

BROADCAST MEDIA: ROLE AND CHALLENGE IN COVERAGE OF GENERAL ELECTIONS VIOLENCE (A STUDY OF NTA AND AIT)

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the challenges and roles of broadcast media in reportage of election violence. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interview and content analysis methods were employed to gather secondary data. Three veteran journalists each were purposely selected for in-depth interview from Nigerian Television Authority and African Independent Television. The study was anchored on Framing theory. The results revealed the roles of coverage of election violence is to report accurate information that is devoid of vulgarity, obscenity, bias in reporting election violence. Equally, the regularly format used in reporting election violence is straight news. Findings revealed that the sources of information on election violence are Independent National Electoral Commission officials, civil Society monitoring units, the press and electorates. It was also discovered that election observers, journalists and Nongovernmental organisations were involved in voters' education. Findings also showed that the nation lost both human and material resources during election violence. Broadcast Journalists faced difficulties during electoral violence in the hand of unscrupulous politicians and security officers, party and ethnic loyalists. Based on the study's findings, journalists report election violence as factual news. As a result, the study suggested that the media always support election education and refrain from portraying election violence with prejudice. The media should likewise avoid being exploited to fan the flames of ethnic and religious conflicts and remember their societal responsibility.

Keywords: Coverage, Election, Journalist, Political, Society, Violence

INTRODUCTION

The watchdog of the three arms of government and the fourth estate of the realm, the media, has long been exploited by people in positions of political power to sway public opinion and spread false information, particularly political propaganda. The purpose of the media should ideally be to inform, educate, and amuse. He who pays the piper dictates the tune, therefore

those in power, particularly the political class, have frequently avoided this responsibility (Iruonagbe, Imhonopi and Ahmadu, 2013).

The surrounding political context both shapes and is shaped by electoral violence. National and local elites fighting for power are incentivized by political rivalry to utilise violence to their advantage. Therefore, in Nigeria's most contentious political battlegrounds and areas where party rivalries might intersect with regional conflicts over resources, identities, and power, the likelihood of a violent escalation is higher. The elections in the most populous state in Africa would ultimately be a bigger test for the state of democracy across the continent (Election Watch, 2023).

Nigeria's 2023 elections will be historic. This extended period of uninterrupted democratic rule is a first for the country. On a continent where military takeovers are still common, as has long been the case in Nigeria's post-independence history, the orderly handover of power from Buhari to his successor represented a momentous shift. The likelihood of holding free and fair elections across the country is jeopardised by Nigeria's political and security crises, which include jihadist insurgencies, rural banditry, intercommunal conflicts, and separatist campaigns. This increases the likelihood that there will be another violent upsurge after the elections (Election Watch, 2023).

According to Rasheed (2016), an election is the formal process of choosing one or more candidates for a particular position or positions from among a larger than necessary field of candidates who have declared their interest in the position or positions in question and consented to be evaluated based solely on their preference over candidates who are equally qualified for the position or office but are not prepared or interested in holding it for the designated amount of time.

Rasheed (2016) states that elections are the mainstay of democracy, and through participating in elections, citizens can have their say on who should be in particular posts at all levels of government. Elections are the voter's means of exercising power, but in order to be properly directed when choosing candidates for office, the electorate must be aware of the positions taken by the parties and candidates on a variety of subjects that are important to them. However, since the introduction of limited elections in the late 1940s, elections have been a source of violent political, ethnic, religious, and communal disputes in Nigeria. The elections held in the 1960s immediately following independence saw a worsening of this issue. Following both the federal and regional elections in the Western Region in 1964 and 1965, as well as a breach between Awolowo and Akintola, violent political clashes were documented. Political violence occurs during every general election in Nigeria for a number of reasons, such as political fanaticism, racial animosity, religious extremism, and intellectual motivations. Due to their overt

or covert political intent, such violent occurrences have been at the forefront of political awareness.

Prior to the elections in 2003 and 2007, there was a great deal of intra-party and inter-party violence, and this continued on the polling days. In a 2004 study, Human Rights Watch reported that serious acts of violence marred both the 2003 and 2004 local government elections in Nigeria, resulting in numerous injuries and dozens of fatalities (Iruonagbe, Imhonopi and Ahmadu, 2013).

According to Chiluya (2011), socio-political crises have been common in Nigeria, and the nation has not yet seen the much-anticipated democratic rebound. Journalists are directly impacted by the social and political upheavals, but more crucially, they may also suffer as a result of acrimonious politics (Abati, 2006). Elections occurring outside of consolidated democracies can involve significant violence despite their intention to allow for peaceful changes of power. Many elections are prone to high levels of violence before, during, and after the election, especially those held in democracies that have not yet reached full development.

Not only are the Nigerian elections exciting, but they also attract both domestic and foreign actors. This is due to Nigeria's significance in both regional and international politics. Although after gaining independence in 1960, its democratic experiences have not been without bumps, they seem to have stabilised since 1999. The study examines challenges and role of broadcast media in the process of coverage of the recent general elections in Nigeria in 2023. The general election of 2023 was held amid many hopes, worries, and apprehensions. However, the results rely on the observer and their perspective.

Nigerian politics have long involved the media, frequently at tremendous expense. It has consistently supported the populace and promoted their goals. However, it can also be used to advance purposes that might be harmful. The ethnic crises in Nigeria before, during, and after the election was most significantly impacted by this ownership control and media manipulation since it led to the media occasionally engaging in ethnic politics.

Through political reporting, purposeful falsehoods, criminal partisanship, and unprofessionalism mixed with tribal influences, the mainstream media has occasionally stoked conflict. Iruonagbe *et al.* (2013) go on to say that the media's role as the fourth estate of the realm, which is to uphold the highest standards of professionalism by serving as a watchdog over the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government, includes reporting on how those in authority attempt to hold onto their positions of power and how they attempt to remove perceived enemies, including their failure to follow through on campaign promises. Furthermore, the purpose of this study (A study of NTA and AIT) is to ascertain role broadcast media in reportage of election violence.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study were to:

- 1) determine the role of NTA and AIT in coverage of election violence;
- 2) investigate the format of reporting election violence by NTA and AIT
- 3) identify the various sources of election violence in NTA and AIT;
- 4) ascertain the effect of election violence in a democratic society;
- 5) Investigate the challenges faced by the media in reportage of election violence; and

Literature Review

Election violence has been around for a while, but what makes it different today are the unsettling number and range of events, as well as the increased opportunity accessible to those who do such violent acts (Alanamu, 2005). Political violence, according to Anifowose (1982), is defined as the use of force within a political system by an individual or group of individuals against another individual or individuals, and/or property, with the intent to cause bodily harm, death, or property damage; the purpose, choice of targets or victims, surrounding circumstances, implementation, and effects of the violence have political significance that tends to modify the electoral system. The media, as the Fourth Estate of the Realm, must hold the authorities accountable for the crises brought on by the municipal elections. Any act or threat of coercion, intimidation, or bodily harm intended to influence an election or that arises from an electoral contest is classified as electoral violence by the United Nations. When violence is committed with the intention of influencing the voting process, it can be used to influence elections.

Political advertising and electioneering campaign statements can be presented (aired) on television in an artistic manner. According to Norris (2004), "fair access to the airwaves by opposition parties, candidates, and groups is critical for competitive free and fair elections". He makes the argument that during elections, it is crucial for state-owned or public television networks to be inclusive of a range of political opinions and viewpoints without endorsing the government.

"Editorial independence, freedom from close government supervision and censorship, and the like create society," claims Swanson (2004). Additionally, it should help collective organisations raise support, serve as vehicles for the opinions of their followers, organise effective protests, and create and spread alternatives. In other words, part of the media's representational responsibility is to foster an environment that completely incorporates many opinions and perspectives.

Challenges and Constraints of the Media in Reporting Violence

It is common knowledge that Nigerian media outlets face significant pressure from public officials and other private interests to fulfil their duties. According to Jimoh (2007), these constraints limit

their potential to improve society, but they should not allow them get in the way of their ability to carry out their responsibilities.

The media, whether privately or publicly owned, does not exist to serve as a propaganda weapon for those who own it. Media organisations exist, in accordance with sociological and philosophical principles, to uphold the rights of the general public and to further their interests from the lowest strata of society to the highest. They must be able to handle the jobs when necessary because they are the Fourth Estate of the realm. The state must protect citizens' rights for the mass media to live up to public expectations (Adeyanju, 2005). However, access to knowledge that has the potential to advance society is restricted for the mass media. The military orders from previous military regimes continue to persecute those who work in the media while performing their duties. The several previous decrees of the previous military governments in Nigeria continue to stifle the press.

The latter was forced to cooperate or face the wrath of the "power that be," which manifested itself in a state-organized arson against the publishing company and a plot to kill Chief Felix Ibru, the newspaper's publisher (Kadiri, 2009).

"Broadcast Media as an Instrument of Change during 2015 Electioneering Campaigns in Nigeria" is a study conducted in 2016 by Rasheed. According to the study's findings, the majority of respondents thought that messages in the media were a significant factor in helping people choose a candidate. They also concurred that people's minds are effectively influenced by the broadcast messages. The study found that messages used in electioneering campaigns can influence people's orientations. According to the study's findings, broadcast media are products of the society in which they are used. Furthermore, given that they are in charge of ensuring free and fair elections, the broadcast media has contributed significantly to the development and maintenance of Nigeria's democracy.

The electioneering contest in Nigeria eventually turned into a series of hate campaigns involving accusations and denials between the two main political parties and their candidates. It was also determined that broadcast media served as an effective means of interacting with the public, particularly voters, during electioneering campaigns. According to the study, broadcast media should be expected to play a peace-building role in order to mend the rifts caused by the intense campaign. Additionally, it was advised that the press not lose sight of its social responsibility and that broadcast media should resist the urge to be used to fan the flames of ethnic and religious conflicts. According to the study, broadcast media should start and continue initiatives that inform and educate voters about how to deal with the economic and social realities of today's voters.

Without the aid of the media, it is impossible for politicians to reach every voter in their areas and ask for their support in order to win elections due to the nature of modern politics. According

to Thurber, Nelson, and Dulio (Swigger, 2012), television ads are now a common occurrence in political campaigns in the United States at all levels of government. They are also one of the most expensive techniques used in political campaigns. Today's platforms for party candidates to inform voters and enlist their support in winning elections are the news media. Kurfi (2010) states that it is debatable that citizens cannot fulfil their roles and that democracy will wither without access to the full range of information about their world.

There was significant dissatisfaction with the electoral process following the 2007 election. The Nigerian media developed as a way to track socio-political unrest under the constraints of colonial rule. According to Oso (1997), Nigerian media originated from nationalistic propaganda and anti-colonial protest. Because of this, the media is a powerful, targeted organisation committed to promoting social harmony and equity (Imhonopi, 2012). Presenting accurate, unbiased, and truth-seeking reporting is the media's primary duty. According to Olayiwola (1999), the military believed that free newspaper circulation and other media transmission would pose a threat to their administration, thus they issued a variety of decrees to censor the media.

Swanson (2004) notes that, in addition to or instead of more conventional campaign tactics like party rallies, political parties and candidates depended on the skillful use of the mass media to influence voters, or "consumers" of political communication, to support them during election season. They also offered campaigns that highlight the endearing personalities of party leaders. Political advertising and electioneering campaign statements can be presented (aired) on television in an artistic manner. "Editorial independence, freedom from close government supervision and censorship, and the like create society," claims Swanson (2004). Additionally, it should aid collective organisations in gaining support, serving as vehicles for the opinions of their followers, registering effective protest, developing and promoting.. According to Norris (2004), "fair access to the airwaves by opposition parties, candidates, and groups is critical for competitive free and fair elections". He makes the argument that during elections, it is crucial for state-owned or public television networks to be inclusive of a range of political opinions and viewpoints without endorsing the government. This has the effect of undermining the electorate's decision during elections.

The broadcast media are a kind of simultaneous communication with a sizable and diverse audience. Print, broadcast, and digital media are three major categories that can be used to group these sources of communication. While print media like newspapers and magazines send information through the printed medium, broadcast media like radio and television transmit information electronically. Information is sent digitally using the Internet and mobile devices, two relatively new forms of digital media. The country's political election campaigns have relied heavily on the broadcast media over the years. Indeed, they are the most effective ways to win over the voters' hearts and minds, who determine the outcome of any democratic, free, fair, and transparently trustworthy election (Rasheed, 2016).

They serve as a conduit for political parties and their candidates to reach a large segment of the populace that would not otherwise have the opportunity to hear them speak at political events. Through the broadcast and publication of campaign messages—news, interviews, speeches, documentaries, commentary, debates, etc.—the mass media may have an impact on the public's voting decisions (Rasheed, 2016).

During electioneering campaign seasons, the electorate typically relies on the broadcast media to give the necessary information for them to make informed judgements. The mass media can satisfy the information demands of the voters through its traditional roles of informing, enlightening, educating, and entertaining. The broadcast media play a significant role in the election process by acting as a conduit between the political parties/candidates and the public. Political parties and their candidates might use them as a platform to canvass for votes. The broadcast media sway the public's opinion in favour of or against a particular political party or candidate through their reporting on, publication of, or broadcasting of political campaign messaging. This crucial function of the media as a mobilising force was made clear in Nigeria during the electioneering leading up to the general elections in 2015 (Rasheed, 2016).

Brown and Udomisor (2015) conducted a study to evaluate how political issues were covered in Nigerian newspapers. They examined the percentage of political news in relation to other subjects, the level of reader interest in political stories, and the prominence and placement of these stories. Stratified sampling was used to create the study sample, and content analysis was used to gather data. A total of 36 daily publications of the two newspapers had their content analysed out of a pool of samples chosen using a stratified random sampling technique from issues of the newspapers published throughout the three-month period—April to June, 2013. Results demonstrated that the two publications' coverage of politics was insufficient and primarily geared towards serving the needs of the administration. Among other things, it was suggested that Nigerian newspapers report on political matters in a clear, objective manner and increase the amount of political content they include in their articles to help Nigerians become more politically aware.

The 2015 Presidential Election campaign had an incumbent President seeking re-election and a formidable opposition challenger polled to defeat him. Chukwuma, Ezeh, and Umuze (2016) assess viewer perception and how the dominating Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) covered the race. According to the study, NTA's reporting was biased, unjust, and unprofessional. According to the study, civic education and voter education about the political process must be centred on the media in order to cultivate an informed, engaged, and logical electorate. Before making extremely critical political decisions, the study advised that all legal means and tactics be used to enable citizens to obtain the necessary knowledge or find alternate sources of information.

Theoretical Framework

Framing Theory

According to Baran and Davis (2010), Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman first proposed the framing theory in 1981. According to this hypothesis (Baran and Davis, 2010), people's comprehension of a message depends on how it is presented (framed). Prior attitudes and knowledge play a significant influence in defining the framing effects, according to Shuck & de Vreese (2006). In that situation, media audience are more likely to be swayed by narratives that are consistent with their cultural orientation.

Both the framing theory and second level, or attribute, agenda-setting are concerned with the weight that specific aspects of a topic receive in the media. Still, there are some distinctions between them as well. By declaring that framing can only be meaningfully compared to attribute agenda-setting when it is "defined in terms of how an object is portrayed in the media or by the public, but when the definition of framing takes a broad or abstract direction." The framing used by the Nigerian media in their coverage of the election violence would influence the tone of the nation's public conversation.

The way the election violence is framed by the Nigerian press and how the general population comes to comprehend and interpret the election violence will inevitably interact. Furthermore, the framing theory centres on the fact that news framing by the media (journalists) affects how news items are presented to the general audience by the journalists.

Methodology

In-depth interview and content analysis methods were used to carry out the study. Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and African Independent Television (AIT) were simple purposively selected from the list of public and private broadcast stations in Nigeria.

The population of the study were Journalists in Nigeria media industry. A total of six (6) senior Journalists (three journalists each from NTA and AIT) were purposively selected for in-depth interview from both NTA and AIT. Also, content analysis of audio and video coverage of 2023 general elections by the two electronic stations (NTA and AIT) was carried out.

Results and Discussion

Roles of NTA and AIT in coverage of election violence as indicated by the journalist.

Objective 1: Roles of NTA in the coverage of election violence

National Television Authority (NTA) Journalists Responses

Journalist 1: In my opinion, the National Television Authority's responsibility in covering election violence in Nigeria is to provide truthful information. This means that journalists should not disparage someone or falsely charge anyone based on election violence. All election violence

information should be given with sufficient adequacy and accuracy, and the impact on the general public should always be considered.

Journalist 2: Yes, there is a real role for the National Television Authority in how electoral violence is covered. In order to prevent media manipulation, this involves ensuring that journalists accurately cover electoral violence and that there is no profanity or obscenity. Because election violence had already caused too much harm to this country (Nigeria), they played a very specific role in the coverage of election violence in Nigeria, a role that would ensure that the general public was aware of election violence as it occurred and how to address the problems.

Journalist 3: The most direct duty of NTA is to describe situations passionately, without making additions or subtraction, and without inciting election violence. The journalist pointed out the media's critical role in increasing public knowledge of election violence and society's reaction to it.

African Independent Television (AIT)

Journalist 1: The main responsibility of AIT in the coverage of election violence in Nigeria was to be sufficiently discreet in reporting election violence, i.e., the media should uphold source confidentiality and protection. If a government official provides information about election violence, the media person should not reveal his name in order to shield him from harm, and this will encourage people to speak out about it.

Journalist 2: The media should accurately report what happened, where it happened, and how it happened. For instance, if just 50 people were killed in a car accident, the media cannot say that 70 or more people died. If AIT station establishes an alert base, the populace will be alerted of the where, when and how of the election violence.

Journalist 3: In particular, the source of the information's right to privacy should be respected by the journalist. AIT journalists are not permitted to publish, broadcast, or otherwise make public anything that is vulgar or indecent. Additionally, when covering election-related violence, journalists aggravate tensions between groups of adherents of many religions and other faiths by publishing or airing material that could incite racial hostility.

Findings from the in-depth interview shows that the role of NTA journalists is to accurately report election violence, should not use vulgar language in reporting election violence, and should not encourage election violence, while the role of AIT journalists is to be sufficiently confidential in reporting election violence, should report election violence accurately, Additionally, AIT must not publish, show, or broadcast any rude or obscene content. In addition, while comparing the roles of NTA and AIT in reporting on election violence, it becomes clear that both the public and private media station own the public accurate, unbiased, adequate and timely information about events in human society.

Objective 2: Format of Reporting Election Violence by NTA and AIT

Journalist 1: National Television Authority journalist states that the regularly format used in reporting election violence is straight news.

Journalist 2: According to National Television Authority journalists, election violence is frequently covered by straight news. The most recent assassinations in the states of Lagos and Ekiti were mentioned along with past examples of politicians being slain across the country.

Journalist 3: Media always reports political violence as straight news, but on a few occasions, the journalists in NTA Nigeria employ opinion and features instead of the straight news that is typically used to cover election violence.

AIT Journalists Responses

Journalist 1: The format employed in reporting election violence, according to an AIT journalist, was straight news, opinion, feature, and an example of straight news, which reads as follows: There was an attack based on the election, and 76 members of the APC and PDP were killed, along with 23 persons who were kidnapped.

Journalist 2: Straight news is the format used to report about election violence. In our channel, the news is factual and straightforward; opinion, news analyses are occasionally included.

Journalist 3: We typically report electoral violence in direct news format.

Conclusion on Question 2

Both the NTA and AIT journalist interview indicated that the format used in reporting election violence were straight new, opinion and feature. This implies that both AIT and NTA use the same format.

Objective 3: Sources of Election Violence in NTA and AIT

NTA Journalists

Journalist 1: According to National Television Authority journalists, they typically obtain information about election violence from officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), party agents, electorates, and reporters from other media stations who are responsible for election coverage

Journalist 2: The INEC staff, the general public, the election observation team, and the civil society situation monitoring unit are all sources from which we regularly collect data.

Journalist 3: Since police departments always have first-hand knowledge of electoral violence, we frequently receive information about it from them. NGOs involved in voter education and election observers provided information on election violence.

AIT Journalists Responses

Journalist 1: Our major sources of information on election violence are election observers and members of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Journalist 2: Information regarding the occurrence during the most recent election was gathered from INEC employees, police officers, and voters themselves.

Journalist 3: Information about election violence was gathered from journalists, other media outlets, and voter education NGOs.

Conclusion on Question 3

It was obvious that Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) personnel, election observers, and NGOs provide information on election violence to both NTA and AIT. Additionally, NTA stated that they get their information from the people, whilst AIT stated that they get their information from other media.

Objective 4: Effects of Election Violence in a Democratic Society in NTA and AIT

National Television Authority Journalists Responses

Journalist 1: Election violence has two detrimental consequences on democratic societies: it jeopardises the stability of the democracy in the nation and distorts the will of the electorate.

Journalist 2: Election violence has a negative influence on society as a whole, and this impact includes the fact that election violence ultimately responsible for the fall of first Republic made possible by some political hucksters.

Journalist 3: Election-related violence is the most senseless act of violence I have ever seen, and it has a significant negative impact on the local populace. Election violence does harm to some of the best minds in political and economic management while outright eliminating others.

AIT Journalists Responses

Journalist 1: Election violence has undoubtedly harmed democratic societies; it has the capacity to undermine democratic stability and bring about economic disaster and enmity between political parties. Election violence has undoubtedly also impeded the path of democratisation.

Newspaper 2: In a democratic society, election violence had the following effects: devastation of the economy, animosity between political parties, and the potential to weaken democratic stability. Additionally, the path of democratisation has surely been hampered by election violence.

Journalist 3: Election-related violence is the most senseless act of violence I have ever seen, and it has a significant negative impact on the local populace. Election violence does harm to some of the best minds in political and economic management while outright eliminating others.

Conclusion on Question 4

NTA journalists reported that election violence undermined the will of the electorate during the elections, which ultimately contributed to the fall of the first Republic. It also paved the way for the ascension of incompetent individuals to important electoral positions, which some political demagogues enabled. AIT journalists reported that election violence resulted in economic destruction, animosity between political parties, and other negative effects.

Objective 5: Challenges faced by the media in report of election violence in NTA and AIT National Television Authority Journalists Responses

Journalist 1: The difficulties we typically encounter include being unable to acquire information on electoral violence and the issue of bias. Even if they occasionally understood the truth, the journalist claimed that they continued to leave their jobs owing to problems at work.

Journalist 2: When it came to covering electoral violence in Nigeria, we were constantly confronted with extremist violence and significant obstacles. Media professionals, data managers, and other state actors who are tasked with providing data honestly, ethically, and appropriately to ensure effective communication of growth in society face a variety of challenges and conundrums while reporting election violence.

Journalist 3: We faced severe barriers and ongoing extremist violence while attempting to report on the election violence in Nigeria. When reporting election violence, media experts, data managers, and other state actors who are responsible for supplying data honestly, ethically, and appropriately to promote successful communication of growth in society encounter a range of difficulties and dilemmas.

AIT Journalists Responses

Journalist 1: We had limitations on how much information we could obtain. Even while the public puts pressure on the media to disclose sensitive material concerning election violence, the media must be aware of the restrictions on what information can be made public in order to avoid contributing to the agenda of violence.

Journalist 2: Since electoral violence constantly puts journalists' lives in jeopardy, it is difficult for them to report on it. As well as being threatened with violence and extorted by political parties, we fear being attacked and hurt by the violent offenders.

Journalist 3: Covering election violence presents a variety of difficulties and dilemmas for media practitioners.

Conclusion on Question 5

Journalists from NTA and AIT both said that they were routinely denied access to information about election violence.

Content Analysis

Table 1: Format of Reporting Election Violence in 2023

| Format Reporting | NTA | AIT |
|------------------|----------|----------|
| Straight News | 4(50.0) | 5(83.3) |
| Opinion | 3(37.5) | 1(16.7) |
| News Analysis | 1(12.5) | 0(0.0) |
| Total | 8(100.0) | 6(100.0) |

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Results in table 1 demonstrate that, overall, 50.0% of the election violence shows on NTA featured just straight news, 37.5% featured opinions, and only 12.5% featured news analysis. Additionally, 83.3% of the total election violence shows on AIT were straight news, as opposed to 16.7% of opinion broadcasts. This demonstrates that the majority of the election violence programmes on NTA and AIT consisted solely of news and opinion. These findings are consistent with the interview schedule that was used to get information on how people in NTA and AIT describe election violence.

Table 2: Sources of Election Violence Story in NTA and AIT

| Sources | NTA | AIT | Total |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| Civil Society Situation Monitoring | 2(18.2) | 1(10.0) | 3(14.2) |
| Election Observers | 1(9.1) | 2(20.0) | 3(14.2) |
| INEC Official | 1(9.1) | 1(10.0) | 2(9.5) |
| Press Officers | 7(63.6) | 6(60.0) | 13(61.9) |

Source: Field Survey, 2023

*Indicate that there are multiple responses

Values in parenthesis are percentages

Findings from table 2 outline the main causes of election-related violence in NTA and AIT. Findings indicate that press officers present in the election-related region were the main source of information on election-related violence (61.9%). This suggests that the press officers provided the majority of the stories. This outcome is in line with the interview findings, which showed that press officers, civil society and INEC officers provided information on election violence.

Conclusion

Broadcast journalists usually cover election violence as straight news. Journalists typically obtain information about election violence from members of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the Civil Society Situation Monitoring Unit, election observers, and non-governmental organisations. Election violence in a democratic society had the unintended consequence of undermining Nigeria's democratic stability and the will of the electorates. Access to information about election violence was restricted, and that vestige of bias reportage in the

media's coverage of election violence is obvious. Aggressive election education is the sole measure that could be taken to reduce election violence.

Recommendations

- 1) In order to mend the divisions caused by the intense campaigns that precede, coincide with, and follow elections, mass media is expected to play the role of peace builder.
- 2) The press should remember its social responsibility and avoid giving in to the pressure to inflame ethnic and religious conflicts.
- 3) The media should not be biased when covering election-related violence.
- 4) The media should be encouraged to always promote election education so that people are aware of what they should and should not do in order for peace to prevail during elections.
- 5) The media should endeavour to carry out in-depth report of election violence

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