



ANALYSIS OF TELEVISION MEDIA COVERAGE OF FLOOD IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

In developing country like Nigeria, emphasizes are placed on the media to ensure that the way of reportage promotes development in different areas of country and also instil sense of hope and assurance in the mind of the populace especially during the occurrence of natural disaster such as flooding. The researcher carried out a quantitative analysis of audio-visual media reportage of two major television media broadcast in Nigeria to analyse the different frames used in the mode of reportage during flooding by these media houses. The choice of media house were private and public media organization with a view to make a comparative analysis in the mode of their reportage. Using purposive sampling method, data from July-August 2022 on flood were analysed because this was the period the disaster was more pronounced in the country.

Introduction

One of the most common natural disasters in the world is flooding, which has led to the loss of lives and properties, damage to critical infrastructures, and thousands of people being displaced annually. Floods occur when land has been submerged by the overflow of water. The causes of floods can be natural or man-made depending on the dominant cause in a region. Often, flood is caused by heavy rainfall, poor drainage system and climate change. Over 2 billion people around the world from 1998-2017 have been affected by floods and people who inhabit plain grounds or non-resistant buildings and also lack disaster warning systems are prone to floods (UNICEF, 2022)

In Nigeria, spontaneous rainfall has been attributed to be one of the major factors causing flooding in 2022 in the country. Also, some critique the release of excess water from Lagdo dam reservoirs to be one of the primary causes of flood in the country. It should be noted that in 1980 the government of Cameroon and Nigeria signed an agreement which part of it was that the Nigeria government should build a dam purportedly to be named Dasin

Hausa dam in Adamawa State which will curtail the excess flow of water from Lagdo dam. However, in September 2022 the effect of the water released from Lagdo dam coupled with constant rainfall was felt in states like Kogi, Benue, Niger, some northeastern states (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe), and the southern part of Nigeria.

Climate change has also been attributed to one of the causes of flooding in Nigeria which has led to extreme temperatures, constant rainfalls, drought, land degradation, and loss of biodiversity. To combat climate change, in 2016 the government put in some measures to reduce the emissions rate by 45 percent before 2030. It is believed that climate change has been one of the reasons for incessant rainfalls. For instance, in 2012 over 30 states out of 36 states in the country were submerged by water and over 1.3 million people were displaced. According to the report by Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA, 2022), the estimated damage caused by the flood was estimated to be \$17 billion.

During the disaster period, the media played a key role, it served as an intermediary between the people and the government before, during and after the disasters. The media also educated the masses and informed them on impending dangers, it as well alerted the relevant government agencies.

Research Objectives

1. To know the format through which the media covered the floods in Nigeria.
2. To ascertain the depth of relevance attached to the coverage through the media timeframe.
3. To know the tone the media used in their reportage.
4. To discover the direction the media used in their reportage.

Statement of Problem

Disaster coverage particularly has been an issue that calls for urgent attention, particularly the 2022 flooding which according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), over 3.5 million people out of 5 million people affected in Africa were Nigerians. Some of the states that were affected the most include Anambra, Delta, Cross Rivers, Bayelsa, Niger, Benue, and Kogi states, the effect of the flood has led to the death of over 500 persons, over 90,000 houses damaged; 140,000 hectares of farmland destroyed while roads and infrastructures were greatly damaged.

Researchers in recent times such as Adekola et al (2008), Ajaero et al (2012) and Ngozi et al (2012) have carried out research work on the effect of flood, audience perspectives, and the role of the media in managing flood disaster. However, the aim of this study seeks to analyze selected government and private media stations' reportage of flooding activities in Nigeria.

The Role of The Media in Developmental Journalism in Disaster Management

The media is a veritable tool in the reportage of disasters which makes it one of the important tools in disaster communication management. Over the years, media has usurped for itself immense power that makes it an agent of change in society. It is known that the role of the media includes to educate, informing, persuading, stimulating, entertaining, and mobilizing the public on different event

The media which includes the radio, television, newspaper, and the new media has the power to mobilize the public for change through the way reports are framed. The disaster which has become part of human society has become worrisome for the public because of the danger it constitutes especially to development. According to Killenberg (2008) flood has become one of the most ravaging and common natural disasters in society.

In the 1960s, the New World Information and Communication order (NWICO) among other debates brought about the word 'development journalism' which was coined at the press Foundation of Asia (PFA), the main fulcrum for development journalism was that journalists should give priorities to socio-economic development activities by prioritizing it in their analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of developmental projects. Developmental journalism has a type of media reportage that is pro-government and is aimed at emphasizing government achievement to bring about growth and national integration (Godswill et. al 2019).

Therefore, the media plays a significant role in nation-building and national integration through deliberate framing of reportage that promotes development and unity by carefully setting agendas for the audience in the manner in which reports are given, the tone, the time, and the angle at which they presented the information. Shan (1996) cited in Hayes (2021), highlighted the basic principles of developmental journalism, three of the principles are related to journalism practice while the other two focused on the reporter:

1. Development Journalism focused on cultural, economic social, and political areas of development.
2. It is democratic in nature and the flow of information is mostly from the bottom-up such as voices and perspectives of the people and prioritizing the opinions of the people
3. Development Journalism makes a conscientious effort to promote reform and social action
4. Journalists are intellectuals and professionals who articulate and bring to limelight issues that could have caused protest or mayhem
5. Development journalists should prioritize localized media content and mainstream media.

Influence of Media Ownership in Disaster Reportage

Media ownership is the process whereby an individual or group owns and controls the shares of the organization, the ownership could be either private or public. Private-owned media are companies owned and controlled by an individual or group, regulated by a body and it is not under the control of the government, while government ownership as the name implies is owned and controlled by the government.

Oftentimes, one of the aims of privately owned media is to make a profit, thus, they focus on the marketing aspect of the media such as advertising. As the popular saying goes “he who pays the pipers dictates the tune” so also, the ownership of media can to a long extent determines the type of journalism such media would practice. One of the roles of the media is to carry out surveillance functions, and warn the audience of the intended dangers, however, the manner and ways these are reported in news, features, editorial, and others still rest on the influence of the media owners and their interest. Like the saying in Journalism “bad stories sell faster”, considering the nature of Nigeria with a heterogenous audience and developing at a steady rate, the media plays a vital role in development through journalism; the way reports are being framed and agendas are being set in the minds of the audience.

Alger (1998) Cited in Linje (2012) affirms that the media plays an important role in the development, stability, and democracy of societies, he contends that one of the factors that influence the media in fulfilling these socio-political and development roles is how they are being owned. According to Doyle (2002), he noted that the problem associated with media ownership (Private) is that they do not promote an ideal democracy and development in society because the owners often provide limited choices for the source of information. Thus, because the interest of the owners is tinted towards profit making this might not align with the interest of the audience who seeks to know what is happening in their society.

Theoretical Framework (Framing Theory)

Framing theory was opined by Goffman, as a theory of mass communication, it refers to how media presents information to the audience highlighting certain events and placing it in a particular context to incite, cause panic or give hope in its interpretation. Framing theory according to some theorists is closely related to Agenda setting theory but the focus of framing theory seeks to give interpretation to current issues rather than a particular topic. The basis of framing theory is that the media focused on sensitive issues through the use of field meaning by conforming the audience to think in a particular manner in other words the manner through which information is presented to the audience influences how information is processed. Frames are abstract work or structured meaning to think about that issue.

Goffman states that there are two distinctions within primary frameworks: natural and social, both play the role of helping individuals interpret data. So that their experiences can be understood in a wider social context. The difference between the two is functional. Goffman identify two types of frameworks; Natural Framework and Social framework. Natural frameworks identify events as natural occurrences without attributing any social forces to the causation of the events. Social framework views events or occurrences as being driven by social players. These frames greatly affect the way data is interpreted, processed, and communicated.

Methodology

The researcher adopted the content analysis method. The purposive sampling technique was used to select NTA and TVC media contents on the coverage of the flood in Nigeria, using comparative analysis the choice of media

was selected because of the ownership, as NTA is a government own media while TVC is a privately owned media; the media over the years also have a large audience which makes them one of the favorites television stations among Nigerians. The study population covered all audio-visual contents of NTA and TVC from July-October 2022 on flood in Nigeria, the choice of this was influenced because the rain was intense during this period. However, 42 data on flood coverage in Nigeria by both media were analyzed using interpretative analysis.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Total media coverage

	Frequency	Percentage
NTA	19	45.2%
TVC	23	54.8%
Total	42	100

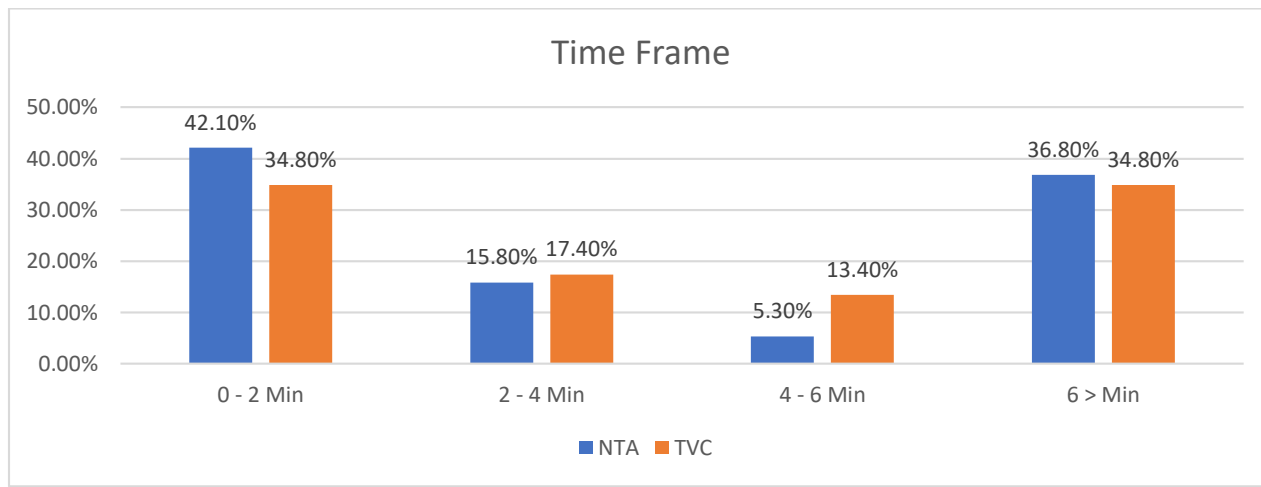
The table above showed NTA and TVC's total media coverage of the floods in Nigeria.

Table 2: Showing Format of Video Coverage

	NTA Frequency	TVC Frequency	Percentage of NTA	Percentage of TVC
News	8	3	42.1%	13.04%
Features	2	5	10.5%	21.7%
Documentaries	2	8	10.5%	34.8%
Opinion/Interview	8	7	42.1%	30.4%
Total	19	23	100%	100%

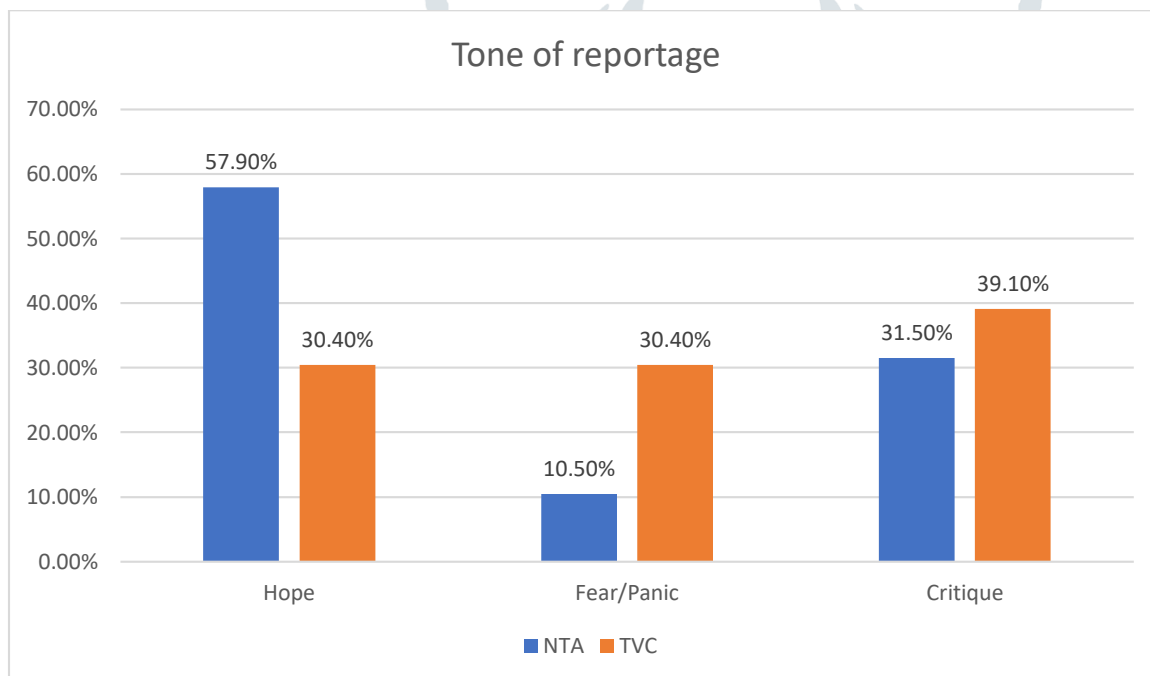
Table showing the format through which flood coverage in Nigeria was reported by the media houses with both media organizations giving preferences more in opinion/interview media coverage.

Figure 1: Showing the Time frame allocated to the video contents



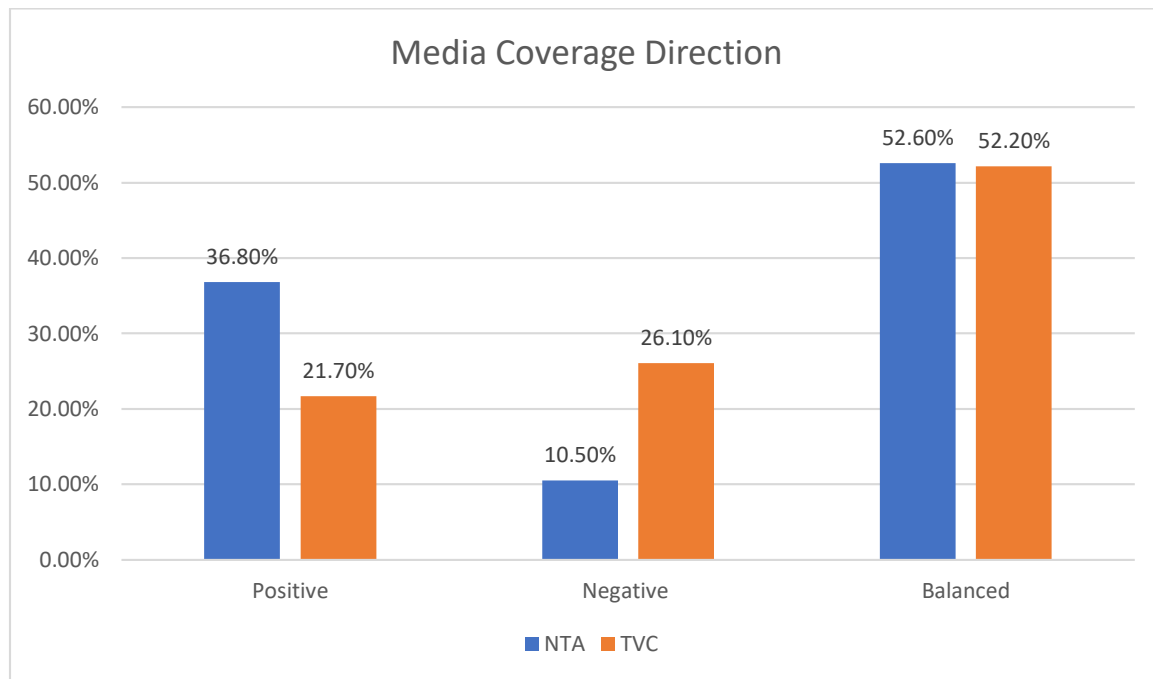
This chart shows the time frame allocated to various video formats. The data above showed that most of the content reported by both media houses was on News and opinion/interview reportage.

Figure 2: Showing the Media coverage Tone



The chart shows the three major classifications of the tone of the media in the reportage of flood disasters in Nigeria. The researcher grouped them into; hope, Fear or Panic, and Critique.

Figure 3: Showing the direction of the coverage



The chart shows the dominant direction employed by the broadcast media in the reportage of floods in Nigeria, these vary from Positive, Negative, and balanced reports.

Discussion of Findings

Data from the content analysis indicated that there is frequent coverage of flooding by broadcast media in Nigeria. Disaster coverage with an emphasis on Flood coverage has become an issue in society, media houses use their channel to reach out to their audience as rightly noted by Kleinberg (2008) that the media reports flooding activities to warn, call for help or inform the people. The data shows that the most dominant format employed by the media houses; NTA dominant formats of reportage were News (42.1%) and Opinion/Interview (42.1%) while the dominant format of reportage for TVC was featured (21.7%), Documentaries (34.8%) and Opinion/Interview (30.4%).

The data further revealed that the most dominant timeframe in the reportage is mostly between 0-2 minutes and 6 > minutes timeframe. NTA time frames show that most of the flood coverage is either between 0-2 minutes (42.1%) and 6> minutes (36.8) while TVC dominant time is 0-2 minutes (34.8%) and 6 > (34.8%). The findings showed that the media always attached relevance to the reportage of floods in Nigeria.

Also, according to Goffman the manner with which media reports is been framed goes a long way in creating what to think in the minds of the audience, the dominant frame of reportage by NTA is Hope (57.9%) while the most dominant frame in TVC is Fear/Panic (30.4%) and Critique (39.1%), this showed that government media houses tone of reportage communicates hope in the minds of the audience.

Shan (1996) stated that the media must focus on social and economic development reportage, he emphasized that reports should be able to promote development in society through positive and balanced reportage. The data showed that the direction of reportage by NTA is mostly balanced (52.6%) and Positive (36.8%) while TVC's direction of reportage showed a balanced report (52.2%), Positive (21.7%) and Negative (26.1%).

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings gathered and data presented, broadcast media in Nigeria has been instrumental in the coverage of flood in Nigeria, thereby bringing information to the audience as it unfolds. The findings show that both government and private media are committed to the coverage of flood disaster in the country. However, the comparative analysis of the media shows that the dominant frame in the tone of reporting in the private media are government critique and capable of inciting fear and panic in the minds of the audience.

Also, findings revealed that government media style of reportage are mainly news report and opinion/interview accruing 42.1% and 42.1% respectively while the private media format of reportage is being spread across, this shows that private media makes flood disaster an agenda for the audience to think and talk about in Nigeria. Although, the direction of the reportage of private media coverage of flood had some unbalanced coverage, however, government and private media coverage of the disaster had over 50% balanced coverage of the disaster. This is in tandem with Shan (1996) that media should make conscientious effort to promote reforms and social action. The studies give the following recommendations:

1. There should be a deliberate effort by the broadcast media to continuously focused on developmental journalism in the area of disaster coverage by creating awareness and warning the audience of impending dangers through constant reportage.
2. The private broadcast media should ensure that when reporting flood disaster in the country, the tone at which the presentation is being made should communicate hope to the audience while not neglecting the need to make audience aware of the damages and dangers it poses.

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