PRINT MEDIA NARRATIVES OF NIGERIA TEAM: THEIR PERFORMANCE IN THE NATION CUP 2012 & 2014

LAWAL IBRAHIM YAZID

Department of Physical and Health Education, Bayero University, Kano, NIGERIA.
Email: ilyazid65@yahoo.com

How to cite this article: Yazid, L.I. (December, 2015). Print media narratives of Nigeria team: Their performance in the nation cup 2012 & 2014. Journal of Physical Education Research, Volume 2, Issue IV, 27-37.

ABSTRACT

Fairness with which media organizations cover and report conflicting sports issues thus engage not only ethical considerations, but also professional performance. This research explores how the concept "fairness" is used by specific story qualities in an ongoing issues (the dismal performance of the Super Eagles) in the 2012&2014 Nations cup, obviously if fairness mean anything in media narratives, they must manifest in stories. The study developed a content based technique of assessing fairness of newspaper coverage of controversial issues and applied to 254 stories that appear in three major newspapers in Nigeria, it also assesses the extent of the newspapers neutrality and objectivity as well as relevance of their narratives on the Nigerian team performance, using qualitative textual analysis methodology, this study drew on Raul's 1971 theory of justice&fairness for an independent press. It appears that the narratives in these newspapers not only contributed to the opening of debate on coaching issues but led to beclouding it which led to negatively affecting the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) but also blaming the technical manager and the entire coaching crew for failure to win the tournament.
Keywords: Print media, fairness, narratives, textual analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

Football is one of the most intelligent games ever discovered by man precisely England, the football field is only one out of many, many fields of human endeavor. Perhaps even the inventors of football never imagined that what they could do on the football field organization and human performance could not be replayed in other field. This is the reality today which gives developing countries hope of not only taking off and catching up with but also over-taking super-

Correspondence: Lawal Yazid Ibrahim, Senior Lecturer, Department of Physical & Health Education, Bayero University, Kano, NIGERIA, Tel: +2348035558946, Email: ilyazid65@yahoo.com

powers in all fields of endeavor, Nigeria Football has came along way. Now it is found to run fast, fly high for the rest of the world which is looking in complete disbelief, this too is reality of today which built up steadily from grass to grace. It would seem the only clean field in Nigeria is that of football, yet there is clear evidence that our rubbish heap or dust bin can produce Gold. This precisely how Nigerian football is indeed shown to run too fast, fly too high and has thrown insurmountable challenges to world football at France (1998), Nigeria (1999), Sydney (2000), Tokyo (2002) and Olympics (2004).

England may have mightily started this great unfinished business of football to deserve a continuity of standing ovation. Perhaps you are aware of the Nigerian Eagles, the eaglets, the flying eagles, the falconet and the super eagles. Have you ever wondered why Nigeria chose the eagle as a symbol? The naturally powerful eagles with great inner strength usually run too fast, fly too high for any other bird to compete with them. It was against this background that this research study was undertaken to find out and determine the past performance of the Nigeria team in the qualifying matches they played and why they lost out in the nations cup qualifying stage, has the media narratives been fair and objective to both sides, that is the players, officials and the country as sport specifically (football) has a greater critical significance in our national quest for overall sport development.

It is pertinent to begin by reviewing the activities of the Nigerian media and how it was rated by the public and then proceed to highlight the roles it can or may play in bringing immemorial is reputed to be very vibrant and this could best be understood from the process of its evolution. If the Nigerian press for instance is rated as the freest in Africa, or better put, one of the freest in the world, such freedom is earned by dint of its consistency, resilience and dynamism, and not through any good will its enjoys from successive governments in the country. Over the years, a lot of repressions have been visited on media establishments and practitioners in Nigeria. But nonetheless, the story of the media today has been that of triumph, measured through their continuous growth. For one, Nigeria has experienced dictatorial rule for the greatest part of her history and to have the media still expanding both in size and strength is a remarkable feat. At present, the print media is witnessing the continued domination of privately owned newspapers. Apart from a few daily or weekly newspapers owned by some state governments and about two (new Nigeria and daily times) controlled by the federal government, the remaining newspapers were established through private enterprise. The foundation of private ownership of newspapers seems to have been laid even before independence, in which case, the likes of Herbert Macaulay, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Obafemi Awolowo, Nigerian founding fathers struggled to establish own newspapers. Today, the number of newspapers and news magazines (grassroots, regional or national) owned by individuals and widely circulated run

into hundreds. Also in circulation are arrays of newspapers printed in local dialects all playing complementary roles in spreading information to the grassroots.

The notion of fairness in reporting is related to the notion of balance (Bentele, 2008). Fairness usually means the simple inclusion of the other side in stories about conflict. According to Bentele, (2008) balance concerns how equally sides to a conflict are treated relative to one another. The two terms interrelate conceptually and ethically, depending on whether focus is on a single story or a related group of stories. According to Arnold, (2009) the modern concern for fairness and balance emerged following the abandonment of objectivity as an attainable journalistic standard. But notions about how journalism should function absent objectivity have been general and abstract, focusing more on institutional roles and individual motives rather than on defined behaviors capable of assessment. Philosophers on the commission on freedom of the press during World War II advocated a social responsibility that emphasized a public service role for journalism. Altmeppen, (2010) viewed fairness as implying urging the press to be less partisan in reporting controversy and to provide the public with all relevant sides of issue. But the commission did not provide the public with all relevant sides of issues and specific guidance on how to assess whether all relevant sides were included in covering controversy. According to Altmeppen, (2006) news organizations have explicitly called for stories to be fair and balanced. According to Craig (2009) codes accepted by organizations such as the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the society of professional journalists and many prestige newspapers have used these terms, or related ones such as impartial or unbiased. Such codes are specific on behaviors such as those entailing potential conflict of interest in reporter-source relationships. Schicha and Brosda (2010a) confirmed that little or no guidance is given, however, on how to impartially portray controversy in stories. Among news workers as individuals, the standard of impartially in reporting also has been valued and impartially ranked as the second attribute of editorial quality in a survey of 746 editors. Schicha and Brosda, (2010b) lent credence that presumably such editors know this quality when they see it in copy. But it is unclear what rules individual editors may apply to assess particular stories or issues. News organization concern for credibility also engages fairness and balance. Studies of Gaziano and Kristin (2008) and Kristin and Gaziano (2006) note that news organization officials, responding to public concern over credibility, included measures of fairness and bias in studies of factors affecting credibility. Again, however, no specific guidance on recognizing and eliminating such bias has emerged from this concern over its presumed negative effects on credibility. This study was an attempt to answer the questions such as:- Is the overall news coverage of the 2012 & 2014 African cup of nations was unfair and imbalanced?, What type of sources stories

dominated 2012 & 2014 African cup of nations? and How do reporters interpret fairness of the 2012/2014 coverage?

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

Fairness and balance are central ethical tenants in modern American journalism, but defining and assessing them are formidable problems. Subjective judgments of these reporting qualities are implicitly biased and unreliable. Partisan critics, for example, may not examine their news coverage in the context of how their two sides are treated. For their part, journalists may be unaware of how their own biases can distort their coverage. Consequently, a context-based definition of fairness and balance constructed and applied in this study to newspaper coverage of the 2012 and 2014 African Cup of Nation, content analysis of reporting can measure how team Super Eagles and the team coaching crew were cited in stories, for example, can be counted and compared. The length and position of their assertions can be determined. The assertions of sports comments and news reports experts can be analyzed for assessment of the team performance during the competitions. But content analysis cannot illuminate the objectives of the reporters who wrote the stories. Hence, campaign reporters were interviewed in this study to explore their perspectives, conflict. Balance concerns how equally sides to a conflict are treated relative to one another. This study analyzed the universe of straight-news stories of the 2012 and 2014 performance of the Super Eagles in the African Cup of Nation and the news narratives within the period. Both before, during and after the competition of two Nigerian Daily newspapers, Daily Trust, leadership and the Guardian; Their circulations range from 50,000 to more than 500,000. They account for about 50 percent of Nigerian total daily circulation.

2.1 The papers were the Daily Trust, the Leadership and the Guardian newspapers

Straight news stories were assessed because they offer the team, coaches, management staff & fans and spectators a legitimate way to present their views, and reporters widely accept an obligation to report those views. McQuail, (1992) viewed these stories as maximizing the motivation of reporters to produce fair and balance treatment of the team and the coaching and management defined in this study as approximately equal treatment in published new copy. This study defines news as information that tells reporters. Partisan sources are defined in this study as those who make assertions supporting a candidate for governor. The presence of partisan sources for both candidates in a story established the fairness of that story. The two-person coder reliability for the presence of a partisan source

supporting one the other candidate was 100 percent. Story balance was assessed by determining how equally the coach/players were treated in a story. Five measures determined for each story: the number of sources cited on behalf of the team and coaches; column inches quoting or paraphrasing sources for players and coaches; source assertions for players and coaches crew appearing in the second through fifth paragraphs and; source assertions for players and coaches crew appearing in the first half or last of the story.

An overall index of a story's balance was created by adding how many of the five measure were dominated by players and coaches crew, or were evenly balanced. If players dominated a majority of the index measures in a particular story (for example, the players got more space than the coaching crew did in the space measure, had more sources cited than the coaching crew did not on the source number measure, and an assertion sited in the lead while the players did not lead measure), the story was considered to be dominated by other players (the team) or coaching crew. According to Hallin and Mancini, (2004) if a particular index measure was not relevant (for example, neither players nor the team nor the coaching crew made an assertion cited in a story lead), it was not figured into that particular story's balance index. The two-person coder reliability on all such measures was between 80 percent and 100 percent. The last three measure in this study's index weight the relative prominence of a source's assertions. The reason is that readers start stories at the lead, with fewer and fewer continuing to the end. Readers may never encounter a balance in a story that confines an opponent to the story's last half.

3. RESULTS

This study included an index makeup of seven measures of player/coaches crew performance and successes noted by expert in stories: (1) a coaching crew standing (2) expectation about the players (3) the player performance (4) the players (the team) personal strength (5) the coaching crew organizational strength (6) how was the player did in (the team performance) performance during the competition and (7) the coaching crew/players (the team) endorsements. Commentary was considered to favor if the players (the team) if it indicated did well in the competition or, was fulfilling expectations; or was gaining momentum; or was showing effective skills; or had a well-financed organized massage; or did well in debates; or had gained support or endorsement. Negative commentary in such matters was considered to favor the opposing candidate. Coaching crew and players (the team) domination of a story was determined by adding how many of the seven measures favored one the other or were balanced evenly. As in the assessment of fans/spectators and public players/coaching crews commentary index if a majority of the relevant component, measures favored the chances of

his performance. Coder reliability on these measures was 80 percent on all components of the commentary index.

3.1 Reporter's Assessment

After 2012 and 2014 African Cup of Nations seven reporters who wrote nearly 60 percent of the competition stories were interviewed. They were asked how their perception of the coverage related to the content study, and how the concern for fairness affected their reporting.

3.2 Findings

Some 214 straight news stories in the three newspapers contained assertions or commentary for either coaching crew/players (the team).

Table 1: Fairness and balance of stories (percent of stories dominated by the team & coaching crew)

Balance in Stories	Unfair Stories	Fair Stories	All
The Team	21%	30%	28%
Coaching Crew	79%	54%	58%
Balanced	0%	16%	14%
Story N	39	175	214

Table 1 show that only 14 percent of the 214 stories were both fair and balanced. However, fewer than 20 percent of the either stories were completely one-side of unfair. Overall, dominated the stories by a 58 percent to 28 percent margin, considering just the unfair or one-sided stories, coaching crew did even better, dominating them by a 40 to 1 margin. The team dominated the balance in more than half of the fair stories as well. In fact, each component measure of the balance index was dominated by the role of coaching crew. The team coverage in three dailies compared to are that the coaching crew dominated by lesser margins.

Table 2: Fairness and balance of event-based and interview-based stories (percent of stories dominated the team and coaching crew partisans)

Partisan sources Domination	Event Stories	Interview Stories
The Team	27%	29%
Coaching Crew	64%	55%
Fair and Balanced Stories	8%	17%
Story N	84	130

Findings indicate that the team had the most say, followed by the coaching crew. The coaching crew was the first, while the team did even better. They were the first sources quoted or paraphrased in 64% percent of the stories.

Some 54 stories contained competition commentary by experts on the team performance. Table 2 shows that commentary in stories favored the team by a 46 percent to 39 percent margin. The commentary in the remainder of the stories was balanced between the team a coaching crew. However, commentary clearly did not offset theory of coaching crew domination in stories. In fact, the commentary most often reinforced coaching crew standing in stories that were also dominated by problem.

Table 3: How do reporters interpret fairness of the 2012 and 14 coverage

Balance in Stories	Unfair stories	Fair stories	All
The Daily Trust	31%	30%	28%
Leadership	34%	24%	28%
Guardian	25%	35%	30%
Balanced	10%	11%	14%
Story N	59	155	214

Finally, most reports saw fairness as giving an attacked party the opportunity to respond, of fairness as giving both the coaching crew and the team the opportunity to take stands. Thus fairness was determined in the context of competition fixtures events and by rhythm of performance and coaching skills during competition. Even if you are not able to put it into words, you may have a natural understanding of fairness if you care about other people and are sensitive to their needs. Fairness is made up of two parts: Objectivity which is not forcing your own personal opinions on the news, the opposite of objectivity is subjectivity. Impartially which is not taking side on an issue where there is a dispute. Impartiality also includes presenting all sides of an argument fairly (balance). The paper therefore recommend the following; even if you have strong feelings about an issue, you must not use the news to put over your own arguments; you must not try to give extra time or better coverage to people you agree with and less time or worse coverage to those you disagree with.

4. DISCUSSION

The result of this study are consist with other research demonstrating that the print media covers controversy unequally in terms of the fairness and balance notions used in this study. This study also suggests that competition coverage may give either the team or the coaching crew opportunity to assert their views. The

commentary on the team exhibited a more balanced pattern overall, but it also tended to supplement or even reinforce domination in individual stories. Finally, the notion of the strategic ritual of objectivity as a motivated for more equal treatment of the team and the coaching crew seems less a governing strategy and more a situational tactic. These finding raise the question of what fairness and balance can mean if these qualities are not manifestly discernible in stories. The reporters interviewed for this were confidence that they knew how to be fair and had succeeded in being fair. Disparities in editorials, news reports, commentary and game analysis coverage measured in this study were not, in their view, the crucial components of fairness. But at least two major problems ensure in the rejection of fairness and balance as manifestly equal treatment in stories. Equal treatment in stories can be defined and measured, and departures from it illuminated. But journalistic breaches of procedural fairness are far less easily illuminated. Such breaches are also more likely to be overlooked or hidden by individual or group biases that reporters as well as other human beings brings to their work. Absent of a method systematically applied to assess a defined fairness, that standard will likely be subverted in unknown ways.

There is no evidence that journalism has developed the kind of self-conscious discipline and accountability that governs how work reflects a professed value such as fairness. A second problem is that the public sees the stories, not the procedures that produced the story. Imbalances may harm credibility because what readers see may well look like bias. And readers are as little likely be responding to appeals for blind trust from reporters as they are by such appeals from the team. The aim of the study, however, is not to argue for any particular way that fairness should be defined. But journalists should certainly develop such a standard, and as importantly, develop the means to assess their performance in achieving it. Finally, journalists should be prepared to discuss and explain that standard and its measure to interested members of the public. These suggestions emerge from a concern that journalism maintain its credibility and audience, avoid manipulation by source and control potential biases from within.

Drawing on a case study of Stephen Keshi and Samson Siasia Wagg (2007) asserted that effectiveness of football mangers (coaches) has become the single most important determinant an explaining the outcome of important matches. As such, Wagg (2007) noted that in the celebrity culture of football elite manager have becomes mythical figures and global celebrities Lars Lagerberg become the first foreign manger of the super eagles national football team I 2010, in the aftermath of African Cup Nation Eagle qualification abrupt resignation after a run of mediocre results threatened Nigeria chances of qualifying for the 2011/12 African Cup of finals (King, 2006). As Nigeria coaches after the 2006 World Cup, as well as embarrassing revelation about Nigeria national team players, which were subsequently publish under lurid and sensationalist headline

in many popular Nigeria newspaper. Previous Super Eagle football managers have always been subjected to enormous critical scrutiny by the popular press. Shuaibu Ahmadu who managed the super eagle team that reached the semi-final of the 2010 African Cup of Nation, was infamously referred to as non achieved infamously,

This popular chant of frustrated football supporters unimpressed by managerial performance reveals the challenges and vagaries of being a manager/coach, and resonated through the newspaper narratives about Stephen Keshi Nigeria team the super Eagle poor performance in beating Ghana 1-0 in their opening game Adesina reported how one loyal Nigeria fan 'asked the question many of us have been debating for the last four years. "Have we got a team manager or what?" (The guardian, 12 June 2012,) Stephen Keshi's lack of emotion was unfavorably compared with the personality of his nemesis, Shu'iabu Ahmadu manger before their quarter-final match. It had been reported that Samson Siasia has been offered the Super Eagle manager's job in the aftermath of the Lars Laserberg episode. Concern was also expressed throughout the newspaper narrative about who would provide the inspirational leadership needed given Stephen Keshi natural inclination to indifference. Former Nigeria international player, Garba Lawal asked, under Stephen keshi restrained stewardship, if the serene Nigeria doesn't get worked up, who takes it on themselves to rally the lads? And suggested that Garba Lawal vast experience and ability to inspiring psychological addresses should come in very handy just before kick-off'

5. CONCLUSIONS

Conclusively there are three basic qualities which should guide print media narratives it must be fast, fair and accurate: Speed comes from increasing knowledge, confidence and experience. Accuracy comes from constant attention to details and from hard work in finding, checking and re-checking details. Fairness has a lot to do with avoiding bias, treating people equally and allowing people to have equal chances to do things or express themselves fairness means reporters covering a story must remember there are usually two sides and often more- to most issues, and that those differing viewpoints should be given roughly equal space in any news story.

Based on the conclusion the following recommendations were made that the objectivity and fairness apply not only to how a reporter writes about an issue, but also to how he conducts himself in public. That means a reporter must not only be objective and fair but also convey an image of being objective and fair. When considering objectivity and fairness. First, such rules apply to reporters covering so-called hard news, or straight news stories, for the main news section

of the newspaper or website. Second, remember that ultimately, reporters are in search of the truth. And while objectivity and fairness are important, a reporter shouldn't let them get in the way of finding the truth. In other words, use objectivity and fairness as tools to find the truth. That's your goal as a reporter.

6. REFERENCES

Altmeppen, K.D. (2006). *Journalismun und medien als Organozationen. Leistungen, Strukturen und Management* [Journalism and media as organizations; Performance, structures, and management. In German]. Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Velage.

Altmeppen, K.D. (2006). The structure of neres production: the organizational approach to Journalism research. In M. Loffelholzo & D. weaver (Eds.), Global journalism research; Theories, methods, findings, fure (p.52); melden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Arnold, K. (2009). *Qualitatsjournalismus. Die Zeitung und ihr Publikum* [Quality in journalism. The newspaper and its audience. In German]. Kanstanz, Germany: Universitatsverlag Konstanz,

Bentale, G. (2008). *Objekivitat und Glaubwerdigkeit: Medienrealitat rekonstruiert* [Objectivity and credibility. Constructing media realities. In German]; Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag.

Craig, D.A. (2009). Justice as a journalistic value and goal; In L.Wikins & C. G. Christians (Eds.), The handbook of mass media ethics (pp.203-216). London, UK: Rouledge.

Fico, F., & Softin, S. (1995). Covering local conflict: Fairness in reporting a public policy issue. *Newspaper Research Journal, 16*, 67-76.

Fico, F., & Softin, S. (2011). Fairness and balance of selected newspaper coverage of controversial national, state and local issues. *Journalism Quarterly Winter*, pp.30-43.

Gaziono, C. & Kristin, M. (2008). How credible is the credulity crises? *Journalism Quarterly Summer*, pp.267-278, 375.

Hallin, D.C., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing media systems; three models of media and politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University press.

King, A. (2006). Nationalism and Sports. In G. Dalanty, & K. Kumar, (Eds.). The SAGE Handbook Nations and Nationalism (pp.249-259), London: SAGE.

Kristin, M. & Gaziono, C. (1986). Measuring the concept of credibility. *Journalism Quarterly, 63*(3), 451-462.

McQuail, D. (1992). *Media performance: Mass communication and the public interest*. Landon, UK: Sage Publications.

Raul, M. (2008). Journalism in a globalizing world society: A societal approach to journalism research. In M. loffelholz & D. Weaver (Eds.), Global

journalism research; Theories, methods, finding, future (pp.28-38); Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Raul, M. (1971). *Theory of justice and fairness; political and moral philosophy*. Routledge Publishers.

Schicha, C., & Broasda, C. (2010a). Einleitung [Introduction]. In C. Schicha, C. & Broasda, (Eds.), Handbuch Medienethik (pp.9-20). Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag.

Schicha, C., & Broasda, C. (2010b). *Medienskandale* [media scandal. In German]. In C. Schicha, C. & Broasda, (Eds.), Handbuch Medienethik (pp.373-390). Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag.

Studer, P. (2005). *Fairness-leerformed oder durchsetzbare Forderung? Das Wertwort Fairness in ausgewethiten Bereichen der ethischen und juristischen praxis* [fairness – empty phrase or enforceable demand? The valuable term fairness in depicted examples of ethical and legal practice. In German]; Konstanz, Germany: UVK.

Wagg, S. (2007). Angels of us all? Football management, globalization and the politics of celebrity. *Journal Soccer and Society 8*(4), 440-458.