

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

## Content Analytical Study of Nigerian Newspapers' Reportage of Southern Kaduna Killings

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### **Abstract:**

*Objectives of the study: The study used three purposively-selected newspapers examine the Southern Kaduna killings in order to determine the intensiveness of the reportage, the frames used in the reports, the prominence given to the reports and how interpretative the reports were.*

*Methodology: The study content analyzed 168 editions of the selected newspapers over a period of 36 weeks (three years) using constructed week and simple random techniques.*

*Results: The study found that newspapers intensively reported the Southern Kaduna killings with an average of 2.08 reports per day. It found five most prevalent frames used in reporting constituting 82.33% while the remaining accounted for 17.67%. It further that the crises enjoy prominence with a cumulative of 154(43.87%) on front and back pages and carried 253(72.07%) interpretative stories.*

*Implications: The implication is that the Nigerian newspapers have significantly improved their reportage of crises and to be rising above ethno-religious and ownership interests.*

*Originality: This study is original and has contributed in educating the public on the underlying issues in Southern Kaduna killings.*

**Keywords:** Reportage, newspaper, killing, southern Kaduna, media

### **1. Background to the Study**

The sanctity of human life is protected by 1999 Federal Republic of Nigeria as well as many international charters and treaties of international organizations like United Nations and African Union and sub-regional bodies like African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, all which Nigeria is signatory to. Specifically, section 4 of the 1999 constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria provides that: "Everybody has a right to life, and no one shall be deprived intentionally of his life save for in execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence of which he has been found guilty in Nigeria," ([www.nigeria-law.org](http://www.nigeria-law.org)).

But despite the elaborate provisions of these statutes, Southern Kaduna has witnessed ceaseless orgy of bloodletting and wanton destruction of properties of inestimable value, mostly, between Christians and Muslims for a long time. These crises have been anchored on three major issues: cattle grazing, chieftaincy disagreements and ethno-religious matters. The severity and regularity of were captured by Dr. Zwahu Bonnat (*Vanguard*, 24 June 2012) when he chronicled 28 ethno-religious and communal crises in Southern Kaduna between 1980 and 2012. Besides, statistics from *Daily Globe Watch* (August 3, 2016) show that since 2010, more than 4000 people have been extra-judicially killed and over 500 houses set ablaze. Fulani herdsmen are alleged to be behind most of these killings in Southern Kaduna. Lending credence to the menace of these deadly herders, *Global Terrorism Index*, opine that Fulani herdsmen has emerged as the fourth bloodiest terrorist organization, ([www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk))

Christians observe that the blood-letting in Southern Kaduna has its roots in the incendiary comments and inciting statements made by the political elite and party leaders including Mohammadu Buhari after 2011 elections that led to attacks on Southern Kaduna Christians in Zaria, Kaduna, Zonkwa and Kafanchan. These utterances, age-long deep mutual suspicions between the Christians and Muslims and the inability of the government to decisively deal with recurrent crisis in Southern Kaduna greatly fueled the current orgy of killings. Apart from the above, fear of Islamization of the country, allegation of the Fulani quest for domination agenda now that Buhari has become the president of the country fueled uneasiness among the Christians.

The Muslims on their own side claim that Christians' aggression against the herdsmen was the major cause of the crises. Alhaji Ahmadu Suleiman Kasuwamagani, the leader of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), Kaduna branch cited in Binniyat (2017, p. 4) counter-claimed that the herdsmen lost homes in Ninte, Gada

Biyu, Unguwan Anjol, Goska Misisi and Dangoma, apart from other places. "According to him, "in Ninte and Godogodo, 22 Fulani were killed in the crisis. Between Manchok and Jankassa, late last year, four of our boys were killed and in that very day, 205 cows were killed too."

But Governor of the state, Nasir El Rufai blamed foreigners for the attacks. According to him, "...the attackers were foreign Fulani herdsmen, who were avenging past attacks on them and their livestock" (*Premiumtimes*, January 13, 2017).

There have, consequently, been conflicting claims on the number of people that have lost their lives in these unnecessary crises. The leadership of the Catholic Diocese of Kafanchan, said a total of 808 people killed in 53 villages across the four local government areas in the state; 1,422 houses; 16 churches; 19 houses and one primary school were destroyed across Kaura, Sanga, Jama'a Kauru Local Government Areas where there had been persistent attacks, (*ThisDay*, December 31, 2017). The National Emergency Management Agency, (NEMA), put the number of deaths at 204 (*Premiumtimes*, January 13, 2017). Then Inspector General of Police disputed the figures put forward by the churches. According to him, "on-the-spot assessment of the crisis by him across Southern Kaduna settlements proved contrary to the allegation of over 800 people were killed in the attacks by bandits, ([www.signalng.com](http://www.signalng.com)).

Regardless of differences in opinion, what is not in doubt is that the peoples of Southern Kaduna are daily living under threat to their lives with dwindling source of subsistence and other socio-economic hardships. Mercy Corps, a global humanitarian organization cited in Ekpiyimi (2018) laments that the incessant crises especially by herdsmen have drastic effect on food supply and security, depletion of income including internally generated revenue by over 47% and estimates that over \$14 billion has been lost since last three years as a result of these crises. The organization also pointed out that crop yield, displacement of farmers, destruction of farmlands by cattle could spell catastrophe for the country.

In view of the media aphorism: if it bleeds, it leads, the mass media thus riveted attention to the unending bloodletting in Southern Kaduna in pursuance of their duties of mirroring the society, gate-keeping and setting agenda. Baran (2004) posits that the media hold a selective mirror of the society where images are not portrayed equally because some things may appear bigger than they truly are; some may appear smaller while, some may disappear altogether. By referring to mirror as being selective, he actually meant the biases and irresponsibility in media reportage of various societal, ethnic, communal and religion issues. However, no matter how selective media's image could be, one way of keeping in touch with our contemporary world is still through the media. It constitutes a major pillar that shape, nurture and build the society. Its traditional roles of informing, educating and entertaining the public are so crucial that societies can hardly make a meaningful progress without the media. This is why the press is referred as "watchdog of the society" implying that the press exists as organ of information sourcing and dissemination, educational promotion, surveillance, social enlightenment and mobilization (Ekeanyanwu, 2007). Therefore, the newspapers' reportage of Southern Kaduna killings plays a significant role in setting the stage for discussion of essential issues and happenings in that society and has great influence on how public opinion is structured, going by the fact that majority of newspaper's readers are elites and opinion leaders.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

The general goal of this study is to examine how Nigerian newspapers reported Southern Kaduna Killings. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- Ascertain the depth/intensity of reportage given to Southern Kaduna killings by the selected newspapers;
- Determine the prevalent fames used by the selected newspapers in reportage of the Southern Kaduna killings;
- Determine the level of prominence accorded to stories on southern Kaduna killings by the selected newspapers;
- Determine the extent the stories were interpretative.

## 3. Review of Related Literature

The media brings to the knowledge of the public the outbreak of crisis in different areas. The media also set the agenda for the society by deciding what topics the people talk about. The agenda setting function of the print media according to Umechukwu (2001) is a significant aspect of the institutional connection between the mass media and politics. The agenda to be set determines how the news story is to be framed. Entman (1993) agrees that media can legitimate one side in a conflict by displaying news about it more noticeably. Placing articles on the front page, for example, assigns a certain level of importance to a story and shows a newspaper's concern for it. Within a story, placing information higher up (in the headline, or the lead paragraph, for example) signals its importance. Though, the killings in Southern killing has been relentless, the following stand out for their bestiality and ruthlessness.

### 3.1. The Chain Attacks in Kafanchan Local Government

Gunmen believed to be Fulani herdsmen carried a chain of night attack skilling 194 people in the districts of Linte, Goska, Doguma and Kafanchan town and 10 people in Chikun local government area in the months of October, November and December, 2016 and early January, 2017 according to statistics from National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA. The Catholic Church in Southern Kaduna counter claimed that a total of 808 people were killed, 1,422 houses, 16 Churches, 19 shops, and one primary school were destroyed. It was further revealed that majority of the people killed were children, women and the elderly. According to Garba Mohammed (*Premiumnews*, Jan. 13 2017), government's response has proved ineffectual to stem the tide of the violence.

### 3.2. 42 People Killed in Series of Attacks in Southern Kaduna

In the wee hours of 19th and 20th February, 2017, according to SB Morgen Intelligence (SBM), heavily-armed Fulani herdsmen carried out raids on communities in Kaduna State destroying homes and claiming at least 21 lives. The report further stated that, "hundreds of militia men descended on Bakin Kogi in the Kaninkon Chiefdom of Jema'a Local Government Area (LGA) in southern Kaduna State burning down houses, killing at least seven people and leaving scores more injured. Additionally, in the early hours of 20th February, Fulani gunmen descended on the villages of Mifi and Ashim in Kaura LGA in the Attakad Chiefdom in simultaneous attacks killing 14. The victims were women and children, aged between eight and 73.

### 3.3. At Least 21 Dead in Fulani Raids in Kaduna State

*The Guardian* newspaper of 19 July, 2017 reported that at least 37 people are feared killed and many others seriously injured in a fresh wave of crisis that that rocked Kajuru Local Government Area in Southern Kaduna.

This trouble, according to the newspaper, started when some Fulani youths allegedly went to a village at Ugwan Uka in Kajuru Local Government, about 50 kilometres from the state capital, to avenge the killing of their kinsman, alleged to be a bandit. The action provoked the Kadara youths who mobilized themselves the following day and attacked Fulani settlements, burning their houses and other property while killing not less than 12 persons in the reprisal attack. Fulani youths killed five of the youths that participated in the killing of their kinsman. An eyewitness, Mallam Salisu Mohammed, said that though some security operatives were deployed to restore peace, "things got out of hand again when the security agents left the bushes and the Kadara youth launched another attack on the surrounding Fulani settlements, killing not less than 10 persons."

### 3.4. 141 Massacred in Southern Kaduna

One of the most gruesome killings in Southern Kaduna occurred on February 10–11, 2019, when 141 people were killed in the Kajuru LGA of Kaduna state. The state governor, Mallam Nasri el-Rufai announced some hours before the Nigerian general election. Among the dead included are 11 Adara natives and 130 Fulani. However the Fulani group Later, Miyetti Allah faulted the governor's figure and published a list of 131 Fulani that died and further stated that the bodies of 66 Fulani were recovered and buried in mass graves while the 65 other Fulani remained missing. Consequently, a reprisal attack by suspected Fulani gunmen on Ungwar Bardi left 11 Adara people - dead. Adara militia in turn retaliated. The natives claimed that the attack was part of their revenge for October 2018 attacks between Christians and Muslims in Kajuru in which killed 55 people and another 22 children, and 11 women were killed.

### 3.5. The February 26, 2019 Killings

At least 29 people were reported to be killed in an attack in Karamai community of Kajuru on 26 February 2019. The attack was suspected to be from Fulani in retaliation to the earlier violence where Fulani settlements were attacked. The governor confirmed a few days later that the death toll had risen to 40.

### 3.6. The Coalition against Kajuru Killings

The Coalition against Kajuru killings stated on March 18 that since then 130 people have been killed in a series of revenge attacks over the massacre announced by El-Rufai, (Wikipedia).

Apart from these major killings, *Daily Trust* of 14 January 2017, in a story entitled: *Southern Kaduna Killings - the Inside Story*, chronicled the following string of deadly attacks in Southern Kaduna:

- July 24: Fulani militants killed 10 Christians near Jema'a County in Kaduna state, including Pastor Shamah Kuyet Ishaya of the Evangelical Church Willing All (ECWA). Victims included Baptists, members of ECWA, Anglican and Roman Catholic.
- July 20: 11 were killed in the Kaduna village of Gora Gan, and seven others were injured
- July 19: Fulani militants killed 18 people and injured 30 others at a wedding reception at a home in the Kakum Daji village in Kaduna.
- July 16: four people were killed and 32 abducted from Mai-ido and neighboring villages in the Kachia Local Government Area in Kaduna.
- July 10 -12: Fulani killed at least 22 people and displaced more than 1000 in a series of attacks in the Zangon Kataf Local Government Area in a coordinated three-day attacks.
- In April, militants killed at least 25 Christians and kidnapped others.

## 4. Empirical Review

Onuegbu (2012)Content analyzed to 340 editions of the *Daily Trust*, *The Nation*, *The Guardian* and *the Daily Sun*. the study: "print media coverage of religious crises in Nigeria between 2010 and 2011" found that the selected papers adequately covered religious crises during the period under study. It was also found that 65% of the news reports were balanced, 79.6% of the news stories were not sensationalized and 71.1% gory pictorial illustrations were used to accentuate their reports.

In a study entitled, "the influence of media coverage of religious crises in Nigeria: A case study of the Mohammed Cartoon Riots in Nigeria," Pauline (2010) explored people's opinion on media reports of religious conflict in Nigeria using content analysis and survey. The study raised questions on people's attitudes on hearing reports of religious restiveness over the media; how the media have helped in curbing religious tension in the country among others. The findings showed

that though the media did adequate coverage of the riots, media reports, have sometimes, ignited religious crises in Nigeria.

Eti (2012) content analyzed the headlines of *Champion*, the *Punch* and *New Nigerian Newspapers* to examine how Nigerian newspapers report crises issues like kidnapping and hostage-taking. The study concluded that, Nigerian press reportage of crises like bombing and kidnapping is 'episodic' and influenced by ethno-political factors, foreign policy implications and as well featured such conflict behaviours as the "bombing of drilling platforms and oil pipelines", "killing and maiming of oil workers and state security operatives", and "kidnapping and hostage taking."

Musediq (2009) conducted a study entitled: "an analysis of the reportage of Jos crisis and Boko Haram insurgency by selected newspapers" to determine the level of prominence, the extent of story balance and influence of ownership interests in coverage of the conflict. Employing the mixed method of data gathering, the study content-analyzed the daily and weekend editions of *Tribune*, *Daily Sun* and *Daily Trust* newspapers for the study spanning a period of twenty months (April, 2010 -December 31, 2012). Findings revealed that *Daily Trust* was less sensational while *Daly Sun* and *Tribune* tended to be sensational with many screaming headlines running from *front* page to *inside* pages. *Daily Trust* stories were more balanced. The newspapers gave high prominence to the coverage of the crises

Okoro and Odoemelam (2013) investigated through content analysis, the frame patterns used by Nigerian newspapers in reporting war against Boko Haram insurgency. The study spanned a period of 12 months (January 2012to December 2020) randomly selected 144 editions of the selected newspapers published within the study period. Findings shows that except the *Daily Sun* that had ethnic and religious frames as its dominant frames, policy response was uniformly the dominant frame in all the other newspapers studied.

In a content analytical study carried out on "giving attention to prominence, frequency and adequacy in the print media coverage of Boko Haram crisis," Hassan (2009), found that the print media in Nigeria often relegate objective and fair reportage to the background whenever they are reporting crisis/conflicts. The study further found that the print media report crisis in line with the interests of their owners and their ethnic affiliations.

Njoku (2010) on, "print media coverage of religious crisis in Nigeria" it was revealed that print media coverage of crisis in Nigeria have not been objective in their reportage of crisis in Nigeria. The study unveiled that the print media usually take sides/participate in the crisis by subjectively covering the conflicts. It found that the direction of coverage of these crisis obviously points to the fact that the print media have not been objective in their coverage of crisis in Nigeria.

In 2015, Ngwu, C., Ekwe, O. and Chiaha, C. employed content analysis and survey to investigate the news frames used by the media in reporting the school girls' abduction of April 14, 2014 school girls' abduction and how the frames influenced the audience. The researchers found that political, hopelessness, rescue efforts, conspiracy, religious, economic, and ethnic frames were different categories of frames used. They identified hopeless frame as the dominant frame. The implication is that readers will likely be pessimistic about stories on how the girls can be rescued. Egbunike (2015) media framing of political protests in Nigeria and found that newspapers were more proactive in framing enthusiasm, belief, and scenario of the protest.

A content analytical study entitled "print media coverage of crisis and other violence in Nigeria" was carried out by Bala (2010) to find out the direction of coverage given to crisis and violence in Nigeria by newspapers and ownership influence on their reportage. The findings revealed that selfishness on the part of print media journalists influenced their reportage of crisis in Nigeria. It was found that, virtually all the reports favoured the regions the owners belong to obvious reasons

Similarly, Okpako (2010) carried out content analytical study on "Nigeria print media coverage of crisis in Nigeria". The finding of the study indicated that the print media coverage of crisis in Nigeria is an adventure of subjectivity. The study also unveiled that the print media performed abysmally poor in their coverage of crises and conflicts in Nigeria.

Orekyeh and Onuorah (2014) conducted a study on "Nigerian magazines' coverage of the Boko Haram Insurgency: A Job well done". The findings revealed that there was high percentage of negative stories, good use of photographs buttressing stories. They concluded that magazines gave coverage to Boko Haram terrorism. It was recommended that more attention be given to the insurgency, while government through its security agencies put more effort in gathering intelligence on the sect and further be done in the future.

## 5. Theoretical Framework

This research work is hinged on Realistic Group Conflict theory. The realistic group conflict theory and framing theory. Realistic Group Conflict theory propounded by Donald Campbell in 1965 attempts to explain the nature and dynamics of intergroup conflict in an environment over scarce resources (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). This theory sees the complexity of man in the society as making conflict inevitable since man's quest to get what he wants, often brings him into conflict with his fellow man. It assumes a steady and unending competition within the human society in the quest for supremacy of power. This theory states that prejudice and other negative attitudes towards out-groups are amplified when in-groups perceive themselves to be economically, socially or culturally threatened by an out-group. Most times, the size of an out-group (or its perceived size) is the major influencing factor behind group conflict. The theory also proposes that groups are in zero-sum of competition among each other and that hostile reactions towards out-groups arise when the in-group's collective economic, social or cultural interests are being tampered with or threatened (Kilpi-Jakonen, 2015).

According to Lance and Pardos-Prado (2015), the theory believes that socioeconomically and culturally vulnerable groups are more likely to exhibit negative attitudes towards immigration as a result of a perception of ethnic competition for inadequate or scarce resources like jobs, economic benefits, housing, political powers, and social services.

The theory also postulates that selfish interests between individuals lead to competition for insufficient resources (Sidaniun & Pratto, 1999). The realistic group conflict theory hinges on three main elements namely group identity, organization and competition for scarce resources as the basis of crisis.

The main tenets of realistic group conflict theory include: 1) groups have their own reality- a unique cultural identity; 2) reality is determined by material conditions that exist; 3) competition for limited resources result to negative relations; and cooperation and reciprocal interactions leads to positive relations. A critical view of recurrent Southern Kaduna crises shows that they are related to issues of identity (ethnicity), power (chieftaincy) and access to resources (e.g. land rights). In other words, they are "struggles over questions of what constitutes authentic local representation, and legitimate land rights". The realistic group conflict theory therefore, is an appropriate for the explanation of inter-ethnic conflict and conflict resolution. It therefore, serves as the main theory in this study.

## 6. Framing Theory

This theory is based on the assumption that how an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences. Framing traces its roots to both psychology and sociology (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Its psychological origin is traceable to the pioneering, experimental work of Kahneman and Tversky in 1979-1984.

Framing is both a macro-level and a micro-level construct (Scheufele, 1999). As a macro-construct, the term 'framing' refers to modes of presentation that journalists and other communicators use to present information in a way that resonates with existing underlying schemas among their audience (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). This does not mean, of course, that most journalists try to spin a story or deceive their audiences. In fact, framing, for them, is a necessary tool to reduce the complexity of an issue, given the constraints of their respective media related to news holes and airtime (Gans, 1979). Frames, in other words, becomes invaluable tools for presenting relatively complex issues ... efficiently and in a way that makes them accessible to lay audiences because they play to existing cognitive schemas and as a micro-construct, framing describes how people use information and presentation features regarding issues as they form impressions (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007, pp.11-12).

Framing is apt in this study since the way crises are framed in the newspapers largely shapes how they are perceived and understood by the audience. Proper framing of the crises not only shapes the way it is understood, it guides the public's reaction to it and to some extent, the importance they to attach to it as well as government's attitude to towards them.

## 7. Method

As research method primarily aid researchers realize the objectives of studies (Odi, 2020), this study adopts content analytical method since it involves analysis of manifest contents of publications. Cavanagh (1997) in Satu & Helvi (2007) opines that when classified into the same categories, words, phrases and the like share the same meaning. Hence, through content analysis, it is possible to distil words into fewer content related categories. The population of the study comprises all nationally circulating newspaper between October 1, 2016 and October, 2019 which the period of this study. Information available at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List>, there are 37 such newspapers in Nigeria during this period. The researchers purposively selected three newspapers namely *Daily Sun*, *The Guardian* and *Daily Trust* out of the population for the study. The selected newspapers circulated daily and nationally, have wide readership and are renowned for their objective analysis of issues. Sample size of 168 editions (56 editions per newspaper) was drawn out of 1,093 editions published by the selected newspaper within the study period.

The constructed week method served as sampling technique. Studies (Holsti, 1969; Riffe, Aust, and Lacy, 1993; Lacy, Robinson and Riffe, 1995) have confirm and validate the use constructed week method as efficacious measuring sample in content analysis. Using the simple random technique, the researcher selected two editions of each of the three newspapers from two constructed weeks per year. This amounts to a total of 14 editions of each of the newspapers from the 52 weeks that make one year. Since the study used three newspapers for a period three years (36 months or 156 weeks), this gave a total of 168 editions. Hence, the sample size for the study is 140 editions of the five selected newspapers. The instrument of data collection was the code sheet developed by the researchers. It was used to gather, record, collate and weight the data from the newspapers. Inter coder reliability test was done using three independent coders (the researchers) and result was tested using Scott's (1955) '*pi index*' formula which guards against any agreements that may have occurred by chance," Wimmer and Dominick (2000, p. 152). The formula is given as:

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

The test was considered reliable as a relatively high inter-coder co-efficient of .75 was achieved after minor adjustments. The coding yielded 351 news stories on Southern Kaduna killings while a thorough review of literature revealed eight prevalent frames used in the reportage of the crises as shown in table I below:

S/No.	Frame	Coding
1.	Political	This refers to policy, actions and or inactions of the government at different levels.
2.	Insecurity	This frame covers the gamut of security threats, fear, attacks, killings, kidnappings, destruction of properties including the activities security personnel.
3.	Islamization	This records the fear of Islamizing or forceful conversion of people into Islam in the country and Muslim dominated Kaduna state in particular.
4.	Massacre	This records the magnitude and consistency of bloodletting by the combatants.
5.	Herders/ Farmers	Frames the issues of destruction of farms and farmlands by the Fulani herdsmen and their animals, grazing land and routes
6.	Religion	The activities of the dominant religious (Christianity and /Islamic) leaders and their faithful as well as their inflammatory preaching are recorded in this frame.
7.	Ethnicity	How the worrisome issue of native – settler (indigenes in local parlance) including leadership palaver are covered in this frame.
8.	Neutral	This covers stories that simply inform the audience on Southern Kaduna killings without any attempt to inject subjective views

Table 1

## 8. Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

### 8.1. Research Question one

What is the depth/intensity of newspaper reportage of the Southern Kaduna Killings during the study period?

S/No	Newspaper	Frequency	Approx. Stories Per Edition.	Percent
1	Daily Sun	101	1.80	28.77
2	Daily Trust	112	2	31.91
3	The Guardian	138	2.46	39.32
4	Total	351	2.08 (aver)	100

Table 2: Show the Intensity of Newspaper Reportage of Southern Kaduna Killings  
Source: Field Study, 2020

Data in table 2 above show that the newspaper carried 351 stories on the Southern Kaduna killing. With an average of 2.08 stories per edition of the newspapers studied, the intensity of the reportage is deemed high taking into cognizance that the newspapers also carry stories on many other disciplines including education, health, environment, politics, economy and others. They also show that *The Guardian* newspaper gave the Kaduna crisis more intensive reportage with an average of 2.46 stories per edition. These findings agree with the findings of other scholars (Orekyeh and Onuorah, 2014; Onuegbu, 2012) while contradicting the findings of Okpako (2010). It handily affirms the media aphorism: "if it bleeds, it leads."

### 8.2. Research Question two

What were the prevalent frames used in reporting Southern Kaduna killings in the selected newspapers?

Newspaper	Political	Insecurity	Islamization	Massacre	Ethnic	Religion	Grazing	Neutral	Total
Daily Sun	10	12	7	5	14	15	17	21	101
	-9.90%	-11.88%	-6.93%	-4.95%	-13.86%	-14.85%	16.03%	-20.79%	-28.77%
Daily Trust	8	13	3	4	16	20	18	30	112
	-7.14%	-11.61%	-2.68%	-3.33%	-14.28%	-17.86%	-16.07%	-26.78%	-31.91%
The Guardian	12	13	8	5	17	20	16	47	138
	-8.69%	-9.42%	-5.80%	-3.62%	-12.31%	-14.49%	-11.59%	-34.05%	-39.32%
Total	30	38	18	14	47	55	51	98	351
	-8.55%	-10.82%	-5.13%	-5.98%	-13.39%	-15.56%	-14.52%	-27.92%	-100%

Table 3: Showing the Prevalence Rate of Frames Used in Reporting Southern Kaduna Killings  
Source: Field Study, 2020

Table three shows the 8 frames category used in reporting the Southern Kaduna killings in the selected newspapers. The data in the table reveal that out of the eight frame categories, 5(82.33%) were most prevalent. These are insecurity, ethnic, religion, grazing and neutral frames. The 3(17.66%) remaining frames namely political, Islamization and massacre frames were not used as prevalently as the other five frames. It was observed that religion and grazing frames the most prevalent and affirms the postulation of (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) on the nature and dynamics of intergroup conflict in an environment over scarce resources and cultural identity.

### 8.3. Research Question Three

What is the level of prominence accorded to stories on southern Kaduna killings by the selected newspapers?

Variable	Daily Sun		Daily Trust		The Guardian		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Front page	35	9.97	24	6.38	37	10.54	96	27.35
Inside page	48	13.67	61	17.37	72	20.51	181	51.56
Center spread	6	1.71	4	1.13	8	2.27	18	5.12
Back page	14	3.99	23	6.55	21	5.98	58	16.52
Total	101	100%	112	100%	138	100%	351	100%

Table 4: Showing the Level of Prominence Given to Southern Kaduna Killings by the Selected Newspapers Source: Field Study, 2020

Prominence in this study was determined by story placement. Stories on front and back pages were deemed to be highly prominent, (Entman, 1993). Data in table four above show that the three newspapers carried 96(27.35%) stories on Southern Kaduna killings on their front pages and 58(16.52%) on back pages. This is a cumulative of 154(43.87%) stories on prominent positions. These figures show that the stories on Southern Kaduna killings enjoyed high prominence in the three selected newspapers. This finding affirms the conclusion of scholars (Musediq, 2009;Ukonu, 2007) that stories on front page of newspapers have high prominence more so on crisis stories.

### 8.4. Research Question four

To what extent are the stories on Southern Kaduna killings interpretation?

Variables	Daily Sun		Daily Trust		The Guardian		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Editorial	4	1.58	5	1.97	6	2.60	15	5.92
Features	29	11.46	25	9.88	32	12.64	86	33.99
Interview	27	10.67	30	11.85	30	11.85	87	34.38
Opinion Articles	20	7.90	22	8.69	23	9.09	65	25.69
Total	80	100%	82	100%	91	100%	253	100%

Table 5: Showing the Extent the Stories on Southern Kaduna Killings Are Interpretative Source: Field Study

News interpretation is also a common feature of newspapers as seen in features, columns opinion articles and letters to the editor. Interpretation answers the question of elucidation. The basis of interpretative journalism is telling the news and telling what it means (Ekharefor et al, 2016). Hence, interpretative stories tend to educate the audience. Soft news stories like editorial, feature, interview and opinion articles are all educative. Ighata (2011) asserts that news interpretation and analysis afford the reporter or journalist/presenter the opportunity to talk to both sides on an issue because doing so is likely to yield new facts and put the news story in a better light. Data in table five above show that the three selected newspapers carried 253(72.07%) interpretative stories on Southern Kaduna killings. The implication of this finding is that the audience are better informed and properly educated on the underlying issues in the Southern Kaduna crises. Scholars (Akagbosu and Omoruyi, 2003, Ighata, 2011; Ekharefor et al, 2016) all concur.

## 9. Conclusion

From the findings of this study, the researchers conclude that: The study of the newspaper coverage of the Southern Kaduna killings by *The Daily Sun*, *The Guardian* and *Daily Trust* successfully proved that the media lived up to their responsibilities as the watchdog of the society in line with the findings others (Emeka & Onuorah, 2014; Onyeukwu, 2012 and Onuegbu, 2012). Though the reportage of the crises was perilous, the media braved the odds to give them intensive, prominent and interpretative coverage. Going by the public's heavy reliance on the media for information that guide their social interactions, it is believed that the newspaper reportage of the Southern Kaduna killings really built a well enlightened public. It was able to pinpoint not only the prevalent frames in the crises but also the dominant ones. The media were uniform in identifying religion, ethnicity, cattle grazing as major underlying issues in the crises not minding the ethno-religious leanings of their owners.

## 10. Limitations

The study did not examine story direction to determine ownership or cultural issues influenced reportage. Besides, the researchers studied only Southern Kaduna killings while there are such killings in most states in Northeast zone of the country particularly, the bloodletting by Boko Haram insurgents. Future studies should include all these.

## 11. Acknowledgement

The researchers are grateful to all the scholars whose works were used here and others who made useful contributions towards the success of this study.

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