Poverty, Politics, and the Press:
Uncovering the Complexities of Media Coverage on Nigeria's Social Investment Programmes

Olasunkanmi Sunday, Arowolo
21030649

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Author: Olasunkanmi Sunday, Arowolo

Supervisors:
Main Supervisor: Dr. Ben Cocking
Secondary supervisors: Prof. Michael Calnan & Dr. Richard Pendry

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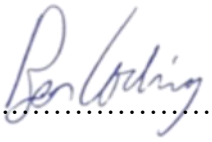
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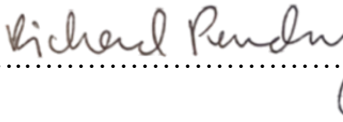
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Declaration of Authorship

I, Olasunkanmi Arowolo declare that this thesis is a result of my own work, and all data generated from research work I carried out. All published literature used in this report have been reference appropriately.

Candidate's Signature:  Date: 30 April 2025

Supervisor Signature:  Date: 07 August 2025
Principal

Supervisor Signature:  Date: 06 August 2025

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the two fathers who led me thus far:

My biological father – High Chief O. Obadiah Arowolo, who peacefully passed away January 4, 2024, after a brief illness.

My academic father, mentor, friend, and confidant – Prof. Lai Oso who passed away in a road accident on the Benin–Sagamu Expressway in Nigeria on June 24, 2023.

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Abstract

Introduction

This thesis undertakes a comprehensive analysis of news media representation and public discourse concerning the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP) in Nigeria. The NSIP, launched in 2016, is a key poverty alleviation initiative by the Nigerian government, and this study investigates how it has been portrayed and discussed across various media platforms, including traditional newspapers and social media. By exploring the role of the press and social media, this research aims to provide insights into the media's influence on public perception and policy implementation regarding the NSIP.

Aims and Objective

The research sets out to achieve four primary objectives. First, it seeks to identify the dominant themes in news reports on the NSIP published in Nigerian newspapers, offering insights into the prominent topics and recurring issues that have shaped the programme's media narrative. Second, the study uses content analysis to examine how the NSIP is portrayed in the news, focusing on the framing, tone, and sources of information used by the press to construct the narrative around the programme, highlighting the dominant narratives and perspectives in the media. Third, this thesis applies critical discourse analysis (CDA) to explore Nigerians' engagement with NSIP news on X (formerly Twitter), revealing public reactions, opinions, and discussions on the platform, and highlighting how social media users shape discourse around the programme Lastly, the study investigates the motivations and practices of Nigerian journalists in reporting on the NSIP, including their use of NSIP policy documents as sources of information. This aspect of the study seeks to understand the factors influencing their reporting choices and the degree to which these choices affect public perception

Results

The study's findings reveal that media coverage of the NSIP in Nigerian newspapers is predominantly framed around themes of governance, corruption, and inefficiency, with a recurring focus on the operational challenges affecting the programme's success. Social media discourse on X, meanwhile, reflects a range of public opinions, from scepticism and criticism to support for the programme, with power dynamics and socio-political influences shaping the conversations. Furthermore, interviews with journalists show that while NSIP policy documents are often used as a one-off primary source, journalists face difficulties in obtaining balanced information due to limited access to independent sources, which affects the depth and objectivity of their reporting.

Discussion

The findings suggest that both traditional and digital media play a crucial role in shaping public perception of the NSIP. The press, through its framing and representation of the programme, contributes to the agenda-setting process, while social media provides a digital public sphere where diverse viewpoints and voices emerge. The study also underscores the importance of journalistic integrity and the need for more transparent "to information to enhance the quality and balance of media reporting on the NSIP.

Conclusion

This thesis contributes to the understanding of how media coverage and public discourse influence the perception and implementation of social welfare programmes like the NSIP in Nigeria. The study offers valuable insights for policymakers, journalists, and stakeholders involved in poverty alleviation efforts, recommending improved media engagement strategies and enhanced transparency in communication to foster public trust and accountability in the NSIP. Future research could explore the long-term effects of media representation on policy outcomes and public attitudes towards poverty alleviation initiatives.

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CHAPTER ONE

1 Background to the study

1.1 Introduction

This thesis focuses on understanding the media coverage of National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP) in Nigeria. NSIP, introduced in 2016, is a social welfare plan of the federal government of Nigeria was designed to lift over 100 million Nigerians out of poverty.

The NSIP was set up to effort to combat widespread poverty, unemployment, and social marginalisation in Nigeria. The programme has four main part programme addressing different vulnerable groups. However, despite NSIP ambitious goals, it has drawn criticism for its effectiveness and transparency. There have been concerns about its true effects on reducing poverty, poor management, and political bias.

This thesis examines two media - the press and Twitter (now officially referred to as X). Additionally, it seeks insights into the reasons behind journalists' reporting and representation of the NSIP in selected Nigerian newspapers. By drawing on the theoretical foundations established in the Curran (2002) study, as well as other relevant theories such as the Political Economy of Communication, Public Sphere (Xsphere), Agenda Setting Theory, Development Media Theory, and Social Responsibility Theory, this thesis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding on the media coverage and representation of the NSIP. To achieve a comprehensive understanding about coverage of NSIP reporting processes, in-depth interviews were conducted with journalists who have reported on the NSIP. By examining both news media coverage and journalists' perspectives, this study aims to provide insights into how the NSIP was portrayed and discussed in the media landscape.

The heart of this thesis is grounded in the belief that the press could play a crucial role for effective communication of social welfare programmes such as the NSIP, as it could provide essential information about social welfare. A leading Nigerian communication professor, Ralph Akinfeleye have also similarly argued that a lack of information, its misuse, or hoarding can have detrimental effects on administration and governance(Akinfeleye, 2003).

> Lack of information or misuse of information or hoarding of information will be counterproductive in governance and/or administration (Akinfeleye, 2003, p. 1).

Since the commencement of NSIP in 2016, Nigerian government have allegedly invested billions of naira to halve poverty by 2020, yet more Nigerians fall into poverty every minute. According to World Bank (2021), Nigeria is leading in Africa with Nominal GDP of over $480.48 billion but almost half of her population are living below poverty-line of $1.90 per day. By 2022, over half of the population; "63% of persons living within Nigeria (133 million people) are multidimensionally poor" (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). However, despite spending over ₦1.358 trillion by 2023 (The Nation (Nigeria), 2023), the number of people living below the poverty line has continued to increase as many Nigerians complain about hardship on social media platforms.

It has been noted that Nigeria has, for the past 6 decades, been making efforts to reduce poverty through its various programmes, but all the interventions were unable to achieve their objectives (Adepegba, 2019; Aibieyi & Dirisu, 2010; Bello et al., 2009; Sodeinde et al., 2015). Apart from corruption, operationalisation, elitist selfish interest impedes the implementation of the programmes. Aibieyi & Dirisu (2010) emphasised unclear and lack of focus as some of the major hindrances of the poverty reduction programmes. Aside from the foregoing findings, according to the literatures, ineffective communication is also a key problem, often leading to

mismanagement and lack of accountability. There is therefore a need to inquire further into the role of the media (the press) for NSIP poverty reduction programme.

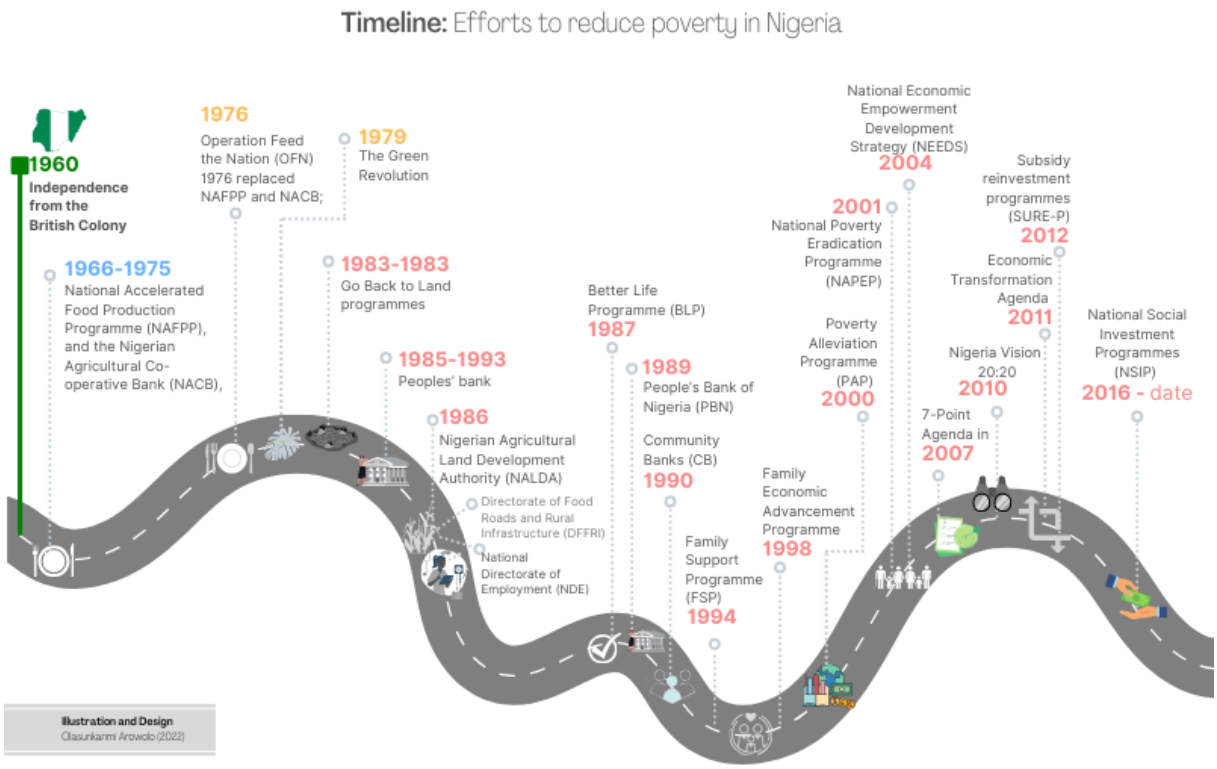
Since Nigeria gained her independence in 1960, poverty has been a longstanding issue, stretching over several decades (Orokpo et al., 2018). This problem can be traced back to the post-independence era in the 1960s, when the country began grappling with economic instability, political upheaval, and inadequate infrastructure, all of which contributed to widespread poverty. The issue has persisted for over six decades, despite numerous governmental efforts to combat it (Godfrey, 2021).

Demographically, poverty in Nigeria affects various groups, but it is most prevalent among the rural population, women, and children. Statistically, by 2022, over 63% of the population; approximately 133 million Nigerians were multidimensionally poor (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022), meaning they were deprived in key areas such as education, health, and standard of living. This poverty affects a broad spectrum of people, but young adults, women, and vulnerable groups in rural areas are particularly impacted.

The magnitude of the problems posed by poverty has led successive governments to introduce various alleviation programmes. These initiatives began in the late 1960s with Gen. Yakubu Gowon's National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) and the Nigerian Agricultural Co-operative Bank (NACB), which focused on agricultural funding. The NACB, according to Bank of Agriculture (2020) was incorporated in 1972 as the Nigerian Agricultural Bank (NAB). In 1978, the name was changed to the NACB to reflect the inclusion of co-operative financing. It was set up to provide credit facilities to small and large-scale farmers as well as small businesses within rural areas. The establishment of the NACB primarily aimed to address the financial challenges faced by Nigerian farmers due to the severe drought that struck

the Sahel region in the 1970s, impacting Nigeria significantly. This drought led to a drastic reduction in agricultural output and increased expenses for farmers. At the same time, the Nigerian government shifted focus to oil as the backbone of the economy. With growing oil revenues, agriculture was largely neglected, which severely impacted food production and exacerbated poverty levels. During this period, the population continued to grow thereby creating a pressing need for initiatives like "Operation Feed the Nation" to boost food self-sufficiency and reduce reliance on imports.

In 1976, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) was introduced by the administration of Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo to encourage subsistence farming among Nigerians. The Green Revolution was also launched in 1979 by Shehu Shagari for the same purpose. This trend continued with the establishment of the Nigerian Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI), and the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in 1986. In 1987, the Better Life Programme (BLP) was introduced by First Lady Maryam Babangida, followed by the People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN) in 1989 and Community Banks (CB) in 1990 to support Small and Medium-size Enterprises (SMEs). Under General Sani Abacha's regime, the Family Support Programme (FSP) and the Family Economic Advancement Programme were launched in 1994 and 1998, respectively. In the fourth republic (1999-2007), President Olusegun Obasanjo implemented the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), and the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS). The succeeding administration (2007-2010), led by Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, introduced the 7-Point Agenda in 2007 and Nigeria Vision 20:2020 in 2010. President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's administration (2007-2015) continued these efforts with the Economic Transformation Agenda in 2011 and the Subsidy Reinvestment Programmes (SURE-P) in 2012.



However, despite these initiatives, "poverty is still very endemic and pervasive in Nigeria" (Omotola, 2008, p. 512), with a significant percentage of the population living below the poverty line. These initiatives were often hampered by corruption, lack of coordination, and poor communication, which limited their effectiveness.

Studies, such as Ejomafuvwe (2008) and Aibieyi & Dirisu (2010) have highlighted the questionable effectiveness of these poverty alleviation programmes, attributing their failures to factors such as corruption, political instability, fiscal indiscipline, ineffective communication and policy inconsistency. Making a statement on corruption, Ejomafuvwe (2008) wrote:

> The poverty alleviation programmes failed due to corruption. Those in the corridors of power and the rich became the major beneficiaries of the programmes. The programmes were ploys by those in the corridors of power to amass wealth for themselves and their relatives (Ejomafuvwe, 2008, p. 54).

Aibieyi & Dirisu (2010) corroborates Ejomafuvwe (2008) view

> …government itself tends to fuel the increase of poverty incidence in the country such as improper management of the country's resource which are sufficient to propel the economy to greater height, large scale fraud and corruption by people in high places who were put in trust of the nation's wealth.

Also, according to Ejomafuvwe study's findings:

> …political instability was the order of the day before this present administration came into power, each of the successive governments was always amassing wealth rather than implementing programmes that can better the life of the masses. Also, money that would have been used for implementing poverty alleviation programmes was channelled into contesting election for second tenure which has become the order of the day in Nigerian politics (Ejomafuvwe, 2008, p. 56).

The forgoing statements illustrate significant disconnect between available resources and their management, suggesting that misallocation and corruption at high levels of government exacerbate poverty rather than alleviate it.

In addition to corruption, issues such as fiscal indiscipline—characterised by irresponsible budgetary practices—and ineffective communication regarding programme goals and implementation strategies further compound the challenges faced by these initiatives. For example, resources intended for poverty alleviation may be misallocated due to a lack of transparency or unclear guidelines, while the intended beneficiaries remain unaware of available support due to poor outreach efforts.

Together, these studies highlight a critical need for systemic reform in the management and execution of poverty alleviation programmes. Addressing these core issues, more particularly the entrenched corruption and mismanagement; could significantly enhance the effectiveness of such initiatives, ultimately leading to more meaningful and sustainable improvements in the lives of those living in poverty.

In 2016, the newly elected government led by President Muhammadu Buhari launched the NSIP to address the increasing poverty in Nigeria. According to The National Social Investment Office (NSIO) - N-SIP (2018), the motivation for launching the NSIP stemmed from a combination of factors, including the need to tackle high rates of poverty and unemployment, especially among youth and women, and to provide a more structured and efficient approach to social support.

1.1.1 National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP)

The NSIP is a social welfare programme of the federal government of Nigeria was designed to lift over 100 million Nigerians out of poverty. The programme was designed with four components. In detail, the programmes under the NSIP framework are in four main categories. N-power targeted at youth between the ages of 18-35[1]; the second, Conditional Cash Transfer for the most vulnerable groups; the third, Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) targeted at market people/entrepreneurs and the fourth, National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme championed towards reducing child poverty – feeding school children. These shows the endemic nature of child poverty in Nigeria.

The summary of the four parts of the NSIP programme are:

1. N-power: This category of programme was designed to target young Nigerians (ages 18-35years). The programme aimed to help this category of youth to "acquire and develop lifelong skills to become change makers in their communities and players in the domestic and global markets. The beneficiaries were given a stipend of ₦30,000 monthly" (Egboboh, 2024). By

[1] N-power was targeted people within the age group of 18-35 – employable age range because part of the primary agenda of the NSIP was to tackle unemployment and social inequality.

providing job training and opportunities, N-Power aims to equip Nigerian within ages 18-35 with skills they need to secure employment and contribute to the economy.

2**. The Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT)** set out to "directly support those within the lowest poverty bracket" (Partnership International Budget, 2020, p. 5) in the country. The objective set include improving nutrition, increasing household consumption, and supporting the development of human capital through cash benefits to various categories of the poor and the vulnerable. The support was conditioned on fulfilling soft and hard co-responsibilities that enable recipients improve their standard of living.

3. Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) was a micro-lending intervention that targeted traders, artisans, enterprising youth, farmers, and women, by providing them with loans of between ₦10,000 and ₦100,000 (ten thousand and one hundred thousand naira) at zero interest rate to beneficiaries. Tradermoni, Marketmoni, and Farmersmoni were the particular sub-agency programmes under the GEEP umbrella. Among these GEEP programmes, Tradermoni is "the most popular of the three schemes" (Oluwagbemi, 2019).

4. **The Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSF)** aimed to deliver school feeding to young children with specific focus on increasing school enrolment, reducing the incidence of malnutrition (especially among the poor and those who ordinarily were unable to eat a meal-a-day), empowering community women as cooks and by supporting small farmers to help stimulate economic growth. Several billions of naira have been invested in the HGSF with 100 billion allocated for same for 2024 alone (Apanpa, 2024). It is worth noting that there have been allegations of corrupt practice which has been investigated by independent (digital) press (FIJ,

2024) , and reports by traditional press (Lawal et al., 2024) on how poor planning and corruption 200 billion previously invested in the school feeding programme.

In the context of Nigeria's ongoing struggle with poverty, this thesis examines the role of the Nigerian press and social media — particularly X[2], in shaping public perception and accountability. By examining media coverage over a significant period of seven years[3], this study will offer insights drawn from the range of published stories across different newspapers. This analysis will help us understand the varying roles and possible influences of the respective media outlets on the NSIP's efforts to address poverty and related social issues in Nigeria.

This thesis provides essential understanding on how the media represents and frames significant social welfare initiative — NSIP in Nigeria. Analysing the media and its content helps us identify the predominant themes, the tone of coverage, and the sources used in reporting, which collectively reveal the underlying narratives and perspectives presented to the public. Furthermore, examining the representation and framing provides insight into how media outlets, influenced by their geo-political location, political interests, and ethnic ownership, may shape public perception and discourse surrounding the NSIP. Including insights from journalists who routinely report on the programme adds depth to this thesis analysis, offering a practitioner's perspective on the dynamics of media coverage. This multifaceted approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of both media practices and their implications on societal engagement with the NSIP.

To achieve this, this thesis uses mixed methods and triangulated approach. Firstly, a content analysis of news reports concerning the NSIP as published by selected Nigerian newspapers

[2] Formerly known as Twitter
[3] from the inception of the programme till the end of administration

was conducted. This researcher carefully selected four (4) newspapers – *Punch, Daily Trust, Tribune, and The Nation* based on their geo-political location and operations, longevity of operation, political interest, and ethnic ownership.

The analysis seeks to identify the predominant themes within these news reports, examine representation, the tone, determine news sources and framing of the NSIP in the Nigerian press. This thesis also provides insights from journalists who have routinely reported on the NSIP.

Secondly, the content analysis of newspaper coverage is complemented by Critical Discourse Analysis - an exploration of social media discourse of Nigerian X platform. This digital public sphere (Xsphere) analysis aims to uncover the dominant discourses, power relations and themes surrounding the NSIP within the Nigerian online community. By examining the discourse, language used and the interactions on social media, this study seeks to capture diverse viewpoints and foster a more inclusive understanding of NSIP poverty alleviation programmes. The analysis of social media discourse is vital in understanding how public discussions and opinions shape the perception and reception of the NSIP.

Lastly, in order to understand the condition under which news contents on NSIP is produced and to gain deeper insights into the reporting processes, this thesis conducted in-depth interviews with selected journalists who regularly reported on the NSIP. The objective of these in-depth interviews was to gather more detailed and contextual understanding of the motivations, thought processes, and techniques used by journalists in their news report and in relation to the content analysis findings. This included exploring how they gathered and verified information, as well as their efforts in ensuring a balanced and unbiased reporting. This aspect of the study sought to identify the key factors that influenced the reporting of these journalists. The journalists were asked about their motivations for reporting on the NSIP, how they decided

which aspects of the programme to report on, and the criteria they used for making these decisions. The selected journalists also discussed the methods they employed to understand the NSIP, how they verified the accuracy of the information they reported on, and how they ensured balance and unbiased reporting. Additionally, the journalists shared their perspectives on the key factors influencing the press' reporting of the NSIP. This thesis phase also examines how Nigerian journalists utilised NSIP policy documents as sources of information for their reporting. The journalists were asked about their access to the NSIP policy document, the challenges they faced in using these documents as sources of information, and how they incorporated the information from these documents into their news reports. They also discussed the strategies they used in effort to ensure the accuracy of the information obtained from these documents and the type of information they found most useful. Through these in-depth interviews, this thesis provides a comprehensive understanding of the journalistic perspectives and practices surrounding the coverage of the NSIP.

Additionally, this study acknowledges the influence of political dynamics and electoral interests on the media's coverage of the NSIP. Specifically, it covers the period leading up to Nigeria's general elections in 2023, providing valuable context for understanding the political factors that may shape media coverage of the NSIP. This examination of the influence of political dynamics aims to shed light on the nuances of how these programmes are covered and reported by the media, and how political agendas may impact the portrayal of poverty reduction efforts.

The findings of this study have the potential to inform policymakers, journalists, and stakeholders involved in poverty alleviation efforts and programme implementation. For policy makers who are interested in holistic approach to designing, delivery and for impact, understanding how the role of the media in shaping public opinion and identifying potential

areas of misinformation and/or support for initiatives is invaluable for effective governance and policy implementation. By gaining a comprehensive understanding of the coverage, reception, and discourse surrounding the NSIP in both traditional and digital Nigerian media landscapes, this study can contribute to the development of more effective communication strategies, improved programme design, and a better understanding of public perceptions and needs related to poverty programmes in Nigeria.

Moreover, this study emphasises the significance of the press in Nigeria and its role in shaping the production, dissemination, and reception of news and information in the country. By examining the historical, cultural, political, and economic factors that influence the press, this study provides insights into media freedom, pluralism, and independence. Understanding the press landscape is crucial in comprehending how news about poverty reduction initiatives, such as the NSIP, is framed and presented to the public.

In summary, this study's analysis of the press coverage of the NSIP in Nigeria, combined with its the Critical Discourse Analysis of conversations on X and In-depth interview with Nigerian Journalists who have reported NSIP poverty reduction, offers valuable insights into the complexities of poverty alleviation efforts. Hence, examining both traditional media and social media discourse on X while considering political and power dynamics, as well as conducting in-depth interview with knowledgeable journalists, this study provides a detailed understanding of how the NSIP is portrayed, discussed, and perceived in the media landscape in Nigeria. The insight from this study contributes theoretically and methodologically to academic literature and empirical data in the area of media coverage of poverty and it directly provide empirical data that can help improve and/or shape communicative aspect of poverty reduction

programmes' policy designs thereby facilitating informed decision-making and promote transparency and accountability in Nigeria's social development initiatives.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The main problem this thesis address is the lack of in-depth understanding regarding the role of press and social media, particularly X, in shaping the discourse and perception of Nigeria's NSIP for poverty alleviation. There is a need to understand how the media influences public understanding, how they shape perception and discourse about Nigeria's NSIP for poverty alleviation. This thesis notes that this requires a comprehensive analysis of media coverage over a significant period. To provide a solution to this knowledge gap, this thesis examines the influence of major media (focusing on the press) outlets in Nigeria and explore the interplay between traditional and digital media platforms. By doing so, we can gain valuable insights into how media coverage shapes public perception and discourse about Nigeria's NSIP. While acknowledging the significant challenges journalists face, such as resource constraints and regulatory gaps, and recognising that issues like corruption may already be known to policymakers, these insights can still provide a useful evidence base. Understanding the specific ways NSIP is reported, framed and discussed in the media can inform communication strategies, highlight areas needing greater transparency or different reporting approaches, and ultimately support journalists, policymakers, and stakeholders involved in poverty reduction efforts and programme implementation. It is important to acknowledge that while the research emphasises the need to analyse media coverage and its influence on NSIP perceptions, it does not explicitly examine the operational challenges faced by journalists, such as resource limitations and regulatory gaps, nor the systemic issue of corruption affecting policymakers. These factors could indeed play a significant role in hindering both groups' ability to effectively

engage with NSIP-related issues and should be recognised as critical areas for further exploration.

Poverty, being the No. 1 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) noted the crucial role that media plays in supporting anti-poverty programmes. The media is often expected and as some scholars have argued, responsible for raising awareness about the SDGs, facilitating dialogue among stakeholders, and tracking progress (Mulholland et al., 2017). Denis McQuail, a British communication theorist, identified the hypothetical aims or effects of mass media power, including attracting and directing public attention, persuasion in matters of opinion and belief, influencing behaviour, providing a definition of reality, conferring status and legitimacy, and informing quickly and extensively (McQuail, 2010). However, studies by Maikaba (2008), Orji (2005), Aligwe (2015), and Haruna (2021) argue that the media in Nigeria is not doing enough in the fight against poverty. Aligwe (2015, p. 113) highlights that "the press has not performed creditably well in the coverage of poverty-related issues in Nigeria." Aligwe stresses that the media has "not done enough to take the microphone to the slum areas so the people can tell us how they are coping with poverty," highlighting a significant shortcoming in poverty-related reporting. Haruna, 2021, p. 122) explicitly states that "poverty is under-reported in the media and, when it is reported, those facing poverty particularly the rural poor are often not given the space to explain what it really means." He argued that "the viewpoint of the mass media in Nigeria has strictly continued to be city based," with journalists primarily focusing on urban areas while neglecting the "difficulties of life, the grievance and the tribulations of the rural areas" (Haruna, 2021, p. 126). This urban-centric focus leaves rural communities, and their struggles underrepresented.

Studies above have highlighted the media's failure to cater to the development information needs of the people and ensure that citizens are well-informed about the government's social and economic policies, especially those related to poverty alleviation. The neglect of media activities, particularly in rural areas, have been a significant challenge (Haruna, 2021). Suleiman and Ojomo (2019) also emphasise the failure of the Nigerian media to give expression to the plights of the people in relation to development, stating, "They do not have access to media platforms to express their plights, and convey their views on the type, scope, and shape of the development programmes that the government could implement to meet their needs and to reduce their poverty level" (Suleiman and Ojomo, 2019, p. 216)

In the context of Nigeria, Denis McQuail's theoretical framework[4] on the aims and effects of mass media power holds significant relevance. Nigeria, as a diverse and populous country, heavily relies on mass media to attract and direct public attention, shape opinions and beliefs, influence behaviour, define reality, confer status (Adelabu, 2022) and legitimacy. The media serve as critical channels for obtaining, evaluating, and disseminating political information. As stated,

> "The media are mass communication channels that are actively involved in obtaining, evaluating, and disseminating information about politics and political issues" (Godswill, 2021, p. 118).

Moreover, mass media plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion, as it "function[s] as purveyors of popular opinion, allowing the elite to make judgments" (Godswill, 2021, p. 118).

[4] Development Communication Theory

Understanding the role of mass media, including press and social media, in Nigeria is crucial for comprehending how they contribute to the discourse and perception of initiatives like the NSIP for poverty alleviation. It is noted that the mass media

> "…can be effective in establishing a good atmosphere where growth and development can take place, particularly in the elimination of ignorance which often leads to conflicts, especially in politics" (Godswill, 2021, p. 119).

Thus, the influence of mass media is instrumental in creating a conducive environment for growth and development.

Through an analysis of media coverage and exploration of the interplay between different media platforms, this research aims to shed light on the dynamics of media power in Nigeria and its implications for effective poverty reduction efforts. It is essential to empirically investigate the role of the Nigerian media in poverty reduction efforts.

Additionally, it is important to note that European research dominates poverty studies and media studies of poverty, while African countries, despite being the most affected region, have limited participation in research. Therefore, this research aims to fill the knowledge gap by providing insights into the role of the Nigerian press in the government's poverty reduction efforts, specifically focusing on the National Social Investment Programmes.

Although some studies, such as those conducted by Maikaba (2008), Owolabi (2014), and Suleiman and Ojomo (2019), have examined the role of the press in addressing poverty in Nigeria, their findings highlight significant gaps in media performance. Maikaba (2008) make

three recommendations in the light of the above identified limitations. In his words, he recommends that:

> Community based media should be established in the nooks and crannies of the country to cater for the needs of the rural poor. Community based media in the form of a local FM station; a small newspaper in the local language would go a long way in educating and enlightening the people on poverty issues and how to overcome them.
>
> Media owners and practitioners must be made to understand the implication of widespread poverty amongst the population, which may not be in the interest of their businesses. They should, therefore, consider poverty issues as a leading agenda in their cover and leading stories. They should shine more light on it.
>
> Other agencies of socialization and orientation such as the family, religious bodies, schools, peer groups and the like should perform their roles sufficiently to make the work of the media easier (Maikaba, 2008, p. 96).

Additionally,

> It has also been observed … that print media in Nigeria unlike radio and television, cannot make much impact in propagating development messages … because of the literacy level and the degree of coverage which is mostly concentrated on urban centers. Given this circumstance therefore, the study suggests that future research should be done on the role of broadcast media (Owolabi, 2014, p. 272)

Suleiman and Ojomo (2019), have attempted to explain the role of the press in fighting poverty in Nigeria, there is still much to be explored in this area. Suleiman and Ojomo highlight that "poverty reporting does not seem sellable and attractive to the Nigerian media" and argue that "the structural weakness of the media – ownership influence, is a major challenge for the media in Nigeria" (J. Suleiman & Ojomo, 2019, p. 224). This suggests that the media's focus is often diverted towards more commercially viable topics, thereby neglecting poverty issues.

Owolabi's content analysis study presents a critical view of the Nigerian press, stating that "the Nigerian press did not perform their responsibilities creditably well especially in the areas of business and development reporting"(Owolabi, 2014, p. 262). This indicates a significant level of incompetence in fulfilling their roles, particularly with respect to critical issues such as poverty and economic development. Maikaba (2008) concluded that the Nigerian media have failed in their responsibilities. Thus, there is a need for further research to delve deeper into the relationship between the media (particularly, the press) and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

This thesis employs a comprehensive methodology, including content analysis, critical discourse analysis, and in-depth interviews with professional journalists, to investigate the challenges identified earlier. Specifically, it seeks to examine the role of traditional press and social media—particularly X (formerly Twitter)—in shaping public discourse and perceptions of Nigeria's NSIP for poverty alleviation.

It is noteworthy that the Nigerian government's attempts to restrict access to X, particularly as evidenced by (Okafor, 2021), highlight the platform's crucial role in facilitating dissenting voices and political discourse. This suppression underscores the need to analyse X as a significant battleground for freedom of expression and public opinion in Nigeria. The thesis observed that there are limitations in media coverage, particularly the lack of critical analysis regarding NSIP's shortcomings. This thesis, therefore, explores both the press' narrative and public discourse on X to provide nuanced understanding that can eventually inform policymakers, journalists, and stakeholders committed to enhancing poverty reduction strategies.

1.3 Research Objectives

This thesis is guided by three main objectives: (1) What are the main themes in the news reports on the National Social Investment Programmes as published in Nigerian newspapers, and how have these programmes been represented by Nigerian newspapers?; (2) to critically examine, using Critical Discourse Analysis, Nigerians' (X (Twitter) users') engagement and discourse with news on the NSIP on the Nigerian Xsphere; and (3) to understand the motivations and procedures employed by Nigerian journalists when reporting on the NSIP, and to examine how they have utilised NSIP policy documents as sources of information. The following research questions will guide this study:

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the main themes in the news reports on the National Social Investment Programmes as published in Nigerian newspapers, and how have these programmes been represented by Nigerian newspapers?

2. How do Nigerian X (Twitter) users engage and discuss news on the National Social Investment Programmes?

3. What are the sentiments used by Nigerian X (Twitter) users when discussing news on the National Social Investment Programmes?

4. What are the dominant discourses and themes surrounding the NSIP on Nigerian Xsphere?

5. What factors influenced the way the press reported on the NSIP?

6. How have Nigerian journalists utilised NSIP policy documents in their reporting?

1.5 Significance of the study

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the understanding of media coverage and public discourse surrounding Nigeria's NSIP. By examining media articles, conducting Critical Discourse Analyses (CDA) of Xsphere discourses, and interviewing journalists, this study aims to shed light on the representation and perception of the NSIP in the media.

The media has the potential to play a critical role in the implementation of poverty-reduction programmes. Wood and Barnes (2007), in their global report– *Making Poverty the Story,* which include an analysis of Nigeria, identified six critical functions of the media that can be applied to the context of poverty alleviation, including the promotion of public discourse and accountability. The key media functions, includes communication, public forum provision, voice amplification, engagement promotion, accountability, and policy/issue highlighting. These functions are crucial for several reason, as the report emphasises:

1. **Communication:**
   "The media have the capacity to reach people en masse – a crucial function if the public is to receive vital news and analysis of significant developments in overall strategies and specific programmes and initiatives to combat poverty" (Wood & Barnes, 2007, p. 19).
2. **Public forum provision:**
   "The media provide a forum for a two-way flow of information, comment and reaction between the public, CSOs, the government in general and policymakers in particular." (Wood & Barnes, 2007, p. 19).
3. **Highlighting Policy & Issues**:
   "The media could examine the newsworthy substance of wider policies relevant to poverty reduction – for example, key stories on social spending plans" (Wood & Barnes, 2007, p. 19).
4. **Amplifying Voices**
   "The media can report and comment critically on the policy issues, options and viewpoints at stake."
5. **Accountability and Scrutiny**:

"The report argues it is crucial to support the potential power of the media's highly relevant scrutiny role." (Wood & Barnes, 2007, p. 53).

6. **Fostering Public Engagement**:

"Effective media coverage of public affairs as an essential part of creating an informed, inclusive public debate that ensures genuine citizenship, democratic participation, responsive governance and effective statecraft." (Wood & Barnes, 2007, p. 53).

The functions outlined by Wood and Barnes (2007) do indeed relate to Nigeria, even though the report presents a global perspective on poverty. The report highlights how media can serve crucial roles in poverty reduction initiatives, such as providing a platform for diverse public opinions, fostering public debate, and holding various stakeholders accountable for their actions. These functions are pertinent to Nigeria's media landscape, particularly in terms of addressing poverty-related issues. These functions include providing an open forum to reflect different public views, including those of poor people; providing an inclusive platform for public debate; scrutinising and holding all actors accountable for their actions, acting as a force for more transparent and accountable decision-making relevant to poverty reduction (Wood and Barnes, 2007). The potential of media in public service delivery is stated by Wood and Barnes in the 2007 Panos report. The work of Wood and Barnes provides a fundamental understanding of how the media may help reduce poverty in a global setting. Their observations are applicable even though they are not solely focused on Nigeria because they draw attention to opportunities and problems that are universal and applicable to a variety of contexts, including Nigeria. It is crucial to acknowledge that Wood and Barnes' observations offer a fundamental comprehension of the media's possible influence on reducing poverty. Their conclusions are relevant to Nigeria because they highlight opportunities and problems that are common to many contexts, including Nigeria.

The Panos report emphasise the significant potential of media to enhance public service delivery by acting as a catalyst for public discourse on critical issues such as poverty reduction.

They argue that effective journalism can shape public opinion and promote policy change by amplifying the voices of marginalised communities, thereby facilitating a more inclusive dialogue on key public policy matters. The report also highlights the importance of a vibrant and independent media sector, which is essential for development and requires support from international donors to fulfil its role effectively. Furthermore, it notes that despite various challenges faced by the media, such as political and commercial pressures, its capacity to raise awareness and engage the public in discussions around poverty issues remains vita

The report, however, noted that due to Africa media's infancy, public expectations have been reduced (Wood and Barnes, 2007). This claim may be true of some African countries, but it is not true in Nigeria at the time of this study. The birth of print media in Nigeria dates to 1859 when *Iwe Irohin fun Awon Egba ati Yoruba* (Newspaper for the Egbas[5] and Yoruba people) was established. Nigeria's journalism industry has been in existence for over 162 years and has developed beyond infancy, with its maturity demonstrated by its role as a platform for anticolonial and nationalist movements. In fact, this history established the foundation for the importance of the mass media in Nigeria as following the departure of the colonial master the constitution gave room for the acknowledgement and empowerment of the media as Section 22 of the Federal Republic of Nigeria's constitution of 1999 enables the media to hold the government responsible to the people. According to the constitution, "the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the mental objectives contained in this Chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people" (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, p. 13). However, there are other factors that could hinder the press from fulfilling its developmental

[5] The Egba people are a subgroup of the Yoruba people, an ethnic group of western Nigeria, a majority of whom are from the central part of Ogun State. They are settled in western side of the historic Olumo Rock.

and surveillance responsibilities – see details in Chapter 2). These factors include undertrained, under skilled, poorly paid journalists (Wood and Barnes, 2007) which may be true of Nigerian press. Other factors including government censorship and regulation, lack of media freedom and independence, political interference and influence, economic pressures and interests of media owners, inadequate training and resources for journalists, threats and attacks on journalists, sensitivity and risks associated with certain topics, such as corruption or national security, and so on. Yusha' (2009) supports Wood and Barnes' argument that capacity, low pay, moral inadequacies (Oso et al., 2024) and corruption in the media industry can hinder the professional and ethical practises of journalists. However, this does not reduce the growing acknowledgment by scholars like Haider & Hakim (2018) and Bassey (2019) about the role of communication in strengthening the efficacy of policies and programmes intended to alleviate poverty in developing nations.

Therefore, understanding how the NSIP is portrayed in the media is crucial for a few reasons. Firstly, it provides insights into the effectiveness and impact of the programme in addressing poverty and social issues in Nigeria. By conducting an analyses of media coverage over a significant period, this thesis can assess the programme's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement as reported by the press.

Secondly, this study explores the multi-perspectivity of public discussions surrounding the NSIP. By examining various discourses and reactions on X social media platform, this thesis seeks to capture diverse viewpoints and foster a more inclusive understanding on NSIP poverty alleviation programmes.

Furthermore, that this study covers the period leading up to Nigeria's general elections in 2023 provides valuable context. It allows the researcher to examine the influence of political dynamics and electoral interests on the media's coverage of the NSIP.

Moreso, the focus on media coverage of NSIP involves recognising the potential public interest in such programmes, even if sometimes underestimated by media practitioners themselves. As evidence from the related field of humanitarian reporting suggests, "Audiences are interested in humanitarian journalism - more than journalists think" (Scott et al., 2018, p. 2). As this study reveals, Scott et al's point is particularly relevant in the Nigerian context. Therefore, examining how these vital programmes are portrayed is significant not only for policy and implementation but also for satisfying a potential public demand for information.

Lastly, the findings of this study can inform policymakers, journalists, and stakeholders involved in poverty alleviation efforts and programme implementation. It can contribute to the development of more effective communication strategies that prioritises transparency and accountability, thereby improving programme design and fostering better understanding of public perceptions and needs related to poverty programmes in Nigeria.

1.6 Scope of the study

The scope of this thesis spans a period of approximately seven years, from June 2016 to February 2023. The study focuses on media articles related to Nigeria's NSIP, conducts Critical Discourse Analyses (CDA) of Xsphere discourses and/or reactions to the NSIP, and includes in-depth interviews with journalists who have reported on the NSIP.

The objective of this thesis is to analyse the media coverage of NSIP programmes from their inception, encompassing both the first term (June 2016 - February 2019) and the ongoing

second term (May 29, 2019 - February 2023) of the Muhammadu Buhari administration. This timeframe includes the period leading up to Nigeria's general elections in February 2023, which provides this research with a comprehensive understanding of the media discourse surrounding the NSIP during a politically significant period. The chosen time frame holds significant importance for various reasons. Firstly, it encompasses a substantial period of President Buhari's administration as the President of Nigeria, extending almost up to the end of his tenure. This is particularly noteworthy as it allows for a comprehensive examination of the implementation of the NSIP throughout his leadership.

Furthermore, this time frame aligns with a period of heightened global discussions on poverty, with poverty reduction being a central focus of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. As a member nation, Nigeria has committed to reducing poverty by 2020, making it imperative to study the initiatives of the NSIP within this specific time frame. By analysing the progress and impact of the NSIP during President Buhari's administration, valuable insights can be gained into the effectiveness and outcomes of these poverty reduction programmes.

1.7 Clarification of terms

The press (or the media): refers to the printed newspapers that allow one or more organisations to exchange information and knowledge with vast, dispersed, and diverse audiences. However, it should be noted that in this study, the terms media and press are used interchangeably to refer to Nigerian publications. This decision is based on the prevailing usage within the Nigerian context, despite the potential for ambiguity, and is justified by the need to accurately reflect the language used in relevant sources.

X: refers to Twitter. The name was changed after the social platform's new owner, Elon Musk, confirmed the rebranding and name change on July 23, 2023.

Xsphere: refers to X users, taken as a group. Hence, this term is used in this study to refer to Nigerians users on X.

NSIP/N-SIP: National Social Investment Programmes

GEEP: Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme

HGSF/NHGSF: (National) Home-Grown School Feeding Programme

CCT: Conditional Cash Transfer.

1.8 Thesis Overview

This thesis is divided into nine chapters. Chapter One provides the background to the study, including an introduction to the topic, a statement of the problem, research objectives, significance of the study, scope of the study, and an overview of the thesis. Chapter Two focuses on the relationship between the media, politics, and poverty reduction, discussing the media's role in a democratic political system, Nigeria's news media environment, the history of the Nigerian press, the functions of the press, and Nigerian press laws. Chapter Three presents a literature review of previous studies, including newspaper coverage studies in Nigeria, main themes in newspaper coverage studies, Twitter studies on Nigeria, and a review of prior studies on National Social Investment Programmes. Chapter Four explores the theoretical framework of the study, including the political economy of communication, public sphere, agenda-setting theory, development media theory, and social responsibility theory. Chapter Five details the methodology of the study, including the research design, methods, content analysis, critical discourse analysis, population of study, samples population, study period, research instrument, ethical considerations, and methodological reflections.

Chapter Six presents the content analysis of Nigerian newspaper coverage of National Social Investment Programmes, analysing the data and providing answers to research questions. The results of content analysis study are extensively discussed in the first study chapter [see Chapter Six].

Furthermore, after conducting a review of press coverage, this study found evidence of dissenting voices being marginalised, leading people to turn to X as an alternative platform – "the most widely used microblogging site" (García-Albacete & Theocharis, 2014, p. 120), to have their voices heard. In the Nigerian context, the rise of alternative platforms like X (formerly Twitter) has provided an important outlet for dissenting voices that may be

marginalised in traditional media channels. Social media has enabled political mobilisation and the airing of grievances, although the Nigerian government has at a time sought to restrict access to these platforms especially Twitter (now X) (Premium Times (Nigeria), 2022). The dynamics of marginalised groups turning to alternative platforms resonates in Nigeria but exists within a challenging political environment for free expression. Hence, the need for Critical Discourse Analysis of conversation on X. Thus, Chapter Seven focuses on the discourse analysis of Nigerian Xsphere on NSIP, examining early and later discourse and communication about The National Social Investment Programmes and emerging dominant themes over the years. Details of the findings are presented in second study chapter [see Chapter Seven].

The last study chapter (refer to Chapter Eight) presents the findings from in-depth interviews conducted with Nigerian journalists, who consistently reported on the NSIP. As mentioned earlier, this thesis also seeks to explore both the news media coverage and the perspectives of journalists. The chapter provides useful insights about factors influencing reporting on the NSIP and the use of NSIP policy document.

Finally, Chapter Nine provides a summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

1.9 Summary

This thesis offers a comprehensive examination of media coverage and public discourse surrounding Nigeria's NSIP, a central poverty alleviation initiative. Through a multifaceted approach, including content analysis of newspaper coverage, critical discourse analysis of the Nigerian Xsphere (formerly Twitter), and interviews with journalists, the study reveals the complex interplay between the media and poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria.

CHAPTER TWO

2 Media, politics, and poverty reduction: an historical perspective

This chapter seeks to explain the relationship between politics and the media (in this case, the press) in relation to the NSIP poverty reduction programme in Nigeria. Like in different parts of the world, media operations are defined by the socio-economic and socio-political environment. As has been argued in the classic works of Siebert et al. (1956) 60 years ago in the American context, the style and pattern of media operations are often influenced by the system of government within which they operate.

> "…the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates" (Siebert et al., 1956, p. 1)

This is true with Nigeria, where the media landscape was shaped by the country's history, from the colonial past to the post-independence era. During the colonial period – officially between the early 1914 to 1960, when Nigeria gained independence, the Nigerian media have been significantly controlled and shaped by the British colonial administration which used newspapers. In the words of Omu, p. (1968, p. 279):

> "The power of the opposition press alarmed the government, which sought to control the newspapers by initiating prosecutions for seditious libels, and proposing or passing restrictive press laws, most of which were renovations and adaptations of obsolete eighteenth-century laws in England."

Similarly, Ogbondah (1992) noted:

> "The colonial government, lacking the mandate of the governed, sought to remain in power by introducing a measure to regulate and control the press and, therefore, press criticism of its policies and actions. For the newspaper was the weapon with which the educated Africans of the time, the literati, criticized the colonial rule and imperial policies" Ogbondah, p. (1992, p. 6).

After Nigeria gained independence in 1960, the media landscape underwent significant changes influenced by the prevailing socio-political landscape. In the early post-independence years, the media played a crucial role in nation-building and promoting democratic ideals. However, successive military regimes that seized power in the ensuing decades imposed harsh restrictions on the media, which included censorship, harassment of journalists, and the outright closure of media outlets deemed critical of the government.

It was not until the return to civilian rule in the late 1990s that the Nigerian media began to regain more independence and freedom of expression. To support this, Akpojivi (2014) study on Ghana and Nigeria states that the two nations:

> "…started their redemocratisation processes in 1992 and 1999 respectively (Ogbondah 2004). Their struggle for independence was initiated in their respective media spheres; in addition, they have similar media structures and were compelled to embrace similar neoliberal policies in the wake of economic recessions in the early 1990s" Akpojivi, p. (2014, p. 87).

Today, the media in Nigeria operate in a complex environment, with a mix of state-owned, private owned, and community-based media outlets. However, while the media has gained relatively more autonomy, it still faces challenges such as political interference, financial constraints, and the need to balance reporting with social and cultural sensitivities. What this validates is that the social and political environment within which the media operate influences media coverage patterns (McQuail, 2010; Siebert et al., 1956, 1984).

Over the years, the primary function of the media has been as a major source of public information, although this has been widely subjected to debates. While some argue that the media has played a significant role of informing the public, holding government accountable and promoting democratic values; scholars like Apuke (2016) have argued that the media has been limited by ownership structures, political pressures and persisting economic constraints.

Also, as asserted by some Western scholars, many people rely on the media to stay informed about political processes and activities, and the information they receive often shapes their perception of reality (Bennett, 1990; Herman & Chomsky, 2008; M. E. McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Scheufele, 1996). In Nigeria, it was a similar situation, where people also depended on traditional media like print and broadcast to stay informed, at least until the emergence of new media and social media technology disrupted this traditional dependency.

The fact is that the media in Nigeria have an interdependent relationship with the state (Salisu, 2024) where the media's business and operations are influenced by its affiliation with politics, particularly partisan politics. This interdependence between the media and the government has an impact on freedom of the media as the media's dependence on the government can limit its ability to report objectively, accurately and independently. This is what Salisu, p. (2024, p. 9) described as an 'unfortunate' situation where:

> "The media have preferred to see journalism as business first, and profession second. The consequence of this is that the interest of the business and political elites is always considered as more important in their contents than of the public" (Salisu, 2024, p. 9)

Although, there is an ongoing debates on newspaper columns and theoretical researches that centres on the tension between government control, interferences, security concern amongst other as per press freedom since 1960s because the period between 1960s to the 1980s saw instances of selected journalists arrested, press shutdown while on the other hand many news media outlets in Nigeria still benefit from their connections with the government due to the political instability and economic challenges facing the media in recent times. In some cases, in Nigeria the press continues to rely on the government to remain profitable and to survive economic challenges, even if it means pursuing partisan means. As argued by Agbaje (1990):

> "…the plurality of competing interests, the dwindling resources of the state, the tendency to see the state as a resource to be exploited, appropriating scarce public resources for private gains, and the heightening of rivalry for these dwindling resources, it was not surprising that the newspaper press became an important part of the partisan struggles" (Agbaje 1990, p.223).

Similar to the context cited above by Agbaje (1990), this thesis aims to examine the influence of the relationship between the media and the government on the coverage of social welfare initiatives.

Just as the media in Nigeria became embroiled in these partisan struggles because of its interdependent relationship with the state, the coverage of social welfare initiatives is shaped by the media's affiliation with the government and political interests. The media's dependence on the government and its resources often lead to partisan reporting that aligns with the government's agenda, rather than objective and independent coverage of social welfare programmes.

Nigeria has a vibrant media landscape, with numerous newspapers, television stations, and online news outlets covering political news and events. These outlets often serve as platform for politicians to communicate their messages to the public to gain political supports. Similarly, media outlets in Nigeria can also be influenced by political interests, leading to biased or incomplete coverage of prominent issues.

Indeed, Nigerian media outlets play pivotal roles in facilitating communication between politicians and the public, especially during election campaigns when Political candidates rely heavily on media coverage to promote their platforms and engage with voters. In contrast, the media can also play a vibrant role in exposing corruption and holding politicians accountable. Interestingly on this aspect, very few investigative journalists in Nigeria have played critical roles in exposing corrupt practices in the country's political class. Notable examples include

the 2012 Occupy Nigeria protests, which were sparked by public outrage over the Premium Times' investigative reporting on the fraudulent oil subsidy payments. Similarly, systemic problems that might have gone unnoticed were brought to light by the work of journalists like Fisayo Soyombo, who carried out an undercover investigation into corruption in Nigeria's criminal justice system. Despite their impact, these incidents are part of a larger pattern of biased and partisan reporting that frequently prevents a thorough examination of political actions.

It has been noted also that most of these journalists were at some pointed treated, some arrested and some went missing. With the advent of digital journalism, where journalists do not require physical infrastructure and the exorbitant running cost, few independent journalists like Fisayo Soyombo, apart from his big investigative story that led to Occupy Nigeria protest, has continued to play critical role in exposing corruption through notable investigative works such as: *With ₦46,000 bribe, I drove a 'stolen' car from Abuja to Lagos, and back (Soyombo, 2018); Bribery, bail for sale... Lagos police station where innocent civilians are held and criminals are recycled (Soyombo, 2019); PORTRAITS OF BLOOD (II): Names, photos, videos – how Lekki #EndSARS protesters were shot (Soyombo, 2021) and ARROWS OF GOD: One of Nigeria's Biggest Orphanages Is Trading Babies for Cash* amidst other illegalities in Nigeria and amongst the political elite.

Secondly, like most countries of the world, the Nigerian economy is closely tied to politics with political decisions often having direct impacts on economic outcomes. For example, the government's policies on social welfare, oil production and exportation can greatly influence the country's economic activities, growth and development.

Thirdly, corruption and financial mismanagement in politics often lead to economic instability and hinder economic growth. As a matter of fact, Nigeria has struggled with corruption for decades, with many politicians and government officials being accused (and some have been found guilty) of embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds. The history of corruption in Nigeria is long and deeply ingrained in colonial and post-independence Nigeria. During the colonial era, corruption in for of nepotism and use of government resources for persona gains – this is mostly among the administrators. Post independence corrupt practices manifested itself through the newly formed government who inherited the colonial government corrupt practices and added their own such as diversion of fund, abuse of office and mismanagement of public funds at local and state levels and the same corrupt practices led to the collapse of the first republic in 1966 by *coup d'etat*. Similarly, military regimes, due to lack of checks and balances, corruption because more institutionalised and military leader enriched themselves without being question. During the 1970s Oil Boom, corruption became worse with military leader and their associates siphoning billions from public funds. When the country returned to civilian rule in 1979, corruption remained pervasive issues with politicians enriching themselves and used their position for personal gains and enriching themselves through kickback from contractors and embezzlement. The second republic was also short-lived by a coup led by General Muhammadu Buhari who ousted President Shehu Shagari out of power in 1983; the coup was justified by citing corruption and mismanagement of public resources by civilian government. During Buhari regime there was measure implemented to curb corruption until Ibrahim Babangida took over in a bloodless coup. During Babangida regime, there was widespread of bribery, mismanagement of the country's oil wealth and public funds were used for personal gains.

The peak of corruption in Nigeria was between 1993 and 1998 when Sani Abacha was the military dictator. Abacha's regime was considered as the most corrupt government in the history of Nigeria with over £3 billion dollars looted from the Nigeria's treasury and stashed in foreign accounts, ghost projects, cronyism, bribery and repression of anti-corruption voices. Abacha loot was still being recovered during the period of this study. Following the Abacha regime, Abdulsalami Abubakar which was tasked with transitioning to democracy came to power. Between 1998 – 1999, there was fewer cases of loot and corruption. Upon transition to democracy in 1999, President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007) took a significant anti-corruption steps by establishing the Economic Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices & Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) but corruption as still widespread. Amother the popular corrupt cases then were Halliburton scandal where Nigerian officials were accused of receiving $180 million (BBC, 2010) bribe from Halliburton to secure contract (Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative - StAR, 2023); there were also cases of corruption in the National Assembly as well as the mismanagement of recovered Abacha loot instead of being reinvested. The next administration, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (2007–2010) strengthened the anticorruption agency while a major programme – Nigeria Delta Amnesty Programme was faulty on the ground of misappropriation. Between 2010 and 2015, Goodluck Jonathan who succeeded Yar'Adua was widely criticised for the lack of political will to fight corruption and during his administration, $20 billion was missing from the Nigeria National Petroleum Commission (NNPC); Dasukigate – a sum of $2.1billion arms deal scandal was reported diverted to political allies and there was Fuel Subsidy Scandal where fuel subsidy claim were largely accused of being inflated.

The administration of Muhammadu Buhari (2016-2023) campaign to bring corruption to minimal level in Nigeria but the administration still faced major scandals which include:

selective anti-corruption fight (targeting opposition); the EFCC boss, Ibrahim Magu was arrested for alleged financial misconduct; Covid 19 Palliative Scandal, NDDC fraud, crude oil theft as well as well the current subject that this thesis focuses on: the NSIP. The NSIP by Buhari administration became embroiled in multiple corruption allegations, raising concerns about transparency and mismanagement of the programmes' fund. While NSIP was initially designed to alleviate poverty through initiatives like N-Power, the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, the Conditional Cash Transfer, and the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP), its execution was marred by scandals. In 2023, Betta Edu, the minister for Humanitarian Affairs uncovered that ₦44 billion allocated for Npower had gone missing with ghost beneficiaries receiving the fund; ₦37.1 billion school feeding fraud was also report with contractor padi for food not delivered. CCT meant for the poor widely accused as not transparent, ineligible person paid to and they were strong accusation that political affiliations influenced beneficiary selection. Investigations and media reports showed that government officials and middlemen hijacked the processes and diverted the fund. The president ordered an investigation into the fund. The process led to the arrest of Minister Betta Edu for diversion of fund and by January 2024, the president ordered the suspension of the programme.

The foregoing corruption history has consequently hindered economic growth and development in the country.

Finally, economic interests also have the power to shape the media and political landscape in Nigeria. Powerful corporations and wealthy individuals often use their economic resources to influence media coverage and political outcomes. For example, in 2019, some media outlets in

Nigeria (for example *The Nation*[6]*)* were accused of partisanship in their coverage of the general elections by giving them disproportionate coverage or by framing reports in ways that influenced public perception. It was reported by the BBC that some media organisations and social media influencers received inducement from political parties to promote their candidates (BBC Global Disinformation Team, 2023), leading to biased coverage and misinformation (BBC, 2023).

Basically, the relationship between media, politics, and the economy in Nigeria is complex, multifactorial and multifaceted. Understanding this relationship is therefore essential to making informed decisions about politics, economics, and media consumption in the country. Media outlets serve as a platform for politicians to communicate their message to the public and gain support from voters.

In effect and as pointed out earlier, the media can also be influenced by political interests, leading to biased or incomplete coverage of important issues. Just as it has been mentioned that economic interests can also shape the media and political landscape, when powerful corporations and wealthy individuals use their economic resources to influence media coverage and political outcomes.

The power dynamics between political players and journalists are examined in this chapter before addressing poverty reduction programmes in the news media. It is also important to understand the link between the press and politics in Nigeria in order to gain insight into how media coverage can impact political outcomes and economic performance. Consequently, when we examine the relationship between media, politics, and the economy in Nigeria, we are able

[6] Owned by the Bola Tinubu, one of the presidential candidates who also belongs to the ruling party where he is the main party leader.

to have a better understanding of political issues and media operations within its particular context.

2.1 Relationship between media, politics and poverty in a democratic political system

To understand the complex relationship between media, politics, and poverty, which are often linked to economic inequality, this study will initially build on the foundational work of Graham Murdock and Peter Golding. In their study, these two researchers claimed that mass media are primarily industrial and commercial organisations that produce and distribute commodities (Murdock & Golding, 1973). A key component of their view is that the media is a significant source of knowledge about social and political processes, thus making it a crucial factor in determining forms of consciousness. Another similar view is that mass media not only produces knowledge, but manufacture consent (Herman & Chomsky, 2002, 2008) by spreading ideas regarding political and economic institutions (Murdock & Golding, 1973).

Although based in Western media environments, these works offer useful frameworks for comprehending the Nigerian media environment. The paradigms of media as a commercial enterprise and media as an opinion-influencing institution are especially relevant in Nigeria, where media ownership can be extremely concentrated and subject to control by political and economic elites. For example, pro-editorial articles and political coverage in Nigerian media can be directly shaped by patterns of media ownership and advertisement interests. In addition, the "manufacture of consent" theory is also applicable in comprehending how state-owned or pro-government media may try to shape public opinion, particularly during decisive times like elections. Grasping these theoretical frameworks puts into perspective the issues and intricacies of media operations in Nigeria and their impacts on the Nigerian people. It is at this juncture that the media, politics, and the economy intersect to establish its relevance on the topic of

poverty which is a global economic subject. For instance, within the Nigerian context, the media has played pivotal role as primary source of information on matters of social and political processes. Studies by academics like Ayandele (2020) have found that the media provides avenue for political information, communication, engagement and a crucial contribution to the democratic process of the country.

Historic accounts indicates that the colonial administration recognised the importance of the press. During the British Colonial government in Nigeria (1900-1960), the media was used as a tool for disseminating information and maintaining control. The government tasked the Post and Telegraphs Department with extending and maintaining connection across different cities in Nigeria, thereby facilitating the distribution of the British Empire Broadcasting Service programmes.

Following Nigeria independence, this media landscape evolved reflecting both indigenous development as well as influence from the British journalistic practice. Thus, journalism in Nigeria has been largely shaped by British colonialism and local context – "the interplay of politics and journalism in Nigeria is emblematic of the colonial experience" Ette, p. (2021, p. 4). This development has also led to the adoption of certain professional values and standards that mirrors those in the UK why also blending the Nigeria's unique social and political environments (Adesile, 2020).

Althusser (1971) posited that the media is an ideological state apparatus. This position was established in practice by Graham Murdock and his colleague, Peter Golding in their 1971 work. These two British scholars examined the UK press to highlight the association between media, politics, and economy – and consequently proposed theory of political economy of mass media.

In a democratic political system, the same relationship between the media, politics and the economy are presumed minimally interdependent and should not be entirely dependent on any other. According to Siebert et al. (1984) the media tends to reflect the values and biases of the larger system in which they operate. So, in a democratic society, the media should align itself with the principles of democracy, especially when operating within such a system. Implying that the media should prioritise the needs and values of democracy in its coverage and presentation of information. Going by the central idea of democracy, by Abraham Lincoln, is government of the people, by the people, and for the people; one should expect the media in a democracy to take the true form of the system of democracy within which it operates. Thus, we should expect *a media of the people, by the people and for the people*. While the second phrase 'by the people' is slanted towards citizen journalism, this is not the focus of this study. However, this study relates to this phrase with the understanding that the media, in a democracy should be a platform through which the people can hear and be heard, especially voices of the oppressed and dissenting voices. Patterson (2000) shares this view; he asserts: "without a free press that serves as a reliable source of information and a watchdog, democracy cannot function properly". In other words, if democracy is to succeed, the press must do its job effectively since what is good for democracy is also good for the press (Patterson, 2000, p. 15).

2.2 Nigeria's news media environment

The broadcast, print (press), and digital media sectors are all thriving industries in Nigeria. However, the influence of Britain's colonial past on the development of early mass media in Nigeria is deeply significant and cannot be overlooked. The modern-day Nigerian media find themselves at the interface of inherited order and contemporary socio-political forces.

Broadcast media came on the scene during the mid-20th century, with radio beginning in 1933 and television in 1959 — Nigeria being the first African nation to own a television station, the Western Nigeria Television (WNTV). Radio is still the most reached medium today, especially in the rural areas, and television has extensive urban reach. However, it is important to note that newspaper set the news agenda as there are TV programmes that are designed to analyse newspaper content and reviewing top stories and cover stories of the newspaper

Print journalism as the initial organisational structure of Nigerian journalism was pioneered by Christian missionaries in south-western Nigeria during the 19th century. Dual roles were performed by such religious presses — roles as agencies for evangelisation and roles as agencies for performing additional colonial agendas by 'civilising' the indigenes (Oso, 2012, p. 11). The most powerful among the earliest newspapers was *Iwe Irohin fun Awon Egba ati Yoruba* founded by Reverend Henry Townsend in 1859; it was in fact the first newspaper published in Nigeria.

Iwe Irohin fun Awon Egba ati Yoruba, established and managed by Christian missionaries from Britain in southwest Nigeria was driven missionary and colonial agenda – they used the press as a tool to educate, evangelise, and 'civilise' the indigenous population, reflecting the broader imperial objectives of the British Empire (Oso, 2012, p. 11).

Following the establishment of religious press in Nigeria was the nationalist press, which adopted a strong political orientation as it emerged as a response to the colonial administration. This evolution shows how Nigeria's media system developed within the framework of British colonial rule, deeply intertwined with the dynamics of the nation's political economy (Oso, 2012) as shaped by its colonial masters. Consequently, the Nigerian media over the

years have taken different colourations reflecting the changing socio-political atmosphere (R. A. Adeniran, 2017).

Similarly, the establishment of the Radio Broadcasting Service as part of the British Broadcasting Corporation's Empire Service in 1932 was the beginning of Nigeria's broadcast media. While the newspaper had started from private enterprise sources, broadcasting initially began as public service, jealously dominated by the colonial regime, the intention of which was to harness the radio for a means of extending British prestige and domination of the masses. For decades, the national, regional, and state governments, influenced by British administrative structures, maintained ownership of the broadcast media until 1992, when broadcasting in Nigeria was deregulated. The legacy of this colonial influence is evident in the way that the Western Region which was one of the country's 23 regional governments launched Western Nigerian Television (WNTV), the continent's first television station. This move sparked a competition among the other regional and later state governments to establish their own radio and television broadcasting companies, further illustrating the lasting impact of British colonial policies on the media landscape in Nigeria.

Websites that publish online news have become the dominant sources of news since the early 2000s with the increase in internet usage and the rise of social media. Conventional online platforms such as *Premium Times*, *The Cable*, *Foundation for Investigative Journalism, Sahara Reporters*, and *Pulse Nigeria* now reach significant urban, youth, and Nigerian diaspora.

The ownership trends and political inclinations within the Nigerian media landscape are diverse, ranging from state-owned outlets to privately held enterprises. State-owned media, such as the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria

(FRCN), and the Voice of Nigeria (VON), typically adopt the language and perspective of the ruling political party.

In contrast, the private media outlets examined in this thesis illustrate this diversity clearly. Their ownership structures range from family legacies with significant influence (like *The Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune*) and private enterprises with strong regional identities (such as *Daily Trust*) to publications closely linked to major political figures and parties (like *The Nation*). Consequently, these newspapers exhibit varied editorial stances, spanning from critical independence and regional advocacy to perspectives aligned with the government.

Currently, private ownership dominates the Nigerian media landscape, a significant shift from its early days under colonial rule when media ownership was primarily owned by the government. R. A. Adeniran (2017) observes that the contemporary Nigerian media can be segmented according to various interests, including ownership patterns, political allegiances, ethnic biases, and gender biases, among others. These divisions reflect the complex and diverse nature of the Nigerian society, where media outlets often serve specific constituencies and agendas.

This thesis specifically examines the coverage of the NSIP within four prominent Nigerian newspapers: *The Punch*, *Daily Trust*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *The Nation*. These publications were chosen because they represent a diverse spectrum of ownership, political orientation, regional focus, and readership demographics, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of how the NSIP was portrayed and debated in the Nigerian media landscape. Their selection captures critical perspectives (*Punch*), Northern regional viewpoints (*Daily Trust*), historical South-West leanings (*Nigerian Tribune*), and pro-government stances (*The Nation*), reflecting the varied ways the NSIP was discussed among different segments of the Nigerian public and

political elite. The rationale for selecting these specific newspapers and a detailed discussion of their characteristics are further elaborated upon in the methodology chapter of this thesis.

In the following sections, I will provide a detailed exploration of the history of the Nigerian press, paying particular attention to key events and developments that have shaped its evolution. This review will highlight the enduring impact of colonial influences and the subsequent shifts that have led to the current media landscape, providing crucial context for understanding the dynamics that inform this study.

2.3 History of the Nigerian Press

The development of the Nigeria press commenced on Saturday, December 3, 1859, when an Anglican Christian missionary, Reverend Henry Townsend of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) established the first newsprint publication called *Ìwé Ìròhìn Fún Àwon Ará Ègbá àti Yorùbá* (meaning the newspaper for the *Ègbá* people[7] and *Yorùbás*[8]). This debut newspaper was published in the Yorùbá language, and it was circulated fortnightly. At the inception of *Ìwé Ìròhìn,* the papers covered news on church activities and later expanded its coverage to include stories about Abeokuta (*Ìwé Ìròhìn* host community) and environs, commercial news about produce prices, announcement from local chiefs and arrival and departure of colonial rulers. On March 8, 1860, *Ìwé Ìròhìn* became bilingual. The *Yorùbá* content was now translated into English. To encourage people to read was the aim, according to its pioneer, Henry Townsend. The paper content was later broadened to include commercial contents, criticism of slave trade activities, advocate of diversion of trade and commerce from human beings to produce and merchandise (Coker, 1968; Oso, 2012). According to Oso (2012), the press published

[7] The *Ègbá* people are a subgroup of the Yorùbá people, a western Nigerian ethnic group, with most of them hailing from the Ogun Central Senatorial District.
[8] *Yorùbá*, one of the three largest ethnic groups of Nigeria, concentrated in the southwestern part of that country.

'advertisements from local firms and government agencies' (Oso, 2012, p. 12). He argued that the reason for the establishment of *Ìwé Ìròhìn* was to influence local politics rather than to advocate the Christian faith. Fred Omu argued that it will be oversimplification to aver that the establishment of Ìwé *Ìròhìn* as a philanthropic educational material to educate the people (as was the motive for its establishment), superseded its impact as a religious press, or made significant impact than it did on political journalism (Omu, 1967). I agree with Omu's observation, even up to the time of this study that some mediums operate with covet motif. More so, Omu's claims are reaffirmed by (Ojebuyi & Salawu, 2018; Oso, 2001; H. Suleiman et al., 2020; Taye Medoye & Adedeji Tukur, 2022; Ukonu et al., 2020). According to Oso's view, he wrote:

> The political class has always found it expedient to recruit the press as a veritable instrument in its intra-class fratricidal war and in its hegemonic project against the subordinate social groups in the country (Oso, 2001, p. 265).

> A close reading of Ìwé Ìròhìn will put a lie to the ecumenical and philanthropic argument advanced for its establishment. The real impact of the Ìwé Ìròhìn was in local politics rather than in evangelism and education. The paper, according to an account, was Townsend's "chief weapon in his ambitious political propaganda and shrewd manoeuvring for power in Egbaland." He also used the paper in his involvement in Egba/Lagos politics (Oso, 2012, p. 12).

Olukotun (2004) agrees with Larry Diamond (1990) concern that some newspaper "reflects and accentuate the polarisation of partisan politics" (Olukotun, 2004, p. 78). Finally reaffirming same claim, Ojebuyi & Salawu, p. (2018, p. 78) asserts "Through their proprietors, who are card-carrying politicians, friends or supporters of the political aspirants, the newspapers still maintain evident link to the political parties."

In the light of all these points, Salawu (2018) rightly pointed out that the history of Nigerian press is inseparable from the country's political developments. In addition, newspapers were used by literate elites to communicate with all facets of Nigerian society (Falola & Heaton,

2008, p. 130). In my view, this is so because, for the media to operate in a developing country like Nigeria, whose political economy is relatively unstable, the media may require the support of the political elites and advertisement from government agencies to be able to finance its daily operations. This view is also shared by Graham Murdock and Peter Golding in their seminal work, *For a Political Economy of Mass Media*, where they assert: "advertising is the principal economic base of both the press and commercial television, hence both are directly vulnerable to adverse changes in general economic condition" (Murdock & Golding, 1973, p. 206). In view of the relationship between power and money, the media contents, agenda might take another shape based on interest, political orientation amongst others for explicable profitable reasons.

Solidifying this arguments, *Ìwé Ìròhìn* sustainability took a new leaf when it caused "much injury … to British prestige" (Burns, 1963, p. 254; Omu, 1967, p. 42). Oso (2012) corroborate Burns' position: "the real impact of the paper was in local politics rather than in evangelism and education" (Oso, 2012, p. 12) as it claimed. The newspaper was subsequently accused of being politically offensive because it was worsening foreign policy issues. In Omu's words:

> Indeed, so unsettling was the paper that in December Governor Freeman lodged a complaint against it with the Colonial Office. Less than two years later, he …accuse the paper of aggravating problems of foreign policy. Several times in 1863, the C. M. S. authorities, prompted by Colonial Office displeasure at the Abeokuta press offensive, cautioned Townsend to exercise restraint (Omu, 1967, p. 42)

In 1867, *Ìwé Ìròhìn* life was abruptly ended amidst a political uprising in Egba Land. However, before the demise of Ìwé Ìròhìn, another newspaper, *The Anglo-African* by Robert Campbell had started, and it became Nigeria's second and Lagos' first newspaper. The first publication of the newspaper came on June 6, 1863, but it was opposed by the British government in Lagos, who felt threatened by its existence since it appeared to have the ability to bring division between the parties of the Lagos colony. Therefore, the newspaper survived only until 1865.

This serves to prove my contention that the political history of *The Nation* had a direct bearing on the history of the Nigerian press. With the introduction of newspapers like *The Anglo-African*, British agents in Lagos felt threatened by them and viewed them as a real challenge to their authority. They feared these newspapers would raise rebellion among the people and lead to tension within the Lagos colony. This reaction shows how colonial powers sought to suppress any means of communication that would spark rebellion or challenge their authority. It also shows just how important the press was to informing Nigeria's political awareness and eventual call for independence.

The *Lagos Times* succeeded Anglo-African on November 10, 1880. The paper was published by Richard Beale Blaize, a Nigerian Sierra Leonean businessperson who was also a political activist. The *Lagos Times* was short-lived as it folded barely three years after it started operations in Lagos. Later, the publisher contacted Liberian immigrant John Payne Jackson, who wanted to reinvent the *Times*. The *Times* re-emerged and began to cover politics once more; it actively participated in the representation of Africans in Lagos, pushed for self-government, and pushed for the separation of Lagos Colony from Gold Coast, which eventually happened in 1886.

During the struggling period, *Lagos Times* was struggling to survive. Interestingly, the political intentions of Robert Campbell in Lagos politics made him Chair the editorial committee of *The Lagos Observer* which was the fourth newspaper in Nigeria (the second in Lagos). While Campbell chaired the editorial board, it was edited and published by Bagan Benjamin.

Ironically, the newspaper promoted the construction of markets and good roads as social advancements. The *Lagos Observer* also participated actively in nationalist causes and its viewpoint on these issues were adjudged to be radical, taking anti-imperialist orientation. On

January 19, 1884, following the death of Robert Campbell after a protest, *Lagos Observer* suffered a great blow due to the demise of its two prominent sponsors.[9] The newspaper however managed to survive another four years, fighting for the administration of justice in Nigeria until it disappeared on December 19, 1888.

The period between 1880s and 1890 saw the emergence of different newspapers with varying interests but mostly among these interests were the criticism of the colonial government. While *Lagos Observer* led this movement, *Lagos Weekly Record* of John Payne Jackson and the Lagos Standard by George Williams complemented the anti-colonial agenda. Prior to the establishment of *Lagos Weekly Record* on January 1, 1891, the following newspapers were established: *The Eagle and Lagos Critic* (published by Owen Macauley on March 31, 1883) and the Church of Scotland Mission's *Unwana Efik and Obukpong Efik* in 1885. This was followed by *The Mirror* on December 17, 1887, edited, and published by Adolphus Marke; another with similar brand name as of the debut newspaper, *Ìwé Ìròhìn Eko* (in 1888) which was edited and published by Andrew Thomas; *Lagos Weekly Times* edited by John Payne Jackson commenced operation in 1890. After *Lagos Weekly Record, Lagos Standard*, edited by George Alfred Williams, with Samuel Herbert Pearse was established in 1893 and *The Lagos Echo* (revamped *Observer)* published by Bagan Benjamin (along with Moses Da Rocha, and David Augustus), commenced operation in 1891. Fred Omu, noted in his work (Omu, 1968, p. 289) that ephemeral newspapers founded in the 1890s included: the *Spectator* (1893), Lagos *Reporter* (1898) and the *Wasp* (1900).

While numerous newspapers appeared during these times, Adeniran (2017) noted that colonialists sought to control the media because they detested criticism of the press so much.

[9] Dr. King and Robert Campbell were the two frontline sponsors of *Lagos Observer* advocating the separation of the administration of Lagos from the Gold Coast.

As a result, the Newspaper Ordinance Act No. 10 of 1903 was passed to regulate the creation and operation of newspapers throughout what was then Southern Nigeria, setting the stage for press regulation and repression in the country.

The law provided that:

> From and after the commencement of this Ordinance no person shall print or publish or cause to be printed or published within this colony any newspaper unless he should have previously
>
> 1) made, signed and sworn before any police magistrate or Distinct Commissioner or any Commissioner of Oaths or registered in the office of the Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court an affidavit containing the several matters and things following, that is to say
>   a) the correct title or name of the newspaper,
>   b) a true description of the house or building wherein such newspaper is intended to be printed and
>   c) the real and true names of abode of the person or persons intended to be the printer or printers, publisher or publishers, proprietor, or proprietors of the same; and
> 2) given and executed and registered in the Office of the Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court a bond in the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds with one or more sureties as may be required and approved by the Attorney General on condition that such printer or printers, publisher or publishers, proprietor, or proprietors, shall pay to His Majesty, His Heirs, and Successors every penalty which may at any time be imposed upon or adjudged against him or them

Azikiwe (1970) in Omu (1978, p. 180) and (Ogbondah, 1988, 1992), stipulated that prospective newspaper owners in colonial Nigeria were required to provide sworn affidavits[10] required to ensure that any person intending to print or publish a newspaper in the colony met certain legal obligations. This was part of a legal process to regulate the press, ensuring accountability for publications. Additionally, they were required to sign a 250-pound bond with one or more sureties. The bond served as a security deposit to be paid by newspaper proprietors or publishers before the government granted them license to commence their operations. It was some sort of collateral or security against probable legal offenses, especially in instances where there was

[10] This affidavit served as a formal, sworn statement, confirming that the individual had met specific legal criteria and obligations set by the government. It acted as a declaration of accountability and commitment to adhering to the laws governing press operations.

the chance of distributing seditious or libelous material. If the newspaper published any objectionable material, it ran the risk of losing the bond and further imposition of a fine. A Professor Tamuno commented that the implication of the law was to mitigate proliferation of newspapers and to militate against the financial prosperity of the press (Tamuno, 1972). He notes: "…this law with the two hundred- and fifty-pounds bond made the newspaper business in Lagos more expensive, so it checked the previous tendency towards the proliferation of newspapers ...." (Tamuno, 1972, p. 113).

The law also restricted the fundamental human right of inhabitant of the colony (Ogbondah, 1988, p. 8). After the declaration of the decree in 1903, it was difficult for any new newspaper to enter the news business because of the restriction and demand by the colonial government until November 1908 when *The Nigerian Chronicle* started publishing. Between 1908 to 1960, about 88 newspapers had been birthed with majority dead except for *Nigerian Tribune* (established on October 1, 1949, and published by African Press Ltd but owned by a political figure (now late), Chief Obafemi Awolowo) which survived not only the colonial but military repressions. It is noteworthy and commendable that *Nigerian Tribune* still operates from her Ibadan Headquarter till the time of this study. Ironically, it was one of the two main newspapers introduced for political purposes (Agboaye, 1984). The newspaper is worth studying due to its longevity and sustainability strength, hence the inclusion as a source of data in this research.

It is important to reiterate that the Nigerian press was established with political orientation and majority of them serving nationalist and freedom-fighting interests. The media system in Nigeria, since inception has always been a proponent of a democratic press and this defined its direction from colonial times to the current democratic system (R. A. Adeniran, 2017; Daramola, 2006). This connection of many of these newspapers, which died within a few years

of their establishment, can be explained by their dependence on political developments. Most of them relied on political sponsorship rather than practicing ideal and professional journalism, which should be largely independent of active political involvement, if not entirely non-aligned.

2.3.1 The Pre-independence Press

This thesis in the foregoing narrative, presented how the foundation of political press is traced to presumed Christian missionary agenda to educate, evangelise and civilise inhabitants of the new colony. However, pre-independent media experience in Nigeria saw the establishment of nationalist press which platform were to advance their causes. A good example is *West African Pilot* established by Nnamdi Azikiwe – the first president of Nigeria, on November 22, 1937. Azikiwe (popularly called 'Zik'/father of Nigerian Nationalism) was considered as a driving force of Nigeria's independence (Crowcroft, 2020; The Guardian, 2020). The radical orientation of *Zik* could be seen through the direction and tone of the article, *Has the African a God?* (Azikiwe, 1936) which led to his trial for sedition. This newspaper, through its critical nationalistic style of journalism helped Nigeria gain independence from the colonial government. The motto of the newspaper was 'show the light and the people will find the way.' This achievement influenced the growth of media in Nigeria. *West Africa Pilot* along with the *Lagos Weekly Record* were notable pre-independence newspapers that criticised government programmes and policies. Other influential figures who used their newspapers to advance the cause of Nigerian independence included Sir Akitoye Ajasa, who published the *Nigerian Pioneer* in 1914, Ernest Sese Ikoli, who published the *African Messenger* in 1921), Herbert Macaulay, who published the *Lagos Daily News* in 1925, and Malam Abubakar Imam who published *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo* in 1939 (Umaisha, 2022).

It is within reasonable understanding that the press in Nigeria has considerable influence on the Nigeria polity. This thesis argues though, that if the press, through it watchdog and critical advocacy roles could bring the colonial government to an end, and subsequently won the fight for Nigeria's independence, the same press can influence the new government with respect to the agenda they pursue. However, this ideal was severely compromised by the fact that, as Oso (2012) astutely observes, the leaders of major political parties at the time were also the prominent newspaper proprietors and journalists. This created an inherent conflict of interest, with newspapers often serving as mere "organizational imperatives" for political factions, undermining their ability to act as independent watchdogs.

2.3.2 Post Independence Press

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, the Nationalist press moved into a new era, which is more defined by identification with ethnic, regional, and political groupings. Post-independence evolution of nationalist press represented a radical departure from their early nationalist orientation that they had maintained while struggling for independence. One of the key occurrences during this period was Nnamdi Azikiwe, the proprietor of the influential West African Pilot newspaper, ascending to the positions of Governor-General and subsequently President of the country. This indicated how the media had been integral in the fight for independence.

Unfortunately, according to Agboaye (1984), the press at this time was replete with "all sorts of unethical conduct." This is a matter of significant import regarding the lowering of news objectivity and absence of bias in reporting, and the press taking sides along political lines, thus mirroring the new sociopolitical cleavages of the nation. The evolution of the press from a nationalist bulwark to a growingly fractionalised one is reminiscent of the manner in which the

media environment can refocus and acculturate with significant political transformation in a country. This is reflective of the role played by the media as a motor and a watcher of centrifugal forces that permeate the societal trends at seminal moments in the country's trajectory towards history.

The cumulatively composite nature of the evolution necessitates contextual examination of the role of the media during the post-independence era of Nigerian development. From the press perspective, one can account for the multi-faceted social and political developments that occurred in the initial years of the nation's independence. This is thus crucial to an adequate understanding of the complex dynamics between the media and the broader societal texture during such periods of change.

2.3.3 Post-Independence Press: First Republic (1963-1966)

Governments naturally try to influence or control the media, as was already mentioned. As a result, some Southwest Nigerians (the Yorubas) accused Zik of stifling oppositional voices through his press, the *West African Pilot*. In 1963, the *West African Pilot* led an outcry against an Act called 'Prevention Detention Act' which was promulgated by the major political party. The Act allowed for indefinite detention without trial. Following the outcry, the act was dropped. Subsequent year saw the enactment of a law called 'Newspaper Amendment Act' which allowed government to punish the media for publishing content the authority considers false. This development marked the genesis of media oppression. Putting media oppression in Nigeria into a perspective, Lewis Obi described Nigeria media freedom as elusive. This same argument is reinforced by other local and foreign scholars in their seminal writings (Agbaje, 1990; Ojebode, 2011; Omu, 1968; Picard, 2014; Schroeder, 2019; Ukonu, 2005) By the end of 1965, the political climate had become so volatile that it had reached a point of disunity

(Agboaye, 1984, pp. 85–86) resulting in the change of government by January the following year. In a twist of irony, the government hijack through a coup was announced through a national broadcast.

2.3.4 Post-Independence Press: Military regime

Nigeria began her first military government experience after the first military coup was led by Major. Gen. Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu on January 15, 1966. The coup d'état was because of ethnic tension, corruption, political instability, economic mismanagement and a failing civilian government. Following the couple, Decree No. 1: Constitution (Suspension and Modification) and Decree No. 2 of 1966 were enacted to lift the ban imposed on newspapers by the civilian governments (Federal Military Government of Nigeria, 1966a) and opposed the press censorship law. But because of the role that some journalists played in the events that led to the fall of the first republic, the military was afraid of granting the press a great deal of freedom (Agboaye, 1984). As a result of this and due to the political interests of most of the Nigerian press, there have been incidents nationwide of journalist abuse, detention, and arrest. Later that year, another law - the Defamation and Offensive Publication Decree No. 4 of 1966, was passed. The newly passed law prohibited publications that sought to incite unrest in the country (Federal Military Government of Nigeria, 1966b).

Unfortunately, these developments entangled relationship between the press and the military government. However, in the event where the press did not cooperate with the military administrators, journalists faced severe consequences and were punished for being critical of government. Instances of the consequence/punishment include 'banning of publications and post-publication punishment of journalists" (Agboaye, 1984, p. 59). Hence, there was no total freedom of the press. *Newspaper Prohibition of Circulation Decree* was another decree issued

by the military government in 1967. By virtue of this decree, the Head of the Federal Military Government was given the authority to impose a nationwide newspaper operating ban, provide that he could demonstrate that the operation of such a publication was harmful to the interests of the federation. Commenting on the journey of the Nigeria press, Aro (2011) emphasises that Nigeria has witnessed 'draconian decrees' that has silenced the press from exposing corrupt officers in Nigeria government. Agboaye wrote:

> To argue that there was total freedom of the press in Nigeria during the military government is an illusion because certain actions by the military and police officials were geared toward suppressing the press (Agboaye, 1984, p. 87).

A review of colonial and post-independence presses laws suggested that both the civilian and military governments had similar intent, as what they set to achieve, which was to check press criticism of the government officials and their activities. (Ogbondah, 1988) who shared a similar view described both the military & civilian laws as sharing similar "covert objectives" (p. 21) to check "press criticism of government officials and their policies" (p. 21). Interestingly, those laws did not enjoy smooth sailing as resentment towards them was expressed by the public, including journalists, students, workers, civil politicians, and everyday citizens of the nation. Some resentments were actively demonstrated through the instruments of law. So, on April 25, 1984, the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) instituted a court action against the Federal Military Government. In their charge, they challenged the constitutionality of the press law; citing the instance where two journalists had been jailed based on the law. In an editorial, the *Punch,* one of the Newspapers purposively selected for this study, described the law as a "needless decree." In their words, as cited in Ogbondah (1988):

> *The Punch* feels very strongly that the Federal Military Government cannot unilaterally determine the yardsticks to measure what is deprecatory and what brings someone into disrepute. The press should be allowed to operate unfettered if it should live up to its image as the people's parliament in a military era. If the people suddenly woke one morning to find all avenues through which they could unburden their feeling shut, it would amount to driving them from the arena of

> freedom to the silos of revolt. For a nation that has come so far in almost twenty-four years, Decree 4 is a needless decree (*The Punch,* May 2, 1984; Ogbondah, 1988, p.23).

Daily Times, another popular newspaper, also in an editorial reaction to the Decree No. 4 argued that it was unnecessary urging the government to have a second look at the law. In my opinion, Decree No. 4 was no longer necessary if Decree 2 pursued the cause of allowing for a free press. This thesis notes like *Daily Times* that the excesses of the press can still be restrained without creating a decree that is so restrictive to the extent that it prevents the media from effectively assisting the government in its fight against corruption, indiscipline, and licentiousness. It is important to point out that for the Federal Military Government to own 60% equity shares in *Daily Times* (Ogbondah, 1988) it meant that the newspaper can be influenced and compromised. It also demonstrates how invested the government is in press activities. To emphasise the depth of the backlash against the decree No. 4 of 1966, even the press, in which the government owns most of the share, criticised a law passed by its biggest shareholder. Justifying why there was a general resentment against the law, Ogbondah wrote:

> One of the rationales for public opposition of the law was that it was perceived as a measure to protect corrupt public officers of the military government from exposure. Apart from rumors that Maj. Gen. Buhari himself was corrupt, there were also accusations from the fleeing politicians that the in-coming soldiers were as corrupt as the civilians they unseated from power. The Promulgation of Decree No. 4 amidst these rumors and accusations of corruption account for why the public perceived it as an institutional measure to cover up corruption in the government. In this respect, the rationale for resenting the colonial press law was the same rationale for public opposition of the post-independence law. At both periods, the public perceived the laws as measures drafted to protect incompetent and corrupt officials (Ogbondah, 1988, p. 24).

In a similar vein, *Nigerian Tribune*, the oldest still-running newspaper purposefully chosen as a source of information for this study, published a press release denouncing the decree. According to Chris Ogbondah:

> It is ironic that it is in these days when the nation is asking the people to discharge their duties honestly that Messrs Nduka Irabor and Tunde Thompson have to go to prison for an honest day's Job . . . We are calling on the Federal Military

> Government not to confirm the sentence handed down to these men as a sign of goodwill toward the freedom of the judiciary and the press under their reign (Ogbondah, 1992, p. 13; *Nigerian Tribune*, July 12. 1984. p.2).

Some of the newspapers which emerged during this period survived the tide of successive suppression and oppression by military rulers. In particular, *Punch* and *Guardian* newspaper journalists during the period of military rule suffered tyranny of government. In 1984, two Guardian journalists – Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor were jailed by Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, as echoed in *Nigerian Tribune's* press release quoted above. The publisher – Alex Ibru, of the same *Guardian* newspaper also escaped assassination during the regime of another military government. In 1986, Dele Giwa a seasoned journalist and publisher of the Tell Magazine was killed through a letter bomb under the regime of Gen. Ibrahim Babangida.

Similarly, *Punch* newspaper editor was jailed for 54 days in 1990 while *Punch* publishing house was also closed by the government in 1993 and 1994. Pertinent to point out that media and journalists were victims of punishment and attacks because of their role in investigating and publishing corrupt practices by the government and its officials. Transparency and accountability in the corridor of power were not encouraged, rather, the government use its organs and security agencies to suppress the efforts of the media to make government accountable.

As earlier noted, during this period the government made intense use of the mass media (more importantly, the press) to drive political agenda based on regional, ethnic, private, political and economic interests. The repressive efforts of government to suppress Nigerian media are noted in the works of Olayiwola (1991) and Ekwunife & Ukeje (2020)

Olayiwola (1991) wrote:

> From the colonial era to the independence period, military interregna and successive civilian republics, the Nigerian political system has employed various measures to curb the political communication activities of the media. These include subsidies to favourite publishers, favouritism in the allocation of tightly controlled paper stocks and newsprint, manipulation of access to news, limitation to what may be published or broadcast, threats of incarceration and proscription, the frequent use of treason and sedition laws to control media output, the shielding of sensitive government proceedings, and the protection of what are regarded as individual reputations and privacy Olayiwola (1991, p. 42)

According to Ekwunife & Ukeje (2020):

> Government control measures are efficient ways of exercising control, and by implication, ownership of both the public and private media. The ruling class has always found ways of bringing the media under its control. In Nigeria, such measures include heavy taxation, repressive and stringent legislations, pre- and post-censorship, (Ekwunife et al. 2021), assassination of media workers, direct and indirect control of essential production inputs, proscription of media houses, and licensing/patent system (Udeze, 2012), among others (Ekwunife & Ukeje, 2020, p. 4).

The forgoing are some of the experiences of the press during military regime in Nigeria.

2.3.5 Civilian Press/Press during democratic government

The previous section discussed the harassment, attempted suppression, and intimidation of Nigeria's press under military rule. It is equally important to examine the press's performance under civilian rule from a historical perspective. By doing this, the connections between the press, civilian government, and military will be better explained as well as their differences and similarities. In contrast to military rule, which may also be a type of dictatorship, a democratic government is the actual exercise of state power on behalf of its people.

Nigeria's first experience of Civil rule was in 1963 (first republic), that is, three years after gaining independence. During this period the government, as earlier noted, made intense use of the mass media (more particularly, the press) to drive political agenda based on regional, ethnic, and private political and/or economic interests. Tafawa Balewa was in charge at the time as the Premier of the country. As Nigeria transitioned to a republic in 1963, civilian leadership persisted; the governor-general was elevated to the role of non-executive president. At the time

of independence, there were three regions: the western, eastern, and northern regions. However, to prevent ethnic conflict, the regions were dissolved and on May 27, 1967, the country was then divided into 12 states. This was done for a number of reasons; to weaken regional power, prevent the Eastern Region's secession, reduce ethnic dominance, strengthen federal control, and address minority group demands. Between 1963-1966, unfriendly publications were banned by civilian governments. In 1964, the newspaper amendment act surfaced its provision restricted the emergence of new press and limited the operation of the press. The Act provided that:

> (1) Any person who publishes or reproduces or circulates for sale in a newspaper any statement, rumour or report knowing or having reason to believe that such statement, rumour, or report is false shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine of £200 or to imprisonment for one year. (2) It shall be no defence to a charge under this section that he did not know or did not have reason to believe that the statement, rumour, or report was false unless he proves that, prior to publication, he took reasonable measures to verify the accuracy of such statement, rumour, or report.

The mere existence of this law serves as ample proof of the legal situation and of how unfavourable the environment was for the press to function in prior to military rule.

Another season (1979-1983) of civil rule commenced – the Nigerian second republic. The effort to repress the press did not stop with the end of military rule but it "extended to the tagged democratic dispensation" (Aro, 2011, p. 17). First, it is important to note that the 1979 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria that ushered in the second republic government provided in Chapter II, Section 21 that:

> The press, radio, television, and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people (The 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979)

Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, the then President, mentioned the role of the press in ensuring a smooth political transition by interpreting and informing the public of issues in his handover

speech. This further support the argument that the influence of mass media on politics is significant. In a similar vein, the first elected Civilian president, Shehu Shagari, equally acknowledged the responsibility of the press. He emphasised in one of his speeches on the media and national integration that the press, "as members of the Fourth Estate of the Realm, …have sacred responsibilities to the nation" (Olayiwola, 1991, p. 35).

Shortly after the results of the 1979 election was announced, there were reports of corrupt electoral malpractices. This was widely reported in the press, and it was topic heatedly debated in private circles that "a good number of discredited individuals had resurfaced in prominent public positions" (Koehn, 1989, p. 404). Interestingly, elected members of the majority party soon moved to strengthen their hold on power by repressing their opponents. This was done by the federal government which subtly recommended a change of editor and staff of the government-owned *Daily Times*, which had published articles remarking on the wages of the new government officials (Seng & Hunt, 1986). Ultimately, what was at stake was that the press was critical and apparently unfriendly to the government. Hence, the move by the Shagari-led civilian government was seen as mainly politically motivated apparently in an effort to protect his government from the criticisms of the opposition. This action historically validated how the press can be controlled (based on ownership and/or interests) of the government.

The central argument in this thesis has been that the relationship between the Nigerian press and politics over the years has been partisan. This argument was validated (Olayiwola, 1991, p. 35) who wrote: "from colonial era to independence period, to military interregnum, the Nigerian press has been overtly partisan. Nearly all papers in Nigeria started in association with political parties"

Olayiwola (1991) who avail to mention that the abuse and incarceration of journalists continued during the second republic. *Nigeria Standard*, a newspaper at that time had her editor beaten by a state legislator and its offices ransacked by the police (Seng & Hunt, 1986). Although the Nigerian Constitution guarantees press freedom, that has not been the case. In my opinion, the press did not enjoy greater freedom during civil rule when the Constitutional provisions were supposed to be upheld. The government and its representatives continued to interfere with and repress the press.

2.4 Functions of the press

"…the gathering and dissemination of information" – Rogers Hilsman

We may be quick to dismiss the role of the press as suggested by the above quote by Rogers Hilsman, a political scientist and State department official in the John F. Kennedy Administration but isolating the press from the three 'I's – information, interpretation and interest will pass as oversimplification of the functions of the press. The press, over the years, has also been assigned the role of informing, educating and entertaining. While all of these are true about the press, the function of the press is beyond these basic functions of the media in general. Before examining other complex functions of the press, a review of the various functions of the press according to different scholars will be necessary. For the purposes of conceptual simplicity, it must be observed that the terms 'media,' 'mass media,' 'news media,' and 'press' shall be used interchangeably in this thesis. Observing that the words may convey a different sense in other studies and discourse, they are being employed as synonyms in this research due to their interchangeable usage in Nigerian studies and discourse. This is a mirror of the usage of the words by Nigerian scholars, who interchangeably use them to describe various channels of information dissemination to the public. This encapsulates the state of the Nigerian media landscape, where boundaries between the aforementioned terms are often very

thin. For instance, in the case of government utilisation of media, especially the press, it is not to suggest an absolute division, but to note the particular channel being used at that time. Hence, in order to stay consistent with the available body of Nigerian media studies, and to refrain from repetitive and unnecessary explanation, these terms will be utilised interchangeably.

In 1950, Richard Windeyer[11], published in *Australian Quarterly* where he noted the influence of the press on the people as being very real. In his article titled *Functions of the Press,* he highlighted three standard obligations of the press. These standards, which were based on submission before the British Royal Commission in 1949, are:

> 1. The Press is to be judged, according to some critics, merely as the chief agency for instructing the public on the main issues of the day.
> 2. It has a duty to report news, and to comment on it. (Speaking generally, this was ascertained to be the view of the proprietors.)
> 3. It should not be judged as a public service, but rather as a great industry.
>
> (Windeyer, 1950, p. 79)

The Commission proposed two requirements as it carefully studied the submissions, and proposed that:

> (1). If a newspaper purports to record and discuss public affairs, it should at least record them truthfully . . . Opinions should be advocated without suppressing or distorting the relevant facts.
> (2). The number and variety of newspapers should be such that the Press as a whole gives an opportunity for all important points of view to be effectively presented (Windeyer, 1950, p. 80).

From the foregoing, we can hypothesise that the press is assigned the obligation of ordering the society. By using the phrase 'instructing the public,' the press takes on the role of a teacher or guardian of the society. This role, consequently, allows the press to effectively mobilise the public.

[11] Mr Richard Windeyer, K.C is a Senior member if the New South Wales Bar, and has had a wide experience and knowledge of Australians constitutional law and of Australian condition

This notion is further reinforced by the work of Chan et al. (2022), who examined the interaction between media, state and civil society in Hong Kong. Their study alongside Audi (1990) and Windeyer (1950), though not within the Nigerian context, provided valuable insights that could be applied to understand the dynamics at play in the Nigerian media. Chan et al. (2022) also reiterated the power of the press for social mobilisation, highlighting its ability to shape public opinion and influence the socio-political landscape.

Additionally, the second standard set for the press is not just to report the news, but to also comment on it, offering the press an interpretive responsibility. In other words, journalists are expected not to just report news stories but also publish their remarks on the contents that makes the news. The third standard is about the commercial perspective of the press. According to the report, the press should be considered as a big industry rather than as public service organisation. The implication of this is that the press is by this standard expected to be commercial in its operations. Hence, operating the press is a business venture. This thesis understands that the press require finance to operate because financial stability is a pillar that keeps the business of the press and its operations going, however, a point need emphasising is that its commercial drive should not transcend its primary obligation to the public. Richard Windeyer captured this idea when he wrote: "an editor who thinks more of his advertisers than his readers will soon have neither advertisers nor readers to think of" (Windeyer, 1950, p. 80).

To Audi (1990), an American philosopher, the press should serve four major functions – a *political function*, *perspectival function*, *historical function*, and *modelling function.* In Robert Audi's words:

> We have maintained that in free and democratic societies the press must serve at least four major functions: a political function, providing both information and ideas to the citizenry; a perspectival function, offering a conception of the shape and texture of the society or certain parts of it; a historical function, keeping before

> us certain traditions and comparisons with the past; and a modeling function, providing and comparing models of personalities, individual conduct, and institutional structures (Audi, 1990, p. 213).

Audi emphasised that in serving political function, the press provides information and ideas to the citizenry. In terms of perspective, the press has a considerable influence on society; in terms of historical function, it preserves tradition and draws comparisons between the present and the past; and in terms of modelling function, it offers comparative models of people, objects, and institutional systems. All these duties are performed to inform and educate the general audience (Audi, 1990).

Concerned about what the role of the press is in the society, Denis McQuail established the assumption of the social responsibility theory of the press. While conveying his idea, he wrote: "media as an institution do have some kind of social responsibility, both with respect to possible effects and also to their intentions" (McQuail, 2006, p. 47). Discussing this conclusion in detail by looking at the empirical component of journalism, added weight to the argument on the press' social journalistic task and purpose. Some of these functions were extensively listed to include but not limited to:

> Information 'discovery'; Information processing into accounts for publication; Monitoring of the social scene; Checking on economic and political power; Providing forum and access for other voices and sources; Opinion-forming by way of advocacy and comment; Interpretation of news events; Signaling events an setting an agenda for public discussion and politics; Servicing the public communication needs of other social institutions; Providing a service to clients and advertisers; Being a means of expression directly; Campaigning for various causes and beliefs; Social networking (including gossip); Acting as critic of government and other agencies in society; Entertaining the public; Supporting the culture of nation, region, place or particular group (McQuail, 2006, p. 50).

Denis McQuail noted that the list is not exhaustive but can be summed under three main functions – *observer and informant, channel and forum and participant role* – each encapsulating empirical and normative component (McQuail, 2006). Thus, the role of the press can be explained as:

1. *Observer and informant:* the press being the channel between the state and the public through engagement with the audience, op-ed, commentaries (especially now, in the age of connectivity) real-time and/or almost instant feedback/reaction to stories published online are fillers that amount to data/insight upon which the medium observation is made. The medium, either based on interest, or commercial reason may release obtained insight to interested stakeholder(s) - the state for policy making or for commercial reasons.
2. *Channel and forum:* the press also serves as platform for voices from other sectors. This, could be in form of guest columnists or exclusive interviews; and
3. *Participant role: wherein* the press takes part in the society as a participant in running the affairs of the society.

McQuail was right to acknowledge the commentary role of journalism which he termed 'commentary journalism' and where the reporter offers remark on journalism research for the purpose of uncovering 'conflicts, oppositions, or choices' (p. 51). In this regard, the press can be neutral or be a participant; or can also focus on the facts and set out to offer interpretation and advice. The press could also act as a gatekeeper or spokesperson for a cause or interest. In addition, the media could promote ideologies and, at the height of its social responsibility, prioritise a social (not for profit) goal over any other. As argued in an Ethiopian study, "the media could play important roles by informing the public, highlighting crucial issues and emphasising policy decisions and thus creating a climate of public concern and enabling debate about poverty alleviation issues" (Ali, 2021, p. 4). Although I acknowledge that while there is no perfect objectivity, I tend to agree with McQuail (2006) that professional journalism should aspire to report the social world objectively, rather than being ideologically biased. It is also essential to acknowledge the significant body of recent media scholarship that highlights the pervasive influence of commercial imperatives. Scholars like Herman & Chomsky (2008) argues that profit-driven motives often overshadow the pursuit of objectivity in news media. However, while recognising the validity of these concerns, I maintain that objectivity remains a vital ethical standard for professional journalism.

This stance is not to deny the commercial realities of the media landscape. Indeed, the drive for profit can significantly impact news production and reporting. However, I argue that the pursuit of objectivity serves as a crucial counterbalance to these commercial pressures. By striving for impartiality, journalists can mitigate the potential for biased reporting and maintain public trust. Furthermore, while complete objectivity may be an "elusive ideal" (Oso & Arowolo, 2018), the commitment to minimising bias and presenting diverse perspectives remains a fundamental principle of ethical journalism. Therefore, while acknowledging the commercial forces at play, the ideal of objective reporting retains its relevance and importance in fostering a well-informed and critically engaged public.

2.5 Nigerian Press Laws

Nigeria has a history of enacting various laws to control media activities. This history dated back to 1903 when the Newspapers Ordinance No. 10 of 1903 was enacted. Given that there was no newspaper in the northern region of Nigeria at the time, the ordinance was intended to control newspaper publication in the southern protectorate. While some guaranteed 'ideal' media operation, a few significant others either restricted or made the mass media operations rather impossible. I will be presenting and reviewing some of these laws and how they are relevant to this study.

A few media scholars in Nigeria have documented media laws in country since the colonial period to the democratic dispensation. Relying on the works of Udeze (2012) and Ufuophu-Biri (2007), the compendium of media laws was presented by Eshett (2018) according to their sequence and period. Eshett presented the promulgation and enactments of these law and decrees first by era, republic, and administration. But for the purpose of this study, this research presents them under three simple subheads – colonial, military, and civilian administrations.

2.5.1 Colonial Press Laws

During the colonial (pre-independence) period (1903- September 30, 1960), the press experienced the introduction of a few significant laws: (1) Basic Provision and Interpretation of Sedition Offence Ordinance of 1909, 1940 and 1942 which criminalises any acts that were seen as inciting or resistance against the colonial government; (2) Newspaper Ordinance of 1917 which require all newspapers to be registered with the colonial government before they can operate, giving the colonial government power to censor or shutdown publications they deemed offensive. (3) Printing Regulation of 1933 which controlled the production of all printed materials; thereby ensuring that all printers and publishers comply with the colonial government standard; (4) Newspaper Act No. 129 of 1958 formalises the regulations of newspaper, including licensing, registration and ensuring all newspapers adhered to the standards specified by the colonial government; (5.); Official Secrets Ordinance of 1953 made it an offense to disclose government secrets, severely limiting the ability of the press to report on sensitive government activities, otherwise, journalist could be prosecuted; and Defamation Ordinance of 1956 allowed individuals, the colonial officials, to sue for defamation if they felt that the press has harmed their character.

2.5.2 Civilian Press Laws (by Enactment)

During the early civilian rule (sequel to independence from the colonial administrators), the press witnessed the introduction of eight laws:

i. Sedition Meeting Acts No. 48 of 1962 – This law restricted freedom of speech and assembly, particularly for those expressing dissent against the government. It was a tool used to suppress opposition and criticism, limiting the press' ability to hold the government accountable.

ii. Defamation Act No. 66 of 1961 – was designed to protect individuals and institutions from false and harmful statements. This law had the potential to be misused to silence critical reporting, and it created a climate of fear among journalists, thus discouraging investigative journalism.

iii. Defamation (Amendment) Acts No. 1 of 1963 – was an amendment to the earlier promulgated Defamation Act. This law further strengthened the legal framework for protecting reputation but also increased the risks for journalists reporting on matters of public interest.

iv. Official Secrets Act No. 29 of 1962 – intended to safeguard classified government information. this law was used to restrict access to information vital for public accountability. It created a barrier between the government and the public, limiting the press' ability to inform citizens.

v. Official Secret (Amendment) Acts No. 39 of 1962 – was an amendment to the Official Secrets Act No. 29 of 1962, this law further tightened control over government information, reinforcing the government's opacity and limiting the press' role as a watchdog.

vi. Cinematography Acts No. 7 of 1963 – aimed at regulating the film industry, this law could be used to censor contents that were deemed to be morally or politically unacceptable. It equally limited freedom of expression in the audiovisual realm.

vii. The Constitution of the Federation of laws (Miscellaneous Power) Order No. 112 of 1964 – granted the government broad powers to make laws, including those affecting

the media. It provided a legal basis for subsequent media-related legislation, which could be used to either protect or restrict press freedom.

viii. News (Amendment Act No. 5) – introduced further regulations and constitutional provisions related to the press. Interestingly, the 1979 Constitution of Federal republic of Nigeria further reinforced a continued government interest in shaping the media landscape. While the 1979 constitution guaranteed freedom of expression and the press, it also allowed for certain limitations and restrictions under the guise of 'in the interest' of public order, safety, and other defined purposes.

2.5.3 Military Laws - (Enactments by Decree)

After the first military coup, the military regime ruled the country through enactment of decrees. Consequently, the following decrees were enacted: Circulation of Newspaper Decree No. 2 of 1966; Defamation and Offensive Publication Decree No 44 of 1966; The Sunday Star and Imole Owuro (Prohibition) Decree No 17 of 1968; The Printer and Publishers of Sunday Star and Imole Owuru (Declaration as unlawful society) Decree No 19 of 1968; Public officers (Protection against false accusation) Decree No 11 of 1979; Trade Dispute Decree No7 of 1978; Newspaper Prohibition from Circulation (validation) Decree No 11 of 1978; The Press Council Decree No 1 of 1978 and The Daily Times Decree of 1978. In 1984, State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree No. 2 and Public Officers (protection against false accusation) Decree No. 4 of 1984 were announced.

The following decrees came to life in subsequent military regimes: Newswatch (Proscription and prohibition from circulation) Decree No. 6 of 1987; The Nigerian Press Council Decree No. 6 of 1988; Concord Group of Newspapers Publication (Proscription and prohibition from

circulation) Decree No. 14 of 1992; The Treason and Treasonable Offences Decree No. 29 of 1993; The Offensive Publication (Proscription Decree No. 35 of 1993); The Newspaper Registration Decree No. 43 of 1993; The Newspaper proscription from Publication Decree No 48 of 1993; National Broadcasting Commission Decree No. 38 of 1992; the National Communication Commission Decree No. 75, Vol. 2 of 1992 and the Armed forces and police (Special Powers) Decree No 24 of 1996.

Eshett (2018) observed that the military administration which replaced the previous one which had passed the laws was extremely repressive and also did not pass any laws governing the press. According to Eshett:

> This regime, though very repressive against the press did not promulgate any press law, it carried out its oppressive acts against the Press arbitrarily and lawlessly. The succeeding military regime of General Abdulsalami Abubakar did not so make any press law. The succeeding regime of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo did not make press law (Eshett, 2018, p. 51).

However, Ufuophu-Biri (2007) cited in Eshett (2018) noted that there were instances of infringement on the press freedom. Such included the brief closure of African Independent Television (AIT) station and Ray Power Station for their coverage of the Bellview plane crash in Lisa village, Ogun State, on October 22, 2005.

2.5.4 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999)

In 1999, what was known as the 1979 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria was updated in preparation for the new democratic dispensation. Within the provisions of this constitution are laws that empower and also limit the operation of the press in Nigeria. The relevant sections of the constitution are presented and examined below:

> The press, radio, television, and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this Chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people.
>
> Chapter 2 of the 1999 Constitution: Section 22

This section as quoted from the constitution require the press to uphold 'fundamental objectives' contained in chapter two of the constitution. To better comprehend what this entails, there is the need to know the contents of the chapter. which include the following provisions and objectives: fundamental obligations of the Government, the Government and the people, political objectives; economic objectives; social objectives; educational objectives; foreign policy objectives; environmental objectives; directive on Nigeria cultures; obligation of the mass media; national ethics and duties of the citizen. However, a legal practitioner had pointed out the inefficacy of this constitutional provision by describing it as a 'responsibility without empowerment' (Ogbamosa, 2019). The argument was predicated on Section 39 of the constitution which restricts the practicability of the section. He noted that:

> A critical look at the constitution reveals that whereas the media is given the responsibility to monitor governance, it is not empowered to perform this role. For instance, Section 39 which talks about press freedom does not give freedom to the mass communication practitioner i.e., the journalist. The freedom given in that section is for ownership of the media.

Agreeing with Ogbamosa's view on the impracticability of Section 22 of the 1999 constitution, Apuke (2016) affirms that there is no statutory protection for press freedom in Nigeria, even though it is guaranteed by the constitution. In essence, press freedom is not guaranteed to journalists because various sections of the constitution conflict with one another for instance, Section 39 of the 1999 Nigerian constitution qualifies and tacitly restricts the press and freedom of expression. The ownership of media outlets, particularly broadcast media, is subject to prior restraints under the second paragraph of Section 39.

2.5.4.1 Chapter 4 of the 1999 Constitution: Section 39(1-2)

This constitutional provision states that:

> (1) Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference.
> (2) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1) of this section, every person shall be entitled to own, establish and operate any medium for the dissemination of information, ideas, and opinions:
> Provided that no person, other than the Government of the Federation or of a State or any other person or body authorised by the President on the fulfilment of conditions laid down by an Act of the National Assembly, shall own, establish or operate a television or wireless broadcasting station for, any purpose whatsoever.

As earlier argued, section 39 is a restriction to section 22. Santas & Ogoshi (2016) noted the promises of section 22 and how helpful it could be in monitoring government in modern democracy, however, paragraph 2 of S22(2) reduces the chances of easily implementing the responsibilities given to the press in section 22 of the constitution.

The provision of the constitution is a legal basis upon which the press is to follow up all government agenda, ensuring that report of implementation of programmes that is of public interest are published on regular basis to keep citizens updated. This is especially necessary to avail the people the knowledge they need on government performance. This knowledge will enable the people to measure if the elected leaders are delivering on their electoral manifestos. Hence, the freedom to provide authentic mass knowledge is required in modern democracy especially for the press.

2.5.5 Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, 2011

"Freedom requires responsibility" – Robert Marzolf

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, 2011 is an act that is geared towards ensuring disclosure of public information. The FOI Act was introduced to promote transparency, accountability and

to give allowance for access to public records held by government institution following many years of advocacy, government secrecy, corruptions and scandals. This Act is in line with the Social Responsibility Theory of the press which allows for a free press. As quoted above, "freedom requires responsibility" (Marzolf, 1991). Therefore, the FOI Act is the legal provision for the release of public information or record upon request by any member of the public. This means that to enforce this act, there must be a request and then there should be a supply. The freedom in this act is that there should be provision of whatever is requested that is of public record from public officers. The responsibility for using the law and keeping track of government actions falls on the demand-side, which is made up of citizens, civil society and community organisations, media, and the private sector (Apuke, 2017).

The FOI Act is a helpful piece of legislation for the media, but it only becomes effective when journalists actively use it. This is in line with the main principles of the Social Responsibility Theory, as put forward by McQuail (2010) which provides that

> - The media have obligations to society, and media ownership is a public trust
> - News media should be truthful, accurate, fair, objective, and relevant
> - The media should be free, but self-regulated
> - The media should follow agreed codes of ethics and professional conduct
> - Under some circumstances, government may need to intervene to safeguard the public interest
>
> (McQuail, 2010, p. 147)

On the premise of this theory, journalists have a responsibility to act in the public interest. This means being proactive in seeking out information. If a public official withholds information, journalists should be able to use the FOI Acts to access it. This is crucial for holding those in power to account.

What this implies within the scope of this study, is that a journalist has the FOI Act as a legal framework for demanding relevant data and information on National Social Investment Programmes to enable the journalist to deliver on social responsibility. Apuke (2017) echoes similar thoughts and affirmed that with enactment of the FOI Act:

> it is glaring that the "Freedom" carries obligations, and the Nigerian press, which now enjoys a privileged position under the new Freedom of Information Act, is obliged to be responsible to Nigerians in carrying out certain essential functions (Apuke, 2017, p. 42).

The implication of this is that the media has a responsibility to compile and disseminate accurate, objective, timely, and truthful reports on the National Social Investment Programmes. This duty entails tracking the government and requiring it to answer to the people.

While this responsibility is underscored by legislative frameworks such as the 2011 Freedom of Information Act, which empowers the media to seek and report on such matters, it is crucial to recognise that this contemporary media landscape is the product of a significant historical evolution. Initially dominated by the press in the pre-1950s, Nigeria's media sphere expanded considerably from the 1950s and 1960s onwards to include the pervasive reach of radio and television, and more recently, the transformative influence of the internet, various social media platforms, and even microblogging sites like X. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of the media's role in relation to political development and specifically concerning programmes like the National Social Investment Programmes, necessitates a broader historical lens that encompasses the dynamic interplay of these diverse media forms and their evolving capacity to inform and hold power accountable.

2.5.6 Digital Media and Emerging Regulations

Digital media in Nigeria is one of the major developments in the past decade. The evolution or coming of digital media has transformed the Nigerian communication landscape. It has also largely impacted the media industry. This impact is partly driven by the increasing internet penetration, the rise of mobile devices, and the widespread adoption of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, and many others. Over the years, Nigeria has accumulated over 100 million internet users, with Nigeria having the highest digital engagement rate in Africa. The accessibility to smartphones, devices, androids in their various forms is also easy, and this has also helped people get onto the platform and adapt to the growing trends. As it may interest the public, there has been an increasing number of contributions to political developments and activism. There is also a general trend that drew along with the development of usage of the internet in Nigeria, a trend called citizen journalism.

It is arguable that social media digital emergence has also allowed for a and has given more opportunity for Nigerians to actively participate and contribute to political, social, and economic debates on social media. This study partly studies X (formerly Twitter) – one of the most used platforms in Nigeria. Nigeria experienced End SARS social movement, which was very massive in the year 2020, and with the public mobilising people against police brutality and to hold the government officials to account for their actions. The movement often allowed citizens express their opinions freely online. Although there have been instances of citizens being tracked and arrested for sharing information that government officials or government institutions deemed was offensive. However, the emergence and the growth of digital media, social media, and interactive media has led to active engagement, and has also driven the government to take actions towards regulating the challenges that come with it. No doubt, fake news, harassment of individuals and public officers, cybercrime, and government censorship

are also disadvantages that come with social media. But this does not replace the relevance and the opportunities that the platform avails.

2.5.6.1 Social Media Laws and Regulations.

In response to manage challenges observed by the government, there have been two major attempts, and one official decision has been made in effort to regulate the social media. They are:

i. **Cybercrime Act (2015):** Cybercrime Act of 2015 is Nigeria's first comprehensive law addressing cyber-related offences in Nigeria. The law aims to combat cyber-threats, and it also aims to reduce offensive attacks online. It prohibits and prevents any related crime as far as it is occurring on the internet. Although the law has been widely criticized for its vague definition which has led to its misuse against journalists, activists, and dissenting voices. Arguably, the law has not been of much relevance to protect or accept the government and accept those who are to their advantage. It has not been of much help to the public, to journalists, to activists, and to people who disagree with the views of the government. More particularly, Cybercrime Act of 2015 aims to reduce and criminalise cyber-stalking. It aims to penalize its speeches, to prevent fraud and identity theft, and to also be an instrument for government surveillance, granting authorities power to monitor online activities under national security justification. This law largely has not been of much help to journalists, activists, and opposition.

ii. **Social media (Attempted Regulations, 2019):** Popularly called Social media bill, the bill was a proposition by one of the legislators to regulate the social media and it

received a very widespread public backlash with a lot of people criticising the government with the claim that the government is making an effort to stifle free speech and to silence opposition. The bill was attempted to be introduced or signed in 2019 but could not make its way. The intent of the bill, according to a media report, it proposes to regulate online content to curb widespread of misinformation and the key provisions include criminalizing spread of false information online and granting government power to shut down online platforms that they deemed harmful and to also impose urban fines and imprisonment for violators of social media, particularly those who use social media against individuals, personalities, and institutions.

iii. Twitter (X) Ban (2021): On June 5, 2021, the Nigerian government shut down Twitter operations. The reason, according to the president's office, was because of national security and misinformation. The ban was announced following the deletion of a controversial tweet by then-president, President Muhammadu Buhari. The ban lasted for seven months, and the ban resulted in businesses, activism, and free speech being disrupted. However, it was achievable for certain Nigerians to utilise Twitter using a virtual private network (VPN). The action by the government was criticised worldwide with accusations of abusing digital rights. It was considered to be an abrogation of people's rights. The ban also had economic implications as firms and influencers who heavily rely on the platform lost out from the shutdown. The ban was subsequently lifted in early 2022 after negotiations with Twitter, which reportedly complied with a specific government demand, which was mostly not revealed. The incident has, however, sparked alarm over government control of online platforms and internet freedom in Nigeria.

2.6 From Colonial Resistance to Digital Activism: The Evolution of Nigeria's Media and Politics

From the discussions so far in this chapter, it is observed that the media landscape in Nigeria has an important role in shaping the country's political development, as they are to a very large extent interdependent. And this is evident from the colonial era through the military regime and through the present and ongoing democratic dispensation. Alongside political changes from pre-independence to post-independence through the military regimes and democratic era, as noted in an earlier section of this chapter, the media has also evolved.

During the colonial period, the Nigerian press became a useful tool in the hands of political activists. The Nationalists especially used the media as a medium to advocate and amplify their voice. As rightly noted, the first newspaper in Nigeria, *Ìwé Ìròhìn*, established by Henry Townsend, set out to educate, but it achieved more than just educating. Similarly, by the 20th century, a more indigenous version of the newspaper emerged, called the Latest Weekly Record, and the *West African Pilot*, which were founded by a political figure. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, who all used the platform for anti-colonial agitations. These newspapers mainly criticised British colonial policies and championed the cause for Nigeria's independence.

Following the post-independence period, between 1960 and the First Republic (1963-1966), the press still built the nation, and the political function of the press became more assertively manifested. But newspapers took sides with political interests: ethnic politics, regional politics, and they also fell into the lines of the nation's divisions. This called for the intervention of the government by establishing the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) in 1957 to govern broadcasting. With the creation of this commission, the media were put to test as politicians tried to dictate media accounts. In 1966, with a military coup, the military took control, as stated, and there was an era of media repression, which had an impact on media operations.

Media repression changed the way they operated, whereby some shut down shop and very few weathered the storm. There was a serious attempt by General Yakubu Gowon's regime, Olusegun Obasanjo, Mohammadu Buhari, and Sani Abacha to put the media in their hands. These military dictators, however, have a differential level of tolerance for the media, and thus, utilised different control methods, with others going to the extent of decreeing. In all the military regimes, there is one constant: the military rule; suppression of the media. At this point, the media still play a significant role in reaching the people as they are able to. The media was a poverty communication medium, but its impact could have not been felt extensively because policies were not communicated well. More so, corruption in government which manifest in various form such as diversion of fund, use of public fund for personal gains and misappropriation was frowned at when efforts were made to publish such practices in the media.

In the 1980s, the regime of Ibrahim Babangida introduced the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) based on the recommendation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). During this period, the press played a key role of following the programmes and its policies, thereby analysing the effect of the programme. Media reports widely criticised the devaluation of currency and how removal of subsidy were worsening poverty in the country. During this period, media continued to face suppression from the government as they did not want to be criticised for their own doings. When the country returned to democracy in 1999, we saw an expanded press freedom, of course, in a version unlike what was the experience during the colonial, early post-independence and the military regime.

> there have been improvements in the level of tolerance by post 1999 civilian administrations but notes that much still has to be done to attain a reasonable level of press freedom (Nwanne, 2014, p. 10).

There was a relative freedom for the media, and this led to the rise of independence and private ownership of TVs and other platforms. We saw the emergence of private television stations,

such as Channels TV, AIT, Ray Power radio station, and digital social media platforms, which revolutionised citizens lives. Although later developments shows that the press were not entirely free. Nwanne (2014) noted that:

> After decades of struggle against militarism by virtually all segments of the articulate publics, especially the press, the military reluctantly ceded power to civilians on May 29, 1999. It was a momentous occasion as the mantle of leadership fell on Olusegun Obasanjo, a retired army general and former military head of state.
>
> Obasanjo, a retired army general and former military head of state. On ascension of office, Obasanjo managed, at times unsuccessfully, to control his bad temper. Even though he spoke of the need for a free press, his disposition and body language did not always support his public statements. Unlike when he was military head of state, he managed to conceal his famed contempt for the local press. Under his watch, security agents had invaded the African Independent Television (AIT), a credible private outfit (Nwanne, 2014, p. 16).

In all of this, this platform came together to shape political discourse and poverty awareness. In later years, we saw Sahara reporters and premium times playing crucial roles in reporting scandals for a subsidy fraud, holding government to account for corrupt practices and economic mismanagement. During the last two decades, there has been an increased media campaign about poverty reduction programmes, such as the National Social Investment Programmes, the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy, as well as some other social welfare programmes under the umbrella of NSIP, for example, Trader Money, Conditional Cash Transfer, Empower, among others. In summary, we would see a trend of governments making efforts to regulate the media amidst some other reasons. Although, some media still survives up to today, although there are many infiltrations into the media. Lastly, "there is no part of the world where you have 100% press freedom" (Apuke, 2016b, p. 34).

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter, Media, Politics, and Poverty Reduction in Nigeria, follows the history of the development of media in Nigeria and politics. It charts the dynamics of the relationship between

politics and press, and how it has also played a role in poverty communication to some extent. Similarly, in this chapter, it has also pointed to the limitations of the media under certain restrictions both during pre-independence colonial, post-independence military, and post-independence democracy regimes. The chapter also pointed to the legal limitations and regulation that were tried during the early period of the media in Nigeria, both under the military rule and the civilian rule. It then looks at the digital media, and how efforts were made to regulate digital media because of the threats it poses to government activities. This chapter has been able to show the key roles of the media in Nigeria in shaping the social and political discourse and environment of the nation. It is argued that the media, the press, is seen as a watchdog, and that is among the reasons why it is considered a danger to governments afraid of media exposing their corrupt ways. But the role of the media in Nigeria over the years still falls under the government ideology for media operations, whether or not it is allowed to be free. And we have seen, as indicated in this chapter, that different governments have different policies and different beliefs, and they adopt different levels of scope towards permitting or forbidding operation of media. To a very large extent, the media in Nigeria has been greatly affected by political activities. The next chapter will be addressing media studies in Nigeria, and more accurately, the issues that crosscut media in Nigeria.

This chapter has demonstrated the pivotal role of the Nigerian media in shaping the nation's social and political landscape. The press, as a watchdog, is instrumental in holding government accountable, particularly in the realm of social welfare programmes like the National Social Investment Programmes. However, the media's capacity to fulfil this role is deeply intertwined with its historical context. Meanwhile, Nigeria's media landscape, shaped by colonial influences and subsequent political developments, continue to grapple with challenges such as government interference and ethical dilemmas. While legal frameworks exist to support a

responsible press, their efficacy is often compromised. Ultimately, the Nigerian media's ability to effectively serve the public interest depends on a delicate balance between its watchdog function and the broader socio-political environment.

CHAPTER THREE

3 Nigerian media: mapping the field

3.1 Introduction

The focus of this thesis is such that it is situated at the intersection between several established fields of study. To account for this, this chapter is organised into four main sections. The first section commences with a review of studies on newspaper coverage in Nigeria. It aims to elucidate the objectives, methodologies, and findings of previous related studies. This section delves into the relevant literature to ascertain the major topics and themes that influence this study. The initial part of this chapter critically analyses the existing research on newspaper coverage in Nigeria, with a specific emphasis on materials that are highly relevant to the present investigation into the role of the press and the Nigerian Xsphere in the coverage of NSIP in Nigeria. The search term employed for the search of studies were 'newspaper,' 'coverage,' and 'Nigeria.' The articles included in this review were filtered by subject areas using the advanced refining search. The first section concludes by examining the main themes identified in the review of studies on Nigerian media, which are further discussed under separate subheadings.

The second section provides an overview of Twitter research in Nigeria. It examines the publications on Twitter conversations research in Nigeria. The articles included in this study were the result of a database search that was filtered by discipline. The search keyword was discipline-filtered to include research publications on social sciences, art, and humanities. The outcome of the search turned up a total of 36 results. Six of the results could not be accessed, thus, they were omitted from the results. Only 14 of the remaining 30 articles are connected to the subject of the review, which is Twitter, consequently, each of the 14 papers is incorporated into this review.

The next section examines the literature on Nigeria's NSIP and its component programmes. The review focuses on peer-reviewed journal publications published following the inception of the programme in 2016. All articles published on NSIP are included in this section's review. In the last section of the chapter, knowledge gaps were identified and defined, the scope of the thesis explained. Finally, the objectives, and research questions were drawn from the review of the present body of research.

3.2 Studies on Newspaper coverage in Nigeria

There is a wide range of studies on newspaper coverage of salient issues and events in Nigeria. These selected body of literature identifies and reflects the main themes and addresses the core issues that shape this thesis. The research method which dominates this area of research is content analysis. Recent studies that use this method include but not limited to Ndinojuo (2023) Okpara (2025) and Aondover et al. (2025) . The content analysis research methodology allows researchers to access and assess manifest contents (in this regard, newspapers) in other to study stories published on the subject of enquiry. Using the content analysis as a method, a researcher may adopt either quantitative or qualitative approach; however, the quantitative approach is the commonly adopted approach in newspaper analysis. Another approach to studying newspaper content is the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). While Content Analysis is notable for helping in the codification of large amounts of text into meaningful quantitative data which helps facilitate analysable categories, the CDA provides the researcher with a more insightful, robust, and contextual meaning of the subject being analysed (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). As at the time of conducting this study, twenty out of the twenty-three results of the articles found adopted the Content Analysis research methods in studying Nigerian newspapers on different subjects while three others adopted CDA, textual analysis and survey. It is evident from this

database search that more has been done using the content analysis research method than other methods. Notable among this is the Critical Discourse Analysis which according to many scholars, (Bednarek & Caple, 2014; Fairclough, 1995, 2010; Geçer, 2018; Graham & Luke, 2011; Porto, 2007; Richardson, 2007a; Stuart, 1996; T. Van Dijk, 1993), offers more contextual insight into understanding subjects and issues of inquiry. Therefore, first, this review notes that there is a methodological gap in the body of knowledge on newspaper analysis in Nigeria., Ironically, no study has combined Content Analysis and CDA to examine National Social Investment Programmes in Nigeria. This thesis, then set out to adopt mixed methods – Content Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis and triangulation of the findings of CA and CDA with In-Depth Interview (IDI) with journalists to study media coverage of NSIP.

In the study of news coverage, the social composition of news is an important indicator for 'meaning making.' The news is a product of a collection of quotes, data, and information from news sources. Habitual dependence on selected sources for news information as noted in Adeniran and Oso suggests the prospect of news manipulation and the possibility of predetermined direct 'issue framing' by news sources (Adeniran & Oso, 2020, p. 48). An investigation into the implications of the findings of Adeniran and Oso's 2020 content analysis study of Nigerian newspapers shows that many quoted news sources on maternal and child health issues were government officials which calls our attention to study other major areas of public and national concerns. A good example of issues of public interest and national concern is social welfare, which is the focus of this research. While I consider the findings from Adeniran and Oso insightful; there is a need to extend similar research into sources of news in NSIP in a bid to help us understand the role of the press in Nigeria. As mentioned, in the preceding paragraph, the research will, as part of the overall thesis objective and methods, use quantitative content analysis to identify the sources quoted by Nigerian journalists in their news

reports on NSIP. The sources will be categorised and coded using a coding sheet, and the data will be analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The output of the SPSS analysis will serve as the quantitative data for this thesis, which will be used to draw descriptive and inferential conclusions.

In a study, "How do Nigerian newspapers report corruption in the health system?" by Abba-Aji et al. (2021), the central question the author attempted to address was how corruption within the health sector was framed in Nigeria Newspapers. Abba-Aji et al. (2021) research is important to this thesis because it focuses on how newspaper reported an important issue, corruption. Corruptions is one of the claims reported in the news as a challenge that limits the performance of the NSIP. Abba-Aji *et al.* used the LexisNexis database to search for articles published on corruption in the health sector. The 135 identified articles underwent content and framing analysis. The study found that news about corruption in the health sector was portrayed primarily as a political problem. Also, most of the articles were episodic, with fewer details on the causes of each case. According to the study's conclusions, a lack of accountability explains the origins of corruption. While enforcement was frequently mentioned as a remedy, it was also concluded to be an ineffective solution. This study also identifies the potential media as a force for change, transparency, and accountability through regular reporting of corruption in the health sector. Abba-Aji et al. (2021) research similarly emphasised the role of the media as a catalyst for change. Their findings highlight how the media promotes accountability and transparency by covering news stories effectively. Like Abba-Aji et al. (2021) study, results from the content analysis phase of this thesis will further verify the authors' findings, thereby contributing to knowledge on how the Nigerian press promotes accountability, and transparency in their coverage of issues of public interest but within the context of National Social Investment Programmes.

However, a major limitation of Abba-Aji *et al's* (2021) was that, first, they mentioned enforcement frame as a cause but never provided data showing it was a solution frame though it was claimed to be the main framing of solution. They provide illustrative examples but did not mention the precise occurrence of these frames in the articles they reviewed.

In another study by Akinro & Zeng (2017) the researchers examined the coverage of the Jos Crisis in Northern Nigeria by three influential Nigerian newspapers between 2010 and 2011. The study aimed to identify the difference in coverage, analyse the patterns of framing during the crisis, explore variations in the time dimension, and investigate the relationship between use of spatial frames and temporal frames. The authors advocated for a more thorough reporting on conflicts. According to the study, the stories published on the crisis were searched using the keyword 'Jos' in the three newspapers – *Punch*, the *Guardian,* and *This Day* archives. The search result was then systematically sampled to select 300 articles which were analysed. Findings from the study showed that journalists experienced difficulty reporting 'multi-action events' (Akinro & Zeng, 2017, p. 426). When reporting news stories with a series of multiple events happening simultaneously, it is essential to have a systematic and strategic approach in order to capture all the important details. This requires a high level of professionalism and the use of appropriate information management tools. According to researchers, Akinro and Zeng, there is a need for a "more comprehensive and thorough reporting…, particularly by Nigerian newspapers" (Akinro & Zeng, 2017, p. 426). If a journalist fails to properly consider the challenge of reporting multi-action events, they may be tempted to oversimplify a complex situation, or to report only one event while ignoring other factors that are equally important. This can be done in an attempt to create a narrative, but it can often lead to an incomplete or distorted understanding of the situation. Hence, the journalist may be driven by a narrative and overlook the other nuances of the situation. The authors also made a case for the possibility of

the audience's missing out on 'sense-making and contextual analysis of very complex events' (Akinro & Zeng, 2017, p. 426). The complexity of the crisis and society makes social analysis uneasy and consequences problematic to discuss. The implication of Akinro and Zeng's findings may mean that Nigeria newspapers news narrative are mostly driven by quoted news sources. Akinro and Zeng's finding inspires this thesis to inquire further on social welfare subject and more particularly on how the Nigerian press report news on important social welfare programmes in the country. One of such programmes is the NSIP which seek to address poverty and social welfare which are major challenges that Nigeria is facing at the time of this research. While discussing this finding, the research emphasises that the Nigerian government has some control over traditional media reports. Akiro and Zeng affirmed thus:

> "As a reflection of the unique press-government relationship in Nigeria, media organizations tend to follow government expectations, especially when covering sensitive topics such as political conflicts" (Akinro & Zeng, 2017, p. 424).

The recognition of the complexity of an event, such as the Jos crisis in Northern Nigeria, by Akinro & Zeng (2017), and how the political elites prefer to meddle in media activities bring us to the point of highlighting political economy principles to assist us to comprehend other issues in the country. Also, the claim by Akinro and Zeng that the media is controlled by the government in their topic of inquiry, calls for further research, especially in the areas of public concern such as poverty and social welfare reporting. A question to bear in mind will be: could the government be influencing media narratives on the NSIP too?

Furthermore, media impact society through agenda-setting theory which presumes that the media shapes people's opinions by selecting and publishing certain issues. In another study Alphonsus et al. (2022) explored how different Nigerian media reported criminality in the name of banditry which is affecting some parts of the country. The study remarkably sampled two

TV stations (Channels Television and the Nigerian Television Authority) and two newspapers (*The Punch* and *The Nation*) with a focus on the regularity, volume, and type of coverage. The method used in the study was content analysis. The result of the study showed that newspapers reported more banditry stories than TV stations. The research findings also showed that newspapers significantly differ in their agenda-setting efforts when compared to the TV. While one of the findings from the study noted that newspapers dedicated more volume to reports on banditry, TV stations' reports did not contain sufficient details of banditry activities. This finding however did not seem to take into consideration that television scripts are by principle shorter than newspaper writings, and that visuals often complement broadcast scripts.

Therefore, Alphonsus *et al.'s* conclusion is incorrect as newspaper and television cannot be compared by volume of reporting because television scripts can be shorter than newspaper writings due to graphics which frequently accompany broadcast texts. Also, in television shows all texts must be read aloud which impacts on the news presentation broadcast time. Hence, a comparison between two or more newspapers or two or more television stations will be ideal because the comparisons would be on similar pedestals. However, unlike the approach of Alphonsus *et al* this thesis studies Nigeria newspapers as a unique news media industry using appropriate parameters discussed in the chapter on methodology. Although, I agree with Alphonsus et al. (2022) that media agenda-setting is poor based on the low frequency of the report, the volume, and paucity of details. Consequently, Alphonsus study's finding on poor agenda setting role of the media is relevant to this thesis because this it seeks to understand how the Nigerian press reported NSIP poverty alleviation and social investment programme. This is especially so because the agenda-setting model recognises the policy agenda, public agenda, and the media agenda.

Another study of interest is, Erubami et al. (2021) which examined the coverage patterns and dominant narrative on the past Lassa fever epidemic in Nigeria. The study used a multistage sampling to select editions from six of the leading newspapers which are *Vanguard, The Guardian, Punch, Daily Sun, Nigerian Tribune,* and *The Nation*. The selected samples were quantitatively and qualitatively content analysed. The research findings showed that even when the disease was frequently mentioned, like Abba-Aji et al. (2021) findings, its coverage was mainly episodic. Erubami *et al.* (2021) specifically stated that news reports were insufficient to elicit the intended public health response. In the in words of Erubami *et al.,* "newspaper narratives on Lassa fever epidemic in Nigeria were largely episodic and event-based with limited thematic discussions that could enhance public understanding of the risks associated with the disease" Erubami et al., (2021, p. 101). These findings suggest that journalists are not adequately fulfilling public needs, and they may be operating below the expectation of being agents for social mobilisation. Taking the implication of Erubami *et al'*s findings that journalism may not be living up to its social mobilisation responsibility forward, this thesis will also provide useful data and analyse that will empirically contribute to body of knowledge in effort to verify the veracity of the claims by Erubami et al that the media is not living up to it social responsibility by investigating another key subject area: a social welfare programme, in this instance, the NSIP poverty reduction programme in Nigeria.

In a similar study Anyanwu et al. (2022) studied Nigeria newspaper headlines on the Covid-19 pandemic. The study sought to understand the Nigerian newspapers' rhetoric on political competition and social polarisation. Using quantitative content analysis to identify news frames, the researchers examine two selected Nigerian newspapers – *Vanguard* and *Guardian*. Findings from the study revealed that both newspapers showed a deep commitment to the coverage of the pandemic by gathering and disseminating news/information. The study also noted that the

different levels of government (local, state and federal) were serious about reacting to the outbreak. However, extensive data analysis revealed that the government was initially hesitant to respond to the Covid-19 epidemic (no reason was particularly advanced for this). This study notes the government's slow response to global health issues also affect the nation.

A revealed fact is that the quantity of space and time given to topics is not as significant as the frames presented. A study by Gever (2019) is a notable exception; unlike Alphonsus et al. (2022) which examined two newspapers and two TV stations to determine the frames and tone of media reportage of anti-open grazing law in Benue state. The study included an interview with 10 relevant journalists for further inquiry on the particulars of why and how they reported certain stories included details such as the tone, and choices of news sources. Results from the study showed that the tone of the stories were mainly positive towards the anti-open grazing law. Data from the study also showed that the majority of the sources of the stories analysed were Benue natives who were in support of the anti-open grazing law. The authors contended that the news may have influenced the narrative, tone, and frames of the report. This is in line with the observation of (Adeniran et al., 2022; Adeniran & Oso, 2020; Gans, 2011; Uwazuruike, 2018)0; Gans, 2011; Uwazuruike, 2018) that there is an imbalanced and limited perspective in news sources. According to Adeniran et al. (2022, p.70) "Nigerian newspapers make limited use of the experiences of individuals." Uwazuruike (2018, p. 70) also observed that "…journalists rely mainly on official sources." Alphonus's finding remains very important to this study because it provides this study with foundational insight on the possibility that Nigerian newspaper could be less representative in their report of NSIPs.

The importance of studying news sources of stories reported on NSIP cannot be overemphasised. Primarily, it allows us to gain a better understanding of how the NSIP policy

is being implemented. It also helps us stay informed on NSIP events, understand different perspectives on issues related to the programme. and assist in developing a more nuanced and informed opinion about the programmes, the effectiveness of the NSIP policy and its mediation efforts. Additionally, studying news sources on NSIP can help us become more critical consumers of the news, allowing us to better identify bias and misinformation. Moreso as studies have revealed, imbalanced news sources are a negative feature in conflict reporting since not all parties are fairly portrayed (Gever, 2019). Therefore, findings such as these strengthen the need to understand more about newspaper coverage of major events and issues. It is on this premise that this thesis sets out to provide robust details on the main sources of NSIP news stories in other to help us understand the role of the press in the implementation of the NSIP policy.

Gever, in another study, Gever & Essien (2019) explored newspaper coverage of farmers and herders in *Tiv* land Benue state of Nigeria. Focusing on two Nigerian newspapers, the authors did a content analysis of news stories where the findings showed that both newspapers published mostly straight news paying less attention to the victims. In terms of prominence, stories were published 'inside the pages' and were mostly episodic. Similar studies by Abba-Aji et al. (2021;; Erubami et al. (2021), Gever & Essien (2019) did advocate that newspaper journalists should refrain from episodic reportage of issues like this but instead set a dignified agenda for the Nigerian public.

The media play an important role in shaping public knowledge. It is on this premise that media reports on societal issues are considered important. Mismanaging the media means mismanaging a key role and therefore abusing the knowledge-shaping power of the media. A newspaper analysis by Ilesanmi et al. (2022) explores the role of media in the coverage of

COVID-19. The research reviewed 14 daily newspapers in Nigeria which were purposively selected due to their high coverage level. The samples for this review were obtained through each newspaper's online archive database search. This thesis notes a methodological flaw in Ilesanmi et al.'s study, despite the finding that the majority of newspaper communication involves misleading information, myths, and panic messages that send despondency to readers. The study design provides a cursory explanation of how newspaper data was approached and managed. Their study did not include the specifics of their research design. Documenting and reporting research design is important because it not only gives credibility but make them replicable. Such documentation provides necessary details that can make other researchers understand and evaluate the methods used to collect and analyse data. Thus, reporting key details of the research design gives other researchers a clearer opportunity to objectively verify a study's findings and build on such findings. To avoid the weakness in Ilesanmi *et al*.'s (2022) study, this thesis reports all methods employed in the process of carrying out this research. This is to ensure transparency and so that other researchers clearly understand how data where approached, gathered and analysed. By providing detailed and clear descriptions of the procedures adopted, other researchers can check on the findings and make a contribution towards the building up of knowledge in this field. This stress on methodological clarity is the result of stress on scientific honesty and encourages the development of open and collaborative research. The above illustrates the importance of a well-designed and replicable method in media content analysis, and most importantly in replicating and validating findings, to this thesis on the National Social Investment Programmes.

The foregoing shows the importance of a clearly defined and replicable methodology in media content analysis, particularly in replicating and verifying findings, is directly relevant to this thesis on the National Social Investment Programmes. The emphasis on methodological

transparency ensures that the study's examination of the press and Xsphere's role is both robust and credible, contributing to a culture of open and collaborative research.

In another research, Mbamalu (2020), the author recognised the influence of mass media coverage and the formation of public perception. Given this, Mbamalu (2020) set out to investigate the role of Nigerian newspapers in the coverage of renewable energy. The research attempt to identify the frames used to report stories on renewable energy. Using framing theory, the research adopts content analysis as the research design. Findings from the study show there were neither articulate narratives nor significant framing efforts in the coverage of renewable energy topics in Nigeria. The results of a comparable study conducted by Mbamalu & Okoro (2021) using the same methodology as Mbamalu (2020) support the findings of prior research on the subservience of renewable energy coverage in the mass media. The absence of such data and information in the mass media endangers mass knowledge because the public is largely influenced by news and information published by the mass media. This explains why Professor Schramm (1964) in his work where he examined the impact of mass communication on economic and social development in developing nations stresses that the populace must have information about national development with their attention focused on the need for change. This further support the fundamental theory – Agenda Setting Theory which explains how the media can set the agenda for development.

In another media study, "Prevalent news frames in news reports about military operations against Boko Haram in North-East Nigeria" (Ndinojuo et al., 2020), the critical question is the way the mass media frame issues and how it influences the public perception of the issues. Media can shape public perception which can either stimulate or suppress the success of a cause. The researchers studied four national daily newspapers using the content analysis research

method. An intercoder reliability test was conducted to ascertain the consistency of the coding sheet. The study was guided by framing theory. Findings from the study show the media played a significant and positive role in the fight against the Boko Haram insurgency in North-East Nigeria. Over 80% of the samples of newspapers surveyed had positive coverage of military action against Boko Haram. This suggests that the newspapers' reports were supportive of military action against insurgence in Nigeria. The implication of this is that the strength of the government is highlighted against Boko Haram radical group. The article suggests that the Nigerian media is contributing positively to preventing chaos while significantly preserving and promoting national security. What this also means is that the media has the capacity to successfully support an agenda through positive coverage of policies that are in the interest of the public. However, in some cases the media went against ethics and principles of journalism. According to the study's findings,

> "…the media have framed the military positively and in some cases against some established journalism ethics and principles. In other words, the Nigerian military can be said to have turned the media to work for and with them in reporting military operations against the insurgents (Ndinojuo et al., 2020, p. 68).

The implication of Ndinojuo *et al*'s suggests media professionals could go out there, against the ethics and principles of the profession for public good. Ndinojuo *et al*'s position supports my argument in the earlier chapters that in a democracy, the media ought to be responsible to the people than other agenda. Similarly, as we have asserted elsewhere that in a democratic system, "the news media have obligation to support good governance" (Arowolo et al., 2023, p. 60). Building on the insights from Ndinojuo *et al* (2020) findings, this thesis seeks to understand to extent of news coverage devoted to the National Social Investment Programmes and how the stories are presented.

In Nwabueze & Egbra (2016) study of Nigerian and Ghanaian newspapers' framing of climate change, using the content analysis research method, the study finds that the dominant frame was action frame while most of the stories were straight news. It was also found that most of the stories were sourced from international meetings on climate change and many were culled from international media. This shows that Nigerian and Ghanaian media have not placed as much emphasis on climate change campaigns as the international press has. The dependence of these African press organisations on international forum reports and foreign news outlets indicates a lack of commitment to these developmental issues. In terms of emphasis, this study will examine the level of emphasis Nigeria press made on the NSIP programme implementation based on the programmes policy documents.

Nwachukwu *et al.* (2021) studies ethnic 'othering' in Nigerian newspapers. Othering is a process of perceiving or treating individuals or groups as fundamentally different from oneself or one's own group, often leading to the exclusion, marginalisation, or dehumanisation of the other. The research focuses on newspaper coverage of the Farmers' and Herders' conflict in Nigeria. The media research study investigated 598 online copies of Nigerian newspapers using quantitative content analysis. According to the findings of the study, Nigerian publications covered the topic adequately, but only with straight news. The prominence of the straight news report style is a common trend in Nigeria journalism because of the simplicity of the format which often result to news reports news having shallow or hold limited details. *Nwachukwu et al.*' findings confirm Gever & Essien (2019) and Nwabueze & Egbra (2016) findings that the Nigerian media are not invested in reporting stories with depth rather they appear to choose scratch stories and their details only on the surface which is an indication of deficient commitment of the press to development issues. It is important to be critical of straight news

since its ineffectiveness has repercussions for the media's credibility, social responsibility, and agenda-setting for development.

In addition, Odiegwu-Enwerem et al. (2021) found that Nigerian newspapers deprioritise security issues. In the study, the researcher used the content analysis method to study 159 stories from six selected Nigerian press (*The Punch, Guardian, Daily Trust, Leadership, The Voice, and Orient Daily)*. The study focused on Farmers' and Herdsmen's conflicts in two Nigerian states. The aim of the research was to determine the major themes in reporting the herdsmen-farmers conflict, peace orientations of news coverage and the level of importance given to the conflict through framing and positioning of news stories. Unlike other studies (Adeniran, 2017; Adeniran and Oso, 2020; Mbamalu, 2020; Mbamalu and Okoro, 2021; Adeniran, Tijani-Adenle and Oso, 2022) where the dominant sources of news information were politicians and (or)public officials; Odiegwu-Enwerem *et al.* found that a larger share of news sources was from reporter/correspondent (42.8%) initiative and from Herdsmen; especially with Miyetti Allah (the herdsmen representative) (31.4%) while others (1.9%) and 2.5% were farmers. This discovery is unique and may be attributed to the specific nature of the issues. Also, Odiegwu-Enwerem *et al.'*s study revealed that almost half of the news reports were neutral while the pro-conflict and the pro-peace reportage were 25.6% each. However, 66.7% of the stories reported were not prioritised (published) on either the front page, page 2, back page, or the centre spread which are considered high-priority pages in newspaper publishing. It is noteworthy that even the matter of security was not considered prominent in news reports. Building upon the insights from Odiegwu-Enwerem *et al*. 's research in social welfare and considering the previously established tendency of Nigerian newspapers to deprioritise critical issues such as security, this chapter will now explore whether similar patterns of coverage emerge in the reporting of the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIPs). issues such as security, it becomes imperative

to explore whether similar patterns exist in the reporting of the NSIPs. Understanding media framing and prioritisation of these crucial social welfare initiatives is essential. This study investigates media attention and framing of these programmes to assess the press's role in raising awareness and shaping public discourse on poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The analysis offers valuable insights into the effectiveness of media coverage in promoting social welfare policies impacting vulnerable citizens.

That there is an observable continued interest in understanding the effects of framing by the press on more specific subjects and neglected sectors. This point is supported by studies on media coverage of elections and politics (Ojebuyi and Salawu, 2018; H. Suleiman et al., 2020; Taye Medoye and Adedeji Tukur, 2022; Ukonu et al., 2020). Equally, a study by Odoemelam, Hasan and Hussein (2021), proposed that more research is needed to understand the way that more specialised sectors such as the oil & gas sector where the menace of pollution is a great public concern are reported in the media. The same point is made for more research on the social welfare programme. In Odoemelam et al. (2021) content analysis study of selected newspapers, a typology of news frames used by the press was codified. Although the study set out to explain how the different types of frames used by the newspapers impact perceptions of the oil-bearing community, a by-product of this study authenticates the framing power of newspapers. First, the researchers noted that the volume of economic consequences frame used in news reports could cause a shift in perception of oil-bearing communities to overlook the local environmental pollution effects for the general economic benefit. Consequently, the researchers noted that this has led to a low level of willingness for oil-bearing communities to pursue collective actions to reduce oil pollution. Lastly, the studies showed a variation in coverage of oil pollution by the three selected newspapers. This implies that the findings of this study could have broader implications for other concerns in society. In arguing for social

welfare programmes, for instance, the questions should be asked: could the press coverage of the NSIP programmes in Nigeria have been presented in a different manner? What roles does the press play in its coverage of NSIP activities? Attempting to answer these concerns have the potential to open up new understanding frontiers, particularly in light of a recent poverty report by Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics, indicating that more people have fallen into poverty since the start of the poverty reduction initiative.

In a discursive analysis of newspaper coverage of the Biafra protest, Osisanwo and Iyoha (2020) contend that the news media has power to use language's discursive practices to tactically represent social actors and actions. In the study, first, they found that newspapers analysed pro-Biafra protesters as violent and constructed them as terrorists who were a major risk to economic stability and development. This observation validated Odoemelam, Hasan and Hussein's (2021) which found that the press has the potential to frame certain issues in a particular manner to convey a defined meaning. In other words, the press has the ability of constructing meaning. In essence, the implications of these arguments suggest the claim that the Nigerian press might have been exercising certain influences on its readers. It is therefore valid to point out that this possibility will be left unresolved if there are no further inquiries in this area. Hence, the studies by Osisanwo & Iyoha (2020) and Odoemelam, Hasan and Hussein's (2021) inspire further research in other areas of concern. As a result, one of the two broad aspects of this thesis examines the role of the press in reporting social welfare advancements, given how the media convey significant social issues. Therefore, robust research is required for well-funded social welfare initiatives such as Nigeria's NSIP which is the focus of this thesis.

In a multi-ethnic society such as Nigeria, and in light of the preceding research findings, there is a propensity for ethnic bias in news reportage. This assertion was validated in a 2018 study, where Uwazuruike found that the use of news frames is significantly influenced by ethnicity. In a textual analysis of newspapers, Uwazuruike (2018) studied the contents of news reports on the Boko Haram[12] abduction of Chibok School girls. The methods used in the study are comparable to the findings from studies (Odoemelam et al., 2021; Osisanwo & Iyoha, 2020) that adopted content analysis and framing theory. The research findings show that the stories were framed as Islamic militancy, government inaction, mass abduction and an act of terrorism. The group of frames used by Nigerian newspapers strongly suggests the ethnic solidarity of an Islamic leader in a multi-religious society. Ironically, other studies of Nigerian newspaper (Adeniran et al., 2022; Adeniran & Oso, 2020; Odiegwu-Enwerem et al., 2021) had also confirmed ethnic bias.

Overall, nine of the studies reviewed in this chapter noted news sources as one of the major themes in newspaper media studies in Nigeria. These studies (Ajaero and Anorue, 2018; Gever, 2019; Adeniran and Oso, 2020; Mbamalu, 2020; Nwachukwu *et al*., 2021; Odiegwu-Enwerem *et al*., 2021; Adeniran, Tijani-Adenle and Oso, 2022) confirmed sources of news as the primary 'influencer' (Mbamalu, 2020, p. 7), 'shape(rs)' of news frames, narrative, and discourses (Uwazuruike, 2018, p. 67), of news contents. This development is partly described by Gandy's (1982) theory of 'information subsidy'.

In summary, news sources is an important topic in newspaper media studies in Nigeria, serving as the key influencer and shaper of news frames, narratives, and discourses. The body of

[12] Boko Haram is a militant Islamist group centred in North-eastern Nigeria that translates literally to "Western education is sinful."

literature on newspaper coverage of issues and events in Nigeria showed that the research method which dominates this area of study is content analysis. Content analysis allows researchers to access and assess manifest contents (in this regard, Nigerian newspapers) in other to study stories published about enquiry. One of the key findings in this thesis's literature review is the identification of a methodological gap in the existing research on newspaper analysis in Nigeria. This gap highlights the need for further studies on media coverage of other significant public issues. Consequently, this thesis recognises the government's social welfare objective through the NSIP as a grey area of public concern that deserves broader investigation in order to offer new knowledge to the field.

3.3 Main Themes in Newspaper coverage studies in Nigeria

The main themes that have been dominant in studies of news coverage in Nigeria include de-prioritisation/ the downplaying of important issues (Adeniran et al., 2022; Erubami et al., 2021; Gever & Essien, 2019; Nwabueze & Egbra, 2016; Odiegwu-Enwerem et al., 2021), the prevalence of quotes from government sources (Uwazuruike, 2018; Gever, 2019; Adeniran and Oso, 2020; Marcel Mbamalu, 2020; Nwachukwu *et al.*, 2021; Odiegwu-Enwerem *et al.*, 2021), use of third-party news sources (Odiegwu-Enwerem et al., 2021), propagation of misleading/inaccurate information (Ilesanmi et al., 2022), inadequate agenda setting (Alphonsus et al., 2022), episodic news framing (Erubami et al., 2021), ethnicity and religious biases (Abubakre, 2018; Confidence Uwazuruike, 2018) and prevalence of straight news format (Nwachukwu *et al.*, 2021) in the Nigerian press. These findings conclusively highlight the necessity for more research into the news media industry's coverage of other crucial issues in Nigeria. In relation to these findings, this work examines how the Nigerian press reported on the NSIP from 2017 to 2023.

3.3.1 The Downplaying of Important Issues

The downplaying of important issues is an unprofessional practice that can lead to certain topics being ignored or overlooked. This can be seen in news reports or political discussions, where certain topics may be de-prioritised in favour of others. Studies of Nigerian newspapers by researchers (Nwabueze and Egbra, 2016; Gever and Essien, 2019; Joshua Aghogho Erubami, Bebenimibo and Ohaja, 2021; Odiegwu-Enwerem *et al*., 2021; Adeniran, Tijani-Adenle and Oso, 2022) show evidence of de-prioritisation of important issues by the Nigerian press. This can of course, be detrimental to the public, as important issues may not receive the attention they want addressed. Additionally, de-prioritisation can lead to a lack of understanding among the public on the importance of certain issues and the need for public engagement. This study also draws on the understanding that media de-prioritisation of the NSIP policy and programme implementation could mean something with regards to public understanding of the programmes agenda and the effectiveness of its implementation and acceptance. Hence, there is a need to investigate Nigerian press reportage of the NSIP programmes and what level of importance the newspapers attached to it as well as its prominence in news reports.

3.3.2 The Prevalence of Government Sources in News Reports

Government sources are often used in news reports because they are considered to be authoritative, reliable and they provide a wealth of information, including official statements and policy decisions. Additionally, government sources are usually perceived as impartial and unbiased, which makes them more attractive to news organisations. More so, they are often more accessible than other sources, as they have an established process for providing information to the public.

Mbamalu (2020, p. 7) found that "government is the most dominant actor, and newspapers frame it as an influencer and policy driver in renewable energy". The implication of the dominance of government sources are, however, not immune to some disadvantages if unbalanced. But relying on government sources are not without dangers. Some of the dangers include the potential for biased or incomplete information. For example, Uwazurike contend that "news frames are more prone to propaganda when there is a heavy reliance on official sources" (Nwachukwu et al., 2021, p. 80). What this means is that government sources may be influenced by their own political interests and may not always present an accurate picture of a given situation. Additionally, government sources may not always have the resources to provide complete coverage of an issue, meaning that the news reports may be incomplete or misleading.

The idea that government source is a prevalence news source is a very important theme to investigate, especially within the context and focus of this thesis. This is because, findings could provide insights on the prevalent sources of news on NSIP. Hence, gathering relevant data related to this theme will help this thesis identify the main voices shaping stories on NSIP reports. As argued by Nwachukwu *et al.* (2021), over reliance on a source may lead to manipulation of stories and distortion of the true context of a narrative. Thus, by providing data on this theme as it relates to NSIP coverage, this thesis contributes to the existing body of knowledge on media coverage of social welfare programmes.

3.3.3 Balancing Reliability and Bias: the use of third-party sources

In the news, third-party sources are frequently employed to provide extra information and perspectives on a particular story. This could include interviews with experts, statistics or data from research groups, or comments from people with a personal connection to the story but

having multiple perspectives on the same story can help to provide a more comprehensive and balanced report for news consumers.

However, the use of third-party sources in the news is a growing concern for many as it can lead to inaccurate and misleading information being presented as facts. This is a source of concern particularly in this age of "fake news" where the truth is often obfuscated by fabricated stories. Also, over reliance on third party source could be detrimental to ethical journalism. Odiegwu Enwerem noted,

> The newspapers relied, in most part, on third parties for their sources of information on the conflict and those also were the sources that were quoted. This could be seen as a challenge in the reporting process and example of communication barriers which can lead to distortions in the news reports (Odiegwu-Enwerem et al., 2021, p. 10).

Third-party sources can compromise news coverage for many reasons; Primarily because they are not held to the same standards as professional journalists, they may be prejudiced or unreliable. They may also lack the skills to handle complex narratives which could result in misleading public information. Additionally, the use of third-party sources can lead to a lack of transparency in news reporting. It can also be difficult to determine their reliability or whether they may be attempting to push their own agenda Personal agenda on its own can invariably lead to a false sense of trust in the news, as people may not be aware of the potential biases or inaccuracies that could be present. For these reasons, it is important to identify if there are third-party sources in the news report of NSIP.

In the case of NSIP, the programme implementers and the beneficiaries are considered as the primary sources of information that journalists should interact with to obtain first-hand information about the programme.

3.3.4 Propagation of misleading/inaccurate information

In line with the point made previously, the transmission of false and inaccurate information is a significant problem in Nigeria's news media. The role of the media in reporting may at times be "misleading, inaccurate, or speculative" (Ilesanmi et al., 2022, p. 237). Consequently, misleading news can lead to erroneous beliefs and foster social unrest, whereas proper information can inform the public, keep them informed of current events, and assist them in making informed decisions. It is however observed that there is a methodological fault in Ilesanmi's study despite its insightful finding that most of the newspaper communication consists of inaccurate information, misconceptions, and panic messages that leave readers feeling hopeless. This thesis, irrespective of noting the limitation in Ilesanmi's study looks out for any evidence of the claim made by the author as in this study news coverage of NSIP programmes.

3.3.5 Inadequate agenda setting

The theme of inadequate agenda setting suggests that the media does not always sufficiently reflect the issues that are important to the public. In a study of the media coverage of banditry in Nigeria, Alphonsus *et al* (2022) found that:

> …media agenda-getting on banditry in Nigeria is generally poor because it is characterized by a low frequency of stories, low volume of stories, lack of detailed stories, as well as less focus on solutions related to banditry (Alphonsus et al., 2022, p. 355).

Although the researcher undertook a comparative study of two selected newspapers and TV stations and found that newspapers covered more grounds than their TVs counterpart; as it has been previously argued in this thesis, the use of news story length and script length for newspaper and TV respectively are not enough basis for the comparisons as they differ in styles.

To therefore fill in this kind of methodological gap, this thesis will focus on comparing four selected major newspapers to provide more appropriate insight on how the newspapers are handling agenda-setting function of the media.

3.3.6 Episodic news framing

> "Newspaper narratives … were largely episodic and event-based with limited thematic discussions that could enhance public understanding (Erubami et al., 2021, p. 101).

Episodic frame is another prevalent kind of frame in Nigeria media research. Episodic news framing is a type of news framing in which news reports focus on specific individuals, events, or stories as opposed to broader social, economic and/or political themes and contexts. It emphasises the 'human-interest' or 'personal' part of the story rather than its broader ramifications. This form of news framing is frequently employed to elicit an emotional response from the audience, which can be utilised to sway public opinion.

Erubami *et al*'s (2021, p. 95) found that newspapers' report of an important public health issue "was mainly episodic with little media prominence, and its framing was too inadequate to compel the desired public health response." In essence, episodic news framing is a serious threat to the public's understanding of principal issues as it often creates a distorted, emotionally charged narrative that can easily mislead viewers and lead to a lack of comprehension of the nuances of a particular subject. Public misinformation can have a far-reaching and critical implications. This thesis, as part of its contribution to the body of knowledge, confirms the kind of news framing in NSIP reports. Its, beyond looking out for episodic framing, examines other kinds of frames reported by the press to ascertain how issues of public concern such as the NSIPs poverty alleviation and social welfare agenda are being presented to the public. While episodic framing may provide public understanding and the awareness of certain sentiments in

reporting, it is important that research further to provide insightful knowledge that can highlight the potential consequences of episodic news framing.

3.3.7 Ethnicity and religious biases

The news media can shape public opinion towards ethnic and religious communities but can also perpetuate biases and stereotypes that marginalise and exclude these groups. In a study by Abubakre (2018), the researcher found religious bias in Nigerian newspapers. According to the researcher,

> newspapers within the south-west Lagos-Ibadan axis were swift in expressing their disapproval of wearing hijab at schools. This prompted the *Daily Trust*, a highly influential newspaper in the northern geopolitical zone, with a large Muslim population, to call on CAN[13] to exercise tolerance and understanding in its June 20, 2016, editorial (Abubakre, 2018, p. 531)

In another study, Uwazuruike equally noted that "ethnic consideration was a major determinant in the manner news frames were used in reporting" (Uwazuruike, 2018, p. 80). In the analysis of news articles following the abduction of schoolgirls by the Boko Haram Islamic terrorist group, it was discovered that the *Vanguard*, a leading national newspaper, only consulted with Christian clergymen who further reinforced the notion that the abduction was specifically targeted at Christians and that the abductors were inherently tied to the Islamic faith. The authors states that:

> "*Vanguard* relied exclusively on Christian clergies who reinforced the belief that the abduction was targeted at Christians and that Boko Haram could not be separated from Islam" (Confidence Uwazuruike, 2018, p. 80).

Ethnic and religious prejudices and biases can result in stereotypes and discrimination against specific communities, posing serious problems for news reporting. Biases can be damaging,

[13] Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)

especially in conflict or instances of communal conflict while biased reporting may inflame prejudices, escalate conflict, and social tensions. Social cohesion on the other hand can also be hindered by ethnic and religious biases. This thesis, as part of its content analyses, data gather provides us with insight to ascertain forms of bias evident in newspaper coverage of the NSIP.

3.3.8 Prevalence of straight news format in Nigerian press

In the newspaper industry, there are varieties of story presentation styles. For example, there is news, features, opinion, editorial, etc. The news is often distinguished from news feature with the addition of descriptive prefix-word, 'straight' making it "straight news." Straight news is objective reporting without remark or analysis. According to Alphonsus *et al.*, straight news is a formal genre of news that tell stories "Without providing deeper details" (Alphonsus et al., 2022, p. 349). Straight news reporting provides truthful and objective information, but it also has its drawbacks. Straight news reporting lacks context and depth because it merely gives the facts without analysis or commentary. This can lead to a lack of understanding and a cursory perspective of complex situations, especially those that require in-depth reporting and analysis. Adeniran's study of maternal and child health found that "straight news [is] dominating across the sampled newspapers" (Adeniran & Oso, 2020, p. 51). Validating Adeniran, Nwachukwu averred:

> "The attention paid to the conflict by the media is not surprising in view of the importance of conflict as a news value. The dominant story genre used by the newspapers in reporting the conflict was the straight news format. This agrees with other studies that found straight news as the dominant story genre in reporting the Nigeria farmers/herders conflict" (Nwachukwu et al., 2021, p. 70).

As a result of the prevalence of straight news, this thesis also provides insight on the dominant kind of stories, as part of comprehensive investigation into the coverage of the National Social

Investment Programmes (NSIPs) by Nigerian newspapers. This these offers valuable insights into the extent to which the media informs the public about NSIPs using different story format.

Also, through the analysis of story format in reporting on NSIPs, this thesis discusses the strengths and weaknesses of this approach. While straight news reporting is characterised by its objective and factual nature, it often lacks the contextual depth necessary for a nuanced understanding of complex issues. This lack of depth can lead to a superficial knowledge of the NSIPs among the public, potentially undermining the programmes' goals and their reception by Nigerian society as against other story formats like features.

This thesis also explores alternative formats, such as feature articles and opinion pieces, that could enhance public engagement and understanding of NSIPs. This research makes effort to identify the different reporting styles used in NSIP coverage and how they are likely to influence public perception and discourse. This thesis therefore aims to contribute to body of research on what story format was by Nigerian press in their coverage of NSIP. This thesis will not only enrich the academic literature on media coverage of social initiatives in Nigeria but also offer practical recommendations for journalists and media outlets, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of public communication regarding these essential programmes.

3.4 Twitter/X studies on Nigeria

As X, previously known as Twitter, has gained widespread popularity, a growing body of research has explored its functionality, particularly its role in facilitating social and political discourse. X (Nigeria) is a 'glocal' online platform where people with a common history and socio-cultural and socio-political interests interact online. The online community has both local users and Nigerian nationals in the diaspora. The language of X in Nigeria are languages spoken

by Nigerians – mostly English, Pidgin and a blend of the local languages which include Yorùbá, Igbo, and Hausa, among others. Based on the belief that these languages are means of engaging X users and that the same strategy has been deployed by media, state, and politicians to improve communicative power, researchers are beginning to inquire into how languages are used in discourse (Opeibi, 2019).

In a UK study, Robson and Stockwell once argued that "language constitutes reality" (Beeman, 1986, p. iv; Robson & Stockwell, 2005, p. 2) in a "negotiated social process" (Beeman, 1986, p. iv) and the control of the use of language is a limitation on the expression of realities. Beeman (1986) foundational explication in US study is supported by Robson and Stockwell later work on language as reality constructor and a means of negotiating social process. Opeibi's (2019) study in Nigeria also validate the assertion that language is a veritable tool for social mobilisation. On Nigeria Xsphere, discourse uses language to engage and sensitise the people. Equally, many Nigerians use their native language to express their sentiments and views (Adamu et al., 2021).

On X, users usually write to present themselves and their thoughts from a definite stance which is a position and how a user conveys their opinion or judgement in writing. Chiluwa (2015) examines the stance in tweets on *Boko Haram* and *Al Shabaab discourses* on X. *Boko Haram* (which means "Western education is sin") is considered a terrorist group in Nigeria while *Al Shabaab* which translates to "the Youth" is a radical arm of the Union of Islamic Courts in Mogadishu. Al Shabaab is a Sunni Islamic terrorist group in Somalia. Chiluwa's study examines 'radicalist discourse' by these two groups on X. The research conceptualised "radicalist discourse" as the language associated with radical movements and rebel groups, either written or spoken" (Chiluwa, 2015). The study uses textual analysis to scrutinise tweets.

The evidence suggests that both Boko Haram and Al Shabeeb's tweets have strong ideological undertones. Through the use of attitude markers, which are a common component of stance in activist discourse, the study demonstrates the many ways in which the groups represent their perspectives, interests, and attitudes on X.

Chiluwa's study is relevant to the discourse on NSIP in Nigeria, particularly in relation to how stance-taking and respective media coverage lead to the creation of public perception. Also, just as Boko Haram uses ideological markers on X to shape opinions, so too can the framing of NSIP by media representatives and individuals serve to either support or criticise government efforts and shape public reception. This stance-taking has implications for how poverty and political issues are framed regarding NSIPs, with specific importance for places like northern Nigeria where some ideologically based opposition to Western education can potentially affect the effectiveness of these programmes.

In other research, Chiluwa and Ifukor studied the stance in the #BringBackOurGirls campaign discourse on X. The campaign started after 276 girls were kidnapped at a government school in Chibok, Borno State. The study derived 2500 tweets from X and 2500 posts from Facebook. Using discourse analysis as methodology, the research thematically analysed tweets from the key groups involved in the debate. The result from the study, first confirms the 'spreadability' (Jenkins et al., 2013) of the social media campaigns, second and more significant for this review, the study shows that language used by #BringBackOurGirls reflects moods, feelings, and judgements. According to the authors, most of the analyses show negative power. One limitation of this study is that it only provided us with the language power of the campaign, but it draws no insightful analysis of the implications of the tweets on the campaign. Although, an inference was made that the #BringBackOurGirls discourse was 'slacktivism.'

Building on the forgoing studies, this research will provide insight about stance on a subject of NSIPs discourse in Nigeria and data on public response to poverty reduction programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

In another study, Fink *et al* (2016) focused on studying X data from Nigeria. The data studied showed that socio-political issues like conversations on the #BringBackOurGirls hashtag are more likely to be adopted by densely connected users with multiple networks of mutual users who have used the same compared to mainstream news hashtags.

As framing is at the heart of mainstream media studies for decades, scholars have also employed the theoretical assumption framing theory to explain social media discourses. A good illustration of a hybrid type of research is an examination of how Boko Haram is portrayed in Nigerian media and on X (Ette & Joe, 2018). The study collected data from four Nigerian newspapers and on X for a period of six months. The study uses Matthes and Kohring's (2008) hierarchical cluster analysis approach to identify frames in the Nigeria press while X data was mined using the Mozdeh's X Time Series Analysis software. According to the study's findings, the mainstream press did not use the same frames that were popular on X, such as the frame "war against women," which was not present in newspapers. Ette and Joe argued that this could be explained by the absence of controlling factors present in newspapers organisation but absent on X since it is a 'Produsers' platform. Similarly, it was found that the press published news or interviewed-based content while tweets were from an individual's perspective. The implication of this study raises a question about how media content is produced and what influences the process of media content production. Taking the insights from this study further, concerns are raised about how the media frames issues of public concern. It also raises questions on what newspaper proprietors and managers deem important to frame and present. This is because in

contrast to X, where issues are generated by its users, who are presumably representative of the general population, the control over what constitutes the journalistic frame is in the hands of journalists and editors.

In light of the findings from Ette and Joe (2018), it is crucial to examine the role of the press, specifically focusing on how Nigerian newspapers address the National Social Investment poverty reduction programme. This inquiry into the framing within legacy media, compared to that on Twitter, will not only enhance our understanding of their study but also validate the researchers' assertions regarding media influence. The question stems from their observations that Nigerian newspapers and Twitter depict issues differently, notably in the context of the National Social Investment programme. Their research suggests that newspapers often do not reflect the frames popular on Twitter, indicating a more controlled narrative in traditional media compared to the dynamic and user-generated content prevalent on social platforms.

Therefore, investigating how Nigerian newspapers portray this programme is vital for revealing their impact on public perception and further confirming the claims about media framing put forth by Ette and Joe. This exploration aims to identify the distinct narratives shaped by legacy media and how they may differ from the discussions occurring in the Nigerian Twittersphere.

Exploring the six social media outlets which included X for information and news destination on the Covid-19 pandemic, Obi-Ani et al. (2020) questions the role of online platforms in news dissemination. Using field survey research methodology, the researchers noted that although the social media used for (mis)information is evident in this study, X is a very important social media platform where a mass amount of information can spread fast since information is key. Secondly, the study noted that X is a prompt and efficient communication channel that helps keep up dialogues and such dialogues are not limited by geographical location. As a result,

Nigerians living abroad may take part in the conversation. This shows that social media platforms like X have a significant advantage for public communication over the legacy press, which typically rehashes chosen voices based on accessible news sources and dominant influences. A noteworthy result from this research is that, in addition to facilitating conversations, X provides the right sources with real-time chances for information rectification and verification. This finding is relevant to this study in the sense that the public can proactively engage with news stories on X. What this implies is that representative dissenting voices could share their individual views about issues on the National Social Investment Programmes. While it has been previously observed that government and public officials dominate the news, X gives the public an equal opportunity to give feedback on what is on the news (for example, a twitter user could respond to news tweets). By implication, researching discourse on the National Social Investment poverty reduction programmes on X, this study can access multi-perspectival data from a diverse and geographically decentralised Nigerian public.

In another study of Nigeria's Xsphere discourse on LGBTQ, Onanuga (2021) contends that online anti-homosexuality "campaigners" challenge gender ideology and recast it as a negative adjective. It argues, utilising Computer Mediated Pragma-Discursive Analysis and corpus linguistics, that Nigerian anti-homosexuals negotiate an anti-homonationalist ideology that is supported by linguistic cues. The use of linguistic cues in tweets helps us understand speakers' feelings and opinions about the subject. The study also noted that religion is often regarded as a fundamental component of the oppositional worldview. Highlighting religion as a fundamental component of view formation explains the Nigerians' religious compliance level. This is significant because it relates to a previous finding from a study on one of the components (the *Tradermoni* loan scheme) of the National Social Investment Programmes, as reported by

Arikewuyo & Akanbi (2020), that the programme is Islamically acceptable, but its implementation faces several challenges.

In another X study, although on celebrity discourse, the power of language in the socialisation process is uncovered through the earlier noted engagement potential of X. In this study by (Inya, 2021), using an interaction pragmatics theoretical framework, findings show that X users deployed the interactional practices of joint fantasising, intertextual allusions, and ethnolinguistic repertoire to orient to the newcomer-celebrity's identity, mark their own identity and co-construct the need for caution by the celebrity. The paper argues that socialising celebrities new to X might include emphasising that their statuses as celebrities might expose them to more savage replies and targeted bullying. The finding of this study further confirms the proactive status of X users in Nigeria and how they engage subjects that attract public interest. Another conclusion drawn from the study is that X users in their interactions with subjects, users may be extreme in their reactions and comments, this, the author height as the "toxic nature of Twitter" (Inya, 2021, p. 149). What this suggests about X is the inclusivity of its users as well as the level of freedom that members of the Nigerian public have in terms of responding and commenting on any subjects without restriction to the freedom they enjoy.

Adamu *et al.* (2021) provide insight into the public mood on X by analysing the Nigerians' response to the Covid 19 emergency response for vulnerable persons. The proposition that results from the study will help the government understand the public they serve as well as taking such understanding into account when making provision for the people's needs, as well as designing programmes to meet those needs, will make the government effective in delivering on programme policy. This is especially crucial to keep in mind when building programmes

such as poverty reduction initiatives that require a comprehensive grasp of people's basic needs and evaluation (through feedback) for improvements.

In recent research, using the discursive approach, Dosekun (2022) studies the Nigerian feminist movement on X with the hashtag #BeingFemaleinNigeria. The campaign sought to represent the voices, and experiences of Nigerian women. The analysis of 700 tweets shows the conversation mostly involved the educated, capacious, and confident urban career women belonging to the country's higher socio-economic strata. Therefore, the study found that the voices were unrepresentative of the problems and experiences of many Nigerian women. In other to understand the implication of this study for Nigeria, as much as how representative Nigerian Xsphere is, there is a need to further study Nigerian Xsphere under different but relevant subjects. Consequently, there is a need to examine public participation in discussions on NSIP poverty programmes by the government. This will be significant since it will tell us what voices are represented and how this manifests itself in NSIP's tweets.

In a 2022 study, X's public opinions provide possibilities to investigate disagreements between distinct perspectives. This study has shown that the platform serves as a window through which allegedly unpredictable social concerns are formed as interconnected elements of a whole. In a study of how X users adopt moral disengagement as a method to justify online criminal behaviour, Lazarus *et al* (2022) use a constructivist/interpretive method to examine Nigeria X users' response to the Economic Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) tweets about the arrest of cybercriminals popularly referred to as 'Yahoo boys' in Nigeria. The study's findings show that Nigerian X users use linguistic strategies in social discursive responses to compare Nigerian politicians to arrested cybercriminals. Thus, X conversations highlight similarities between arrested cybercriminals and Nigerian politicians. The paper argues, based on collected

data, that X discussions pursue the argument that while the arrested young cybercriminals are referred to as "Yahoo boys," Nigerian politicians and many wealthy people in the country are equally responsible for similar fraudulent activities, making them "Yahoo men." The study suggests that the boundary between individuals who are not criminals and cybercriminals is fuzzy, making it difficult to categorise cybercriminal behaviour as a unique "subculture." First, these results imply that Nigerian X users can actively and meaningfully contribute to social debate. Similarly, X users in Nigeria can critically evaluate recent events and become a force to represent their respective group interests to form opinions on certain matters especially issues of public interest.

Consequent to the foregoing understanding, Nigeria's Xsphere is confirmed to be an active space for public consideration, engagement, and formation of opinion on matters people of the country consider worth giving attention to. Therefore, X has become a platform that allows conversational exchange between powerless groups and powerful groups (e.g., politicians). What this may mean for other public interest discourse in Nigeria Xsphere is that the platform offers a channel for the public the opportunity to interact with programmes and policies. In the instance of this thesis, there are conversations about the National Social Investment Programmes on X; the public at different times interacts with stories and news development on the deliveries of the various components of the programme. Drawing inspiration from Lazarus et al. (2022) study, it will be useful to analyse X conversations regarding poverty programmes in order to ascertain the public's perspective on the National Social Investment Programmes.

Building on the aforementioned studies, Adesina et al. (2019) particularly advanced Adamu *et al's* (2021) research on the public mood. Adesina et al. (2019) used the X dataset to conduct a sentimental analysis of the opinions of X users on the industrial action by the Academic Staff

Union of Universities (ASUU) by exploring the tweets on the strike. First, Adesina et al. (2019) found that the majority of the public held negative opinions about the strike action. Unexpectedly, the study discovered a large number of positive attitudes about the strike action. This, according to the researchers' dataset, was due to students utilising the strike period for skill development, self-improvement, or the development of an online business. The analysis also revealed the most popular subjects discussed on X during the ASUU strike. These topics included effect, strike call-off, ASUU appeal, student demonstration, and student appeal. These results demonstrate the potential for X research to provide information, knowledge, and perspectives from multiple angles on topics of significant public concern. Therefore, a study of X use by Nigerians on the National Social Investment poverty reduction programmes has the possibility of providing useful multi-perspective knowledge on the NSIP social welfare plans.

There is a correlation between X's usability and its effectiveness for social mobilisation. Social media platforms, remarkably X, facilitate the organisation and documentation of events by social and digital activists. Uwalaka (2022) in a mixed-method study of the #EndSARS protest in Nigeria, found that X was adopted by Nigerians because of its affordability and usability. As it has been argued in an earlier chapter of this thesis, Uwalaka agrees that although mainstream media have perceived reliability, findings show that protesting members of the public and activists rarely use mainstream media to be heard. This, as argued in this thesis is a result of the inaccessibility of mainstream media to the non-societal elite. Also, in terms of news consumption use, the lack of power supply to watch the news on television, among other factors such as the cost of buying newspapers makes it uneasy for the average Nigerian to access news on conventional mass media. Hence, social media, and in this particular regard, X is an easily accessible platform by Nigerian with a smart mobile phone with internet.

Next, Uwalaka (2022) study noted that the majority (52%) of the tweets on #EndSARS were solidarity tweets. Frustration, validation, invalidation, and other categories got the remaining 48% share of the sampled tweets population.

This study validates social media platforms as protest drivers in Nigeria, revealing that digital networks are reducing the cost of initiating and planning collective activities. It also demonstrates that social media platforms serve as a vehicle of solidarity where protesters learn, plan, honour their offline friends, and pledge solidarity to offline protesters. Lastly, it illustrates that social media is equipping Nigerians with the knowledge and information required for the emergence of protest culture in the country.

Drawing from the findings of this study, Nigerian Xsphere has an active X community that often engages in debates on topics ranging from politics and current events to popular culture, lifestyle, and entertainment. the National Social Investment Programmes introduce by the government as a social welfare project against poverty is one relevant socio-political topic with the potential to attract vibrant and diverse views which need to be studied to ascertain some level of understanding of the public perception of the poverty reduction scheme.

X (Nigeria) is a 'glocal' online platform where people with a common history and socio-cultural and socio-political interests interact online. The language of X in Nigeria is mostly English, Pidgin and a blend of local languages. More so, language has been noted as a powerful tool for social mobilisation, and Nigerians use their native tongues to express their sentiments and views (Adamu et al., 2021).

Chiluwa (2015) provides insight by demonstrating the many ways in which the groups represent their perspectives, interests, and attitudes on X. In another research, Chiluwa & Ifukor (2015)

analysed the #BringBackOurGirls campaign discourse on X, proving the spreadability of social media campaigns and demonstrating that language expresses attitudes, emotions, and values.

Fink et al. (2015b) discovered that intensively connected consumers are more inclined to accept socio-political issues while Ette & Joe (2018) discovered that the mainstream media did not employ the same frames that were popular on X. This raises difficulties regarding how the media portrays matters of public concern and what newspaper owners and editors believe are essential for framing and presentation. It is essential to investigate the function of the press with a particular emphasis on how Nigerian media cover the National Social Investment poverty reduction programme. This study will help in comprehending how the media has reported on the government's social investment agenda.

Obi-Ani et al. (2020) observed that Nigerians overseas can participate in X conversations since it is fast and efficient. X offers real-time information correction and verification, and the public can actively engage with news items. This allows the public an equal chance to comment on the news, giving this study multi-perspectival data from a broad and geographically decentralised Nigerian public. This shows Nigerian X users are proactive, inclusive, and free to engage and remark on any topic and there is paucity of data and research on subject like the National Social Investment Programmes which is generating insightful conversation on X.

Nigeria has a large and active X community, with many users using the platform to share their thoughts, opinions, and experiences. One of the defining features of Nigeria's Xsphere is its strong sense of community and engagement. Users frequently join in trending hashtags and engage in heated conversations, use the platform as a tool for social activism (Chiluwa & Ifukor, 2015; Uwalaka, 2022) and advocating for social justice causes (Sadiq Muhammad & Nat, 2022) as demonstrated by research.

It is also important to note that X is also widely used by journalists, influencers, and celebrities, who use it to share news, promote their work, and engage with their followers. There is also a growing number of Nigerian corporate entities using X to reach their respective stakeholders.

Essentially, Nigeria's Xsphere represents the country's rich cultural legacy and dynamic social landscape and acts as a forum for conversation, advocacy, and connection for people from all walks of life.

The preceding studies on Twitter's effectiveness in Nigeria reveal several notable gaps and weaknesses that warrant further investigation. While it is acknowledged that Nigeria boasts a vibrant and engaged Twitter community, there is a lack of comprehensive analysis regarding how this engagement translates into tangible social change or impact. Previous research has primarily focused on the platform's use for social activism and advocacy for social justice causes, yet it has not sufficiently explored the depth of these movements or the actual outcomes arising from Twitter campaigns.

Moreover, there is limited attention given to the diversity of voices within Nigeria's Twittersphere. Existing studies often overlook the nuances of participation among different demographics, including variations in engagement levels across age, gender, and socio-economic backgrounds. This lack of intersectional analysis may result in an incomplete understanding of the platform's role in shaping public discourse.

Additionally, while the role of journalists, influencers, and celebrities on Twitter is acknowledged, previous studies have not adequately examined the implications of their presence for grassroots movements and local users. The dynamics between these influential

figures and ordinary users could significantly affect the authenticity and effectiveness of social advocacy on the platform.

Finally, there is a growing trend of corporate entities utilising Twitter for stakeholder engagement, yet the implications of this commercialisation on the platform's original purpose as a space for free expression and social activism remain underexplored. Understanding how corporate interests intersect with public discourse on Twitter could reveal critical insights into the platform's evolving nature in Nigeria.

In summary, while previous studies have laid a foundation for understanding Twitter's role in Nigeria, there is a pressing need for more nuanced, intersectional, and outcome-focused research to address these gaps and provide a fuller picture of the platform's impact on Nigerian society.

3.5 Review of prior studies on National Social Investment Programmes

Nigeria, a country with a population of approximately 200 million, have 133 million people who are living in poverty, according to recent estimates (Egole, 2024; National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). As a nation, Nigeria contributes greatly to global poverty, which has become a worldwide concern. The first Sustainable Development Goal is to end global poverty for all people by 2030. Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) figures for 2022 indicate a 13 per cent increase in the number of persons living in poverty since the NSIP was implemented. Initiated in 2016, the NSIP is a social welfare programme of the federal government of Nigeria aiming to pull more than 100 million Nigerians out of poverty. Few academic studies have examined the NSIP poverty reduction programme and its components (Adamolekun et al.,

2021; Akintayo et al., 2022; Akujuru, 2019; Arikewuyo & Akanbi, 2020; Olateju, 2021; Oyewo, 2021).

In a research article by Oyewo (2021), the challenges of National Social Investment programmes were addressed. Setting the focus of the research, the author conceptualised NSIP as a social protection programme. The article reviewed the programme against Global Multi-dimension Poverty Index (GMPI). It also reviewed literature and national newspaper articles that the author used to support his argument.

The results from the research article identified four distinct challenges impeding the success of the programme. The challenges identified by Oyewo (2021) are poor accountability and transparency, political factors, funding, and lack of proper coordination. Although, the author did not state the specific method used for the research or specific details on how the GMPI index was deployed. Nevertheless, challenges number one, two and four are related to preliminary issues that drive this study. First, on transparency, the news media is a useful platform through which government officials and NSIP handlers could account for modalities and how the fund allocated to the programme was spent. Regular media coverage of the NSIP matters also encourages transparency. Second, political factors – such as state power and influence by politicians can considerably influence how stories that connect to political power holders are reported in a country like Nigeria where democracy is not working. The research suggested that because of politicisation, ethnicity, favouritism and nepotism, data and information published are often condemned by the public – they believe the figures given by the government through the news media are untrue. This disbelief calls for attention to study the news media and how news sources are managed. It is important to investigate how the news media coverage the National Social Investment Programmes in Nigeria to understand how to

address this challenge identified by Oyewo (2021). Lastly, the research note that proper coordination is confronting the poverty reduction scheme. This, the author explained is a result of inappropriate training and coordination of NSIP staff on the field. This suggests that an untrained staff may also not know the significance of effective communication which is a major aspect of the programme.

In this study, the technique and approaches for the theoretical argument were not stated, which is one of the shortcomings of the study. Another issue to be concerned about is that the author did not declare any conflicts of interest. These two issues are constraints that might impact and lead to a very different outcome.

Taking a closer look at the communication channels that were used in the implementation of the National Social Investment Programmes, Akintayo et al. (2022) empirically investigated the channels of communication. Akintayo et al. (2022) provided insights into effective communication implied from one of the challenges identified by Oyewo (2021). Using survey research design Akintayo, *et al* (2022) studied nine local government areas of three purposively selected states of Akwa-Ibom, Delta, and Rivers. With multistage sampling, a sample size of 827 was drawn using Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill's formula. The authors conceptualised knowledge as the extent to which respondents had access to verifiable, credible, and actionable information. As indicated by the findings of the study, mass mobilisation was accomplished through a variety of channels.

The importance of this study lies in its focus on communication, which is a significant function of journalism. This study found that communication plays a significant role in influencing people's understanding of the NSIP poverty alleviation initiative. According to the survey results, face-to-face communication played an important role in educating individuals about

involvement. Despite being highly educated on poverty alleviation programmes, respondents reported low participation rates. This indicates that respondents are not convinced of the programmes' intent and accessibility. The research argued that the low participation rate of respondents was because the programme was not beneficial to them. This is worrisome because of the huge amount of funding committed to the programmes' implementation in various parts of Nigeria. These results confirm the importance of effective and adequate communication on NSIP for public education and reorientation. This could be achieved through local news media like the radio which the study confirms. Newspapers rank third after television. One limitation of this study is that data is from purposively selected three out of 36 states in Nigeria and the reason for the selection was not stated by the author in the research method. More so, the sample state represents only one of the six geopolitical regions in Nigeria. Another concern with his research is that the paper did not mention any inclusion and/or exclusion criteria.

A survey of one of the components of the National Social Investment Programmes, Tradermoni by Adedeji (2015) shows that the Tradermoni subprogramme has a substantial impact on market women's entrepreneurial development, with statistically significant effects on inventory and business growth. The report suggests that the federal government should ensure that a similar effort is written into the constitution. The implications of this finding demonstrate to the significance and value of the programme for the nation, making it a newsworthy topic that demands not only substantial coverage but also coverage from multiple perspectives. Adedeji (2015) only offers quantitative data drawn from the sampled population within five markets in Lagos. Lagos is out of 36 states in Nigeria where the programmes is being executed and there are several markets in Lagos, but this study has only considered 5 out of the 425 markets in Lagos. More so, the questionnaire survey method may not be appropriate for uneducated market women. Therefore, this study notes a concern about the effectiveness of the research instrument

as the method did not make any procedural statement on how the questionnaires were administered. This points us to methodological inadequacy, hence, the need for more investigation using other appropriate and well-documented methods.

Investigating the National Investment poverty reduction programme from a policy telescope, Akujuru (2019) studied the effect of Public Policy on Economic Empowerment – an analysis of the Tradermoni Scheme. The population of the study consists of 87 million Nigerians living in extreme poverty. Questionnaire was used to collect primary data from a sample size of 402 traders across the six geopolitical regions. For data analysis, descriptive and inferential statistics were utilised. The study found that Trader Moni empowers petty traders in Nigeria, but that the implementation of the programme is hindered by insufficient information, non-payment of stipends, bribery and corruption, wrong bank verification number (BVN), overbearing hands of politicians in the programme, high transportation fare paid by participants to get to work, website and internet glitches, and inadequate funding of the programme.

In another study, Olateju (2021) attempt to study the impact of Tradermoni on business growth. The researcher uses a questionnaire to collect data from two purposively selected local governments among the 20 local governments in Lagos. The study's findings show that the Tradermoni programme has increased petty traders' profits and enhanced business expansion. Olateju's findings establish the importance of the Tradermoni programme in encouraging and sustaining small businesses as evidence from two studied local governments shows the effectiveness of the programme for petty businesses. Although this study provides useful insight into the impact of the Tradermoni (one of the components of the NSIP) from only two Local Governments in Lagos, there is a need for more research covering not only other local governments but to have a better understanding of how the programme is faring nationwide.

Considering the study at hand, the following issue arises: what role do the media play in promoting Tradermoni programmes? Is the press reporting the programme? How are they reporting Tradermoni and other National Social Investment Programmes components?

Taken together, the body's current knowledge of the National Social Investment Programmes suggests that information and communication play important role in the implementation of NSIP (Akintayo et al., 2022; Oyewo, 2021). Mass interaction on poverty programmes influences participation, reduces unaccountability, and improves transparency. It can be assumed from these two pieces of literature (Adamaagashi et al., 2023; Akenbor & Obeki, 2022) that effective communication and frequent interactive commitment will determine the accomplishment of the National Social Investment Programmes in Nigeria. It is, therefore, important to examine the roles of mass communication and news media in Nigeria.

In order to offer new knowledge, the role of the news media (the press) in covering National Social Investment Programmes must therefore be investigated. Similarly, studies of the Nigerian Xsphere, on the other hand, acknowledge X as a thriving platform where Nigerians contribute to national discourse. People's (X users') interaction with news provides helpful insights on public issues on X, so it functions as a platform for public response to government programmes and opinion formation. Also, to solidify our understanding on the subject matter, we also conducting in-depth interview with journalist who have reported on the subject of study.

Based on the identified research gap and the imperative need to contribute to the existing body of knowledge, this study sets out to address the following sets of research objectives and questions.

3.6 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has provided review of the scholarly work pertinent to this thesis focus. The opening section centred on dissecting studies related to newspaper reporting in the Nigerian context, emphasising their aims, research designs, and primary outcomes. An evident pattern emerged from this analysis: Content Analysis stands out as the preeminent research methodology in the realm of Nigerian newspaper studies, frequently employing a quantitative perspective. Nevertheless, this thesis contends, in consonance with various scholars, that although Content Analysis is adept at quantifying substantial volumes of textual data, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) affords a more intricate and contextually grounded comprehension of the subject matter at hand.

The review then proceeded to examine existing research on Nigeria's NSIP. This inquiry disclosed a significant methodological gap. Despite the consensus among scholars regarding the crucial role of communication and media exposure in the effectiveness of NSIP, particularly with respect to fostering public engagement, transparency, and accountability, there exists a scarcity of literature that scrutinises the specific function of Nigerian newspapers in reporting on NSIP. Moreover, no research to date has integrated Content Analysis and CDA to explore this subject matter.

This thesis contends that this methodological gap warrants attention in order to achieve a more comprehensive grasp of the Nigerian press' framing of NSIP and its consequential influence on public opinion. Consequently, the study proposes a mixed-methods research design, amalgamating Content Analysis, CDA, and In-Depth Interviews (IDI) with journalists, to investigate media reporting of NSIP. This multi-dimensional approach is anticipated to yield a

more profound and insightful examination of the intricate dynamics between media coverage, source impact, and the general populace's perception of this pivotal social initiative.

Additionally, the thesis emphasises the imperative of methodological transparency, which is essential for the replicability and verification of findings, thereby bolstering the reliability and credibility of the research endeavour. Through addressing these methodological constraints and implementing a meticulous mixed-methods approach, the thesis aspires to make a substantial contribution to the academic discipline of media studies in Nigeria, with a particular emphasis.

CHAPTER FOUR

4 Theoretical Framework

Theories are developed principles that help explain, predict, and understand a subject or phenomenon in the world. Theoretical framework is the structure that holds a body of study together. This chapter, therefore, focuses on explaining the body of theorised knowledge that supports this thesis. It also connects this thesis to well-established ideas upon which this study is grounded. Specifically, this chapter explains the key theories relevant to the focus of this thesis. The theories discussed are the Political Economy of Communication, Public Sphere Theory, Agenda-Setting Theory, Framing Theory, Development Media Theory, and Social Responsibility Theory. These theories establish the foundation upon which this thesis discuss how media coverage operates in Nigeria. The selected theories are relevant to this study because they help us understand how media institutions, particularly newspapers, cover the NSIP and the role they play in shaping public discourse.

This chapter present before the literature review chapter and before the methodology because theoretical review serves as a bridge between the foundational discussions in this these and the empirical findings and analysis that are presented in later chapters – Study Chapters Six, Seven and Eight. The earlier chapters, especially the literature review (See: Chapter Three), a sizable study on media's role in political and social contexts were reviewed. Now, this chapter introduces the theories relevant upon which this this thesis builds reviews on. This will provide an appropriate lens through which they can interpret the newspaper data content analysis and social media subjected to critical discourse analysis as present later in the thesis.

Following this theoretical review is the research methodology chapter, where the theoretical framework directly informs the choice of methods. For example, one of the key theories in this

thesis is the Political Economy of Communication theory which helps shape the decision to use content analysis and critical discourse analysis as primary methods, ensuring that the study captures how economic and political pressures influence media reporting on NSIP. The Public Sphere, Framing and Agenda-Setting theories, on the other hand, provide insights into how certain narratives may dominate media coverage and how these narratives shape public perception, which is explored in later chapters through empirical analysis.

This theoretical framework chapter not only connects the initial research questions with the empirical investigation but also plays a crucial role in shaping the methodological approach adopted in the subsequent chapter. At different sections of this chapter, the foundation upon which the analysis and interpretation of data gathered for this thesis is considerably presented and discussed. Hence, ideas in this chapter drive the details presented in subsequent study chapters' discussions and analysis. Additionally, the theoretical frameworks presented in this chapter help make broader generalisations, conclusions, and recommendations. It ensures that the study is grounded in a coherent theoretical structure, which is essential for analysing both the content of Nigerian newspapers and the discussions on social media regarding NSIP.

4.1 Political Economy of Communication

The political economy of communication theory argues that media operations are influenced by the political and economic environment. This is particularly relevant to this thesis because it helps us understand how power dynamics and financial structures can impact media coverage of the programme. The political economy of communication theory's primary focus is on the relationship between media ownership, control, and content. In the Nigerian context, where media ownership is often concentrated among political and economic elites, understanding the

political economy of communication is crucial. This framework is essential to uncovering the influence of power dynamics and economic interests on media narratives in Nigeria.

The political economy theory of communication often highlights the potential conflict between private interests and the public good, which is crucial for understanding how media outlets might cover a government programme such as the National Social Investment Programmes. For example, media owners might have political affiliations or business interests that influence their reporting. In this sense, this theory also helps us understand how advertising revenue, commercial interests and government policies could influence media behaviour and contents.

Again, within the Nigerian context which is a multicultural country with a complex web of ethnic groups and power imbalances, the theory is even more relevant. This thesis uses this theory to analyse and explain how these factors might lead to biased or incomplete coverage of the programme. It allows for an examination of how the press might either reinforce existing power structures or provide a platform for marginalised voices. By applying this theory, the thesis can assess whether the press is fulfilling their role in providing balanced and accurate information, ultimately contributing to a more informed public discourse about the National Social Investment Programmes.

Moreover, the media has always operated within a political and economic environment. Although this environment was not earlier observed as primary influencers of communication like it seems today. To lay the foundation for this review of political economy of communication, it is important to understand what political economy theory is and how it has evolved and expanded into the field of communications.

The idea of political economy was first theorised by Adam Smith, who was a Scottish economist and philosopher. The concept of *political economy* is an amalgamation of two different concepts – politics and economy. The concepts attempt to explain the relationship between power and money. In his work, Adams Smith offers insights on how power and money affects each other. Although mostly comparative (between power and money), political economy offers insight on how the two amalgamated concepts affect other aspects of the society.

Adam Smith lived in Britain during the industrial revolution (1760–1840). He made efforts to comprehend how the system works. He consequently turned pro-capitalist. He organised, enumerated, and clarified the political economic order that was developing during the industrial revolution in his writings. He focused on the free market. He thought that a free market will guarantee that the best products and services are offered at the most affordable prices. Smith's idea was Capitalist-Utilitarian. This is so, in the sense that he finds maximising resources and opportunities for profitability. He also believed in political liberty and that the government is responsible for providing stable political frame for the economy – thence, the idea of the invisible hand. The invisible hand is at work when self-interest, competition and the profit motive guide our choices.

For a political economy of communication, two British scholars, Graham Murdock and Peter Golding started making a case for the relationship of power and money in communication. Murdock and Golding traced the history of the press and made a case for on how communication has been mostly financed over years, the evolving financing hurdle during the time of recession and how the cut in corporation advertising budget has drastically affected commercial advert patronage which was the main financial source the mass media depend on. The authors argue that the survival of the press, broadcast and any other form of media depend

on the power relations that exist between the media owners and political and economic actors. What this implies, also because of the strong relations between politics and power, is that the actors' interests will be, in the process of sustaining commercial relationship, there is interference with media independence, contents, agenda and frames. This is a foundational work that open political economy of communication. The ideological quests of Graham Murdock and Peter Golding have further explained the complexity and dynamic of media operations in the society. In a follow up article (Murdock, 1981), the former addressed the problems of conceptualising power and press, and he provided, but this was in effort to further establish his earlier work of Peter Golding on political economy (Murdock & Golding, 1973).

Following the development of the field of political economy of communication, several works have established the special relationship between political economy and communication. Some of which include McChesney (2000) which was primarily concerned with the economic concentration of media ownership in the United States and its impact on journalistic quality and diversity; Herman & Chomsky (2002), focuses on the political influence on media, arguing that powerful elites use the media as a tool to propagate their ideologies and maintain their control over society; Garnham (2011) explores the historical and socio-political factors that have shaped media systems; Garnham & Fuchs (2014) analyses the impact of digital technologies on media industries and argues that the rise of the internet has led to new forms of media ownership and control; Dwyer (2015) examines the role of media in development and argues that media can be a powerful tool for promoting social and economic change; Suleiman & Ojomo (2019) explores the relationship between media and democracy in Africa and they argue that the media plays a crucial role in promoting democratic governance and accountability and Knoche (2021), from a political economy perspective grounded in Marxian analysis, argues that understanding the commercialisation and economisation of the media industry within

contemporary capitalism is crucial, as it highlights the ongoing influence of capitalist structures and dynamics on media development.

Noting the two main dimensions of scholarly works on political economy theory of communication, Robert McChesney contends that one dimension addresses the nature of "relationship between the media and communication systems on the one hand and the broader social structure of society" while the other focus on how media "ownership, support mechanism (e.g., advertising and government policies) influence media behaviour and content" (McChesney, 2000, p. 110). This study's primarily focus on the latter while it may provide useful insights on the former. Although, the first examines how media and communication systems and contents support, contradict, or have an impact on current class and social relations, the second dimension of studies discuss structural factors and the process of communication production, distribution, and consumption. McChesney claimed that these two dimensions set the political economy approach apart from other types of communication and cultural analysis. He however noted that while this approach provides a distinct framework to understanding "certain issues extremely well" and providing "necessary context for most research questions in communication" field; but, in their assessment, political economy cannot explain all communication activity.

Justifying why the political economy approach is very useful in understanding economic and socio-political developments, Wasko, Murdock and Sousa debates on the premise of extending 'logic of capitalism' along 'marketisation as driving force' that worsening conflict between private interests and the public good, tense public policy, growing privatisation, and an increase in the abuse of private power has called for a robust theory such as the political economy theory;

it is particularly important for 'understanding contemporary media and communications' (Wasko et al., 2011, p. 2).

In a multicultural country like Nigeria, with over two hundred and fifty ethnic groups and multiplicity of language and variety of local dialects, conflict of interest is inevitable because of the differences that play out among the various cultures. Making a case for how the media can affect or influence coexistence and harmonisation of cultural differences matters. The same could be argued for varying interests of people who are of different culture. In political matter, decisions are left to the leaders who represents the culture groups. Today, due to demographic factors and cultural dynamics, Nigeria is characterised by both major and minor ethnic groups. The main ethnic groups are the Yorùbás, Hausas and the Igbos (by geo-political location, they are the South-West, North-West and the South-East); The remaining ethnic groups are less prominent. Economically, the largesse of the country gets first to the main ethnic group before the crumbs are left for others.

In terms of media and communication, which is the thrust of this study, the dominant voices in the Nigerian news media are also that of the Yorùbá, Hausa and Igbo. Debates, issues and concerns and decisions of these main ethnic group appears more mediatised than others. This could lead to the neglect of other concerns that may matter. The perverse operating mode of the phenomenon is described by Nigerian historian, Okwudiba Nnoli, who also examines the social dynamics that has enveloped ethnicity in Nigeria (Nnoli, 1978). This state of ethnicity drives the political affairs, and economic compromises can subsequently affect the news narrative which could be linked to the influence of news sources and/or media ownership influence. At the level of the news gathering, Galtung and Mari notes that a journalist cannot report everything. Such journalist is confronted with a decision to select from multiplicities of stories

that strikes his/her attention. This decision is further influenced by the connection such journalist have with the stories being considered (Galtung & Ruge, 1981). The media environment, to a great extent, correlate with McChesney's understanding while he categorised the studies of political economy of communication into two dimensions for robust understanding. Like Wasko *et al* (2011) posited, the political economy theory is relevant for the purpose of this study based on the conviction that it helps us understand the worsening conflict of interest in a complex society against public good. This theory is particularly useful in understanding the dynamics of public policy and its communication within a multicultural environment like Nigeria especially when public policy is, as a result, struggling. Consequently, the theoretical path of political economy of communication will be used to explain the data gathered in this study. This will help this thesis to a great extent, expanding on the body of knowledge this research is contributing to. It is also important to note that this study contributes to this theory and to its application to the communication field.

In summary, the political economy of communication theory provides a rich theoretical framework for unpacking the complicated relationships between media, power, and society within a country like Nigeria with its multicultural and fast-changing media landscape. This theory opens up ways of showing how structures of economies, politics, and social dynamics interact in the construction of media and their products and in the shaping of perception.

This theory will be a very appropriate theoretical framework since the thesis focuses on the media reportage of the National Social Investment Programmes in Nigeria. With the political economy of media framework, the thesis can critically examine how media ownerships, funding models, and political affiliations could have a bearing on the nature of framing and the coverage for this very integral government programme. It will allow investigating potential biases,

agenda-setting, and the marginalisation of voices that are not part of the media narrative. In addition, the insights derived from the political economy of communication theory could help to interpret the results obtained in content analysis and in-depth interviews with journalists.

For example, the theory can be used to explain if the identified patterns of media coverage reflect wider systemic influences, such as the prioritisation of commercial interests over public good or the influence of political elites in media narratives. For example, the theory can be used to explain if the identified patterns of media coverage reflect wider systemic influences, such as the prioritisation of commercial interests over public good or the influence of political elites in media narratives. This will enable the thesis to provide a nuanced and insightful understanding of the forces that shape media coverage of the National Social Investment Programmes and its implication for public understanding and policy discourse in Nigeria.

Within the context of this thesis, the political economy theory of communication focuses on the relationship between media ownership, control, and content. In the Nigerian context, this theory will help explain how economic interests and power structures influence the press' portrayal of the NSIP, potentially highlighting biases in coverage that align with the interests of media owners or political actors. This framework is essential to uncovering the influence of power dynamics and economic interests on media narratives in Nigeria.

4.2 Public Sphere (Xsphere)

The idea that the media plays a role as a facilitator of democracy by giving everyone equal access to information and the chance to engage in public discourse makes the concept of the public sphere fundamental to media studies.

The concept of the public sphere, as described by Habermas, is central to understanding this thesis which seeks to also explore how digital platforms such as Twitter (now referred to as X) function as contemporary public spheres in the context of Nigeria's National Social Investment Programmes. Therefore, the second phase of this study, which focuses on Twitter, directly intersects with the concept of the public sphere, particularly in its digital form through platforms such as Twitter (Xsphere).

The public sphere, particularly in the form of social media platforms like X (formerly Twitter), is increasingly important in Nigeria as it offers a platform for alternative voices, especially when traditional media may marginalise dissenting views. This theory offers the foundation and allowance to explore how the social media platform contributes to public discourse around poverty alleviation and the NSIP. It is particularly relevant in a country where the press is often constrained by political and economic pressures, making social media a vital space for public engagement and alternative narratives.

Furthermore, public sphere theory, as conceptualised by Jurgen Habermas, has direct relevance to the thesis. It provides a framework for understanding how, in the Nigerian context, 'X' formerly called Twitter, works as a space for public discourse and how it is influencing public opinion on such government initiatives. The theory argues that the existence of an open and inclusive space for public dialogue, free from state and market influences, is among the basic requirements for democratic functioning. Against this backdrop, this theoretical framework allows for exploration into how the Nigerian Twittersphere makes provisions for NSIP discussions, critique, or endorsement that may influence public perception and policy decisions. This thesis, therefore, examines the Nigeria's Twittersphere discourse in view of the Public Sphere theory, with attention to how far the extent the Nigerian online public engage in critical

deliberation that has the potential to hold the government accountable for NSIP activities and how this further shape the way in which the programme is implemented.

Habermas's framework explains the public sphere as a space for critical discourse and citizen engagement that can influence political action. In the context of this thesis, Twitter functions as a digital public sphere where Nigerians can exchange ideas, express opinions, and scrutinise the National Social Investment Programmes, potentially impacting its implementation and public perception. While Habermas envisaged the public sphere as an egalitarian space, critiques highlighting potential exclusions based on factors such as class and education are also relevant to the Nigerian context and could be explored in how Twitter discourse around the programme unfolds.

The idea of public sphere can be traced to the early work of Jurgen Habermas in the 1984. The term public sphere refers to a location common to all where ideas and information can be exchanged. In other words, it is understood as a location or platform that host people with common interest where they identify and discuss societal issues with the goal of influencing political action.

Habermas was particularly concerned on how the citizens interact with established state power. Influenced by the critical theory, Habermas, particularly in the context of European bourgeois society. contends that the media provide partial platform for interaction between people in power and the lead. He argues that the news media are dividing the society and making people more private; thus, making it challenging to accommodate public opinion that is rationally critical and at odds with that of established power.

The history of public sphere can be traced to the agora, in ancient Greece; the royal court of the European monarchies, salons in England, France and Germany; tribal gatherings in western Africa; church congregations and today, it is mostly tied to the media. Notable in the media is the internet technology (called the digital media) which host almost, if not all sectors and other spheres of life. As Kees Brants puts it: "it is not surprising that the internet is often prescribed as the medicine for democracy in a midlife crisis and sometimes embraced as the new, electronic, "salon" (Brants, 2006, p. 144).

4.2.1 **Tracing the history of public spaces**

As noted in preceding paragraph, the origins of the concepts that underpin the public sphere notion can be traced to the agora in classical Greece. This ancient Greek city is where Aristotle first made his undisputed claim about the essential qualities of public places. In his texts as quoted by (Graham, 2012, p. 45), Aristotle theorised that:

> … it is evident that the state is a creation of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal. And he who by nature and not by mere accident is without a state, is either a bad man or above humanity (…) Nature, as we often say, makes nothing in vain, and man is the only animal whom she has endowed with speech. And whereas mere voice is but an indication of pleasure or pain and is therefore found in other animals (…) the power of speech is intended to set forth the expedient and inexpedient; and therefore, likewise the just and the unjust. And it is characteristic of man that he alone has any sense of good and evil, of just and unjust, and the like, and the association of living beings who have this sense makes a family and a state. (Aristotle [1941] 2001: 1129).

From Aristotle's text, a tendency for the naturalisation of a political order can be observed. According to the Greek philosopher, the state is a product of nature, and one definitive facet of the state is *speech.* Explicating Aristotle's view, Graham (2012) argues that:

> To live well is to live together in a family and a state united by common speech. No explanation is necessary. Nature is aimed at the good. The state is the highest form of political association produced by nature. Therefore, the state itself is the greatest of political goods.

As we culturally know it, even in the ancient Greece, (Dickinson, 1926, p. 313; Graham, 2012, p. 46) there is no power beyond the King's authority except that which is of God (of course, "in an era ruled by the word of God, the King (Graham, 2012, p. 46) " is subject only to God and the priesthood, who represent God upon earth" (Dickinson, 1926, p. 313). In this respect, the public cannot influence the King's judgement. As Dickinson notes, a time came when a corporatist idea emerged. This idea subsequently became a seed of changes and revolution in ancient Greece, as it birthed a group, known as the *universitas* with the *populis* which gave rise to the public sphere between the 17th and the 18th centuries that Jurgen Habermas identifies (Graham, 2012). In other words, the public sphere (universitas, as it were) becomes an active unity, bearing its own persona, and capable of speaking and acting for itself, against the prince, if necessary; as opposed to being under the management of the King (Dickinson, 1926). According to Habermas, this demonstrates the beginning of "the public sphere." Following this, the definition of what constitutes a public good and a private good are fundamentally determined by the public sphere.

4.2.2 Jürgen Habermas: on the concept of Public Sphere

> By "the public sphere" we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body. They then behave neither like business or professional people transacting private affairs, nor like members of a constitutional order subject to the legal constraints of a state bureaucracy. Citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion--that is, with the guarantee of freedom of assembly and association and the freedom to express and publish their opinions-about matters of general interest. In a large public body this kind of communication requires specific means for transmitting information and influencing those who receive it. Today newspapers and magazines, radio and television are the media of the public sphere. We speak of the political public sphere in contrast, for instance, to the literary one, when public discussion deals with objects connected to the activity of the state. Although state authority is so to speak the executor of the political public sphere, it is not a part of it (Habermas et al., 1974, p. 49).

The fundamental tenet of Habermas' concept of the public sphere is the dissolution of the absolutist state's bureaucratic activities and ushering in of "the public sphere" in which the ruler's power which was just displayed before the people was eventually replaced by the emergence of the bourgeoisie with a sphere in which state authority was publicly monitored through informed and critical discourse by the people. The emerging public space is particularly composed of "increasingly influential, post-mercantilist, propertied citizen-class that rose to dominance to the demise of the sacred order" of the state leadership (Graham, 2012, p. 47; Habermas, 1991). According to Habermas, this form of sphere come into existent when private people come together as a public to freely form public opinion independently of the state authority's influence (Habermas, 1991).

According to Habermas, the public sphere is the intersection of civil society and public life. It is a place of neutral ground where different people come to share their private thoughts about public matters especially on important social and political issues. These ideas are usually constructive because of the intellectual capacity of the participants. Ideally, it is a room to peep into the state and the society. In this room, the bourgeois gather to discuss, test, challenge, and subsequently form public opinions on such matters and these opinions is then transmitted for the public debate. Habermas' ideal of 'the public sphere' is one which is accessible to all just like the social media (in the instance of this study, Twitter: which is in this context conceptualised as 'Xsphere') – Nigerians came together to virtually discuss public concerns such as the National Social Investment Programmes - which this study focuses on. As a form of digital public sphere, Twitter has evolved into redefining power relationships between the state and the civil society (Castells, 2007) which arguably lessen the typical influence of geographic distance between the participants by allowing communication amongst individuals

regardless of their location, geographic distances, or nationality (Samuel-Azran & Hayat, 2020).

4.2.3 Critique of Habermas Public Sphere

Although originally conceptualised as an egalitarian and social platform for citizen engagement in discussions on societal topics upon which a consensus is drawn, stir, and to influence public opinion and debates, 'the Public Sphere' has since been criticised for marginalisation of certain identities – emphasising dominance of identities such as the upper-middle class, educated, male gender in Europe. While Nancy Fraser (1990) argues that there are competing interests between the 'strong publics' and the 'weak publics' as well as difficulty in defining what is common concerns ('public matter' as in Habermas original work) and what qualifies as private interests amidst other critical issues like equality and diversity, Chantal Mouffe (1999) argues that for there to be more deliberative democracy there should be non-exclusive public sphere where rational consensus could be reached.

4.2.4 Nigerian Xsphere: The Public Sphere Theory in the Nigerian Context

In Nigeria, X (formerly known, as Twitter), in the last ten years has gathered momentum as a location of efficient information dissemination even in the time of emergency/crisis (Carter, 2014). This platform is particularly popular due to its unique feature of being accessible to a large number of people for information and communication. X, in Nigeria, over the time have also become a social channel where the voice of the people can be heard; a platform where societal problems and issues are discussed (in threads), liked, endorsed, and/or criticised via repost (with and/or without comments). The Nigerian Twittersphere (now Xsphere) demonstrates engagement with newspaper news tweets from a potentially diverse audience,

although the exact demographic breakdown requires further research. Evidence for this diversity can be inferred from several factors such as broad social media usage in Nigeria, news consumption on social media, engagement with prominent news outlets and issue-specific engagement as observed since the last decade. Through these 'threads' (sequence of tweet conversations) discourse influence and forms public opinion and subsequently public agenda. The experience that the twitter platform offers Nigeria mirrors on Jurgen Habermas' idea of public sphere, hence, the term 'Nigeria's Xsphere.' While Habermas envisioned 18th-century European coffee houses as physical spaces for rational-critical debate among private individuals forming public opinion, Twitter (now X) in Nigeria serves as a contemporary digital space where a diverse (though not universally representative) audience engages with news and discusses matters of public concern. This mirroring lies in its potential to facilitate the expression of opinions and the emergence of public discourse that can, at times, influence the political landscape. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the significant differences arising from the digital nature of the platform, including issues of access, algorithmic influence, the prevalence of non-rational discourse, and the platform's susceptibility to commercial and state interests, which distinguish it from Habermas' idealised model.

Nigeria has a significant and growing number of X users, with estimates varying from over 8.4 million according to the World Population Review (2025) to 7.57 million as reported by Kepios. (2025). These users have been observed to actively engage with government officials online over the years. It is also important to note that Twitter has the repute of channel for official communications (The Sun, 2021). The Nigerian Xsphere have also shown its capacity to hold power to account, to lead movement and to debate public matters and policies through the use of hashtag which harmonised all comments and reaction on subject of concerns (Fink et al., 2015a). Similarly in term of engagement and preference of the public interaction on public

concerns, Fink *et al* argues that Nigeria Twitter users prefer to adopt hashtags which are original to the public other than mainstream news media hashtag. The neglect of mainstream media hashtag suggests some level of independence of Nigerian's Xsphere. This is especially arguable based on the links some of the Nigerian news media maintains with political parties and leaders. Hence, the unconventionality of Twitter as public opinion formation and generation in Nigeria is a noteworthy observation of this study, which can be illuminated by Jurgen Habermas' thesis on the public sphere. This thesis argues that the evolving nature of the public sphere sees a significant manifestation in online platforms, particularly Twitter (now called X), which, despite its informal characteristics, exhibits structural elements fostering a relatively serious and orderly virtual space for egalitarian dialogue. This perspective builds upon the foundational concepts of public sphere theory, adapting them to the unique affordances of digital environments in Nigeria. While some critiques of online public spheres exist (e.g., the prevalence of echo chambers and misinformation), this thesis contends that Twitter's specific structure in the Nigerian context [for example, its use by political figures, journalists, and activists for serious discussion] supports its consideration as a significant, if imperfect, contemporary public sphere

This thesis argues that the evolving nature of the public sphere finds a significant manifestation in online platforms, particularly Twitter (now called X). Despite its informal characteristics, Twitter exhibits structural elements that foster a relatively serious and orderly virtual space for egalitarian dialogue. This perspective builds upon the foundational concepts of public sphere theory, adapting them to the unique affordances of digital environments in Nigeria. As noted in theoretical paper, social media acts as "a new public sphere… where individuals and groups associate to discuss matters of mutual interest" (Jimada, 2019, p. 3). This indicates that Twitter

facilitates serious discussions among various stakeholders, including political figures and activists.

Furthermore, the platform enables users to "directly hold those in power/government to account by acting as watchdogs over leaders" (Jimada, 2019, p.5), highlighting its engagement and responsiveness to citizen demands. Importantly, social media provides "higher levels of participation for younger people and an avenue for women… to demand for accountability" (Jimada, 2019, p.1), underscoring its role in promoting inclusivity within public discourse.

While critiques exist regarding the prevalence of echo chambers and misinformation, acknowledging that social media can create environments of misinformation, it simultaneously fosters "a platform for robust, constructive public dialogue"(Jimada, 2019). This reflects Twitter's capacity to facilitate serious discourse about governance and national issues in Nigeria. Additionally, the internet allows local events to gain international attention with minimal resources, thus emphasizing Twitter's role in both local and global discussions about governance. In the later part of this thesis, in Chapter 7, this thesis contends that Twitter specific nature in the Nigerian context supports its consideration as a significant, if imperfect, contemporary public sphere.

In conclusion, the literature reviewed highlights the increasing importance of social media platforms like X (formerly Twitter) in the Nigerian public sphere. Scholarship suggests these platforms offer spaces for diverse and alternative voices, potentially challenging mainstream narratives and enabling new forms of public discourse. This thesis now proceeds to examine the role of X in Nigeria through the lens of public sphere theory, aiming to contribute to the body of knowledge on online public spheres and their implications for democratic participation

and accountability in the Nigerian context. The subsequent analysis will explore how these dynamics manifest in the specific case of the NSIP coverage.

4.3 Agenda Setting Theory

The Agenda Setting theory is instrumental in examining how the press selects and prioritises certain issues, shaping public perception and discourse. In the case of the study of the NSIP, the agenda-setting role of the Nigerian press is pivotal in influencing how the public and policymakers view poverty alleviation efforts. The Agenda Setting theory evolved in the early 1920s because of the growing need to understand the mass media.

Inspired by Walter Lippmann's thesis, Max McCombs and Donald Shaw developed the theory of agenda setting. Lippmann's idea revolves around the understanding that the media serves as the bridge between the world outside and the picture in our head; and that the picture in our head are the reflection of the media we are exposed to, not necessarily what is happening in the world outside (Lippmann, 1921). Although, the trigger thesis of 'Agenda Setting' was stimulated by the words of Bernard Cohen in a book he wrote about the press and foreign policy. Bernard Cohen claimed that while the media is often unsuccessful in telling the public what to think by shaping the opinions of the general public, it is successful at telling its readers what to think about by shaping the views of its readers (Cohen, 1963). This statement came to be known as the agenda-setting hypothesis when the theory was made popular by McCombs and Shaw in 1972.

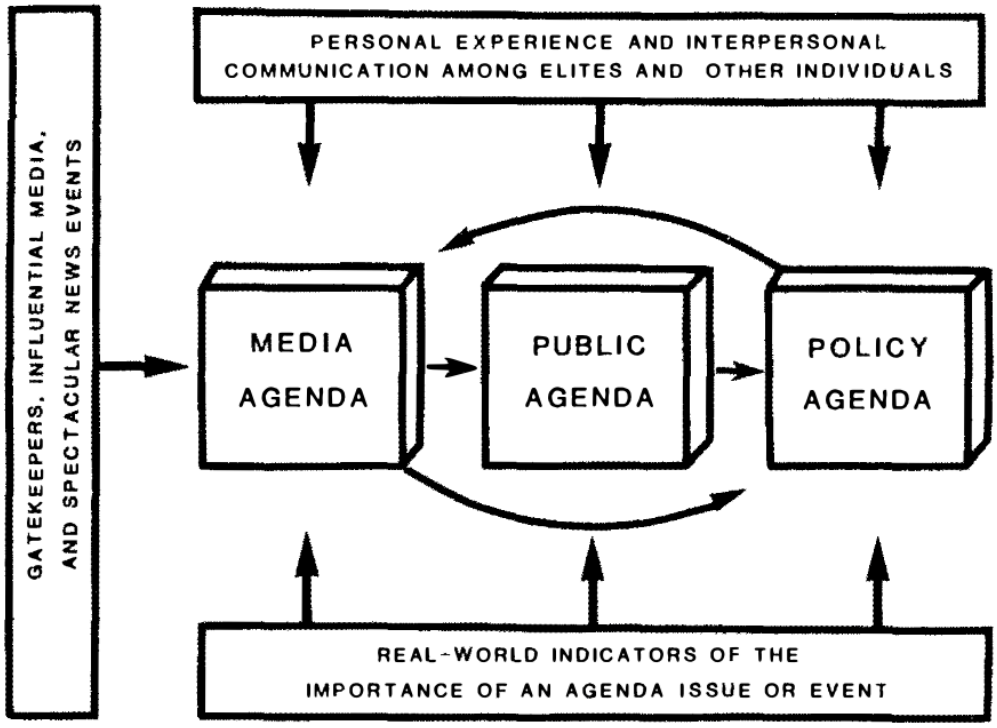
In their seminal work, McCombs and Shaw theorised further, developing Cohen's 1963 statement: 'the media do not tell us what to think but what to think about' (Cohen, 1963; McCombs and Shaw, 1972). McComb in an interview with Em Griffin, argues that the

beginning point for agenda setting is the second part of Cohen's statement: '…what to think about.' He said: "the second part holds very much, and that was the beginning point for agenda setting – the media focus our attention; they tell us what to think about" (Interview conducted by Em Griffin, 2014; M. McCombs & Griffin, 2014). The general proposition of agenda setting, according to McCombs, is about the transfer of salience from one agenda to another; and if you are exposed enough to a particular agenda, you are likely to perceive such agenda as important. Although, in his views, he believes that agenda-setting is a by-product of the fact that the media is limited in space and/or time, hence they must select a few topics to pay attention to each day. Additionally, the press is cognisant that the public may not be able to take in a large amount of data at once and thus decides which topics should be prioritised. In order to emphasise the certain issues, the press utilises a variety of techniques. Headlines of varying sizes are used to show their significance on the front page, as well as 'kickers' and 'riders,' which establish the theme of the headline. The lead paragraph of the story is crafted in the same manner. On television, this cue is mostly the position of the stories (this is, the story that is presented first (newspaper front page) and the one that take the most time (in news broadcast journalism), as well as contents (visuals) and sources (in some instance). In this process, the media include or omit what content they 'cook' for their audience. Agenda setting theory is also central to explaining political economy of the news (Herman & Chomsky, 2008), although with more emphasis on the power and money.

In 1988, Everett Rogers and Dearing James offered a model (see figure 1 below) to explain agenda setting theory of the media. The model is instructive to help us to understand how the press function and it explains how agenda are influenced. The model identified three main actors in the agenda setting process – the media (which include the gatekeepers, the influential media and personal experiences), public agenda (which consists of real-world indicators of

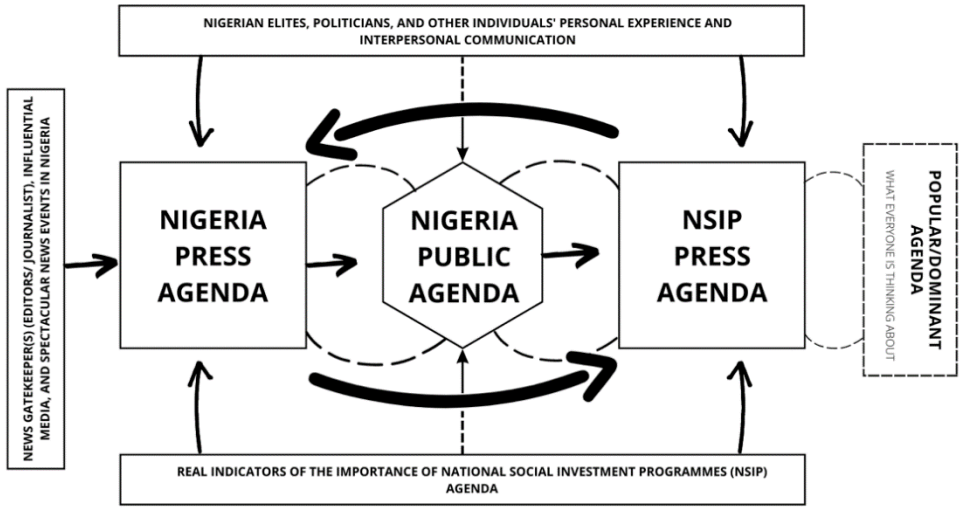
what is important) and policy agenda – which focuses on the thrust of the policy in view (Rogers & Dearing, 1988).The model identified three main actors in the agenda setting process – the media (which include the gatekeepers, the influential media and personal experiences), public agenda (which consists of real-world indicators of what is important) and policy agenda – which focuses on the thrust of the policy in view (Rogers & Dearing, 1988).

Figure 1: *Three main components of the agenda-setting process: media agenda, public agenda, and policy agenda.*



The agenda setting theory of the mass media is relevant to lay the foundation and subsequently to drive and support the central argument of this thesis. This theory helps this study identify and understand the agenda set by selected Nigerian press and how they have influenced their readers. At this juncture, I have adapted Rogers and Dearing 1988 model with a few modifications for clarity and with respect to the context of this study. The model is presented in the diagram below.

Figure 2: *Adapted three main components of the agenda-setting process: media agenda, public agenda, and policy agenda for National Social Investment programme in Nigeria.*



Note: Adapted from Rogers and Dearing (1988) Three main components of the agenda setting process

Arowolo (2022)

Contextualising (with the minor adjustment) the Rogers and Dearing 1988 model, I have replaced generic subjects for specific as it concerns this thesis. I have also added what I described as 'popular/dominant agenda,' which is largely the product of the news media. As earlier argued by scholars like Michael Schudson, Noam Chomsky, Graham Murdock among other sociologists, the media make the news and the news is the product; similarly, the news media manufacture consent and the consent manufactured is 'the picture in our heads' (Lippmann, 1921).

As posited in the original model, inspired by the original work of Lazarsfeld and Merton in 1948, Rogers and Dearing in the Agenda Setting model believe that news media agenda is as a result of the influence from the corridors of power. These power group as noted by the scholars include organised business as they exert some forms of social control in the cause of negotiating interest since these "big business finances the production and distribution of mass media. And

all intent aside, he who pays the piper generally call the tune" (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 2007, p. 240). This thesis, generally, agree with the directions of Lazarsfeld and Merton (1948, 2007) and the idea conveyed by Rogers and Dearing; the model put forwards explain the news media terrain in Nigeria. Media agenda are largely determined by the financiers of the media. Similarly, the two American scholars (Rogers & Dearing, 1988) contend that commercially sponsored mass media system is operated by the ruling class in the society, hence, it 'cannot' be expected that the media would question socioeconomic structure of the society critically. What this implies, within the context of this thesis and application of this theory to this study, is that the content of the mass media are largely influenced by mass media financiers, in a situation where a medium has an economic relationship and/or interest (either directly or indirectly such as advert placement), stories that will harm the interest of her client will by almost all mean be avoided so to protect and preserve the business relationship between such medium and client. No wonder, Terrence Quarter posits that the news media seem to support, uphold, reassures, and protect the interest of the elite in the society (Qualter, 1985). Subsequently, this translates into the popular agenda.

There is a general understanding that public opinion is influenced by mass media contents. This then takes us to the second level (as seen in the middle of the model) – public agenda. Simply put, what the media makes popular is what become the popular knowledge. The scholarly writing of Bernard Cohen has laid a tested foundation to this claim when he penned: the press may not be successful to tell the public what to think but it is capable of telling readers what to thinks about. Bernard Cohen's scholarly writing supports the notion that news media communications can be an effective tool for disseminating information to the public. In particular, news media communications in Nigeria could be a powerful channel for public knowledge on the National Social Investment Programmes. This thesis' findings will spotlight

how the media have represented the NSIP how the manifest agenda benefits these programmes while discussing their implementation. There details will count as a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge, and it could help the press relearn how to strategically inform citizens, potentially resulting in greater public engagement and support for these initiatives. Additionally, by discussing the challenges and shortcomings of the programmes, the press can also help to ensure that the programmes are properly evaluated and improved upon. With this in mind, Bernard Cohen's writing serves as a reminder of the potential of news media's contribution to the public's understanding of important national programmes.

Insight on NSIP press agenda, as it has been earlier argued in this thesis, is driven first by media stakeholders and financiers of the medium. The involvement of these stakeholders/financier is political, thus, what become the media agenda determine the shape, form, and direction of policy agenda. The agenda setting theory will help this thesis explain how the public agenda and NSIP policy agenda is influenced by the ruling class, elite and social indicator which inevitably inform what I described in the modified model as the popular/dominant idea on NSIP.

4.3.1 **Dominant research tradition in Agenda Setting**

There are two major research traditions in agenda setting; the first is public agenda setting by the mass media and the second is policy agenda setting. While the policy agenda setting research traditions started early, the former has attracted more attention than the latter taking a share of two-third of general research on the agenda setting on the subject in the late 80s. According to Rogers and Dearing (1988), the central research questions scholars addressed were "how does a public issue get on the policy agenda" rather than "how do the mass media put an agenda on the policy agenda." The setting of agendas is the subject of both queries. With

the coordinated aim of analysing, to identify how the agenda is formed for such a significant public-centred programme aimed at reducing poverty in Nigeria with the secondary aim of meeting SDGs 1 – No poverty (which is a global concern). This thesis focuses on the analysis of media coverage of the NSIP in Nigeria. This theory provides a useful framework, and it will help in the explanation of the circumstances surrounding the NSIP programme and how the production of news on the programme.

4.3.2 **New directions in Agenda Setting**

It is now almost 60 years since the development of Agenda setting theory of the media, the popularity of the theory has allowed different scholars from the varying societies of the world to apply, studied and test the validity of the assumption of the theory. Maxwell McCombs, Donald Shaw, and David Weaver, the original researchers, documented the evolution of the theory up until the theory's 50th anniversary. The trio discovered seven distinct characteristics in their analysis of significant scholarly publications that are motivated by agenda setting theory. The seven 'facets' are:

1. Basic agenda setting, the impact of the media agenda on the public agenda regarding the salience of issues, political figures, and other objects of attention (the first level of agenda setting).
2. Attribute agenda setting, the impact of the media agenda on the public agenda regarding the salience of the attributes of these objects (the second level of agenda setting).
3. Network agenda setting, the impact of the networked media agenda of objects or attributes on the networked public agenda of object or attribute salience (the third level of agenda setting).
4. Central to understanding the strength of agenda-setting effects is the concept of need for orientation, which details the psychology of each individual's encounter with the media. More recently, dual psychological paths linking media exposure and agenda-setting effects have been detailed.
5. Consequences of agenda-setting effects at all three levels for attitudes, opinions, and behaviour.
6. Origins of the media agenda, which range from the prevailing cultural and ideological environment to news sources, the influence of the media on each

other, the norms and routines of journalism, and the individual characteristics of journalists.

7. Agendamelding[14], the way we merge the civic agendas of the media and our valued reference communities with our personal views and experience to create a satisfying picture of the world.

(McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver, 2014, p. 782)

However, these pioneering researchers covered three of the seven identified facets in depth. They propose—and I unequivocally concur—that the third aspect, need for orientation (NFO), the fourth, networks of agenda setting, and the seventh, agenda-melding, are the three facets that should direct future research. The first aspect, the need for orientation, is the most crucial for the principal argument in this thesis. This is due to the study's emphasis on two key terms: relevance and uncertainty, which are aspects of major concerns. Below are some basic NFO facts, with highlights of the other two facets noted for reasons that will be discussed later in this thesis.

*4.3.2.1 **Need for Orientation***

The agenda is set for both openly stated and occasionally, if not frequently, privately held motives. One of the reasons for media agenda is because of the need for orientation. At the basic level, the function of the media is often and primarily ascribed to informing, educating, and entertaining. However, from a broader perspective, the function of the news media is to determine and set the agenda. The concept of need for orientation (NFO) has been created for about 50 years now, since McCombs and Weaver's introduction of it to a larger academic community at the International Communication Association (ICA) annual meeting in April 1973. In their original work, as presented at the conference, they wrote:

> Explication of an agenda-setting function of the press must include the relevant social and personal characteristics that mediate such an effect. The traditional

[14] According to the note provide by (M. E. McCombs et al., 2014, p. 782), *Agendamelding* is explained as "the unhyphenated construction … coined to describe the intimate, often unconscious process by which we borrow from a variety of agendas to find, or create, the personal communities in which we choose to live."

> "effects orientation" of communication research must be combined with the "information-seeking" or "uses and gratifications" approach (McCombs and Weaver, 1973, p. 2).

In this regards, Michael Schudson in his work, *Six or seven things news can do for democracy,* presents NFO as 'mobilization.' Schudson argues that "the news media serves as advocates for political programs and perspective and mobilize people to act in support of these programs" (Schudson, 2008, p. 12). In other words, Schudson believed the news media acts as an advocate for political initiatives and viewpoints, encouraging individuals to act in favour of these initiatives. Now, it is noteworthy to reiterate the historical partisan nature and persisting reality of the news media environment that this thesis is seeking to address. Schudson questions: "Why...the political press [is] so pervasive?[15] He claims that this is not the result of a press that does not try to be fair and balanced, but it is a case of a "press [that] rarely tried to be fair or balanced." Similarly, Schudson argues in the light of US journalism in the nineteenth-century. Schudson 2018 argument further supports the NFO facet of agenda-setting as put forward by McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver in 2014. In Michael Schudson's words,

> Newspapers were subsidized by political parties directly and indirectly. The publishers, editors and reporters understood their job to be political cheerleading and mobilising, not political reporting (Schudson, 2008, p. 21)

In Nigeria, although there are neither any official and/or explicit information on newspaper subsidy but there is some evidence that supports the partisanship and other forms of interests of newspapers in Nigeria. These interests and/or relationship has seemingly subsequently influenced the ideal job of journalists in Nigeria. A Nigerian Newspaper Editor, Ishiekwene Azubuike, while sharing his experience on the job, opined that it is not an editor's job to cheerlead. In an opinion article, he wrote: "…editors are, by and large, catalysts in the media space…in spite of … shortcomings and limitations [and]… so much faith invested in the ability

[15] Original text: "Why was the political press so pervasive?" (Schudson, 2008, p. 21)

of the press to "hold the line" and [to serve] as a catalyst for …and consensus building as supported by the Section 22 of the 1999 constitution".

As earlier noted, the seminal contribution of McCombs and Weaver (1973) set the debate for NFO. As a follow up to their earlier work, the two American scholars co-authored another paper with David Shaw where they defined need for orientation as "a combination of relevance and uncertainty, such that low levels of relevance led directly to low levels of NFO, a high level of relevance coupled with low uncertainty led to a moderate level of NFO, and a high level of relevance coupled with high uncertainty led to a high level of NFO" (McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver, 2014, p. 784).

While this study concedes with McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, this thesis focus, based on the foregoing definition, are simply to provide answers to questions like: what do Nigerian journalists and editors consider relevant? How is the level of relevance measured? And what are the levels of need for orientation? – is it high or low for a poverty reduction scheme such as National Social Investment Programmes? Do these inform what they publish and how they structure what becomes the NSIP news? These are the basic questions this researcher seeks to address in this thesis. Insights from the answers to these questions is also relevant to Nigerian Xsphere because Twitter is a platform where journalists, editors, and individuals share and discuss news and current events. It is a place where people can express their opinions on various topics, including poverty reduction schemes such as the National Social Investment Programmes in Nigeria.

Knowing what Nigerian journalists and editors consider relevant is important on Twitter because it provide information on current events and can influence public opinion.

Understanding how relevance is measured can help individuals gauge the credibility of the information they published and shared by the press on Twitter.

Furthermore, knowing the level of need for orientation among Twitter users can help in understanding the level of awareness and education around poverty reduction schemes such as the National Social Investment Programmes. This knowledge can be used to inform discussions and advocacy efforts on Twitter to raise awareness and increase support for these initiatives.

4.4 Framing Theory

Framing theory posits that social reality is constructed through selective emphasis on particular aspects of an issue. There is a conceptual intersection between concept of framing and agenda-setting (Weaver, 2007). The idea of framing is similar to the 'second level' of agenda setting which "examines the relative salience of attributes of issues." In other words, "framing is related to the agenda-setting tradition but expands the research by focusing on the essence of the issues at hand rather than on a particular topic" (Arowolo, 2017, p. 1).

The framing process, although, often subtle, effectively influences public opinion and understanding. In the context of this thesis, the framing is crucial in examining how the press coverage and Xsphere shape public discourse around Nigeria's NSIP. To operationalise framing theory in the context of this thesis, data gathered from quantitative content analysis of the coverage by the selected Nigerian newspapers on NSIP will be used to explain how the press frames the NSIP and the relationship between these frames and the overall narrative constructed about the programme. By quantitatively analysing the press coverage, this thesis will identify recurring frames, key actors, and dominant narratives. This approach will allow for a systematic examination of how the press shapes public understanding of the NSIP.

Concurrently, a critical discourse analysis of Twitter conversations will explore the nuances of language, power dynamics, and ideological underpinnings in shaping online discourse around the programme. The combination these methodologies will enable this thesis to provide a comprehensive understanding of how framing influences public perception of the NSIP across traditional and digital media platforms.

4.5 Development Media Theory

Following much debate regarding the appropriate theories that explains media systems in Africa after the departure of colonial powers, Denis McQuail identified two theories that are well-suited for this purpose. One of these theories is the Development Media Theory, which explains African media systems that do not align with any of the four theories of the press proposed by Siebert et al. (1984).

The main assumption of development media theory is "...the idea of the media functioning in partnership with the government to achieve set goals of rural and national" (Musa, 2010, p. 132).

The principles of the theory according to McQuail (1987, p. 121) are as follows:

1. The media should accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy.
2. Freedom of the media should be open to restriction according to economic priorities and development needs of the society.
3. Media should give priority in their content to the National culture and language.
4. Media should give priority in news and information to links with other developing countries that are close geographically, culturally or politically.
5. Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities as well as freedom in their information gathering and dissemination tasks.
6. In the interest of development ends, the state has the right to intervene in or restrict media operations and devices of censorship; subsidies and direct control can be justified.

This theory, therefore, suggests that media should align with national policies, prioritise national culture and language, and promote connections with other developing countries. It recognises that media freedom can be limited to align with economic priorities and development goals. In such cases, the state retains the right to intervene, restrict media operations, and utilise tools like censorship, subsidies, and direct control when deemed necessary for developmental objectives. To sum up, journalists and media workers have both some level of freedom and responsibilities in gathering and disseminating information.

Given Nigeria's post-colonial context and the challenges of national development, Development Media Theory is particularly applicable. This theory posits that the media should work in partnership with the government to promote development goals, which is especially pertinent in the case of poverty alleviation programmes like the NSIP. The theory will be utilised to assess whether the Nigerian press views its role as one of collaboration with the government in promoting the NSIP or if it adopts a more critical stance in line with democratic ideals.

Again, the Development Media Theory is highly relevant for this thesis because this study focuses on the media's role in promoting social and economic development. By applying the Development Media Theory, the study is able to examine how the press and Xsphere contribute to the goals and outcomes of the NSIP. Also, through content analysis of newspapers, the study can assess how the media frame and portray the NSIP, and whether they emphasise its developmental impact. Critical discourse analysis of Twitter conversations can shed light on public perceptions, debates, and narratives surrounding the programme, and how the media influence these discussions. In-depth interviews with journalists can provide insights into their

understanding of the NSIP, their reporting practices, and the challenges they face in communicating its objectives and outcomes.

By using the Development Media Theory, this study evaluates the extent to which the press and Xsphere effectively inform and engage the public about the NSIP, contribute to its implementation and accountability, and influence policy discourse and public opinion. This theoretical framework provides a comprehensive lens to explore the role of the media in shaping and supporting development initiatives like the NSIP in Nigeria.

4.6 Social Responsibility Theory

In a democratic society, the press is expected to act responsibly and serve the public interest. This theory will help evaluate the extent to which the Nigerian press upholds its responsibility to inform the public accurately and fairly about the NSIP. It will also guide an exploration of how the press balances its duty to the public with any potential pressures from political or economic actors.

The Social Responsibility Theory was developed following the Hutchins 1947 commission. The commission was critical of the press for its failure to project the voices of some groups outside the elites and most influential minority. In 1947, the social responsibility theory of the press, spearheaded by Robert Hutchins, the president of the University of Chicago, proposed five guidelines for a socially responsible press. These guidelines were the result of a four-year deliberation process that began in 1942. The report, titled "*A Free and Responsible Press,*" aimed to establish principles that would guide the media in fulfilling its social responsibilities. The guide include:

(1) a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning.

(2) a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism.

(3) the projection of a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society.

(4) the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society.

(5) full access to the day's intelligence.

Following Hutchins commission propositions, the idea of the press' social responsibility was developed by Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm in 1956, about ten years after the Hutchins initiative. The authors were influenced by the 1947 American Commission on Freedom of the Press, which linked press freedom with the responsibility to provide trustworthy news, relevant information, and opportunities for diverse voices to be heard. The commission's report even suggested that if the press fails in this responsibility, government intervention might be necessary to ensure the quality of news and information (Siebert et al., 1956, 1984).

In McQuail (2010), the main proposition of Social Responsibility Theory are as follows:

- The media have obligations to society, and media ownership is a public trust.
- News media should be truthful, accurate, fair, objective and relevant.
- The media should be free, but self-regulated.
- The media should follow agreed codes of ethics and professional conduct.
- Under some circumstances, government may need to intervene to safeguard the public interest

Denis McQuail, however, expressed his critique that there is insufficient political determination to implement the principles of the Social Responsibility theory in the face of market demands and the influential position held by established media.

The social responsibility theoretical framework will be crucial in assessing the ethical dimensions of media coverage and the role of the press in supporting or undermining social development initiatives. The social responsibility theory holds great relevance for this thesis because it underscores the media's obligation to provide reliable and pertinent news and

information to the public. Yun et al (2021, p. 5) posits that "social responsibility is an important criterion that contributes to the reduction in poverty." Therefore, by analysing newspaper content, Twitter conversations, and engaging in interviews with journalists, this study examine how the media fulfil their social responsibility in reporting on the NSIP. It can evaluate whether the press delivers accurate and diverse coverage, critically analyse the discourse surrounding the programme, and explore the perspectives and challenges confronted by journalists in reporting on the NSIP reporting. Adopting the social responsibility theory can offer valuable insights into the role of the press and the media landscape in Nigeria's National Social Investment Programmes.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, this thesis explored the primary theories that will be guiding this thesis. The chapter started off with the segment the political economy theory which is central to the argument of this thesis because it helps this research to understand the power relations between the press, state, and the public. This was followed by Jurgen Habermas' public sphere theory; from which the term Xsphere originates: as an online community of people who engage with public matters and then, the agenda setting theory of the media – which offers how the media determine what is news and what the public should be concerned about. The next section introduces Framing Theory, which explains how the NSIP is presented to audiences, followed by Development Media Theory, which focuses on the media's role in supporting positive development tasks in line with national policies. Finally, Social Responsibility Theory is discussed, emphasising the media's duty to act ethically and serve the public interest.

By combining these theories, this thesis investigates the interplay between economic factors, media agenda-setting processes, the role of media in development, social responsibility in

media, and the dynamics of public discourse within the context of the public sphere. This comprehensive approach provides valuable insights into the complex relationships between media, politics, economics, social responsibility, development, and public engagement within the scope of the study of National Social Investment programmes in Nigeria. Thus, these five theories are crucial to enhancing the explanatory power of this thesis.

CHAPTER FIVE

5 Methodology

This chapter provides, in detail, the research methodology adopted by this thesis in examining the media coverage of NSIP in Nigeria. According to the theoretical orientation presented in Chapter Four, with a focus on key theories such as Political Economy of Communication, Public Sphere, Agenda-Setting, Framing, Development Media Theory, and Social Responsibility Theory, this methodology chapter details research design and procedure that aligns with these theoretical orientations. These theories provide a structural framework through which the media coverage and public discourse regarding NSIP are understandable and therefore guide the methodological choices made in this study.

This thesis chapter begins with the explanation of research design used in this study. This thesis uses mixed-methods research using qualitative and quantitative methods. This is needed to explain different aspects of media representation and public participation, especially in examining how NSIP is covered by Nigerian media and social media platforms such as X (formerly and generally known as Twitter).

The quantitative aspect is of this thesis is addressed primarily by content analysis, which allows systematic examination of themes and the quality of coverage of NSIP in Nigerian dailies. Critical discourse analysis (CDA), a qualitative approach, was employed to analyse the underlying ideologies, meanings, and power structures in both newspaper reports and public discourse about X. Lastly, in-depth interviewing of journalists who have followed and have reported NSIP was utilised to probe deeper into the context and influencing factor on journalists' reports.

Furthermore, this chapter provides a detailed explanation of the population of study and the sampling procedures. The study focuses on Nigerian newspapers and social media platforms, with careful consideration given to selecting a representative sample of news articles and social media posts. This is to ensure that this thesis captures and reflects the broad and diverse range of perspectives on the coverage of the NSIP in Nigeria. The study period of data collected for this purpose of this study is also clearly defined in this chapter in effort to ensure that the newspaper item content analysed reflects a specific time frame relevant.

The chapter also discusses the research instruments utilised in collecting data, including content analysis coding manuals and CDA templates. The instruments are utilised to achieve the reliability and validity of the research findings. In addition, ethical concerns are raised, particularly concerning the utilisation of publicly accessible social media data and handling sensitive data. The methodological considerations part also acknowledges potential weaknesses of the methods used and discusses how they were met in order to secure the integrity of this thesis.

5.1 Research design

Studies are carried out to fulfil objectives. A research project could be planned to serve more than one of these objectives in addition to being purely exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory (Babbie, 2010). The design of this research is descriptive and explanatory. The choice of two designs is strengthens the weakness of one. Descriptive research design enables a researcher to describe a phenomenon of enquiry after a scientific analysis (R. A. Adeniran, 2017). The goal of this research design is not limited to describing the phenomenon but also its characteristics. The descriptive design is concerned with what, rather how and why reason questions (Nassaji, 2015). This design will guide this research in providing answer to this study's first three

research questions. Explanatory research design explains the 'why' and 'how' of existing phenomena.

5.2 Methods

Research methods are procedures chosen in effort to provide answers to research questions (Hall, 2020). These two methods – quantitative content analysis and qualitative (critical discourse analyses) will be employed for this study.

This research will provide descriptive insights, and the explanatory aspect will be carried out using an The Hybrid CDA Approach that combines Norman Fairclough and Cummings et al.' critical discourse models.

5.2.1 Content Analysis

> Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use. (Krippendorff, 2019).

Content analysis research method entails analysing manifest contents in video, audio, texts, selected newspaper and other forms of manifest contents. Content analysis is systematic coding and categorising approach used to study large amount of existing textual information to ascertain existing trends and patterns of words, frequency, relationship and structure, context, and discourses in communication (Grbich, 2012, p. 190). Krippendorff (2013) defines content analysis as "a systematic reading of a body of text, images, and symbolic matter, not necessary from an author's or user's perspective" (p.10). As a method, content analysis calls for s*pecialised procedures* (Krippendorff, 2004).

Commenting further on Content analysis, Krippendorff describes it as a technique that involves specific steps, which are learnable and can separated from the researcher's individual authority.

Content analysis as a research method offers fresh perspectives, deepens one's comprehension of specific phenomena, or inspires practical action (Krippendorff, 2019). This method, suppose that while different researcher may be working at various times, and possibly under different circumstances, it is expected that applying the same technique to the same data results. Thus, the reliability and reproducibility of content analysis's findings are expected.

According to Krippendorff, who offered a history of content analysis, the term did not originate until 1941 (Krippendorff, 2010), but it can be linked to research done by the church in the 17th century. A well-documented quantitative analyses Christian hymns, *Songs of Zion,* a collection of 90 hymns was published in the 18th century Sweden (Krippendorff, 2004).

In 1903, Eugen Löbl made an important, though lesser-known, contribution to the early development of content analysis. Löbl introduced an elaborate classification scheme aimed at analysing the "inner structure of content" with a focus on its social function. His methodology, which was primarily used in journalistic circles at the time, provided a systematic way to examine media content. Although Löbl's work predates the formalisation of content analysis by figures like Harold Lasswell and Bernard Berelson, his approach laid the groundwork for understanding how media serves various social roles. Löbl's classification system anticipated later developments in content analysis by emphasising the relationship between content and society, an idea that would become central to media studies in the decades to come.

The first quantitative method for content analysis in the field of journalism was published in the 1920s (Bos & Tarnai, 1999). This method was further advance by Harold Lasswell's propaganda study in 1927. Between the first and during the second world war, content analysis was used to study Nazi propaganda. Eight years after Lobl's contribution to the development of content analysis, Max Weber proposed a large-scale content analysis of the press. Barely two

after this this, while working on a theory of chains of symbols, Andrei Markov discovered the influence of this unique form of analysing contents in 1949. His work on Markov chains, which traced patterns in sequences, would later become crucial in analysing media content, paving the way for modern approaches to computational text analysis.

Subsequently, Shannon and Weaver's mathematical theory of communication (Shannon & Weaver, 1949) further influenced Charles Osgood's working on contingency analysis, based on the inference and indicators of content analysis. After the second world war, and as perhaps argued by Krippendorff (2004), the picture of content provided by Berelson (1952) lead to the spread of the deployment of content analyses as a research method across many disciplines. Although, Krippendorff noted that this is not to say that the method emigrated from the mass communication discipline rather it attracted scholars who studied mass media from novel perspectives. The formal analysis of newspaper content, including editorial and advertising, was something Weber strongly supported in order to spot trends in social change.

5.2.1.1 Content analysis: a quantitative research method

This is most common research practice in content analysis. From inception of content analysis development, it has been defined and executed as quantitative research method with mostly methodological approach. Positioning content analysis as a quantitative method, Bernard Berelson describes it as a "research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (1952, p.18).

Describing patterns and trends of newspaper coverage of a particular topic require a standard procedure of determining newspapers to be covered, editions selected in the newspapers covered and how subject of research will be identified in selected publication (Gunter, 2000). Following Gunter's procedure, this researcher will be required to decide which Nigerian

newspapers will be covered, which edition of the selected newspapers will be selected and how NSIP programmes will be identified within the selected publications (Gunter, 2000). Hence, content analysis will be used to generate quantitative data.

Content analysis research method entails analysing manifest contents in selected newspapers. Content analysis is systematic coding and categorising approach used to study large amount of existing textual information to ascertain existing trends and patterns of words, frequency, relationship and structure, context, and discourses in communication (Grbich, 2012, p. 190). Krippendorff (2013) defines content analysis as "a systematic reading of a body of text, images, and symbolic matter, not necessary from an author's or user's perspective" (p.10).

5.2.1.2 Justification and the Relevance of Content Analysis

Standardised procedures are often required to describe patterns and trends in newspaper coverage. The same standard is required for NSIP programmes. This involved selecting relevant Nigerian newspapers, determining which editions to analyse, and identifying how NSIP programmes were represented within those publications (Gunter, 2000) Content analysis was employed to generate quantitative data, allowing for a systematic examination of the coverage. The research techniques were congruent with significant theories like the political economy of communications, agenda-setting, and framing theories that helped contextualise the results.

As earlier discussed in Chapter 4, political economy theory focuses on the influence of ownership, political, and economic systems on media content. Thus, content analysis is an effective form of analysis with the explanatory power of the political economy theoretical tradition since it allows room to analyse media content systematically and elicit patterns and trends that can point to the interests and ownership control of media advertisers or owners. The use of content analysis for this thesis can identify and describe the power relations evident in

the coverage of NSIP in Nigeria. For instance, the questions of whose voices are prioritised and how the programmes are framed in news report especially within the context of broader economic agendas.

Similarly, agenda-setting theory posits that the media does not tell people what to think, but rather what to think about. In consonance with the agenda setting theory, content analysis is a useful method here as it quantifies the prominence and frequency of NSIP-related topics in the media, indicating how much importance the media attaches to these issues. Additionally, the use of content analysis will help manage large volume of data over a longer period. For this study, content analysis helps this study manage and codify data on NSIP can help us understand how the media shapes public awareness and prioritisation of social investment initiatives. Lastly, the use of content analysis along with Framing Theory provides use with robust understanding through the available quantitative data which allows for the identification and categorisation of different kinds of frames in the media coverage of the NSIP. Framing theory is concerned with how media highlights certain aspects of reality and organises them in such a way that it influences how the audience perceives and interprets these issues. Through content analysis, a systematic and objective coding of media texts was undertaken to quantify the presence and frequency of specific frames used in reporting on NSIP. This method, which is very useful in identifying these frames quantitatively helps this study analyse how the media shaped public perception of NSIP by emphasising certain themes over others.

For example, by coding articles, the content analysis revealed the extent to which certain frames were prevalent, such as whether NSIP was portrayed as a successful government initiative or as a poorly managed programme. However, it is important to clarify that content analysis of news coverage reflects the media's construction of the programme. While it can highlight

dominant narratives and potential biases in reporting, it does not provide a direct assessment of the actual effectiveness or management of the NSIP on the ground. To understand how effectively NSIP was managed, one would need to consult programmes' evaluations, government reports, beneficiary surveys, and other forms of direct assessment.

This quantitative data provided a foundation for understanding the broader patterns of representation, allowing the study to link these media frames to the deeper political, social, and economic contexts, as discussed in the Political Economy of Communication and Framing Theories. Therefore, by way of conclusion, content analysis not only furnished evidence for media's agenda-setting function by quantifying the extent to which issues had been covered most but also enabled the recognition of the subtle ways in which these issues had been presented to the audience.

5.2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

While content analysis focuses on extracting quantitative data from large bodies of qualitative content, Critical Discourse Analysis, on the other hand, focuses on deriving deductive qualitative meanings (in a more contextual form) from selected qualitative content, with this as the primary aim. Knowledge emerging from CDA are mostly interpretive and often rich; providing deeper meaning based on social, and social relations of language use and texts.

For this thesis, Critical Discourse Analyses (CDA) will be adopted to analyse and develop content categories and unit of analyses that will be used for content analysis. The rationale for this approach is because generic coding sheet will not be appropriate and/or adequate since the subject of study is novel and specific, hence the need for carefully and specifically design research instrument. Although, the term 'discourse' and 'discourse analyses' are widely

contested terms (Richardson, 2007b), the concept of discourse, as contextualised in this study "refers to group of statements that structure the way a thing is thought, and the way we act on the basis of that think" (Rose, 2012). Discourse analysis has been approached from a variety of theoretical perspectives across a variety of disciplines (Machin & Mayr, 2012; van Dijk, 1983; Van Dijk, 1995; van Dijk, 2011; Zimmermann, 2012).

Discourse analysis (DA) as a method is a systematic approach to examining structures and functions of text and talk within their social, political, and cultural context (van Dijk, 1985, 1995). Analysis of discourse starts with written texts (Krippendorff, 2013; van Dijk, 1977; van Dijk, 1993). Consequently, discourse analysis in communication studies, as explained by van Dijk (1995) require researcher "pay detailed attention to the structures and strategies of such discourses and to the ways these relate to institutional arrangements, on the one hand, and to the audience, on the other hand" (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 10). The goal of discourse analysis is to explain what the discourse '(re)present,' how and why it (re)present what it does (Krippendorff, 2019, p. 70). It aims to interpret the text by looking into the assumptions that went into its creation. According to Machin and Mayr (2012), the common view of Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis is "the view of language as a means of social construction"; they argue that "language both shapes and is shaped by society" (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 4). The authors went further to note that although CDA covers language use it is however not so much interested in language "but in the linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures" (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 4).

Critical discourse analysis is recognised as a more unbiased approach to discourse analysis by academics like Norman Fairclough and Van Djik. According to critical discourse analysis, power relations are discursive and are communicated and exercised through discourse. What

CDA helps to understand include: "who is given power" and "who is denied power" in a discourse. As a mean to help know this, CDA help us identify and understand how language is reflecting and reproducing ideologies, power differentials, social relationships and amidst other key details.

5.2.2.1 Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical theory of language is the general origin of critical discourse analysis. According to CDA, language is a type of social practice, and all social practices are linked to existing and specific historical contexts "by which existing social relations are reproduced or contested, and different interests are served" (Janks, 1997, p. 1). Consequently, critical discourse analysis, rooted in this understanding of language, examines how linguistic choices reflect and perpetuate social inequalities (Janks, 1997).

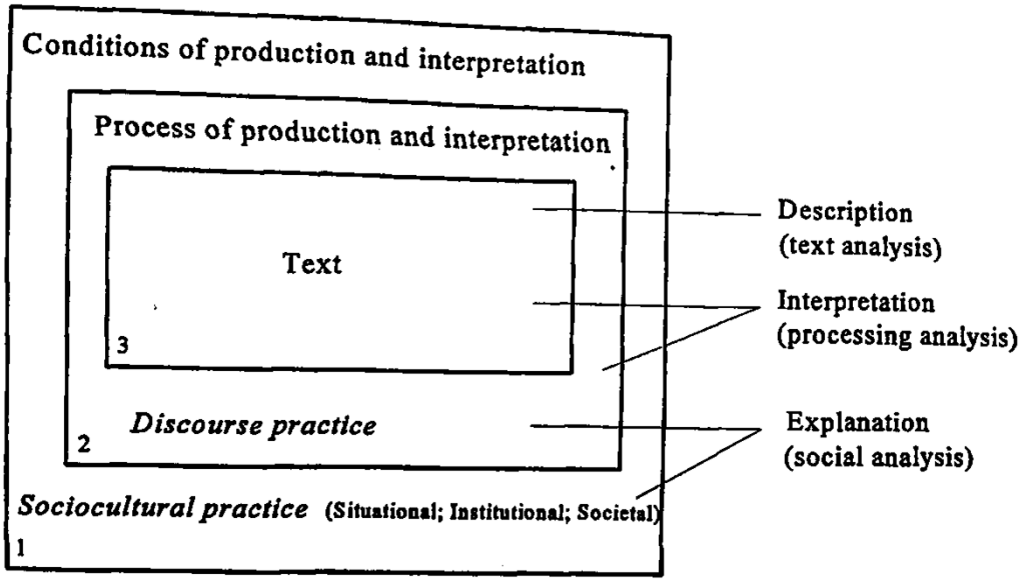


Figure 3: Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis

Hence, it is for this reason that CDA will be appropriate to understand social media conversations on newspaper stories on the NSIP programmes. This method will be used to answer research question six.

5.2.3 In-depth Interview

The in-depth interview is one of the major ways of gathering data in research. In-depth interview is a qualitative research method in where the researcher conducts a one-on-one interview among a small number of representative respondents to understand their perceptions about an idea, programme, or issue.

According to Boyce & Neale (2006), in-depth interview is a qualitative research method involving intensive interviews with few respondents to draw on the respondents' perspectives concerning a particular idea, programme, or situation. According to Kvale (1996) in-depth interviews are an intersubjective interaction aiming at understanding the meanings of central

themes in the subject's lived world. In support of this, Legard et al. (2003) express that in-depth interviews allow researchers to probe deeply into intricate behaviours, motivations, and emotions that perhaps other methods might not be in a position to capture. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) add that in-depth interviews facilitate the collection of detailed and nuanced insights into social phenomena through a conversational approach that fosters trust and openness between the interviewer and interviewee. These in-depth interviews had the aim of comprehensively verifying how journalists engage with and reported the National Social Investment Programmes.

In-depth interview, in this thesis, helps us to gain a thorough insight on how journalists gather, interact with materials they used to gather information while reporting the NSIP. The IDI conducted for the purpose of this thesis primarily explores the journalists' motifs for reporting, the challenges they faced, and the methods they used to verify, interpret and process NSIP-related information. The interview questions were semi-structured, allowing space for respondents to provide detailed information while also making sure that all aspects of key interest were covered

5.3 Research Approach

Quantitative content analysis according to Berelson (1952) in Rourke & Anderson, 2015) is defined as "a research technique for the systematic, objective, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (p. 18). Qualitative content analysis according to (Grbich, 2012, p. 189) is useful when studying a 'large sets of existing written or visual documentation which require analysis.' In similar regard, the social media aspect of this thesis will be studied using critical discourse analysis. Although time-consuming, it will provide this thesis with ample depth of constructs that will help identify the correlation or divergence of

data gathered. The choice of mixed methods is built on the understanding that the study will be interacting with "rich textual information in order to gain understanding" (Hall, 2020, p. 59) of media reportage of the NSIP.

It is also important to note that this study is within the research paradigm, hence, the typical method for studies within such paradigm is mixed methods where the data type is quantitative and qualitative (Hall, 2020, p. 12). Additionally, this research is informed by Marxist criticism, so I would view the data for this research via a Marxist lens. This Marxist critical approach, as noted by Asa Berger, "point out the hidden messages in mediated and other forms of communication" (Berger, 2011, p. 93). The arguments of these hidden messages shape the consciousness of those who receive the messages. Berger observed that "even more insidious, Marxist critics argue, many people in the media, …do not recognise the extent to which their messages contain ideological content" (Berger, 2011, p. 93). This thesis attempts explain both the overt and covert, or coded, reflections of the creation of materials, ideological value, class relations, and power structure, as well as the socio-political and economic context of mediated news on National Social Investment Programmes in Nigeria newspapers and discourses on Twitter. This study's use of the Marxist approach gives us the chance to integrate structuralism and semiology as analytical tools for deconstructing and understanding mediated news. Barrie Gunter in his text, *Media Research Methods,* describes this approach as 'critical social science' (Gunter, 2000, p. 6) Barrie Gunter view of this approach aligns with Asa Berger's perspective when he similarly argues that in this regard, "the principal aim of research is to reveal, explain and understand power structures and relationship within society" while noting that the media are "powerful sources of social control" even as the media is "…controlled by social, cultural and political elite" (Gunter, 2000, p. 7)

5.4 Population of study

Population of study is the entirety of target population from which sample is drawn. Therefore, all the items of a particular category on which researchers are interested make up a population (Chadwick, 2017). The population which this thesis seeks to examine are Nigerian Newspaper and Nigeria Xsphere. Although, it is difficult to get a comprehensive list of all newspapers published in Nigeria (Adeniran, 2017); the population of this study include all Nigerian print newspapers published in English language (official language in Nigeria) with exclusion of Newspapers focusing on subject areas and communities. According to Nigeria Press Council inventory, which supposedly contain all newspapers and magazines in Nigeria, there are 41 daily newspapers in published in Nigeria. The NPC (Nigerian Press Council) inventory shows that majority of the newspapers are published in Lagos (Southwest) and Abuja (North Central).

The second category of this study's population, Xsphere refers to the entirety of the Twitter discourse on National Social Investment Programmes. According to Chadwick (2017, p. 2), "a population might be broad in scope", so, it is important to clearly define the units that constitute the population. In this instance of social media, such units to Amy Chadwick could be 'individual posts' or 'threads.' For this purpose of this study and with respect to the Public Sphere theory that drives this aspect of this research, the later, thread constitute a unit that forms this study's population.

5.4.1.1 Samples Population

The sample population for this study is categorised into two. The first is sample population for newspapers and the second is sample population for Twitter. The two samples population categories are explained below.

5.4.1.1.1 Selection of Newspapers

The population for the content analysis component of this research involves all print newspapers operating in Nigeria. However, to ensure that this study uses a focused and manageable sample size, the study specifically studies four major newspapers were purposively selected based on their prominence, reach, ownership structures, political orientations, regional strengths, and historical significance within the Nigerian media landscape. The chosen newspapers – *Punch, Daily Trust, Nigerian Tribune, and The Nation* collectively represent a diverse spectrum of perspectives crucial for comprehensively examining the social production of news related to the NSIP.

These newspapers are selected for several key reasons: [16] [17] [18]

1. **Prominence and Reach:** All four publications are among Nigeria's most prominent and widely circulated newspapers, covering national political, economic, and social issues newspapers in Nigeria[19] (Adeniran, 2017; Oboh, 2016). Their selection ensures

[16] Daily Trust and *The Nation* were selected based on their geo-political zones and ownership. While Daily Trust is owned by a Northern Nigeria academic who was a columnist and commentator, Kabiru Yusuf, The Nation ownership is linked to Southern Nigerian politician, Bola Ahmed Tinubu who is now the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

[17] *Nigerian Tribune* is included based on political affiliation. While *The Nation* is affiliated to Bola Tinubu who is one of the founders and leader of the ruling party - All Progressive Congress (APC), *Nigerian Tribune* is committed to the cause of opposition – Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP). *The Nation* is considered sympathetic to the cause of its founder and ideology of APC (Ademilokun & Taiwo, 2013, p. 452; Ojebuyi & Salawu, 2018). It is therefore understood that *The Nation* will be sympathetic to the government of Nigeria because APC is the ruling party. On the opposition, *Nigerian Tribune supports* the PDP, especially the Yoruba faction of PDP (Oso, 2012).

[18] *Punch* is a newspaper that emerged after Nigeria gained independence. On the other hand, both *Daily Trust* is a contemporary newspaper. *Punch* being a post-independence might have covered the NSIP from a historical perspective while this researcher hopes to understand how contemporary newspaper like *Daily Trust* covered the NSIP.

[19] This thesis, at inception, proposed to include Guardian in this study but was eventually excluded because of accessibility reasons. The newspaper library was undergoing upgrade as at the time and the newspapers were not also available in digital format like other samples. It would worth studying Guardian in future study. This is because, like Nigerian Tribune and Punch, Guardian also have a distinct history of surviving repressive government in Nigeria. Guardian has also been described as the flagship of new journalism in Nigeria and the first newspaper set to respond to Nigeria's economic and socio-political needs (Eghosa, 2007, p. 94). Guardian is a post-independence newspaper. Given its significance as a post-independence newspaper, I would be interested in focusing on The Guardian in post-doctoral research when relevant data is accessible.

coverage of major outlets shaping public discourse. However, they cater to distinct audiences:

- ***The Punch***: Boasts broad national readership, particularly strong among the urban, educated middle-class, professionals, and students (Adebayo et al., 2025), primarily in Southern Nigeria but with significant national online reach. *Punch* is recognised for having widespread readership Ademilokun & Taiwo, 2013), p.79). Ademilokun and Taiwo (2013) highlight *Punch* as the "most widely circulated quality newspaper in Nigeria," emphasising its acclaimed ideological neutrality.

- ***Daily Trust:*** Predominantly serves Northern Nigeria, reaching the political and business elite, civil servants, academics (Hassan et al., 2015), and the general populace (including Hausa readers via Aminiya). Its readership significantly overlaps with key NSIP implementation regions.

- ***Nigerian Tribune***: Holds its strongest readership base in the South-West(Adesoji & Alimi, 2012), including educated individuals, older generations, regional political followers, and the general public in states like Oyo, Ogun, and Osun.

- ***The Nation***: Has national reach but is particularly influential among the political class (Ojetola et al., 2024), business community, and urban populations, especially in Lagos and the South-West, attracting those interested in APC perspectives

2. **Ownership and Independence:** The ownership structures significantly influence editorial stances:

   - ***The Punch*** (Punch Nigeria Limited): While influenced by the founding Aboderin family, it is widely regarded as independent and non-aligned with active political figures, known for its critical stance towards governments in power and investigative journalism.

   - ***Daily Trust*** (Media Trust Limited): A private enterprise often perceived as independent but with a distinct emphasis on Northern Nigerian issues and perspectives.

   - ***Nigerian Tribune*** (African Newspapers of Nigeria Plc): Nigeria's oldest private newspaper, founded in 1949 by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, with continued family influence. Historically associated with progressive, South-West interests.

   - ***The Nation (***Vintage Press Limited): Widely linked to Bola Ahmed Tinubu (now President, formerly a key APC figure), it is generally perceived as reflecting pro-APC interests (Mordi et al., 2017, p. 288).

3. **Political Orientation and Editorial Stance:** The selected newspapers exhibit varied political leanings, crucial for analysing diverse framings of Tradermoni/NSIP:

   - ***The Punch*****:** Maintains a reputation for critical independence and holding authorities accountable, likely scrutinising NSIP/Tradermoni implementation, funding, and effectiveness. *Punch was* originally non-politically aligned, later transitioned into a politically active newspaper (Ojebuyi & Salawu, 2018) *Punch* is recognised for maintaining a neutral stance (Ademilokun & Taiwo, 2013), p.79)

   - ***Daily Trust*****:** While capable of critique, its focus through a Northern lens is vital for understanding NSIP/Tradermoni reception and challenges in high-priority beneficiary regions.

   - ***Nigerian Tribune*****:** Historically critical of the central government, particularly concerning South-West interests. Its coverage might focus on regional equity and the perceived effectiveness of federal programmes like NSIP/Tradermoni within the South-West. *Nigerian Tribune supports* the PDP, especially the Yoruba faction of PDP (Oso, 2012).

   - ***The Nation*****:** As a publication aligned with the party (APC) that initiated and managed NSIP/Tradermoni during the study period, its coverage was frequently seen as supportive or defensive of the government's programmes. It is often considered sympathetic to the cause of its founder and the ideology of the APC (Ademilokun & Taiwo, 2013, p. 452; Ojebuyi & Salawu, 2018). Its coverage likely highlighted successes defended the programme against criticism and amplified pro-government narratives.

4. **Relevance to NSIP/Tradermoni Demographics and Discourse:** The selection strategically captures newspapers whose readerships intersect differently with the NSIP's target beneficiaries (poor, unemployed youth, traders, etc.) and the broader public debate:

   - ***Direct Overlap:*** *Daily Trust* and *Nigerian Tribune* serve regions (North and South-West respectively) with significant concentrations of potential NSIP/Tradermoni beneficiaries, offering perspectives potentially closer to the ground.

   - ***Influential Opinion-Shapers***: *The Punch* and *The Nation* reach crucial segments of the tax-paying public, urban middle-class, and political/business elites who, while not direct beneficiaries, are key opinion-shapers influencing the public and political debate on government expenditure, programme effectiveness, and accountability.

In summary, selecting *The Punch, Daily Trust, Nigerian Tribune,* and *The Nation* provides a robust and balanced sample. It allows this thesis to analyse the coverage of the Tradermoni

poverty reduction programme from multiple angles: critical independent scrutiny (*Punch*), Northern regional perspectives potentially close to beneficiaries (*Daily Trust*), historical South-West viewpoints focused on equity (*Tribune*), and pro-government framing (*The Nation*). This diversity is essential for a comprehensive understanding of how the programme was constructed and debated within the Nigerian public sphere.

5.4.1.1.2 Sampling Technique/ Sample Size

Developed on the foregoing, four newspapers – *Punch, Daily Trust, Nigerian Tribune,* and *The Nation* were selected based on their relevance to the study. 'Relevance sample' (Krippendorff, 2013) is purposive sampling. It is a non-probabilistic sampling technique aimed at selecting source that provide answers to the research questions (p.120). This technique will help this study gather relevance data on the role and pattern of media coverage of NSIP. With these techniques, this study is likely to show if political interest, ownership, and/or economic interest influence media reports.

This researcher began by acquiring a collection of Portable Document Format (PDF) archive newspapers from *Punch, Daily Trust, Tribune, and The Nation* libraries. The newspapers generally collected covers the entire study period ranging between June 2016 through May 29, 2023. These newspapers were diligently organised in a folder structure, categorised by the names of the respective newspapers, followed by the year, and further divided into months within each year.

To facilitate the search process, the researcher utilised the Adobe Acrobat Reader Premium version. By using the "Advanced Search" option, the researcher selected the specific Nigerian newspaper folder for analysis. In the "Search For" field, the researcher entered the different variation of keywords used for Tradermoni during the preliminary investigation. The keywords

are 'Tradermoni,' 'Trader money,' 'Tradermonie' and 'Trader Moni.' The newspaper folders were named "*Punch*," "*Daily Trust*," "*Tribune*," and "*The Nation*." By clicking the "Search" button, Adobe Acrobat Reader generated a list of documents that matched the specified keyword(s). The researcher then carefully reviewed this list, selecting documents that features stories on Tradermoni for further examination.

The developed search strategy for newspaper is shown in the table below:

Table 1: Search strategy for NSIP coverage in Nigerian Newspapers

	General key terms/phrase
1.	National Social Investment Programmes and/or NSIP
2.	Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP)
3.	The Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSF)
4.	The Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT)
5.	N-power
6.	Poverty
7.	Tradermoni,
8.	MarketMoni
9.	CCT
10.	Home based school feeding
11.	N-Power

Table 2: Deep-Search strategy for NSIP coverage in Nigerian Newspapers

TARGET words	**Specific keywords**
NSIP	"National Social Investment Programmes" and/or "NSIP"
GEEP	"Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme" or/and "GEEP"
Tradermoni	"Tradermoni" and/or "trader-moni" and/or "tradermoney" and/or "trader money"
Marketmoni	"MarketMoni" and/or "market-moni" and/or "marketmoney" and/or "market money"
Farmermoni	"FarmerMoni" and/or "farmer-moni" and/or "farmermoney" and/or "farmer money"
N-power	"N-power"
HGSF	"Home-Grown School Feeding Programme" or/and "HGSF"
CCT	"Conditional Cash Transfer" or/and "CCT"
Poverty	"Poverty"

Subsequently, the researcher proceeded to print all the stories that focused on NSIP, and its component programmes as searched using the above search strategy. This entire process was repeated for the keywords mentioned in the methodology chapter and for each Nigerian newspaper sample included in the study.

After coding the stories using the designated system, the data were analysed in SPSS. A Cross-tabulation was used to compare coverage across the four newspapers and identify any differences. The results were discussed and used to draw conclusions about the overall coverage of NSIP in the Nigerian press.

This sample plan is a more targeted plan which enables this researcher to access all the newspapers edition editions from *Punch, Daily Trust, Tribune, and The Nation* libraries.

5.4.1.1.3 Twitter Sample

As mentioned earlier, threads constitute the units of analysis that make up the population for this study. Twitter is a popular platform in Nigeria where individuals express their opinions and experiences on public matters, and where ideas are frequently promoted. To access and analyse the substantial data stream generated on this platform regarding the National Social Investment Programmes, this research employed the Apify Twitter Scraper using a developed keyword search strategy. Apify is a no-code scraping tool that enables the extraction of Twitter data, including tweets, threads, hashtags, replies, favourites, timestamps, and statistics, without the limitations of the Twitter API.

Also, as previously proposed, this study attempted to use the Collaborative Online Social Media Observatory Software (COSMOS) desktop software to collect, save, analyse, and visualise real-time Twitter data, but it was unsuccessful. COSMOS is a social media analysis tool funded by

the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) as part of the Big Data Network. COSMOS enables researchers to collect real-time data via the Twitter filter stream API (Engagement Lead Social Data Science Lab, n.d.). Changes to Twitter, introduced by its new owner Elon Musk around the time of data collection, meant that the API was no longer effective, thus explaining the failure of this method. Therefore, the Apify API access was subsequently adopted to collect Twitter data as it allows this researcher to collect data without Twitter limits.

This software allows this research to extract all Twitter discourse on the subject of research, National Social Investment Programmes, and its components using the developed search keywords. Following data acquisition via the Twitter API using specific keywords (as detailed in the Metaverse script chapter), Twitter data related to the study topic was collected from the announcement of the cover in June 2016 until the time of data extraction and saved as Excel sheets. The data was subsequently cleaned to remove repetitions. To ensure a representative and non-subjective sample for Critical Discourse Analysis, a multi-stage selection process was employed. First, R software was used to generate random numbers corresponding to tweets within the initial six months following the official announcement, focusing on identifying tweets from official sources. Subsequently, the random number tool was further used to sample tweets based on a ranking system. This ranking prioritised tweets with high engagement metrics (number of retweets and replies), representation of diverse viewpoints, and relevance to the study's timeframe. The selected threads were then subjected to Critical Discourse Analysis using the The Hybrid CDA Approach.

5.4.1.1.4 In-depth Interview Participant's sample; Selection of participants

Journalists were purposively selected based on their experience in covering NSIP-related issues in Nigeria, including their involvement in reporting on social investment programmes, years of

experience in journalism, and representation across diverse media houses. This approach ensured that the study reflects mainstream perspectives. A total of eight journalists were interviewed, as outlined Table 8.1 of this thesis.

These journalists were identified during the content analysis stage by reviewing by-lines of frequently published NSIP stories. Those with the highest count of stories for each content-analysed newspaper were shortlisted for participation in the in-depth interview.

5.4.1.1.4.1 Data Collection Process

The data collection process involved one-on-one interviews conducted either in person or through virtual platforms, depending on the availability of the journalists. Each interview lasted between 35 and 53 minutes, as recorded in Table 8.1, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the journalists' experiences and viewpoints. The interviews were audio-recorded (with the participants' consent) to ensure accuracy in capturing their responses.

5.5 Study period

Nigeria's poverty rate has posed serious threats to United Nations Sustainable Development Goal to end poverty by 2030 (Nwachukwu, 2019). Efforts to reduce poverty continues in Nigeria. In 2016, the NSIP was announced and was launched. Hence, for robust insight on NSIP, this researcher proposes to study Nigeria print media from the day the NSIP was launched in 2016 to 2022. Within these periods, this thesis assumes that the media would have given expected coverage to the programmes and/or perform surveillance function as it required of media as watch dog. This is especially necessary for a country where a simulated result of 10 million is expected to fall below poverty line in 2022 (World Bank, 2021). The period of search for Twitter is also between 2016 through 2023.

5.6 Research Instrument

Measurement tools are generally referred to as instruments (Sathiyaseelan, 2015). Given the subject-focused nature and specific particulars of this study, a research-specific instrument was developed by the researcher for data collection. This development was informed by a thorough review of the existing literature, ensuring the instrument's appropriateness for the research enquiry (Hsu & Sandford, 2010).

5.6.1 Content analysis

The development of codes and coding are important in data analysis. This process varies from quantitative to qualitative. In this study, codes refer to concepts and their identification through explicit criteria (Lisa, 2008).

For the first phase of this study – content analysis, *coding scheme*[20] will be developed to collect data from study population. In order to conduct content analysis, each sampled unit of analysis must be put into a category. In other to determine the content categories, the researcher recorded observed themes in news report on NSIP during preliminary research. At the level of preliminary investigation, the first phase of this research involved a content analysis approach to identify the prevalent themes within the collected data. By coding the news articles and Twitter threads, this initial analysis aimed to determine the significant topics and frames used in the coverage of the NSIP. Following this initial thematic identification through content analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was then employed as the primary approach to further examine how these identified themes were linguistically constructed, what ideological perspectives they reflected, and how power relations were enacted through language within the

[20] Coding scheme means developing a classification system or categories into which each sampled unit can be placed.

news coverage and social media discussions. The structure of this instrument presents content categories (which are nominal), unit of analysis and assignment of codes to variables – not ranked in any order.

5.6.1.1 Validity and Reliability

To ensure the clarity of this study's research tool and confirm the usability of the coding sheet (an inter-coder reliability test), two to three other content analysis researchers used the tool to code the same stories. To promote reliability in the coding process and ensure that coders would generate comparable findings from the same manifest samples, the degree of agreement achieved was measured using Scott's Pi (π). The following is the formula for:

$$\text{Pi} = \frac{\%\text{ of observed agreement} - \%\text{ of expected agreement}}{1 - \%\text{ of expected agreement}}$$

The outcome of this intercoder agreement serve as a parameter to demonstrates the level of usability of the designed instrument to code the various categories and that their corresponding units of analysis. In summary, the purpose of this test is to test for replicability of this thesis' research instrument.

5.6.2 Critical Discourse Analysis: Norman Fairclough's Approach

Critical discourse analysis, while its application can be nuanced and less straightforward, this thesis has carefully studied the various approaches to CDA but has decided to adopt the Norman Fairclough CDA approach.

This approach will be applied in phases and step. The method, as conceptualised by Cumming, *et al* suggests that CDA be guided by the following processes.

5.6.2.1 The Hybrid CDA Approach

In order to carry out this study, the below method was developed by this researcher for this thesis study based on the Fairclough (1995, 2010, 2014) and Cummings et al. (2020). This approached is referred to as "hybrid" because this CDA approach combines different analytical frameworks and methodologies, particularly those developed by Norman Fairclough and Cummings et al., to in studying, analysing texts and answering questions arises from the analysis. While Fairclough's approach itself integrates linguistic analysis with social theory (making it inherently hybrid), in the context of this thesis' methodology, the term "hybrid" specifically refers to the combination of Fairclough's CDA framework with the analytical framework and methodologies proposed by Cummings et al. This synthesis allows for a more multifaceted examination of the texts under analysis, drawing on the strengths of both approaches.

This combination these methods allow this thesis examine texts not only at the micro level—such as individual words and phrases—but also at the macro level, focusing on the broader discourses that emerge from the text, as well as how these discourses relate to wider social contexts. Therefore, the integration of a detailed linguistic analysis (drawing from one framework) with a critical examination of broader societal discourses (informed by the other framework) is what makes this approach a hybrid one.

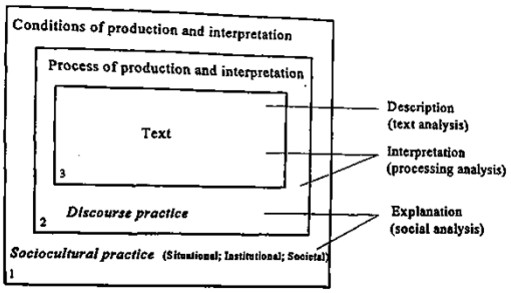
The Hybrid Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach is a methodological framework that integrates elements from different schools of thought, primarily drawing on Fairclough's model of CDA and further refined by Cummings et al. (2020). While Fairclough's model provides a foundational understanding of the relationship between language, power, and ideology, and emphasises the interconnectedness of text, discursive practice, and socio-cultural context,

Cummings et al. (2020) offer a more explicitly structured and often phased approach to applying CDA, particularly useful for analysing policy-related texts. Their work provides a clearer set of analytical steps and considerations for researchers, making the process of conducting CDA more systematic and potentially more accessible for certain types of analysis. This hybrid approach in this thesis leverages Fairclough's theoretical depth with the more operationalised framework suggested by Cummings et al. (2018, 2020).

5.6.2.1.1 The Hybrid CDA Approach (Designed by the Researcher, Drawing on (Fairclough, 1995, 2010, 2014) **and Cummings et al. (2020))**

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">CDA Methodological Instrument for Twitter</th></tr>
<tr><td>Phase 1:</td><td>Selection of research topic and providing an overview of past discourses

Steps — Task/Activity/Process
1 Selecting a research topic that relates to a social question that can be productively approached with a focus on text.
2 What discourses have already been identified in the area being investigated?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Phase 2:</td><td>Selection and analysis of texts
Steps — Task/Activity/Process
1 Select texts appropriate to the object of research.
2 Analysis of texts at the level of:
a. Individual words and phrases
b. How the words and phrases relate to each other in the text
c. The priority given to different themes
3 Identifying discourses in the text, based on the prior discourses identified in phase</td></tr>
<tr><td>Phase 3:</td><td>Describe how the text was created and how this potentially relates to the discourses identified in the analysis of the text and the discourses which have been identified.

Integrating Norman Fairclough Model, this phase will proceed to analysis at these following levels:

a. Description (textual analysis)
b. Interpretation (process analysis): of text and discourse practice
c. Explanation (Social Analysis)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Phase 4:</td><td>Possible solutions or ways past the dominant discourse in terms of creating new discourses, narratives, and arguments</td></tr>
</table>

The methodology then moves to the selection and detailed analysis of texts, where individual words, phrases, and their relationships within the text are examined. Finally, the approach involves identifying discourses within the text and linking them to broader societal contexts

5.6.2.2 Twitter Dataset

Given the substantial number of tweets for NSIP hashtag, a complete analysis involving every tweet on NSIP is not viable. Therefore, a seven-day representable sample of on #NSIP, #Tradermoni, #Marketmoni, #Marketmoni, #Schoolfeeding twitter dataset will be examined. As earlier noted by Prendergast and Quinn (2020), unlike using random sampling (Theocharis et al., 2014), or focusing only on "top" tweets (Steeves, 2018) or latest tweets (Najafabadi & Domanski, 2018). This method combines analysing 'top tweets' (those with high engagement) and examining tweets chronologically (over time, often around specific events). While Dominic Cummings is known for using data analysis in political communication, these specific methods (looking at engagement and time) are common techniques in social media analysis and discourse studies. Consequently, as applied by (Prendergast & Quinn, 2020), this study will focus on "top" 50 tweets from each day as generated by twitter and a daily chronological sample of "50" tweets per day of strategically and purposively selected period. Top tweets are selected because it is "deemed…to be a better subset for analysis than random sampling due to their impactful nature" (Prendergast & Quinn, 2020, p. 1619).

Also, as noted by in a Twitter Anatomy study Tremayne (2013), users of Twitter can start conversations with others using the @mention (@+individual username on twitter) and/or with other wider group which the subject relates to using hashtags. This is what Smith and Hansen *et al* described as symmetric and asymmetric while noting that "Twitter has focused attention on [both][21] the creation of direct [that is symmetric, and], asymmetric networks" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 710). Therefore, the use of @ and # help users connect, comments, endorse, or disagree

[21] The word and phrases in parenthesis are my modification of the (Smith et al., 2009) statement.

with subject of discourse on twitter. This study's analysis will use the @ and # indicators to connect each discourse, threads, and responses.

This choice of CDA for Twitter conversation analysis is because it has been proven as an ideal approach for analysing a naturally occurring text (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). CDA has been used by other research published in impact journals and books (Aljarallah, 2017; Crosset et al., 2019; Dyer & Hakkola, 2020; Dyson & Gorvin, 2017; Najafabadi & Domanski, 2018; Prendergast & Quinn, 2020; Saad Bustan & Alakrash, 2020; Tareq Awad, 2021) as there is an increasing categorical importance of the CDA approach to investigate social power relations and identity (Dyer & Hakkola, 2020). The technique of critical discourse analysis acknowledges that, despite the fact that people can choose how they describe a phenomenon, the vocabulary of terms that are available to them is reliant on context and culture (Dyson & Gorvin, 2017).

5.6.3 In-depth Interview

In this research, in-depth interviews, as primary research instrument is designed to yield rich data about participants' (that is, journalists') experiences, motivations, and perceptions, and as such, they are well-suited to explore complex phenomena or subjective meanings. For example, in this study, in-depth interviews were employed to discover how Nigerian journalists report the NSIP and how journalists utilise NSIP policy documents in their reporting.

The journalists' perceptions of audience interest (or lack thereof) in NSIP coverage (Chapter 8) should be considered alongside evidence suggesting that journalists may sometimes underestimate public engagement with complex social issues. Research in the humanitarian sector, for example, indicates that 'Audiences are interested in humanitarian journalism – more

than journalists think' (Humanitarian News Report, 2023, p. X). This raises the possibility that a similar dynamic could be at play regarding reporting on national social intervention programmes.

Interview guide was crafted and used as the research instrument. Two fundamental research questions were used to construct the Interview guide: 1) What influenced the manner in which the press reported the NSIP? and 2) How have Nigerian journalists utilised NSIP policy documents as information sources for their stories? These were also explored in depth with a set of focus questions (appendix) in order to enable the interview to explore alternative sides of the journalists' experiences, such as why they covered the NSIP, how they went about fact-checking, and how specific challenges were encountered when utilizing NSIP policy reports.

In addition, the interview tool employed open and follow-up questions to allow for respondents to provide detailed and profound responses. Examples of such questions include "Why did you decide to cover NSIP?" and "What role have NSIP policy documents played in helping you prepare your reports?" were employed in order to incite detailed conversation regarding the matter.

The interviews were conducted online on the safe university network, as per the security and ethics protocols, and respondent ease. For confidentiality purposes, all the interviews were recorded with the participants' consent, and no identifying information was included in the final report. This approach has not only ensured that this thesis maintains Kent's ethical standards but has also helped to gather rich, qualitative data for analysis.

In-depth interview guide was a robust research instrument that allowed both the practical and contextual determinants of the reporting of NSIP by Nigerian journalists to be explored.

5.7 Ethical considerations

This study adhered to the University of Kent's ethical requirements and received approval after thorough review and consideration by the University's Ethics Committee. The ethical considerations for this research were multifaceted, encompassing the nature of the data, the involvement of journalist participants, and adherence to data protection regulations.

5.7.1 Public Domain Data

It is important to emphasise that the research involves the analysis of publicly available news reports from Nigerian newspapers and publicly accessible data from Twitter. The use of publicly available data mitigates some ethical concerns, as the material is already in the public domain and its analysis does not involve the collection of private or personal information from individuals without their consent.

5.7.2 Journalist Participants

A key ethical focus of this study was the involvement of journalists as participants in in-depth interviews. Several ethical considerations were addressed to ensure their well-being and protection:

- **Potential Risks and Safeguards**: The study acknowledges the challenging and potentially hostile environment in which journalists in Nigeria operate. While the research does not aim to increase these risks, it recognises the sensitivity of the topic, which involves government policy and allegations of corruption. To mitigate potential distress or psychological harm, participants were provided with comprehensive information about the study, and informed consent was obtained. Participants were

assured of the anonymity of their data, with the removal of any information that could reveal their identity. Furthermore, journalists were asked to confirm they were in a safe place to proceed with the interview. Interviews were designed to include a five-minute comfort break to accommodate the journalists' well-being.

- **Power Imbalances:** To address potential power and dependency imbalances between the researcher and participants, the study employed measures such as establishing clear boundaries, ensuring informed consent, reflexivity, and incorporating participant feedback. These steps were taken to uphold participant autonomy and ensure ethical conduct.

- **Cultural Diversity:** The research considered cultural diversity by acknowledging the researcher's fluency in multiple Nigerian languages, facilitating effective communication. Additionally, the widespread use of English in Nigerian journalism was noted.

5.7.3 Data Protection and GDPR Compliance

The study was conducted in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Key measures to ensure data protection included:

- **Pseudonymisation and Data Security:** Pseudonymisation and technical safeguards were used to protect against accidental disclosure, loss, or corruption of research data. Personal data collected during interviews (e.g., name, place of work) was stored in a protected, password-protected space.

- **Data Minimisation:** The data collected was limited to the minimum necessary for the research purposes, focusing on journalists' professional experiences.

- **Informed Consent and Participant Rights:** Participants were fully informed about how their data would be used, and their rights to access, rectification, erasure, restriction of processing, data portability, and objection to processing were respected.

- **Privacy Notice**: A privacy notice was included in the Participant Information Sheet, detailing how information would be collected, used, and shared. Participants were informed that this information sheet would be read out to them electronically and not provided as a hard copy.

- **Data Breach Protocol:** Procedures were established to promptly report any data leaks or breaches to the University's Data Protection Officer and, if necessary, to the Information Commissioner's Office.

- **Data Storage and Access:** Interview data was securely collected and stored using the University's network and secured software, with access limited to the researcher.

- **Data Anonymisation:** The data can be anonymised to achieve the research objectives.

- **Data Retention:** Data will be securely stored for 19 months after the study's completion, after which it will be permanently destroyed.

5.7.4 Other Ethical Considerations

- **No Payment to Participants:** Participants were not paid for their involvement in the study.

- **Feedback to Participants:** Participants can access an electronic copy of the thesis via the University's Kent Academic Repository (KAR).

- **Ethics Approval:** The study also obtained ethical approval from TETFund, the researcher's scholarship body.

- **Terrorism Act:** The research does not involve access to, or use of material covered by the Terrorism Act.

- **COVID-19 Risk Assessment:** A COVID-19 risk assessment was conducted, and it was determined that it was not required due to the online nature of the interviews.

5.7.5 In-depth Interviews

Informed consent was given by the participants prior to conducting interviews so that they were aware of the nature of the study, how their data will be used, and how they were entitled to

withdraw at any moment without penalty. Notice of privacy was also presented to the participants, as mandated by GDPR legislation, in which their access, rectification, and erasure rights were declared regarding their data.

During data collection, confidentiality of the participants was maintained. Their anonymity was ensured using pseudonyms, and any data that may potentially identify them - such as names, organisations, or events - were omitted during transcription as well as the final analysis. Besides, direct quotations used in the research were paraphrased carefully as well to avoid unintended participant identification. Audio recordings were also stored securely and deleted after transcription, according to data protection policies.

Against the backdrop of the sensitive issues that were under discussion, ranging from government intervention to freedom of the press, the research continued further to ensure that the participants would give their opinions freely without fear of retaliation or additional exposure. The volatile situation on which Nigerian journalists must operate, facing threats, arrest, and even violence, was observed, but the research went one step ahead to ensure that the participation exposed them to no further risk.

5.7.6 X (formerly Twitter) Data Set

According to the Ethical Standards for Internet-mediated Research (The British Psychological Society, 2021), using "tweets" (now X posts) as a source of research needs to be treated with extreme ethical sensitivity even where the data are publicly available. It is not always easy to obtain explicit consent from individual users, but anonymising the data must be undertaken in a way that maintains their privacy, particularly in politically sensitive contexts like Nigeria. Although tweets are public, users do not necessarily expect substantial inclusion in scientific

studies. Researchers must therefore respect this by avoiding the risk of harm and by not subjecting the users to danger. This is especially important when dealing with marginalised voices or oppositional perspectives because there are potential repercussions in oppressive environments.

This thesis, therefore, ensures that no personally identifiable data is contained within the quoted data of X. The socio-political environment in which the tweets are being posted is also identified within this thesis. This is particularly necessary due to the environment of the current study, whereby there is government regulation of social media, such as in Nigeria.

Extra care was exercised not to further stigmatise already vulnerable populations. Ethical guidelines, such as those laid down by the British Psychological Society (2021), mandate that researchers maintain user dignity, privacy, and autonomy, even with publicly available information. Anonymisation, harm minimisation, and context sensitivity were important considerations for ethically using X posts in this thesis.

5.8 Methodological Reflections

The section reflects on some of the experiences the researcher encounters during the process of designing a feasible method for this study. The researcher had to deal with peculiar problems specific to each of the employed approaches. Below, is a reflection on the relevant method.

5.8.1 Content Analysis

Despite the fact that analysing documents already in the public domain is a common part of content analysis of media content, there is still the issue of accessibility. Therefore, when creating and organising any content analysis study in Nigeria, accessibility must be considered.

Considering this problem, while designing the methods, this research parallelly considered the accessibility of each of the selected newspapers from their respective library. After several contacts, I reached a conclusion that studying the hard copies of the newspapers will not only be a very difficult task but will be inefficient because of the unorganised state of some of the selected newspaper libraries in Nigeria. A newspaper content scholar, Adeniran Raheemat, had earlier noted that the "poor record keeping of media organisations in Nigeria" (R. A. Adeniran, 2017, p. 123) as a major hindrance to conducting content analysis of newspapers published in the country. Hence, I opted for electronic options. Earlier studies (Kim & Yoon, 2009; Zhang et al., 2015) have noted electronic database source as an ideal data source for content analysis research. Consequently, in place of studying the hard copies of the newspaper, which has always been the practice in Nigeria, I, alternatively decided to order all the newspapers edition in Portable Document Format (PDF). The PDF file are OCR[22]-enabled files. OCR files allow this research to search keywords in a document. Farther to this, I deployed the Acrobat Reader Software to search keywords within a file folder by newspapers, by years and by dates.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter has described the three primary research techniques employed in this thesis: content analysis, critical discourse analysis (CDA), and in-depth interviews with journalists. Each of these methods was selected to address specific aspects of the research questions, and the combination of the methods strengthens the study's rigour by showing more than one side through triangulation.

The content analysis was designed to systematically categorise and interpret the newspaper coverage of the NSIP to be able to identify patterns and trends in how the programme was

[22] Optical Character Recognition

reported by the media and how the media represented it. The critical discourse analysis, on the other hand, analysed the underlying meanings, ideologies, and power relations in X (formerly Twitter) discourses on NSIP, and brought out the underlying narratives. The use of in-depth interviews with reporters, who wrote about NSIP, provided rich qualitative depth to the study, providing contextual insight into the drivers of their reporting and the challenges they encountered in accessing and utilizing NSIP policy documents.

The sampling procedure was also addressed within this chapter, where it was explained how an independent sample of Nigerian newspapers and social media posts were selected in an attempt to receive a broad choice of perspectives. Ethical procedures, including anonymisation of the interviewees and adherence to GDPR legislation, were also maintained to ensure the dignity and privacy of the participants were maintained.

In addition, methodological remarks addressed the issues encountered during the research process and how they were resolved to maintain the integrity of the study [6]. In summary, this chapter has laid the groundwork for the ensuing analysis by guaranteeing validity and reliability of applied methods. The next chapter will present findings of the content and critical discourse analyses, the newspaper and Twitter data respectively.

CHAPTER SIX

STUDY 1

6 Content Analysis of Nigerian Newspaper Coverage of National Social Investment Programmes

This chapter is the first of the three study chapters in this thesis; it presents the results of a content analysis of newspaper coverage of the NSIP in Nigeria. The content analysis procedure, taking inference from Bernard Berelson's (1952, p. 18) definition, involves a research technique through which a researcher describes the manifest contents of communications objectively, systematically, and quantitatively. As it applies to this study, first, the Portable Document Format (PDF) archive newspapers were purchased from a newspaper organisation and carefully organised in a folder by names of newspapers, by year, and within each year by month. Then, using the Adobe Acrobat Reader Premium version, this study used the "Advanced Search" option to search newspapers within the folder of selected the Nigerian newspaper. The keyword(s) (see the list of keywords in the methodology chapter) was entered into the "Search For" field. The newspaper folders are named "*Punch*," "*Daily Trust*," "Tribune," and "*The Nation*." The "Search," bottom was clicked and Adobe Acrobat Reader displayed a list of documents that matched the keyword(s). The list was reviewed, the documents where the stories was published was opened and then all the stories that focused on NSIP (National Social Investment Program) were printed. Specifically, stories where the main subject of the article was NSIP were included. Also, stories that features significant portion of the content dedicated to NSIP initiatives were also included. Articles that briefly mentioned 'NSIP' without making it a central topic were excluded. To determine the primary focus of each article, this study considered the depth and context in which NSIP was addressed. This process was repeated for

each of the keywords listed in the methodology chapter and for each of the Nigerian newspaper samples.

After identifying the relevant stories, the page where the story appears was printed, and the content of each story was read and coded. The coding process involved assigning each story a story ID and codes that represented the content of the story. The content categories and units of analysis are explained in the methodology chapter and codebook (see Appendix B).

Subsequently, after all the stories had been coded using the designed coding sheet (see Appendix A) the data were inputted and analysed in SPSS. The analyses of the data provide descriptive and quantitative insights into the trends and patterns of the coverage of the NSIP by Nigerian newspapers.

The analysis focused on various aspects such as content type, themes, placement, tone, framing, frequency and quality of coverage, and the sources of the stories. Using cross-tabulation, the analysis also compared the coverage across the four newspapers to identify any differences that may have existed. The results of the analysis were used to discuss coverage of the NSIP in the Nigerian press.

6.1 Data Analysis and Discussions

Table 3: Statistics of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)

Number of stories published on NSIP by selected Nigerian Newspaper

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	*Punch*	63	14.8	14.8	14.8
	The Nation	136	32.0	32.0	46.8
	Nigerian Tribune	127	29.9	29.9	76.7
	Daily Trust	99	23.3	23.3	100.0
	Total	425	100.0	100.0	

Table 6.1 above shows the findings of the content analysis that was conducted on a sample of Nigerian newspapers to determine the number of stories related to NSIP that were published. It shows the frequency of articles, represented as counts, as well as percentages, published in each newspaper. The sample included four selected Nigerian Newspapers: *Punch*, *The Nation*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *Daily Trust* between June 2016 when the programme was announced through May 28, 2023, which the cumulative two-tenures of the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari comes to an end.

Statistical measures for NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)
Number of stories published on NSIP by selected Nigerian Newspaper

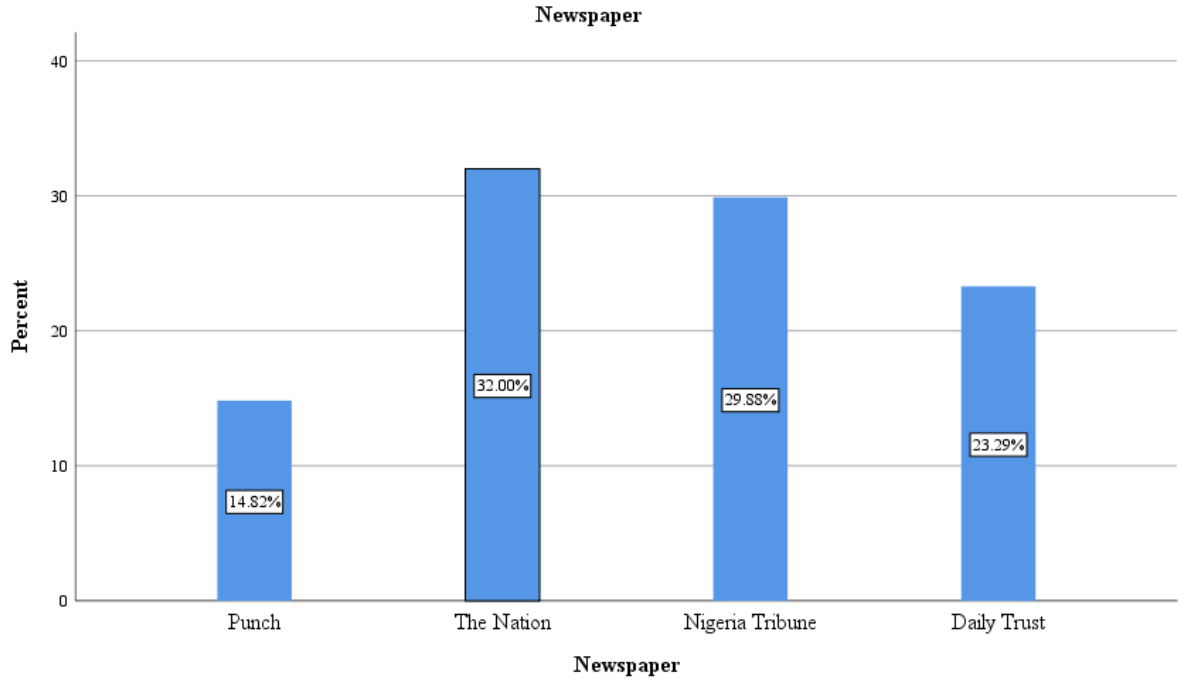
N	Valid	425
	Missing	0
Mean		3.4682
Median		4.0000
Std. Deviation		1.26810
Variance		1.608
Skewness		-.681
Std. Error of Skewness		.118

Statistical Measures Table 1

Inferential data analysis presented in statistical measure table 1 above on NSIP story coverage across Nigerian newspapers gives us an interesting picture of how these stories were reported. On average, each newspaper published about 3 to 4 stories on NSIP, which the mean (3.47) and median (4) confirm. However, there's some noticeable variation, as the standard deviation of 1.27 suggests that while many papers stayed close to this average, others published more or less.

What is particularly striking is the negative[23] skew in the data which implies that most newspapers published fewer stories, but a few outliers pushed the average up by publishing considerably more. This uneven spread of coverage is an important takeaway, showing that while NSIP got attention, it wasn't consistently highlighted across all publications. The data reflects a mix of higher and lower engagement with NSIP stories, depending on the newspaper.

Figure 4: Story count by Newspapers.



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The results indicate that NSIP is a topic of interest among Nigerian newspapers. The table above shows the coverage intensity by newspaper, with *The Nation* newspaper having the highest frequency of 136 stories representing 32% of the total analysed articles. This was followed by *Nigerian Tribune* with 127 NSIP stories accounting for 29.9% of stories. *Daily Trust* placed

[23] To determine the tone of each news story, a systematic coding process was employed based on the codebook's guidelines (See: Appendix B: Code Book) for 'Tone of Story' (variable 15). The tone was coded as positive (1), negative (2), neutral or mixed (3), or critical (4).

third with 99 NSIP stories at 23.3% while *Punch* had the least number of NSIP-related stories at 63 counts which was 14.8%.

These findings suggest *The Nation* and *Nigerian Tribune* published more NSIP-related news, as they had the highest number of stories related to NSIP in the sample during the period under review.

6.1.1 Year of Publication and Newspaper of NSIP Stories Content Analysis

Table 4: Crosstabulation by Year of Publication and Newspaper of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)

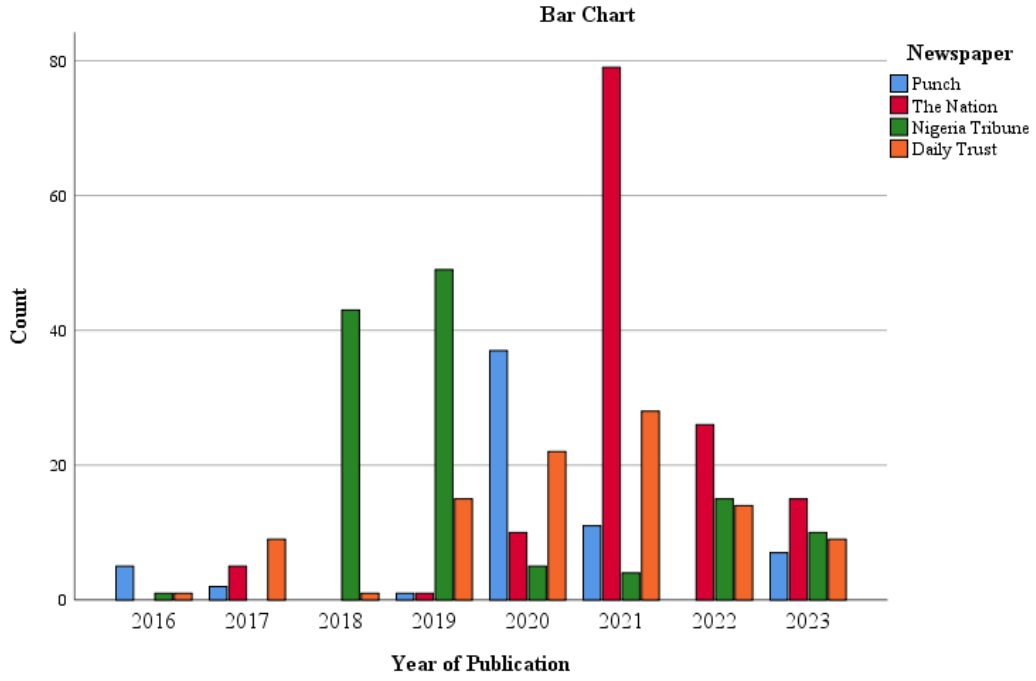
Year of Publication of NSIP stories * Newspaper Crosstabulation

			Newspaper				
			Punch	*The Nation*	*Nigerian Tribune*	*Daily Trust*	Total
Year of Publication	2016	Count	5	0	1	1	7
		% within Year of Publication	71.4%	0.0%	14.3%	14.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	7.9%	0.0%	0.8%	1.0%	1.6%
		% of Total	1.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	1.6%
	2017	Count	2	5	0	9	16
		% within Year of Publication	12.5%	31.3%	0.0%	56.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	3.2%	3.7%	0.0%	9.1%	3.8%
		% of Total	0.5%	1.2%	0.0%	2.1%	3.8%
	2018	Count	0	0	43	1	44
		% within Year of Publication	0.0%	0.0%	97.7%	2.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	0.0%	33.9%	1.0%	10.4%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	10.1%	0.2%	10.4%
	2019	Count	1	1	49	15	66
		% within Year of Publication	1.5%	1.5%	74.2%	22.7%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	0.7%	38.6%	15.2%	15.5%
		% of Total	0.2%	0.2%	11.5%	3.5%	15.5%
	2020	Count	37	10	5	22	74
		% within Year of Publication	50.0%	13.5%	6.8%	29.7%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	58.7%	7.4%	3.9%	22.2%	17.4%
		% of Total	8.7%	2.4%	1.2%	5.2%	17.4%
	2021	Count	11	79	4	28	122
		% within Year of Publication	9.0%	64.8%	3.3%	23.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	17.5%	58.1%	3.1%	28.3%	28.7%
		% of Total	2.6%	18.6%	0.9%	6.6%	28.7%
	2022	Count	0	26	15	14	55
		% within Year of Publication	0.0%	47.3%	27.3%	25.5%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	19.1%	11.8%	14.1%	12.9%
		% of Total	0.0%	6.1%	3.5%	3.3%	12.9%
	2023	Count	7	15	10	9	41
		% within Year of Publication	17.1%	36.6%	24.4%	22.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	11.1%	11.0%	7.9%	9.1%	9.6%
		% of Total	1.6%	3.5%	2.4%	2.1%	9.6%
Total		Count	63	136	127	99	425
		% within Year of Publication	14.8%	32.0%	29.9%	23.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	14.8%	32.0%	29.9%	23.3%	100.0%

GO TO LIST OF TABLES

Table 4 shows the result of the analysis of stories published by four selected Nigerian newspapers on NSIP over seven years (from 2016 to 2023). As seen in the table, it presents the number of NSIP-related articles published by each newspaper by year, as well as the percentage of articles published by each newspaper within the total number of articles published and within each year.

Figure 5: Coverage pattern by Year of Publications



GO TO LIST OF FIGURES

Firstly, considering the distribution of articles across newspapers, *The Nation* clearly dominates the landscape, accounting for 32% of all NSIP-related articles published, followed by *Nigerian Tribune* with 30% and *Daily Trust* with 23%. *Punch*, while still contributing significantly, trails behind with 15%. This distribution suggests variations in editorial focus and perhaps differing levels of interest or emphasis on social welfare issues among the newspapers.

When analysing the trends from the years covered in this study, several patterns emerge. An emerging pattern is a noticeable increase in coverage from 2016 to 2021, with a peak in 2021, but a significant drop-off of coverage in the years 2022 and 2023. The observed spike in media coverage may correlate with periodic relevance or public interest in NSIP initiatives during these times. It is plausible that the general elections in 2019 contributed to the increase. The government, for later analysis of news reports reveals that the government prominently featured NSIP "success stories" stories in their election campaigns, especially to woo voters to secure a second term. The continued focus through 2021 suggests continued discussion around the programme. By 2022 and 2023, though, the media might have shifted its attention to the next election cycle, with broader political issues overshadowing stories about NSIP. Also, activities related to NSIP has also declined as there were emerging evident of anomalies with the programme was no longer fit for electioneering campaigns.

Delving deeper into each paper's coverage, there are some interesting observations. For instance, *Punch* had a fairly low number of stories in earlier years but experienced a surge in 2020 that explained most of the coverage for the year. This could be an indication of a shift in editorial interest or increased attention to NSIP social welfare issues in 2020.

Likewise, the *Nigerian Tribune* shows a trend that is more variable, peaking in levels of coverage during 2018 and 2019 before subsiding in later years. It could be due to a shift in editorial posture, a shift in public narrative, or a fluctuation of government policy and interest in topics related to NSIP.

Daily Trust reporting, while relatively consistent, is also not uniform year to year, with spikes occurring in 2017 and 2021. This shows that interest or attention to NSIP-related stories in the editorial agenda of the newspaper is also variable.

Besides, articles were shared across the newspapers by year, and a few newspapers published more articles in certain years than others. In 2016, for instance, *Punch* was the only newspaper that published more about NSIP when the social welfare programmes commenced. The percentage of NSIP-related articles published by each newspaper varied over the years.

Data from Table 4: Crosstabulation by Year of Publication and Newspaper of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023) provides useful information on the distribution of NSIP-related articles among the selected Nigerian newspapers over the years, with *The Nation* being the most active publisher of NSIP-related articles. For instance, *The Nation* demonstrates a consistently high coverage throughout the years, while *Punch* shows more variability, with peaks in certain years. Understanding these patterns can provide insights into each newspaper's editorial stance or audience engagement strategies.

The implications of these findings, in relation to the Media Agenda Setting theory, are quite significant. The different levels of coverage of NSIP stories in various newspapers indicate that the media has the potential to shape public opinion through agenda-setting. For instance, newspapers such as *The Nation* consistently cover NSIP-related issues, which could potentially influence how the public perceives these initiatives and the discussions surrounding them. The fluctuation in NSIP coverage over time indicates changing public and media attention towards social welfare programmes in Nigeria. The rise and fall of interest in NSIP initiatives reflects shifts in public priorities. This has implications for policy impact.

The table also offers insights into the dynamics of newspaper article publication on NSIP in Nigeria over the period covered in this study, which could be useful in identifying trends and patterns in the coverage of NSIP in Nigerian newspapers. Further analyses of the reasons for

the variation in NSIP-related stories by year and newspaper, as well as the quality and tone of the coverage, are explored later in this chapter (see Table on tone).

Inferential Statistic Test Table 1

Chi-Square Tests for Year of Publication of NSIP stories * Newspaper Crosstabulation

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	367.800[a]	21	.000
Likelihood Ratio	374.667	21	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.868	1	.090
N of Valid Cases	425		

a. 7 cells (21.9%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.04.

A chi-square test confirmed a statistically significant association between the year of publication and the specific newspaper covering NSIP. This implies that the coverage was not uniform across different newspapers and publication years, hinting at potential underlying factors influencing these patterns. Given that both the Pearson Chi-Square (367.800) and Likelihood Ratio (374.667) are quite large, and the p-value is .000, it's highly unlikely that this association of year publication and newspapers occurred by chance. The distribution of NSIP stories across different newspapers and publication years is not random; there is a pattern. However, weak linear association test shows a p-value of .090. This suggests a weak linear relationship between year and newspapers. What this means is that the association is not a straight line but most likely a complex association. It was earlier noted in Chapter 2, that Nigeria media operate in a complex political and social system environment where the relationship between media, politics, and the economy in Nigeria is complex and multifaceted; this was observed in Akinro & Zeng (2017) study. Hence, this text uneven distribution of NSIP stories across newspapers and publication years with some newspapers focusing on NSIP more during specific years. More so, there could be other factors influencing the coverage patterns.

6.1.2 Months of Publication and Newspaper of NSIP Stories Content Analysis

Table 5: Crosstabulation by months of Publication and Newspaper of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)

Month of Publication * Newspaper Crosstabulation

			Newspaper				
			Punch	*The Nation*	*Nigerian Tribune*	*Daily Trust*	Total
Month of Publication	Jan	Count	5	11	18	3	37
		% within Month of Publication	13.5%	29.7%	48.6%	8.1%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	8.1%	8.2%	14.2%	3.0%	8.8%
		% of Total	1.2%	2.6%	4.3%	0.7%	8.8%
	Feb	Count	4	10	11	7	32
		% within Month of Publication	12.5%	31.3%	34.4%	21.9%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	6.5%	7.5%	8.7%	7.1%	7.6%
		% of Total	0.9%	2.4%	2.6%	1.7%	7.6%
	Mar	Count	6	7	10	12	35
		% within Month of Publication	17.1%	20.0%	28.6%	34.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	9.7%	5.2%	7.9%	12.1%	8.3%
		% of Total	1.4%	1.7%	2.4%	2.8%	8.3%
	Apr.	Count	9	8	8	11	36
		% within Month of Publication	25.0%	22.2%	22.2%	30.6%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	14.5%	6.0%	6.3%	11.1%	8.5%
		% of Total	2.1%	1.9%	1.9%	2.6%	8.5%
	May	Count	11	8	7	6	32
		% within Month of Publication	34.4%	25.0%	21.9%	18.8%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	17.7%	6.0%	5.5%	6.1%	7.6%
		% of Total	2.6%	1.9%	1.7%	1.4%	7.6%
	Jun	Count	14	14	5	15	48
		% within Month of Publication	29.2%	29.2%	10.4%	31.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	22.6%	10.4%	3.9%	15.2%	11.4%
		% of Total	3.3%	3.3%	1.2%	3.6%	11.4%
	Jul	Count	2	8	6	5	21
		% within Month of Publication	9.5%	38.1%	28.6%	23.8%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	3.2%	6.0%	4.7%	5.1%	5.0%
		% of Total	0.5%	1.9%	1.4%	1.2%	5.0%
	Aug	Count	4	37	1	5	47
		% within Month of Publication	8.5%	78.7%	2.1%	10.6%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	6.5%	27.6%	0.8%	5.1%	11.1%
		% of Total	0.9%	8.8%	0.2%	1.2%	11.1%
	Sept.	Count	1	19	12	16	48
		% within Month of Publication	2.1%	39.6%	25.0%	33.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	14.2%	9.4%	16.2%	11.4%
		% of Total	0.2%	4.5%	2.8%	3.8%	11.4%
	Oct	Count	5	3	9	6	23
		% within Month of Publication	21.7%	13.0%	39.1%	26.1%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	8.1%	2.2%	7.1%	6.1%	5.5%
		% of Total	1.2%	0.7%	2.1%	1.4%	5.5%
	Nov.	Count	1	4	20	3	28
		% within Month of Publication	3.6%	14.3%	71.4%	10.7%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	3.0%	15.7%	3.0%	6.6%
		% of Total	0.2%	0.9%	4.7%	0.7%	6.6%
	Dec.	Count	0	5	20	10	35
		% within Month of Publication	0.0%	14.3%	57.1%	28.6%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	3.7%	15.7%	10.1%	8.3%
		% of Total	0.0%	1.2%	4.7%	2.4%	8.3%
Total		Count	62	134	127	99	422
		% within Month of Publication	14.7%	31.8%	30.1%	23.5%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	14.7%	31.8%	30.1%	23.5%	100.0%

6.1.3 Months of Publication and Newspaper of NSIP Stories Content Analysis

Table 5 provides a cross tabulated analysis of the number of articles published ordered by months and by selected Nigerian newspapers (*Punch*, *The Nation*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and Trust) on NSIP between June 2016 to May 2023.

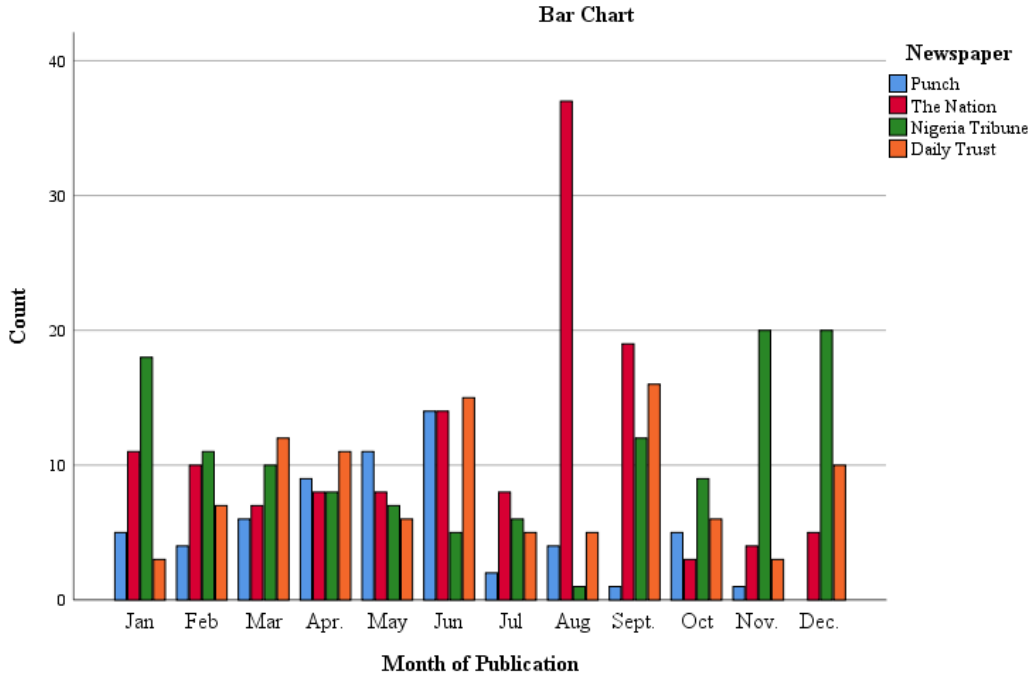
6.1.4 One notable finding, from the Months of Publication and Newspaper of NSIP Stories Content Analysis

Table 5 is the fluctuation in coverage across different months, with peaks observed in certain months such as June, March, and August. For instance, in June, NSIP stories accounted for 11.4% of the total coverage, indicating a notable spike in media attention during that month. Also, data reveals notable fluctuations in the percentage of articles published by each newspaper across different months, reflecting the dynamic nature of media coverage and the diverse editorial agendas of the newspapers. While some newspapers exhibit relatively consistent coverage patterns throughout the months, others demonstrate more variability in their publication frequencies. This variability underscores the nuanced factors influencing editorial decisions, such as news agendas, audience interests and marketability dynamics as well as organisational priorities.

For instance, *The Nation* maintains a relatively stable percentage of articles published across the months, indicating a consistent level of coverage. However, there are obvious peaks in certain months, such as August, where *The Nation* significantly increases its publication of NSIP-related articles, reaching a peak of 78.7%. This suggests that *The Nation* might prioritise specific topics or events during certain periods, for certain reasons, leading to fluctuations in coverage intensity.

On the other hand, newspapers like *Nigerian Tribune* exhibit more flexibility in their publication patterns, with fluctuations in the percentage of articles published across different months. For instance, *Nigerian Tribune* shows a substantial increase in coverage in December and then January, with NSIP-related articles accounting for 57.1% and 48.6% of its publications during those months respectively. This suggests that *Nigerian Tribune* might have focused extensively on NSIP-related issues or other relevant topics in December and January, contributing to the higher percentage of articles published.

Figure 6: Bar chart showing Newspapers coverage pattern by Month of Publications of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)



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Similarly, *Punch* and *Daily Trust* also demonstrate fluctuations in their publication patterns across months, indicating shifts in editorial priorities and audience engagement strategies. For example, *Punch* publishes the highest percentage of articles (34.4%) in May, while *Daily Trust* leads with 31.3% in June. Figure 6 shows us the overall trends and patterns by month. These

variations highlight the nuanced interplay between editorial decisions, interests, and external factors shaping media coverage of NSIP-related issues.

Inferential Statistic Test Table 2

Chi-Square Tests for Newspapers coverage pattern by Month of Publications of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	144.110[a]	33	.000
Likelihood Ratio	148.174	33	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.309	1	.007
N of Valid Cases	422		

a. 6 cells (12.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.09.

Similar to test results in inference from crosstabulation year and newspapers publication of NSIP stories, the above tests show that there is a significant association between the newspapers' coverage patterns and the month of publication of the stories. The analysis suggests a linear relationship between the month of publication and the coverage patterns.

6.1.5 Week of Publication and Newspaper of NSIP Stories Content Analysis

Table 6: Crosstabulation by Day of the week of Publications and Newspaper of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)

Day of the Week of Publication * Newspaper Crosstabulation

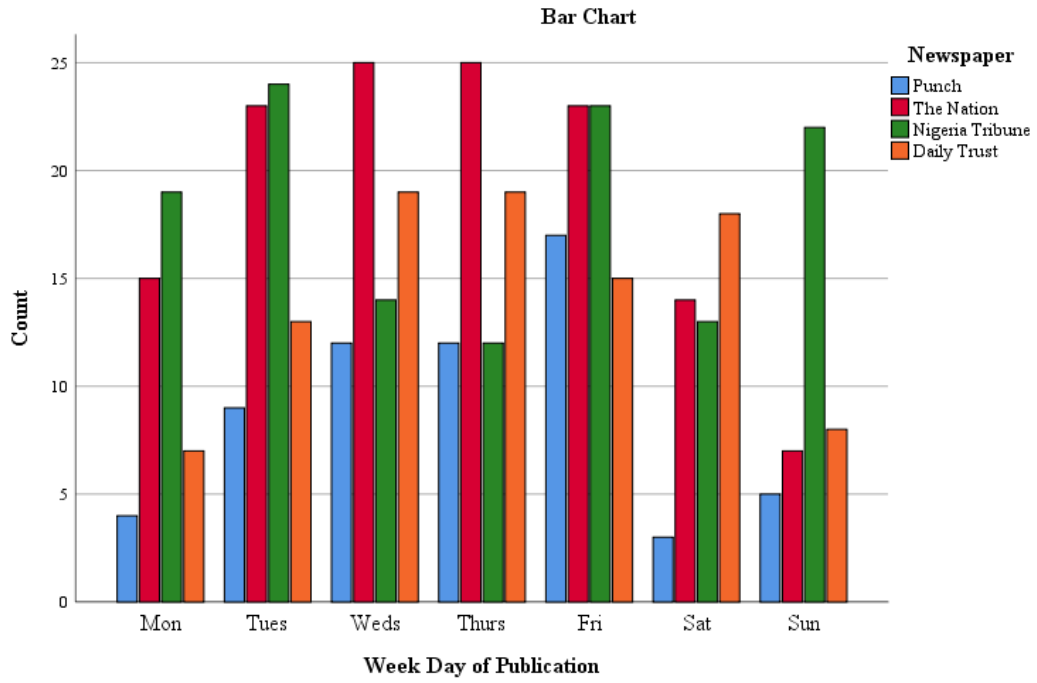
			Newspaper				
			Punch	*The Nation*	*Nigerian Tribune*	*Daily Trust*	Total
Day of the Week Publication	Mon	Count	4	15	19	7	45
		% within Weekday of Publication	8.9%	33.3%	42.2%	15.6%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	6.5%	11.4%	15.0%	7.1%	10.7%
		% of Total	1.0%	3.6%	4.5%	1.7%	10.7%
	Tues	Count	9	23	24	13	69
		% within Weekday of Publication	13.0%	33.3%	34.8%	18.8%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	14.5%	17.4%	18.9%	13.1%	16.4%
		% of Total	2.1%	5.5%	5.7%	3.1%	16.4%
	Weds	Count	12	25	14	19	70
		% within Weekday of Publication	17.1%	35.7%	20.0%	27.1%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	19.4%	18.9%	11.0%	19.2%	16.7%
		% of Total	2.9%	6.0%	3.3%	4.5%	16.7%
	Thurs	Count	12	25	12	19	68
		% within Weekday of Publication	17.6%	36.8%	17.6%	27.9%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	19.4%	18.9%	9.4%	19.2%	16.2%
		% of Total	2.9%	6.0%	2.9%	4.5%	16.2%
	Fri	Count	17	23	23	15	78
		% within Weekday of Publication	21.8%	29.5%	29.5%	19.2%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	27.4%	17.4%	18.1%	15.2%	18.6%
		% of Total	4.0%	5.5%	5.5%	3.6%	18.6%
	Sat	Count	3	14	13	18	48
		% within Weekday of Publication	6.3%	29.2%	27.1%	37.5%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	4.8%	10.6%	10.2%	18.2%	11.4%
		% of Total	0.7%	3.3%	3.1%	4.3%	11.4%
	Sun	Count	5	7	22	8	42
		% within Weekday of Publication	11.9%	16.7%	52.4%	19.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	8.1%	5.3%	17.3%	8.1%	10.0%
		% of Total	1.2%	1.7%	5.2%	1.9%	10.0%
Total		Count	62	132	127	99	420
		% within Weekday of Publication	14.8%	31.4%	30.2%	23.6%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	14.8%	31.4%	30.2%	23.6%	100.0%

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The table provides a detailed breakdown of the distribution of NSIP stories published by the selected Nigerian newspapers (*Punch*, *The Nation*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *Daily Trust*) by weekday and newspaper. The crosstabulation provides insights into the distribution of media coverage across different newspapers.

The crosstabulation of day of the week of publication against newspaper showed some variations in publishing agendas. Across all newspapers, publication counts tend to peak midweek (Tuesday through Thursday), with the highest percentages being 16.4% on Tuesday and 16.7% on Wednesday. Fridays also show consistent publication counts across all newspapers at 18.6%, while weekends see a dip in publication frequency, except for the *Nigerian Tribune*, which has a notable increase in Sunday publications, making up 5.2% of total publications.

Figure 7: Bar chart showing weekday of publications and Newspaper of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)



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Inferential Statistic Test Table 3

Chi-Square Tests for Day of the week of Publications and Newspaper of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	34.617[a]	18	.011
Likelihood Ratio	34.768	18	.010
Linear-by-Linear Association	.807	1	.369
N of Valid Cases	420		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.20.

The results of the Chi-Square tests are helpful in determining the relationship between the day of week of publications and the newspaper in which NSIP stories were examined in some of the Nigerian newspapers from June 2016 to May 2023. The Pearson Chi-Square value of 34.617 with 18 degrees of freedom and an asymptotic significance (p-value) of 0.011 suggest that there is a statistically significant relationship between the day of week of publications and the newspaper of NSIP stories examined. What this implies is that the spread of the NSIP stories across different newspapers does not occur evenly across the week.

Similarly, the Likelihood Ratio test which yielded a value of 34.768 on 18 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.010 also provides evidence to the Pearson Chi-Square test results, reiterating the significance of the association.

But the Linear-by-Linear Association test produced a result of 0.807 with 1 degree of freedom and a larger p-value of 0.369, which indicates that possibly there is no significant linear trend between the publication day of the week of NSIP stories analysed and the newspaper.

According to these findings, there is a unique pattern in NSIP story dissemination among different papers and days of the week and whether specific days may be of special significance for particular papers.

A closer examination of how NSIP stories are reported over the years, months, and weeks provides this thesis with worthwhile insights into reporting by the media. Yearly patterns can reflect changes in what the public wants to hear about and the effects of political activity, especially when there are elections and coverage is higher as governments trumpet their initiatives in an attempt to garner approval. Weekly breakdowns reveal trends that generally align with significant events, including budget announcements, which can lead to increased visibility. Examining weekly coverage, it is interesting to observe that Fridays have the most stories released, indicating that media outlets are attempting to attract readers' attention when they will be more apt to be interested in the news. Overall, this analysis indicates how media coverage not only reflects state agendas but also responds to public interests so that stakeholders are able to know how effectively NSIP projects are communicated.

6.1.6 NSIP Stories Content Types Analysis

Table 7: NSIP Content Types by Newspapers

Cross-tabulation Analysis of NSIP Content Types (Story Genres) in Publications across Newspapers

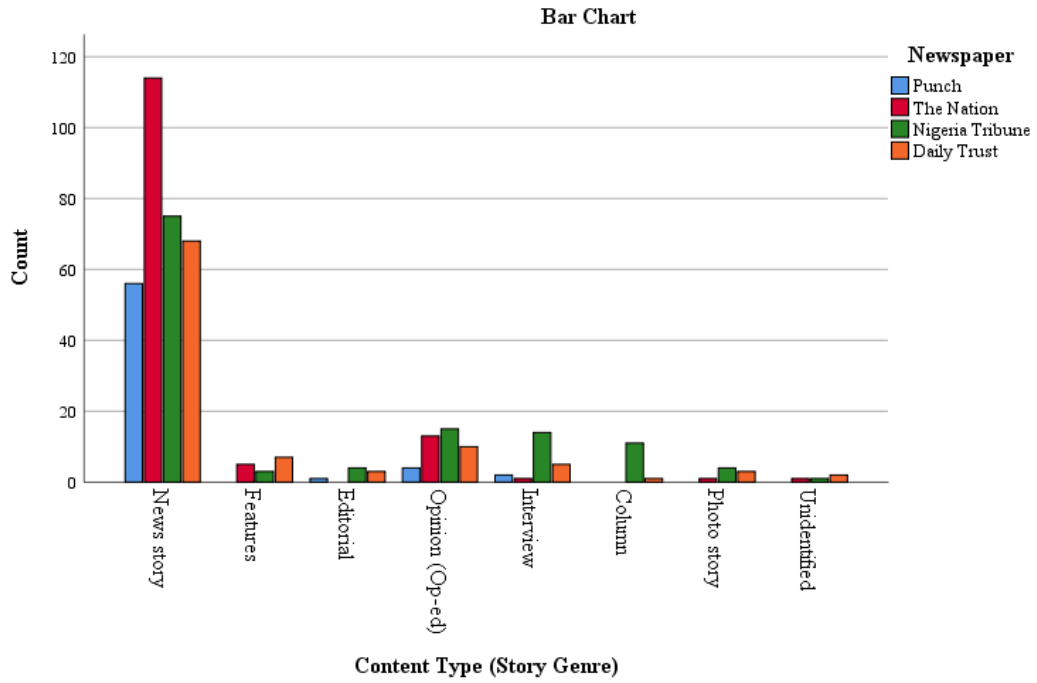
			Newspaper				
			Punch	*The Nation*	*Nigerian Tribune*	*Daily Trust*	Total
Content Type (Story Genre)	News story	Count	56	114	75	68	313
		% within Content Type (Story Genre)	17.9%	36.4%	24.0%	21.7%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	88.9%	84.4%	59.1%	68.7%	73.8%
		% of Total	13.2%	26.9%	17.7%	16.0%	73.8%
	Features	Count	0	5	3	7	15
		% within Content Type (Story Genre)	0.0%	33.3%	20.0%	46.7%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	3.7%	2.4%	7.1%	3.5%
		% of Total	0.0%	1.2%	0.7%	1.7%	3.5%
	Editorial	Count	1	0	4	3	8
		% within Content Type (Story Genre)	12.5%	0.0%	50.0%	37.5%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	0.0%	3.1%	3.0%	1.9%
		% of Total	0.2%	0.0%	0.9%	0.7%	1.9%
	Opinion (Op-ed)	Count	4	13	15	10	42
		% within Content Type (Story Genre)	9.5%	31.0%	35.7%	23.8%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	6.3%	9.6%	11.8%	10.1%	9.9%
		% of Total	0.9%	3.1%	3.5%	2.4%	9.9%
	Interview	Count	2	1	14	5	22
		% within Content Type (Story Genre)	9.1%	4.5%	63.6%	22.7%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	3.2%	0.7%	11.0%	5.1%	5.2%
		% of Total	0.5%	0.2%	3.3%	1.2%	5.2%
	Column	Count	0	0	11	1	12
		% within Content Type (Story Genre)	0.0%	0.0%	91.7%	8.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	0.0%	8.7%	1.0%	2.8%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	2.6%	0.2%	2.8%
	Photo story	Count	0	1	4	3	8
		% within Content Type (Story Genre)	0.0%	12.5%	50.0%	37.5%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	0.7%	3.1%	3.0%	1.9%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.2%	0.9%	0.7%	1.9%
	Unidentified	Count	0	1	1	2	4
		% within Content Type (Story Genre)	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	0.7%	0.8%	2.0%	0.9%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.5%	0.9%
Total		Count	63	135	127	99	424
		% within Content Type (Story Genre)	14.9%	31.8%	30.0%	23.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	14.9%	31.8%	30.0%	23.3%	100.0%

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The table above shows the general breakdown of the different categories of content (i.e. story genres) content-analysed of NSIP-related stories published by four major Nigerian newspapers (*Punch*, *The Nation*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *Daily Trust*).

News story is the most common genre in all the papers, accounting for 73.8% of the publications. *The Nation* leads the way with 36.4% news stories, followed by *Nigerian Tribune* (24.0%), *Daily Trust* (21.7%), and *Punch* (17.9%). It is an indication that news story is prioritised by all the four newspapers as the principal content category, with a notable emphasis for the genre type at *The Nation.*

Figure 8: Content Type



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Feature stories account for only 3.5% of total publications. *Daily Trust* leads in this genre with 46.7% of features, followed by *The Nation* (33.3%) and *Nigerian Tribune* (20.0%). *Punch* does not have any feature stories, indicating a potential difference in editorial focus.

Editorials represent only 1.9% of total publications, with *Nigerian Tribune* leading this genre with 50.0%, followed by *Daily Trust* (37.5%) and *Punch* (12.5%). Similarly, for opinion pieces,

Nigerian Tribune leads again with 35.7%, followed by *The Nation* (31.0%) and *Daily Trust* (23.8%). It is worth noting that *Nigerian Tribune* is an oppositional newspaper known for its willingness to publish critical and opposing views. This may explain why the newspaper published a relatively high number of opinion pieces (15) taking 35.7% share of articles published within the category, compared to the other newspapers analysed as well as standing out for its emphasis on editorials. This, generally, suggests a strong editorial stance and commentary on NSIP matters. It is likely that the *Nigerian Tribune*'s editorial policy of welcoming criticism and opposing viewpoints contributed to its high number of NSIP-related opinions, interviews as well as its high percentage of column stories. The value of considering newspapers' editorial stance and policies becomes evident upon consideration of the way in which specific issues are presented by the media, particularly as regards political alignment.

Interviews form 5.2% of the total publications, topped by *Nigerian Tribune* with 63.6%, followed by *Daily Trust* with 22.7% and *Punch* with 9.1%. Furthermore, column articles, photo stories, and unidentified content types contribute to a smaller fraction of NSIP coverage. Columns represent 2.8% of total publications, with *Nigerian Tribune* making up 91.7% of this genre. Photo stories account for only 1.9% of total publications, with *Nigerian Tribune* (50.0%) and *Daily Trust* (37.5%) leading. Unidentified stories are rare, making up 0.9% of total publications. *Daily Trust* leads this genre with 50.0%, followed by *The Nation* and *Nigerian Tribune* each with 25.0%. *The Nation* and *Nigerian Tribune* appear to have a more diverse range of content types compared to *Punch* and *Daily Trust*, which focus more heavily on news stories.

Inferential Statistic Test Table 4

Chi-Square Tests for NSIP Content Types (Story Genres) in Publications by Newspapers

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	61.744[a]	21	.000
Likelihood Ratio	68.673	21	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.426	1	.064
N of Valid Cases	424		

a. 21 cells (65.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .59.

Similar to data on publication trends of NSIP stories by year, months and week against newspapers, the Chi-Square tests performed on the NSIP content types in newspapers' publications indicate a significant association between the variables. Both the Pearson Chi-Square and Likelihood Ratio tests showed a strong statistical significance. However, the Linear-by-Linear Association test revealed a non-significant linear relationship between the variables, suggesting that changes in content types do not consistently align with predictable changes in publications.

6.1.7 NSIP Components Coverage Analysis

Table 8: NSIP Components Reported in Newspaper Stories

Component of National Social Investment Programmes Reported in the story * Newspaper Crosstabulation

			Newspaper				
			Punch	*The Nation*	*Nigerian Tribune*	*Daily Trust*	Total
Component of National Social Investment Programmes Reported in the story	N-Power	Count	11	22	0	17	50
		% within Component of National Social Investment Programmes Reported in the story	22.0%	44.0%	0.0%	34.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	17.5%	16.3%	0.0%	17.2%	11.8%
		% of Total	2.6%	5.2%	0.0%	4.0%	11.8%
	Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT)	Count	5	22	1	11	39
		% within Component of National Social Investment Programmes Reported in the story	12.8%	56.4%	2.6%	28.2%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	7.9%	16.3%	0.8%	11.1%	9.2%
		% of Total	1.2%	5.2%	0.2%	2.6%	9.2%
	Government Enterprise Empowerment Programmes (GEEP)	Count	1	18	97	4	120
		% within Component of National Social Investment Programmes Reported in the story	0.8%	15.0%	80.8%	3.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	13.3%	76.4%	4.0%	28.3%
		% of Total	0.2%	4.2%	22.9%	0.9%	28.3%
	Home-grown School Feeding Project (HGSFP)	Count	28	30	2	12	72
		% within Component of National Social Investment Programmes Reported in the story	38.9%	41.7%	2.8%	16.7%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	44.4%	22.2%	1.6%	12.1%	17.0%
		% of Total	6.6%	7.1%	0.5%	2.8%	17.0%
	All NSIP programmes	Count	15	30	24	33	102
		% within Component of National Social Investment Programmes Reported in the story	14.7%	29.4%	23.5%	32.4%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	23.8%	22.2%	18.9%	33.3%	24.1%
		% of Total	3.5%	7.1%	5.7%	7.8%	24.1%
	Unidentified	Count	3	2	2	22	29
		% within Component of National Social Investment Programmes Reported in the story	10.3%	6.9%	6.9%	75.9%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	4.8%	1.5%	1.6%	22.2%	6.8%
		% of Total	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%	5.2%	6.8%
	N/A	Count	0	11	1	0	12
		% within Component of National Social Investment Programmes Reported in the story	0.0%	91.7%	8.3%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	8.1%	0.8%	0.0%	2.8%
		% of Total	0.0%	2.6%	0.2%	0.0%	2.8%
Total		Count	63	135	127	99	424

% within Component of National Social Investment Programmes Reported in the story	14.9%	31.8%	30.0%	23.3%	100.0%
% within Newspaper	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of Total	14.9%	31.8%	30.0%	23.3%	100.0%

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These findings indicate that different components of NSIP were reported by Nigerian newspapers. Firstly, from NSIP Components Coverage Analysis as presented in Table 8 on the previous page, among the various programmes under the NSIP, the Government Enterprise Empowerment Programmes (GEEP) received the most extensive coverage, accounting for 28.3% of the overall coverage. Interestingly, the *Nigerian Tribune* stood out as the primary source for GEEP[24] news, contributing to 82% of its coverage. This observation suggests a specific interest in GEEP either by the *Tribune* or its readership.

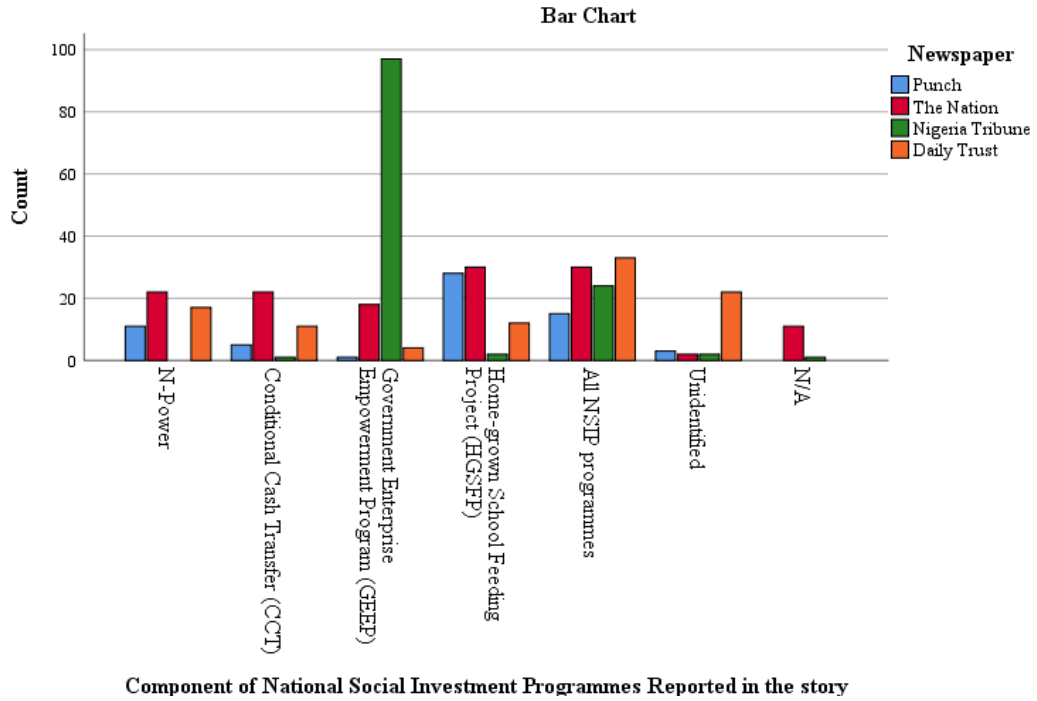
The Home-grown School Feeding Project (HGSFP) held the second highest coverage, making up 17% of the total. *The Nation* (41.7%) and *Punch* (38.9%) lead in reporting this component, with *Daily Trust* (16.7%) and minimal contributions from *Nigerian Tribune*.

[24] GEEP is a category within the NSIP programme that includes Tradermoni. In the upcoming chapter (Chapter 7) of this thesis, which focuses on the Critical Discourse Analysis of Xsphere conversation on NSIP, it was found that Tradermoni is the most politicised aspect of GEEP. Therefore, the persistent media coverage of GEEP by *Nigerian Tribune* can be seen as an indication of the opposition party's efforts to highlight the Tradermoni component of NSIP in order to scrutinise the current government for some political reasons.

N-Power, another component of the National Social Investment Programmes, ranked third in terms of coverage, accounting for 11.8% of the overall media attention and is primarily reported by *The Nation* which emerged as the leading news outlet reporting on N-Power, contributing to 44.0% and *Daily Trust* (34.0%), with *Punch* contributing 22.0%. *Nigerian Tribune* did not report on this component. *The Nation* leading in reporting on this aspect of NSIP could be as a result of it being a big promotional programme for government in power which they are politically aligned with.

Furthermore, the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) accounts for 9.2% of total publications. *The Nation* dominate coverage in this area (56.4%), followed by *Daily Trust* (28.2%) and *Punch* (12.8%), while *Nigerian Tribune* reports minimally (2.6%).

Figure 9: NSIP Components Reported in Newspaper Stories



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Overall, the data reveals that each newspaper has different levels of focus on various components of NSIP. *The Nation* reports extensively across most components, especially N-Power, CCT, and HGSFP. *Nigerian Tribune*'s coverage is mostly concentrated on GEEP and All NSIP Programmes. *Daily Trust* focuses more on All NSIP Programmes with 32.0% followed by *The Nation* (29.4%), *Nigerian Tribune* (23.5%), and *Punch* (14.7%). *Punch*'s coverage is more evenly distributed but less extensive compared to the other newspapers.

As noted in this thesis literature review, *The Nation* newspaper is owned by a notable political figure: Bola Tinubu, the All Progressive Congress (APC) party leader who is eventually succeeded in the 2023 General Elections to become the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Hence, the focus of *The Nation* newspaper coverage of NSIP could be explained by their alliance with the ruling party.

Lastly, it is worth noting that a significant portion of NSIP coverage (6.8%) remains unidentified, with *Daily Trust* contributing the most to this category. This suggests a need for clearer reporting on specific programmes within the NSIP. Additionally, the "N/A" category accounts for 2.8% of total publications and is primarily from *The Nation* (91.7%) and *Nigerian Tribune* (8.3%) indicates instances where NSIP is mentioned but no specific programme is identified.

Inferential Statistic Test Table 5

Chi-Square Tests NSIP Components Reported in Newspaper Stories

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	309.829[a]	18	.000
Likelihood Ratio	318.416	18	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.805	1	.005
N of Valid Cases	424		

a. 5 cells (17.9%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.78.

Chi-Square tests conducted on the NSIP components reported in newspaper stories reveal a significant association between the variables. Both the Pearson Chi-Square and Likelihood Ratio tests produced high values of 309.829 and 318.416 respectively, with 18 degrees of freedom, and p-values of .000, indicating strong statistical significance. Also, the Linear-by-Linear Association test also resulted in a significant finding, with a value of 7.805, 1 degree of freedom, and a p-value of .005. This, unlike earlier analysis, suggests a significant linear relationship between the variables under Components Reported in Newspaper Stories.

6.1.8 GEEP Components Analysis

Table 9: Component of GEEP referred to in the story.

Component of Government Enterprise Empowerment Programmes (GEEP) referred to in the story * Newspaper Crosstabulation

			Newspaper				
			Punch	*The Nation*	*Nigerian Tribune*	*Daily Trust*	Total
Component of Government Enterprise Empowerment Programmes (GEEP) referred to in the story	Tradermoni	Count	2	5	83	8	98
		% within Component of Government Enterprise Empowerment Programmes (GEEP) Referred to in the story	2.0%	5.1%	84.7%	8.2%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	3.2%	3.7%	65.4%	8.1%	23.1%
		% of Total	0.5%	1.2%	19.6%	1.9%	23.1%
	Marketmoni	Count	0	1	0	1	2
		% within Component of Government Enterprise Empowerment Programmes (GEEP) Referred to in the story	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	1.0%	0.5%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.5%
	Farmersmoni	Count	2	3	8	3	16
		% within Component of Government Enterprise Empowerment Programmes (GEEP) Referred to in the story	12.5%	18.8%	50.0%	18.8%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	3.2%	2.2%	6.3%	3.0%	3.8%
		% of Total	0.5%	0.7%	1.9%	0.7%	3.8%
	All	Count	5	11	14	5	35
		% within Component of Government Enterprise Empowerment Programmes (GEEP) Referred to in the story	14.3%	31.4%	40.0%	14.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	7.9%	8.1%	11.0%	5.1%	8.3%
		% of Total	1.2%	2.6%	3.3%	1.2%	8.3%
	Unidentified	Count	6	3	2	40	51
		% within Component of Government Enterprise Empowerment Programmes (GEEP) Referred to in the story	11.8%	5.9%	3.9%	78.4%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	9.5%	2.2%	1.6%	40.4%	12.0%
		% of Total	1.4%	0.7%	0.5%	9.4%	12.0%
	N/A	Count	48	112	20	42	222
		% within Component of Government Enterprise Empowerment Programmes (GEEP) Referred to in the story	21.6%	50.5%	9.0%	18.9%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	76.2%	83.0%	15.7%	42.4%	52.4%
		% of Total	11.3%	26.4%	4.7%	9.9%	52.4%
Total		Count	63	135	127	99	424
		% within Component of Government Enterprise Empowerment Programmes (GEEP) Referred to in the story	14.9%	31.8%	30.0%	23.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	14.9%	31.8%	30.0%	23.3%	100.0%

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Table 9 shows the crosstabulation data of the components of the Government Enterprise Empowerment Programmes (GEEP) referred to in NSIP stories across the different newspapers (*Punch*, *The Nation*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *Daily Trust*). The table draws our attention to varying focuses and preferences in newspaper reportage on specific aspects of the programmes.

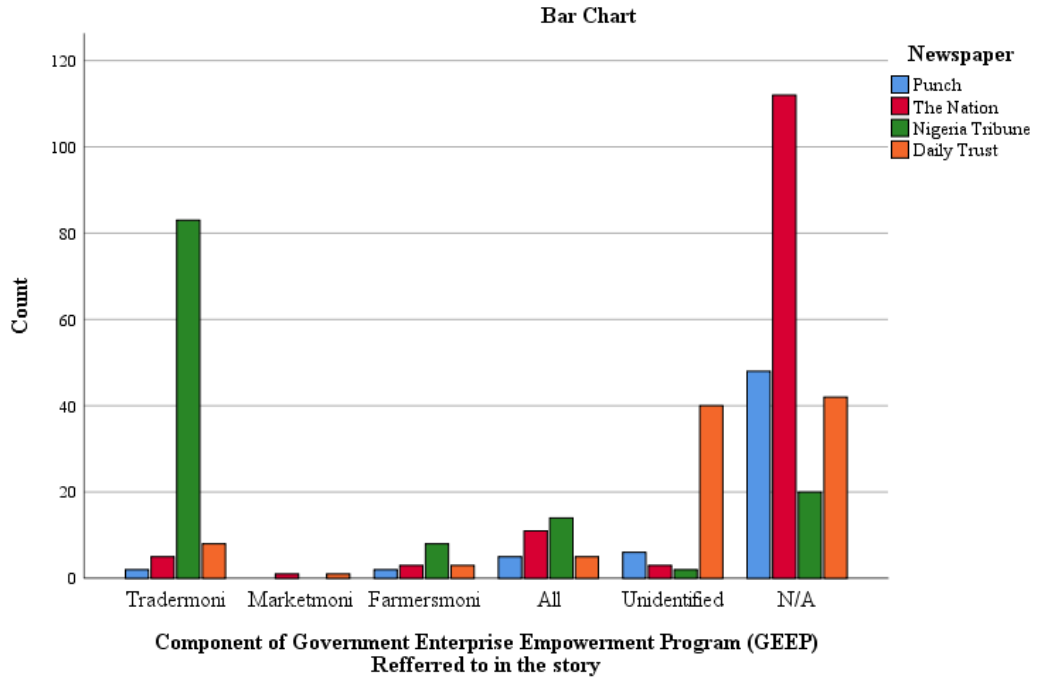
According to the table, the most prominent component, Tradermoni, comprises 23.1% of total GEEP-related publications and is predominantly reported by *Nigerian Tribune*, accounting for 84.7% of stories. This suggests *Nigerian Tribune* has a strong emphasis on covering Tradermoni from a more critical perspective. This could be because of the political orientation of the *Nigerian Tribune*. Further insight from the next study chapter's CDA findings shows Tradermoni as highly controversial, politicised, and taken advantage as electioneering advantage which might be an advantage for oppositional aligned newspaper organisation.

Marketmoni stories, though making up only 0.5% of total GEEP-related content, see minor coverage by *The Nation* and *Daily Trust*. This could indicate that newspapers might view Marketmoni, a microloan programme for small market owners, as less newsworthy or impactful compared to other GEEP components. Farmersmoni stories represent 3.8% of total GEEP-related content, with *Nigerian Tribune* once again leading coverage, accounting for half of these stories.

In terms of comprehensive coverage of GEEP as a whole, 8.3% of total GEEP-related stories encompass all aspects of the programme. *Nigerian Tribune* leads this category with 40.0% of such stories, suggesting a concerted effort to provide in-depth and wide-ranging reporting on the entire GEEP programme. *Daily Trust* takes the lead in unidentified GEEP stories, which account for 12.0% of total GEEP-related content, showing an interest in reporting on the programme without specific attribution to individual components. Finally, the majority of

GEEP-related publications that fall under the N/A category are 52.4%, with *The Nation* and *Daily Trust* leading in coverage. The N/A (which means not applicable) refers to non-GEEP stories, which by category does not belong to the set being targeted under the content category.

Figure 10: Component of Government Enterprise Empowerment Programmes (GEEP) referred to in the story.



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In summary, this analysis demonstrates that *Nigerian Tribune* has a clear focus on Tradermoni and Farmersmoni, while *The Nation* prioritises broad coverage of the GEEP programme. *Daily Trust* provides extensive reporting on less specified aspects of GEEP, and *Punch's* coverage is more balanced but less specialised.

As noted, there were observed differences in emphasis on various components of the NSIP across these newspapers. In effort to understand the reason, interviewees were asked about these variations (see Chapter 8: *In-depth Interview with Nigerian Journalists*). Their insights suggest

that editorial priorities, target audience interests, and resource availability and dependent on news sources significantly influence the focus areas of each newspaper. For instance, some newspapers may prioritise certain NSIP components due to their perceived relevance to their readership or political alignment. Where direct interview data was limited, it is plausible that these factors contribute to the differentiated coverage observed. This nuanced understanding highlights how media outlets tailor their reporting on NSIP programmes, reflecting broader organisational and audience-driven considerations.

Chi-Square Tests for Component of Government Enterprise Empowerment Programmes (GEEP) referred to in the story * Newspaper Crosstabulation

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	302.197a	15	.000
Likelihood Ratio	286.676	15	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	16.722	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	424		

a. 7 cells (29.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .30.

The Chi-Square tests conducted on the component of the Government Enterprise Empowerment Programmes (GEEP) mentioned in the newspaper story reveal a highly significant association and linear relationship between the variables.

6.1.9 Stories Dateline Analysis

Table 10: Dateline of the story of the story

Dateline of the story (Location of Journalist) * Newspaper Crosstabulation

			Newspaper				
			Punch	*The Nation*	*Nigerian Tribune*	*Daily Trust*	Total
Dateline of the story (Location of Journalist)	North-Central	Count	37	50	26	57	170
		% within Dateline of the story (Location of Journalist)	21.8%	29.4%	15.3%	33.5%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	58.7%	37.0%	20.5%	57.6%	40.1%
		% of Total	8.7%	11.8%	6.1%	13.4%	40.1%
	North-East	Count	4	6	4	9	23
		% within Dateline of the story (Location of Journalist)	17.4%	26.1%	17.4%	39.1%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	6.3%	4.4%	3.1%	9.1%	5.4%
		% of Total	0.9%	1.4%	0.9%	2.1%	5.4%
	North-West	Count	3	8	3	3	17
		% within Dateline of the story (Location of Journalist)	17.6%	47.1%	17.6%	17.6%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	4.8%	5.9%	2.4%	3.0%	4.0%
		% of Total	0.7%	1.9%	0.7%	0.7%	4.0%
	South-West	Count	6	19	24	8	57
		% within Dateline of the story (Location of Journalist)	10.5%	33.3%	42.1%	14.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	9.5%	14.1%	18.9%	8.1%	13.4%
		% of Total	1.4%	4.5%	5.7%	1.9%	13.4%
	South-East	Count	0	1	2	2	5
		% within Dateline of the story (Location of Journalist)	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	0.7%	1.6%	2.0%	1.2%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%	1.2%
	South-South	Count	3	7	1	3	14
		% within Dateline of the story (Location of Journalist)	21.4%	50.0%	7.1%	21.4%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	4.8%	5.2%	0.8%	3.0%	3.3%
		% of Total	0.7%	1.7%	0.2%	0.7%	3.3%
	Various Regions	Count	5	0	1	6	12
		% within Dateline of the story (Location of Journalist)	41.7%	0.0%	8.3%	50.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	7.9%	0.0%	0.8%	6.1%	2.8%
		% of Total	1.2%	0.0%	0.2%	1.4%	2.8%
	Beyond Africa	Count	0	0	0	3	3
		% within Dateline of the story (Location of Journalist)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%	0.7%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.7%
	Not specified/Unknown	Count	2	22	56	1	81
		% within Dateline of the story (Location of Journalist)	2.5%	27.2%	69.1%	1.2%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	3.2%	16.3%	44.1%	1.0%	19.1%
		% of Total	0.5%	5.2%	13.2%	0.2%	19.1%
	Unidentified	Count	0	4	6	7	17
		% within Dateline of the story (Location of Journalist)	0.0%	23.5%	35.3%	41.2%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	3.0%	4.7%	7.1%	4.0%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.9%	1.4%	1.7%	4.0%
	N/A	Count	3	18	4	0	25

	% within Dateline of the story (Location of Journalist)	12.0%	72.0%	16.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within Newspaper	4.8%	13.3%	3.1%	0.0%	5.9%
	% of Total	0.7%	4.2%	0.9%	0.0%	5.9%
Total	Count	63	135	127	99	424
	% within Dateline of the story (Location of Journalist)	14.9%	31.8%	30.0%	23.3%	100.0%
	% within Newspaper	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	14.9%	31.8%	30.0%	23.3%	100.0%

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Table 6.1—8 shows that the most prominent source of stories is from the North-Central region accounting for 40.1% of total publications across all newspapers. Data shows the region is mainly reported by *Daily Trust* (33.5%) and *The Nation* (29.4%), with *Punch* also making a significant contribution (21.8%). The focus of the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers indicates that the two organisations prioritise the coverage of NSIP stories from NSIP events and developments in North-Central. This reflects the region's importance in national discourse, as prioritised by the newspapers. This is also predominantly because Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) where the seat of the President is in located in North-Central. The FCT (Abuja) account for the majority of reports from this region.

North-East Nigeria accounts for a lower percentage of total publications (5.4%), though *Daily Trust* leads with 39.1%. It indicates intense regional concentration, a characteristic in line with *Daily Trust*'s coverage of northern Nigeria for comprehensive news. Fascinating, however, is that the publication is owned by a northerner, and its headquarters are located in Abuja. Its ownership and location may thus be said to account for the paper's interest in Northern affairs.

The representation of stories from North-West Nigeria is also relatively low, comprising 4.0% of total publications. However, *The Nation*'s leading share of 47.1% signals a targeted focus on the region, while *Nigerian Tribune* and *Punch* offer minimal contributions.

South-West Nigeria stories make up 13.4% of total publications, with *Nigerian Tribune* taking the lead (42.1%) and *The Nation* following closely behind (33.3%). *Punch* and *Daily Trust* have less coverage of this region since they portray varied regional interest and target reader audience among dailies. Here, it has to be mentioned that both, *The Nation* and *Nigerian Tribune* dailies are established by South-Western Nigerian; the former, by Bola Tinubu and the latter, by Late Chief Obafemi Awolowo. These dailies, like the *Daily Trust*, prioritise their region as source and point of reporting.

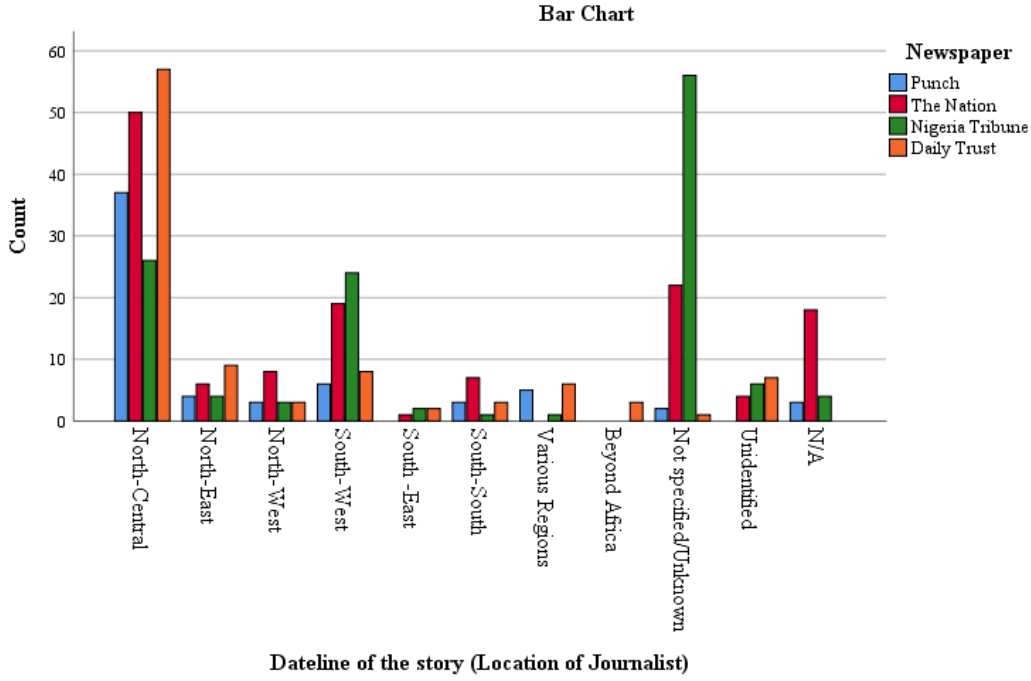
South-East and South-South Nigeria coverage remains low at 1.2% and 3.3% of total publications, respectively. *The Nation* is the principal source for stories from these regions, with some contributions from *Nigerian Tribune* and *Daily Trust*. This limited coverage suggests these areas are not major focuses for the newspapers.

While stories from Beyond Africa make up only 0.7% of total publications, *Daily Trust* is the sole newspaper reporting these stories, highlighting its international coverage capabilities and broader perspective.

Not specified/Unknown and Unidentified locations account for a notable portion of total publications, 19.1% and 4.0% respectively. *Nigerian Tribune* has the highest number of stories with unspecified or unknown locations (69.1%), while *Daily Trust* has 41.2% of stories from unidentified locations.

Largely, these result shows that each newspaper demonstrates regional strengths and focus areas. *Daily Trust* has a strong presence in northern Nigeria and international reporting, *The Nation* covers central and southern regions, and *Nigerian Tribune* stands out in covering South-West Nigeria.

Figure 11: Dateline of the story (Location of Journalist)



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6.1.10 Main Sources Analysis

Table 11: Main source quoted in NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)

Main source quoted in the stories * Newspaper Crosstabulation

			Newspaper				
			Punch	*The Nation*	*Nigerian Tribune*	*Daily Trust*	Total
Main source quoted in news stories	Government officials	Count	49	120	54	70	293
		% within Newspaper	77.8%	88.9%	42.5%	70.7%	69.1%
		% of Total	11.6%	28.3%	12.7%	16.5%	69.1%
	Non-Governmental Organisation	Count	7	2	2	6	17
		% within Newspaper	11.1%	1.5%	1.6%	6.1%	4.0%
		% of Total	1.7%	0.5%	0.5%	1.4%	4.0%
	Ruling Party members	Count	0	0	5	2	7
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	0.0%	3.9%	2.0%	1.7%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	0.5%	1.7%
	Opposition party	Count	1	0	19	1	21
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	0.0%	15.0%	1.0%	5.0%
		% of Total	0.2%	0.0%	4.5%	0.2%	5.0%
	Beneficiaries	Count	2	0	6	2	10
		% within Newspaper	3.2%	0.0%	4.7%	2.0%	2.4%
		% of Total	0.5%	0.0%	1.4%	0.5%	2.4%
	Partners	Count	1	0	0	0	1

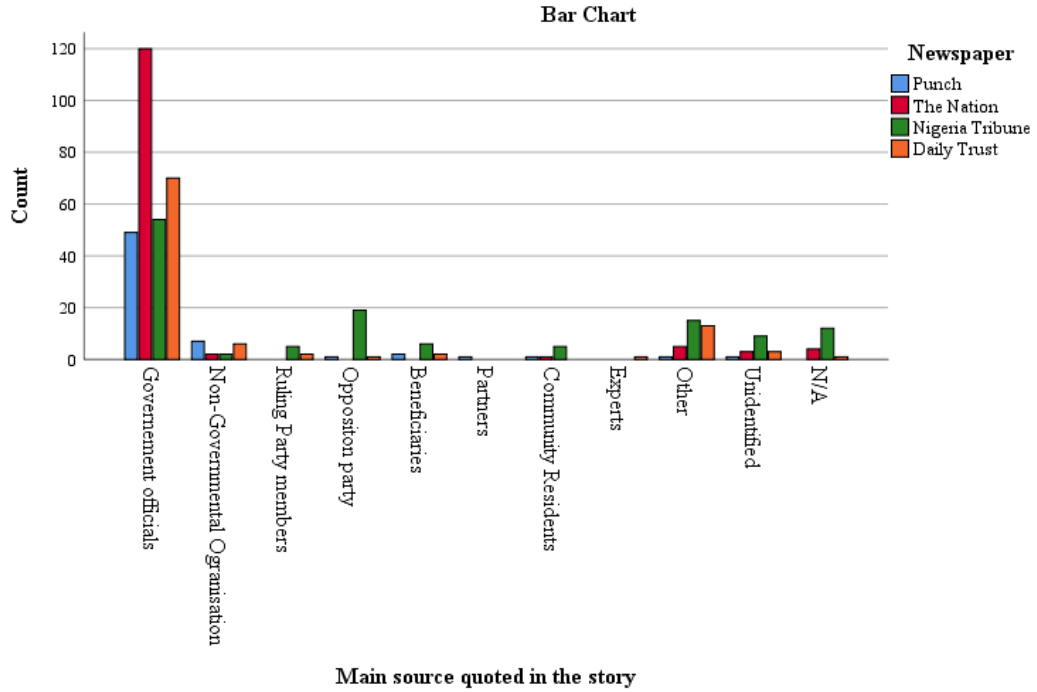
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
		% of Total	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
	Community Residents	Count	1	1	5	0	7
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	0.7%	3.9%	0.0%	1.7%
		% of Total	0.2%	0.2%	1.2%	0.0%	1.7%
	Experts	Count	0	0	0	1	1
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.2%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%
	Other	Count	1	5	15	13	34
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	3.7%	11.8%	13.1%	8.0%
		% of Total	0.2%	1.2%	3.5%	3.1%	8.0%
	Unidentified	Count	1	3	9	3	16
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	2.2%	7.1%	3.0%	3.8%
		% of Total	0.2%	0.7%	2.1%	0.7%	3.8%
	N/A	Count	0	4	12	1	17
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	3.0%	9.4%	1.0%	4.0%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.9%	2.8%	0.2%	4.0%
Total		Count	63	135	127	99	424
		% within Newspaper	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	14.9%	31.8%	30.0%	23.3%	100.0%

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Table 6.1—9 provides an analysis of the main sources quoted in stories on NSIP published by four Nigerian newspapers; *Punch*, *The Nation*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *Daily Trust*. The data shows that government officials were the most frequently quoted source as government officials emerge as the dominant source quoted in the stories, representing 69.1% of total publications. This reliance is particularly obvious in *The Nation* (88.9%) and *Punch* (77.8%), with *Daily Trust* also quoting a high proportion of government officials (70.7%). *Nigerian Tribune*, while also using government sources frequently (42.5%), demonstrates a slightly more diverse pool of sources than the other newspapers. These findings have significant implications for the media's coverage of NSIP. The fact that government officials were the primary source of information for stories on NSIP in these newspapers suggests that the government may have a significant influence on the media's coverage of NSIP. This lack of diversity in sources, as detailed by the journalists interviewed in this study, limited media's ability to provide a balanced and nuanced perspective on NSIP. Journalists specifically noted challenges in

accessing beneficiaries and independent experts, often resulting in a heavy reliance on government official sources[25] and political figures for information. In later Chapter of this thesis where the result of the in-depth interview with journalist are presented, journalist commented on what Key influence of NSIP reports.

Figure 12: Bar chart showing the main sources quoted in NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)



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The coverage from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) is relatively low, accounting for only 4.0% of total sources across all newspapers. *The Nation* and *Nigerian Tribune* have minimal coverage from NGOs, while *Daily Trust* quotes NGOs more often, although still

[25] It is important to note that journalist are assigned by newspaper editor (s) and deployed to their post (in the instance of this study, journalist who report on NSIP are deployed by employers (or editors) to the Presidential Villa (Aso Rock) from where they mostly write from on regular basis.

infrequently. This suggests that news coverage might lean heavily towards official narratives, with limited perspectives from external, independent entities.

Ruling party members are rarely quoted in the stories, accounting for just 1.7% of total sources. The quotes mostly come from *Nigerian Tribune* (3.9%) and *Daily Trust* (2.0%), while *Punch* and *The Nation* do not feature quotes from this source category.

In contrast, opposition party members often quoted by *Nigerian Tribune* (15.0%) compared to the other newspapers. This suggests *Nigerian Tribune* may provide more balanced coverage by incorporating perspectives from different political parties other thank the ruling party.

Beneficiaries make up 2.4% of total sources, with *Nigerian Tribune* leading in coverage (4.7%), followed by *Punch* (3.2%). This focus indicates that *Nigerian Tribune* and *Punch* may have aimed to include the voices of those directly affected by NSIP.

Sources from Community Residents, Experts, and Partners account for a very small proportion of total sources, suggesting that stories in these newspapers are primarily guided by official narratives rather than diverse local or expert perspectives.

Other sources of stories account for 8.0% of the total sources, where *Nigerian Tribune* (11.8%) and *Daily Trust* (13.1%) reported a greater percentage of their stories originating from other sources compared to *Punch* and *The Nation*.

Lastly, Unidentified and N/A sources are in a minority of total sources at 3.8% and 4.0%, respectively. This could be an indication of reliance on unidentified or unverified sources, which would affect the credibility and richness of reporting.

While all the newspapers heavily rely on government officials as sources, *Nigerian Tribune* and *Daily Trust* demonstrate a broader range of source diversity by quoting opposition party members and including other sources such as beneficiaries and community residents.

Theoretically, the findings from the table have implications for agenda-setting theory, which argues that the media play a strong role in shaping the public's perceptions of social problems and policy proposals. The fact that government officials were the most quoted source of information in coverage of NSIP suggests that they are the ones with significant influence over the media covering the programmes. This confirms agenda-setting theory, which assumes that the media will mirror the priorities and opinions of powerholders.

6.1.11 Story Origin Analysis

Table 12: Origin of NSIP Stories

Origin of stories * Newspaper Crosstabulation

			Newspaper				
			Punch	*The Nation*	*Nigerian Tribune*	*Daily Trust*	Total
Origin of the story	Press release	Count	14	72	49	7	142
		% within Origin of the story	9.9%	50.7%	34.5%	4.9%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	22.2%	52.9%	38.6%	7.1%	33.4%
		% of Total	3.3%	16.9%	11.5%	1.6%	33.4%
	New conference	Count	0	0	1	0	1
		% within Origin of the story	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.2%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
	Interviews	Count	5	2	22	11	40
		% within Origin of the story	12.5%	5.0%	55.0%	27.5%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	7.9%	1.5%	17.3%	11.1%	9.4%
		% of Total	1.2%	0.5%	5.2%	2.6%	9.4%
	Investigative reporting	Count	1	6	0	2	9
		% within Origin of the story	11.1%	66.7%	0.0%	22.2%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	4.4%	0.0%	2.0%	2.1%
		% of Total	0.2%	1.4%	0.0%	0.5%	2.1%
	Interpretive reporting	Count	36	1	3	60	100
		% within Origin of the story	36.0%	1.0%	3.0%	60.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	57.1%	0.7%	2.4%	60.6%	23.5%
		% of Total	8.5%	0.2%	0.7%	14.1%	23.5%
	News agency	Count	0	0	2	0	2
		% within Origin of the story	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	0.5%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.5%
	Author's analysis	Count	3	14	27	14	58
		% within Origin of the story	5.2%	24.1%	46.6%	24.1%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	4.8%	10.3%	21.3%	14.1%	13.6%
		% of Total	0.7%	3.3%	6.4%	3.3%	13.6%
	Research/Reports/Communique	Count	0	2	1	0	3
		% within Origin of the story	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	1.5%	0.8%	0.0%	0.7%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%	0.7%
	NSIP policy document	Count	0	1	0	1	2
		% within Origin of the story	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	1.0%	0.5%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.5%
	Social media	Count	0	1	1	0	2
		% within Origin of the story	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	0.7%	0.8%	0.0%	0.5%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.5%
	No source indicated	Count	2	16	1	0	19

		% within Origin of the story	10.5%	84.2%	5.3%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	3.2%	11.8%	0.8%	0.0%	4.5%
		% of Total	0.5%	3.8%	0.2%	0.0%	4.5%
	Other	Count	0	12	13	0	25
		% within Origin of the story	0.0%	48.0%	52.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	8.8%	10.2%	0.0%	5.9%
		% of Total	0.0%	2.8%	3.1%	0.0%	5.9%
	Unidentified	Count	2	5	7	4	18
		% within Origin of the story	11.1%	27.8%	38.9%	22.2%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	3.2%	3.7%	5.5%	4.0%	4.2%
		% of Total	0.5%	1.2%	1.6%	0.9%	4.2%
	N/A	Count	0	4	0	0	4
		% within Origin of the story	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
Total		Count	63	136	127	99	425
		% within Origin of the story	14.8%	32.0%	29.9%	23.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	14.8%	32.0%	29.9%	23.3%	100.0%

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Story Origin Analysis

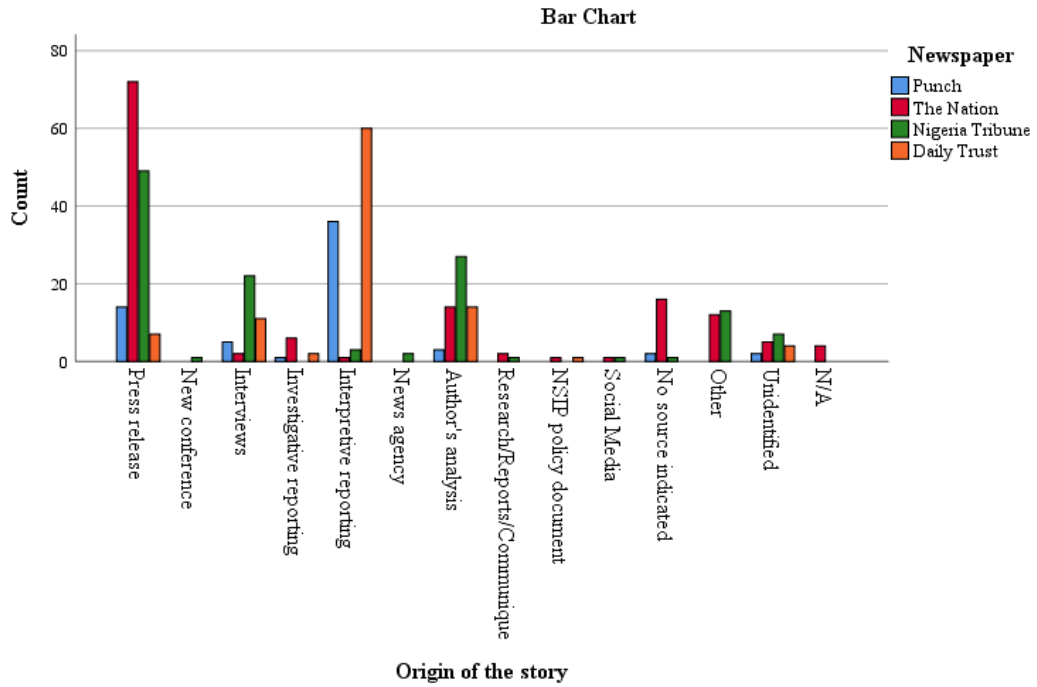
Table 12 provides an analysis of the origin of the stories (source type) across different newspapers on NSIP published by four Nigerian newspapers; *Punch*, *The Nation*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *Daily Trust*. This crosstabulation reveals varying approaches to news gathering and reporting, highlighting the reliance on certain sources.

Content analysis of stories shows that press releases are a significant source for all newspapers, particularly for *The Nation*, which uses them in 52.9% of its stories. In contrast, *Daily Trust* relies minimally on press releases (4.9%). This suggests *The Nation* leans heavily on official statements and announcements, whereas *Daily Trust* may prioritise alternative sources for its NSIP reports.

Finding also shows that interviews constitute 9.4% of total stories, with *Nigerian Tribune* leading this category (55.0%), indicating a strong focus on personal insights in its reporting. *Daily Trust* and *Punch* also uses interviews as root source of story, but to a lesser extent.

Stories which were interpretive were 23.5% of total stories, this was mostly driven by *Daily Trust* (60.0%) and *Punch* (36.0%). These statistics showcase these newspapers' commitment to providing context and analysis on news events. This approach can enrich the reader's understanding of complex issues. Author's analysis comprises 13.6% of total stories, with *Nigerian Tribune* leading (46.6%), suggesting the newspaper values opinion-based narratives and in-depth examination of news events. This approach can offer readers diverse perspectives and critical thinking on key issues.

Figure 13: Origin of NSIP stories.



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Data shows that investigative reporting is less common, representing only 2.1% of total stories, with *The Nation* taking the lead (66.7%) with a total count of 6 stories across the entire year of study. While this indicates that investigative journalism is not a primary focus for most newspapers, *The Nation* demonstrates a willingness to dive deeper into news stories. 4.5% of total stories did not accounts for the source of the stories; predominant here are stories from *The Nation* newspapers which claim a share 84.2%, suggesting a potential need for improved source transparency in reporting.

In summary, *The Nation* relies heavily on press releases and investigative reporting, emphasising official narratives and uncovering hidden facts about the NSIP. *Nigerian Tribune* excels in interviews and author's analysis, focusing on individuals' accounts and critical perspectives. *Daily Trust* prioritises interpretive reporting and interviews, providing context and personal insights. *Punch* demonstrates a balanced mix of story origins, with a focus on interpretive reporting.

6.1.12 Sentiment (Tone) Analysis

Table 13: Tone of the Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)

Tone of the story * Newspaper Crosstabulation

			Newspaper				
			Punch	*The Nation*	*Nigerian Tribune*	*Daily Trust*	Total
Tone of the story	Positive	Count	31	98	62	56	247
		% within Tone of the story	12.6%	39.7%	25.1%	22.7%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	49.2%	72.6%	48.8%	56.6%	58.3%
		% of Total	7.3%	23.1%	14.6%	13.2%	58.3%
	Negative	Count	12	10	21	13	56
		% within Tone of the story	21.4%	17.9%	37.5%	23.2%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	19.0%	7.4%	16.5%	13.1%	13.2%
		% of Total	2.8%	2.4%	5.0%	3.1%	13.2%
	Neutral or mixed	Count	13	19	6	20	58
		% within Tone of the story	22.4%	32.8%	10.3%	34.5%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	20.6%	14.1%	4.7%	20.2%	13.7%
		% of Total	3.1%	4.5%	1.4%	4.7%	13.7%
	Critical	Count	7	5	29	7	48
		% within Tone of the story	14.6%	10.4%	60.4%	14.6%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	11.1%	3.7%	22.8%	7.1%	11.3%
		% of Total	1.7%	1.2%	6.8%	1.7%	11.3%
	Unidentified	Count	0	3	9	3	15
		% within Tone of the story	0.0%	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	2.2%	7.1%	3.0%	3.5%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.7%	2.1%	0.7%	3.5%
Total		Count	63	135	127	99	424
		% within Tone of the story	14.9%	31.8%	30.0%	23.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	14.9%	31.8%	30.0%	23.3%	100.0%

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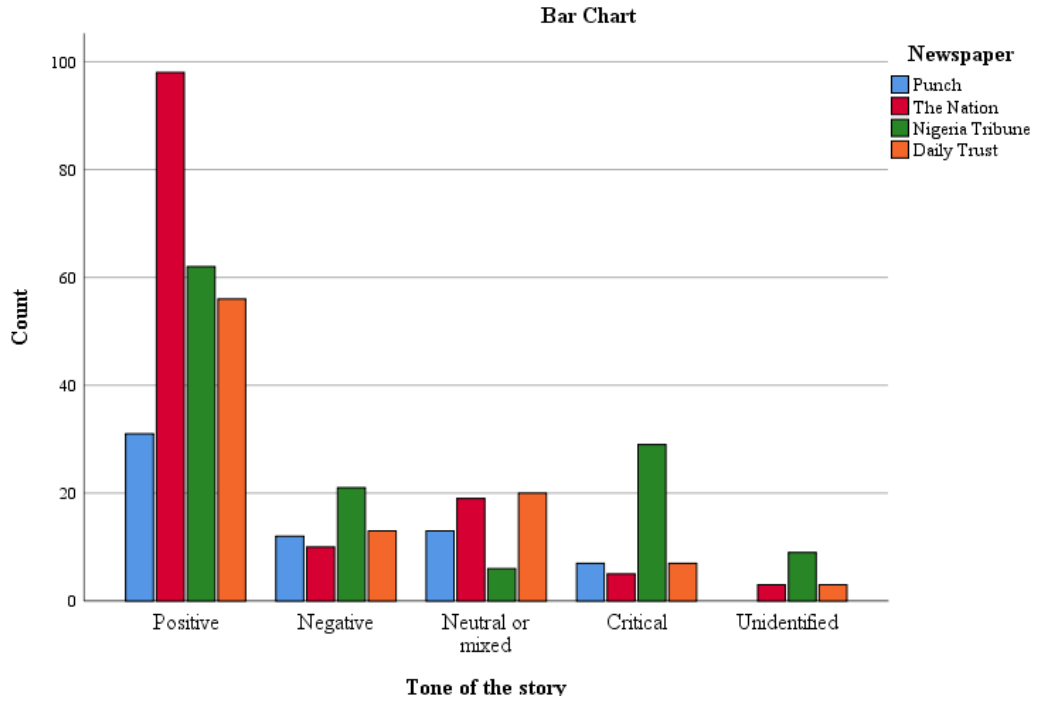
This data from the table above shows the distribution of tones (positive, negative, neutral/mixed, critical, and unidentified) of stories about NSIP published in 4 major Nigerian newspapers: *Punch*, *The Nation*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *Daily Trust*.

The key findings show that positive dominate across all newspapers, making up 58.3% of total publications with *The Nation* having the highest positive tones, with 72.6% of its stories falling under this category, while *Daily Trust* (56.6%) and *Nigerian Tribune* (48.8%) also frequently use a positive tone. *Punch* has the lowest percentage of positive-toned NSIP stories (49.2%) but still reported positive toned NSIP stories more than other types of tones. Negative stories account for 13.2% of total publications across all newspapers. *Nigerian Tribune* leads in this category, with 37.5% of its stories taking on a negative tone. In contrast, *The Nation* uses this

tone the least (17.9%). This finding could indicate a preference for critical and opposing narratives in *Nigerian Tribune*'s reporting. This result further supports earlier finding as discussed under NSIP Stories Content Types (see Table 6.1—5) and Story Origin analysis (see Table 6.1—10).

In the next tonal category, 13.7% of total publications on NSIP were categorised as containing neutral or mixed tone. *Daily Trust* reported most frequently in this category taking the lead with 34.5% share of the stories. *The Nation* and *Punch* are close behind at 32.8% and 22.4%, respectively. This suggests a focus on providing balanced and objective reporting, especially by *Daily Trust*.

Figure 14: Tone of the stories.



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NSIP stories with critical tones represent 11.3% of total publications, with *Nigerian Tribune* heavily relying on this approach (60.4%), suggesting a focus on scrutinising policies, programmes, and actions. This approach could offer a more questioning and challenging perspective on NSIP news. From the pattern thus far, *Nigerian Tribune* tend to be consistently critical in their publications.

Stories with unidentified tones account for a small proportion of total stories (3.5%). *Nigerian Tribune* leads in this category (60.0%), indicating that some of its stories may lack a clear tone or the tone may be ambiguous.

Ins summary, this data shows the dominance of positive tones across all newspapers, especially *The Nation*. However, *Nigerian Tribune* balances this with a significant proportion of critical and negative-toned stories, suggesting a more sceptical approach to reporting NSIP articles. *Daily Trust* and *Punch* offer more neutral or mixed-tone stories, potentially aiming for objective and balanced coverage. The key implications are that newspaper stance, and framing can significantly shape readers' perceptions of NSIP and other government programmes. Readers who primarily consume stories from one newspaper may develop biased views that do not represent the full range of coverage. Consuming news from multiple sources with different frames can help mitigate this.

6.1.13 Dominant Theme Analysis

Table 14: Dominant Themes in of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)

Dominant Theme in the Story			Newspaper				
			Punch	*The Nation*	*Nigerian Tribune*	*Daily Trust*	Total
Dominant Theme in the Story	Adequate Funding and Resource Allocation	Count	8	2	7	4	21
		% within Newspaper	12.7%	1.5%	5.5%	4.0%	5.0%
		% of Total	1.9%	0.5%	1.7%	0.9%	5.0%
	Effective Design and Planning	Count	4	70	34	10	118
		% within Newspaper	6.3%	51.9%	26.8%	10.1%	27.8%
		% of Total	0.9%	16.5%	8.0%	2.4%	27.8%
	Efficient Implementation and Execution	Count	9	26	3	7	45
		% within Newspaper	14.3%	19.3%	2.4%	7.1%	10.6%
		% of Total	2.1%	6.1%	0.7%	1.7%	10.6%
	Fair and Ethical Election Practices	Count	0	0	19	0	19
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	0.0%	15.0%	0.0%	4.5%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%	0.0%	4.5%
	Good Management	Count	23	4	15	30	72
		% within Newspaper	36.5%	3.0%	11.8%	30.3%	17.0%
		% of Total	5.4%	0.9%	3.5%	7.1%	17.0%
	Government and Officials receive Praise	Count	3	1	4	0	8
		% within Newspaper	4.8%	0.7%	3.1%	0.0%	1.9%
		% of Total	0.7%	0.2%	0.9%	0.0%	1.9%
	Inclusivity and Diversity	Count	1	0	2	0	3
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	0.7%
		% of Total	0.2%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.7%
	Integrity/Honesty	Count	0	1	2	6	9
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	0.7%	1.6%	6.1%	2.1%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.2%	0.5%	1.4%	2.1%
	Non-Partisan Decision Making	Count	5	0	2	8	15
		% within Newspaper	7.9%	0.0%	1.6%	8.1%	3.5%
		% of Total	1.2%	0.0%	0.5%	1.9%	3.5%
	Sustainability	Count	4	8	17	21	50
		% within Newspaper	6.3%	5.9%	13.4%	21.2%	11.8%
		% of Total	0.9%	1.9%	4.0%	5.0%	11.8%
	Unsustainable practices	Count	1	5	0	0	6
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%
		% of Total	0.2%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%
	Unsustainable practices	Count	0	0	1	0	1
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.2%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
	Poor Design and Planning	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
		% of Total	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%

	Missing Data	Count	1	4	7	1	13
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	3.0%	5.5%	1.0%	3.1%
		% of Total	0.2%	0.9%	1.7%	0.2%	3.1%
	Not Applicable	Count	3	14	14	12	43
		% within Newspaper	4.8%	10.4%	11.0%	12.1%	10.1%
		% of Total	0.7%	3.3%	3.3%	2.8%	10.1%
Total		Count	63	135	127	99	424
		% within Newspaper	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	14.9%	31.8%	30.0%	23.3%	100.0%

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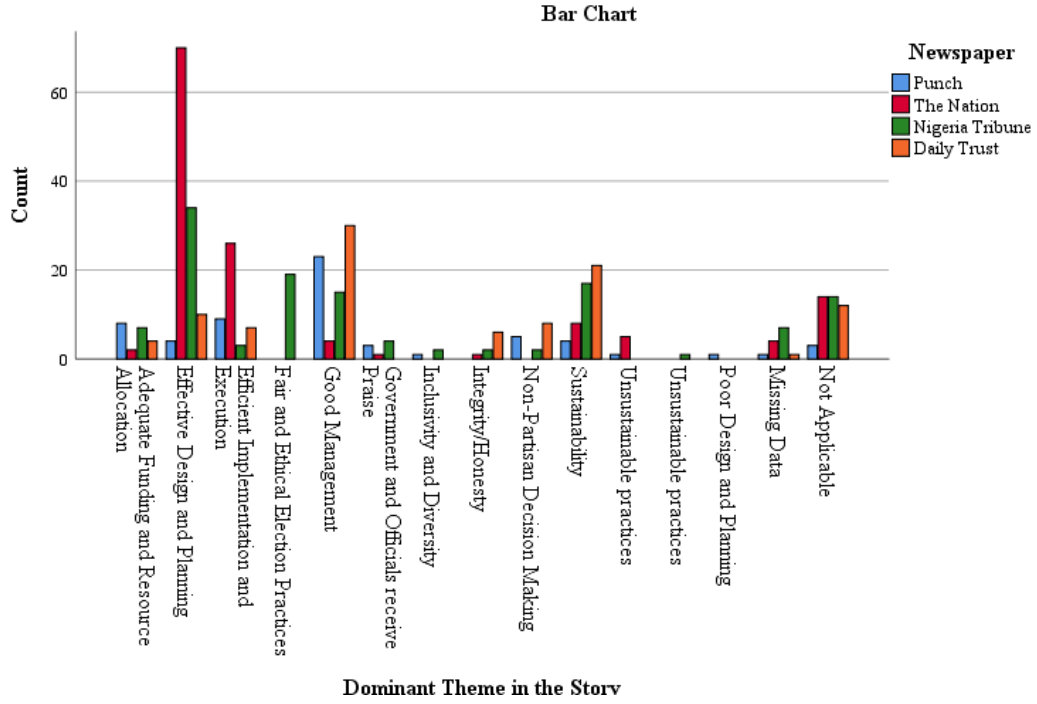
Table 14 presents a detailed crosstabulation data on dominant themes in NSIP stories across different newspapers (*Punch*, *The Nation*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *Daily Trust*. This analysis provides important insights into the key narratives each publication focuses on when reporting about NSIP.

Firstly, this study found that effective design and planning is the most prominent theme across all newspapers, making up 27.8% of total publications. *The Nation* leads in coverage of this theme (51.9%), followed by *Nigerian Tribune* (26.8%) and *Daily Trust* (10.1%). *Punch* has the least coverage in this category (6.3%). This suggests that *The Nation* focused more on the planning and organisation aspects of NSIP.

Furthermore, good management emerges as the second most prominent theme, accounting for 17.0% of total stories. *Daily Trust* leads this theme (30.3%), followed by *Punch* (36.5%) and *Nigerian Tribune* (11.8%). This indicate that *Daily Trust* reported more on how well NSIP is managed and executed.

Next, sustainability is another significant theme, making up 11.8% of total publications. *Daily Trust* leads in this area (21.2%), highlighting its emphasis on the long-term impacts and continued success of NSIP. *Nigerian Tribune* (13.4%) and *The Nation* (5.9%) also cover this theme, though not as extensively.

Figure 15: Dominant Themes in of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)



The theme of Non-Partisan Decision Making constitutes 3.5% of total publications, primarily covered by *Daily Trust* (8.1%) and *Punch* (7.9%).

Additionally, themes such as fair and ethical election practices, Inclusivity and Diversity, and Integrity/Honesty, though less common, provide critical perspectives on NSIP. *Nigerian Tribune*'s focused on Fair and Ethical Election Practices (15.0%) indicates its interest in how NSIP relates to the Nigerian political landscape as well as offering critical approach to understanding ethical issues as it relates to the programme's implementation.

Lastly, 3.1% of the data in this category is missing. Missing data were mostly from *Nigerian Tribune* and *The Nation* newspapers.

In conclusion, each newspaper highlights different aspects of NSIP in their reporting, with *The Nation* focusing on design and planning, *Daily Trust* emphasising sustainability and management, and *Nigerian Tribune* exploring fair practices and ethical concerns.

6.1.14 Categorical Theme Analysis

For further analysis reason, the news stories which were originally coded based on their Dominant Theme, identified by examining the primary message conveyed in the article. Themes are grouped into Positive and Negative categories to capture the framing of government social investment programmes (SIPs) and related governance issues. Each category is explained below with sample excerpts illustrating how stories were coded under each dominant theme units of analysis.

Positive Dominant Themes (with Excerpts)

- ✓ **Adequate Funding and Resource Allocation**

  Excerpt:

  "It must be emphasised that, for the records, the repatriated 322 million dollars is now currently being applied to support the Buhari administration's Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) scheme under the Social Investment Programmes." (*Daily Trust*, 2019)

- ✓ **Effective Design and Planning**

  Excerpt:

  "The disbursement process of the TraderMoni loans is transparent and direct, while the enumeration is technology-driven, whereby enumerators meet traders at their business locations to get their data." (*Daily Trust*, 2019)

- ✓ **Efficient Implementation and Execution**

  Excerpt:

  "That the vice president is championing the scheme across the states is because of the commitment of the administration to the common man and to ensure effective implementation." (*Daily Trust*, 2019)

- ✓ Good Management

  Excerpt:

  "The Bank of Industry facilitates the loan disbursements in partnership with third-party agents to ensure transparency, accountability and efficiency of the process." (*Daily Trust*, 2019)

- ✓ Government and Officials Receive Praise

  Excerpt:

  "This government has been able to do far more with less resources, than what was obtained under past administrations, where profligacy; gross mismanagement of the country's resources were rife." (*Daily Trust*, 2019)

- ✓ Sustainability

  Excerpt:

  "Part of the conditions under which the looted funds were restored to Nigeria is that the World Bank would be involved in over-sighting its disbursements, which is what is being done now." (*Daily Trust*, 2019)

Negative Dominant Themes (with Excerpts)

- ✓ Lack of Transparency and Accountability

  Excerpt:

  "It was indeed an obscene display of executive recklessness and abuse of office. Pray, where did the money come from? Was it budgeted for in the appropriation law?" (Punch, 2019 — Obasanjo)

- ✓ Unsustainable Practices

  Excerpt:

  "The issue of sustainability was not thoughtfully considered. As Maryam Uwais, the special adviser to the president, noted, 80 per cent of payments for social investments have come from the looted funds recovered from former Head of State, Sani Abacha." (*Nigerian Tribune*, 2019)

- ✓ Poor Management

  Excerpt:

  "It appears that the transfer of the SIP programmes from the office of the vice president where they had been domiciled since their inception in 2016 has been done to bury them." (*Nigerian Tribune*, 2019)

- ✓ Criticism of Government/Its Officials

  Excerpt:

  "Former President Olusegun Obasanjo… described it as a sinister move to buy votes of the people… What an absurdity!" (Punch, 2019)

- ✓ Corruption and Nepotism

  Excerpt:

  "The programmes were riddled with corruption." (*Nigerian Tribune*, 2019)

- ✓ Politicisation of Programmes and Benefits

  Excerpt:

  "The government enterprise and empowerment scheme became notorious for the 'Tradermoni' initiative which saw Vice President Yemi Osinbajo visiting local markets and sharing money to select traders during the election season. Not a few considered it a form of vote buying." (*Nigerian Tribune*, 2019)

- ✓ Marginalisation and Discrimination

  Excerpt:

  "In spite of the limited coverage, problems of wrong targeting and leakage issues…" (*Nigerian Tribune*, 2019)

- ✓ Poor Design and Planning

  Excerpt:

  "It is clear that the whole scheme was not properly conceived." (*Nigerian Tribune*, 2019)

- ✓ Vote Buying and Bribery

  Excerpts:

  "It was indeed an obscene display of executive recklessness… Pray, where did the money come from?" (Punch, 2019)

  "Not a few considered it a form of vote buying." (*Nigerian Tribune*, 2019)

6.1.15.1 Positive Dominant Theme Analysis

Table 15: Positive Dominant Theme in the Story of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)

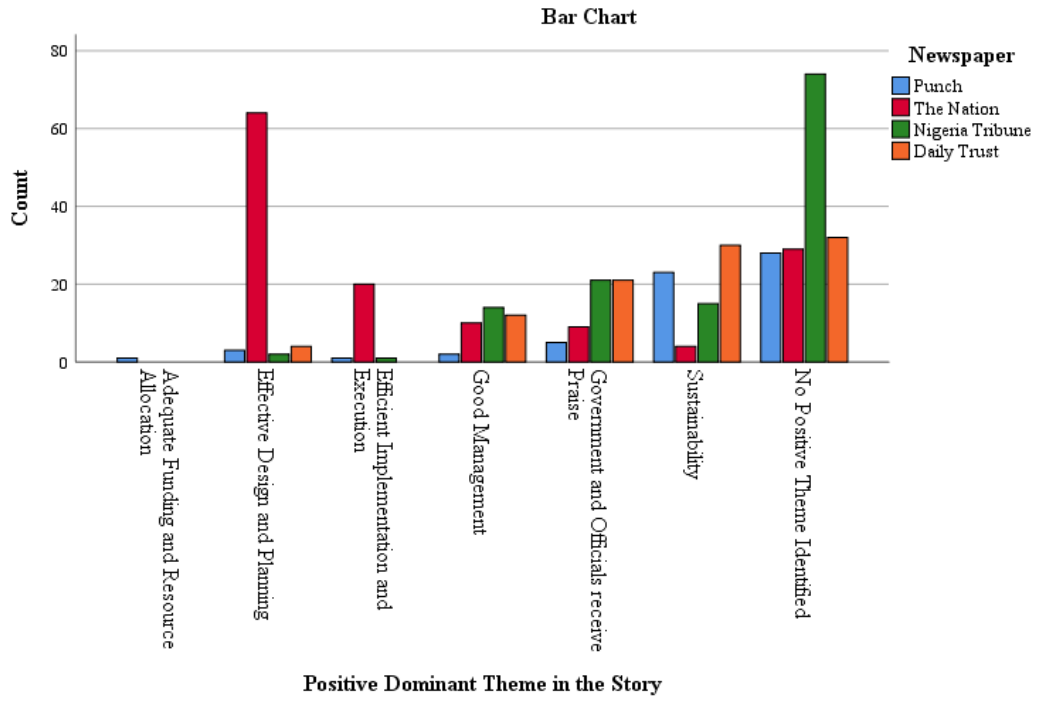
Positive Dominant Theme in the Story			Newspaper				
			Punch	*The Nation*	*Nigerian Tribune*	*Daily Trust*	Total
Positive Dominant Theme in the Story	Adequate Funding and Resource Allocation	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		% within Positive Dominant Theme in the Story	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
		% of Total	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
	Effective Design and Planning	Count	3	64	2	4	73
		% within Positive Dominant Theme in the Story	4.1%	87.7%	2.7%	5.5%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	4.8%	47.1%	1.6%	4.0%	17.2%
		% of Total	0.7%	15.1%	0.5%	0.9%	17.2%
	Efficient Implementation and Execution	Count	1	20	1	0	22
		% within Positive Dominant Theme in the Story	4.5%	90.9%	4.5%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	14.7%	0.8%	0.0%	5.2%
		% of Total	0.2%	4.7%	0.2%	0.0%	5.2%
	Good Management	Count	2	10	14	12	38
		% within Positive Dominant Theme in the Story	5.3%	26.3%	36.8%	31.6%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	3.2%	7.4%	11.0%	12.1%	8.9%
		% of Total	0.5%	2.4%	3.3%	2.8%	8.9%
	Government and Officials receive Praise	Count	5	9	21	21	56
		% within Positive Dominant Theme in the Story	8.9%	16.1%	37.5%	37.5%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	7.9%	6.6%	16.5%	21.2%	13.2%
		% of Total	1.2%	2.1%	4.9%	4.9%	13.2%
	Sustainability	Count	23	4	15	30	72
		% within Positive Dominant Theme in the Story	31.9%	5.6%	20.8%	41.7%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	36.5%	2.9%	11.8%	30.3%	16.9%
		% of Total	5.4%	0.9%	3.5%	7.1%	16.9%
	No Positive Theme Identified	Count	28	29	74	32	163
		% within Positive Dominant Theme in the Story	17.2%	17.8%	45.4%	19.6%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	44.4%	21.3%	58.3%	32.3%	38.4%
		% of Total	6.6%	6.8%	17.4%	7.5%	38.4%
Total		Count	63	136	127	99	425
		% within Positive Dominant Theme in the Story	14.8%	32.0%	29.9%	23.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	14.8%	32.0%	29.9%	23.3%	100.0%

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Positive Dominant Theme Analysis

Table 15 breakdown the predominant positive themes in NSIP news stories. Result of data analysed shows that Effective Design and Planning is the most common positive theme, accounting for 17.2% of total stories. *The Nation* leads in coverage of this theme (87.7%), suggesting a strong emphasis on highlighting strategic planning and organisation in NSIP. *Punch*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *Daily Trust* offer considerably less coverage in this area. This is closely followed by Sustainability, making up 16.9% of total stories. *Daily Trust* leads in this area (41.7%), emphasising the importance of long-term impacts and success of NSIP. *Punch* (31.9%) and *Nigerian Tribune* (20.8%) also cover this theme but lesser in relations to others.

Figure 6.1—13: Positive Dominant Theme in the Story of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)



The theme of Government and Officials receive Praise represents 13.2% of total stories, with *Nigerian Tribune* and *Daily Trust* each leading in coverage (37.5%). This may indicate these newspapers' focus on the achievements and commendations related to NSIP. Good Management is another significant positive theme, constituting 8.9% of total stories. *Nigerian*

Tribune (36.8%) and *Daily Trust* (31.6%) provide more coverage on this theme compared to *Punch* and *The Nation*. This suggests an interest in highlighting the administrative successes of NSIP.

Stories with No Positive Theme Identified accounts for 38.4% of total stories. This is mostly found in *Nigerian Tribune* reports (45.4%), which may suggest that a significant portion of NSIP coverage is not directly centred on positive narratives.

Efficient Implementation and Execution makes up 5.2% of total stories, mainly driven by *The Nation* (90.9%). This theme indicates an emphasis on NSIP's execution quality and effectiveness.

To sum up, each newspaper highlights different positive aspects of NSIP in their reporting. *The Nation* focuses on effective planning and implementation, *Daily Trust* emphasises sustainability and praise for officials, and *Nigerian Tribune*, based insights from this data, offers a broader range of themes with an emphasis on management and execution.

6.1.15.2 Negative Dominant Theme Analysis

Table 16: Negative Dominant Theme in NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)

			Newspaper				
			Punch	*The Nation*	*Nigerian Tribune*	*Daily Trust*	Total
Negative Dominant Theme in the Story	Lack of transparency and accountability	Count	8	2	7	4	21
		% within Negative Dominant Theme in the Story	38.1%	9.5%	33.3%	19.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	12.7%	1.5%	5.5%	4.0%	4.9%
		% of Total	1.9%	0.5%	1.6%	0.9%	4.9%
	Unsustainable practices	Count	1	2	3	0	6
		% within Negative Dominant Theme in the Story	16.7%	33.3%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	1.5%	2.4%	0.0%	1.4%
		% of Total	0.2%	0.5%	0.7%	0.0%	1.4%
	Poor management	Count	0	2	2	6	10
		% within Negative Dominant Theme in the Story	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	1.5%	1.6%	6.1%	2.4%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%	1.4%	2.4%
	Criticism of government/its officials	Count	8	6	0	7	21
		% within Negative Dominant Theme in the Story	38.1%	28.6%	0.0%	33.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	12.7%	4.4%	0.0%	7.1%	4.9%
		% of Total	1.9%	1.4%	0.0%	1.6%	4.9%
	Corruption and Nepotism	Count	2	0	0	0	2
		% within Negative Dominant Theme in the Story	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
		% of Total	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
	Politicisation of Programmes and Benefits	Count	2	4	32	6	44
		% within Negative Dominant Theme in the Story	4.5%	9.1%	72.7%	13.6%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	3.2%	2.9%	25.2%	6.1%	10.4%
		% of Total	0.5%	0.9%	7.5%	1.4%	10.4%
	Marginalisation and Discrimination	Count	1	2	2	0	5
		% within Negative Dominant Theme in the Story	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	1.5%	1.6%	0.0%	1.2%
		% of Total	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%	1.2%
	Poor Design and Planning	Count	6	5	3	8	22
		% within Negative Dominant Theme in the Story	27.3%	22.7%	13.6%	36.4%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	9.5%	3.7%	2.4%	8.1%	5.2%
		% of Total	1.4%	1.2%	0.7%	1.9%	5.2%
	Vote Buying and Bribery	Count	0	0	19	0	19
		% within Negative Dominant Theme in the Story	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	0.0%	15.0%	0.0%	4.5%

		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%	0.0%	4.5%
	No Negative Theme Identified	Count	35	113	59	68	275
		% within Negative Dominant Theme in the Story	12.7%	41.1%	21.5%	24.7%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	55.6%	83.1%	46.5%	68.7%	64.7%
		% of Total	8.2%	26.6%	13.9%	16.0%	64.7%
Total		Count	63	136	127	99	425
		% within Negative Dominant Theme in the Story	14.8%	32.0%	29.9%	23.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	14.8%	32.0%	29.9%	23.3%	100.0%

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The analysis of the negative dominant themes in the NSIP stories across various Nigerian newspapers (*Punch*, *The Nation*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *Daily Trust*) reveals the critical perspectives each publication emphasises when reporting on social welfare programme.

Starting with Lack of Transparency and Accountability, this theme accounts for 4.9% of total publications, with *Punch* leading coverage at 38.1%. *Nigerian Tribune* (33.3%) and *Daily Trust* (19.0%) also report on this theme, pointing to these newspapers' focus on potential areas of concern within NSIP.

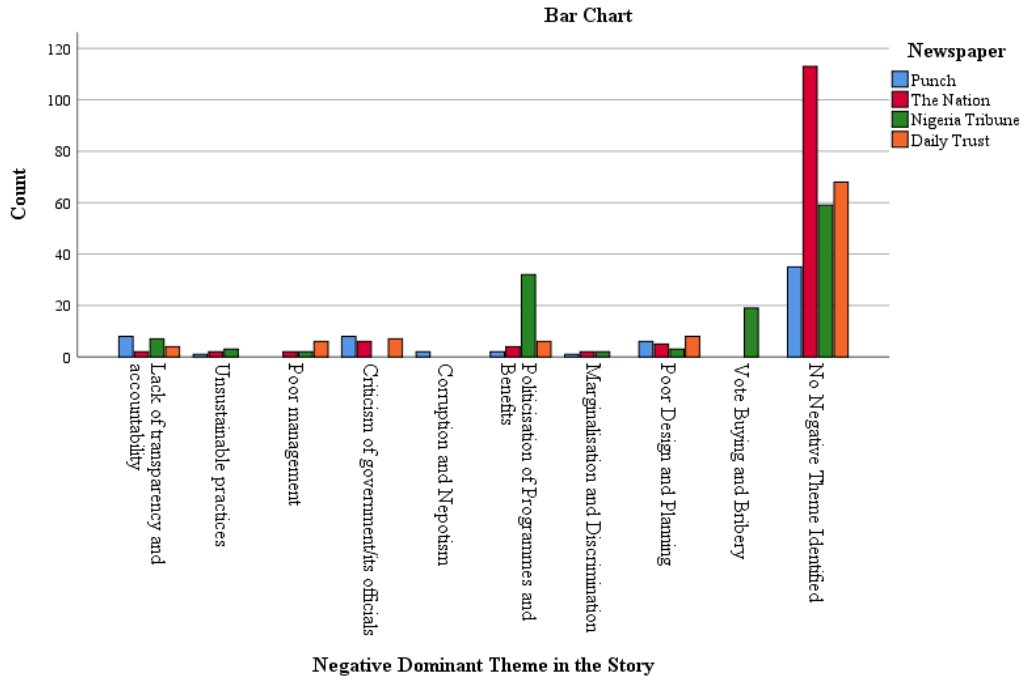
When considering Unsustainable Practices, this theme represents 1.4% of total publications. *Nigerian Tribune* (50.0%) and *The Nation* (33.3%) lead in coverage, which suggests an interest in scrutinising the long-term viability and potential weaknesses of NSIP.

In the area of Poor Management, *Daily Trust* leads coverage (60.0%), indicating an interest in exploring the challenges and inefficiencies in NSIP. This theme constitutes 2.4% of total publications, with *Nigerian Tribune* and *The Nation* also contributing.

Regarding Criticism of Government and its Officials, this theme accounts for 4.9% of total publications, with *Punch* (38.1%) and *Daily Trust* (33.3%) leading coverage. This suggests these newspapers may be more critical of NSIP's administration.

The theme of Politicisation of Programmes and Benefits comprises 10.4% of total stories, primarily driven by *Nigerian Tribune* (72.7%). This may indicate concerns about potential biases in the distribution and administration of NSIP.

Figure 16: Negative Dominant Theme in NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)



Furthermore, themes such as Marginalisation and Discrimination, Poor Design and Planning, and Vote Buying and Bribery offer additional critical perspectives on NSIP, although they are less stories conveying these themes. *Nigerian Tribune* and *Daily Trust* provide more coverage on these issues, pointing to their interest in addressing social and political concerns.

Stories with No Negative Theme Identified accounts for 64.7% of total publications. This suggests that a considerable portion of NSIP stories were not specifically focused on negative aspects of the programme. This could be explained by the high dependent on press release/statements from government officials with only 2.1% of the overall NSIP stories

originating emerging from investigative reports as seen in Table 6.1—10 showing the analysis of the Story Origin.

In conclusion, each newspaper highlights different critical aspects of NSIP in its reporting. *Punch* focuses on lack of transparency and accountability, *Nigerian Tribune* emphasises Politicisation and unsustainable practices, and *Daily Trust* scrutinises poor management.

6.1.16 Story Intent Analysis

Table 17: Intent of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)

Intent of the story

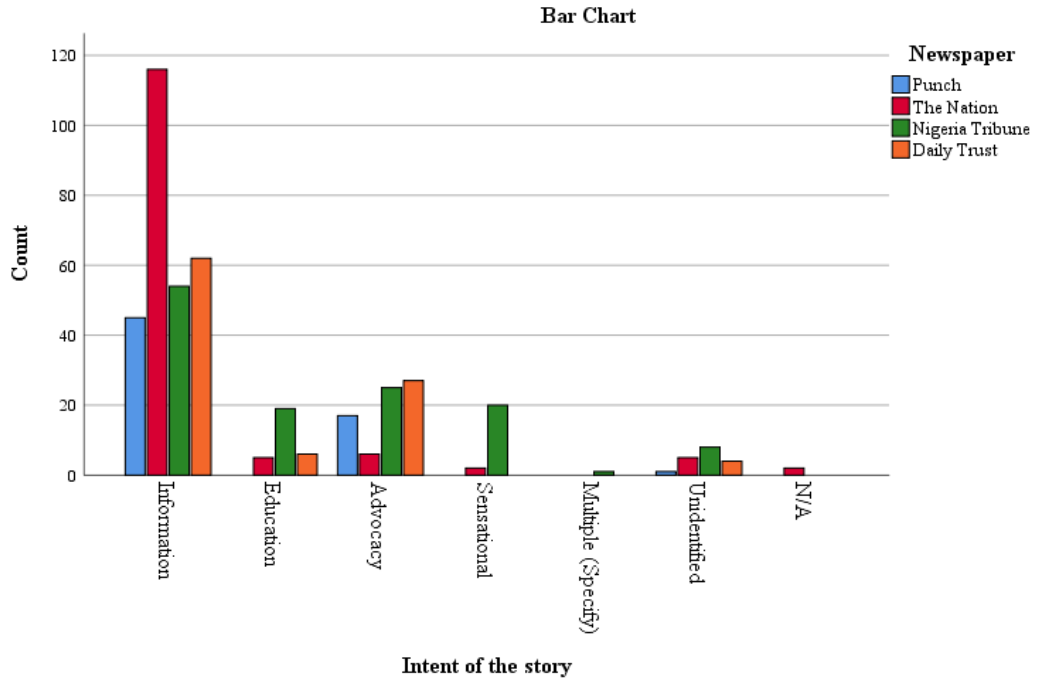
			Newspaper				
			Punch	*The Nation*	*Nigerian Tribune*	*Daily Trust*	Total
Intent of the story	Information	Count	45	116	54	62	277
		% within Intent of the story	16.2%	41.9%	19.5%	22.4%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	71.4%	85.3%	42.5%	62.6%	65.2%
		% of Total	10.6%	27.3%	12.7%	14.6%	65.2%
	Education	Count	0	5	19	6	30
		% within Intent of the story	0.0%	16.7%	63.3%	20.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	3.7%	15.0%	6.1%	7.1%
		% of Total	0.0%	1.2%	4.5%	1.4%	7.1%
	Advocacy	Count	17	6	25	27	75
		% within Intent of the story	22.7%	8.0%	33.3%	36.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	27.0%	4.4%	19.7%	27.3%	17.6%
		% of Total	4.0%	1.4%	5.9%	6.4%	17.6%
	Sensational	Count	0	2	20	0	22
		% within Intent of the story	0.0%	9.1%	90.9%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	1.5%	15.7%	0.0%	5.2%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.5%	4.7%	0.0%	5.2%
	Multiple (Specify)	Count	0	0	1	0	1
		% within Intent of the story	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.2%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
	Unidentified	Count	1	5	8	4	18
		% within Intent of the story	5.6%	27.8%	44.4%	22.2%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	3.7%	6.3%	4.0%	4.2%
		% of Total	0.2%	1.2%	1.9%	0.9%	4.2%
	N/A	Count	0	2	0	0	2
		% within Intent of the story	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
		% of Total	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
Total		Count	63	136	127	99	425
		% within Intent of the story	14.8%	32.0%	29.9%	23.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	14.8%	32.0%	29.9%	23.3%	100.0%

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The above table shows the intent of the NSIP stories across different newspapers (*Punch*, *The Nation*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *Daily Trust*). The cross tabulation reveals the motivations behind the reporting and how each publication presents NSIP to their readers.

First and foremost, Information is the most common intent, accounting for 65.2% of total stories. *The Nation* leads in coverage with 85.3% of its stories aiming to inform, followed by *Daily Trust* (62.6%) and *Punch* (71.4%). This suggests a primary focus on providing readers with straightforward news and details about NSIP initiatives.

Figure 17: Intent of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)



In terms of Education, this intent comprises 7.1% of total stories, with *Nigerian Tribune* taking the lead (63.3%). This highlights *Nigerian Tribune*'s effort to educate readers about NSIP, providing deeper insights into its programmes. Advocacy is another notable intent, making up 17.6% of total stories. *Daily Trust* (36.0%) and *Nigerian Tribune* (33.3%) prioritise this intent, suggesting a focus on promoting NSIP or raising awareness about its goals and achievements.

When it comes to Sensational content, *Nigerian Tribune* dominates this category (90.9%), comprising 5.2% of total stories. This indicates a potential focus on creating more dramatic narratives or highlighting controversial aspects of NSIP.

NSIP stories with unidentified intents account for 4.2% of total stories, with *Nigerian Tribune* leading coverage (44.4%). This suggests that the intent behind some stories may not always be clear, which could affect the objectivity and depth of reporting.

In summary, each newspaper exhibits different approaches in their reporting intents regarding NSIP. *The Nation* focuses primarily on providing information, while *Daily Trust* and *Nigerian Tribune* also emphasise advocacy and education. *Nigerian Tribune*'s inclination towards sensational and unidentified reporting suggests a focus on controversial or unclear narratives. *Nigerian Tribune* approach to reporting NSIP could comprehensively be explained by discussions in earlier findings.

6.1.17 Message Framing Analysis

Table 18: Message Framing of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)

Message Framing of NSIP Stories

			Newspaper				
			Punch	*The Nation*	*Nigerian Tribune*	*Daily Trust*	Total
How the story framed the message	Political	Count	5	20	57	12	94
		% within How the story framed the message	5.3%	21.3%	60.6%	12.8%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	7.9%	14.7%	44.9%	12.1%	22.1%
		% of Total	1.2%	4.7%	13.4%	2.8%	22.1%
	Economic	Count	4	8	13	46	71
		% within How the story framed the message	5.6%	11.3%	18.3%	64.8%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	6.3%	5.9%	10.2%	46.5%	16.7%
		% of Total	0.9%	1.9%	3.1%	10.8%	16.7%
	Cultural	Count	1	0	2	0	3
		% within How the story framed the message	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	0.7%
		% of Total	0.2%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.7%
	Human Interest	Count	2	2	9	0	13
		% within How the story framed the message	15.4%	15.4%	69.2%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	3.2%	1.5%	7.1%	0.0%	3.1%
		% of Total	0.5%	0.5%	2.1%	0.0%	3.1%
	Conflict	Count	3	1	0	4	8
		% within How the story framed the message	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	4.8%	0.7%	0.0%	4.0%	1.9%
		% of Total	0.7%	0.2%	0.0%	0.9%	1.9%
	Response	Count	2	3	12	0	17
		% within How the story framed the message	11.8%	17.6%	70.6%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	3.2%	2.2%	9.4%	0.0%	4.0%
		% of Total	0.5%	0.7%	2.8%	0.0%	4.0%
	Responsibility	Count	32	5	9	32	78
		% within How the story framed the message	41.0%	6.4%	11.5%	41.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	50.8%	3.7%	7.1%	32.3%	18.4%
		% of Total	7.5%	1.2%	2.1%	7.5%	18.4%
	Morality	Count	6	3	6	0	15
		% within How the story framed the message	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	9.5%	2.2%	4.7%	0.0%	3.5%
		% of Total	1.4%	0.7%	1.4%	0.0%	3.5%
	Unidentified	Count	1	5	8	3	17
		% within How the story framed the message	5.9%	29.4%	47.1%	17.6%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	3.7%	6.3%	3.0%	4.0%
		% of Total	0.2%	1.2%	1.9%	0.7%	4.0%
	N/A	Count	7	89	11	2	109
		% within How the story framed the message	6.4%	81.7%	10.1%	1.8%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	11.1%	65.4%	8.7%	2.0%	25.6%
		% of Total	1.6%	20.9%	2.6%	0.5%	25.6%
Total		Count	63	136	127	99	425

% within How the story framed the message	14.8%	32.0%	29.9%	23.3%	100.0%
% within Newspaper	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of Total	14.8%	32.0%	29.9%	23.3%	100.0%

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Stories are often framed in certain ways to convey certain (or pre-defined) meanings. Message framing is one ways newspaper article could be used to drive up an idea.Message Framing Analysis

Table 18 presents a crosstabulation of the message framing of NSIP stories across different newspapers (*Punch*, *The Nation*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *Daily Trust*) providing insight into how each publication presents the stories' content and focuses on specific aspects of NSIP.

As seen in the table, Political frames is the most common message frame, accounting for 22.1% of total stories. *Nigerian Tribune* leads with 60.6% of its stories adopting a political framing, suggesting a focus on the intersection of NSIP and politics. This further support a consistent pattern in *Nigerian Tribune*'s reports. This also upholds the next study's chapter findings about the politicisation of NSIP. *Punch* and *Daily Trust* also use this frame, though to a lesser extent.

The Economic framing comprises 16.7% of total stories, with *Daily Trust* taking the lead (64.8%). This suggests a focus on the economic implications and impact of NSIP initiatives, particularly by *Daily Trust*.

When it comes to Cultural framing, it constitutes just 0.7% of total stories, with *Nigerian Tribune* dominating this area (66.7%). This indicates *Nigerian Tribune*'s reporting the story as it relates to people's culture.

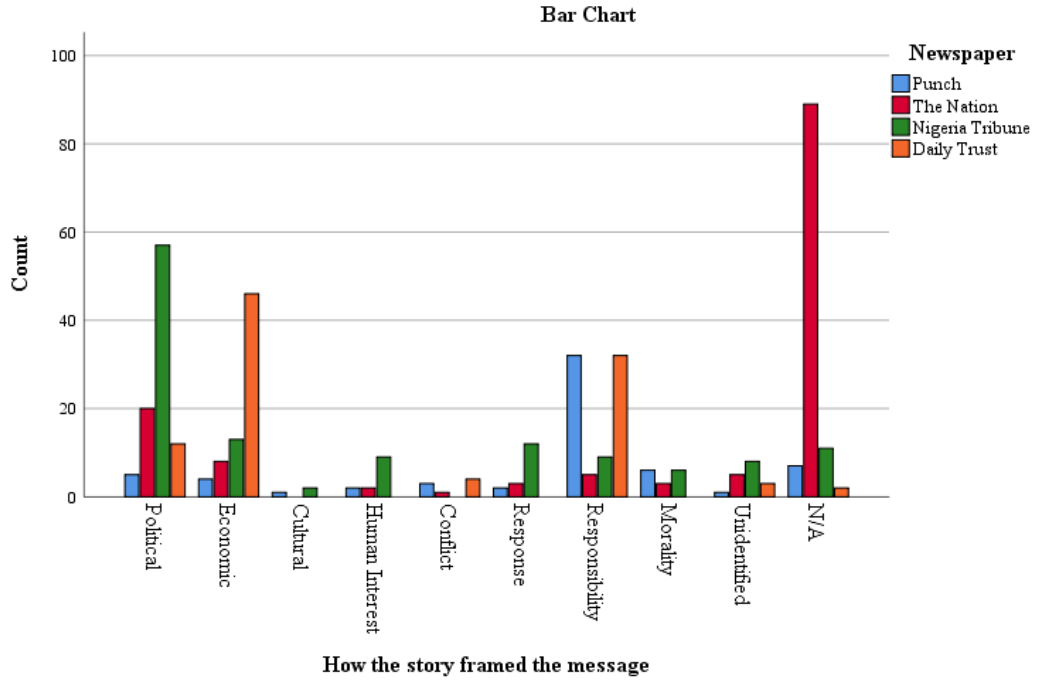
Human Interest framing, which is less common across the newspapers, accounts for 3.1% of total stories, with *Nigerian Tribune* (69.2%) leading coverage. Human interest message frame highlights the human impact and personal stories within NSIP reporting.

Conflict framing is also present, making up 1.9% of total stories. *Daily Trust* leads in this area (50.0%), pointing to a focus on controversies or disputes related to NSIP while Response frame makes up 4.0% of total stories, with *Nigerian Tribune* (70.6%) and *The Nation* (17.6%) emphasising this approach. This suggests a focus on reactions and feedback related to NSIP.

Responsibility framing accounts for 18.4% of total stories, with *Punch* and *Daily Trust* each leading in coverage (41.0%). This focus points to stories emphasising accountability in the implementation of NSIP. On another hand, morality is another frame, making up 3.5% of total stories, with *Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune* each providing equal coverage (40%). This suggests a focus on ethical and moral considerations surrounding NSIP.

NSIP stories with unidentified frames accounts for 4.0% of total stories, primarily covered by *Nigerian Tribune* (47.1%) and *The Nation* (29.4%). This may indicate ambiguous narratives or unclear framing in some stories and lastly, NSIP stories with no identified message framing are 25.6% of total stories. *The Nation* reported most (81.7%) of stories with no message frame. This suggests that a significant portion of stories may lack a clear framing.

Figure 18: Message Framing of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)



In summary, each newspaper exhibits different approaches in framing NSIP stories. *Nigerian Tribune* uses political, cultural, and human-interest framing, while *Daily Trust* emphasises economic and conflict-related narratives. *Punch* focuses on responsibility and morality framing.

6.1.18 Story Issues Framing Analysis

Table 19: Issues Framing of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)

Crosstab

			Newspaper				
			Punch	*The Nation*	*Nigerian Tribune*	*Daily Trust*	Total
How the story framed the issue reported in the story	Episodic	Count	8	21	83	32	144
		% within How the story framed the issue reported in the story	5.6%	14.6%	57.6%	22.2%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	12.7%	15.4%	65.4%	32.3%	33.9%
		% of Total	1.9%	4.9%	19.5%	7.5%	33.9%
	Thematic	Count	25	18	11	15	69
		% within How the story framed the issue reported in the story	36.2%	26.1%	15.9%	21.7%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	39.7%	13.2%	8.7%	15.2%	16.2%
		% of Total	5.9%	4.2%	2.6%	3.5%	16.2%
	Systemic	Count	22	4	16	44	86
		% within How the story framed the issue reported in the story	25.6%	4.7%	18.6%	51.2%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	34.9%	2.9%	12.6%	44.4%	20.2%
		% of Total	5.2%	0.9%	3.8%	10.4%	20.2%
	Unidentified	Count	1	5	8	3	17
		% within How the story framed the issue reported in the story	5.9%	29.4%	47.1%	17.6%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	1.6%	3.7%	6.3%	3.0%	4.0%
		% of Total	0.2%	1.2%	1.9%	0.7%	4.0%
	N/A	Count	7	88	9	5	109
		% within How the story framed the issue reported in the story	6.4%	80.7%	8.3%	4.6%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	11.1%	64.7%	7.1%	5.1%	25.6%
		% of Total	1.6%	20.7%	2.1%	1.2%	25.6%
Total		Count	63	136	127	99	425
		% within How the story framed the issue reported in the story	14.8%	32.0%	29.9%	23.3%	100.0%
		% within Newspaper	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	14.8%	32.0%	29.9%	23.3%	100.0%

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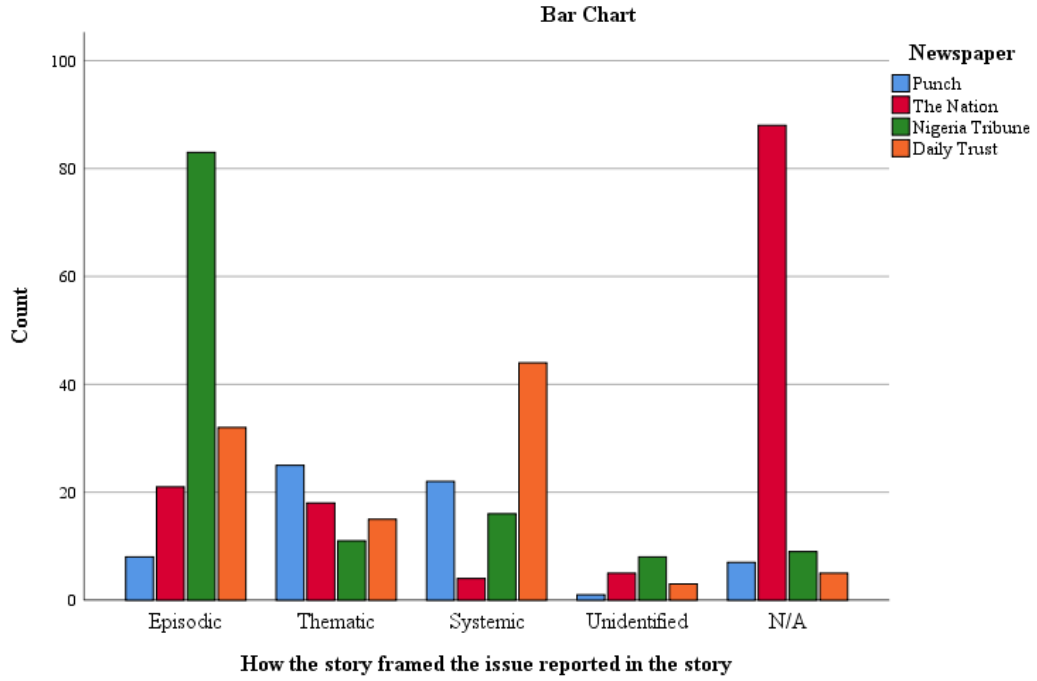
The analysis of issues framing of NSIP stories across different newspapers (*Punch*, *The Nation*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *Daily Trust*) as show in Story Issues Framing Analysis

Table 19 provides insights into how each publication presents NSIP stories based on episodic, thematic, or systemic issues.

Episodic framing is the most common approach, accounting for 33.9% of total stories. *Nigerian Tribune* leads this category with 57.6% of its stories framed episodically, suggesting a focus on

individual events or cases within NSIP reporting. *Daily Trust* and *Punch* also use this framing, but to a lesser extent.

Figure 19: Issues Framing of NSIP Stories Content Analysed in Selected Nigerian Newspapers (June 2016 - May 2023)



Thematic framing comprises 16.2% of total stories, with *Punch* leading in this area (36.2%), followed by *The Nation* (26.1%) and *Nigerian Tribune* (15.9%). This approach emphasises broader themes and trends within NSIP, offering a more comprehensive perspective.

Systemic framing represents 20.2% of total stories, with *Daily Trust* dominating this category (51.2%). This suggests *Daily Trust*'s focus on structural and systemic issues within NSIP, providing a deep dive into the underlying factors affecting the programme.

To sum up, each newspaper exhibits different approaches in framing NSIP stories. *Nigerian Tribune* leans towards episodic framing, *Daily Trust* prioritises systemic framing, and *Punch* emphasises thematic framing.

6.2 Answers to Research Questions (RQs)

6.2.1 RQ 1a: What are the main themes in news reports on NSIP published in Nigerian newspapers?

The content analysis of news reports on NSIP published in Nigerian newspapers reveals several dominant themes, both positive and negative. The analysis of news reports on the National Social Investment Program (NSIP) published in Nigerian newspapers, it is evident that effective design and planning emerge as central themes. These themes are observed across various publications.

This thesis research data reveals that approximately 27.8% of news reports across all newspapers highlight the planning and design elements of NSIP. Among the publications, *The Nation* stands out for its extensive coverage of this theme, accounting for 51.9% of related reports. The *Nigerian Tribune* also emphasises this theme with 26.8% of the coverage, while *Daily Trust* contributes 10.1%. Conversely, *Punch* provides the least coverage on this theme, with only 6.3%.

This distribution suggests a strong emphasis on the planning and organisational dimensions of NSIP, particularly in *The Nation*. The varying degrees of coverage across different newspapers may reflect diverse editorial priorities or regional interests in the implementation of the programme. This insight could guide further research on media framing of social welfare initiatives in Nigeria.

As earlier noted, this thesis categorises the dominant themes into positive and negative. On the positive side, each newspaper highlights different positive aspects of NSIP in their reporting. *The Nation* focuses on effective planning and implementation, *Daily Trust* emphasises

sustainability and praise for officials, and *Nigerian Tribune* offers a broader range of themes with an emphasis on management and execution. Therefore, the undisputed positive dominant theme found in content analysis of NSIP news stories is effective planning and implementation.

On the other hand, a key area of concern is the lack of transparency and accountability, with *Punch* leading coverage at 38.1% of reports. Other newspapers, such as *Nigerian Tribune* (33.3%) and *Daily Trust* (19.0%), also highlight this theme, indicating a focus on potential issues within NSIP. The theme of poor management is led by *Daily Trust*'s coverage (60.0%), suggesting an interest in exploring challenges and inefficiencies in NSIP.

The theme of unsustainable practices constitutes 1.4% of total publications, with *Nigerian Tribune* (50.0%) and *The Nation* (33.3%) leading in coverage. This points to scrutiny of the long-term viability and potential weaknesses of NSIP. Politicisation of programmes and benefits comprises 10.4% of total stories, primarily driven by *Nigerian Tribune* (72.7%). This coverage suggests concerns about potential biases in the distribution and administration of NSIP.

While a significant portion of NSIP stories (64.7%) does not focus on negative aspects of the programme, reliance on press releases and statements from government officials may play a role. Only 2.1% of overall NSIP stories emerge from investigative reports, which may limit the depth of critique. Each newspaper emphasises different critical aspects of NSIP: *Punch* focuses on transparency and accountability, *Nigerian Tribune* examines politicisation and unsustainable practices, while *Daily Trust* scrutinises poor management. These findings reflect the varying editorial priorities and perspectives of each newspaper in assessing NSIP's impact and challenges.

6.2.2 RQ 1b: How has the news coverage of NSIP in Nigeria by Nigerian newspapers been represented?

To answer this question, this study collected range of categorical data using a coding sheet. The categories of analysis that provide data that help us answer these research questions include identifying the content types, NSIP component programmes (and of the NSIP, knowing the GEEP sub-programmes) that were reported. I also codified dateline, main and other sources as well as the story origin of the NSIP stories. These content categories provide useful information on NSIP article content and source. Also, elements such as tone of story provides data that for sentiment analysis of the stories. In further efforts to provide a complete understanding of this research question, this study explores the media representation of NSIP stories. Under framing, this study chapter explored perspective on poverty, poverty frame, intent, message frame and issue frames in NSIP stories.

Nigerian newspapers have reported on NSIP in various ways, as shown by the earlier data [see Table 6.1—9, Table 6.1—10, Table 6.1—11, Table 1.1—15, Table 6.1—16, Table 6.1—17]. Each newspaper has its own approach and intentions when reporting on NSIP.

One notable aspect is the varying intents behind the news stories. The most common intent is to provide information, with *The Nation* leading in coverage in this area [see Table 6.1—15]. However, *Daily Trust* and *Nigerian Tribune* also emphasise advocacy and education. *Nigerian Tribune*, in particular, seems to have an inclination for sensational indicating a focus on controversial narratives [See: Table 6.1—11 and Table 6.1—15].

The newspapers also employ different message framing techniques to convey specific meanings. Political frames are prevalent, accounting for a significant proportion of the stories [see Table 6.1—16]. However, positive tones dominate across all newspapers, with *The Nation*

being particularly noteworthy in this regard [see Table 6.1—11]. *Nigerian Tribune*, on the other hand, strikes a balance between positive and critical tones, suggesting a more sceptical approach Table 6.1—11. *Daily Trust* and *Punch* aim for more neutral or mixed-tone stories, potentially striving for objective and balanced coverage.

Moreover, the newspapers diverge in the frames they use to present NSIP. *Punch* and *Daily Trust* emphasise responsibility framing, focusing on accountability in the implementation of NSIP [see Table 6.1—16]. *Punch* and *Nigerian Tribune* also cover ethical and moral considerations surrounding NSIP [see: Table 6.1—16]. *Nigerian Tribune* excels in interviews and author's analysis, offering readers diverse perspectives and critical thinking [Table 6.1—10] *The Nation*, on the other hand, relies heavily on press releases and investigative reporting, aiming to uncover hidden facts about NSIP [see Table 6.1—9].

In terms of sources quoted in the stories, government officials emerge as the primary source, representing a significant proportion of total publications [see Table 6.1—9]. This reliance on government officials is particularly evident in *The Nation* and *Punch*. While *Nigerian Tribune* also quotes government sources frequently, it demonstrates a slightly more diverse pool of sources The dominance of government sources raises questions about the media's ability to provide a balanced and nuanced perspective on NSIP. While *Nigerian Tribune* exhibits a slightly broader range of sources, the overall dominance of government voices suggests a significant gap in the narrative. Crucially, this heavy reliance on officialdom appears to marginalise, if not entirely exclude, the perspectives and experiences of ordinary Nigerians who are the intended beneficiaries (or perhaps unintended casualties) of the National Social Investment Programme. This absence of the voices of everyday people – their successes, their

challenges, their opinions on the programme's effectiveness – paints an incomplete picture and potentially masks the true impact and realities of the NSIP on the ground.

To sum up, the news coverage of NSIP in Nigeria by Nigerian newspapers varies in terms of intents, message framing, and sources. Each newspaper has its own priorities and approaches, shaping readers' perceptions of NSIP. Also, NSIP stories were mostly positive in Nigerian newspapers reports. For the negative toned stories, *Nigerian Tribune* took the lead as shown in Figure 6.1—11: Tone of the stories.

6.3 Implication of research findings, recommendations and conclusions

The diverse representation of news coverage of NSIP in Nigeria by Nigerian newspapers has a number of significant implications. Firstly, the newspapers' different intents and message framing techniques can shape readers' perceptions of NSIP. Depending on which newspaper they primarily consume, readers may develop biased views that do not represent the full range of coverage of NSIP programme. It is therefore important for readers to seek information from multiple sources to mitigate this bias and obtain a more comprehensive understanding of NSIP.

Secondly, the reliance on government officials as the primary source of information raises concerns about the media's ability to provide a balanced and nuanced perspective on NSIP. This lack of source diversity may limit the depth and credibility of NSIP stories. It suggests that the government may have significant influence over the media's coverage of NSIP which the Chapter Eight of this thesis further validate using data collected from the analysis of In-depth Interviews with Nigerian journalist who have reported NSIP. This finding is consistent with agenda-setting theory, which suggests that the media often reflects the priorities and perspectives of those in power.

Furthermore, the dominance of positive tones in the news coverage, particularly in *The Nation*, can influence readers' perceptions of NSIP. Positive framing can create a favourable image of NSIP and the government's initiatives. On the other hand, *Nigerian Tribune*'s more sceptical approach, with a balance of critical and negative-toned stories, may lead readers to question the effectiveness or transparency of NSIP. This highlights the power of media framing in shaping public opinion. In recent develop, this study argues that journalists sourcing most of their information from government official, especially through press releases has consistently led to far-from-reality narratives. This came to fore after a scheme was eventually suspended in 2024 after its principals (BBC News, 2024a; Channels Television, 2024) were found wanting while the new government announced that there are "significant concerns regarding operational lapses and improprieties surrounding payments to the programme's beneficiaries" (Business Day, 2024).

Additionally, considering NSIP stories dateline, the newspapers' regional strengths and focus areas imply that certain regions may receive more or less coverage on NSIP. *Daily Trust*, for example, has a strong presence in northern Nigeria and international reporting, while *The Nation* covers central and southern regions, and *Nigerian Tribune* focuses on South-West Nigeria. The disproportionate media focus on stories originating from North-Central, is primarily due to the fact that Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT) is Abuja. Aso Rock in Abuja serves as the official residence of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. As a result, the North-Central, particularly, Abuja, accounts for the majority of reports from this region, leading to an imbalance in regional coverage. This lack of diversity in reporting contributes to a narrow multi-perspective understanding of the National Social Investment Program (NSIP) across the country. In conclusion, the limited representation of news coverage

of NSIP in Nigerian newspapers has implications for readers' perceptions, source diversity, media influence, framing effects, and regional focus.

CHAPTER SEVEN

STUDY 2

7 Discourse Analysis of Nigerian Xsphere on NSIP

The previous chapter has provided a comprehensive quantitative data about the coverage of NSIP in Nigeria Press. This chapter presents result of qualitative data – a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the discussions taking place on X among Nigerians regarding the National Social Investment Programmes. The rationale behind employing the CDA methodology is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the context within which these conversations occur. Also, this method enables us to examine how the unspoken background knowledge of the participants affects the way in which they interact, and how this, in turn, shapes the formation of commonly held ideologies. Studies have shown that Twitter (now called X) is utilised in both developing and developed democracies globally, serving as a tool to facilitate social engagement. Consequently, citizens can utilise X as a platform to hold their governments accountable (Akerele-Popoola et al., 2022; Hari, 2014).

The insights derived from this analysis can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the discourse surrounding NSIP on X. Therefore, this thesis uses CDA to problematise and deconstruct language and lexical usage in tweets (Dyer & Hakkola, 2020) from Nigerian Xsphere conversations on the NSIP.

The analysis presented in this chapter is based on the methodological instrument developed by Fairclough (1995, 2010, 2014) and Cummings et al. (2020), as presented in the methodology

section of this thesis (see Chapter 4.6.2). Deploying the method drawn up, NVivo qualitative analysis software was used to code tweets.

In this study, tweets from Nigeria were scrapped using Apify Quacker X scrapper tool. This Apify Quacker X scrapper only collects data that are publicly available. This means data that are accessible without logging in to X.

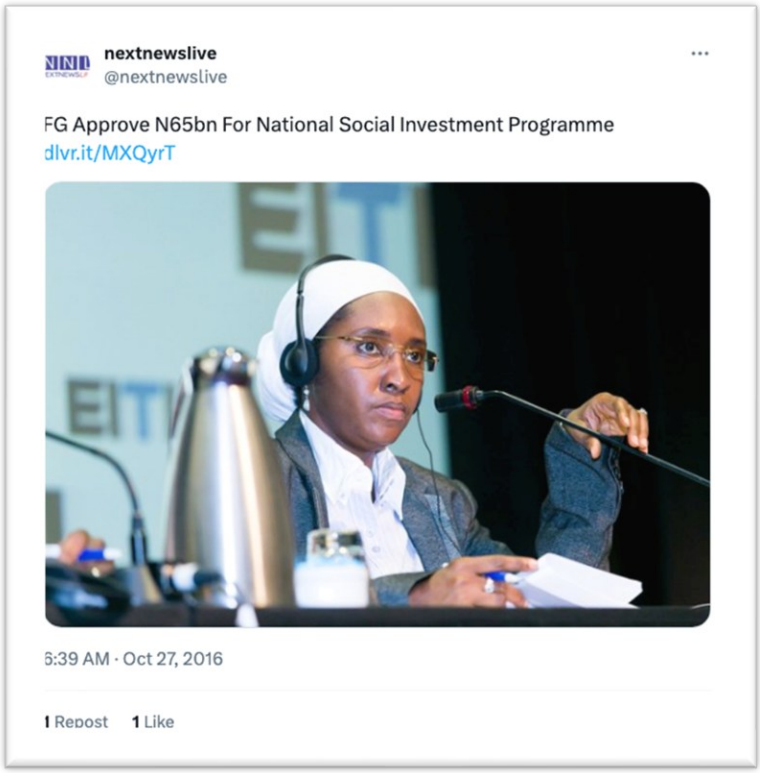
Table 6.1—1 Overview of X dataset

Overview of X dataset		
NSIP	*Total number of tweets*	23876
	Date range	June 2016 – February 18, 2023
GEEP	*Total number of tweets*	627
	Date range	June 2016 – February 18, 2023
Tradermoni	*Total number of tweets*	20543
	Date range	June 2016 – February 18, 2023
Farmersmoni	*Total number of tweets*	2333
	Date range	June 2016 – February 18, 2023
Marketmoni	*Total number of tweets*	7126
	Date range	June 2016 – February 18, 2023
HGSFP	*Total number of tweets*	1050
	Date range	June 2016 – February 18, 2023
CCT	*Total number of tweets*	19376
	Date range	June 2016 – February 18, 2023
Npower	*Total number of tweets*	11181
	Date range	June 2016 – February 18, 2023

The rationale for this period of data collection spans from the commencement of the NSIP to the end of the administration that initiated the programme, and extends toward the upcoming general elections, culminating one week prior. This timeframe ensures a comprehensive understanding of the NSIP's impact over the course of its implementation, including its influence on policies, societal dynamics, and electoral considerations leading up to the election.

7.1 Early Discourse and Communication about The National Social Investment Programmes

The Nigerian federal government's commitment to initiate The National Social Investment Programmes was initially announced in June 2016, but it was not until October 27, 2016, when the first news tweet on X revealed that the FG (Federal Government) had approved ₦65bn for the programme. The tweet succinctly stated, "FG Approve ₦65bn For National Social Investment Programme."



Screenshot 6.1.2

As shown in the screenshot on the left, the tweet attracted only a repost[26] and one like[27] on X.

The X headline establishes the Federal Government as the subject taking official approving action towards a large monetary allocation of ₦65bn for the object of the "National Social Investment Programme". This conveys the priority themes of significant funding being allocated from the highest levels of authority for a national social programme, reinforcing discourses of active government intervention in social policies and substantial action to improve conditions. The commitment signalled by the amount budgeted raised hope and positive expectations among Nigerians. However, minimal detail is given about the specific issues the programme addresses or its aims, leaving room for further clarification of the specific impacts of this investment. In doing so, the text constructs a narrative of assertive social spending without fully exploring the discourses around its targeted outcomes or the potential difficulties that may arise during implementation.

[26] Reposting on X involves sharing someone else's tweet on your own profile, indicating that you find the content worth sharing with your followers.
[27] Liking a tweet on X indicates approval, agreement, or appreciation for the content of the tweet.

This was followed by another tweet on 9 December 2016 in which the National Orientation Agency (NOA), the Oyo Directorate, announced the NSIP verification exercise.



Screenshot 6.1.2

The tweeted headline constructs an official notice of a verification exercise for the National Social Investment Programme. This is constructed through the phrases "PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT" and references the nation-wide government through "NATIONAL." It establishes the subject as the "SOCIAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME" which is undergoing a "VERIFICATION EXERCISE." While there is no observable semantic clarity, the tweet implies governance themes through reference to the government and evaluation of beneficiaries, although ambiguity remains around the specifics and impacts, allowing interpretations around discourses such as performance, funding, and meeting needs. In brevity, the text establishes an air of official procedures amid unclear policy implications.

Furthermore, this tweet received no engagement from Nigerians. The reasons for this lack of engagement are unknown, and it could be attributed to a lack of publicity about the programme or the notably low followership of the @noaoyodirect X account, representing the Oyo Directorate of the NOA. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the official national headquarters X handle, @NOA_Nigeria, surprisingly has a relatively low number of followers, with only 9,239[28] followers out of a Nigerian Xsphere user base of 4.95 million (Kepios, 2023). By

[28] Data retrieved on August 25, 2023, at 18:56 BST.

implication, the significantly low number of followers for these accounts, as compared to the overall Nigerian Xsphere user base, suggests a limited reach and impact of NSIP-related tweets. This raises questions about the effectiveness of the communication strategy employed to disseminate information about the programmes and generate public interest and participation. This stresses the need for improved publicity and outreach efforts to ensure that important initiatives such as the NSIP gain the attention and engagement they deserve from the target audience.

7.2 Emerging dominant themes

Drawing from findings derived from the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of X conversations surrounding the NSIP, a series of dominant emerging themes have come to the fore. These themes encapsulate a diverse array of concerns, from advocating for third-party monitoring to raising alarms about the politicisation of the NSIP and allegations of vote buying. Amidst these discussions, expressions of frustration and narratives of suffering echo through the digital discourse. Specific attention is drawn to critiques such as the perceived failure of initiatives like "Petty cash for Petty Traders" and the seeming disconnect between substantial budget allocations and tangible impact, as noted by figures like the Wife of the President, Aisha Buhari. Furthermore, instances of fraud are under scrutiny, indicating a broader landscape of scepticism and scrutiny surrounding the NSIP. This section delves into these prominent themes, elucidating their implications within the context of CDA analyses of X conversations on the NSIP using the hybridised Norman Fairclough model as explained extensively in this thesis methodology.

7.2.1 Call for Third-Party Monitoring: Ensuring Accountability in the NSIP Initiative



By April 2017, the NSIP began to attract the attention of civil and human rights movements/organisations. As it has been the case in Nigeria, civil society groups play a pivotal role in political development, and they often serve as the primary avenue for the public to have a say in national decision-making (Kew & Kwaja, 2018). During the period when NSIP was in operation, one of the prominent civil organisations in Nigeria was ActionAid[29]. They were the first to express concern and call for third-party monitoring of the NSIP initiative by the federal government.

The idea of monitoring can be attributed to the need to oversee the substantial amount of funds allocated to the programme and ensure their appropriate utilisation. Monitoring the NSIP has become particularly important because the programme has remained relatively unknown since its actual funding/commencement in October 2016. In relations to the Agenda Setting Model, it can be argued that the reason why NSIP is unknown at the inception of the programme is as a result of the absence of failure of 'public agenda' component of the model. In such cases, there is a higher risk of misappropriating funds for a project that lacks public awareness and support. Therefore, implementing effective monitoring measures is crucial to prevent any misuse of resources and ensure accountability in the utilisation of funds.

[29] ActionAid is a global movement of people working together to further human rights for all and defeat poverty.

7.2.2 Politicisation of The National Social Investment Programmes: Implications and Concerns

> "GSG trained 54 personal as Community Based Targeting Team to register poor & vulnerable indigenes for National Social Investment Programme."
>
> 1:28 AM · Mar 15, 2017, from Gombe, Nigeria

This text constructs a narrative of workforce training to aid the social welfare efforts of the federal government of Nigeria. Specifically, "GSG" trained "54 personal" as a "Community Based Targeting Team" with the purpose of "register[ing] poor & vulnerable indigenes for [the] National Social Investment Programme."

The prioritisation of numerical specifics ("54 personal") paired with the designation of a specialised team implies efficient administration and precision targeting of services. However, the ambiguity in the GSG's identity and qualifications for such targeting roles leaves scope for debate around governance transparency and effectiveness.

To summarise, the text conveys the message of the government on enabling local participation in receiving aid. However, the lack of context could also give rise to counter-discussions regarding accountability, the interests served, and whether targeting criteria uphold the principles of equity and inclusion. While outlining a workflow, the text ultimately presents an opportunity for a deeper interrogation of approaches and realities versus stated objectives.

> "Who's watching National Social Investment Programme on NTA[30]? This woman said she received Gbagam and she opened the alert it was an money 😂😂😂"
>
> 11:16 AM · May 29, 2017, from Calabar, Nigeria

[30] National Television Authority (NTA) is a Nigerian government-owned commercial broadcaster and public corporation which is managed and controlled only by the government.

The above quoted tweet establishes an individual's reported experience with The National Social Investment Programme through the anecdote of a woman receiving a "Gbagam"[31] from her mobile phone.

By leading with an enquiry about the viewership of the programme, there is an underlying discourse of public interest and engagement. Meanwhile, descriptive yet informal language constructs a relatable narrative focused on the theme of direct financial disbursement.

The user, in tweet thread, also made a direct allusion to the possible marginalisation in terms of the communicative language used by NSIP beneficiaries while delivering their respective testimonies when he called Nigeria Xsphere's attention to:

> "See the marginalisation in Nigeria? While other participants from oda regions struggled with English Amina the northerner has an interpreter.
>
> 11:33 AM · May 29, 2017

It is also important to note here that the testimonies were televised on the Federal Government's National Television (NTA) on 29 May which coincides with Nigeria's Democracy Day. Additionally, as evident in the previous study's findings, the NSIP appears to be highly politicised. This helps explain why beneficiaries' testimonies were televised during a political event organised by the Federal Government.

In response to the tweet, another X user wrote,

> "Democracy Day, what a show of shame live @ Presidential Villa (National Social Investment Programme)"
>
> 11:20 am · 29 May 2017

[31] 'Gbagam' correctly spelt 'gba gaun' is an onomatopoeia for bank credit alert notification.

The above tweet constructs a critical viewpoint of an event through descriptive phrases associating the "Democracy Day" political celebration with a perceived "show of shame" related to the "Presidential Villa (National Social Investment Programme)."

By prioritising the collocation of two opposing themes, an evaluative discourse is conveyed that questions the appropriateness or authenticity of involving the social programme in the government-organised function. This interpretation is supported by the context shared earlier, as airing pre-recorded beneficiary testimonies on NTA during Nigeria's Democracy Day coincides with findings that the NSIP seems highly politicised in practice.

Considering this, the emerging criticism stems reasonably - the blending of politics and social welfare during an official government function understandably invites concern over the uses and possible abuses of power.

Another tweet read:

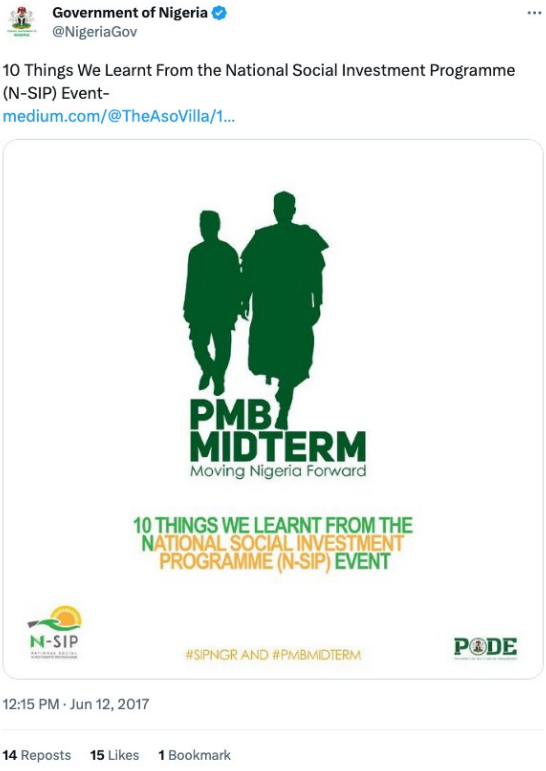
> N-SIP should not be a privilege but set derivative for Nigerians as deserved. @ProfOsinbajo @bankofindustry
>
> 12:17 PM · May 29, 2017

This tweet quoted the words of Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, whose speech constructs a discourse advocating that the National Social Investment Programme be framed as a right rather than a privilege for Nigerians. Through word choices like "should not be" and phrasing it as "deserved," it prioritises a rights-based theme over alternative framings. While this observation aligns with the findings of the content analysis study chapter, indicating a prevalent narrative in the press, particularly in stories sourced from government officials or press statements and releases, a contrasting narrative appears to emerge from the Nigerian Xsphere.

Taking note that the official X account of the Government of Nigeria (@NigeriaGov) first twitted about NSIP was on May 30, 2017. This was the day following Nigeria's Democracy Day and by calendar month, almost a year after the programme was announced by the government. This suggests a communication deficiency via their X accounts. The 30 May tweet thread by the Government of Nigeria highlighted "10 Things We Learnt From the National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP) Event" with the hashtag #PMBMidTerm, indicating another instance of the programme being politicised.

Furthermore, on 12 June 2017 another significant political date in Nigeria's history, the exact same tweet content as that of 30 May (the day after Nigeria's democracy celebration) was published.





This recurrence emphasises the politicisation of the NSIP programme, as it is now being associated and promoted alongside major political events in the country, which can be argued to be partisan in nature. The consequences of associating the NSIP programme with political events have several potential consequences which include but are not particularly limited to: (a) *perceived bias*, which could be interpreted as the programme being used as a tool for political gain, rather than serving its intended purpose of social welfare and development. This can erode public trust in the programme and undermine its credibility); (b) *polarisation:* carry divisive and partisan undertones; and (c) *questioning programmes' motives:* associating the NSIP programme with political events may raise questions about the underlying motives of the programme. Critics may argue that the programmes' actions and decisions are politically motivated rather than driven by a genuine commitment to addressing social issues. This can lead to public scepticism.

It was also noted that after the first two tweets from the Nigerian government's account in May and June 2017, the next time the account made mention of NSIP eight months later (i.e. in February 2018). This suggests that the government shares seasonal information. In their 2018 tweet, the federal government published an update as follows:

> UPDATE: Several milestones were recorded via the National Social Investment Programmes @NSIP_NG in 2017, in line with its inclusive growth plan, which includes tackling poverty and hunger, and creating jobs for Nigerians.
>
> 11:35 am · 3 Feb 2018

This tweet shows that the work of the NSIP is progressing. It mentions "Several milestones" and how the policies are helping to reduce poverty, hunger, and unemployment, which are important development goals. Thus, such language constructs a result-focused discourse.

Considering Fairclough's three dimensions offers a useful perspective. At the text level, word choice and organisation focus on results achieved without context. Discursively, this project is a story of success that links efforts to macro goals. However, viewed through the lens of social practice, such a presentation risks being taken more as a statement of intent than as a rounded assessment.

Considering power dynamics, such proclamations normalise top-down communication over the representation of stakeholders' perspectives. By privileging macro-outputs, imbalances emerge where citizen realities receive less emphasis.

However, in the absence of substantive evidence or acknowledgement of differing views, questions could reasonably be raised about the relationships between stated activities and citizens' lived experiences. It was observed that there were 16 repost and 16 likes by X users. This suggests a likely disinterest and unpopular engagement, which could be explained by the sociocultural realities of Nigerian society. This is because within Nigerian society, policy efficacy relies on trust between leadership and communities. While intentions seem aligned with maintaining inclusive growth, dismissing limitations risks disengaging those who are most affected. Traditional wisdom holds that problems addressed together through respectful dialogue find solutions that honour diversity. In a similar regard, the progress of the NSIP initiative requires acknowledging complex, intersecting issues facing implementation which the tweet has apparently left out of the context.

Still on the existentiality of politicisation of NSIP and power dynamics in X discourse, another tweet responds to a tweet which is unavailable[32]. The response read:

32 The reason for the unavailability of the is based on 'Tweets with limited visibility' rules and policy.

> @APCNigeria Yes..but let the commencement of all the N-power,N-Sip etc especially in this month PDP wants to capitalize on them..real facts
> 6:01 AM · Dec 7, 2017

The tweet mentions the X handle "@APCNigeria"[33] and expresses a desire for the commencement of programmes such as N-power and N-Sip.

It acknowledges that the PDP[34] may attempt to capitalise on these programmes but emphasises the importance of presenting "real facts" - this also suggests the probable existences of fake facts. This shows evidence of the politicisation of the social investment programme.

At the discourse practice level, the text reflects a sense of anticipation and urgency, as the user wants the programmes to start, specifically in the current month. The mention of X handle "@APCNigeria" suggests that the user is addressing or referring to the All-Progressives Congress (APC), the ruling political party. The user expresses awareness of the potential political manipulation by the PDP and highlights the importance of relying on factual information.

Power relationships can be observed in this discourse. The mention of political parties suggests the presence of different power struggles and narratives in Nigerian politics. The user's concern about the PDP capitalising on the NSIP implies a power dynamic in which the ruling party (represented by "@APCNigeria") is wary of opposition parties (such as the PDP) using social welfare initiatives for their own political gain. This reflects the broader political landscape in Nigeria, where different parties compete for power and seek to influence public perception through initiatives, such as the NSIP, especially when such initiatives fail under the leadership of an opposition party. Again, the emphasis on the importance of presenting "real facts,"

[33] The ruling political party in Nigeria, All Progressive Congress (APC) official X account
[34] People's Democratic Party (PDP), the main opposition party in Nigeria.

indicating a desire for transparency and accountability in the political discourse. This emphasises the sociocultural context of Nigeria, where the dissemination of accurate information is crucial for navigating political power dynamics and election campaigns.

7.2.3 Amidst frustration and suffering

In a follow-up tweet:

> @Chairman_APC pmb give the order for the commencement of all the N-power,N-Sip,etc to take efforts especially in this month
>
> 6:05 AM · Dec 7, 2017

The user reinforces the message by explicitly mentioning the party chairperson to convey the same message. In another tweet:

> @AsoRock FG,pls order for the commencement of all the N-power, N-Sip, etc we are suffering too many excuses
>
> 6:13 AM · Dec 7, 2017

The user's text consists of a tweet directed at the official X account of the Nigerian government, specifically the Federal Government of Nigeria (@AsoRock), requesting the commencement of various government programmes, such as N-power and N-Sip (NSIP). The writer emphasises their frustration with the multitude of excuses they perceive from the government, indicating a sense of suffering. The main words and phrases in this text include "FG" (Federal Government), "pls" (please), "order," "commencement," "N-power," "N-Sip," "suffering," and "excuses."

The writer uses the term "FG" to address the Federal Government, politely urging them to "order" the commencement of government programmes such as N-power and N-Sip. The phrase "we are suffering' highlights the writer's discontent with the delay or lack of action from the government. The term "excuses" serves to convey the writer's perception that the

government is offering insufficient justifications for the delay or lack of implementation of these programmes.

The main themes in this text are the writer's frustration with the government's inaction and its impact on individuals. The writer conveys a sense of urgency and prioritises the commencement of government programmes, such as N-power and N-Sip, indicating that they view these programmes as crucial for addressing the existing challenges or suffering faced by the people.

From the perspective of Fairclough's CDA framework, this indent text is a direct tweet addressed to the Federal Government of Nigeria (@AsoRock) requesting the commencement of various government programmes. The writer expresses frustration with perceived excuses and emphasises their suffering. The text is short, direct, and straight to the point. The writer's use of social media to communicate with the government reflects a contemporary mode of engagement and highlights the accessibility and immediacy of such platforms. By directly addressing the government, the writer seeks accountability and prompts action. The use of abbreviations and informal language ("pls") indicates an informal register and, potentially, a sense of urgency and frustration. The power relations in this discourse can be understood in terms of the individual addressing a higher authority: the Federal Government of Nigeria. The writer's direct plea for action can be viewed as an attempt to hold the government accountable. The use of social media as a platform for communication allows the writer to access and engage with the government, potentially because traditional channels such as the Nigerian Newspaper does not give such dissenting voice an opportunity to be heard – content analysis study chapter results have shown that average Nigerians do not have easy access. In this case, power relations are influenced by technology and the possibilities it offers for direct and immediate communication with political leaders.

As discussed previously, X provides a platform for all users to contribute to ongoing discussions, including news and debates. This means that X allows for engagement as long as tweets adhere to the platform's usage policies. In this context, X has become an alternative voice for Nigerians who are unable to hear their voices through traditional news coverage.

In this light, a Nigerian X user responded to the February 2018 tweet by the Government of Nigeria, as follows:

> "Only elite were enjoying in this dark tanure."
>
> 11:45 AM · Feb 3, 2018

The text portrays a sense of exclusivity and privilege, with the elite being the only ones who enjoy a particular dark tenure. The usage of words like "only," "elite," and "enjoying" shows the likelihood of unequal distribution of opportunities and resources. This mirrors the existing social inequalities and power imbalances in the country. The text emphasises the need for critical discussions about social justice and the importance of promoting greater equity and inclusivity.

Similarly, Vanguard newspapers, one of the leading Nigerian newspapers, tweeted a news story:

> 6.8m Nigerians benefit from Buhari's NSIP - No fewer than 6.8 million Nigerians out of the projected 10 million have benefited from the National Social Investment Programme being implemented by the Buhari administration.
>
> 6:30 AM · Feb 7, 2018

The response from the Nigerian Xsphere disapproves of the credibility of the story that they have published. They wrote:

> They should release the prove of such not just saying it.
> 8:45 AM · Feb 7, 2018
>
> No, let's rephrase it

> 6.8m NORTHERNERS benefits from Buhari's NSIP ... States include Kano, Kaduna, katsina , and Nasarawa
>
> 6:34 AM · Feb 7, 2018

These responses provide subtle evidence of a lack of belief in the authenticity of news reports, as the user requests that the proof be released alongside such reports. The second tweet suggests that the reported beneficiaries were perceived to be primarily from the northern region. The user substitute 'Nigerians' in the news tweet for 'Northerners.' This implies a potential bias in resource allocation towards the northern region, possibly due to the president's northern background, leading to the allocation of more resources to that region.

Another user, like the former, sarcastically raised a rhetorical question about who the beneficiaries were.

> When was this so called projects implemented and who are the people that benefited from it? And whose people are we talking about here? Is it The Fulani Herdsmen or the Hausas?
>
> 12:44 PM · Feb 7, 2018

The use of words like "so-called" and "people," indicate scepticism and a sense of exclusion. The questions highlighted a sense of suspicion regarding the project's implementation and beneficiaries. The text suggests a perceived division among the ethnic groups in the country. Discourse practice implies a sense of exclusion and suspicion in certain groups. The sociocultural analysis reveals the power relations at play in discourse. In analysing power relations in the discourse, it can be observed that the questions express scepticism and doubt about the implementation of a project and the identity of its beneficiaries. The use of words like "so-called" dismisses the legitimacy of the project, questioning its true nature. The mention of Fulani herdsmen and Hausas in the questions highlights ethnic divisions and power struggles within the community. The questions are posed in a manner that assumes some positions of

power consciousness, suggesting a power dynamic where the questioner seeks to challenge and question the actions and beneficiaries of the project. This position of socio-political knowledge allows the questioner to shape the discourse and potentially influence how others perceive the project and its beneficiaries.

Also becoming popular is the allegation of fraudulent practice in the implementation of the social investment programmes. While the debate emerged in news and is beginning to gather momentum on social media, NTA News on X, in response, published a tweet that reads:

> National Social Investment Programmes Recording Successes, Not Hampered by Fraud
>
> 7:23 AM · Feb 17, 2018

This tweet uses positive language to highlight the achievements of the NSIP and dismiss claims of wrongdoing that might hinder its work. Phrases stressing "Successes" and dismissal of issues being "Hampered" utilise a defend, results-oriented style. Thus, such phrases emphasise successes and downplays any issues that may be slowing down progress. However, there are still concerns about inequalities from a social perspective. Focusing solely on positive outcomes without acknowledging the experiences of all stakeholders could undermine the legitimacy of the policies. The tweet confidently describes accomplishments but fails to address power imbalances and systemic problems. The tweet discourse has created a situation that requires respectful collaboration to address both successes and limitations on the ground. This tweet attracted 2 reposts, 3 likes and no comments from readers on tweeter. This development was followed by a tweet by National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) share a photo of the Special Adviser to the President on National Social Investment Programme, Mrs Maryam Uwais' visit to the Director General/Chief Executive Officer of NITDA, Dr Isa

Pantami in Abuja. Although the context/purpose of the visit was not contained in the tweet, barely a. month after, NITDA Nigeria tweeted:

> President @MBuhari led administration's Social Investment Programme received a new lease of life today as #NITDA, @NSIP_NG signed a MoU on Implementation of the National Social Investment Programme & provision of Technical Support for the proposed N- Power Innovation Hubs. https://t.co/T0gB327aKj
>
> …

The tweet above is a report of signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between NSIP_NG and NITDA for the National Social Investment Programme and N-Power Innovation Hubs. It emphasises the President Buhari government's engagement in the project and the enhanced energy or activation the Social Investment Programme has been given. The application of "received a new lease of life" expression indicates that Social Investment Programme is given new strength or new energy. The tweet serves as promotional message that provides information to the public about cooperation between NITDA and NSIP_NG and steps being taken by the administration of President Buhari to give Social Investment Programme a new lease of life. It places the MoU as a significant milestone and establishes the programme as a major element of the government's agenda.

The tweet reflects the socio-cultural context of Nigeria and its government's focus on social development and investment. The mention of President Buhari's leadership highlights his involvement and commitment to social initiatives. The prioritisation of the Social Investment Programme in the tweet suggests that it is considered a flagship programme of the government, addressing social and economic challenges in the country. The collaboration between NITDA and NSIP_NG indicates a recognition of the importance of technology and innovation in achieving the goals of the programme.

By September 2018, NSIP was beginning to get better engagements from the Nigeria as the campaigns towards the 2019 general elections draws near. In a tweet, a X user posted:

> @obalaide @IfeAdebayo @Vall_erie @toluogunlesi @Dolarpo @OfficialAPCNg @MrAbuSidiq @AO1379 @ProfOsinbajo As regards #npower and all these government #cct programs the 5k don't go to those that really need them @npower_ng @ProfOsinbajo …

The writer of the above tweet mentions various individuals and two organisations in the tweet, suggesting that they are connected to the topic being discussed or have some level of responsibility or influence over it. The user specifically mentions #npower, #cct, @npower_ng, and @ProfOsinbajo, which indicates that these government programmes and individuals are central to the discussion. In the news, content analysis evidence confirms the continuous role of Prof Osinbajo played NSIP implementation and shaping the NSIP narrative. The tweeter mention of @obalaide, @IfeAdebayo, @Vall_erie, @toluogunlesi, @Dolarpo, @OfficialAPCNg, @MrAbuSidiq, and @AO1379 may suggest that these individuals are either involved in or could potentially address the issue raised in the tweet. The main theme in this tweet is the concern that the 5k assistance provided by government programmes does not reach those who truly need it. Hence, the tweet criticises the allocation of government assistance provided by programmes like #npower and #cct, arguing that the 5k assistance does not reach those who truly need it. The user uses X to express their concern and raise awareness about what they perceive as a problem with the distribution of government assistance. By mentioning specific individuals and organisations, the user may be attempting to draw attention to the issue and potentially engage them in a conversation or action.

The above tweet reflects the socio-cultural context of Nigeria and its government programmes. From the tweet, it is understandable that the user's criticism indicates a lack of trust in the success and fairness of the NSIP programmes. As reflected, the prioritisation of certain

individuals and organisations (as intermediary) as mentioned in the tweet shows the perception of their power and influence within the government and its programmes. The tweet also highlights the role of social media in allowing individuals to voice their concerns and hold those in power accountable. This argument supports this thesis earlier argument that Nigeria sought alternative platforms to be heard since the mainstream media, in this case, the press has marginalised the voices of the oppressed. In essence, this reflects the evolving role of social media in empowering individuals and enabling them to participate in socio-political discussions.

7.2.4 Vote buying

In another tweet,

> ₦10,000 Collateral Free Loan... that mostly will never be repaid. Is this the best way to revive the economy or is this a vote buying strategy hidden under state aid scheme? Why Osun when there is election in just over 2 weeks? Is Govt aware what this looks like? Shameful
>
> 8:38 PM · Sep 3, 2018

The key words and phrases in this tweet include "₦10,000 Collateral Free Loan," "never be repaid," "revive the economy," "vote buying strategy," "state aid scheme," "Osun," "election," "Govt aware," and "shameful." These words and phrases are used to express scepticism and suspicion about the motives behind the loan scheme and its timing.

The words and phrases in the tweet are related to each other through the theme of distrust towards the government. The mention of the loan scheme being collateral-free and likely to never be repaid suggests a lack of faith in the effectiveness and sustainability of such initiatives. The tweet also questions whether the loan scheme is a genuine effort to revive the economy or

merely a strategy to sway voters ahead of the upcoming election in Osun. The mention of the government's awareness and the term "shameful" further underscore the sentiment of disappointment and suspicion.

The discourse practice in this tweet reflects the speaker's interpretation of the loan scheme as a possible vote buying strategy disguised as state aid. The choice of words and phrases, such as "shameful" and "Govt aware," suggests a critical attitude towards the government's actions.

The theme of distrust towards the government is dominant, as indicated by the repeated use of words like "vote buying strategy," "hidden under state aid scheme," and "shameful." The tweet also implies a concern for the overall impact on the economy and raises doubts about the effectiveness of the loan scheme.

Corroborating the same position, in response to several tweets raising questions on the aforementioned tweet, another user wrote:

> Pls let's call a spade by its real name A SPADE! This is VOTE BUYING 🤦🏾 There are 36 states of the federation, why go to Osun that ll be facing elections in a few weeks 🙄 it is very sad that this beer palour idea of economic growth is being used to hoodwink the poo
>
> 9:51 AM · Sep 5, 2018

In this tweet, the author expresses their frustration and criticism towards what they believe is vote buying in the state of Osun, Nigeria. They use the phrase "let's call a spade by its real name A SPADE!" to emphasise their point. The author questions why they chose to go to Osun State to hand over N10,000 to people few weeks to elections. The tweet expresses disappointment in the idea that economic growth is being used as a means to deceive the public in bid to get their vote.

By using the phrase "let's call a spade by its real name A SPADE!" they are urging others to acknowledge and confront the issue directly instead of pretending it does not exist. The author implies that the programme execution in Osun state few weeks to elections period is not a genuine means of poverty reduction, but rather a tactic used to deceive and manipulate people's votes. The tone of the tweet suggests frustration and disappointment with the state of politics in Osun.

The tweet reflects the socio-political context of Osun State, Nigeria, where elections are approaching. The writer of the tweet is critical of the practice of vote buying, which is a common issue in Nigerian politics. By focusing on Osun State, the author may be drawing attention to the specific dynamics at play in the state's political landscape. Showing power relations, the user highlights the unequal distribution of resources and attention, questioning why the focus is on Osun State and not on other states. The term "vote buying" suggests a manipulative practice that undermines the democratic process. The use of the phrase "hoodwink the poo" implies that the user believes certain individuals or groups are being deceived or misled. This suggests a critique of those in power, who may be using vote buying as a means to maintain or gain political control. The tweet reflects a concern for fair and transparent elections and an awareness of the potential abuse of power.

Under the same thread a X user argued:

> My point exactly. You can do the RIGHT thing in the WRONG way and at the WRONG time.
>
> 11:51 AM · Sep 5, 2018

The user's statement reflects an understanding of power dynamics within discourse practices. By recognizing the possibility of doing the right thing in the wrong way or at the wrong time, the user implies a consideration for the consequences of actions in relation to power structures.

This suggests an awareness of the potential for misuse or manipulation of power, as well as the importance of ethical conduct in decision-making. The statement can be seen as a critique of those in positions of power who may try to justify their actions solely based on their perceived moral correctness, neglecting the significance of method and timing.

Another user responded:

> Should the government stop whatever is necessary because of election
> 11:09 AM · Sep 5, 2018

While another replied:

> This is a mischievous question. Will the loan suddenly not work if given next month for example. Will the recipients not still be there. Why do it at campaign rally with APC T Shirt all over the place. This is a Nigerian project not a party political scheme to buy vote. Is it?
> 11:43 AM · Sep 5, 2018

The above tweet questions the timing and context of distributing a loan at a campaign rally. The user refers to the loan as a Nigerian project and criticises the presence of APC (political party) T-shirts at the rally. They ask if the loan would still be effective if given at a different time and argue against its use as a party-political scheme to buy votes.

Furthermore, the user's questions demonstrate a critical evaluation of the loan distribution, raising doubts about its transparency and non-partisan nature. The mention of APC T-shirts suggests a link between the loan and the political party, implying potential use for partisan gain.

Discourse practice in the tweet reveals an awareness of power relations in the discourse. The X user challenges the loan's distribution at a campaign rally, suggesting a potential misuse of power for political purposes. By emphasizing the loan as a Nigerian project, they position it as a resource that should benefit all Nigerians, rather than being used as a party's tool to secure votes. The tweet reflects a concern for fair governance and transparency, highlighting the user's awareness of power dynamics and their desire for equitable distribution of resources.

The argument further provides evidence for the prominent politicisation of the National Social Investment Programme. The presence of vote buying, as evident from content analysis of news reports, is also strongly reflected in discourses on Nigerian X.

In another tweet, a Nigeria wrote:

> U can't deceive us desperate @OfficialAPCNg, vote buying in a well advanced form. But sorry it's dead on arrival, we will take d money n kick out cluelessness come 2019.?
>
> 2:37 PM · Sep 6, 2018

The quoted tweet contains the following relevant words and phrases: "deceive," "desperate," "vote buying," "dead on arrival," "take the money," "kick out cluelessness," "2019." The deliberate use of these words by the user is used to covey scepticism towards the OfficialAPCNg (All Progressives Congress) party's attempts to deceive voters through vote buying. They assert that these tactics will not be successful and that they will use the money received to remove the current leadership in 2019. The discourse reflects power relations in the socio-political context. The tweeter positions themselves against the OfficialAPCNg party, highlighting their desperation and attempts to deceive voters. The tweeter also expresses user position by claiming the ability to resist these tactics and to bring about political change in the upcoming elections; showing strong conscientious of ruling party's political intent and how they are possibly taking advantage of the NSIP programme to their political advantage (particularly to harvest votes) during the electioneering season.

In the same vein, the Senate, the upper chamber of Nigeria's law-making body has criticised the implementation of the poverty alleviation programme while noting that the impact of the trillion of naira spent on the reducing poverty in country is not felt by Nigerian considering the magnitude of fund involved. This is captured in a tweet by Blueprint newspaper on X.

7.2.5 Of politicisation and swaying voters

Another example of politicisation and effort to sway voters is evident when the Buhari Media Organisation, an account set up to promote the president's political agenda since 2015, produced and published emotionally appealing promotional videos of selected beneficiaries of NSIP Condition Cash Transfer (CCT). Quoting the tweet that also contain the audio-visual read:

> Pres. Buhari's Cash Transfer Programme to the poorest of the poor is changing lives indeed. Here's Aminatu Julius' story, a native of Okene, Kogi State, who is a beneficiary. Over 400,000 families are benefiting from the Conditional Cash Transfer to the poorest Nigerians.
>
> 10:17 AM · Sep 15, 2018

Nigerians' response to the tweet were mostly negative, as some X users call it 'Fake,' 'Propraganda,' 'Scam of the 21st century', 'Capital lies' while some raised questions while passing a comment.

> Can we verify the statistics of those who got the cash, states, LGA, and the amount spend so far? I laugh 😂 😂 😂 because corruption is Dancing 🎶 in this administration
>
> 11:07 PM · Sep 15, 2018

Another commented:

> The poorest of the poor are still very hungry and poor. The Money has being shared among the looters. GEJ is better than you
>
> 9:21 PM · Oct 4, 2020

From the above sample tweets conversations, the exchange critically examines poverty reduction efforts. Textually, phrases like "can we verify...amount spend" question transparency while "money...looters" allege corruption. Interpretatively, it is a discourse of scepticism towards impact and probity emerges. Such deficit framing risks breeding further cynicism without acknowledgement of complexities involved.

Another mostly engaged by Nigerians is a tweet by Aisha Yesufu, a popular Nigerian Activist, which reads:

> About 2 months to elections the ruling party/govt is going around sharing money in the form of trader moni.
> Ask them
> * Where were they when your child was sick and you could not afford to pay hospital bills
> *Where were they when your children were sent home from school https://t.co/WTZCaBop82
>
> 8:29 AM · Nov 30, 2018

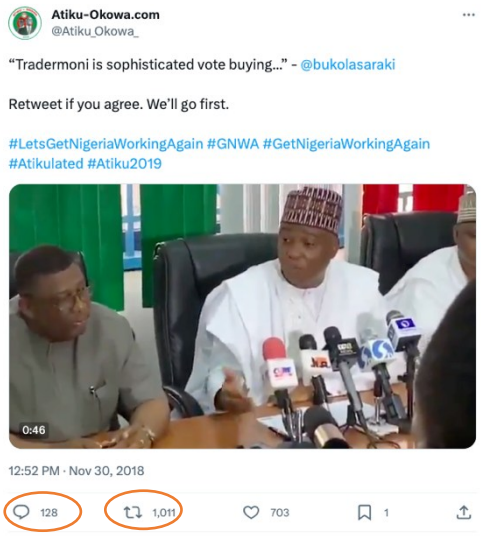
Aishat Yesufu's tweet criticises the ruling party/government for distributing money in the form of Tradermoni close to the elections. It questions the government's absence and lack of support during times of personal crisis, such as when a child is sick, and hospital bills cannot be paid or when children are sent home from school. The tweet reveals a power relation between the ruling party/government and the people. The government is depicted as using financial handouts as a tactic to gain support before the elections, implying a manipulative strategy to sway public opinion in their favour. The questions posed in the text highlight the government's failure to address societal issues and prioritise the needs of their constituents. This tweet reflects a critical perspective on the ruling party/government's actions. It suggests that the distribution of money in the form of Tradermoni is a mere show of benevolence, attempting to overshadow the government's neglect in addressing more substantial issues such as healthcare and education. This implies that the ruling party/government's priorities lie more in maintaining their power rather than genuinely addressing the needs and concerns of the people. This tweet can be argued as evidence of politicisation of NSIP because it portrays the ruling party/government's actions as manipulative tactics for gaining support during the elections. This finding aligns with the content analysis findings (see Negative Dominant Theme Analysis) presented in the previous chapter.

Supporting this line of argument, an opposition campaign organisation atiku.okowa.com tweeted a video where Bukola Saraki[35] of the People's Democratic Party (PDP):

> "Tradermoni is sophisticated vote buying..." - @bukolasaraki
>
> 12:52 PM · Nov 30, 2018

The phrase "Tradermoni is sophisticated vote buying" stands out as a concise but powerful statement that captures the essence of the discourse. The use of the word "sophisticated" implies that the act of vote buying has evolved into a more sophisticated and subtle form. The phrase also suggests that Tradermoni, a government programme providing financial assistance to small-scale traders, is being used strategically to influence voters. This statement reveals power relations within the Nigerian context.

Additionally, the discourse effectively employed X logic by leveraging the retweet functionality to gauge agreement with the assertion that Tradermoni is a vote buying strategy. Notably, the tweet prompted a substantial retweet engagement, surpassing a thousand instances of users echoing their agreement. Furthermore, the statement garnered significant approval, with 703 users expressing staunch support through the use of the like/love button, as observed in the accompanying screenshot.



By labelling Tradermoni as vote buying, it exposes a potential abuse of power by the government. It suggests that the ruling party may be using this programme to gain political support and manipulate the electoral process. This interpretation signposts the unequal power

[35] Bukola Saraki is a Prominent Lawmaker and the former President of the Senate of Nigeria.

dynamic between the government and the marginalised traders who are recipients of Tradermoni. The accusation that Tradermoni is a form of sophisticated vote buying reflects the socio-cultural context in which Nigerian elections take place. Nigeria has a history of electoral malpractice, including vote buying, which undermines the democratic process. This interpretation suggests that the practice of vote buying has evolved and become more covert, aligning with the sociocultural norms of Nigerian politics. It exposes the complex relationship between socio-cultural practices, power dynamics, and political strategies within Nigeria.

On the other hand, a user registered the voice of what could be the possible perspective of NSIP beneficiaries when he wrote:

> Only enemies of the common man will say trader money is a sophisticated vote buying
>
> 9:27 AM · Dec 2, 2018

This tweet represents uncommon voice on NSIP. The discourse reveals power relations as it presents those who oppose or criticise "trader money" as enemies of the common person. This discourse practice attempts to discredit any dissenting voices and positions those who question or challenge this form social interventions as being against the interests of the common people.

Taking advantage of the discourse and the approval of the people, the account added this under the thread:



But Nigerians on X disagrees with comments such as:

> "Hahahaha... I laugh in Chinese ooo. All what you know is the plan. Baba we are wiser than before now, you can't deceive us again like you did before. We are moving to the next level.

Another wrote:

> 😂 which stupid plan, plan to loot money abi 🤣🤣🤣🤣

From these sample of response, it shows that Nigerians shows a satisfactory level of awareness about the politicisation of the NSIP limitations and opposition adventure to taking advantage of this shortcoming for their partisan/political gain. The statement, 'Hahahaha... I laugh in Chinese ooo' is a clause to express ridicule/mockery - it is a common practise among Nigerians. The second quoted tweet above ascribes whatever what the account handler refer to as plan as 'stupid plan' which the user understand to be a 'plan to loot money' which was put further a rhetorical question.

Analysing power relations in the discourse, it can be observed that the author of the text assumes a position of authority or superiority over the plan. By employing sarcasm and mockery, the author seeks to delegitimise the plan and assert their own judgment. The use of emojis as a form of expression also allows the author to convey their emotional reaction and influence the interpretation of the text.

In terms of social-cultural analysis, the text reflects a casual and informal communication style exemplified by the inclusion of the Nigerian slang word "abi." The overall tone of the text appears to be sarcastic and mocking towards the mentioned plan.

> So absolutely spot on that these N-SIP programs won't help the poor. They are short term gratification aimed at populist agenda to win elections...these programs aren't designed to sustainably lift people out of poverty. But you can't stop someone being obtuse if he's paid to be.

The text criticises the N-SIP programmes, claiming they are only meant to win elections and do not actually help the poor. The speaker asserts their viewpoint confidently and dismisses any opposing opinions, positioning themselves as the authority in the discourse. This demonstrates power dynamics in the discourse, with the speaker having control over the narrative and dismissing any dissenting voices. The power dynamics found in this discourse shows how much Nigerians feels free to engage with daily issues, criticise the government on social media.

Sometime in mid-October 2018, a tweet was published claiming:

> the National Social Investment Programme of @MBuhari's administration is the biggest social investment in Africa. It is now a model for other countries. The beneficiaries of this social initiative might not have a voice on social media, but they will speak with their PVCs.

The text highlights the National Social Investment Programme as the largest social investment in Africa and presents it as a model for other countries. It suggests that the beneficiaries may not have a voice on social media, but they will exercise their power through voting with their PVCs. The discourse reinforces a power imbalance by focusing on the actions and achievements of those in power, specifically the administration of @MBuhari. The use of the phrase "they will speak with their PVCs" suggest how highly politicised NSIP is.

Responding in this regard to the above tweet, another user wonders:

> So was it mainly for PVC's or it is an obligation? Now you making me wonder

Furthermore, it is important to point out that the claim that "The beneficiaries of this social initiative might not have a voice on social media" does not appear to be completely true because the N-power component of the NSIP programme's beneficiaries are primarily graduate youth who are unemployed. Also, by statistics, X is main dominated by Nigerian youth. Hence, this statement is mostly untrue.

7.2.5.1 Petty cash for Petty Traders: Complete and perpetual failure

In another discourse that focus on the failure of the NSIP programme, a discussant argued that the ₦10,000 offered by the Tradermoni scheme is not feasible. The user made a case about the failure based on the inflation which make the amount given useless to traders. The use cited an example: "a Trader who sells rice could buy 1 full bag of rice with less than 10k in 2014 bt today, the 10k Tradermoni will be barely enough to buy ½ Bag". Responding to this post, a sampled tweet reads:

> For traders selling roasted plantain aka boli 10k is a lot. For mama Sikira selling vegetables in mile 12 10k is a lot. For the woman operating mama-put 10k is a lot etc. Tradersmoni is for PETTY traders!!

Below the thread, another X user said:

> The dream of every Petty Trader is to one day become a Large scale Trader. The mama-put[36] hopes to be a fast food one day but GMB have made such dream tall. A mama-put/ Vegetable/roasted Plantain seller in 2014 with 10k could aim to expand but today its barely enough for anything.

The text highlights the aspiration of petty traders to become large-scale traders, focusing specifically on mama-put businesses. It also mentions that the dream of expanding or upgrading has become increasingly difficult due to the influence of GMB (presumably referring to the current government). The text further suggests that the amount of capital that was sufficient in 2014 is no longer enough for anything. It reflects the struggles and limitations faced by small traders in their pursuit of economic advancement and highlights the role of those in power in shaping the opportunities available to them.

In another tweet,

[36] Nigerian English. A street vendor, typically a woman, selling cooked food at low prices from a handcart, stall or roadside restaurant:

> Petty cash for Petty Traders is making a lot of intellectuals to be Petty in their thinking. Elites are very wicked. Don't want the poor to survive at all

The above tweet employs negative language and repetition to convey a specific viewpoint. The phrase "Petty cash for Petty Traders" is repeated, which suggests an element of criticism or mockery towards the programme. The statement about intellectuals being made "Petty in their thinking" is a subjective interpretation and opinion. The use of "wicked" to describe the Nigerian elites suggests a negative evaluation of their actions. This also implies that the elites are intentionally preventing the poor from getting adequate support they need.

The text reflects a perspective that highlights power imbalances and social inequalities. The use of terms like "Petty" and the criticism towards intellectuals suggest a hierarchical understanding of power, where some individuals or groups are seen as superior or more important than others.

In another discourse, an NSIP discussant wrote:

> … 1984 -WAI (war against indiscipline) vs 2018-Tradermonie. For each policy Buhari wins, we d people loses. In Nigeria consequences of policies are never reviewed. What an ironie!!!

Analysing this particular tweet at individual words and phrase level, "1984 - WAI (war against indiscipline) vs 2018 - Tradermonie" are references to different policies implemented in Nigeria, with "WAI" being the acronym for a past policy called "War Against Indiscipline" and "Tradermonie" referring to a policy from 2016. "For each policy Buhari wins, we d people loses" expresses the opinion that under Buhari's leadership, the policies implemented have negative consequences for the people and "consequences of policies are never reviewed" phrase suggests that there is a lack of evaluation and assessment of the outcomes of policies in Nigeria. The above tweet text contrasts two policies from different time periods, implying a comparison between their effects. The phrase "For each policy Buhari wins, we d people loses" suggests a

cause-effect relationship between Buhari's policies and negative outcomes for the Nigeria people. The mention of consequences not being reviewed further emphasises the perceived lack of accountability and evaluation.

7.2.5.2 NSIP impact not felt despite huge funds budgeted - Wife of the President

Another wave of concerns was sparked when the wife of the President, Aishat Buhari, faulted the social investment programme on the grounds that the impact of the programme is not felt in the country, considering the huge amount budgeted for the intervention. Her comment about the programme sparked debate on X, as it is unusual for Nigeria's First Lady to make a critical comment about the government of her husband, Muhammadu Buhari, in this instance.

X data discourse shows that the First Lady's statement is biased toward her state, as her comment was within the context of Adamawa state, a northern state. In fact, popular belief is that the president was biased by allocating more funds to the northern states, so it may come as a surprise that, according to Aishat Buhari's claim, not all northern states felt the impact. Nigerian X users largely argued that her perceived failure of the programme in Adamawa state does not equal NSIP failure in the north, since Adamawa, which is the First Lady's state, is not the only northern state.

The NSIP establishment officially defended their efforts on the programme and criticised Mrs. Aishat Buhari's criticism. Buhari's aide, Maryam Uwais, a Senior Special Adviser to the President on Social Investment Programmes, has said that the Buhari government does not "brag" about its achievements.

On X, we have seen references to news content stating that 13,000 households in Adamawa benefited from CCT funds in 2018. Additionally, there is a screenshot of news quoting Aishat

Buhari's face-to-face interaction with women in Adamawa. During the interaction, she asked how many of the women in the hall had benefited from the NSIP CCT intervention, to which they responded negatively. They claimed to have received nothing in the past four years.

A tweet read:

> The Leadership newspaper in the report, published on July 23 said the first lady, Aisha Buhari's claims that the NSIP failed to justify its annual N500 billion budget for its four programmes "may not be far from the truth

In this text a few key words and phrases that stands out. Some of them include "Aisha Buhari's claims," "NSIP failed," "justify its annual ₦500 billion budgets," and "four programmes".

Using Fairclough's framework, the description of the text reveals a report published by the Leadership newspaper on July 23. The report discusses Aisha Buhari's claims that the NSIP failed to justify its annual ₦500 billion budgets for its four programmes. The text suggests that Aisha Buhari's claims may have some truth to them, indicating a lack of transparency and accountability within the NSIP. This raises questions about the effectiveness of its programmes.

The interpretation of the tweet text and discourse practice highlights the cause-effect relationship between Aisha Buhari's claims and the potential failure of the NSIP to justify its budget. The report presents the claims as credible and suggests that they reflect a larger issue. This interpretation indicates a critical stance towards the NSIP and raises concerns about its financial management and programme outcomes.

Analysing the power relations in the discourse, it can be seen that Aisha Buhari, as the first lady, holds a position of power and influence. By publicly questioning the NSIP's budget justification, she brings attention to the issue and potentially challenges the authority and

credibility of the NSIP implementation. However, the NSIP, as a government programme, also holds institutional power. The report by the Leadership newspaper acts as a platform to expose and critique the NSIP's alleged failure, indicating a power struggle between the first lady and the government institution. This discourse exposes the tensions and power dynamics within the political landscape, with Aisha Buhari using her position to question and potentially influence the actions of the NSIP.

Social-cultural explanation of the tweet above addresses the power relations of the discourse within the space that people hold within the political. Aisha Buhari, being a first lady, has a place of power and commands the voice of responsibility and critique. The NSIP, as an embodiment of the government ministry, is less credible and has its power curtailed through the criticism provided by Aisha Buhari. This highlights the power struggle between different actors in the political system, as Buhari uses her role to challenge and expose the flaws of the NSIP as seen. This discussion reflects the broader social and cultural environment of power and accountability in government institutions, emphasising the importance of transparency and legitimacy in government initiatives.

7.2.5.3 …fraud being investigated.

Subsequently, a news tweet emerged:

> After Aisha Buhari's complaints, EFCC investigating N-SIP 'fraud' in Borno, Yobe

The text is a news headline that reports on the investigation being conducted by the EFCC in response to complaints made by Aisha Buhari regarding alleged fraud in the N-SIP programme. We believe this headline is framed as a response to the Aishat Buhari's complaints but it clear that the original complaint was about NSIP performance in Adamawa but here, we see ongoing investigation in different northern states — Borno and Yobe. This does not, however, dismiss

the fact that the investigation is coming after the first lady's criticism of the programme performance. By and large, the tweet is a representation of a specific discourse practice where the news agency highlights the concerns raised by Aisha Buhari and the subsequent actions taken by the EFCC. The use of the phrase "After Aisha Buhari's complaints" suggests a cause-effect relationship, implying that the complaints led to the investigation. This framing presents Aisha Buhari as an influential figure whose voice prompts action.

The power relations in the discourse centre around the influence and agency of Aisha Buhari and the authority of the EFCC. Aisha Buhari's complaints are given weight and credibility, positioning her as a powerful voice that can affect change. The EFCC is presented as an investigative authority that acts based on the concerns raised by individuals in positions of influence. This suggests the existence of a power dynamic where influential figures have the ability to initiate investigations and prompt action by regulatory agencies like the EFCC. This is unlike what is obtainable despite the magnitude of voices with similitude complaint on Nigerian Xsphere. In a democracy, one would expect that voice of the people, not just the influential be taken seriously especially when there are in reasonable numbers.

In another development, the EFCC was rumoured on X to be investigating the Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo following alleged NSIP fraud in some states by Aishat Buhari and the conversation stirred. While there was a gathering momentum on the discourse, the EFCC in statement described the rumour as a "sensational attempt to project a false indictment and incite the Vice President against the person of the Chairman of the EFCC, is therefore condemnable" (The Nation, 2019). In a news tweet, the EFCC's press release affirms that:

> Magu Did not Allege Corruption in N-SIP - EFCC

Another tweet reads:

> EFCC debunks probing VP Osinbajo, N-SIP

The publication of narratives debunking investigation of the Vice President saw the end of the investigation embarked by EFCC on NSIP fraud. This was followed by the removal of The National Social Investment Office (NSIO) from the office of the vice president to a newly created Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development. According to the Presidency, the movement was to avoid further peddling of falsehood and conspiracy. It also noteworthy that prior to the movement of the office, the NSIO have also partnered with the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) prevent abuse in the implementation of the programme. This narrative was also captured from Nigerian Xsphere:

> @AjuriNgelale (SSA to President, Public Affairs) giving the goodwill message at the NSIO-ICPC partnership on preventing corruption in the implementation of the National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP) @ICPC_PE @NSIP_NG #NSIOPartnersICPC https://t.co/sDLCt4J8YL

The text serves as a public announcement of a partnership event and promotes the message of preventing corruption in the implementation of The National Social Investment Programme. By using the platform of X, @AjuriNgelale engages in a public discourse practice to convey the government's commitment to transparency and accountability. This discourse practice utilises X as a means of reaching a wider audience and influencing public perception. In the discourse, power relations are evident through the positioning of @AjuriNgelale as the SSA to the President on Public Affairs. This indicates a position of authority and influence within the government. Additionally, the partnership between NSIO and ICPC signifies collaboration and cooperation between two governmental entities with the power to enforce anti-corruption measures. The discourse also reflects the power of social media platforms like X, which can amplify messages and engage a broader audience. Generally, the discourse demonstrates the exercise of power and authority in promoting the government's commitment to prevent

corruption in the implementation of the National Social Investment Programmes. From a CDA perspective, this text suggests the exercise of power and authority by the government in promoting its commitment to prevent corruption.

From the analysis thus far, it is clear that there are two prevalent viewpoints regarding Nigeria's NSIP discourse on X. On one hand, members of the public have expressed criticism towards the government's management of the programme. On the other hand, the government has defended its handling of the NSIP, asserting that the programme has been successful and that steps are being taken to prevent corruption in its implementation.

7.3 Further findings: by other NSIP specific component programme

While the earlier section offers a CDA of data gathered using umbrella keywords[37], this section offers further analyses based on scrapped data using specific keywords[38] of components.

7.3.1 Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme

Conversation in from data gather using the GEEP keywords were mostly informative and positive. People are discussing and sharing information about the Government Enterprise and

[37] The umbrella keywords are: "National Social Investment Programmes" and/or "NSIP," "Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme" or/and "GEEP."

[38] The component specific keywords are:

Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme	GEEP
Tradermoni	"Tradermoni" and/or "trader-moni" and/or "tradermoney" and/or "trader money"
Marketmoni	"MarketMoni" and/or "market-moni" and/or "marketmoney" and/or "market money"
Farmermoni	"FarmerMoni" and/or "farmer-moni" and/or "farmermoney" and/or "farmer money"
N-power	"N-power"
Home-Grown School Feeding Programme	"Home-Grown School Feeding Programme" or/and "HGSF"
Conditional Cash Transfer	"Conditional Cash Transfer" or/and "CCT"

Empowerment Programme (GEEP) and its various initiatives. Those engaged in the conversation highlighted the benefits and impact of the programme, such as interest-free loans, poverty reduction, and increased school enrolment. The tone is generally supportive and optimistic, with individuals expressing agreement and asking for thoughts on the programme.

Based on this these CDA methods, this thesis explores the underlying processes and practices surrounding the text. The discourse in the tweets emphasises the government's role in designing and implementing the GEEP programme. The tweets highlight the positive impact of the programme, such as poverty reduction, increased school enrolment, and support for vulnerable individuals and communities. The discourse reinforces the government's authority and positions the government as a key-actor in addressing socio-economic challenges.

From the conversations, it is deducible that government holds a position of power as the primary authority responsible for designing, implementing, and allocating resources for the programme. An example of a typical conversation that shows power relations is:

> Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) started in May 2016 in which Tradermoni, Marketmoni and farmermoni are all tools in empowering Nigerians and the GEEP programme has not stopped, fear Allah and remember when you'll meet him.

The above quoted tweet illustrates power dynamics by using religious authority to assert control and in still fear. The mention of Allah suggests that those who question or oppose the continuation of the programme should be cautious and accountable to a higher power. It implies that challenging the programme or those in power goes against religious principles, thus reinforcing the authority and dominance of the government in implementing and sustaining GEEP. Also, the use of religious authority in this context reinforces the power dynamics at play, where the government employs religious rhetoric to assert dominance, discourage opposition,

and maintain control over its programmes. It highlights how religious authority can be utilised as a tool to reinforce and legitimise power structures.

This power enables the government to control the distribution of benefits and resources, such as interest-free loans and social interventions, to specific individuals and communities. Furthermore, the government's collaboration with state governors and other institutions demonstrates the Nigerian Federal Governments ability to mobilise support and extend its reach across different regions. This network of alliances strengthens the government's power and influence in implementing the GEEP component of NSIP. It is important to acknowledge that power relations are complex and multifaceted. While the framework used here highlights the government's role and authority in the GEEP programme, it is crucial to consider the perspectives and experiences of the beneficiaries and other stakeholders to gain a comprehensive understanding of power dynamics.

In conclusion, the power relation in the text reveals the government's authority in shaping the discourse, controlling resource allocation, and creating partnerships for the implementation of the GEEP programme.

7.3.2 Marketmoni

Conversation participants express gratitude to MarketMoni. People are typically acknowledging these programmes as chances designed for the poor and middle class, and the conversation is in a positive tone. They are viewed as initiatives aimed at lifting people out of poverty and promoting entrepreneurship.

> … I no dey fight you o. I responded with my views. And I stated clearly that I understand your point, that is because I believe it is valid. Tradermoni and Marketmoni are new policies, may be good to have someone run an independent impact analysis which I suggested to you.

The tone in these discussions is one of enthusiasm and support for the government's efforts to empower individuals. For example, one tweet states,

> "Under MarketMoni, ₦15.2bn interest-free loan ranging from N50,000 to N350,000 has been disbursed to over 400,000 market traders and artisans across the 36 states of the federation. #SWA"

There are discussions about the impact and effectiveness of MarketMoni and other GEEP programmes. Some participants express curiosity about the data related to the programme, such as the gender distribution of beneficiaries and default rates. They seem interested in understanding the outcomes and effectiveness of MarketMoni. For instance, one tweet asks,

> ""@MarketMoni has assisted over 350,000 persons..." A huge dataset that if properly mined would reveal so many insights! How many males vs females were recipients? Can recipient data be granulated to the type of goods sold? How many defaulted? etc"

There are mentions of MarketMoni and TraderMoni being suspended after elections:

> …Tell me brother, where is their Marketmoni or Tradermoni now they suspended it after elections as gone and dusted God is watching all of them and the man called himself Pastor and prof in Law, because all this is part of vote buying and corruption, fighting corruption in my foot.

Some express strong scepticism and disappointment, seeing the suspension as political. They doubt government poverty alleviation efforts like Marketmoni and Tradermoni, questioning their whereabouts post-elections. A user, including a pastor and law professor, implies these initiatives were for vote buying and corruption, doubting the government's anti-corruption stance. The phrase "fighting corruption in my foot" underscores disbelief in government claims. The power relationship in the text lies in the perceived authority or influence of the government and its initiatives, such as Marketmoni and Tradermoni, contrasted with the scepticism and criticism expressed by the user. The government is portrayed as having the power to implement poverty alleviation programmes and combat corruption, but the user challenges this authority,

implying misuse of power for political gains. The tone in this discourse is one of frustration and suspicion, as people question the continuity and sustainability of the programme.

In essence, X discussions about MarketMoni primarily focus on government empowerment, impact, suspension concerns, government official's misuse of public fund and loan accessibility issues. This study notes varying tones from supportive to curious or concerned.

7.3.3 Farmermoni

There are several dominant points of discussion regarding from Farmersmoni datasets. The tweets focus cut across Tradermoni, Farmermoni, and Marketmoni. These government initiatives aimed at providing financial support to individuals have sparked various reactions and opinions among X users.

One prevalent point of discussion is scepticism and frustration regarding the effectiveness and impact of these programmes. Some users expressed doubts about the actual benefits they provide, questioning whether the small amounts of money given through Tradermoni and Farmermoni can truly alleviate poverty or improve the economy.

> "Honest Questions: They said tradermoni, farmermoni etc. Is it the 30k they are giving people that can't buy one bag of rice that they will use to pull people out of poverty?"
>
> @PeterROCK_ Tradermoni. Farmermoni. Marketmoni. Na wetin go grow una economy, reduce inflation and increase GDP in 10 years be that.
>
> I carefully read the speech/address of the President, and I think the speech writers have done a disservice to him by subtly ignoring the facts that resonate with the reality. Rather, they were scoring cheap political points with Tradermoni, Farmermoni etc.

The text is a tweet by user @PeterROCK_, questioning the effectiveness of government initiatives such as Tradermoni and Farmermoni in alleviating poverty. The user highlights the

limited amount of money given and questions whether it can truly make a significant impact. They also criticise the speech writers for focusing on these initiatives and scoring political points instead of addressing the actual issues that resonate with reality. The user's tweet reflects a critical stance towards the government's approach to poverty alleviation. They argue that the small amount of money provided through programmes like Tradermoni and Farmermoni is insufficient to pull people out of poverty. The user suggests that the speech writers are intentionally diverting attention from the underlying issues by emphasizing these initiatives, which they perceive as mere political tactics. This tweet reveals a power dynamic in which the government is seen as having the ability to address poverty through its initiatives. However, the user questions the effectiveness of these initiatives and suggests that they are used for political gain rather than genuine poverty alleviation. This implies a power relationship in which the government holds the power to implement policies, but the user challenges their motives and effectiveness, indicating a potential power struggle or scepticism towards the government's actions.

There is a sentiment that these initiatives are merely symbolic gestures or political tactics.

> "FarmerMoni, MarketMoni,TradeMoni...for decades Nigeria's commonwealth has subsidized the rich. Now it is targeting the poor. Political or not, they deserve a share of the cake too! My simplistic opinion..." - Sola Salako

Another point of discussion revolves around the timing and relevance of mentioning Tradermoni, Farmermoni, and Marketmoni in official speeches or addresses. Users question why these initiatives are brought up in contexts unrelated to poverty alleviation or economic development, perceiving it as a diversion from more pressing issues.

> It just crossed my mind again that the president actually talked about Tradermoni, Farmermoni ati gbogbo e while not saying a word about actual human beings who were killed. Ah, o ga gaan o.

This has led to criticisms of the government for not prioritising the concerns and needs of the people.

> Sir, the broadcast meant for u, ur family n the elite. That's not for Nigerians. Sir, u don't have us in mind, is everybody on Trademoni? Farmermoni? n the rest.... Countries are helping their citizens by providing food stuff n money but urs nah stories

There are references to the distribution and accessibility of these programmes. Some user express curiosity about how to apply for Farmersmoni loans or seek further information regarding the initiatives. On the other hand, some individuals claim to have received the funds and encourage others who have also benefited to share their experiences.

Overall, data scrapped using Farmersmoni keywords suggests the dominant points of discussion surrounding Tradermoni, Farmermoni, and Marketmoni in this X conversation include scepticism about their effectiveness, criticism of their timing and relevance, and inquiries about accessing or applying for these initiatives. These discussions shed light on the diverse opinions and concerns regarding the government's financial support programmes.

7.3.4 Npower

There are expressions of concerns about programme continuity and the need for intervention from higher authorities, scepticism and allegations of embezzlement related to the Npower programme. The tweets below are a sample from tweets that indicate discontent and dissatisfaction with Nigeria's N-Power programme.

> @npower_ng @NGRSenate @NGRPresident @atiku @officialABAT Get out of here with your mundane comments everytime and pay us our stipends.

> @npower_ng @AminaMuhammad8 @MBuhari @NigeriaGov @GarShehu @Sadiya_farouq Whoever is behind this nonsensical messages should relay to the higher authority to talk to us about the possible continuity of this program
>
> … obviously this is a generic answer because right from 1999 till date we have always had these kind of projects been executed even at cheaper prices and in a better economy. N-Power, TraderMonie and the rest like Covid-19 were all conduit pipes used to embezzle public...
>
> "So food is available and affordable now, healthcare is accessible and affordable now? #5000 and #10000 loans to market women?... how many people does N-Power pay?

The above X users criticise the programme for not paying stipends, calls the messages from the programme "nonsensical," and questions the effectiveness of projects like N-Power and Tradermoni. They also question the impact of N-Power payments on daily survival and feeding. The text reflects a discourse practice of voicing grievances and demanding accountability. The users use strong language to express discontent and accuses the programme of embezzlement. They also challenge the effectiveness of government initiatives in addressing socio-economic issues. This discourse practice highlights a power dynamic where the author, as a citizen, feels marginalised and demands answers from the higher authority. The dissatisfaction expressed in the text reflects broader social and economic issues in Nigeria. The author's frustration with the N-Power programme suggests a lack of trust in government initiatives and questions their impact on poverty alleviation. The unequal distribution of power becomes evident as citizens demand transparency and accountability from those in authority. This emphasises the power dynamics between the government and the citizens, where the latter seeks to hold the former accountable for their actions and policies.

7.3.5 Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) and Home-Grown School Feeding Programme

Scrapped X conversations discussing the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme in Nigeria highlight other government initiatives such as N-Power, Trader Moni, Survival Fund, Artisan Grant, and the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme. These programmes aim to alleviate poverty and provide financial support to vulnerable individuals. The discourse also mention collaborations with World Food Programme (WFP) to enhance the implementation of the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme. The language used in the X discourse were mostly informal and conversational which is typical of X discussions.

The discourse practices in these texts largely depicts praise and appreciation of government's efforts in implementing the Conditional Cash Transfer programme. Further analysis of these texts reveals the significance of government intervention through the Conditional Cash Transfer programmes in addressing poverty and improving the lives of vulnerable individuals in Nigeria. The discussions highlight the positive social impact of these programmes, such as job creation for cooks, financial support for small-scale farmers, and empowerment of beneficiaries. For example, in the below excerpt the

> …personally I know the beneficiaries of Npower, market moni i.e the loan, I also know many cooks who are engaged for HGSF and I heard about beneficiaries of CCT in my village.

The language used in these texts suggests the presence of a discourse community that supports and appreciates these government CCT initiative.

Power dynamics can be observed in the relationship between the government and the beneficiaries of the Conditional Cash Transfer programmes. An example that illustrates the power dynamics between the government and the beneficiaries of the Conditional Cash

Transfer programmes in Nigeria can be seen in the discussions praising the government's initiatives and their impact on the lives of the beneficiaries.

> National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme, N-Power, Government Enterprise & Empowerment Programme (GEEP)i.e Trader Moni & Conditional Cash Transfer. All conceptualised & implemented under @ProfOsinbajo's direct supervision. Millions impacted. Zero reported being 'Christenised.'

The language used in these CCT X discourse reflects a power relationship where the government is positioned as the provider of assistance and support. The beneficiaries, in turn, rely on the government for financial aid and opportunities.

7.4 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter presented a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the debate surrounding Nigeria's NSIP on X. The analysis focussed on tweets demonstrating significant public engagement (likes, retweets, comments, critiques), selected to capture the most resonant aspects of the online conversation, as elaborated in the methodology. The findings clearly indicate a landscape marked by divergent viewpoints and notable power dynamics.

The Twitter discourse analysed revealed strong public criticism regarding the NSIP's implementation. Some of the common themes revolved around allegations of fraudulent activities, perceived shortcomings in specific programme areas, and fundamental questions about the programme's objectives and actual effectiveness. In contrast, governmental discourse typically sought to legitimise the NSIP by emphasising its successes, broad reach, and commitment to anti-corruption. Amidst the prevailing criticism, the analysis did identify nuanced discussions, such as mixed positive and negative feedback regarding specific components like the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP).

Central to the debate, as shown by the X analysis, were persistent concerns about transparency and accountability. A perceived absence of clear, accessible information on programme operations, beneficiary selection criteria, and fund disbursement raised significant public scepticism and doubt regarding the NSIP's integrity and impact. These dynamics were further influenced by powerful actors; for instance, critical remarks by First Lady Aisha Buhari concerning the programme's financial explanations significantly amplified public concerns and challenged the official government narrative.

In summary, the CDA of Twitter conversations demonstrates that the NSIP debate in Nigeria is complex, contested, and shaped by competing narratives and power imbalances. The key findings of this chapter showed the dominance of public discourse focus on transparency, accountability, and corruption concerns, contrasting sharply with the government's narrative of achievement. The analysis specifically highlighted how information gaps fuelled public distrust, how individual programmes like GEEP elicited varied responses, and how interventions by prominent figures could sway public opinion. Ultimately, addressing the fundamental issues of transparency and accountability, whilst actively incorporating the diverse perspectives of all involved parties, is presented as vital for enhancing the NSIP's legitimacy and achieving its intended success.

CHAPTER EIGHT

STUDY 3

8 In-depth Interview with Nigerian Journalists

This study chapter focuses on exploring the factors that influenced the way the press reported on The NSIP in Nigeria. To gain insights into this aspect of the study, selected journalists from the content-analysed newspapers (those frequently reporting on the NSIP or its component programmes) were privately interviewed. These journalists were initially identified from the NSIP news story by-lines during the content analysis stage. Subsequently, the journalists with the highest count of stories for each content-analysed newspaper were shortlisted for recruitment to participate in this in-depth interview.

The objective of the study chapter was to understand the motivations, decision-making processes, methods of gaining understanding, information verification, ensuring balance and unbiased reporting, and the key factors influencing the reporting of these selected journalists. Ideally, these objectives align with the expectations placed on Nigerian journalists by both the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which emphasises the press's role in upholding government accountability, and the Nigeria Union of Journalism (NUJ) Code of Ethics, which stresses the importance of accuracy, fairness, and objectivity in reporting. However, the research also seeks to explore the realities of journalistic practice in Nigeria, acknowledging that the day-to-day experiences of journalists may involve navigating various constraints and challenges that can affect their ability to consistently adhere to these ideals. Additionally, this study inquired about their coverage frequency, story formats used, and the utilisation of NSIP policy documents as sources of information for their reporting.

The first research question aimed to investigate the factors that influenced the press' reporting on the NSIP. The selected journalists were asked about their motivations for reporting on the NSIP and how they decided which aspects of the programme to report on. They were also questioned about the criteria they used when making these decisions. Furthermore, the journalists were asked about the methods they employed to gain an understanding of the NSIP before reporting on it. They also discussed how they verified the accuracy of the NSIP information they reported on and how they ensured that their reports were balanced and unbiased. The journalists were also invited to share their perspectives on the key factors that influenced the way the press reported the NSIP. Additionally, they were asked about the frequency of their coverage of NSIP programmes, the types of story formats they used when reporting on NSIP, and the frequency of their news analysis of NSIP programmes. The journalists were also questioned about the motivations behind their NSIP news analysis.

The second research question focused on examining how Nigerian journalists utilised NSIP policy documents as sources of information for their reporting. The selected journalists were asked whether they had access to the NSIP policy document, and if not, the reasons for the lack of access. For those who had access, the challenges they experienced in using NSIP policy documents as sources of information were explored. The journalists shared how they incorporated NSIP policy documents into their news reports and the strategies they employed to ensure the accuracy of the information obtained from these documents. They also discussed the type of information they found most useful from NSIP policy documents and how these documents assisted them in their reporting. Finally, the journalists provided tips for other journalists on effectively using NSIP policy documents as sources of information. Interview transcripts were analysed using the NVivo software and the identified themes are discussed under this chapter's subheadings.

Table 8—1: Summary details of Journalist interviewed.

S/No	*Respondent's Unique Identifier*	*Newspaper Unique Identifier*[39]	*Interview Dates*	*Interview Durations (MM: SS)*	*Experience in Journalism (Years)*
1.	R01	NA	22/11/2023	35:24	6 years
2.	R02	NA	22/11/2023	53:25	8 years
3.	R03	NA	27/01/2024	49:14	12 years
4.	R04	NA	29/01/2024	50:10	7 years
5.	R05	NA	30/01/2024	34:08	10 years
6.	R06	NA	01/02/2024	62:29	20 years
7.	R07	NA	08/02/2024	59:55	5 years
8.	R08	NA	19/02/2024	58:15	8 years

8.1 Factors Influencing Reporting on the NSIP

Reporting on the NSIP is subject to a few influential factors, as revealed through in-depth interviews with Nigerian journalists who have reported these Programmes. These interviews provide valuable insights based on the first-hand experiences and perspectives of reporters, shedding light on the various elements that shape the reporting on NSIP. From aspects to report and balancing bias to access to information, individual journalists' knowledge and expertise, news sources, public opinion, and the constraints of time and resources, these factors significantly influence the narrative and public perception of the NSIP. Analysing these factors helps develop a comprehensive understanding of how the NSIP is covered in the media. However, to strategically understand the qualitative data set analysed using the NVivo software, the codes were organised by cluster and categorised into four identified themes. The following table shows the summary:

Table 8.1—1: Organised Clusters of Codes on Factors Influencing Reporting on the NSIP, Categorised and Grouped into Themes

Cluster 1 **Theme 1: Influences on NSIP Reports**	Cluster 2 **Theme 2: Challenges Faced by Journalists**	Cluster 3 **Theme 3: Reporting Process and Considerations**	Cluster 4 **Theme 4: Impact and Reactions**
• Key influence (5) • Politics (5) ○ Party politics (4) • Current Trends (2)	• Financial challenges faced by journalists (5) • Commercialisation (3) • Time luxury (3)	• Aspect to report (30) ○ Competing interest (1) • Verification of Information (19)	• Public reactions (3) • Investigative report (2) • Grants as major driver of investigations (1)

[39] Unique identifier has been removed and assigned the value of NA (Not Applicable) to ensure confidentiality.

• News makers influence (1) • Political timings (1) • Question of Priority (1)	• Beat restriction (2) • Brown Envelope Syndrome (1) • Overwhelming responsibility (1) • Wasted Efforts (1)	○ Factchecking (1) • Balancing bias (15) • Churnalism (9) • Press briefing (7) • News sources (6) • Duty to report (6) • Method (5) • Press statement (3) • Editor's pressure (3) • Cut down of allocated page(s) (2) ○ Causes of cut-down (1) • Editorial Meeting (2) • Motivation (2) • Memorandum (1)	• Media Responsibility (1)

8.1.1 Influences on NSIP Reports

A substantial number of factors influenced how The NSIP were reported across Nigerian newspapers. Some of these factors, as identified from in-depth interviews with Nigerian journalists who have reported on the NSIP for the newspapers analysed in this thesis, are discussed in this section under the following headings.

8.1.1.1 Key influence

"Poverty, corruption. It wasn't reflecting reality," one of the journalists noted. The pronoun in the quoted refers to the NSIP. When I inquired further about the conclusion the journalist responded thus:

> they were not factual, the government officials were stealing the money, I don't want to say hoarding it, as I said earlier it wasn't reflecting reality so that prompted us to dig, and we dug deeper.

In another interview, the journalist stated that the purpose of the programme was being played out differently than what it was originally intended to achieve. In the journalist's own words:

> it is because of the repressive nature of poverty in the country that that programme was designed but unfortunately the programme became a goldmine for some corrupt government official.

The journalist cited an example of how the school feeding programme faced corruption issues, including the provision of substandard meals or embezzlement of funds, which garnered significant attention in the press report. They stated:

> school feeding that it's supposed to feed primary school children across the country because the idea is that when you feed children in primary school, they not only get a better nutrition they are also encouraged to go to school, to be regular in class, so government wanted to achieve that but in implementation it was fault with corruption. In many cases food was not provided for the pupil and when food us even provided, it was substandard so government officials found that as a way to syphon from the money so that is that for the school feeding programme then the second aspect that is even more technical is a system of direct cash transfer to Nigerians.

Referring to a recent development, the journalist noted how corruption has persisted:

> the corruption has continued, we have an unauthorised transfer of about 37 billion Naira from government account to a private account, so what was designed to alleviate poverty have turned out to be a major cause of poverty in the country. This is very concerning to journalists such as me.

Another journalist said perspective often influence how NSIP is reported. The below excerpt shows that a:

> major influence would be individual perspective, the way I see things is different from the way every other man sees it. … The way I carve my story definitely may be different…. when you bring a piece of information, there's a way I do my analysis and I may be seeing what my partner is not seeing… that particular thing you're seeing that nobody is seeing is what makes the news, what makes a news story is not what makes news to somebody.

The above excerpt also reaffirms the assumption of framing theory. The 'journalist went further to approved that:

> media ownership or the editors will decide what finally goes into the public. I've heard quite a number of experiences writing a piece and somebody on the table, perhaps the sub editor, news editor or the editor himself finally say no this should not go, maybe it conflicts with the interest of the whosoever is possible then maybe government.

Also offering a scenario that affirm interference of political class in news production process, the journalist said:

> I wrote the report, and I reached out to the woman. She did not pick up until the secretary of the commission because I didn't have the number of the woman and it's late in the night. The man said I'll call you back… so when I dropped the call, I obtained the phone numbers of the woman and I know reached out to her, madam there's a petition before me alleging so, so are you aware, how true is this, what will be your reaction this issue, she said my brother, I'm not aware, I'm hearing from you for the first time. Nobody briefed me, there's not a copy of the petition before me. I informed her it was a petition sent by 23 commissioners in the presidency alleging that you breached the extant laws and the board resolution on so so issue. I asked her is there… should I run with it, should I put it there, she said very well then, I let go. So, I did my report, few seconds after the secretary called and said my brother, I'm hearing for the first time too, please see the chairman on Monday. Because you may not understand the import of what you are saying per adventure you can check the petition and take it to her, that was sincerely what transpired. Let me reach out to the woman and narrate what the secretary said to me, I feed her back that should I still go ahead with the report or I should come on Monday as advised by her secretary, do you know what she told me, she said who told you that I don't know anything about it but we use to give your organisation adverts. I said madam adverts and this report are two separate things. I'm not talking about the adverts you're giving, I'm talking about the report, you secretary said so… so, she flared up and said I don't know anything about it. Okay sorry about it, I dropped the phone, so I think she cut the phone on the other side, do you believe me the next call I received was from the man that sent the petition telling me that it is true, so it is true that you're pressurizing, I said pressurising who?

The statements from the journalists in this thesis reveal deep concerns about corruption within the NSIP and how it has led to the exacerbation of poverty in Nigeria. These interviews shed light on the mismanagement of funds intended for poverty alleviation programmes and emphasise the crucial role of the media in highlighting such issues. Despite differing perspectives and potential political interference, journalists remain dedicated to uncovering the truth and holding officials accountable. The challenges highlighted in these interviews underscore the importance of transparency and ethical governance in addressing systemic issues of corruption and poverty in Nigeria.

8.1.1.2 Politics and politicisation of NSIP news

In this thesis systematic review of literature, politicisation is one of the four distinct challenges identified by Oyewo (2021). This also emerged from interview transcripts of journalists. These are reflected in the below excerpts:

> "That (politicisation) is the major problem we have; it is not separated from politics."

> "…you know the Nigeria situation, when we talk about strong institutions if we have strong institutions and this thing is not run like it is running in the UK where you know all those kinds of… thing, you know you're jobless, government is wondering what you're doing, it is not doing it because you're a member of Labour Party. But it is your right as a Nigerian. That's the problem, we don't**. Some of these things are not given to people based on their rights as Nigerians.**
> **That** (referring to politicisation) **is the major problem we have; it is not separated from politics."**

> "I remember even there were photographs of some remote places where they packed most of those items like rice and they were getting bad and **they never got to anybody so probably people suggested then that maybe politicians were keeping then for maybe the election.** So, it generated a lot of public outcries.

In another example of communication inconsistency, a government official contradicted themselves due to the political timing of a statement by the now suspended Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Betta Edu, regarding the upcoming suspension of the Npower programme, which had been withheld from the public.

> "…she was caught off guard. **Maybe she was getting reaction from some of her political friends or so**. Maybe she wouldn't have said it the way she said it or she would have not disclosed it, **it would have been something from the presidency rather than her being the one to announce it.** At the end of the day, it was announced and then she owned up.

8.1.1.2.1 Party politics

There were also discussions about the influence of party politics. In the excerpt below, a journalist explains how political parties sometimes sabotage other parties' programmes, using an unrelated instance to illustrate political dynamics:

> one party using information against the other person, it could be a candidate who feels like… because a lot happen for instance, you find a governor doing a road and then he leaves, some people just come and pour dirt on it overnight.
>
> … sometimes you just feel that you're contesting with a lot of factors, a lot of enemies, fighters, people are fighting among themselves using information so it can be a big issue.

In another instance, a journalist shared how political parties could take advantage of the poverty alleviation scheme to promote their political interests and aspirations.

> Imagine I'm living in an area, I know that their people don't believe in this programme in the first place, some are not even aware that this programme even exists. I come as a political, I say gentlemen, government has a 100 million to give all of you as part of the Social Investment Programme, mobilize and send his men and mobilize house by house. Even if you're not aware and you key into this programme. Now the first thing, you now see this man as a benefactor, this thing was existing and I don't know do you understand, by the time at the end of it we have like 900 people coming in behind him to register in this programme. The first thing they see, they see you as a saviour, they might not even care that this is a government programme but just because he feels like look, I've been able to drive more people so the beginning there is faulty because the man is now seen as a saviour.

Another journalist, speaking from their day-to-day experiences, pointed out that decisions made by the government or political party may not always reflect the desires or needs of the people.

> If I remember very well some of the story suggested that for so many reasons so the political party or government in power decided to do what they decided to do, it was not like, how do I put it, it was not democratised in terms of this is what the people want or this is what the whole society want or this is how the whole society want the help to come or the social welfare whatever to come and also you remember that time it was like there was no really a nationwide spread it was alleged so and things like that so just maybe

It suggests that these decisions may not have been reached democratically or with widespread support. Additionally, there may have been allegations of lack of transparency or equal distribution of resources. The suggests that there are issues of accountability and fairness in the decision-making process.

In conclusion, the IDI conversations and literature review presented shed light on the complex and often manipulative nature of party politics. From sabotage to exploiting poverty alleviation schemes for political gain, it is evident that personal interests and power dynamics greatly influence the decisions made by government officials and political parties. Building on Oyewo (2021) identification of politicisation as a key challenge, the interviews with journalists further establish this theme. The case of Betta Edu, the suspended Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, serves as a striking example of how political considerations can lead to communication inconsistencies and public backlash. This underscores the thesis' content analysis findings that politicisation is a prevalent issue, reflecting the intricate intertwining of politics and governance in Nigeria. This confirmed the arguments of Agbaje (1990) that there is a strong link between press and politics as well as Oyewo (2021) findings on the politicisation of the National Social Investment Programmes in Nigeria.

8.1.1.3 Current Trends (2)

According to a journalist, the reporting on the National Social Investment Program (NSIP) is undeniably influenced by current trends in the news agenda and based on the current focus of the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development. This finding is supported by agenda-setting theory (McComb & Shaw, 1972) and the concept of source cues in journalism (Bennett, 1990). Agreeing with Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972) on their foundational work on agenda-setting, Cohen (2015), in his own words,

stated that the media is "stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (Cohen, 2015, p. 13; McComb & Shaw, 1972, p. 177). This highlights how the prominence given to certain issues by the media, often driven by current trends, shapes public perception of their importance.

> … sometimes you carry out stories when you find they're trending
> Look at trending issues because you also want to be on top if the game so those are drivers in the things you do as a journalist.

The rationale behind this approach is the aspiration to maintain a competitive edge and stay ahead in the field of journalism. As a result, it becomes crucial for journalists to closely monitor and address the prevailing issues that captivate the public's attention.

8.1.1.4 News makers influence

At times, journalists attend events that turn out to be unremarkable or lacking in newsworthy content. This can create a dilemma, as government agencies and other organisations naturally desire media coverage and publicity. When journalists choose not to report on such events, there is a risk of disappointing the organisers who expected their story to be covered. Additionally, journalists may encounter situations where they receive invitations to cover events featuring influential figures, but focusing on a different angle may lead to questioning from event organisers. In respondents' original words:

> "…some events they hold you'll discover that there's nothing, no big deal or no newsworthy event or story is coming out of it so you don't get to report anything and you know a government agency or anybody naturally they like publicity so when you don't report their events they feel okay this one will not carry our story the way we expect them too and sometimes they even send you invite to go cover and let's say, let's assume the minister is around or maybe the Chief of Defence Staff also comes to such event and you take it from the angle of the chief of event staff they get to sometimes query you to say we invited you, you'll have taken it from the minister's angle rather than the chief of defence staff angle meanwhile the minister didn't say anything strong enough to make news."

The forgoing can occur even if the influential figure did not make any significant statements warranting news coverage. Hence, in a situation where there is a working network with such journalist's editorial leadership, there might be some consequences. This further suggests the relevance of agenda setting theory, especially the adaptation of Rogers and Dearing 1988 model of agenda setting as earlier presented in this thesis.

8.1.1.5 Political timings

It was also discovered that reports on NSIP are often religiously reported with respect to political timings. It is also during these periods that newspaper do news analysis of NSIP activities.

> For instance, usually when we're getting close to the beginning of a new year of the administration, every administration is sworn in on the 29th of May, so let's say the current administration was sworn in last May 29th, it will be a year May 29th 2024 before then as expected, it is just something you should do, that's the place you have covered in the last one year, do an analysis of things that have happened in the last one year under the administration and if you consider it critical enough like NSIP now to highlight, then you highlight providing facts and figures of the activities that have taken place with regards to NSIP in the last one year so that way, let me say okay that's the kind of analysis that I've done about NSIP not categorically about it or strictly about NSIP. For NSIP as an item in a larger analysis of the activities of the president.

However, it is important to note that the analysis offered by the press is not solely focused on NSIP but is part of a broader evaluation of the president's activities in office.

8.1.1.6 Question of Priority (1)

Findings from this study shows that the attention given to NSIP is influenced by priorities and time constraints. Journalists may choose to focus on stories that align with their beats or are easier to cover.

> it's a question of priority and how much time you have to run after other people's beat, you can also make it easier for yourself.

This consideration of priorities and efficiency highlights the factors shaping media coverage of NSIP.

8.1.2 Challenges Faced by Journalists

Journalism is a profession that comes with a multitude of challenges, from beat restrictions that limit a journalist's ability to cover certain topics to the temptation of the infamous brown envelope syndrome. The ever-increasing commercialisation of media outlets and the financial struggles faced by journalists only add to the pressure and stress of the job. With overwhelming responsibility, time constraints, and often wasted efforts, Nigeria journalists shared insightful perspective on the challenges they encountered while reporting The National Social Investment programmes in Nigeria. The challenges are presented under the following subhead, and they are ranked based on how from the highest reference to the lowest reference from this study's in-depth interview with the journalist who have reported NSIP over the years.

8.1.2.1 Financial challenges faced by journalists (5)

Amidst the pursuit of professional effectiveness and efficiency, financial challenges emerge as a significant factor impacting Journalists in their roles. While the bureaucracy enjoys satisfactory remuneration, journalists, who are responsible for gathering and reporting stories, often face unfavourable conditions such as non-payment of their salaries, freelancing options, or low wages.

> The… bureaucracy are well remunerated while the field officers or the field guys who go to harvest these stories most of them are either not paid at all or freelancing or poorly paid, most.
>
> Then you now ask me what is my take home in all of these? So those are some of the factors, not as if I don't want to. Then the space constraint is another issue.

Consequently, these circumstances raise questions about the implications for their overall motivation and productivity. Furthermore, the limitation of an available space for reporting also adds to the complexities faced in effectively addressing critical issues.

Another journalist highlighted an additional financial challenge faced by media houses, leading to cost-cutting measures and a decrease in the number of reporters. As a result, reporters are now expected to cover multiple beats across various platforms. The rising costs associated with printing and production have further compelled media houses to streamline their operations and effectively manage limited resources. This is captured in the below excerpt:

> …the major reason is the financial crisis. Most media houses are trying to cut cost because they have so much to spend money on. So, they're just trying to manage their resources. So you have media houses before that the probably maybe you know state correspondents in the past, it is possible that you consider some states as your catchment area and maybe you have 3 or 4 reporters in that particular state but now you just have only one and these reporters are expected to write for the online, the digital platform of your publication, they're expected to write for the print if you're a newspaper house, if you're a TV house, they're expected to write for the broadcast and some and that's some media houses. We also have some media houses that now have a radio station, these people are also expected to report so imagine if you have less than 5 reporters on a particular newsroom so the editor is forced to split those beats among those 5 people so it's very possible that somebody will be covering up to 2, 3,4,5,6 beats so that is just the way it is now. Even there are some newsroom now that you even have some editors also as reporters, maybe as assistant editor, we'll be asked to maybe cover this beat, cover that beat and that was not the tradition before they're actually expected to be in the newsroom be like the leader that can bring meaning to news, you know all those things but now because the newsroom is trying to cut cost they're actually trying to make use of fewer people and you won't blame them because they have so many things to spend money on. And the cost of printing and production have gone so high so they just have to manage. It is not about having enough people; I think it is about the media houses trying to see how they can reduce their costs.

8.1.2.2 Commercialisation (3)

Commercialisation of the media houses has been at the core of political economy of communication debate. Thus, speaks to the association of media, politics, and the economy. As it has been argued by Murdock and Golding, "advertising is the principal economic base of bother the press and commercial television and hence both are directly vulnerable to adverse

changes in general economic condition." The following excerpt confirms the relevance of the political economy theory. In the journalist's words, they

> …have to rely on advert because advert revenue is the issue, the newspaper sales are very poor now. So what newspapers are looking at now is advert drive.

As previously discussed in one of the earlier excerpts, it was observed that a government official expressed a sentiment suggesting that journalists may refrain from questioning them due to the financial benefits their employers receive through government advertising patronage, which plays a crucial role in sustaining the media organisation. Where the journalist persisted to get her to comment, journalist explained:

> That may not [be] really applicable, you know I told you earlier the claim of the woman I cannot substantiate so I don't know where she's coming from. She just wanted to resort to blackmail.
>
> …if you tell me that the cost of so, we give you advert, you trigger my antenna to dig more, and I will dare you and go ahead and do my report. And I've been doing that… you cannot say that because you gave advert that we should cover the abuses you've been committing. I don't take such a trick and that's why to great extent those that I cover, they know. If you see me in your office, you can report me, I do my work and work away. I don't subscribe for; I'm just telling you what's supposed to be obtainable and some of those abuses and blackmail that all government officials resort to. Even if… at any given time that should be a yardstick to commit fraud or to abuse your office. The public office you're serving. It's neither here nor there.

In conclusion, the commercialisation of media houses has deeply impacted the political economy of communication, with advertising revenue playing a crucial role in sustaining media organisations. This relationship between media, politics, and the economy can sometimes result in conflicts of interest and potential ethical dilemmas for journalists.

8.1.2.3 Time luxury

Time luxury is yet another challenge journalists face with respect to this, they reflected:

> You may not have the luxury of time to be delving into some other…
>
> It doesn't mean that you cannot investigate, you can if you can afford the time, I try to restrict myself.

> if you're especially interested in a particular thing, it's your prerogative to go after such thing but again you have the luxury of time to do it.

The implication of this is that there may be limitations on the amount of time available for journalists to delve further into in-depth reporting of NSIP.

8.1.2.4 Beat restriction (2)

Similarly, beat restrictions on is yet another limitation, Journalists often do not probe suspicious matter that emerge while gathering information for NSIP report. This could be because:

> Some other things will suffer, and I don't want to be caught on that in my beat, I try as much as possible to restrict myself to my beat.

It was also noted that:

> in beat reporting, everyone is assigned to do one thing or the other, they have their beat to cover but if you're especially interested in a particular thing, it's your prerogative to go after such thing but again you have the luxury of time to do it then number 2, if you pursue further on a particular news item on whichever beat then what will be left for people who are actually assigned to those beat. You understand what I'm saying?

In summary, the limitations faced by journalists in investigating suspicious matters related to NSIP reports are influenced not only by factors such as time constraints but also beat restrictions. Journalists often find themselves restricted by the luxury of time to probe into certain topics and must prioritise their assigned beats. Furthermore, pursuing in-depth investigations may impact the coverage that other journalists are responsible for. Balancing these factors becomes a crucial consideration in ensuring comprehensive reporting while respecting the boundaries of beat assignments.

8.1.2.5 Brown Envelope Syndrome (1)

> sometimes they (the government/ministry) don't get to invite all the media house because of this brown envelope syndrome, they just assume if you're invited, they have to give you something for transport and then once they don't give it to you, you may not report them well. Sometimes they tend to streamline the number of media houses they get to invite.

The practice of selectively inviting media houses based on the expectation of financial incentives undermines the integrity of professional journalism. It compromises unbiased reporting and erodes public trust. The government's intent appears to be one that plan to control the narrative and minimise the risk of negative coverage. This suggests evidence of government interference in the news production process and such challenges the principles of transparency and accountability.

8.1.2.6 Overwhelming responsibility (1)

One of the journalist reasons that having one journalist assigned to cover the presidency (presidential 'villa') is quite an overwhelming task. In his words:

> … covering the villa is a bit big. You may not have the luxury of time…

8.1.2.7 Wasted Efforts (1)

In the light of the overwhelming responsibilities, journalist felt their independent effort to uncover the truth might be a wasted effort because:

> It will not be published.
> To the best of my knowledge, no and once it's not published, what's the essence of the efforts, as reporters we are happy when we see our works being published so if it's not published, it will pain you as somebody because you've put in so many efforts, and you are seeing that nothing came out of it.

The challenges faced by journalists in their pursuit of truth and impactful reporting are evident. The limitations of time constraints, beat restrictions, and the potential influence of financial incentives all hinder their ability to delve into important matters and maintain independence. Moreover, the selective invitations by the government based on the expectation of favourable coverage further complicate the landscape of professional journalism. These factors can lead to a sense of frustration and futility for journalists, as their efforts to uncover the truth may go

unpublished and seemingly unnoticed. It is essential for both media organisations and governments to recognise the importance of supporting and promoting independent journalism, ensuring that the valuable work of journalists reaches the public and contributes to a well-informed society.

8.1.3 Reporting process and Considerations

In the world of journalism, the reporting process and considerations are vital for delivering accurate and impactful news. Journalists are tasked with uncovering stories, investigating issues, and informing the public. Nevertheless, Muñoz-Torres (2012) argues that news selection processes are inevitably influenced by subjective values. This section explores the subthemes that emerged in the interview transcripts.

8.1.3.1 Aspect to report (30)

Various reasons were provided by Nigerian journalists concerning their choices in reporting facets of the National Social Investment Programmes. For some, their reports are influenced by current trends. However, one of the journalists underscored the significance of all aspects, asserting,

> "Every aspect is important so nothing will be left out and in reporting."

This statement emphasises the comprehensive nature of reporting, emphasising the need to cover all facets of the National Social Investment Programmes. It reflects a commitment to providing a holistic view of the programme without neglecting any specific area. Contrary to this statement, content analysis evidence shows otherwise as there were selected aspect (e.g. Tradermoni, Npower and School Feeding) of the NSIP programme that were mostly reported by Nigerian newspapers.

The interviewee went further to explain:

> "It may not be deep; it may not be extensively if it is news reporting. There are no specific criteria to decide which aspect you report on."

This excerpt suggests a recognition of the potential constraints in news reporting. While emphasising the importance of covering every aspect, the interviewee acknowledges that in the context of news reporting, depth and extensive coverage may be limited. This highlights the need for concise yet comprehensive reporting, especially in a fast-paced news environment. The second aspect of the excerpt suggest lack of predetermined guidelines or rigid rules when selecting which aspects of the National Social Investment Programme to report on. This indicates that reporters or journalists have the freedom and flexibility to choose the elements or components of the programme that they deem most relevant or newsworthy. The following excerpts capture the perspectives of the respondents on the factors influencing the selection of aspects to report in NSIP.

> "…it has to be brief, and it is based on the understanding of what you were briefed that you'll do your reporting so there weren't any specific or special criteria other than as a news reporter, the most critical part. In a news… that's what I followed. What is most important in this thing maybe figures or things like that."

In the above excerpt, the journalist seem to have some level of interest for quantitative data about the NSIP but, it is interesting that not so much of quantitative information were reported in the news, as noted in the content analysis chapter of this thesis; except in the instance of amount allocated to the projects and sources of these figures were mostly government officials most importantly there were no statement in the report that confirmed that the figures were verified for correctness before publishing the report.

In another excerpt below, one of the interviewees state their bias for the entrepreneurship aspect of the NSIP - that is the *Farmersmoni.*

> "I'm generally interested in entrepreneurship opportunities and how what it means to take farmers from subsistence to commercial level so that people can really see agric as business on another level to look for new opportunities in entrepreneurship, new opportunities in tech"

For another journalist, factual report of what is trending also matters. This, the journalist believes will help reduce misinformation.

> "You also look at what is trending as a reporter, what is there, what are Nigerians talking about that programme, some might be because they are nor informed, some might be because a picture is presented that is not true and so when you find out that thing, you now go and look at the area"

The journalist quoted above emphasised that trends play a significant role in determining what they report. However, it is important to note that not all trends make it into the news unless they are associated with the discovery of fraudulent activities or public complaints about certain practices. This is reflected in the below excerpt:

> "What motivates it is when it becomes a trending issue. When it's either increasing public complaints, people are frauded, there are either issue of malpractice and all that and then those things are the drivers. Like I said there are so many news issues almost on a daily basis. So these things are ranked according to news judgment based on certain criteria."

The priorities of news outlets also influence how journalists report on social intervention programmes. This factor becomes a crucial determinant of what gets covered in the news due to the presence of competing news priorities.

> "…look at your news issues priorities. What are my priorities because I don't just report that alone. I report agriculture, I report business, I also do entrepreneurship. Occasionally I do things around job opportunities, so you have all these things contesting for attention."

In relation to the previous points, in addition to aspects of the NSIP that are supposedly influenced by trends, public complaints, and feedback, Interviewee R03 of NP01 highlighted

that their media outlet frequently holds content brainstorming meetings to determine the news angle. This is captured in the below excerpt:

> "Basically, you know also in Nigeria and worldwide, people so like complain, maybe feedback we get from the public and stuff like that. And just like I said, when we brainstorm in our content meetings. Maybe on Sundays especially so we now decide on the angle to pursue."

Another factor that determines aspects to report is the disapproving theme of possible exploitation and corrupt practices in the implementation of the programme. This qualifies as human interest criterium of news. This point was coming up in the interview when one of the interviewees mentioned that a programme that is aimed to assist the poorest of the poor is failed to be reaching them. Thus, widespread complaints were influence, indicating significant issues with the programme's implementation. The interviewee emphasises that these concerns were not limited to a specific area, suggesting a systemic problem. Furthermore, the media played a role in highlighting these issues. This interview excerpt below provides valuable qualitative insights into the challenges faced by the programme and the need to address the shortcomings in reaching the intended beneficiaries.

> "a programme that is meant to reach the poor, the poorest of the poor and it never got to them. Complains all over so I think that was what really… not just the ***, it was all over the place, I can put it that way, things were coming up and the media were reporting it." [R03 of NP01]

The above excerpt confirms some of the voices on the Nigerian Twittersphere, as presented in the critical discourse analysis chapter of this thesis. It was revealed from CDA analysis that the programme was negatively impacted by corrupt and unethical practices, leaving the poor even poorer as the welfare provisions of NSIP never reached them. Recent reports in the Nigerian media confirm that this is true. Both the Pioneer Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development, Sadiya Umar-Farouq, has recently been arrested and detained by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)(Emmanual, 2024), and

the immediate past minister of the same ministry, now called the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Betta Edu, has been suspended (BBC News, 2024b). Both government officials who were in charge of the NSIP project are now being investigated for corruption and misappropriation of fund. Aside from both ministers, the National Coordinator, Halima Shehu has also been suspended(Faith Yahaya, 2024). It is also noteworthy, as at the time of writing this thesis, that the NSIP is being suspended for six (6) weeks to allow for thorough investigation.

On the other hand, there were some positives:

> "For the positives just like you noticed then there were a lot of positives in the sense that I think that was the first time this school feeding programme and so on and things like that reaching out down to the people. So, I remember the photographs. The first photograph of the then vice president getting to the classrooms with the pupils you know it was the first time the… I think something like that. So, who wouldn't report that?" [R03 of NP01]

In the later part of the above excerpt, the participant recalls a memorable moment captured in a photograph, where the then Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo visited classrooms, interacted and seat to share school feeding meal with the pupils. This respondent emphasised the significance of this event and question why it would not be reported. This is especially because prominent figures like the Vice President is by news determinant is newsworthy. Additional details were offered by the interviewee:

> "Ehn not just the (public) figure [referring to the instance where Vice President Yemi Osinbajo sat in a classroom posing to share meal with school fed children] because of the kids… not just the *** a lot of newspapers has to carry some photographs and pictorials that were quite good." [R03 of NP01]

It is worth mentioning that these positive developments occurred during the lead-up to The National general elections, which raises questions about potential political motives. The timing

of these events seems to align with election campaigns, suggesting that they may have been used as a form of positive publicity for political purposes.

When asked what motivated them to report the social investment programme given that journalists are by professional standard at liberty, a journalist responded:

> To be frank with you, it's not like I wasn't actually motivated, it's just the nature of the work, you don't choose the beat you get to cover, your editor looks at you and maybe your capacity and then decides to assign you a particular beat. It wasn't like I was motivated to do it; I was assigned to actually cover humanitarian ministry which the NSIP falls under so by virtue of my work I was just made to do it and I got to enjoy it in the process.

Given that the programme has subcomponents programmes, this research inquires how they determine which aspect to report because content analysis study result shows the prevalence of some component programmes over others. One of the respondents said:

> Most of their programmes falls under NSIP… NPower, GEEP and other ones, so the ministry get to send the invite and if you go and its related to NSIP you just have to cover, it's not like you're choosing which one to go for. The only time you get to choose basically is maybe when you're out of time or you're indisposed to go for the event if not there's no time for you to choose because your office also expects you to come back with report based on the activities of the ministry.

This circumstance limits reporters' control over the events they cover. Journalist editors expect reports based on ministry activity, so journalists may not have the freedom to choose which programmes or events to cover. This lack of autonomy in selecting aspects of NSIP reports can restrict the public's access to a variety of news and viewpoints and potentially limit the diversity of stories and perspectives presented by journalists.

8.1.3.1.1 Competing interest (1)

The process of covering government events often involves balancing multiple perspectives and ensuring a fair representation of all parties involved. This may include combining or splitting

stories, preventing clashes between events, and presenting both official statements and independent investigations. In one of the journalist words:

> Most of the times when those events are being covered, if you have two or three government agencies holding similar programme, you just try to combine the stories but they are also wise they also try to split these programmes maybe one hold its own today and another will hold its own tomorrow so they're also wise to also ensure that they don't have a clash. That also determines the news but then in the advent that you have an investigation that you're doing and government is holding an event, of course you have to give them their voice, report what they've said and then you come out with your own investigation to actually say government said it but this is what we found on the field.

8.1.3.2 Information verification: navigating treacherous waters (19)

Like balancing bias, the process of verifying information does not seem different, journalists interviewed relied more on the questions and answer session as an opportunity to verify information.

> "At every briefing, there's usually a question-and-answer session, it is during such occasion that we have the opportunity of scrutinizing the initial information provided by the person providing the brief."

From the foregoing excerpt, it can be deduced that journalists 'scrutinise' the preliminary information provided at press briefings and, as they said in their previous response, leave it there without further investigation. One would think that a journalist would conduct additional research and unearth additional information in the public interest given their professional status.

One of the journalists reflected a scenario shown in the following excerpt, providing an example of the context and the way they had asked questions:

> "...for instance now if they're telling us one of the aspects of NSIP which is the Conditional Cash Transfer that you have given out so so amount …let's say 10 million Naira for instance to so so amount of family, to so so numbers of people in the initial brief and maybe adding 1 and 1 together, you discover it is coming to 1½ instead of 2, then you probe further, ask questions why did it become this, if you have this number of people and this amount, how did it come to this, that way we kind of get clearer views and be able to also provide insight when we are reporting"

Regarding the degree of freedom journalists have to pose questions, the answer was:

> "…it's no holds barred, you're free to ask questions that you believe are relevant to providing clarity to the issue at hand and of course nobody censors anybody."

Another journalist gave the NSIP narrative a broader context by stating that, in an attempt to gauge success, he frequently draws parallels with welfare programmes around the globe. To use his precise words:

> "I look at where has it been done; how successful it is. The area will give basis to understand, it will give you a better picture of how it is run, so that helps you, you can now look at what is happening in Nigeria vis-a-vis what is happening outside."

Journalists do concede, nevertheless, that there are certain challenges in confirming facts and issues. He offered political explanations, the lack of data and the issues of accessibility as well as credibility of scantily available one while explaining that this is a product of the environment in which they operate.

> "The issue of verification is a bit very difficult because of the very complex situation we operate in and then the political elements in it itself and then the fact that data level us very poor, it is not like the place where you are where you can easily access the world bank data, you can do there and pick but these are places where the databases is not really open to the public so you only make do with what you have and then also the complains people have because you may also filter complains."

Where journalists lament about issues of accessibility of data, one would question the usefulness of the Freedom of Information Act of 2011. According to the journalists, they confirm that FOI Act has not been very helpful:

> "I think people hardly apply that now. People don't just believe… some of these things (referring to the practicability of the FOI Act of 20211)."

In this kind of situation, journalists will need to do in-depth investigation in order to communicate true facts. Naturally, by all measures, only dedicated journalists with sufficient resources could conduct an inquiry of this nature. Risks and safety concerns accompany such a

task, particularly in a nation like Nigeria where journalists frequently operate in a hostile environment where they may encounter physical violence, threats, or arrests. This is typical in cases where the subject of discussion is a sensitive policy issue, especially one that has been the target of multiple accusations, including corruption, embezzlement, and other improper actions by public servants. In instances where there is public accusation against the government officials, it is uneasy and sensitive issues to report. Thus, reporting such require strong and unbiased evidence. In this study's in-depth interview, one of the journalists said:

> "…when you say government is not doing this, and they are really doing it, you also have to make sure at least you're not biased because when you're biased, there's also adversarial journalism which people do which is okay. But that adversarial journalism has to be based on facts.

Also, journalist noted some financial constraints as well as people who are unwilling to talk to journalists out of fear of being targeted by those in power.

> "The best way we do it is just to talk to a few beneficiaries and then because these things are also distance dependent, you only work on the ones you can verify because the cost of movement around the place and all that and then the access because if you don't have access to people. The people are not willing to tell you cannot get that information, work within your limits, work with what you can see, if there are data that are published you work on that, if there are complaints from people, you work on that because you must also ensure that you're not used as a political tool."

From the above, the interviewee highlighted the possibility of being used as a political tool which we have earlier observed. What this implies is that journalist must be sensitive enough to be able to understand the limits of professional journalism practice and avoid being involve in partisan journalism. While it is understandable that positive developments may be highlighted during election periods, journalists should maintain their independence and avoid becoming mere platforms for political publicity.

One journalist explained that, in order to verify information, they undertake research by conducting a literature review of existing knowledge on the subject. This process allows them

to gather insights that often prompt them to make phone calls for verification and to obtain additional necessary details. These investigative efforts sometimes go beyond the journalist's own scope and geographical location, spanning across different regions as the investigation becomes trans-geographical.

> "…literature review may lead you to the website basically or you have to make some calls and then there are respondents for newspaper nationwide so sometimes also you can ask your correspondent in Abuja wherever to do the legwork or maybe Calabar, Enugu, Sokoto and so on in terms of going there physically to verify and investigate that's what we do. Or making calls like in most of these places even in the Federal, in the presidency you may have sources."

The journalist went further to mention some of areas where they often source information that makes the news:

> "…sources in the Federal ministries, we have sources everywhere, we have sources in professional bodies, we have sources in the civil society, we have sources in the private sector. Sometimes they may even be the people that… so they give you the main information. So, when you're now bringing the information to those people that presume duty or whatever you already coming from a strong side."

8.1.3.2.1 Factchecking

The growing practice of factchecking government officials' statement has also revolutionised how much of information is given to journalist, making journalist have less details to process and subsequently report on. According to one of the journalists interviewed,

> "…since we start doing factchecking they have reduced giving out specific data."

The above could indicate that they may be trying to conceal or downplay certain information, or that they are being more cautious with their data in response to the fact-checking process.

8.1.3.3 Balancing bias

Balancing bias in journalism is of utmost importance, especially within the context of political activities and election campaigns. By standard of professional journalism practice, journalists must be diligent in presenting information in a fair and objective manner, allowing readers to form their own opinions based on reliable and balanced reporting. When inquired about their approach to mitigating bias in news reports, given that a significant portion of the news is derived from government-official press briefings, the interviewee indicated that they frequently pose questions during these briefings. One journalist articulated their perspective thus:

> "The essence of asking question is to ensure it is balanced and unbiased and the first thing at the back of your mind as a journalist is you're not serving VVIP so to speak, talking about people in government, you're serving the interest of the public so that guides what you ask and what you try to find out."

In another response, it was also noted that:

> "…journalist does is the best he can. Do the best you can based on a few principles if you can meet them because really, it's also very difficult to get an accurate situation no matter how you make the efforts because of the limitations in the system."

When asked if efforts were made aside sourcing stories from press releases, speeches, questioning government officials and reaching out to beneficiaries of the programmes to verify information from official sources, journalist have these to say:

> "Just do the best you can. I think that's just it and leave it there."

> "That is basically (…do the best you can....and leave it there) … see the issue is that even when you read reports people do a lot of these things, there's subjective objectivity."

> "Ours is more like interview method because it's very costly. If you're doing a story, you might not interview more than 5 people because these are lengthy approaches. Maybe like research you have like 3."

> "Certainly, you have to get your own side of the story for instance when you're told that somebody stole or whatever after investigating, you have to ask the

> person is this what you are, what do you have to say about it? That's how we try to balance our stories, all sides involved. We try to speak to them or else sometimes some people refuse to speak for whatever reason but at least you made attempts."

The foregoing excerpts suggests that not so much has been done by journalists to balance bias in reporting NSIP stories.

8.1.3.4 Churnalism

"Churnalism" is a term commonly used to describe the practice of producing news articles that are largely based on press releases or other pre-packaged materials, with minimal original reporting or independent verification. One of the findings of this thesis' content analysis study of the selected Nigerian newspapers shows similarity in news content – Churnalism, characterised by the replication of the same structure and quoted sources, similar to syndicated contents. However, what is particularly interesting is that the news articles are prepared by Public Relations experts in a ready-made news format, which is then distributed as press releases or presented at news conferences. This practice results in the similarity of news reports across newspapers, with slight changes appearing in news headlines and lead paragraphs, while the by-line remains distinct. In the in-depth interview with Journalists, one of the respondents explicated on the place of press statement:

> the place of press statements, unfortunately years ago, press release just use to be about an agency just giving you an overview of what is said at the press conference but nowadays they actually write the news for the reporters and unfortunately some of the lazy reporters because they don't want to bother their head (if I can put it that way), they just go with that line of thought. It is actually one of the major bane of journalism that we have now in the country that you just see **reporter**, **they just pick press statements and they put their by-lines**, that is the only thing that some of them will change even those that even change the headline, you even have to give them credit, there are some that won't change the headline, they won't change anything in the story, the only thing that they will just add to it is their by-line…

Another journalist said.

> Most times, when you see a story coming out of a statement, you might have that kind of circumstance because then you're not the source of the entire report you have a statement to work on so when you have a statement, you don't want to just send it in just like that, you have to make adjustments in headlines.

The above excerpts suggests that press statements have evolved from simply providing an overview of a press conference to actually writing the news for reporters. Also, the followings could be deduced from the excerpts: one, some lazy reporters rely heavily on press statements for their stories without conducting further research or investigation. Two, this practice is seen as a major problem in journalism in Nigeria, as reporters are not adding value to the news they produce. And lastly, some reporters may only change the headline and add their by-line to the press statement without making any other significant modifications to the content.

Based on the above, we can draw that the journalists believes that statements often form the basis of news stories, indicating their involvement in relaying information rather than generating questions and verifying it, as professional journalism require. They however stress the importance of adjusting headlines, which may be to capture readers attention to an effort to creating compelling narratives. In another interview excerpt, a journalist said:

> most times when it is a statement, people look for different angles that interests their organisation from that statement, you'll look after reading it, okay that one looks stronger for my medium that's why you see different headlines but then the content is coming from the same statement, you're likely not… except you want to produce your own statement different from what you've been given.

This suggests that journalists or media organisations selectively choose perspectives or aspects of a statement that best serve their agenda or target audience. The journalist implies that different headlines may be used to emphasise specific angles or narratives, even if the content is derived from the same statement. This suggests that different headlines of stories on the

National Social Investment Programmes may be used by media outlets to attract attention or convey a particular viewpoint. Another journalist explained:

> …something about why content in report of different media organisations look alike for instance now let us take just a statement, let's say briefing, the content will be the same because it is the same person everybody is quoting. When you've done the transcript of the briefing, you will now replace what someone has said with your own ideas, it has to be what that person have said. Only that the angle you're taking it from might be different from everybody else. If the report is coming from a particular… one source you're bound to see similarities in reports of different media organisations because the report is coming from the same source.

The journalist in the above excerpt established that the source of the information plays a key role in shaping the content of media reports. The transcript explains that if multiple media organisations are reporting on the same source, there will likely be similarities in their reports. However, this similarity seems to me more 'Churnalistic.' It is also reflected in the except that reporters may paraphrase the original content however, differences in reports may come from the unique angles or perspectives taken by reporters in presenting the information.

One of the journalists that Churnalism practice should be expected if reports are not product of journalist's independent investigations.

> "…if they're not researched works you expect that. Sometimes it's a government statement, you want to be very sure who told you that's why you see sometimes, you see quotations."

A concerned responded expresses self thus:

> That is my headache about journalism practice in Nigeria. I've raised the issue quite a number of times and people feel I think they do *oversabi*[40]. Because the beauty of journalism is that flexibility is important, individual perspectives must prevail, you must see different angles, you must see that beauty of what is happening at a particular event different from the way I report mine.

[40] "Oversabi" is a Nigerian Pidgin English term used to describe someone who excessively shows off their knowledge or skills. It refers to individuals who go overboard in demonstrating their expertise, often in a manner that can be annoying or exaggerated.

> Unfortunately, enough we have issues of copyright, plagiarism that are not being checked and you blame that on the erosion of the sub desk in the media houses. Sub desk is the brain box of the media houses, you can see that the depth of the stories we write now there are no background, no historical background against the usual practice in those days maybe because of the… of information we have now because if you look at (mentions name of newspaper) of then is different from (mentions name of newspaper) of today, the background have been a little historical addition if what happened at so so time. I don't know whether you understand that.

The foregoing excerpts also supports the earlier discussed idea that the individual perspectives and unique angles present in journalism are being eroded by the reliance on press statements and lack of background research. This, journalist ascribes to the diminishing role of sub desk in media houses which is resulting to an unaddressed issue of copyright and plagiarism. The respondent explained that sub desk is seen as the "brain box" of media houses and they ought to be responsible for ensuring depth, accuracy, and historical context on NSIP news stories. The current state of journalism in Nigeria seems to lack the richness and depth that was present in the past, exemplified by the comparison between newspapers of the past and newspapers of today.

Furthermore, the respondent complained about the unprofessional practice current generation of journalists:

> the crop of guys practicing journalism now is another issue that is actually worrisome. The set of guys we have now. Nobody wants to sacrifice a second to do the right thing. Rather they either go, if my platform runs a story or breaks a story what they do is they'll just go to the online, copy everything and copy and paste. I have try to checkmate some of our colleagues, but the story still remains the same even across board. It's really unfortunate.

From responses, the lack of dedication to do thorough and original reporting explain reasons for similarities in news reports across newspapers. Also, instead of putting in the effort to produce quality content as professionalism require of them, many journalists simply resort to copying and pasting stories from online sources. Within the journalists' newsroom, despite

attempted interventions to address this issue, the trend of plagiarism and lack of originality persists among journalists. It is also noteworthy that the lack of commitment to ethical journalism practices and the decline in quality reporting is a significant problem encountered in reporting the National Social Investment Programmes.

Providing further insight, another journalist has this to say:

> …in the past, you have a reporter that covers just only one beat but nowadays, you have a reporter that is expected to cover 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 beats, in some instances so and maybe in a day a reporter has to attend like 3 or 4 press conferences so where does he have the time to start writing those stories, to start transcribing and start doing those tedious job and also the advent of Internet, online journalism has also put pressure on the newsroom.

8.1.3.5 Press Briefings

Press briefings serve as a valuable source of news for journalists, but relying solely on them undermines professional journalism practice and increases the risk of media hijack. Journalistic principles emphasise the importance of independent verification and balanced reporting, which can be compromised when journalists become passive conduits for selectively presented information from authorities.

One of the journalists recounted that:

> "The first thing is that when such programme comes you as a journalist will try to get involved in the briefing, initial briefing and then you also try to compare, look at how social protection programmes are done elsewhere. Maybe places like Asia. So, I look at where has it been done, how successful it is. The area will give basis to understand, it will give you a better picture of how it is run, so that helps you, you can now look at what is happening in Nigeria vis-a-vis what is happening outside.

This excerpt highlights the importance of journalists actively engaging in press briefings and comparing social protection programmes across different regions. By doing so, journalists can gain a better understanding of how these programmes operate and assess their success. This

approach allows for a more nuanced analysis of Nigeria's context and enables journalists to compare it with international practices, contributing to a more comprehensive and informed reporting.

For another journalist, who seem to more reliant on press briefings, he said:

> "It has to be a brief, and it is based on the understanding of what you were briefed that you'll do your reporting so there weren't any specific or special criteria other than as a news reporter, the most critical part. In news… that's what I followed."

For the above-quoted journalist, it appears that such journalist largely depends on press briefing opportunities before he could report. According to him "it has to be a brief," "…based on the understanding of what you were briefed."

> "After the Federal Executive Council meeting or any other government activity at the State House that involves NSIP, we will definitely be briefed, and we will report the briefing."

By solely depending on press briefings, journalists may unknowingly contribute to the dissemination of misinformation or biased narratives, allowing powerful entities to manipulate the news agenda.

This threatens the integrity of journalism and hinders the public's access to a comprehensive and unbiased understanding of events. To uphold professional journalism practice, journalists must actively seek out diverse sources, rigorously fact-check, and hold power accountable.

8.1.3.6 News source (6)

This study found the lack of well-established frameworks for sourcing information independently. This is coupled with restrictions on who can speak on certain matters, presents a challenge for obtaining accurate and reliable information.

> "…the frameworks for sourcing information independently are not well established and then in some places too, some people are not allowed to speak on matters … for instance a permanent secretary cannot speak on an issue except he has an authorisation, so the authorisation layer is very critical.

The above excerpt also suggests that there may be some lack of transparency in NSIP communication flow. The requirement for authorisation to speak on issues, especially for high-ranking officials like permanent secretaries, complicates the process of news sourcing.

Furthermore, the reliance on quoted sources, which may have questionable credibility, raises concerns about the accuracy of the information being reported.

> The quoted sources. Basically anyway, I can't… maybe the sources may be 5 years ago, I wouldn't know why but I also believe that most of those sources too, most of those stories I had to some join by-lines it is possible. I think so. So, what we needed is what we get, for instance now most of the times I think we've got information that there's corruption allegations and bla-bla so the people that are being alleged to do so are people we speak to.

The speaker mentions that they often rely on obtaining information directly from the people involved in the events or issues being reported on.

> Yeah. So sometimes since we have access to the people coordinating. I think I mentioned… to you so sometimes we have difficulty, you know Nigeria and some of these online things, we're coming up we are not yet there so sometimes instead of waiting to get whatever news or information, I just call the persons involved directly and they give me whatever I want.

This suggests that they may bypass traditional channels of information gathering, such as attending events or relying solely on press releases and instead opt for direct communication with the relevant individuals. This approach may allow for more immediate access to information but could also introduce biases or limitations in their reporting. Another journalist said:

> Sometimes because we write based on statements not that we attended the event.

Additionally, the reliance on statements rather than first-hand attendance at events can also impact the accuracy and reliability of the information being reported. The practice of reaching out directly to individuals involved in a story, rather than waiting for official news sources, can lead to biases or incomplete information being presented in news reports.

8.1.3.7 Duty to report (6)

Some journalists see reporting on NSIP as their duty and obligation given its importance and impact on citizens.

> it was incumbent on me to report it because it is a critical national issue, it's affecting people, and it is my duty to report such things. That's the reason why I've… being a correspondent, I had no choice I must report it.

> I'm a journalist, when you're sent to a beat, you'll have to cover the beat…

By describing it as something they "had no choice" but to report on, it indicates they see reporting of NSIP as non-negotiable. Referring to NSIP as a "critical national issue" shows they recognise the significance and sensitivity of reporting on a major federal intervention programme. However, this does not reflect in the content analysis findings as it shows that issues around its implementation were underreported, and details effectiveness of programme were not supported with diversified and multi-perspectival evidence.

Also, journalists were 'made to do it;' reporting NSIP was not initially journalists' initiative or interest:

> I was assigned to actually cover humanitarian ministry which the NSIP falls under so by virtue of my work I was just made to do it and I got to enjoy it in the process.

It can be inferred that the journalist initially may not have had a personal interest in covering the NSIP but was assigned to do so as part of their job. However, they found the experience enjoyable and potentially rewarding.

Also, journalist seems to be limited within a defined expectation, and they are not particularly allowed to report the NSIP freely, when asked if they were allowed to question unclear development, like to investigative aspect that requires further clarity beyond the press releases and information from government sources, one of the journalist's responded thus:

> To an extent, yes, my hands are tied though it's not clearly spelt out like do not do this but if you do, you're just going on your own journey on your own.

Describing independent investigation into thee NSIP activities as "going on your own journey on your own" suggest that journalist's employer might be supportive of journalist's interest to dig further.

For yet another journalist, it is a different case as they see it as a clarion call.

> I think the responsibility now on me is to go all out and get it done. So, I do not really isolate any, I do it as clarion call beckons.

Framing it as a "clarion call" indicates the journalist feels strongly about using their platform to shed light on matters of vital public importance like NSIP, beyond just routine coverage.

In conclusion, it is evident that some journalists view reporting on the NSIP as a duty and obligation. They acknowledge the critical national issue and the impact it has on citizens, believing it is their responsibility to report on such matters. However, it is important to note that the content analysis findings suggest that the reporting on NSIP may not fully reflect this sense of duty, as issues around implementation and the effectiveness of the programme were underreported. Additionally, it seems that journalists may be limited in their ability to freely report on NSIP, as they feel their hands are tied and independent investigation may not be encouraged. Nevertheless, there are journalists who view covering NSIP as a clarion call, recognizing the importance of shedding light on these matters beyond routine coverage.

8.1.3.8 Method

Different journalists seem to have followed different procedure in reporting some of the stories on the NSIP. The below transcripts capture what the journalist consider as the method they adhere to while gathering information for their reports.

> Most times I do a lot of literature reviews. I visit websites, go to Google and really take time to search and get real background information and the issues, you know. Maybe, there was a time I did my literature review sometimes I even change the peg of my story, so it depends on… I investigate first through the Web most times, that's what I do.

As revealed in the above quotation, journalists rely heavily on literature reviews and online research to gather background information and understand the issues at hand.

> I try to do my research online and I do interviews, I try to look at the society in general. Of course, you know you can't isolate happenings in the society from the society itself, the needs of the people. Being a Nigerian, I try to understudy over the years, based on experience and happenings in the newspaper, other reports, business reports then I do have first-hand information about virtually everything and we have a saying in journalism that a journalist knows everything about something and something about everything.

The journalist mentions their newsgathering procedures, which include online research and interviews. They believe in considering the societal context and the needs of the people when conducting their research. The journalist claims to strive for a comprehensive understanding through experience, newspapers, and firsthand information. They mention the saying that journalists know everything about something and something about everything. This qualitative data suggests the journalist's diligence in their research approach and their commitment to being well-informed for comprehensive coverage. However, findings from this thesis content analysis study suggest a different perspective.

According to one of the journalists, they intentionally seek out oppositional individuals or parties to comment on their programmes as a means of checking their own biases. They believe that everyone has their own agenda to promote, regardless of whether it is beneficial or not.

> "It is deliberate (to get oppositional people or parties to speak to comment on the programme just to checkmate) because as you know everybody wants to sell his product even whether it is good or not. That believe that we want to put the impression out there we are doing something but for me when you roll out a policy, you need to check with all the parties and do a thorough evaluation to really know whether this is impactful and you going to correct the notion so when we put government officials on the spot if you're saying giving people N30,000 will change their lives or their wellbeing somebody out there will tell you this money cannot even buy, cannot even feed a family of 5 and that is the truth, I'm not to say it because I cannot be the judge in such an instance. I have to get back to the people and actually ask them what you're doing is it right. Even in the house of reps I cover when they make pronouncement or there's a bill being passed, I go back to the… ask him this bill is on the table, can you do your evaluation, can you make an input, is it right, is this going to be impactful, is this particular bill a good one for the society, do you think we need such a bill at such a time, it's not only limited to NSIPA or NSIP, I do it occasionally or sorry, on regular basis as time permit me to make sure I do the evaluation and put it in the public space, let there be input from various sectors of the economy, whether from the opposition party or from the civil society. It's to a great extent a deliberate effort."

They express the belief that thorough evaluations and consultations with all parties are necessary when implementing policies to determine their impact and correct any misconceptions. The journalist emphasises the importance of putting government officials on the spot to provide accountability and get feedback from the people affected by their decisions. They mention that they also engage with members of the House of Representatives to evaluate bills and gather input from various sectors of the economy, including the opposition party and civil society. This approach is described as a deliberate effort to ensure a comprehensive evaluation and foster public participation.

8.1.3.9 Press statement (3)

The below excerpts from the interview highlight the challenges faced by journalists reporting on the National Social Investment Program (NSIP) in Nigeria. One significant phrase is "Sometimes because we write based on statements not that we attended the event." This phrase indicates that journalists often rely on provided statements rather than first-hand experience.

> Sometimes because we write based on statements not that we attended the event.

Another significant phrase is "this is what they want published so they will not give you additional information." It suggests that journalists may be limited in obtaining comprehensive information as they are fed specific narratives.

> It's a statement so you're just writing based on what you were fed and by the time you call, they will just, this is what they want published so they will not give you additional information. Mostly you get additional information you see varying stories when you're at the event and then the minister or whoever is involved says something different and you feel this is newsworthy to your organisation, this is newsworthy to another organisation. If not, we are just doing a bandwagon.

This can result in varying stories when they attend the actual event and encounter different statements from officials.

> basically, an announcement because the federal government made the announcement. My submission is such that many announcements… In fact, all the announcements from the president's office come from me, it's not just because I report the presidency so everything that emanates from the office in the villa, I'm more likely to report it along with other people that cover that beat. It may just have been an announcement that was just made, and the onus fell on me to report it as a news report.

The phrase "all the announcements from the president's office come from me" is also notable. It suggests that the journalist has a key role in reporting announcements from the government, particularly those originating from the president's office. This highlights their responsibility in conveying news reports based on official statements.

Overall, the qualitative data reveals the challenges faced by journalists reporting on the NSIP, including reliance on statements, limited access to additional information, and the responsibility of reporting government announcements.

8.1.3.10 Editor's pressure (3)

The excerpts from the interview shed light on the challenges faced by Nigerian journalists reporting on the National Social Investment Program (NSIP). One challenge is the pressure to attend events, as missing out on important news can lead to being held liable by the office.

> In the event that you say you're not going for the event and that's where a news breaks what will happen, your office will start asking for the story then you may be held liable. You know how the work is

Another challenge is the journalist's contemplation of whether their reporting should solely focus on humanitarian issues or encompass a broader range of topics.

> I think so. Sometimes… do I necessarily have to speak about humanitarian or just generally now as a journalist?
> the editor trying to meet up with deadline and then the people you're reporting also trying to have an angle to what they want you to report.

Additionally, the excerpts highlight the competing demands between meeting deadlines set by editors and navigating the agendas of the individuals being reported on. These insights provide valuable perspectives on the complexities and pressures encountered by journalists covering the NSIP in Nigeria.

8.1.3.11 Cut down of allocated page(s) (2)

The in-depth interview with journalists also touches upon the limitations of space in newspapers.

> Because of space in the newspaper, we are reporting it as it is. If you're saying you want to wait to do a feature out of it, space will be a factor. So many reporters have written and they're praying for their features to be used, so if you say you want to go and join the queue of those waiting for their feature to be published, it may no longer be relevant at the time it is to be published

Due to space constraints, news articles are often reported as they are without the opportunity for in-depth features. Reporters may write articles with the hope that their features will be published, but if they have to wait in line, the relevance of the feature may diminish by the time it is published.

The journalist further explains that there is no specific limit on the number of news articles that can be written in a day, as long as they are newsworthy and cover different events. However, space constraints remain a determining factor in the number of articles that can be published.

> The only limit is maybe there's no space but there's no limit, you can write 3, 4 in a day provided they're newsworthy and probably from different events.

This qualitative data provides insights into the challenges faced by journalists in terms of space limitations and the need for specialised pages in newspapers. It also sheds light on the considerations made when deciding between news articles and features based on space availability and timeliness.

8.1.3.11.1 Causes of cut-down (1)

Cut down of news page are mostly as a result of financial considerations and challenges faced by newspapers. The journalist mentions that some specialised pages are driven by advertisements, and newspapers rely on income generated from these advertisements. They give an example of their own experience of having their page sponsored by the World Bank,

which brought in income for the paper. They also note that newspaper sales are currently poor, emphasising the need to rely on advertising revenue.

> Some of these things are advert driven, pages… now are looking for what the income comes so once you don't have. Like I use to have the world bank sponsor my page for like 7 months. So that brought some income to the paper. I was few of the paper that was sponsored by world bank but when that happens, you now must rely on advert because advert revenue is the issue, the newspaper sales are very poor now. So what newspapers are looking at now is advert drive.

This excerpt underscores the shift in focus for newspapers towards being advert-driven in order to sustain their operations. It reflects the changing landscape of the newspaper industry and the financial pressures faced by publications in Nigeria. Overall, this excerpt sheds light on the current economic realities and strategies adopted by newspapers to sustain their operations in a challenging market environment.

8.1.3.12 Editorial Meeting (2)

Another factor that influences report on NSIP is editorial meeting, according to a journalist,

> "basically, we normally have a kind of content meeting among the editors, and we look at issues and not just me. I think the editor highlighted it and say we should look into it; I think that was what informed it as at then."
>
> "we brainstorm in our content meetings."

The foregoing excerpts from the interview transcript with Nigerian journalists reveals the collaborative and deliberative nature of the editorial process within the newspaper. Through regular content meetings, editors come together to discuss and brainstorm ideas, ensuring that a range of perspectives are considered, and important topics are addressed. Thus, decision to report NSIP has been significantly influenced by editorial decisions of newspaper.

8.1.3.13 Motivation

Journalist's motivation is yet another factor that influences NSIP reports. One of the journalists speaks about his motivation:

> I've been there for about 5 years covering the activities of the ministry and of course I personally have the passion to impact, I have this welfarism personality as well so everything that has to do with humanity, I've been part of it over the years, I'm a development oriented personality as well so taking care of people, looking after the welfare of people is a passion for me and I think having the opportunity to report that particular sector is a good stuff for me and I have a passion as well to the less privileged. I think I'm a round peg in the round hole.

The journalist views the opportunity to report on this NSIP as a perfect fit, describing themselves as a "round peg in the round hole." This statement emphasises the journalist's deep personal investment in their reporting work and their alignment with the subject matter they cover. It suggests that their passion and commitment to making a positive impact drive their journalistic endeavours in the field of welfare and development.

8.1.4 Other underlining themes

8.1.4.1 Slip through the cracks; left in the Shadows.

> "a programme that is meant to reach the poor, the poorest of the poor and it never got to them…" [R03 of NP01]

Based on the findings from the themes analysed earlier that the journalists encountered a lot of challenges in reporting the NSIP programmes and the most prominent is the fact that the government is not transparent in the way the funds are being managed. The fact that journalists are only given access to information that government officials want disseminated, rather than what is actually happening as evidenced by content analysis and Twitter conversations, suggests that the operation is shrouded in secrecy.

A transparent approach should ideally be taken when implementing a poverty alleviation programme designed to support the most marginalised sections of society. Journalists would be

able to cover the programme's impact and effectiveness attributable accurately and thoroughly to such an accountability, which would help increase public trust.

8.1.4.2 'Pack Journalism'/Syndicated News Report

Another key element that influences the coverage of NSIP stories is the habit of various journalists from various media outlets reporting from the same source, or "pack journalism." Originally, the goal of pack journalism was to concurrently use the same techniques and sources while pursuing the same goals. However, campaign journalism, a kind of political journalism that has evolved into pack journalism, has put this kind of journalism in jeopardy over time. Another key element seen in the coverage of NSIP stories is the habit of various journalists from various media outlets reporting from the same source, or "pack journalism." Originally, the goal of pack journalism was to concurrently use the same techniques and sources while pursuing the same goals. However, campaign journalism, a kind of political journalism that has evolved into pack journalism, has put this kind of journalism in jeopardy over time. High content similarity amongst the news items in all the content-analysed newspapers is one of the alarming effects of this. The same narrative was published in multiple newspapers using exact identical paragraphing and phrase structures, according to this study. It was noteworthy that the headlines had a minor twerk but had distinct bylines. This implies that the journalist has only slightly altered a small percentage of the news content, which was most likely provided by news sources already in news format. This practice is 'sloppy and a lazy form of newsgathering' (Arant & Meyer, 1998; Matusitz & Breen, 2007, p. 6). To understand why this is evident in NSIP news report, the journalists were asked to explain the reason for this high level of similitude:

> "Most times, when you see a story coming out of a statement, you might have that kind of circumstance because then you're not the source of the entire report you

> have a statement to work on so when you have a statement, you don't want to just send it in just like that, you have to make adjustments in headline" [R01 of NP01].

In the above interview excerpt, the journalist discusses the process of working with statements to create news stories. The journalist highlights that when a story is based on a statement, there are certain circumstances that come into play. Specifically, the journalist suggests that in such cases, they are not the original source of the entire report but rather have a statement to work with. Second, as a proactive and professional attitude to work, the journalist highlights the significance of changing the headline while working with a statement, acknowledging that conveying the statement alone would not be sufficient. The majority of the report from the contents does not, however, indicate that any effort was made to verify the statements or quote other sources, such as beneficiaries, analysts, opposition views, or expert opinion. News stories from a certain period of reporting them strongly imply that they were syndicated and published mostly as they had been sent by government sources.

Additionally, the journalist talks about how various media outlets and organisations frequently look for aspects of a statement that support their agendas in the following excerpt.

> "…most times when it is a statement, people look for different angles that interests their organisation from that statement, you'll look after reading it, okay that one looks stronger for my medium that's why you see different headlines but then the content is coming from the same statement, you're likely not… except you want to produce your own statement different from what you've been given.

From the excerpt, the journalist emphasised that while various headlines may emerge, the content ultimately stems from the same statement, unless a media outlet decides to obtain from opposing source, which the content analysis study noted was evident in opposition news reports.

The journalist said:

> "…as a matter of fact, the medium might decide to take their lead from one of the reactions that ought to be trailing the subject."

Providing further details for high level of similitude, one journalist responded:

> "…something about why content in report of different media organisations look alike for instance now let us take just a statement, let's say briefing, the content will be the same because it is the same person everybody is quoting. When you've done the transcript of the briefing, you will now replace what someone has said with your own ideas, it has to be what that person have said. Only that the angle you're taking it from might be different from everybody else. If the report is coming from a particular… one source you're bound to see similarities in reports of different media organisations because the report is coming from the same source."

According to this journalist, the content in news report from different media organisations may look similar because they often quote the same person or source (which the content analyses chapter of this thesis already confirmed were mostly government sources). Although the wording might be different, the information is typically the same since it is based on the statements made by that person. Each organisation may have a different perspective or angle on the story, but the information remains consistent. If there is only one source for the report, it is likely that multiple media organisations will have similar content in their reports.

8.1.5 Impact and Reactions

8.1.5.1 Public reactions

Journalist also noted in their response that there complained "all over the place" online (e.g. social media) and offline. These reactions were triggered by different developments, for instance:

> there was the time to that some warehouses had these things, and they were decaying … bags of rice.

The warehouse referred to were some of the welfare packages that were meant to be distributed to the people but never got to them. So, this was one of such development that stirred public reactions and triggered media reports. Another journalist recalled:

> I remember even there were photographs of some remote places where they packed most of those items like rice and they were getting bad, and they never got to anybody so probably people suggested then that maybe politicians were keeping then for maybe the election. So, it generated a lot of public outcries. How can people think that way, how can people do such things, you know things like that…

In the second response, it was indirectly suggested that the packages may have been stored for the purpose of electioneering, in an attempt to appeal to voters and potentially engage in bribery or vote buying. This practice of using food items to sway vulnerable electorates during elections is not uncommon, as it was previously reported in the news during the 2015 general elections (Newsweek Magazine, 2015).

8.1.5.2 Investigative report

Investigative reports in the media play a crucial role in upholding and strengthening democracy. These reports serve as a watchdog, holding governments, businesses, and other powerful entities accountable for their actions. In a democratic society like Nigeria, the media expectation as a fourth estate, is providing a check and balance on the government and other institutions but very little could be said about Nigerian media in this regard as investigative report is discouraged among the traditional press and this finding shows that it is one of the least factors that has influence NSIP reports. For instance, media houses do not seem to be interested in investigative reports:

> You have to know whether your media house is interested (in investigative report) so that it won't be a fruitless effort.
>
> **What do you mean by that, are there some levels of permission you have to take before you start investigating?**

> Yeah. You have to… before you go on an investigative report, usually you have to seek the permission of the editor so that your effort will not be wasted, you go now, you compile everything you need and then you don't get to see the story in the paper so what's the essence of your investigative journalism.
> Your effort will just be wasted because it won't see the light of the day, so what are you doing? You're just doing it for…

The excerpt highlights absence of independence on the part of the journalist as there need to get permission from editors before embarking on an investigative report. The frustration arises from the fear that all the effort put into the investigation will be wasted if the story does not get published. This raises questions about the purpose of investigative journalism if it does not see the light of day due to various interests, such as economic or partisan/political influences. Ultimately, the journalist expresses concern about the potential futility of investigative journalism if the reports are not given the opportunity to reach the public and fulfil their intended purpose.

8.1.5.3 Grants/Awards as major driver of investigations

While the sustainability of investigative reports has been severally impacted by various interests, from economic to partisan/political, a few news media (online) who have benefitted from foreign grants have been fulfilling the ideal fourth estate roles on bringing issues too light, questioning government processes and investigation use of public funds. It is also noteworthy that these digital journalists are also motivated to embark on investigation because of the rewards they earn through awards. One of the journalists interviewed has this to say:

> most investigative stories are award based and because that award pays for instance imagine if you win a story and then you win a prize of about $10,000, which means that makes a difference to their lives. The major driver of a lot of investigative stories is grants. It's not really because it's exciting. It's not exciting again.

Two factors are noted from the above: One, investigative stories are often motivated by the potential financial rewards they bring, such as winning awards that come with substantial cash prizes. These awards can make a significant difference in the lives of journalists. Two, Grants also serve as a major driver for investigative stories, as they provide financial support. The thrill of the professional work itself may not always be the primary motivation.

8.1.5.4 Media Responsibility

However, a journalist noted that amidst all influences, media has a responsibility to play in reporting the National Social Investment Programmes because:

> it is constitutionally incumbent on the media to seek the truth and make it available to the public, so it is our duty. Of course it might not be my duty as an individual correspondent, but the media organisation knows what to do and they know who to meet.

8.2 Use of NSIP policy document as news source Reporting NSIP

Journalists and news organisations can obtain useful information from policy documents, which offer a thorough and dependable description of a government's viewpoints, guidelines, and objectives. Apart from being formal documents, policy documents are also considered as legally binding documents. Like other standard policy documents, the National Social Investment policy document should include official policies, strategies, and guidelines. This will give journalists a reliable source of information when reporting on the programmes, issues, and developments related to the NSIP. The purpose of this section is to explore how Nigerian journalists are using NSIP policy documents and to confirm their access to them. To discuss journalist's use of NSIP policy document, codes from NVivo analyses of interview transcript have been organised by cluster and then into identified themes. The themes and codes along the reference count as resent below:

Table 8.2—1: Clustered Themes of Categorised NSIP Policy Document Data

Cluster 1 **Theme 1: Accessing the NSIP Policy Document**	Cluster 2 **Theme 2: Using the NSIP Policy Document as a News Source**	Cluster 3 **Theme 3: Ensuring Accuracy in Journalism**	Cluster 4: **Theme 4: Advice for Journalists**
• Access to NSIP policy document (16) • Challenges accessing NSIP policy document. (6) • Source of NSIP policy document (2)	• Use of NSIP policy document (11) • Usefulness of NSIP policy document (15)	• How journalists ensure accuracy (6)	• Advice to other journalists on using NSIP policy documents as a news source. (5)

8.2.1 Accessing the NSIP policy document

In an effort to provide answers to this category of research question, this study inquiries about journalists' access to the National Social Investment Programmes policy documents. Access to the document is a prerequisite to its use. UNESCO has noted that high levels of information sharing, and public participation are positively correlated. As regards access to the NSIP policy document, journalist responses are reflected in the following excerpts:

> "I think I've been given one at a briefing at some point when the DG of the NSIP came to brief at the villa, in the last administration, there was this platform called ministerial briefing, it happens every Thursday."
>
> "The villa brings different government officials, every parastatal, every agency. I think there was one that the DG came with the minister of humanitarian affairs to address us, the DG had the opportunity of briefing alongside the minister. I think then they distributed some documents, and that document was one of them."

> No, I don't.

> I accessed all those things when I was doing literature review if I remember very well, I told you that's what I tried doing when I write my stories.

From the interview excerpts, it appears that one of the journalists recalls receiving a policy document from the Director-General (DG) of the National Social Investment Program (NSIP) during a briefing at the Villa, which is the presidential office. This briefing likely occurred during the previous (President Muhammad Buhari) administration's tenure. The document was distributed alongside other materials during a ministerial briefing session attended by various government officials, including the DG and the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs. However, the other journalist could not recall accessing the policy document, which they mention they attempted while writing stories. This suggests that there are policy document accessibility issues and ineffective use of the policy document in news reports.

8.2.2 Using the NSIP Policy Document as a News Source

An extensive interview with Nigerian journalists on this use of NSIP policy document as news source reveals several key findings: limited utilisation and accessibility, discrepancies between the policy document and its practical implementation on the ground. Additionally, instances were noted where the implementation significantly diverged from the document's stated objectives. Journalists mentioned the pivotal role and significance of policy documents in reporting and analysis.

First, journalists mentioned difficulties in accessing or utilising the NSIP policy document effectively. One journalist mentioned having a copy of the document but found it challenging to retrieve amidst other documents.

> "documents were given and that was one of them and the document is in my house. I cannot really place my hand on it, it is because from time to time, I have a lot of documents..."

Another journalist admitted to not making optimum use of the document due to time constraints and it not being their primary area of focus.

> "No, I don't. I accessed all those things when I was doing literature review if I remember very well..."

Journalist rarely use the NSIP policy related material. It appears that the journalist is unlikely to reuse the policy material after first use.

> "after that first day when it was given which, I cited one or two quotes from it and that's it."

Secondly, journalists highlighted discrepancies between the policy document and its actual implementation on the ground. They noted instances where the implementation deviated significantly from the stated objectives in the document.

Lack of specificity in the document regarding beneficiaries and funding allocation was noted as a challenge by one journalist, leading to difficulties in tracking and accountability.

> "You'll always know when you look at aspects of the document compared with what's on ground, they are very far afar. But implementation is never carried the way it is designed."
>
> "...one of the problems that I have with that document was lack of measuring the specific of coming out and saying okay in Ekiti State in Irepodun Local Government Mr ABC is getting this, Mr XYZ is getting that..."

Despite challenges, journalists emphasised the importance of the NSIP policy document in their reporting. They referred to it for background information, clarification of objectives, and data to reinforce their stories.

> "The information that I've always found to be most useful about those documents is the explanation of the objectives of the programme, what the programme supposed to be..."
>
> "sometimes we use the information that we get from the document especially when you want to do background for your story..."

Also, journalists acknowledged the NSIP policy document as a crucial tool for analysing and critiquing government programmes. They claimed to have used it to assess the feasibility of programme provisions and to suggest improvements or alternatives.

> "if as a journalist or an analyst, you're seeing something in the document that is not workable then it's within your responsibility to say no this is nor workable, it should be done like this and that." (Reference 6, File R08)
>
> "...when you're doing reports on a certain topic of course you don't know everything, so you have to refer to, you have to extract from this report to either reinforce what you're writing or give clarity to what you're writing..." (Reference 4, File R08)

However, content analysis findings shows otherwise as they were no significant reports that used policy document as news source. Data suggests that there were discrepancies between policy objectives and implementation realities, as well as the need for clearer guidelines and accountability measures. However, these were not clearly reported in the media, but we could obviously note pointers to this in opposition newspapers who were more critical of the government in power.

8.2.3 Ensuring Accuracy in Journalism

Ensuring accuracy for Nigerian journalists who cover NSIP which is often from the press releases and conferences held in government houses is no one journalist task. Journalists emphasise the importance of teamwork within the press crew to ensure accuracy. Multiple reporters who have been assigned to the ministry cover events and ask probing questions during interviews. One journalist mentioned,

> "thank God it is not just you that will be there, we are a Corp, a press Corp so if somebody doesn't pick the hole another person might pick the hole."

Also, journalists say they compare information provided by news source with their own observations and fieldwork to verify accuracy. They claim to strive to align what was said with what was given, ensuring that their reports accurately reflect the facts. One journalist explained,

> "You try to compare what was given, what was said, and you also look at the... you also have to do fieldwork too to balance your report."

Journalists engage directly with beneficiaries, social coordinators, ministers, and special assistants (SAs) to gather information first-hand. By conducting interviews and interrogations, they ensure the accuracy of their reporting. One journalist mentioned,

> "I speak with beneficiaries directly then I interview the social coordinators then we also interrogate the minister, we also ask SA"

Journalists emphasise the importance of verifying information independently. As one journalist stated,

> "Verification, it is actually to always verify what is written because you can't believe it 100%, you have to do your own verification as well"

8.3 Summary and Conclusion

The qualitative interviews with journalists provide an in-depth description of the NSIP and its coverage in the media. The interviews bring out some of the most crucial findings in terms of the complicated issues and potentialities of the programme and its coverage.

First, the media are worried about the NSIP's deviation from its original mandate, pointing out how corruption issues, such as serving substandard meals and embezzlement of funds, have tainted its success. Secondly, they highlight how political parties utilise the programme for their agenda, perpetuating a cycle of manipulation and misinformation. These observations

underscore the important role of the media in keeping in check those responsible for the implementation and management of the programme.

They also discuss the broader Nigerian politics environment within which government or party choices occasionally fail to benefit the people. They discover the complex pattern of power and individual interests dominating news narratives as well as opinion, revealing the battle it is to maintain independence and objectivity by the journalists.

Economic constraints and commercialisation of media outlets increase the difficulties involved in these problems, negatively impacting the quality and diversity of news coverage. Requirements to prioritise some stories over others put reporters in a challenging position, particularly with too much dependence on official statements and lack of sufficient resources to research thoroughly. Such reliance on official statements can render the profession less trustworthy while creating view diversity shortages.

Although Nigerian Journalist faces varieties of difficulties, they still remain a potential pillar of democracy and defenders of the people, striving to uncover the truth and hold power to account. They recognise the importance of policy documents like the NSIP policy but lament their unavailability and influence on news coverage. Furthermore, they also recognise that journalism is a dynamic profession, with fact-checking now being a significant aspect and with attempting to keep pace with an ever-changing media environment.

On the whole, information obtained through reports by journalists offers a general view of the NSIP and how it is reported. Despite challenges being common, including corruption, political interference, and financial constraints, there exists optimism and determination among journalists to provide their mandate to the people. By addressing these challenges and encouraging greater transparency, responsibility, and ethical journalism, there is potential for a

better, more equitable, and more efficient policy of social welfare and media practice in Nigeria. In the end, the testimonies of the journalists are a call to action of all parties to strive together for a better society.

CHAPTER NINE

9 Discussions, Summary of Findings, Conclusions, Contributions to Knowledge, Recommendations and Further Research

9.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the entire finding of this thesis. The central focus of this thesis has been to study the role of the press and Twittersphere in Nigeria. The specific context and subject issue are the NSIP. In efforts to provide a detailed understanding of the topic, the thesis was divided into three different study chapters. This division was based on the different research methods adopted for this study. Preceding the three study chapters were two literature review chapters the first review chapter presents a historical context for the study, and the second presents a more narrowed review of studies focusing on the area and subject of study.

9.2 Discussions of findings

Based on the thesis' chapter structure, discussions are presented in an orderly manner.

9.2.1 Media, politics and poverty reduction

The findings of this thesis shows that the media plays a significant role in Nigeria. This is particularly seen in its relations to the Poverty Reduction Programme in the instance of the Subject of Study, National Social Investment Programmes. This thesis noted that the Nigerian 1999 Constitution assigns to the media the crucial responsibility of holding authorities accountable. This responsibility, in the context of NSIP will ensure that there is an effective implementation of social programmes. This finding aligns with the social responsibility

theoretical frameworks which supports this thesis. The theory emphasises media's obligation in providing reliable news information and to create a platform for contributing to debates.

However, it was observed and noted that media in Nigeria still face significant challenges even in the face of these expectations. These challenges include pressures from political and economic forces in the nation. This situation echoes the political-economic theory which this thesis was also built around. This helped us understand and also to examine the power dynamics between the press, the state, and the public. Irrespective of all these challenges, there is a legal framework that exists to support accurate and fair reporting in Nigeria. This legal framework enables journalists to navigate competing interests and prioritise the public interest and good. This enablement relates to the principle of development media theory, earlier discussed as one of the theoretical frameworks for this study, where the media freedom is acknowledged but can also be restricted based on political-economic priorities and development needs.

The role of the media in shaping public understanding is observed in the body of literature reviewed in this thesis and empirical findings from this study on the NSIP shows that the media in Nigeria has the potential of shaping and influencing public understanding. The power of the mass media to affect public understanding is adequately explained by the framing theory - while this study employs content analysis, critical discourse analysis, and interviews to examine NSIP reporting, framing theory offers a crucial theoretical framework for interpreting the findings. Content analysis reveals what is being reported, CDA explores conversations on X on the development on the subject, how it is being reported and the underlying ideologies, and interviews provide insights into journalists' perspectives and processes of news production. Framing theory helps us understand the effects of these reporting choices on public perception. Media framing theory posits that the media create frames by introducing news items with predefined and narrow contextualisation. As it was explained elsewhere, this theory "suggests

explained how something (e.g. an idea, story, programme – for instance or in this instance, media stories on NSIP) is presented to the audience (called "the frame") influences how the choices people make about how to process the information (Arowolo, 2017, p. 2).

This posits that the media influence public perception by emphasising or focusing on specific aspects of an issue while leaving out others.

In addition to this, the study of X, formerly known as Twitter, as a platform where public debates and discussion of news and also a platform for expression of opinion, links us to yet another theory which shifts this study, the theory of the public sphere, which in the context of this study is called X-Sphere. This theory helps this thesis explain how the social media could function as digital public sphere thereby creating a channel for the facilitation of democratic public discourse.

Lastly, the dominance of content analysis in studying the media role in poverty reduction is seen across majority the studies reviewed at the early stage of this thesis. More particularly, the few studies on NSIP mostly use same method. What this implies is that there is a methodological gap or abandonment of other approaches. The recognition of this limitation leads to this thesis to incorporate CDA, critical discourse analysis and in-depth interviews alongside content analysis to reflect a more comprehensive approach towards understanding the complexities of media discourse and its impact on poverty reduction initiatives.

9.2.2 Previous Studies

This thesis review of the previous research focuses on dominant themes in Nigerian newspaper reporting, particularly in the context of the NSIP. The predominant finding is the frequent use of content analysis as a research approach in newspaper studies. As Shoemaker and Reese

(1996) note, content analysis enables the coding of large amounts of text into quantitative data that makes sense, which helps in categorizing news content. Similarly, a systematic review of studies confirmed that the most prevalent approach employed was content analysis, while Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was less prevalent, despite its potential to provide more contextual insight (Bednarek & Caple, 2014; Fairclough, 1995, 2010). This thesis concurs with these reports but bridges the methodological gap by wedding both content analysis, CDA and in-depth interviews (IDI) to come up with a more comprehensive picture of the media coverage of NSIP.

Another main finding relates to news sources in NSIP. The dominance of government sources is a concern given the issues over the completeness and objectivity of the news reports. Nwachukwu et al. (2021) argue that overdependence on a single source may expose the process to manipulation and distortion of narratives, which may affect the credibility of news reports. This thesis is in agreement with this observation and attempts to identify and categorise sources used in NSIP reporting to assess potential biases. The role of third-party sources in news reporting is also investigated. While the use of such sources might enrich news reports, it also creates problems of misinformation and inaccuracy, which mislead the public.

Furthermore, the role of social media, particularly X (formerly Twitter), in shaping public discourse is highlighted. X is where Nigerians engage with news and government programmes, and public opinion is formed. This thesis builds on this observation and incorporates an analysis of public engagement with NSIP-related news on X to investigate how news consumers engage with the programme.

Lastly, there is the necessity for methodological transparency. Current studies, such as Ilesanmi et al. (2022), have been faulted in this thesis review of literatures for lacking clarity in their

methodological procedure. In this thesis, this deficiency is surmounted as it specifically declares its methods for the purpose of introducing transparency, reproducibility, and strength into its findings.

In summary, while this thesis is a follow-up to existing research, it seeks to address methodological loopholes by integrating both content analysis, CDA and IDI, making the research open, and opening the area of study to online platforms. All these will go a long way in building a more nuanced image of newspaper reporting of NSIP in Nigeria.

9.2.3 Content Analysis

This thesis analysis of newspaper coverage of the dominant themes in reporting of public programmes, and by extension the NSIP, reflects disparities in ranking between various media. The most salient themes identified are funding, planning, implementation, electoral conduct, governance, government support, inclusivity, integrity, decision-making, sustainability, and the dark side like incompetence in management, corruption, politicisation, marginalisation, and vote buying.

As earlier presented in Chapter 6, this thesis identified the dominant themes and organised the at the coding stage into position and negative themes. In the same organised format, the discussion as presented below:

On the Positive Themes in Newspaper Reporting, the first dominant theme is Adequate Funding and Disbursements. Funding issues reporting is apparent to be less in the target newspapers with merely 5% of total coverage addressing the subject. Despite how important finance disbursal in government programmes is, this corroborates previous studies with evidence

indicating that Nigerian dailies do take serious issues lightly in reporting them (Adeniran et al., 2022; Erubami et al., 2021). This means that the media may not be prioritising critical discussion on resource allocation and therefore constraining public discussion on good financial management.

On the theme of Effective Design and Planning, most of the stories (27.8%) dealt with the effective planning and organisation of programmes. *The Nation* newspaper, in particular, had the greatest coverage (51.9%), indicating a high predisposition towards reporting well-conceived programmes. This discovery concurs with findings that Nigerian newspapers tend to source stories from government officials and external sources, which may play a role in the positive presentation of programme planning (Uwazuruike, 2018; Gever, 2019).

Implementation was also a prevalent theme, coded under "Effective Implementation, and Implementation" with extensive coverage (10.6%), and *The Nation* again led in coverage (19.3%). Emphasis on implementation aligns with previous studies that chronicle how Nigerian media often frame public policies in ways supporting government narratives (Odiegwu-Enwerem et al., 2021). However, the relatively low overall percentage suggests that media coverage may not be as robust in critically examining the success of programme implementation.

Management, under the content category "Good Government and Good Management Praise" was of highest priority in 17% of the total coverage, and *Daily Trust* contributed the most (30.3%). The intensity of concern about management, as compared to the other categories reviewed, is consistent with earlier work that has found Nigerian newspapers tend to have articles that are in favour of governance structures (Arowolo et al., 2023). Complementing

government officials directly was not strong (1.9%), and this reflects a balanced approach whereby papers acknowledge effective management but never over flattery officials.

When considering "Inclusivity and Diversity," inclusivity reporting was low (0.7%), which is in accordance with the absence of media attention to diversity and representation in public programmes. This finding aligns with existing scholarly work that shows Nigerian newspapers are likely to neglect critical issues related to ethnic and social inclusion (Odiegwu-Enwerem et al., 2021).

Stories with integrity, categorised under "Integrity and Non-Partisan Decision-Making" matters only accounted for 2.1% of the total coverage, and even fewer partisan choice-making at 3.5%. This line up with the broader literature, which shows that Nigerian newspapers systematically employ government sources and can therefore limit independent investigative reporting on public programmes' integrity (Adeniran & Oso, 2020).

Last on positive theme is sustainability which received only 11.8% of the coverage, with *Daily Trust* contributing the greatest percentage (21.2%). Given the importance of long-run programme success, this coverage is relatively low. Previous research has found that Nigerian newspapers are more likely to report minor policy arguments downplayed (Odiegwu-Enwerem et al., 2021).

On the other hand, Negative Themes in Newspaper Coverage, as presented included "Poor Management and Corruption." This thesis notes that negative coverage of inefficient management was relatively low (2.4%), though *Daily Trust* had the largest percentage (6.1%). Nepotism and corruption were reported even less (0.5%), which is contrary to reports of rampant corruption in Nigerian government. This is in agreement with studies that Nigerian

newspapers tend to report in favour of the government, which could lead to underreporting of corruption (Adeniran et al., 2022).

Politicisation was also a frequent occurrence, making up 10.4% of all coverage with *Nigerian Tribune* carrying the percentage at 25.2%. This is in line with studies, which reveal that Nigerian media frame public programmes in political terms, showing tendencies of partisanship (Ette & Joe, 2018).

Marginalisation coded under "Marginalisation and Discrimination" only covered 1.2% of coverage, implying exclusion issues in public programmes are hardly given attention. This is contrary to previous findings that Nigerian papers might ignore socially critical issues for social justice (Odiegwu-Enwerem et al., 2021).

Vote buying, which was coded under "Vote Buying and Bribery" was only reported exclusively in *Nigerian Tribune* (4.5%). Exclusive reporting suggests that while some newspapers report electoral malpractice, others may avoid such issues due to editorial policy or political allegiance. Research that has already been conducted has confirmed that Nigerian media frame election issues from their owners' interests (Adeniran et al., 2022).

The forgoing discussion reveals that Nigerian newspapers prioritise themes related to effective design, management, and implementation while downplaying issues of funding, inclusivity, integrity, and corruption. This pattern aligns with previous studies that suggest Nigerian media often reflect government narratives, potentially leading to selective reporting (Odiegwu-Enwerem et al., 2021). The discrepancies between newspapers, such as *The Nation* focusing on design while *Nigerian Tribune* highlights politicisation, further demonstrate how media

ownership and editorial policies influence coverage. Future research should investigate how these biases shape public perceptions of social programmes in Nigeria.

Another key aspect of this thesis findings, using content analysis shows a high reliance on government officials as lead sources in newspaper coverage of the NSIP in Nigeria. In four major newspapers—Punch, *The Nation*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *Daily Trust* - government officials accounted for 69.1% of all sources cited, with *The Nation* (88.9%) and Punch (77.8%) being particularly high in reliance. This concurs with available literature (Adeniran & Oso, 2020; Nwachukwu et al., 2021), which has proven the hegemony of the voices of official government in Nigerian newspaper news, particularly on matters of policy, thereby reinforcing state narratives at the cost of alternative perspectives (Alphonsus et al., 2022). Adeniran and Oso (2020) also found that Nigerian newspapers widely quoted government sources while covering maternal and child health issues, which evoked suspicion about the framing of news and even manipulation. Therefore, the over-reliance on government sources is problematic in terms of news framing and state intrusion into media content with less critical and independent reporting.

Meanwhile, the voices of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (4.0%), opposition party members (5.0%), and NSIP beneficiaries (2.4%) were underrepresented in NSIP news articles. This finding supports earlier studies that have criticised Nigerian newspapers for not providing diversity of voices in policy reporting, hence constraining the dissenting voices (Gever, 2019). The underrepresentation of NSIP beneficiaries is especially troubling, as it shows media coverage does not reflect the true lived reality of those directly affected by the programme. This source diversity paradox is counter to the role of the press as a channel for public debate and accountability.

Moreover, this thesis shows the use of press releases as a source of news content, with 33.4% of the stories analysed derived from official press releases. *The Nation* used press releases for 52.9% of its NSIP stories, followed by *Nigerian Tribune* (38.6%) and Punch (22.2%), which also showed considerable dependence on this type of content. This aligns with earlier studies that have shown dependence on official statements in Nigerian journalism, which is a concern for passive news reporting over investigative reporting. The widespread use of press releases suggests a preference for government-managed narratives over independent journalistic inquiry, which can hinder the press's capacity to hold policymakers accountable (Adeniran & Oso, 2020).

However, although these findings are consistent with earlier research on source dependence and government control, they also produce areas of divergence. For example, such Nigerian newspaper coverage studies (Oyewo, 2021) as have emphasised that political factors, like ethnicity, nepotism, and favouritism, influence reporting in the news and public interpretation of government statistics. This research didn't specifically measure ethnic or political biases in NSIP reporting but did find that opposition voices were heavily marginalised. This suggests that although Nigerian newspapers wouldn't necessarily document explicit ethnic bias in policy reporting, political imbalance in selection of sources remains very much alive.

Also, previous research has shown that digital platforms such as X (formerly Twitter) more and more influence public perceptions regarding policy matters in Nigeria. While this study did not focus on social media, its findings suggest that newspapers continue to employ traditional news-gathering methods with little integration of online sources. This would suggest a potential gap between online opinion and print media coverage that can be explored further by subsequent studies.

Methodologically, the use of quantitative content analysis on this study is similar to early research practice in Nigerian media research, where content analysis is a dominant method for analysing source dependency and news framing. However, this thesis argues that content analysis is not enough on its own to account for all the nuances of media framing and recommends complementing content analysis with critical discourse analysis and qualitative interviews to offer more comprehensive insights into the manner NSIP is covered.

This thesis therefore shows that although patterns of source usage can be found using quantitative information, it does not explain why journalistic choices or editorial preferences are made - hence the need for the third study chapter where journalist where interviewed on the subject which addresses this methodological gap. Similarly, the chapter on Twitter contributes by exploring how the public engages with and responds to news about the NSIP, providing a crucial layer of understanding about the broader reception and discourse surrounding the programme beyond the news media's production.

This thesis reaffirms the problem of government source dominance and press releases in Nigerian newspapers reporting on NSIP. While the findings are largely in line with current research on source imbalance and official accounts' use by the media, they also point out areas of divergence, especially in terms of the representation of opposition voices and the use of new media. To improve public discourse and journalistic reporting, Nigerian dailies must broaden their sources, place more emphasis on investigative reporting, and present a greater diversity of opinion, including from NSIP recipients and independent experts.

In addition to the above, this thesis analysis of newspaper coverage on the intent, framing, and issue reporting of the NSIP in Nigeria shows significant patterns in media representation. The data indicates a predominant focus on providing information, with limited emphasis on

education, advocacy, or critical investigative reporting. Moreover, the way stories are framed varies across newspapers, with political and economic narratives being the most common. These findings align with previous research on Nigerian media but also highlight discrepancies in thematic emphasis and prioritisation.

The majority of the stories (65.2%) were intended to inform the public, with *The Nation* having the highest share (85.3%). This aligns with earlier studies that found Nigerian newspapers often favour straight news reporting over analytical or investigative journalism (Nwachukwu et al., 2021).

The findings from the content analysis (Chapter 6) regarding the prevalence of straight news reporting in NSIP coverage can be contrasted with the priorities of specialist audiences in related fields. According to Scott et al. (2018), while assessing humanitarian news, "the four most highly valued aspects were expert analysis (58%), investigative reporting (54%), consistent coverage of ongoing crises and issues (52%) and impartial or neutral reporting (52%)" (Scott et al., 2018, p. 32). This highlights a potential gap between the typical characteristics of NSIP reporting identified in this study and the qualities valued most by informed audiences in similar sectors. However, the emphasis on information aligns with the media's traditional role as a disseminator of public policy updates. However, the relatively low coverage of educational (7.1%) and advocacy-based reporting (17.6%) suggests a gap in the media's role in fostering critical discourse and civic engagement.

The tendency for newspapers to deprioritise in-depth investigative reporting is consistent with findings from Odiegwu-Enwerem et al., who noted that Nigerian media often fail to prioritise critical security and social issues in their coverage. This suggests that while NSIP receives media attention, it is framed primarily as a policy update rather than an issue requiring scrutiny.

While considering the message Framing of NSIP Stories, this thesis found that the framing of NSIP stories was predominantly political (22.1%) and economic (16.7%), with *Nigerian Tribune* reporting the highest proportion of political narratives (60.6%). This supports previous research suggesting that Nigerian media often link public programmes to political influences, sometimes reinforcing partisan perspectives (Oyewo, 2021). Politicisation of social programmes has been identified as a key factor affecting public perception, where media coverage may either legitimise or undermine government initiatives.

Economic framing was most evident in *Daily Trust* (46%), reflecting a focus on the financial and developmental aspects of NSIP. This aligns with findings that suggest Nigerian media sometimes address economic concerns but often fail to provide deeper analysis on financial transparency (Egole, 2024) [6]. The low coverage of social (7.5%) and development-oriented (3.5%) framing indicates a gap in reporting on NSIP's broader societal impact, which could hinder public understanding of its effectiveness beyond economic and political considerations.

Also, this thesis analysed issues framing of NSIP and the result shows that issue reporting in NSIP stories was predominantly episodic (33.9%), with *Nigerian Tribune* leading in this category (65.4%). Episodic framing, which focuses on isolated events rather than broader systemic issues, is a common characteristic of Nigerian media reporting (Odiegwu-Enwerem et al., 2021). This approach may contribute to a lack of sustained public engagement with the structural challenges facing NSIP.

Thematic framing, which provides context and explores long-term implications, was significantly lower (16.2%), with Punch having the highest share (39.7%). This is consistent with previous research indicating that Nigerian newspapers rarely engage in deep investigative journalism on social policies (Adeniran & Oso, 2020) [3]. However, systemic framing, which

examines institutional and governance-related issues, was relatively high in *Daily Trust* (44.4%), suggesting a stronger focus on governance-related discussions in certain newspapers.

In summary, the findings reveal that Nigerian newspapers prioritise information dissemination over educational or advocacy-based reporting. The framing of NSIP stories is largely political and economic, with limited attention to social and developmental dimensions. Episodic framing dominates, reinforcing short-term narratives rather than systemic analysis. These patterns align with previous research highlighting Nigerian media's tendency to favour straight news reporting and political framing while deprioritising investigative journalism and long-term policy scrutiny. Addressing these gaps through more thematic and systemic reporting could enhance public understanding and accountability in social investment programmes.

9.2.3.1 Theoretical Implications and Framework.

The research findings on Nigerian newspaper reporting of the NSIP indicate a discernible trend of government control, significantly affecting the role of the media in public debate. The prevalence of government sources and press releases is a classic example of the Political Economy of Communication, where state power determines media content, suppressing alternative voices. The Political Economy of Communication theory highlights how media ownership and financial structures influence media narratives. In the Nigerian context, findings suggest that media portrayals of the NSIP are shaped by economic interests and political affiliations, leading to potential biases in coverage. The dominance of political elites in media ownership means that reporting may prioritise commercial and political interests over the public good, affecting how the NSIP is framed and understood by the public. This aligns with prior research indicating that media narratives often reflect the interests of those in control (Gunter, 2000; Salisu, 2024), thereby limiting diverse perspectives (Adeniran et al., 2022; Adeniran & Oso, 2020; Gans, 2011; Uwazuruike, 2018) and marginalizing certain voices (Nwachukwu et

al., 2021). This is, in some ways, contrary to early premises of Public Sphere Theory, which envisions a space for rational-critical debate; however, it is important to acknowledge that Habermas's initial conceptualisation was criticised for arguably prioritising the voices of society's elites and potentially overlooking marginalised groups. In this case, the underrepresentation of NGOs, opposition parties, and, most notably, NSIP beneficiaries, significantly reduces the plurality of voices essential for a truly inclusive and informed public discourse. The deprivation of beneficiary opinions is particularly significant, undermining the very purpose of development programmes. Public Sphere Theory, as conceptualised by Habermas, in his work on the structural transformation of the public sphere, emphasises the ideal of a space for rational-critical debate, an ideal that has been extensively applied by subsequent scholars to analyse the role of media in fostering democratic participation. This thesis finds that social media platforms, particularly Twitter (now X), serve as contemporary digital public spheres where discussions on NSIP occur outside traditional media constraints. While mainstream media is influenced by political and economic forces, social media provides an alternative space for public engagement and accountability.

This finding supports the argument that digital platforms, particularly Twitter (now X), can function as a significant, albeit complex and contested, space relevant to the public sphere in Nigeria. It enables a wider array of voices to participate in shaping public narratives and influencing governmental actions (see this thesis' second study chapter: Discourse Analysis of Nigerian Xsphere on NSIP).

For instance, the #EndSARS movement in 2020, which gained significant momentum on Twitter, demonstrated how citizen-led discourse online could translate into real-world protests and force the Nigerian government to acknowledge and respond to demands for police reform. Similarly, the consistent use of Twitter by Nigerians to scrutinise government policies and

expose alleged corruption, often using specific hashtags, creates a form of digital accountability that can pressure authorities to address public concerns. Furthermore, government agencies and officials themselves actively use Twitter to disseminate information and engage with citizens, indicating its recognition as a vital space for public communication, even if this engagement is sometimes met with criticism and demands for greater transparency (Official Twitter accounts of Nigerian government agencies, e.g., @NCDCgov).

However, it is important to acknowledge the ongoing debate about the extent to which platforms like Twitter fully embody the ideals of the public sphere. While they facilitate participation and can exert influence, concerns remain about issues such as:

i. **Echo chambers and filter bubbles:** The algorithmic curation of content can lead to users being primarily exposed to information that confirms their existing biases, potentially limiting exposure to diverse perspectives.
ii. **Fragmentation:** Online discourse, such as on X, can be fragmented and polarised, making it difficult to achieve the kind of rational-critical debate envisioned by public sphere theorists.
iii. **Manipulation and disinformation:** The spread of misinformation and coordinated manipulation campaigns can undermine the quality of public discourse and erode trust in information.
iv. **Power imbalances:** While Twitter can amplify marginalised voices, it is also subject to power dynamics, including the influence of elites, political actors, and platform owners.

Therefore, while Twitter exhibits characteristics of a public sphere by enabling public discourse and influencing government, it also presents challenges that raise questions about its inclusivity, rationality, and overall democratic potential. It may function as a barometer of public opinion and a space for activism, but its role in shaping government action is complex and contingent, rather than a guaranteed outcome.

Secondly, this thesis documents how media impact and agenda-setting are manipulated. The agenda-Setting Theory posits that media influence public perception by selecting and prioritizing issues. The ubiquitous presence of government officials makes Agenda-Setting

possible, with newspapers prioritising official views to shape public opinion. The use of press releases also facilitates this, allowing the government to shape the NSIP. This capability to manipulate, especially in contentious issues, follows Framing Theory, where government explanations are favoured, excluding others. This also erodes Development Media Theory as the top-down approach and disavowal of beneficiary perspectives are stifling empowerment and social change. Similarly, further findings on the intent, framing, and issue reporting of the NSIP shows that Nigerian media play a crucial role in shaping public and policymaker views on poverty alleviation programmes like NSIP. By determining which aspects of the programme receive attention, media outlets can influence public discourse and policy focus. This supports McCombs and Shaw's view that media act as a bridge between reality and public perception, often shaping discussions based on editorial priorities rather than objective necessity.

Framing Theory, one of the theoretical frameworks for this thesis, explores how media presentation affects audience interpretation. This thesis reveals that NSIP coverage is framed in ways that reflect broader systemic influences, such as political interests and economic priorities. By emphasising certain narratives – such as success stories or failures – media outlets shape public understanding and sentiment towards the programme. This finding aligns with research suggesting that framing can significantly impact audience perception by highlighting specific aspects of an issue while downplaying others.

Development Media Theory argues that media should support national development objectives. This thesis' findings indicate that while Nigerian media do report on NSIP's role in development, their coverage is often influenced by political and economic constraints, limiting their ability to function as a purely developmental tool. This suggests a gap between the theoretical ideal of development-oriented media and the realities of media practice in Nigeria,

where commercial interests and political affiliations may take precedence over developmental concerns.

Finally, the study reveals a breakdown in journalistic responsibility. The Social Responsibility Theory, another framework adopted for this thesis emphasises the ethical duty of the media to serve the public interest. The revealed imbalance contradicts Social Responsibility Theory, with an absence of delivering balanced news and reflecting diverse voices. The prominence of press releases over investigative journalism also negates this principle. The research also looks towards the shifting media environment with increasing power given to digital arenas such as X and refers to a difference between conventional public spheres and virtual ones. On the methodological front, research focuses on supporting quantitative content analysis with qualitative analysis, such as critical discourse analysis, in order to capture thoroughly the nuances in journalistic decisions and media framing.

In conclusion, these theoretical findings show complex interplay between economic factors, political influences, media agenda-setting, public discourse, and social responsibility in shaping narratives about the NSIP. While social media offers alternative spaces for discussion, traditional media remain constrained by ownership structures and economic priorities. These insights reinforce the need for critical media literacy and structural reforms to ensure that media fulfil their role in supporting informed public discourse and national development

9.2.4 Critical Discourse Analysis

The second study chapter of this thesis focuses on Critical Discourse Analysis of conversation about NSIP on X (formerly Twitter). From the study, one of the key qualitative findings of the CDA research is the function of *ideology in constructing discourse* around the NSIP in Nigeria.

The Role of Ideology in Discourse on NSIP

The examination of discourse on X (previously Twitter) shows that participants tend to construct NSIP in ideological terms, either as a successful government policy or as a failed policy motivated by political interests. This is consistent with Fairclough's (1995, 2010, 2014) contention that discourse is in itself ideological and used to sustain or challenge power relations.

Equally, Van Dijk (1993) highlights the ways in which ideologies are embedded within language and help shape public opinions of social policy. This thesis CDA chapter noted that government-owned accounts and allies often used positive lexical options like "empowerment," "poverty alleviation," and "economic transformation" to enforce a positive perception of NSIP. On the other hand, opposing voices used words like "mismanagement," "political propaganda," and "failed promises" to challenge the effectiveness of the programme.

These addresses prior research (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996) on media discourse and stresses how economic and political interests shape public storytelling but in Nigerian context. This thesis relies on this previous work by highlighting how such ideologically charged fights make their presence felt in the discourse of social media, as well as in how online portals serve as places for affirming and challenging narratives.

The Use of Language and Lexical Choices in Shaping Perceptions

Another significant finding is about the strategic use of language and lexical choices in X discourse around NSIP. The perceptions of various stakeholders about the programme were mostly shaped not only by their word choices but also by different rhetorical moves made by various players. Government communications tended to employ optimistic and affirmative language, countered by sceptical and confrontational tones from the critical voices.

This observation supports the findings of Bednarek and Caple (2014) that language plays a vital role in the construction of media narratives, especially in political and policy discourse. This thesis combines and uses the methodology put forward by Fairclough (1995, 2010, 2014) and Cummings et al. (2020), which point out the need to analyse the relationship between textual features and their wider socio-political contexts.

For instance, government representatives commonly employed collocations in their tweets such as "efficient implementation" and "positive impact," further reinforcing NSIP as an implementable policy. The opposing voices, however, stressed phrases like "corruption" and "unaccountable spending," casting NSIP in disparaging light as ineffective and poorly managed. This corroborates existing literature stating that government and media actors deliberately shape language to legitimise or delegitimise certain policies (Richardson, 2007; Porto, 2007).

Public Engagement and Accountability Through Social Media

This thesis reaffirms that social media served as a tool for the people to engage and hold the government accountable concerning NSIP. Largely, it was found that citizens used the X to counter the narratives put forth by the government, demand transparency, and share direct accounts of their experiences concerning the programme.

This finding backs previous attempts at identifying social media as an important instrument for civic engagement for both developing and developed democracies (Akerele-Popoola et al., 2022; Hari, 2014). The interactivity of X is real-time; hence, citizens could counter official claims and tend to share their counter-narratives.

Several tweets analysed responded directly to government announcements, with users creating counter-narratives and demanding NSIP impact evidence.

This aligns with Public Sphere theory's emphasis on digital platforms' potential for deliberative democracy (Habermas, 1989). However, while these tweets show Twitter's use for public discourse and accountability, challenges such as misinformation and polarisation, prevalent in recent social media discourse studies, also complicate the actual impact on government. Also, the actual impact on government requires considering the distinction between expression and influence, direct vs. indirect effects, and selective government responsiveness. Further research is needed to analyse how online discourse translates into political impact.

Methodological Implications and the Need for a Mixed-Methods Approach

The findings emphasise the importance of mixed methods approaches combining Content Analysis with CDA and interviews (IDI) with journalists to obtain a comprehensive insight into media discourse on NSIP.

Whereas CDA provided better insights into ideological structures and linguistic strategies, Content Analysis gave a systematic approach to quantifying media representations. The approach thus constitutes an answer to the methodological gap which previous literature has revealed, in that most studies of Nigerian newspaper reporting relied on Content Analysis with virtually no integration of CDA (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). This thesis CDA study chapter reinforced the argument that CDA affords researchers a more informed contextual analysis than purely quantitative methods as presented in the first study chapter 6. More so, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is particularly valuable for analysing Twitter/X discourse because it allows for the examination of how power dynamics and social inequalities are expressed and negotiated

within online interactions about the NSIP. Using CDA to analyse the language and narratives used in tweets, this thesis also seeks to reveal how Twitter/X functions as a space where citizens engage with, challenge, or reinforce dominant discourses surrounding the programme.

The application of Fairclough's (1995, 2010, 2014) CDA framework, for instance, enabled thesis to disclose implicit biases and power dynamics in X discourse on NSIP, which may have gone unnoticed by Content Analysis only. This goes to strengthen the case for triangulation in media research, especially in the context of politically sensitised fields.

CDA Findings and their Connection to Content Analysis

- **Government Power and Authority in NSIP Discourse:** One insight that emerged from CDA is the modality of government discourse relating to NSIP and its proclamation of power and authority with high regard for anti-corruption measures. The government deploys language that affirms its assurance for transparency in the management and implementation process of the NSIP while positioning itself on the agenda relating to NSIP. Such discourse manifests in statements that emphasise fraud prevention and accountability mechanisms, at positioning the government as a reasonable actor (Akerele-Popoola et al., 2022; Hari, 2014).

  In juxtaposition with the Content Analysis findings, it is clear that newspapers have been reporting a government statement regarding the NSIP, therefore reproducing official narratives without much critical work on their part. Content Analysis obviously points out government press releases and official statements that make a high percentage of newspaper coverage and reflect an alignment of media coverage with state discourse (Bednarek & Caple, 2014; Fairclough, 1995, 2010; Geçer, 2018). This finding directly

supports the observations made in Chapter 2 regarding the dominance of government narratives in the Nigerian media. However, it contradicts the assumption presented in Chapter 3, which posits a relatively balanced and independent media landscape.

- **Public Criticism and Scepticism Towards NSIP**: The public are overtly sceptical of the NSIP and are dimly critical of digital discourse, especially on X. Citizens question the effective promotion of these schemes by the government on many grounds that include ineptness, corruption, and negligible value of the NSIP intervention at individual beneficiary level. There are many discussions revolving around the alleged inconclusiveness of "Petty Cash for Petty Traders" and allegations of vote-buying surrounding NSIP.

  Supporting previous evidence, the Content Analysis study finds that journalistic reporting on NSIP criticisms is often infrequent or superficial, particularly when compared to government reports. This pattern points towards a potential journalistic tendency to rely more on easily accessible government sources than on investigating and detailing criticisms. Quantitative textual analysis suggests that critical frames are sometimes repressed or framed to downplay public discontent (Van Dijk, 1993; Richardson, 2007). The assertion in Chapter 3 that the media operates as a watchdog is not supported by this finding. Instead, the evidence here strengthens the argument from Chapter 2, which suggests a tendency for Nigerian newspapers to reflect the government's agenda.

- **The Role of Social Media in Shaping Discourse**

Another important finding from this thesis CDA is the role of social media, especially X, in shaping alternative narratives about NSIP. Unlike the traditional media, which is dominated by elite sources, power holders (Ali, 2021), government narrative and agenda, social media (particularly X) provide a space for dissenting voices. According to the CDA, it is revealed that language on X includes other emotional expressions of frustration, narrative testimony about hardship, and request for third-party monitoring of NSIP (Dyer & Hakkola, 2020).

While Content Analysis has found that the newspapers adopt a more structured and formal approach towards policy announcement, budget allocations, and official evaluations, social media discourse has more immediacy, interactivity, and reflectiveness of the grassroots concerns. The comparison is further revealing of the gulf that lies between institutional narratives and citizen experiences. The findings subsequently reinforce the importance of social media as a counterbalance to mainstream media coverage (Porto, 2007; Graham & Luke, 2011). This, of course, corresponds with the discussions in Chapter Two regarding the transformative power of digital media, which contradicts the perspective shared in Chapter Three regarding the traditional media providing a major source of public information in Nigeria.

9.2.4.1 Theoretical Implications and Framework.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) also had significant theoretical implications on different media theories such as the Political Economy of Communication, Public Sphere Theory, Agenda Setting Theory, Framing Theory, Development Media Theory, and Social Responsibility Theory. These insights help this thesis understand how power and discourse work to shape public perception about political narratives.

Contributing to the Political Economy of Communication, these CDA findings corroborate the point that media coverage is essentially influenced by economic and political forces. Political Economy of Communication theory highlights how the ownership of the media, their funding avenues, and affiliate relationships can play an essential role in deciding on the framing and distribution of narratives. This thesis CDA study affirms that commercial interests and the presence of political elitism often steer the narratives in the media, resulting in biased or selective reporting on public policies such as the NSIP. Moreover, the ownership of the media in Nigeria has been subjected to some monopoly by the political and economic elites, which acts negatively towards the diversity and impartiality of coverage. These results are consistent with other literature findings that suggest that media do not function independently (Agbaje, 1990; Olayiwola, 1991) but are shaped under the aegis of economic and political constraints (Apuke, 2016) dictating what is said or not said in the public debate.

Secondly, the concept of the public sphere theorised by Habermas is crucial for understanding how media discourse fosters or constrains democratic involvement. This thesis CDA findings indicate that media platforms, particularly social media, afford spaces for public dialogue, but dominant interests shape them to determine which narratives get visibility. The CDA study suggests that public sphere dialogue on NSIP is thus undertaken in partially closed or exclusive networks, as structural inequalities in media access and representation often silence marginalised voices. This supports the idea that while the media may have the potential to offer a platform for deliberation, they are equally restricted by political and economic forces that inhibit participatory discourse from thriving.

Next is the agenda-Setting Theoretical framework as comprehensively discussed and adapted for this thesis holds that media play a role in what the public considers to be important issues.

The CDA findings indicate that, in fact, certain narratives about NSIP completely dominate media coverage, customarily this reflects the interest of powerful stakeholders rather than the general public. Through the analysis of content on X, this thesis shows how the public uses X to engage and analyse both government and media agenda with an explicit criticism of the media pointing the shortcomings of their editorial choices and journalistic practice as well as conspiracy with government official to bring only government narrative to the forefront, while allowing the public opinion fade into the background. The people through the social media were able to response to government and media agenda with what may pass as the 'public agenda' – their interest, views, demands and realities. This shows the agenda-setting role of media, that selection and focus on particular themes determine public perception.

The fourth theoretical framework, framing also discussed in Chapter 4, helps explain how issues are presented for audiences via media discourse, therefore influencing how those issues are interpreted and understood. The result from this thesis CDA indicate that NSIP is framed in ways that align more so with political and economic interests, often celebrating government successes while mitigating criticisms. The CDA study also reveals the manner in which arguments, word choice, images, and rhetorical strategies are employed to create either the favourable or unfavourable representation of the programme, thereby further influencing public opinion and policy discussion. The decision of how to frame these issues is non-neutral one, with an obvious wide-ranging structural and institutional influences.

Development Media Theory, the fifth theoretical framework that shapes this thesis, highlights the media's contribution to national development. The result of this thesis findings shows that discourses in the media on NSIP are oriented toward development but always constrained by economic and political influences which inhibit critical engagement. The highlight of this thesis

CDA study is such that, while media narratives sometimes ride alongside government policies in NSIP, they scarcely do any monitoring of their effectiveness or impact, raising a question about the independence of journalism in developmental reporting. This means media may be manipulated to become custodians to propagate development, but they are overwhelmed by pressures that actually undermine their role as the watchdogs.

Lastly, the Social Responsibility Theory educates that media should really act to serve the public interest providing authentic, rich, and ethical communication. The of the CDA is such that while some media practitioners recognised that this was their responsibility, they were not always able to handle this due to political and economic constraints (See Chapter 8: In-depth Interview with Nigerian Journalists for more details). It examines whether journalists cover these themes in an impartial and critical manner; however, in fact, the media discourse is constantly subject to constraints from institutional pressures that, indeed, can affect journalistic independence. Through media content analysis and journalist interviews, it surfaces the ethical challenges posed to reporting on public policies, amidst a growing need for media accountability.

In conclusion, the CDA qualitative findings confirmed arguments that discourses are ideological and the strategic use of language to construct public policies. This also supports the advantages of interplaying CDA with other forms of analysis such as Content Analysis and In-depth Interviews. Most especially, triangulating CDA with Content Analysis brings in a systematic understanding of media coverage, exposing trends such as the prevalence of governmental narratives, and reinforces power dynamics and contestations shaping public perception through CDA's exploration of linguistic and ideological aspects. Methodological triangulation here, as noted in Chapter 5, answers the challenge posed by relying on just Content

Analysis, including aspects put forward in Chapter 3 as a loophole indicated by past studies. In addition, CDA findings show that media discourse is characterised by structural influences, confirming theoretical frameworks such as Political Economy of Communication, Public Sphere Theory, Agenda-Setting Theory, Framing Theory, Development Media Theory, and Social Responsibility Theory. This thesis combines these findings with existing scholarship in advancing knowledge on media, politics, and public discourse and broadening the interplay between media, power, and society while also positing conclusions on broader implications for governance, public accountability, and citizen engagement.

9.2.5 In-depth Interviews

The qualitative data collection from the in-depth interviews with the journalists proffers useful insights into their reporting practices on the NSIP. Key themes emerging from this study include reliance on literature reviews and online research, sourcing information from different institutions, the disparity between policy objectives and media reporting, limitations on independent investigative journalism, and teamwork as a means of ensuring accurate reporting. Each of these themes is discussed in light of relevant academic literature, with attention to how they concur with or diverge from the existing literature.

One of the findings from the interviews was that journalists use 'literature reviews'[41] and online research to collate background information before writing on NSIP, contextualising their reports and sharpening their angles of writing the stories. This finding reinforces previous findings that underline the function of the literature review in journalism. Deuze (2005) found that journalists were paying growing attention to online sources and literature reviews for

[41] What this mean in this context by the journalist that mentioned it is that they review secondary sources (e.g. documents, previously published stories, press release, reports, etc.)

corroborating facts and thereby enhancing the quality of the piece. Singer (2010) also argued that the use of new digital tools and online databases changes the way journalistic work is undertaken, allowing the reporter to harness this rich information base very rapidly. While such use of literature reviews is obvious, this finding further seems to indicate that journalists do not conduct field investigations, which conflict with proper journalistic practice for collecting primary data (Tuchman, 1972). This inconsistency calls into question and raises concerns regarding the depth of investigative journalism in Nigeria, particularly on policy-related matters such as NSIP.

Journalists report sourcing information from diverse sources, including government ministries, professional bodies, civil society organisations, and the private sector. This is also in accordance with news sourcing literature, which suggests that journalists utilise institutional sources for credibility (Gans, 1979). Hall et al. (1978) also argue that journalists prefer to use official sources, reinforcing prevailing frames while potentially avoiding alternative voices.

This finding suggests that Nigerian journalist's coverage of NSIP operate within the conventional journalistic norm of obtaining information from authoritative sources. But it also raises questions about whether or not journalists are applying sufficient critical scrutiny or whether they are unwittingly reinforcing government narratives, particularly when independent investigative reporting is limited.

The IDI findings show that while NSIP policy documents have clearly outlined goals, but media reports do not always reflect the implementation realities. There is an observable gap between programme intentions and press reporting. The result is consistent with media framing literature, which suggests that journalists frame issues on the basis of editorial instructions or political imperatives, not objective policy analysis (Entman, 1993).

Furthermore, the policy differences underreporting is also in line with previous studies of media coverage of governance issues in Nigeria. Abba-Aji et al. (2021) note that Nigerian newspapers often overlook thorough corruption analysis in the health sector, which aligns with comparable reporting deficits in NSIP reporting. This lends support to the argument that investigative coverage of social policies remains in short supply, perhaps due to political pressures or editorial constraints.

Another important finding is that the journalists are under constraint to carry out independent inquiry into NSIP. There were some respondents who said that they are under pressure both politically and institutionally not to be able to critically examine the programme without hindrance. This is consistent with the academic research on media repression and press liberty in Nigeria. Ojebode (2013) highlights how journalists are subjected to political constraints, thus preventing them from reporting objectively on government programmes. Similarly, Nyamnjoh (2005) discusses how freedom of the press in Africa is consistently eroded by state and commercial interests, affecting investigative reporting.

This is in line with the broader literature on press limitations in authoritarian and semi-democratic regimes, where media institutions censor themselves not to be penalised (Schudson, 2003). This finding is proof of an increased demand for greater media autonomy in a bid to obtain effective and critical reporting of such public policies as NSIP.

Additionally, journalists pointed to collaboration as central in fact-checking, particularly in coverage of NSIP. They mentioned that factuality is largely sustained through collaboration with colleagues, other reporters in other places, and professional networks. The outcome is confirmed by research into journalistic fact-checking practices. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2014)

argue that verification is the essence of journalism, and that collaborative reporting enhances the credibility of news reports.

But while cooperation is necessary, the lack of independent investigative effort means reliance on institutional sources at the expense of ground-level verification. This is partially opposite the ideal model of investigative journalism, which prioritises first-hand collection of data and critical analysis (Carlson, 2017).

Other significant points of discussion include:

Concerns on Corruption and Political Interference in NSIP Reporting

One of the most significant findings is that the journalists document instances of corruption in the NSIP, including serving substandard food and embezzlement of funds. They also highlight how political parties use the programme for their agenda, often turning it into a political tool rather than a social investment. This finding shows the significance of journalism in documenting corruption and holding government officials accountable. But it also reveals the challenge that journalists face to obtain reliable information to support claims of mismanagement.

Issues of Information Verification and Access to Policy Documents

Journalists emphasise the need for independent verification since they acknowledge they cannot solely rely on reports. A journalist stated, "You can't believe it 100%, you have to do your own verification as well". This demand for verification despite that, journalists report hindrance in accessing NSIP policy documents, which affects their ability to critically examine the

programme implementation. The limited access and openness of official documents show systemic barriers that inhibit investigative reporting on NSIP.

Selection of NSIP Aspects to Report on is Often Random

This thesis finds that there are no set standards by which journalists decide which parts of NSIP should be reported. Reporters report items they believe are most deserving of coverage and tend to specialise in prominent sectors like Tradermoni, Npower, and School Feeding. This implies media reports might not fully capture the entirety of NSIP, or that the presentation of the programme could be out of balance. Prioritisation of certain points over others could be based on editorial priorities, audience appeal, or external pressure.

Time and Resource Constraints in Newsroom Operations

Journalists are aware that while extensive coverage is best, the need for news production to be prompt usually jeopardise how much they can investigate NSIP issues in-depth. One of the interviewees clarified, "It may not be deep; it may not be extensive if it is news reporting." The point here is the challenge of balancing investigative depth with the immediate demands of news cycles, which may mean superficial treatment of such significant social programmes.

Reliance on Institutional and Government Sources

One of the themes running through much of the IDI study's findings is that journalists tend to refer to information in government ministries, social coordinators, and government spokespersons in reporting on NSIP. Even though these sources carry weight, they can potentially bring bias in that government agents have a personal stake in positive reporting of

the programme. Relying on institutional sources reflects broader concerns over media autonomy and the capacity for government narratives to dominate coverage.

Low Frequency of NSIP News Analysis

Result from this third study chapter also examines how often NSIP is covered by the news and the forms employed in reporting. It finds that news coverage of NSIP is quite regular but in-depth analysis of the news is not so common. Journalists cite restrictions such as editorial agendas, audience demands, and time pressures as factors which influence the extent of their reporting. This means that while there is media attention to NSIP, there may be few critical in-depth pieces that examine its long-term impact.

9.2.5.1 Theoretical Implications and Framework.

Findings from the in-depth interviews (IDI), like Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), provide a complex understanding of how media narratives in Nigeria are shaped by political and economic elites, framing activities, and the influence of digital media on public discourse. The combination of these methodologies helps this thesis evaluate the implications of these findings for the Political Economy of Communication, Public Sphere Theory, Agenda-Setting Theory, Framing Theory, Development Media Theory, and Social Responsibility Theory which discussed below:

Fo the Political Economy of Communication theory posits that media content is shaped by ownership structures, finance models, and political affinities. This thesis' IDI findings strongly support this theory's assertion because journalists attested to the fact that editorial decisions on the NSIP were informed by political and economic interests. Government-aligned papers

covered NSIP as a success, often highlighting poverty-reduction initiatives, while opposition and independent media highlighted inefficiency and corruption allegations.

This is in line with Ette and Joe (2018), who observed that Nigerian newspapers framed Boko Haram differently from social media due to institutional constraints and ownership. Similarly, the CDA revealed that government discourses were more prevalent in mainstream media, whereas Twitter (X) provided a platform for alternative, often critical, discourses. This division of print and new media substantiates the argument that economic and political agendas determine stories in the media, limiting diversity in the media within the mainstream news.

According to the argument of Habermas, Public Sphere Theory believes that media has to offer open and inclusive discussion. Results from the interview with Journalists, however, disagree with this ideal because access to media discussion in Nigeria is often closed by economic and political barriers. The in-depth interviews revealed that journalists operate under constraints that deny critical reporting, where editorial policy aligns with ownership rather than public interest.

While platforms like Twitter (X) provide other spaces of debate, CDA findings confirm that these spaces are also co-opted by influencers, media, and political elites, but not grassroot voices. This accords with Obi-Ani et al. (2020), who theorised that social media enables the rapid spread of information but is not necessarily synonymous with equal voice in public debates. Therefore, although digital platforms expand the public sphere, their availability and impacts are not balanced, entrenching present power structures.

Considering Agenda-Setting Theory which proposes that media will shape public perception by determining which issues attain a dominant status. This IDI study further disclosed that the

editorial decisions concerning NSIP coverage stemmed from both political directives and commercial interests. Newspaper journalists indicated that reporting aspects such as funding and programme reach, were prioritised in government-aligned newspapers whereas the concerns of transparency and effectiveness were left to independent media. This finding is related to Abba-Aji et al.'s work, which states that, Nigerian newspapers selectively framed corruption in the health sector, consequently shaping the public discourse on the issue.

Also, CDA results illustrate that these discussions quite frequently set alternative agendas, pushing hashtags and viral content to shed attention to issues overlooked by traditional media. This, therefore, exemplifies the maturing agenda-setting where digital spaces, sometimes, can challenge the priorities of mainstream news outlets.

Another theoretical framework, Development Media Theory argues that media should support national development goals. Finding from interview with journalist suggest partial validation of this theory, as government-aligned newspapers framed NSIP as a developmental success, reinforcing state narratives. However, independent journalists and social media discussions frequently challenged this perspective, arguing that critical reporting is essential for accountability and sustainable development.

This tension is reflected in Abba-Aji et al. (2021), who found that Nigerian newspapers framed corruption in the health sector as a structural issue, demonstrating that development-focused reporting can sometimes obscure systemic problems. The findings indicate that while some media outlets adhere to the principles of Development Media Theory, others resist state-centric narratives, advocating for investigative journalism and public accountability.

Lastly, Social Responsibility Theory posits that the media have an ethical duty to serve the public interest. The IDI findings revealed mixed adherence to this principle, as some journalists expressed a commitment to ethical reporting, while others noted that financial constraints and political pressures compromised journalistic integrity.

9.3 Summary of Findings

The following subheads summarise the findings, conclusions, then a few recommendations are made at the end of the chapter.

9.3.1 Review of Literature

The first review chapter of this thesis emphasise the vital role of the media in Nigeria. Beyond mere reporting, the media, as the 1999 constitution require them, is expected to play crucial watchdog role, holding authorities accountable and contributing to poverty reduction agendas in Nigeria. One of such is a big government poverty reduction programme like the NSIP. This means they keep a close watch on what the government is doing and make sure they are doing it right. Also, in Nigeria, the media faces a lot of challenges. They often must deal with pressures from politicians and people with a lot of money who want things to be reported in a certain way (Agbaje, 1990; Olukotun, 2004). Despite these challenges, there are laws in place to help the media do their job properly. These laws are meant to make sure that the news is reported accurately and fairly.

However, it is not always easy for journalists despite the provisions of these legal frameworks. They sometimes must make tough decisions about what to report and how to report it. This can be especially tricky when there are competing interests at play. So, it is crucial for journalists to always think about what is best for the public and try to report the truth as accurately as

possible. Lastly, the research review shows that the media in Nigeria have a crucial role in holding the government accountable and could serve as a tool in helping to reduce poverty by making sure that important programmes like the NSIP are implemented effectively and transparently.

The second review shows that content analysis research method dominates the area of study with over 87% of the literatures reviewed using the method. This review, therefore, note a methodological gap which this thesis subsequently set out to address by introducing the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and In-depth Interview (IDI) methods along with Content Analysis.

Some of the main findings from the review include:

i. Nigerian newspapers lack comprehensive reporting and tend to oversimplify complex news and- events (Akinro & Zeng, 2017, p. 426).
ii. News articles heavily rely on quoted sources, and the government exerts control over traditional media reports (Akinro & Zeng, 2017, p. 426).
iii. The Nigerian media demonstrates poor agenda-setting roles and mainly provides episodic news coverage (Erubami et al., 2021b).
iv. News sources are imbalanced and limited, with politicians and public officials dominating as sources of information (R. Adeniran et al., 2022; R. Adeniran & Oso, 2020; Mbamalu, 2020; C. A. Nwachukwu et al., 2021; Uwazuruike, 2018).
v. There is a high-level reliance on government sources (Uwazuruike, 2018)
vi. Some studies lack explicit methodological details, with many providing only brief descriptions.
vii. Majority of published stories were straight news (Gever & Essien, 2019; Nwabueze & Egbra, 2016; C. Nwachukwu et al., 2021), and there is a de-prioritisation of certain news topics (Odiegwu-Enwerem et al., 2021).
viii. There is a propagation of misleading and inaccurate information in the media (Ilesanmi et al., 2022).
ix. The emergence of social media platforms like Twitter provides an alternate platform for Nigerians to express their views and engage in public communication.
x. Social media platforms offer advantages over legacy press in terms of public feedback and inclusivity.
xi. However, voices on social media are not always representative of the experiences of most Nigerian people.
xii. Public opinion on social media provides opportunities to explore disagreements between different perspectives.
xiii. Nigerian social media users are proactive, inclusive, and freely engage in discussions on diverse topics.

Regarding studies focusing on the National Social Investment Programmes:

i. Challenges include poor accountability, transparency, political influence, funding issues, and lack of coordination.
ii. Respondents' express doubts about the programme's intentions and accessibility.
iii. Low participation rates are attributed to the programme's perceived lack of benefits for participants.

9.3.2 Content Analyses Study

The first study chapter focused on conducting a content analysis of news reports on the NSIP as published in Nigerian newspapers. The primary objective of the first study chapter was to address the first two research questions outlined in this thesis. These questions have been thoroughly answered in Chapter 6, and the subsequent paragraph in this summary provides a concise overview of this thesis' findings.

The first research question addressed by the method of content analyses focuses on the main themes in NSIP news reports published in Nigerian newspapers, and this study found that multiple dominant themes were present.

The analysis indicates a strong emphasis on effective design and planning as central themes across various publications. Approximately 27.8% of news reports highlight the planning and design elements of NSIP, with *The Nation* accounting for 51.9% of related reports. The *Nigerian Tribune* and *Daily Trust* also emphasised this theme with 26.8% and 10.1% coverage, respectively. However, *Punch* provides the least coverage on this theme, with only 6.3%. The varying degrees of coverage across different newspapers may reflect diverse editorial priorities or regional interests in the implementation of the programme. This finding opens opportunities for further research on media framing of social welfare initiatives in Nigeria.

On the positive side, each newspaper highlights different positive aspects of NSIP. *The Nation* focuses on effective planning and implementation, *Daily Trust* emphasises sustainability and praise for officials, and *Nigerian Tribune* offers a broader range of themes with an emphasis on management and execution.

However, there are also key areas of concern highlighted in the analysis. Transparency and accountability, lack of effective management, unsustainable practices, and politicisation of programmes and benefits emerge as negative themes.

Punch leads in coverage of the lack of transparency and accountability at 38.1% of reports, followed by *Nigerian Tribune* (33.3%) and *Daily Trust* (19.0%). *Daily Trust* also leads in coverage of poor management at 60.0%. The theme of unsustainable practices constitutes 1.4% of total publications, with *Nigerian Tribune* (50.0%) and *The Nation* (33.3%) leading in coverage. Politicisation of programmes and benefits comprises 10.4% of total stories, primarily driven by *Nigerian Tribune* (72.7%).

It is worth noting that a sizeable portion of NSIP stories (64.7%) does not focus on negative aspects of the programme. This study, however, notes that the reliance on press releases and statements from government officials may have influence and limit the depth of critique, as only 2.1% of overall NSIP stories emerge from investigative reports.

The second research question addressed by content analyse method focuses on how NSIP was represented in the news. Findings reveal that the news coverage of NSIP in Nigeria by Nigerian newspapers is diverse. Each newspaper has its own approach and intentions when reporting on NSIP. One notable aspect is the varying intents behind the news stories, with the most common

intent being to provide information. However, advocacy and education are also emphasised by some newspapers, while *Nigerian Tribune* tends to have an inclination for sensationalism.

The newspapers also employ different message framing techniques, with political frames being prevalent. Positive tones dominate the coverage across all newspapers, with *The Nation* standing out in this regard. *Nigerian Tribune* strikes a balance between positive and critical tones, while *Daily Trust* and *Punch* aim for more neutral or mixed-tone stories.

Moreover, the newspapers diverge in the frames they use to present NSIP. *Punch* and *Daily Trust* emphasise responsibility framing, while *Nigerian Tribune* covers ethical and moral considerations. *The Nation* relies heavily on press releases and investigative reporting while aiming to uncover hidden facts about NSIP.

In terms of sources quoted in the stories, government officials emerge as the primary source, particularly in *The Nation* and *Punch*. *Nigerian Tribune* demonstrates a slightly more diverse pool of sources. This reliance on government sources raises questions about the media's ability to provide a balanced perspective on NSIP.

The news coverage of NSIP in Nigeria by Nigerian newspapers varies in terms of intents, message framing, and sources. These framing are driven by a range of intertwined factors which range from partisan politics, economic interest, and social issues. Each newspaper has its own priorities and approaches, shaping readers' perceptions of NSIP. Additionally, the majority of NSIP stories were positive in their reports, with *Nigerian Tribune* leading in negative-toned stories.

9.3.3 Discourse Analysis Study

The second study chapter focuses on Critical Discourse Analyses (CDA), the chapter sought to gather qualitative insight from Nigerians' perspective. Findings from the study of twitter conversations on NSIP discourse shows some significant themes which helps us understand the varying perspectives to NSIP.

First, it is note worth that NSIP did not receive attention at the beginning of the programme commencement. This result is likened with the pattern as evidence in the content analysis chapter. This thesis argues that NSIP was not famous when it began because the Agenda Setting Model's "Public agenda" part did not do what it was supposed to. Hence, the programme did not get the public attention at the beginning.

A year after the commencement of the programme, conversation began to emerge on twitter criticising the NSIP initiative as Nigerian in various tweet claimed the programme is highly politicised. Also, this study found compelling evidence of unbalanced power relations and well as convincing evidence in tweet discourse showing Nigerian perceived bias, polarisation and a considerable number of tweets questioning the effectiveness of the programme. Result also shows that Nigerian X users were frustrated and a few used languages that convey suffering which suggest that the programme is not as effective as it was reported in the print news media. In fact, CDA data shows that NSIP was not effective in addressing what it set out to address. Content analysis, with its focus on quantifiable data, presented a more limited view, focusing on what was reported rather than how. In contrast, CDA findings, drawn from diverse sources and not subject to the same constraints of quantification, provide a richer and potentially more interpretive assessment of the programme's effectiveness, exploring the underlying discourses and power dynamics at play.

This further explain why the poverty level in Nigeria is on it increase. The analysis of public discourse data supports the theoretical argument of NSIP ineffectiveness. This finding diverges from the dominant narrative in the Nigerian press, where, with the exception of oppositional newspapers, the programme was mostly presented as effective and well-managed.

oppositional newspapers mostly reported to be effective and well-managed. Hence, this study find that X offer a more direct opportunity for immediate reaction to news on NSIP, by this power relation is influenced.

Another finding from the CDA study shows an interpretive discourse practice where X users explained the NSIP scheme as a "vote buying" strategy. Nigerian X users shared their respective disappointment with the notion that an economic and social welfare growth agenda is being used deceitfully for political gains.

Similarly, findings also shows that the programme was used to "sway voters" by the means of giving out petty cash to traders during electioneering period. Fraudulent details were also found in X discourse. They were instances of call on third party monitoring by the public and intensive engagement by X user when indices show the NSIP management is being investigated by the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC). There was also active interpretive reaction to the Wife of the president statement[42] that made the headline about the minimal impact of NSIP in certain state. A sizeable number of Niger X users connect with her in social discourse agreeing to similar reality in their state and communities. Thus, this study argues that the Nigerian Twittersphere is as vibrant, validates and is impactful as Jurgen Habermas' theory. Like Habermas' public sphere theory where 'private people come together as a public' (Habermas, 1991, p. 27) to opening and freely discourse and debate matters of public interests.

[42] "NSIP impact not felt despite huge funds budgeted" - Wife of the President

Similar to Habermas's ideal of the public sphere, the Nigerian Twittersphere (Xsphere) ideally functions as a space free from the influence of social, economic, and political status. In this regard, this study found that Nigerians on X do, to a significant extent, engage in NSIP public discourse regardless of who they are or social, economic, or political status.

In further findings, it was noted that a section of Nigeria X users highlighted the benefits of the GEEP component of the NSIP. However, these categories of tweets where from government institution, political allies/supporter or people who are already identified with the party. This tweet often also get reaction from others disapproving such statement as untrue and making inference that there will be spiritual implication based on X users' religious convictions. Additionally, discussions among X regarding MarketMoni primarily revolve around government empowerment, its impact, concerns about suspension, misuse of public funds by government officials, and issues related to loan accessibility. This study revealed a spectrum of opinions, ranging from supportive to curious or concerned.

Also, findings from Farmersmoni keywords indicate scepticism regarding the effectiveness of entire programmes design – Tradermoni, Farmermoni, and Marketmoni. Criticism is directed towards the programmes' timing and relevance, while there are also details about accessing or applying for these initiatives in the X conversation.

The findings from X discourse on the Npower component reflect concerns regarding the programme's continuity and the call for intervention from higher authorities. It found that a large population on X criticises the programme for not paying stipends. Furthermore, scepticism and allegations of embezzlement concerning the Npower programmes are notable themes within the discussions. There was also power dynamic in the discourse practice a most X users conveys feelings of being marginalised and demands answers from the higher authority.

In this context, the relationship between the government and citizens becomes evident, with the latter seeking accountability from the former for their actions and policies.

Lastly, the Conditional Cash Transfer programme discourse depicts praise and appreciation of government's efforts. The texts shows that a section of X users recognise the significance of CCT intervention in addressing poverty and some tweeted about how it has impacted them as a mean of financial support. Although, they were also conversations that shows that not everyone had the opportunity to benefit from the programme. The expression of gratitude and admiration towards the CCT government's initiatives highlights a notable disparity from Tradermoni's discourse. This acknowledgment underscores the government's authority and capability to tackle societal issues effectively through its projects, revealing significant power dynamics in play.

9.3.4 In-depth Interview Study

The last study chapter investigated further from knowledgeable journalists how and why they have reported the National Social Investment Programmes they way they have. During a virtual in-depth conversation (semi-structured interview), this study asks journalists essential questions. The journalist was selected from various newspapers who frequently reported on the NSIP or its component programmes. These journalists were initially identified from the content-analysed news stories by-lines on NSIP during the content analysis stage. This is to ensure that only journalists who had some depth of understanding and experience covering the programme.

The main findings from the IDI shows there were range of factors that affected the way the NSIPs were reported. The findings for research questions five and six were answered in thematical clusters.

The factors in thematic cluster one explains the factors that influence the way the press reported the NSIP. Some the factors according to journalist were politics (including party politics), current trends, news makers' influence, political timings, and the question of priority, significantly impacted the reporting of the NSIP.

Furthermore, findings from cluster 2 sheds light on the significant challenges faced by journalists in their coverage of the NSIPs. These challenges, including financial constraints, commercialisation, time limitations, beat restrictions, the pervasive influence of the "Brown Envelope Syndrome," and the overwhelming sense of responsibility, highlight the intricate landscape journalists navigate in their reporting. These findings illuminate the nuanced difficulties journalists encounter while striving to provide comprehensive coverage of the NSIPs, highlighting areas where improvements and support mechanisms may be necessary to ensure robust and impartial reporting.

Additionally, cluster 3 findings provide insights on the complex as well as the myriad considerations journalists must navigate when covering NSIP-related stories. From deciding which aspects to report amidst competing interests to ensuring the accuracy of information through rigorous fact-checking, journalists face a multitude of challenges. The journalists' perceptions of audience interest (or lack thereof) in NSIP coverage (Chapter 8) should be considered alongside evidence suggesting that journalists may sometimes underestimate public engagement with complex social issues. Research in the humanitarian sector, for example, indicates that "audiences are interested in humanitarian journalism – more than journalists think" (Scott et al., 2018, p. 2). This raises the possibility that a similar dynamic could be at play regarding reporting on national social intervention programmes.

Balancing bias, avoiding churnalism, and managing editorial pressures while fulfilling their duty to report further underscore the complexities involved. Additionally, the influence of news sources, reporting methods, and the planning of page allocation all contribute to shaping the final narrative. These findings provide valuable insights into the dynamic landscape of NSIP reporting and the multifaceted considerations that journalists encounter in their professional endeavours.

Lastly on influence, cluster 4 sheds light on the significant impact and varied reactions stemming from NSIP reporting. This theme underscores the pivotal role of journalism in shaping public discourse and fostering investigative efforts. Through an examination of public reactions, the pursuit of investigative reports which were found to be few across the newspapers (in this thesis content analysis study), and the influence of grants on journalistic endeavours, it becomes evident that NSIP coverage extends beyond mere reporting, playing a notable role in holding institutions accountable and fostering media responsibility.

Finding that answers research question six which asks focuses on how have Nigerian journalists utilised NSIP policy documents as sources of information for their reporting? Were also answered in clustered themes.

Three prominent themes emerged in cluster one thematic codes: firstly, issues surrounding the accessibility of the NSIP policy documents and their ineffective utilisation in news reports. Secondly, journalists faced challenges accessing the NSIP policy documents, leading to difficulties in incorporating them into their reporting effectively. Lastly, there is no defined source where journalists could obtain policy information from if they did not attend press briefings. This hindered their ability to provide comprehensive coverage of NSIP-related issues. This research also observed that the official website of the programme at the inception of this

research were not update with policy information, and it provide very scanty details and barely a year into this research the website stopped working and eventually a new website with new domain name and entirely new information with lesser details were provided. As at the date (May 15, 2024) that this study was drafted, a new website https://nsipa.gov.ng had coming soon page since its announcement. Also, as at the date (January 21, 2025) this study was proofread for submission, the website was no longer online[43].

In cluster two findings for research question six of this study, it was found that journalists often do not make optimal use of the document due to time constraints and it not being their primary area of focus. Additionally, there is a tendency among journalists to rarely use NSIP policy-related material, with little evidence of its reuse after initial utilisation. Moreover, journalists have pointed out discrepancies between the policy document and its actual implementation on the ground. Despite these challenges, journalists recognise the importance of the NSIP policy document in their reporting, considering it a crucial tool for analysing and critiquing government programmes. However, there is a gap in reporting discrepancies between policy objectives and implementation realities, as well as the need for clearer guidelines and accountability measures. These issues are more prominently addressed in opposition newspapers, which tend to be more critical of the government in power.

Findings from Cluster 3, which explores Ensuring Accuracy in Journalism, reveal journalists' claim to employ various methods to uphold accuracy in their reporting. Although this claim is not supported by the data in content analysis data. Journalists also claim they commonly compare information provided by news sources with their own observations and fieldwork to

[43] The response when the website is visited says "nsipa.gov.ng's server IP address could not be found."

verify accuracy, ensuring that their reports accurately reflect the facts; this was barely evident in the newspapers except in the oppositional newspaper like *Nigerian Tribune.* Direct engagement with beneficiaries, social coordinators, ministers, and Special Assistants (SAs) is highlighted as a key strategy for gathering first-hand information; this was noted in *The Nation* newspaper. Through interviews and interrogations, some journalists ensure the accuracy of their reporting by cross-referencing and verifying information obtained from multiple sources. However, this was evident in a very few stories.

9.4 Conclusions

In conclusion, the above findings show the role of the media in Nigeria, emphasising the need for accountability and transparency in reporting, especially regarding government programmes like the National Social Investment Programmes. Irrespective of the challenges, the media, in line with the constitution, is expected to play a role in holding the government accountable and ensuring accurate and fair reporting; this is not evident in this study. Additionally, the dominance of content analysis as a research method in this area of study is noted. While useful for identifying patterns in coverage, this method often falls short in explaining the underlying reasons for these patterns, such as the influence of political economy, power dynamics in discourse, or the specific constraints and motivations shaping journalistic practices. Therefore, this thesis introduces Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and In-depth Interviews aiming to address these methodological gaps, thereby offering a more nuanced understanding of how and why the NSIP is represented and discussed across different media platforms, and exploring the contextual factors influencing news production. The findings emphasise the need for comprehensive reporting, avoidance of oversimplification, and the importance of diverse perspectives in news coverage, particularly in relation to the NSIP. The public discourse on social media platforms like Twitter provides valuable insights into the effectiveness and

perception of government programmes, highlighting the need for improved transparency and accountability to address poverty reduction effectively in Nigeria.

9.5 Contribution to Knowledge

This thesis makes several significant contributions to the body of knowledge within media studies, development communication, political communication, and Nigerian/African studies, particularly concerning the interplay between media, politics, and social welfare initiatives.

1. **Pioneering Empirical Baseline of NSIP Press Coverage (2016-2023):** This study establishes the first comprehensive, longitudinal empirical baseline detailing how Nigeria's NSIP were represented in the nation's leading newspapers (Punch, *Daily Trust*, Tribune, *The Nation*) over a critical seven-year period. Moving significantly beyond prior anecdotal accounts or smaller-scale studies, it quantitatively demonstrates the persistent dominance of governance failure frames (specifically highlighting corruption, inefficiency, and political controversy) over narratives focusing on programme objectives or beneficiary impact. The analysis empirically confirms a prevailing negative/critical valence in press coverage and statistically validates the over-reliance on official government and political sources, thereby marginalising beneficiary and independent expert perspectives. This detailed mapping, including identified temporal variations linked to political cycles, provides crucial, data-driven insights into the specific representational patterns and source dynamics characterising Nigerian press coverage of major social policy, addressing a clearly identified gap in the existing literature – particularly concerns about the specific ways Nigerian media cover large-scale poverty alleviation and development programmes, offering concrete data on framing patterns (e.g., conflict, consequence frames) and source dynamics over an extended period

2. **Novel Critical Discourse Analysis of the Nigerian Xsphere as a Digital Public Sphere:** This thesis breaks new ground by applying Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) specifically to the Nigerian X (formerly Twitter) sphere in the context of social welfare policy debate. It illuminates the function of X as a vibrant, albeit contested, digital public sphere where citizens actively engage with NSIP news. The analysis reveals not just general sentiment but

identifies specific discursive strategies employed by users to articulate widespread public scepticism, construct counter-narratives challenging official governmental portrayals, and engage in politically polarised debates, particularly around controversial components like Tradermoni. This contribution lies in its detailed, context-specific examination of digital discourse, power dynamics, and the contestation of meaning surrounding a major government-led poverty alleviation initiative within a globally significant African democracy.

3. **In-depth Qualitative Insights into Journalistic Practices and Constraints:** Through in-depth interviews with journalists actively covering the NSIP, this thesis provides rare, quality qualitative data on the operational realities, motivations, and structural constraints shaping social policy journalism in Nigeria. It moves beyond assumptions by documenting the explicit tension between journalists' professed watchdog ideals and the practical impediments they face, including documented difficulties in accessing diverse sources (especially beneficiaries and critical insiders), editorial pressures linked to media ownership and political economy factors, and the pervasive influence of economic precarity (including 'brown envelope' inducements). Crucially, it empirically establishes the limited and often superficial engagement with primary NSIP policy documents in routine reporting, contrasting this with a reliance on official press releases and event-driven coverage, thereby providing vital context for interpreting the quantitative content analysis findings.

4. **Significant Contribution to African Media and Development Studies:** This thesis delivers a robust, mixed-methods analysis focused squarely on a major Nigerian social welfare programme. This research makes a substantial contribution to African media studies and development communication. It directly addresses the frequently noted geo-epistemic imbalance where scholarship is often dominated by Western theoretical frameworks and empirical contexts, providing rich, contextualised data and analysis from a key nation within the Global South, thus enhancing the comparative and global understanding of media's role in development processes.

5. **Methodological and Theoretical Integration:** This thesis demonstrates the analytical power of integrating multiple theoretical lenses—including the Political Economy of Communication, Public Sphere theory, Agenda Setting, Framing, Development Media

Theory, and Social Responsibility Theory—and triangulating quantitative and qualitative methodologies (Content Analysis, CDA, In-depth Interviews) to explain the complex dynamics of media representation and public discourse on the NSIP across both traditional (press) and digital (X) platforms in a developing country context. This integrated approach offers a uniquely multi-layered and validated understanding of how NSIP narratives were constructed, circulated, and contested across these platforms, providing a more holistic explanation than single-method or single-theory studies could achieve.

6. **Evidence-Based Implications for Policy, Practice, and Civil Society:** Beyond this thesis' academic contributions, this thesis generates concrete, actionable recommendations tailored to the Nigerian context. It provides evidence-based insights for policymakers on enhancing communication transparency and strategy for social programmes; offers critical reflections for journalists and media houses on improving reporting depth, sourcing practices, and navigating structural constraints; and equips civil society actors with a nuanced understanding of media narratives and public discourse to inform advocacy, monitoring, and accountability efforts concerning poverty alleviation initiatives.

9.6 Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, a few recommendations can be made for future research in the field of media coverage of social programmes.

Firstly, it would be beneficial to conduct a comparative analysis of media coverage of the NSIP in different regions of Nigeria. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the programme is portrayed and perceived across the country.

Secondly, future studies could explore the role of social media platforms in shaping public opinion and influencing media coverage of social programmes. With the increasing prevalence and impact of social media, understanding its role in shaping narratives and public discourse is crucial.

Additionally, it would be valuable to investigate the perspectives and experiences of beneficiaries of the NSIP in relation to media coverage. Understanding how beneficiaries perceive and engage with media representations of the programme can provide insights into the effectiveness and impact of media coverage on the ground.

Lastly, conducting a longitudinal study (textual analysis) over an extended period of time would allow for a deeper analysis of how media coverage of the social investment evolutions and changes over time. This would provide valuable insights into the dynamics between media, public opinion, and social programmes.

Overall, these recommendations can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of media coverage of social programmes and inform strategies for effective communication and public engagement in the future.

9.1 Further Studies

As this thesis concludes, it opens avenues for further research in the field of media coverage of social programmes, specifically focusing on the NSIP in Nigeria. Future studies could explore the extent to which the voices and experiences of ordinary individuals directly affected by programmes like Tradermoni are represented in news coverage, investigating the potential for a 'bottom-up' perspective in reporting and whether the media amplifies or marginalises the voices of the poor. Another area involves delving into public discourse surrounding such programmes, perhaps through an analysis of conversations on social media platforms like X, to understand public sentiment, concerns, criticisms, and the influence of social media on shaping perceptions. Furthermore, research could examine the functional relationship between news media coverage of social programmes and the policy-making process itself, assessing the

degree to which media narratives influence governmental decisions and strategy formulation for initiatives like the NSIP. Finally, a focused analysis of the framing and slants employed by the Nigerian print media when reporting on poverty, particularly within the context of social programmes, could shed light on how the 'side-lined voice of the poor' is portrayed and how these media representations shape broader societal attitudes towards poverty and social interventions.

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Appendix A: Coding Sheet

CODING SHEET FOR NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS V5

Thesis Title: National Social Investment Programme: The Role of the Press and Xsphere in Nigeria

Identifying Article Information

Story ID: _____ / **Coder No:** ____

1. **Newspaper**
   Punch..... 1 Guardian 2
   The Nation ..... 3 Nigeria Tribune 4
   Daily Trust 5
2. **Year**
   2016 .....1 2017 .....2 2018 3
   2019 .....4 2020 .....5 2021 6
   2022 .....7 2023 8
3. **Month**
   Jan ..... 1 Feb ..... 2 Mar..... 3
   April ..... 4 May ..... 5 June 6
   July..... 7 Aug..... 8 Sept. ... 9
   Oct..... 10 Nov..... 11 Dec..... 12
4. **Day**
   Mon... 1 Tues ... 2 Weds... 3
   Thurs 4 Fri..... 5 Sat. ... 6
   Sun. 7
5. **Article Headline:**

   _____

   _____

   _____

Understanding Article Content and Sources

6. **Content Type**
   News Story ... 1 Features 2
   Editorial ..... 3 Op-ed.....4 Interview..... 5
   Column ..... 6 Photo Story... 7 N/A 99
7. **NSIP Component Programmes**
   N-Power .....1 CCT 2
   GEEP..... 3 HGSF..... 4
   All.....5 N/A 99
8. **GEEP Sub-programmes**
   Tradermoni..... 1 Marketmoni..... 2
   Farmersmoni... 3 All... 4 N/A ... 99
9. **Story Dateline**
   North-Central (Abuja, Kogi, Niger, Benue, Kwara, Plateau, Nasarawa) ... 1
   North-East (Kaduna, Kebbi, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kano, Jigawa, Katsina) ... 2
   North-West (Taraba, Borno, Bauchi, Adamawa, Gombe and Yobe) 3
   South-West (Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti) 4
   South-East (Enugu, Anambra, Imo, Abia, Ebonyi) 5
   South-South (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Edo, Cross River, River, Delta) 6
   Two or more Regions in Nigeria 7
   Africa..... 8
   Beyond Africa..... 9
   Not Specified/Unknown 10
   N/A..... 99

Understanding Article Content and Sources

10. **Main source**
    Government Officials 1
    Non-Governmental Organizations..... 2
    Party Members..... 3 Opposition..... 4
    Beneficiaries ... 5 s..... 6
    Comm. Residents 7 s..... 8
    Other..... 19 N/A..... 99
11. **Other source**
    Government Officials 1
    Non-Governmental Organizations 2
    Party Members..... 3 Opposition.... 4
    Beneficiaries ..... 5 Donors..... 6
    Comm. Residents .... 7 Experts..... 8
    Other..... 19 N/A..... 99
12. **Story Origin/Approach**
    Press releases..... 1
    News conferences..... 2
    Interviews..... 3
    Investigative reporting..... 4
    Interpretive reporting..... 5
    News agency 6
    Author's analysis 7
    Research/Reports/Communique..... 8
    NSIP policy document 9
    Social media..... 10
    No source indicated 11
    Other (Specify) _____ 19
    N/A..... 99

Layout Placement

13. **Placement**
    Front page 1
    Business/Economy page..... 2
    Editorial/Op-Ed page..... 3
    Inside page (before CS) 4
    Inside page (behind CS) 5
    Back page 6
14. **Where does the article begin on the page?**
    Top half..... 1 Lower half..... 2
    N/A 99

Analysing Article Elements

15. **Number of paragraphs:** (Cross if N/A)
16. **Tone of story**
    Positive..... 1 Negative ... 2
    Neutral or mixed 3 Critical 4
    N/A 99
17. **Accompanied with photograph(s)?**
    Yes...1 No 2
18. **Accompanied with Infographic(s)?**
    Yes...1 No 2
19. **Accompanied with Illustration(s)?**
    Yes...1 No..... 2

CODERS NOTE: _____

_____

Note on 15 - 19 (If any): _____

Code **Main Subject** in 17 -19 (If any)
based on **CONCAT. 10** Unit of analysis:

Story by-line: _____

V5

CODING SHEET NEWSPAPER

Story ID: _____

NATIONAL SOCIAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME: THE ROLE OF THE PRESS AND XSPHERE IN NIGERIA

Exploring Article Themes and Perspectives

20. Positive dominant Theme in the story

Adequate Funding/Resource Allocation… 1
Effective Design/Planning…… 2
Efficient Implementation/Execution …… 3
Fair/Ethical Election Practices …… 4
Good Management…… 5
Government/officials receiving praise …… 6
Inclusivity/Diversity…… 7 Integrity/Honesty 8
Non-partisan Decision Making …9 Sustainability… 10.
Transparency/Accountability … 11 N/A … 99

21. Negative dominant Theme in the story

Corruption/Nepotism …… 1
Criticism of Government/It's Officials…… 2
Inadequate Funding…… 3
Lack of Transparency/Accountability……4
Marginalisation and Discrimination…….. 5
Politicisation of Programmes and Services... 6
Poor Design/Planning…… 7
Poor Implementation/Execution……..8
Poor Management…9 Unsustainable Practices…10
Vote Buying and Bribery…11 N/A … 99

22. All themes (Select all applicable themes from the list below)

Corruption ☐ Transparency/Accountability ☐
Politicisation ☐ Vote buying ☐
Sustainability ☐ Marginalisation ☐
Poor Design ☐ Insufficient funding ☐
Poor Implementation ☐ Praise of Govt/Its official ☐
Proper Management ☐ _____ ☐

23. Types of corruption

Mismanagement… 1 Misappropriation 2
N/A …… … 99

Exploring Article Poverty Framing

24. Perspectives on poverty

Economic perspective……... 1
Social perspective…… 2
Cultural perspective……. 3
Behavioural perspective…… 4
Political perspective……. 5
Multidimensional perspective… 6
None identified …… 7 N/A…… 99
Other (Specify) _____19

25. Types of poverty frames

Individualistic frame……1
Cultural frame…….. 2
Structural frame……. 3
Fatalistic frame…….. 4
Human interest frame……. 5
Empathy frame… 6 Survivor frame… 7
Morality frame … 8 N/A…… 99
Other (Specify) _____19

Evaluating Article Approach, Intent, and Framing

26. Intent

Information ……1 Education …… 2
Entertainment …… 3 Advocacy ……. 4
Sensational ……5 N/A…… 99
Other (Specify)……19 Multiple (Specify)…20

_____

27. Message frame

Political…… 1 Economic……. 2
Cultural…… 3 Human Interest... 4
Conflict…… 5 Response …… 6
Responsibility… 7 Morality…… 8 N/A……99

28. Issue framing

Episodic ……. 1 Thematic …… 2
Systemic…… 3 N/A…… 99

Identifying Beneficiaries

29. Target beneficiary mentioned

Artisans ☐ Children ☐
Farmers/Agricultural workers ☐ ☐
Market women ☐ Orphans/Vulnerable children ☐
People living with Disabilities ☐
Poor/Vulnerable households ☐
Small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) ☐
Traders ☐ Women ☐ Youth ☐
Youth corps members ☐

Obtaining Coders' General Reaction

30. General Reaction: Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your general reaction to the story:

	StrD	D	SmD	NA/D	SmA	A	SA
a. The story was interesting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. The writing was clear and understandable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. The story was emotionally engaging.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. The story referenced the NSIP policy document effectively.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

CODERS NOTE:

Appendix B: Code Book

Codebook

Newspaper Content Analysis of NSIP coverage by Nigeria Newspapers

Criteria for story coding

A news story refers to an individual editorial item, which includes news, features, interviews, columns, or opinion (op-ed) articles, along with accompanying pictures, graphics, or cartoons with or without text. The length of the item is not a determining factor in classifying it as a news story. It must not be an advertisement.

In the event that an article explicitly states that it continues on another page, it is necessary to code the continuation on the other page as a single story.

Story Identification number

The Story Identification (ID) number is a unique identifier that is assigned to each news item that is being analysed.

Coder ID

The Coder ID is a unique identifier assigned to each individual responsible for data coding or analysis. It will be used to keep track of the work of individual coders and to ensure consistency and accuracy in the coding process. The identifier is serial (1,2, 3….497,498, 499, etc.) Note: Coders do not begin at "1" when coding a second newspaper. It is a running/continuous number throughout the selected publications.

Content Analysis Codebook

Newspaper Content Analysis of NSIP coverage by Nigeria Newspapers *for PhD thesis title:*

Thesis Title: Poverty, Politics, and the Press: Uncovering the Complexities of Media Coverage on Nigeria's Social Investment Programmes

1. **Newspaper**
   This refer to the newspaper being analysed.

Punch	*(1)*	*Guardian*	*(2)*
The Nation	*(3)*	*Nigeria Tribune (4)*	
Daily Trust	*(5)*		

2. **Year**
   This refer to the year of the news item publication.

2016	*(1)*	*2017*	*(2)*
2018	*(3)*	*2019*	*(4)*
2020	*(5)*	*2021*	*(6)*
2022	*(7)*	*2023*	*(8)*

3. **Month**
   This refer to the month of the news item publication.

Jan	*(1)*	*Feb*	*(2)*
Mar	*(3)*	*April*	*(4)*
May	*(5)*	*June*	*(6)*
July	*(7)*	*Aug*	*(8)*
Sept	*(9)*	*Oct*	*(10)*
Nov	*(11)*	*Dec*	*(12)*

4. **Day**
   This refer to the day of the week of the news item publication.

Mon	*(1)*	*Tues*	*(2)*
Weds	*(3)*	*Thurs*	*(4)*
Fri.(5)	*Sat.*	*(6)*	
Sun.	*(7)*		

5. **Article Headline**
   This refer to the full headline of the news item.

   This category is written out as string data. It exclusively for story-code sheet tracking. This will also be useful for identify and possible headline quotation during analysis discussions. Hence, it is not required to be inputted in analyses software.

6. **Content type**
   This refers to the content genre of the news item. For example, includes news, features, interviews, columns, or opinion (op-ed) articles.

News story(1)
This refer to most frequent type of story (1), factual news report, report of events etc., of what has happened [when, where, who, what, why?], e.g., report on recent events etc.)

Features (2)
A detailed/Vivid report of a correspondent, named as the author of the article. Features are often longer article, not only factual reporting, looking behind the scenes, analytical, in-depth - not only descriptive, often explicitly marked as "analysis", etc.

Editorial (3)
Typically, explicitly marked as editorial, opinion-piece, an article of its own, clearly defined to give evaluations, typically on same page within newspaper each time. It has to be formally distinct from the rest of the page. It clearly expresses a standpoint of the author/editor who again speaks for his newspaper.

Op-ed/commentary (4)
This category of newspaper content are often not written by a journalist but by an external source such as an expert, politician etc., often the official position of the author is given as welt, often explicitly marked as "commentary", e.g. by guest author)

Interview (5)
This refer to newspaper content published in Question-and-Answer interview format. This category of content are often labelled 'exclusive interview'. There have to be at least two interview questions (often in bold or italic)! Note: Interview sections which are part of a "new story" are not meant here

Column (6)
Clearly marked as special column, distinct from regular coverage, most likely always at the same place within newspaper, re-occurring item on a regular basis as fixed part of newspaper coverage, can be written in very personal style.

Photo Story (7)
A Photo Story in a newspaper is a news article that primarily uses photographs to tell a story accompanied by captions and brief paragraphs of text.

Not Applicable (N/A) (99)
This refers to instance where this content category is not applicable to the story being coded.

7. NSIP-component programme

This refer to the particular category of the National Social Investment Programme reported in the item being analysed.

N-Power (1)
N-Power addresses youth unemployment and social development.

Condition Cash Transfer (CCT) (2)
The Conditional cash transfer Programme directly helps the most vulnerable by providing no-strings-attached cash to the lowest income group, reducing poverty, improving nutrition and self-sustainability, and boosting growth through increased consumption.

Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programmes (GEEP) (3)
Micro-lending investment programme for low-income businesses is the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme. Traders, women cooperatives, market women, entrepreneurial youngsters, farmers, and agricultural workers receive interest-free loans.

National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) (4)
The National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme aims to provide a cost-effective programme that increases school enrolment, reduces malnutrition, especially among the poor, empowers cooks, supports local agriculture through small holder farmers, and stimulates economic growth through the socioeconomic value chain. The programme strengthens communities across the nation by providing free school meals from local smallholder farmers.

Not Applicable (N/A) (99)
This refers to instance where this content category is not applicable to the story being coded.

8. GEEP Sub Programmes

Tradermoni (1)
TraderMoni (for youths) is a component of GEEP empowerment scheme designed to uplift underprivileged, under-served, and marginalised youths (18 – 40 years) in Nigeria from poverty.

Marketmoni (2)
MarketMoni (for women) is a subcomponent of GEEP empowerment programme specifically for underprivileged and marginalized women (18 – 55 years) in our society.

Farmersmoni (3)
FarmerMoni (for rural farmers) is a GEEP empowerment programme for Nigerian farmers (18 – 55 years) mostly in rural areas that operate in the agricultural space (farmers and agricultural

Not Applicable (N/A) (99)
This refers to instance where this content category is not applicable to the story being coded.

9. Story Dateline

This refers to the city the journalist was in when he reported the story. In Nigeria, there are six-geopolitical zones. This division is a type of administrative grouping Nigeria's states. They six zones are:

North-Central (1)
These include the Federal Capital Territory – Abuja, Kogi, Niger, Benue, Kwara, Plateau, Nasarawa

North-East (2)
This location include Kaduna, Kebbi, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kano, Jigawa, Katsina

North-West (3)
This location include Taraba, Borno, Bauchi, Adamawa, Gombe and Yobe

South-West (4)
This location include Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti

South-East (5)
This location include Enugu, Anambra, Imo, Abia, Ebonyi

South-South (6)
This location include Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Edo, Cross River, River, Delta

Two or more Regions in Nigeria (7)
This refers to a category or code assigned to articles that cover news or events involving at least two regions within Nigeria in a newspaper study's coding sheet.

Africa (8)
This refers to a category or code assigned to articles that is from outside Nigeria but from any other African country.

Content Analysis Codebook

Newspaper Content Analysis of NSIP coverage by Nigeria Newspapers *for PhD thesis title:*

Thesis Title: Poverty, Politics, and the Press: Uncovering the Complexities of Media Coverage on Nigeria's Social Investment Programmes

Beyond Africa ***(9)***
This refers to a category or code assigned to articles that originate from outside Africa country.

Not Specified/Unknown ***(10)***

Not Applicable (N/A) ***(99)***
This refers to instance where this content category is not applicable to the story being coded.

10. Main source

Government Officials ***(1)***
Individuals who hold a position in the government and provide information or statements to the media.

Non-Government Organizations ***(2)***
Organizations that are not affiliated with the government but work towards specific social or environmental causes.

Party members ***(3)***
Individuals who are members of a political party and provide information or statements to the media.

Opposition(4)
Individuals or groups who are opposed to the government or ruling party and provide information or statements to the media.

The poor ***(5)***
Individuals or groups who are poor or vulnerable to poverty and provide information or statements to the media.

Donors ***(6)***
Individuals or organizations who provide financial or other forms of support to a cause or organization and provide information or statements to the media.

Community Residents ***(7)***
Individuals who live in a particular community and provide information or statements to the media.

Experts ***(8)***
Individuals who have specialized knowledge or expertise in a particular field and provide information or analysis to the media.

Other ***(19)***
Sources of news stories not covered by the above categories, which can be specified. Please specify on the code form and input the number (19) as code.

Not Applicable (N/A) ***(99)***
This refers to instance where this content category is not applicable to the story being coded.

11. Other source(s)

Government Officials ***(1)***
Individuals who hold a position in the government and provide information or statements to the media.

Non-Government Organizations ***(2)***
Organizations that are not affiliated with the government but work towards specific social or environmental causes.

Party members ***(3)***
Individuals who are members of a political party and provide information or statements to the media.

Opposition ***(4)***
Individuals or groups who are opposed to the government or ruling party and provide information or statements to the media.

The poor ***(5)***
Individuals or groups who are poor or vulnerable to poverty and provide information or statements to the media.

Donors ***(6)***
Individuals or organizations who provide financial or other forms of support to a cause or organization and provide information or statements to the media.

Community Residents ***(7)***
Individuals who live in a particular community and provide information or statements to the media.

Experts ***(8)***
Individuals who have specialized knowledge or expertise in a particular field and provide information or analysis to the media.

Other ***(19)***
Sources of news stories not covered by the above categories, which can be specified. Please specify on the code form and input the number (19) as code.

Not applicable (N/A) ***(99)***
This refers to instance where this content category is not applicable to the story being coded.

12. Story Origin/Approach

Press releases (1)
News originating from an official press release or statement from an government, organisation or individual.

News conferences (2)
Events where journalists are invited to attend and ask questions of a spokesperson or experts on a particular topic.

Interviews (3)
News that originates from a full interview with a source, often providing in-depth information on a particular topic. It often involves conversations between a journalist and a source (e.g., an expert, a witness, a public figure) that are recorded or transcribed for use in a news story.

Investigative reporting (4)
News originating from investigative journalism or a tip-off leading to the story. Usually an in-depth reporting that involves original research and uncovering of new information, often involving long-term, complex investigations.

Interpretive reporting (5)
News that provides analysis or interpretation of events, often offering a perspective on their significance.

News agency (6)
News originating from a news agency, which gathers and distributes news to various media outlets.

Author's analysis (7)
Content that includes the journalist's analysis or observation of events, often based on interviews with sources. It is usually a form of opinion or editorial writing in which the author provides their own analysis or interpretation of news events or issues.

Research/Reports/Communique (8)
documents or reports that present research findings, statistics, or other information relevant to a particular topic or issue.

NSIP policy document (9)
a policy document issued by the Nigeria Social Investment Programme (NSIP) outlining its goals, objectives, and strategies for providing social safety nets to vulnerable populations.

Social media (10)
online platforms where users can create, share, and exchange information and ideas, often used by journalists as a source of breaking news or as a tool for engaging with audiences.

No source indicated (11)
News that does not specify the source of the information. This is particularly an instance where the piece does not attribute content to any particular source or origin.

Other (Specify) _____ (19)
News that originates from a source not covered by the above categories, which can be specified. Please specify on the code form and input the number (19) as code.

NSIP policy document (12)
News that originates from a National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) policy document, which outlines the government's plans and actions in social investment.

Not Applicable (N/A) (99)
This refers to instance where this content category is not applicable to the story being coded.

13. Placement

Front Page (1)
Stories that appear on the front page of a newspaper, which is considered to be the most important or prominent section of the paper.

Finance/Economy page (2)
Stories that appear on the section of the newspaper that focuses on finance and economic news.

Politics page (3)
Stories that appear on the section of the newspaper that focuses on political news and analysis.

News pages (before CS) (4)
News pages (before Centre Spread) refers to stories that appear in the main body of the newspaper before the centre spread or double-page spread.

Content Analysis Codebook

Newspaper Content Analysis of NSIP coverage by Nigeria Newspapers *for PhD thesis title:*

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News pages (behind CS) ***(5)***

News pages (behind Centre Spread) refers to stories that appear in the main body of the newspaper, after the centre spread or double-page spread.

Back Page ***(6)***

Stories that appear on the last page of a newspaper, often featuring sports news or other lighter content.

Other (Specify)_____ ***(19)***

Placement of stories not covered by the above categories, which can be specified. Please specify on the code form and input the number (19) as code.

14. Where does the article begin from on the page?

Top half ***(1)***

Top half: News stories that begin at the top half of a newspaper page, above the center line or fold.

Lower half ***(2)***

Lower half: News stories that begin at the lower half of a newspaper page, below the centre line or fold.

Not Applicable (N/A) ***(99)***

This refers to instance where this content category is not applicable to the story being coded.

15. Number of paragraphs

This refer to the number of paragraph block in each news item. **Cross if N/A**

16. Tone of Story

The tone of a story refers to the emotional or attitudinal position conveyed by the author or the newspaper towards the subject matter of the story. It can be positive, negative, or neutral. The tone of a story is determined by the choice of words, expressions, tone of voice, and other elements used in the text.

Positive ***(1)***

A positive tone is used when the author or the newspaper expresses a favorable, optimistic, or hopeful attitude towards the subject matter of the story. This can be conveyed through the use of positive language, upbeat expressions, and a generally optimistic tone.

Negative ***(2)***

A negative tone is used when the author or the newspaper expresses a critical, pessimistic, or harsh attitude towards the subject matter of the story. This can be conveyed through the use of negative language, and a generally pessimistic tone.

Neutral or mixed ***(3)***

A neutral or mixed tone is used when the author or the newspaper remains impartial or presents a balanced view of the subject matter of the story. This can be conveyed through the use of neutral language, factual expressions, and a generally objective tone.

Critical ***(4)***

This is expressed through critical expressions.

Not Applicable (N/A) ***(99)***

This refers to instance where this content category is not applicable to the story being coded.

17. Accompanied with photograph?

"Accompanied with photograph?" category refers to whether a story is accompanied by a photo. A photo can provide visual context, engage the reader, and support the author's or newspaper's tone. The absence of a photo can make the story less engaging and make it harder to convey the tone effectively. Yes or no options are available and are coded as 1 and 2, respectively.

18. Accompanied with Infographics?

"Accompanied with infographics?" category refers to whether a story includes visual representations of data. Infographics can make complex information easier to understand, add visual interest, and impact reader engagement and the author's tone. Yes or no options are available and are coded as 1 and 2, respectively.

19. Accompanied with Illustration?

"Accompanied with illustrations?" category refers to whether a story includes drawings or sketches. Illustrations can add visual interest, provide context, and impact reader engagement. Yes or no options are available, coded as 1 and 2.

20. Dominant Theme in the story

The dominant theme in a story refers to the main subject or topic that the story

revolves around. It is the overarching idea or message that the author or the newspaper is trying to convey to the reader.

Corruption (1)
The theme of corruption relates to the abuse of power or position for personal gain or the misuse of public resources.

Politicisation (2)
The theme of politicisation refers to the involvement of political interests or partisanship in an issue or decision-making process.

Transparency/Accountability (3)
The theme of transparency and accountability relates to the responsibility of individuals or institutions to provide clear and open information, and to be held responsible for their actions.

Vote buying (4)
The theme of vote buying refers to the practice of using money or other incentives to influence voters during elections.

Sustainability (5)
The theme of sustainability relates to the long-term viability of a system, resource, or practice, and the need to balance economic, social, and environmental factors.

Marginalisation (6)
The theme of marginalisation refers to the exclusion or neglect of a particular group or community from the benefits or opportunities of society.

Poor design (7)
The theme of poor design relates to the inadequacy or inefficiency of a system or process due to flaws in its design.

Insufficient funding (8)
The theme of insufficient funding refers to the lack of financial resources allocated to a particular project or initiative, leading to limitations in its implementation or impact.

Poor implementation (9)
The theme of poor implementation relates to the failure to effectively execute or carry out a plan or program due to various factors such as lack of resources, capacity, or political will.

Praise of government/its officials (10)
The theme of praise of government or its officials refers to the expression of admiration or approval towards the actions or policies of government or its representatives.

Proper management (11)
The theme of proper management relates to the effective and efficient administration and oversight of a system, resource, or organization to achieve its intended goals or outcomes.

21. Positive Dominant Theme in the story

The positive dominant theme in a story refers to the main subject or topic that the story revolves around. It is the overarching idea or message that the author or the newspaper is trying to convey to the reader.

Adequate Funding/Resource Allocation (1)
This theme relates to the availability and distribution of necessary financial resources or other assets to support a particular activity, project, or system.

Effective Design/Planning (2)
This focuses on the quality and thoroughness of the initial conceptualization and preparation stages of a project or policy, emphasizing foresight and strategic thinking.

Efficient Implementation/Execution (3)
This theme highlights the smooth and productive carrying out of plans or policies, emphasizing minimizing waste and maximizing output.

Fair/Ethical Election Practices (4)
This clearly refers to the principles of justice, impartiality, and moral conduct in the processes related to elections.

Good Management (5)
The theme of good management relates to the effective and efficient administration and oversight of a system, resource, or organization to achieve its intended goals or outcomes.

Content Analysis Codebook

Newspaper Content Analysis of NSIP coverage by Nigeria Newspapers *for PhD thesis title:*

Thesis Title: Poverty, Politics, and the Press: Uncovering the Complexities of Media Coverage on Nigeria's Social Investment Programmes

Government/officials receiving praise (6)
The theme of praise of government or its officials refers to the expression of admiration or approval towards the actions or policies of government or its representatives.

Inclusivity/Diversity (7)
This theme likely pertains to the representation and involvement of a wide range of individuals with different backgrounds, perspectives, and identities.

Integrity/Honesty (8)
This emphasizes the importance of truthfulness, moral uprightness, and strong ethical principles within a particular context

Non-partisan Decision Making (9)
This theme underscores decisions made without bias towards any particular political party or affiliation, focusing on objective criteria.

Sustainability (10)
The theme of sustainability relates to the long-term viability of a system, resource, or practice, and the need to balance economic, social, and environmental factors.

Transparency/Accountability ... (11)
This relates to the openness and clarity of processes and decisions, along with the mechanisms for holding individuals or entities responsible for their actions.

Not Applicable (N/A) (99)
This refers to instance where this content category is not applicable to the story being coded.

22. Negative Dominant Theme in the story

The negative dominant theme in a story refers to the main subject or topic that the story revolves around. It is the overarching idea or message that the author or the newspaper is trying to convey to the reader.

Corruption/Nepotism (1)
The theme of corruption relates to the abuse of power or position for personal gain or the misuse of public resources.

Criticism of government/its officials(2)
The theme of criticism of government or its officials refers to the expression of disapproval or negative feedback towards the actions or policies of government or its representatives.

Inadequate funding (3)
The theme of insufficient funding refers to the lack of financial resources allocated to a particular project or initiative, leading to limitations in its implementation or impact.

Lack of Transparency/Accountability (5)
his theme signifies a lack of openness, clarity, and mechanisms for holding individuals or institutions responsible for their actions and decisions. It suggests a deficiency in providing clear information and facing consequences for missteps.

Marginalisation and Discrimination (4)
The theme of marginalisation refers to the exclusion or neglect of a particular group or community from the benefits or opportunities of society.

Politicisation of Programmes (6)
The theme of politicisation refers to the involvement of political interests or partisanship in an issue or decision-making process.

Poor design/planning (7)
The theme of poor design relates to the inadequacy or inefficiency of a system or process due to flaws in its design.

Poor implementation/Execution (8)
The theme of poor implementation relates to the failure to effectively execute or carry out a plan or program due to various factors such as lack of resources, capacity, or political will.

Poor Management (9)
This theme encompasses ineffective and inefficient administration and oversight of a system, resource, or organization, leading to a failure to achieve intended goals or outcomes. It implies deficiencies in leadership, coordination, and operational processes.

Unsustainable Practices (10)
This theme highlights actions or approaches that compromise the long-term viability of a system, resource, or the environment. It indicates a failure to balance economic, social, and environmental considerations, potentially leading to negative consequences in the future.

Vote buying/bribery (11)
The theme of vote buying refers to the practice of using money or other incentives to influence voters during elections.

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23. All themes in the story (if more than one)

When a story has multiple themes, it's important to identify and tick all applicable themes to understand the issues it addresses. For instance, a story about a corrupt, poorly implemented government project due to insufficient funding may have themes of corruption (1), poor implementation (9), and insufficient funding (8). Identifying all themes helps the researcher comprehend the story's message and issues.

24. Types of corruption

"Types of corruption" refers to different forms or categories of corrupt practices that can occur.

Mismanagement (1)
This refers to the mismanagement or misuse of resources or funds by individuals in positions of power or authority. This can include inefficient or ineffective use of resources, lack of proper planning, or neglect of responsibilities.

Misappropriation (2)
This refers to the intentional and unlawful use of public funds or resources for personal gain by individuals in positions of power or authority. This can include embezzlement, bribery, and other forms of financial fraud.

Not Applicable (N/A) (99)
This refers to instance where this content category is not applicable to the story being coded.

25. Perspectives on Poverty

Economic perspective (1)
This perspective emphasizes the role of economic factors, such as unemployment, low wages, and lack of access to resources and opportunities, in creating and perpetuating poverty.

Social perspective (2)
This perspective emphasizes the role of social factors, such as discrimination, inequality, and social exclusion, in creating and perpetuating poverty.

Cultural perspective (3)
This perspective emphasizes the role of cultural factors, such as values, beliefs, and behaviours, in creating and perpetuating poverty.

Behavioural perspective (4)
This perspective emphasizes the role of individual behaviours and choices, such as education, work, and savings decisions, in creating and perpetuating poverty.

Political perspective (5)
This perspective emphasizes the role of political and policy factors, such as welfare programs, social safety nets, and economic policies, in creating and perpetuating poverty.

Multidimensional perspective (6)
This perspective emphasizes the complex and interrelated nature of poverty, and views poverty as a result of multiple factors and systems that interact with each other.

None identified (7)
Not applicable (N/A) (99)
This refers to instance where this content category is not applicable to the story being coded.

Other (Specify) _____19
Code to specify on the code form and write the number (19) as code.

26. Types of poverty frames

Individualistic frame (1)
This frame blames poverty on personal choices. It claims that poverty is caused by a lack of skills, drive, or discipline, not systemic or structural issues.

Cultural frame (2)
This frame blames cultural shortcomings such lack of morals, education, or work ethic for poverty. It argues that cultural or religious factors make some populations more likely to be poor.

Structural frame (3)
Social and economic systems, policies, and institutions create and maintain poverty in this perspective. It contends that systemic inequities and injustices cause poverty and need structural transformation.

Fatalistic frame (4)
Poverty is unavoidable and immutable in this frame. It implies that poverty is ingrained in society.

Human interest frame (5)
This frame emphasises the personal tales and challenges of poor people, frequently

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utilising emotional or sympathetic language.

Empathy Frame ***(6)***
This frame strives to comprehend and share the thoughts and experiences of others, especially marginalised or disadvantaged ones.

Survivor frame ***(7)***
This frame portrays poor people as survivors who can overcome adversity via their own efforts and drive.

Morality Frame ***(8)***
Morality frames analyse acts and events in terms of right and wrong, good and terrible, ethical and unethical.

Not applicable (N/A) ***(99)***
This refers to instance where this content category is not applicable to the story being coded.

Other (Specify)_____ 19
Please specify on the code form and input the number (19) as code.

27. Intent

Information ***(1)***
News stories that aim to inform the public about events or issues.

Education ***(2)***
News stories that aim to educate the public about a particular subject or issue.

Entertainment ***(3)***
News stories that aim to engage the public through interesting or amusing content.

Advocacy ***(4)***
News stories that aim to promote a particular cause or point of view.

Sensational ***(5)***
News stories that aim to attract attention through shocking or exaggerated content.

Other (Specify)_____ (19)
News stories that have an intent not covered by the above categories, which can be specified.

Multiple (Specify)_____ (20)
News stories that have multiple intents, which can be specified.

28. Message frame

Political ***(1)***
News stories that frame events or issues in terms of political context, actors, or implications.

Economic ***(2)***
News stories that frame events or issues in terms of economic context, actors, or implications.

Cultural ***(3)***
News stories that frame events or issues in terms of cultural context, actors, or implications.

Human Interest ***(4)***
News stories that focus on individuals or communities and their personal experiences or stories.

Conflict ***(5)***
News stories that frame events or issues in terms of conflict, tension, or disputes between individuals or groups.

Response ***(6)***
News stories that focus on the reactions or responses of individuals or organizations to events or issues.

Responsibility ***(7)***
News stories that frame events or issues in terms of accountability, responsibility, or fault.

Morality ***(8)***
News stories that frame events or issues in terms of ethical or moral considerations.

Not applicable (N/A) ***(99)***
News stories that do not have a specific message frame or are not applicable to any of the above categories. In other words, this refers to instance where this content category is not applicable to the story being coded.

29. Issue Framing

In media and communication studies, there are various ways of framing a topic,

including episodic, systemic, and thematic frames.

Episodic (1)
This framing shows an issue or problem as an isolated incident or personal experience. It stresses the issue's direct and emotional impact on a person or group without considering the structural or systemic reasons that cause it. Episodic framing is used in news reports to personalise a problem and make it more accessible.

Thematic (2)
This frame highlights the larger social, political, or economic processes that cause a problem. It aims to comprehend the systemic variables that underlie individual experiences or events and find the core causes. Social justice and advocacy campaigns use systemic framing to target root issues and change systems.

Systemic (3)
This frame accentuates an issue's subject, idea, or message. Instead of addressing systemic causes, it emphasises one facet of the issue. Media campaigns use thematic framing to influence public opinion and promote a message.

Not applicable (N/A) (99)
This refers to instance where issue framing is not applicable to the story.

In short, episodic framing focuses on individual stories and experiences, systemic framing on the larger structures and systems that contribute to an issue, and thematic framing on a specific theme or message. Each framing has pros and cons and can be strategically employed to achieve different communication goals.

30. Target Beneficiary mentioned in the story.

Poor/Vulnerable households
Individuals or families who are poor or vulnerable to poverty.

Small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs)
Businesses that are small to medium in size and are typically independently owned and operated.

Youth
Individuals who are in the age range of adolescence to early adulthood.

Women
Female individuals or groups.

Children
Individuals who are under the age of 18.

Artisans
Skilled individuals who work with their hands to produce goods or provide services.

Traders
Individuals who engage in buying and selling goods or services.

Market women
Female individuals who sell goods in a market setting.

People living with disabilities
Individuals who have physical or mental impairments that limit their ability to function in daily life.

Farmers/Agricultural workers
Individuals who work in the agricultural sector, such as crop or livestock farming.

Artisans/craftsmen
Skilled individuals who work with their hands to produce goods or provide services in a specific trade.

Orphans and vulnerable children
Children who have lost one or both parents or are vulnerable to abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Youth corps members
Recent graduates who participate in a National Youth Service Corps (NSYC) programme in Nigeria

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31. General Reaction:

Coder to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements based on coder's general reaction to the story:

StrD	**D**	**SmD**	**NA/D**	**SmA**	**A**	**SA**
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

a. The story was interesting.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

b. The writing was clear and understandable.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

c. The story was emotionally engaging.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

d. The story referenced the NSIP policy document effectively.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

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