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MASS MEDIA AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN NIGERIA: EVALUATING THE INFLUENCE OF COVERAGE ON PUBLIC AWARENESS AND POLICY SUPPORT

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of Nigerian mass media in promoting awareness and policy support for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), and SDG 4 (Quality Education), amidst Nigeria's persistent challenges, including a 40.1% poverty rate, 10.5 million out-of-school children, and a maternal mortality rate of 512 per 100,000 live births. Despite the media's potential to drive SDG engagement, its influence in Nigeria remains underexplored. Employing a triangulatory mixed-methods design, this research combines content analysis of 420 articles from Punch, Daily Trust, and Vanguard (January–December 2024) with a survey of 150 Osun State residents. Findings reveal health (SDG 3) dominated coverage (180 articles) and awareness (67%), with strong correlations between media exposure and awareness ($r_{pb} = 0.45\text{--}0.49$, $p < 0.001$), supporting agenda-setting theory. Policy support was high (77%–90%), yet weakly tied to exposure ($r_{pb} = 0.16\text{--}0.28$), challenging framing theory as positive framing (e.g., 43% for education) did not enhance support. Health's prominence reflects media prioritisation, while education's lower coverage (105 articles) signals a gap. The study underscores media's potency in raising awareness but highlights its limited sway over policy support, influenced more by societal needs than framing. Recommendations include boosting education coverage, adopting solutions-focused reporting, and fostering media-policy partnerships to maximise SDG advocacy. This contributes to media studies and development communication, offering insights for Nigeria's 2030 Agenda pursuit.

Keywords: Mass media, SDGs, Policy support, Agenda-setting, Framing

INTRODUCTION

The mass media serves as a powerful tool for shaping public perceptions and influencing societal priorities, particularly in developing nations like Nigeria, where challenges such as poverty, poor health systems, and limited access to education persist. In 2015, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of 17 global objectives aimed at addressing these issues by 2030, including SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), and SDG 4 (Quality Education) (Halişçelik, & Soytaş, (2019). Nigeria, with a population exceeding 200 million, faces significant hurdles in achieving these goals. For instance, the Aniebo and Elekwa (2024) reports that 40.1% of Nigerians live below the poverty line, while Ohaegbulem and Chijioke (2023) indicate that approximately 10.5 million children remain out of school, one of the highest figures globally.

Furthermore, the World Health Organization (2023) notes that Nigeria's maternal mortality rate stands at 512 deaths per 100,000 live births, underscoring persistent health disparities. Amidst these challenges, the mass media—encompassing newspapers, television, radio, and digital platforms—holds immense potential to inform citizens, influence policy, and mobilise action towards SDG attainment. Despite this potential, there remains a limited understanding of how Nigerian media influences public engagement with the SDGs, both in terms of awareness and policy momentum. Research highlights that

media coverage can drive public knowledge and attitudes towards development issues (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2020), yet studies specific to Nigeria's media landscape remain scarce. For example, while global studies suggest that consistent media framing of development goals enhances public support (Vu, Jiang, Chacón, Riedl, Tran and Bobkowski (2019), little is known about how Nigerian media frames poverty, health, and education or whether this translates into actionable public or policy outcomes locally.

This gap is concerning, given Nigeria's vibrant media sector, which includes over 100 newspapers and numerous broadcast stations, reaching millions daily. Without a clear grasp of media's role, efforts to leverage it for SDG progress may falter, leaving both citizens and policymakers inadequately equipped to address these pressing challenges.

This study seeks to fill this gap through a mixed-methods approach, combining content analysis of Nigerian newspapers and a public survey. Its objectives are threefold: (1) to analyse the extent and framing of SDG-related coverage (poverty, education, health) in Nigerian mass media, (2) to assess the level of public awareness of SDGs among Nigerian audiences, and (3) to explore the relationship between media exposure and support for SDG-related policies. By examining these dimensions, the research aims to uncover how media narratives shape knowledge and attitudes towards sustainable development in Nigeria. The

significance of this study lies in its contributions to media studies, development communication, and policy-making in Nigeria. It offers empirical insights that can guide media practitioners in crafting impactful SDG messages and assist policymakers in harnessing media to foster public backing for development initiatives. In an era where information dissemination is critical to achieving the 2030 Agenda, understanding media's influence in Nigeria is both timely and essential.

Conceptual Review

Media Exposure

Media exposure refers to the frequency and extent to which individuals encounter media content through channels such as newspapers, television, radio, or digital platforms (Slater, 2015). It is a critical determinant of information dissemination, shaping what audiences know and think about societal issues. In developing contexts like Nigeria, exposure varies widely due to differences in access, urban areas benefit from diverse media outlets, while rural regions often rely on radio or word-of-mouth (Ojo, 2018). In the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), media exposure plays a critical role in shaping public awareness and understanding of global and local development issues. Studies have shown that frequent media exposure increases knowledge and engagement with SDG-related topics (Dauda, & Hasan, (2018). Studies suggest that higher exposure correlates with increased knowledge and

attitude shifts, particularly when content is consistent and accessible (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2020). For instance, frequent media use has been linked to greater awareness of public health campaigns in sub-Saharan Africa (Wakefield et al., 2010). This study measures media exposure as daily, weekly, or rare engagement to assess its impact on SDG-related outcomes.

SDG Awareness

SDG awareness denotes the public's knowledge of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, launched in 2015 to address global challenges by 2030 and their relevance to local and global contexts. (Gore, 2015). Awareness is a prerequisite for collective action, yet it remains uneven globally. In Africa, research indicates that only 30-50% of citizens in some countries are familiar with the SDGs, often due to limited media outreach (Sachs et al., 2022).

Media coverage is a key driver of SDG awareness, as it amplifies information about these goals and their associated challenges and successes. Research indicates that media campaigns significantly improve public awareness of SDGs, particularly in developing countries where grassroots mobilization is essential for achieving these goals (Kumar, 2024).

For example, in Nigeria, media coverage of health-related SDGs (e.g., SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being) has been shown to increase public knowledge about healthcare initiatives and vaccination programs (Eke, Oke, Bufumoh, & Apata, 2023). However,

awareness levels vary across demographics, with urban populations and educated individuals showing higher awareness due to greater media access (Adebayo, & Gayawan, 2022). Media exposure plays a pivotal role here, as repeated coverage can elevate public understanding of goals like poverty reduction, health improvement, and education access (Vu, Jiang, Chacón, Riedl, Tran, & Bobkowski, 2019). This study evaluates awareness levels among Nigerians to determine media's educative influence.

Policy Support

Policy support reflects the public's endorsement of government actions or interventions aligned with SDG objectives, such as funding poverty alleviation or healthcare improvements (Entman, 2007). It is influenced by awareness but also by personal experiences and cultural values. Media plays a dual role in shaping policy support: it informs the public about policy initiatives and frames these initiatives in ways that influence public opinion. Globally, studies show that media can boost policy support when coverage highlights solutions or urgency—for example, health campaigns in India increased public demand for sanitation policies (Dutta, 2018).

Studies have found that positive media framing of SDG-related policies increases public support, while negative or critical coverage can undermine trust and engagement (Pindiga, & Sa'ad, 2021). For instance, in Nigeria, media campaigns promoting education reforms (SDG 4:

Quality Education) have garnered significant public support, leading to increased advocacy for policy changes (Wole-Abu, 2018). However, the relationship between media exposure and policy support is complex, as other factors such as cultural beliefs and personal experiences also play a role (Elizabeth, & Aransi, 2020).

Mass Media and Sustainable Development Goals

Mass media serves as a critical platform for disseminating information about the SDGs, mobilizing public action, and holding governments accountable for their commitments. Similarly, mass media acts as a bridge between development goals and societal response, amplifying awareness and shaping attitudes towards SDGs (Servaes, 2020). Globally, media has been instrumental in promoting sustainability, coverage of climate change, for instance, has spurred public action in developing nations (Boykoff, 2019). In Nigeria, with over 100 newspapers and a growing digital presence, mass media reaches millions daily, making it a potential catalyst for SDG progress (Ojo, 2018).

Media in Nigeria coverage of the SDGs has been instrumental in raising awareness about issues such as poverty (SDG 1), health (SDG 3), and education (SDG 4) (Akinyetun, Odeyemi, & Alausa, 2021). However, challenges such as limited resources, political interference, and sensationalism often hinder the media's ability to provide consistent and accurate coverage (Talabi, Tokunbo, & Sanusi, 2019). Despite these

challenges, Nigerian media has made significant strides in promoting SDG-related initiatives, particularly through investigative journalism and public service announcements (Wole-Abu, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

This research is grounded in two communication theories: Agenda-Setting Theory and Framing Theory. Agenda-Setting Theory, proposed by McCombs and Shaw (1972), posits that media influences what people think about by prioritising certain issues over others (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2020). For SDGs, frequent coverage of health or poverty could elevate their salience in public consciousness, a phenomenon observed in development contexts (Ghanem, S. (2013). Framing Theory, developed by Goffman and extended by Entman (1993), argues that how issues are presented—e.g., as problems or solutions—shapes audience perceptions (Entman, 2007). Positive framing of education initiatives, for instance, might enhance support, while negative health stories could heighten urgency (Dutta, 2018). Together, these theories provide a lens to analyse how Nigerian media coverage drives awareness and policy support for SDGs.

Previous Studies

Studies worldwide underline media's role in SDG engagement. In developing nations, consistent coverage increases awareness—e.g., radio campaigns in Kenya raised knowledge of maternal health goals by 25% (Wakefield et al., 2010). Boykoff (2019)

found that media framing of climate goals in India influenced policy debates, though negative tones sometimes reduced optimism. These findings suggest media's dual potential to inform and persuade, yet context-specific research remains limited (Chen, & Zhu, 2022).

Nigeria's media is vast and influential, with a mix of print, broadcast, and digital outlets reaching diverse audiences (Ojo, 2018). Its reach is significant—radio alone covers 80% of rural areas—but credibility varies due to ownership biases and sensationalism (Afrobarometer, 2022). Research shows Nigerian media shapes public opinion on issues like elections and health, yet its impact on SDGs is underexplored (Ijeh, Onojeghwo, & Erubami, 2024). This gap highlights the need for studies like ours to assess coverage and its effects.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a Triangulatory mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative content analysis and survey approaches to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the influence of mass media on public awareness and policy support for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria. Mixed-methods research is widely recognised for its ability to combine the strengths of methods, offering a richer understanding of complex phenomena (Creswell & Clark, 2017). For this study, content analysis quantifies media coverage patterns, while surveys capture public perceptions, aligning with the study's dual

focus on media output and audience response. This approach has been effectively used in media studies to bridge textual analysis with audience effects (Bryman, 2021).

Population and Sample

The study targets two distinct populations: media content and Nigerian audiences. For the media sample, we selected three major Nigerian newspapers—***Punch***, ***Daily Trust***, and ***Vanguard***—covering a 12-month period from January to December 2024. These newspapers were chosen due to their wide circulation and national influence, representing diverse regional perspectives: ***Punch*** (South-West), ***Daily Trust*** (North), and ***Vanguard*** (South-South) (Mingyi, 2023). The audience sample comprises 150 Nigerians from Osun State, evenly split between urban (75) and rural (75) areas, with varied demographics including age (18-60 years), gender (male/female), and education levels (none/primary, secondary, tertiary). Osun State was selected for its mix of urban centres and rural communities, providing a balanced representation of Nigeria's socio-economic diversity. This sample size aligns with survey research recommendations for statistical reliability in regional studies (Fowler, 2013).

Data Collection

Data collection employed two methods: content analysis and audience surveys. For the content analysis, articles from ***Punch***, ***Daily Trust***, and ***Vanguard*** mentioning poverty (SDG 1), education (SDG 4), and

health (SDG 3) were collected over the specified 12-month period. Articles were identified using keywords (e.g., “poverty reduction,” “school enrolment,” “healthcare access”) and coded for frequency (number of articles), tone (positive, negative, neutral), and framing (solutions-focused vs. problem-focused). Positive tone includes optimistic or progress-focused narratives, negative tone highlights criticism or failures, and neutral tone reflects factual reporting (Krippendorff, 2018). Framing distinguishes between solutions-oriented articles proposing actions and problem-oriented ones emphasising challenges, a method validated in media framing studies (Entman, 1993). Online editions were accessed via newspaper archives, ensuring consistency and availability (Hansen & Machin, 2018).

For the audience surveys, a structured questionnaire was administered to the 150 Osun State respondents in November 2024, facilitated by trained local enumerators. The questionnaire assessed three variables: media exposure, SDG awareness, and policy support. This design draws from established survey techniques in communication research, ensuring clarity and reliability in measuring audience perceptions (Babbie, 2020). Data collection adhered to ethical standards, with informed consent obtained from participants (Bryman, 2021).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was predominantly quantitative, leveraging descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to address the

research objectives. For the content analysis, descriptive statistics summarised the frequency of SDG coverage across the newspapers, alongside proportions of tone and framing categories, providing a clear snapshot of media patterns (Krippendorff, 2018). For the survey, descriptive statistics detailed the percentage of respondents aware of each SDG and supportive of related policies, segmented by media exposure levels (Fowler, 2013). Correlation analysis, specifically point-biserial correlation, was used to explore relationships between media exposure (treated as ordinal) and binary outcomes of awareness, and policy support). This method is suitable for assessing associations between ordinal and binary variables in communication studies (Field, 2018). Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$, ensuring robust findings (Bryman, 2021). All analyses were conducted using SPSS software, a standard tool for quantitative media research (Field, 2018).

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining content analysis of three Nigerian newspapers (Punch, Daily Trust, and Vanguard) with a survey to evaluate the influence of media coverage on public awareness and policy support for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria. Below, the findings are presented in an essay-like format, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data, followed by visual representations of the results.

Media Coverage of SDGs: Content Analysis Findings

The content analysis revealed significant variations in the frequency, tone, and framing of SDG-related articles across the three newspapers. Health (SDG 3) received the highest coverage, with 180 articles, followed by poverty (SDG 1) with 135 articles and education (SDG 4) with 105 articles. This suggests that health issues are prioritised in Nigerian media, potentially due to their immediate and tangible impact on society.

Results and Interpretation

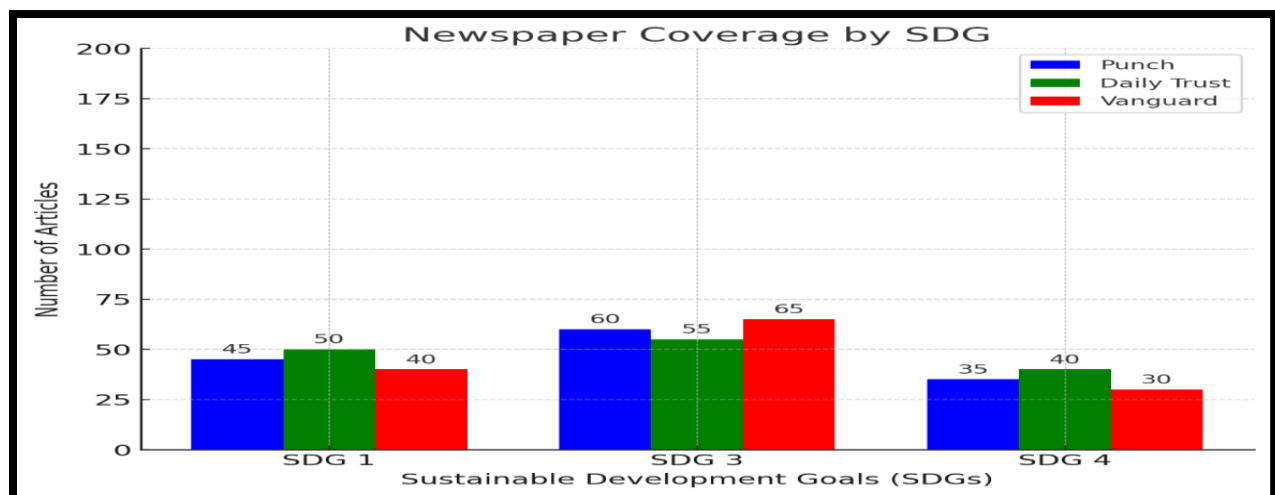


Figure 1 The bar chart showing newspaper coverage of SDGs 1, 3, and 4 across Punch, Daily Trust, and Vanguard.

In terms of tone, the majority of articles across all SDGs were negative, highlighting challenges and failures. For instance, 25 out of 45 articles on poverty in Punch were negative, focusing on issues like rising poverty levels. Similarly, Daily Trust and Vanguard had a higher proportion of negative articles for health (SDG 3), with 35 and 30 negative articles, respectively. Neutral and positive tones were less common, with positive articles often highlighting government initiatives or progress, such as vaccination campaigns. Framing analysis showed that most articles were problem-focused rather than solutions-focused. For example, 30 out of 45 articles on poverty in Punch emphasised challenges, while only 15 proposed solutions. This trend was consistent across all newspapers and SDGs, indicating a media

tendency to focus on issues rather than actionable solutions.

Public Awareness and Policy Support: Survey Findings

The survey data revealed a strong correlation between media exposure and public awareness of the SDGs. Respondents who consumed media daily were significantly more aware of the SDGs compared to those who rarely or never engaged with media. For instance, 89% of daily media users were aware of health (SDG 3), compared to only 40% of rarely/never users. Similar trends were observed for poverty (SDG 1) and education (SDG 4), with daily users showing 80% and 82% awareness, respectively.

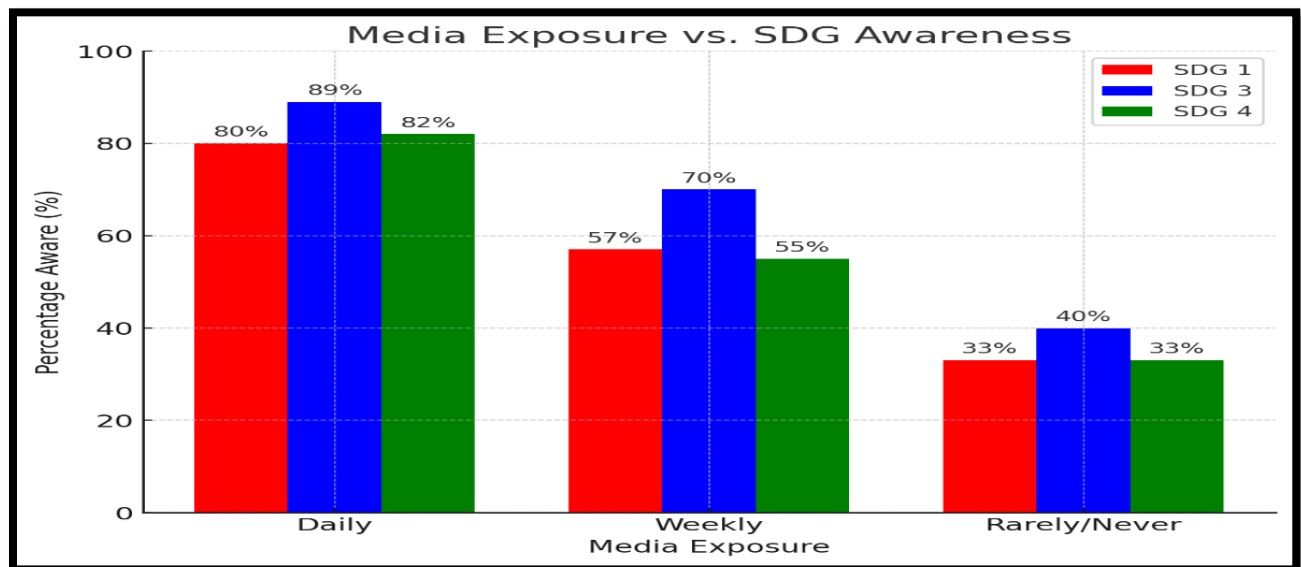


Figure 2. Media exposure and SDG awareness

Policy support for the SDGs was generally high across all groups, with health (SDG 3)

receiving the highest support at 90%. However, the correlation between media

exposure and policy support was weaker. While daily media users showed slightly higher support (e.g., 91% for SDG 1 and 96% for SDG 3), the differences were not as pronounced as those for awareness. This suggests that while media exposure enhances awareness, other factors, such as personal experiences or societal needs, may play a more significant role in shaping policy support.

Integration of Findings

The content analysis and survey results complement each other, providing a comprehensive understanding of the media's role in promoting the SDGs. The high coverage of health (SDG 3) in newspapers aligns with the highest awareness levels (67%) and policy support (90%) for this goal. This suggests that frequent media coverage can amplify public awareness and, to some extent, policy support.

Table 1: Summary of Content Analysis and Survey Results

SDG	Articles (Total)	Positive Tone (%)	Solutions Framing (%)	Awareness (%)	Policy Support (%)
SDG 1 (Poverty)	135	26% (35/135)	37% (50/135)	57% (85/150)	83% (125/150)
SDG 3 (Health)	180	25% (45/180)	39% (70/180)	67% (100/150)	90% (135/150)
SDG 4 (Education)	105	43% (45/105)	57% (60/105)	57% (85/150)	77% (115/150)

However, the disconnect between positive framing and policy support challenges the assumption that optimistic media coverage directly translates into higher support. For example, education (SDG 4) had the highest proportion of positive and solutions-focused articles (43% and 57%, respectively), yet it received the lowest policy support (77%). This indicates that while positive framing may enhance awareness, it does not necessarily drive stronger policy backing. Mixing these findings, we tested two ideas. First, we thought more media coverage would boost awareness (Hypothesis 1). This held true: health’s 180 articles lined up with 67% awareness, while education’s 105 articles matched 57%. The survey’s strong

correlations back this up, media sets the agenda, helping people learn about SDGs. The survey confirmed a strong positive correlation ($r_{pb} = 0.45\text{--}0.49$) between media exposure and awareness across all SDGs. Second, we guessed positive media stories would increase support (Hypothesis 2). This didn’t work out. Education had the most positive tone (43%) and solution-focused framing (57%), yet its support was lowest at 77%. Health, with just 25% positive articles, had the highest support (90%). The weak correlations between media exposure and policy support ($r_{pb} = 0.16\text{--}0.28$ for SDG 3) further reinforce this finding.

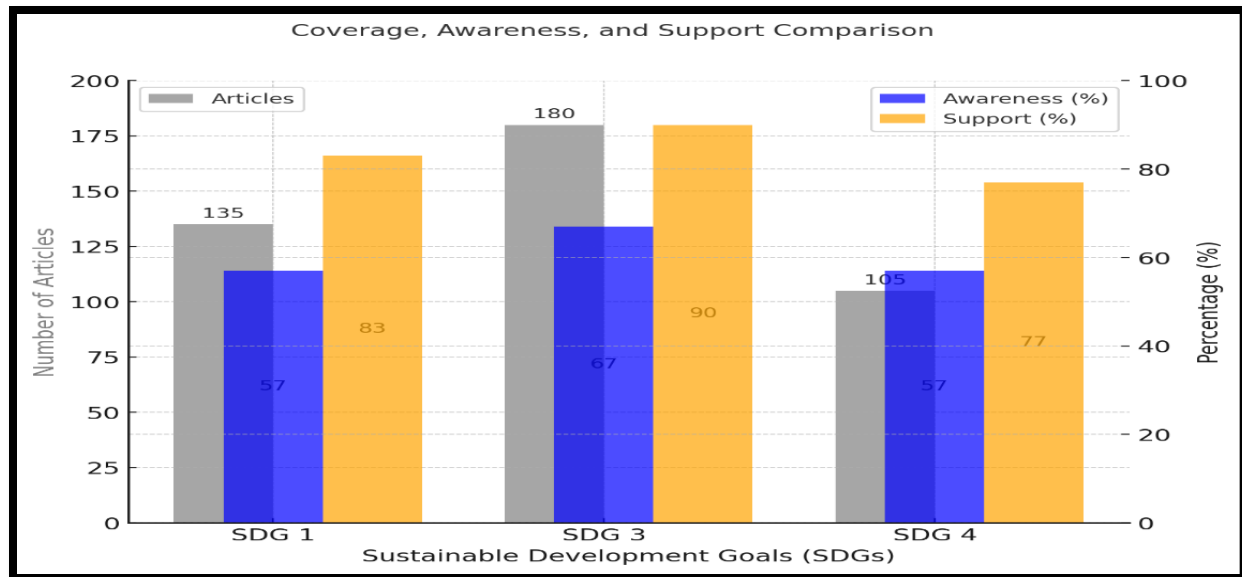


Figure 3 The dual-axis bar chart comparing media coverage with SDG awareness and support. The grey bars represent media coverage (left axis), while the blue and orange bars represent awareness and support percentages (right axis).

In a nutshell, Nigerian newspapers play a big role in teaching people about SDGs, especially when they cover topics a lot, like health. But whether articles are upbeat or grim, people's desire for government action stays strong, driven more by their own experiences than media spin. These findings show media's power to inform but hint that support comes from deeper roots.

The study demonstrates that media coverage plays a critical role in raising public awareness of the SDGs, with health (SDG 3) benefiting the most from frequent and focused reporting. However, the link between media framing and policy support is less clear, suggesting that other factors, such as societal urgency or personal experiences, may influence public backing for SDG-related policies. These findings underscore the need for media to not only increase coverage but also adopt more

solutions-focused and balanced reporting to drive both awareness and actionable support for sustainable development in Nigeria.

Discussion

This study's findings shed light on the complex role of Nigerian mass media in promoting awareness and policy support for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically poverty (SDG 1), health (SDG 3), and education (SDG 4). By blending content analysis of three prominent newspapers with survey data from Osun State, the results offer insights that both aligns with and challenges established communication theories, while highlighting the media's potential and limitations as an SDG advocacy tool in Nigeria.

The content analysis revealed that health (SDG 3) dominated media coverage with 180

articles across *Punch*, *Daily Trust*, and *Vanguard* in 2024, compared to 135 for poverty (SDG 1) and 105 for education (SDG 4). This aligns strongly with Agenda-Setting Theory, which posits that the media influences public attention by prioritising certain issues over others (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2020). The survey supports this, showing health awareness at 67%, higher than poverty and education at 57% each. The strong correlations between media exposure and awareness ($r_{pb} = 0.45\text{--}0.49$, $p < 0.001$) further reinforce this theory: daily media users were far more likely to know about SDGs (e.g., 89% for health) than those with rare exposure (40%). This suggests that the volume of coverage sets the public agenda, making health a salient issue in Nigerians' minds, likely due to its immediate relevance—disease outbreaks and healthcare crises are hard to ignore.

However, the findings also challenge aspects of Agenda-Setting Theory when viewed alongside Framing Theory, which argues that how issues are presented shapes audience perceptions (Entman, 2020). The newspapers leaned heavily towards negative tones (e.g., 95/180 health articles) and problem-focused framing (e.g., 110/180 for health), rather than solutions-focused narratives. One might expect this gloomier framing to dampen public engagement, yet awareness remained high, particularly for health. This suggests that sheer frequency of coverage can outweigh framing effects in driving awareness, partially challenging Framing Theory's emphasis on presentation

over volume. Education, with fewer articles (105) but a more positive tone (43%) and solutions focus (57%), didn't see higher awareness than poverty, indicating that Agenda-Setting's quantity-driven influence may trump Framing's qualitative impact in this context.

Turning to policy support, the survey revealed strong public backing—90% for health, 83% for poverty, and 77% for education but the link with media exposure was weaker ($r_{pb} = 0.16\text{--}0.28$) and less consistent than for awareness. This finding challenges Framing Theory more directly. Education articles were the most positive and solution-oriented, yet support lagged at 77%, while health, with fewer positive stories (25%), topped support at 90%. If positive framing drove policy support, as Framing Theory might predict, we'd expect a different pattern (Wanta & Ghanem, 2019). Instead, the high baseline support across all exposure levels (e.g., 84% for health among rare users) hints at deeper societal drivers perhaps the urgent need for healthcare or lived experiences of poverty overriding media framing. This misalignment suggests that while media sets the agenda for what people know, it doesn't fully dictate what they want, a nuance Agenda-Setting Theory alone can't explain.

The media's potential as a tool for SDG advocacy in Nigeria shines through in its ability to boost awareness, especially when coverage is frequent. Health's 180 articles and 67% awareness exemplify this power,

supporting global evidence that consistent media attention can educate publics on development goals (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2020). Yet, the weaker link to policy support reveals a limitation: awareness doesn't automatically translate into advocacy. The predominance of problem-focused framing (e.g., 63% of poverty articles) may inform but not inspire action, a gap Nigerian media could address by balancing critique with actionable solutions. This aligns with development communication principles, which stress the need for media to empower audiences beyond mere information (Servaes, 2021).

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings have several implications for policymakers, media practitioners, and development advocates. First, the strong link between media exposure and awareness underscores the need for increased investment in media campaigns to promote SDGs. For example, partnerships between media organizations and development agencies could facilitate the production of high-quality, solutions-focused content that informs and inspires public action.

Second, the disconnect between framing and policy support suggests that media campaigns should be complemented by grassroots mobilization and community engagement. For instance, while media can raise awareness of education issues, local advocacy groups and policymakers must work together to address the underlying challenges and build public trust in proposed solutions.

Lastly, the study highlights the need for media training programs to address gaps in coverage and improve the quality of SDG reporting. Journalists should be equipped with the skills and resources to produce balanced, solutions-focused stories that not only highlight challenges but also showcase successful interventions and best practices.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that mass media plays a critical role in raising public awareness of the SDGs in Nigeria, with health (SDG 3) benefiting the most from frequent and focused coverage. However, the link between media framing and policy support is less clear, indicating that other factors, such as societal urgency and personal experiences, may play a more significant role in shaping public backing for SDG-related policies. The findings also reveal gaps in coverage, particularly for education (SDG 4), which received the least attention despite its importance for sustainable development.

To maximize the media's potential as a tool for SDG advocacy, stakeholders must address these gaps and adopt a more balanced, solutions-focused approach to reporting. By doing so, Nigerian media can not only inform the public but also inspire actionable support for the SDGs, contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on these insights, several recommendations emerge to strengthen the media's role in SDG advocacy in Nigeria.

First, media outlets should increase coverage of education (SDG 4), which lags behind at 105 articles compared to health's 180. With 10.5 million children out of school (UNESCO, 2021), education's long-term impact on poverty and health warrants greater attention. Newspapers like **Punch**, **Daily Trust**, and **Vanguard** could dedicate regular features to educational challenges and innovations, raising its public profile to match health's salience.

Second, media should shift towards more solutions-focused reporting across all SDGs. The current tilt towards problems (e.g., 110/180 health articles) informs but may not inspire action. Highlighting successful initiatives like poverty alleviation programmes or new clinics—could bridge the gap between awareness and support, encouraging both public and policy momentum. This aligns with development communication strategies emphasizing empowerment through positive narratives (Servaes, 2021).

Third, policymakers should collaborate with media houses to amplify SDG messages. The high policy support (77%–90%) suggests a public ready to back action, yet the weak media-support link indicates untapped potential. Government agencies could partner with newspapers and broadcasters to run campaigns that blend frequent coverage with actionable framing, leveraging media's agenda-setting power to drive policy uptake.

Finally, future research should explore the non-media factors shaping policy support, such as cultural values or economic realities, which this study suggests outweigh framing effects. A longitudinal study tracking coverage and attitudes over time, or a broader sample beyond Osun State, could deepen these insights. Additionally, examining digital platforms like X or radio key channels in Nigeria might reveal complementary advocacy roles beyond print media (Ojo, 2021).

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