



Nigerian Newspapers Representation and Lagos State Audiences Perception of People with Disabilities

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Abstract

The Nigerian newspapers have contributed a lot to issues around disability and persons with disabilities. This study examined how selected Nigerian newspapers have reported disability in their publications and the effect of such reportage on their audience in Lagos state. The study content analysed contributions of the four selected national newspapers on the disability issues during the study period, it also gauged the effects of their reportage on newspaper's audience in the state. Two media effect theories: Agenda setting and Framing were used to give theoretical perspectives to the study. The study discovered no significant difference in the pattern of coverage and direction of treatment of disability issues among the selected newspapers. Also, findings from the study revealed there was no effect of agenda setting and media framing on the relationship between Nigeria newspapers' representation and Lagos state audience perception of people with disabilities. The study recommends that Nigerian newspapers should devote more space to the coverage of disability issues as well as given prominence and importance through placement of stories on persons with disabilities on their front pages.

Keywords: Disability, Audience perception, Newspaper Representation, Inclusiveness

Contribution to/Originality Knowledge

The study has contributed to the body of knowledge by providing fresh insight in the area.

1.0 Introduction

Disability is generally likened to incapacity, a state of impairment, activity limitation and participation restriction. The International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health (ICFDH, 2001) conceptualized disability as a limitation in a functional domain that arises from interaction between a person's intrinsic capacity, and environmental and personal factors. The United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD, 2006) identified persons with disabilities (PWDs) to include those with long time physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments that hinder their full and effective participation in society on equal basis.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2018) conceptualized disability from multidimensional views which include health conditions, personal and environmental factors such that persons with disabilities have differences in age, gender, sexuality, socio-economics status and cultural backgrounds. These definitions basically refer to personal functionalities of persons living with disabilities in their daily life as they contend with different



hindrances to survive. The barriers can be sight, limbs, auditory, mental or other bodily impairments as they also come in ranges from mild to severe. Disability may be physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional and developmental or some combination of these and may be present from birth or occur during a person's life (Haruna, 2017).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2019), about one billion persons, representing about 20 percent of the world population suffer from different disabilities. Majority of these people are reported to have come from the poor countries around the globe. Again, WHO survey record suggested that globally about 785 million people, representing 15.6 percent who are 15 years and older live with a disability. Global Burden of Disease (GBD 2016) study indicated 975 million, representing 19.4 percent persons are with disabilities.

A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2016) report estimates 80 percent of persons living with disability to be domiciling in developing countries while the World Bank estimates 20 percent of the world poorest people who have some kinds of disabilities as most disadvantaged and likely to experience adverse socio-economic outcomes than persons without disabilities.

In Nigeria, though the National Population Commission (NPC 2020) estimates the country population to be 206 million, an estimated 25 million people are said to be living with one form of disability or another. Two interest groups: Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPED) and the Association for the Comprehensive Empowerment of Nigerians with Disabilities (ASCEND) have championed the course of persons with disabilities in Nigeria. These organisations operate as mouthpiece for social inclusion, rights advocacy, economic empowerment and national platform for disability discourse on Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

Meanwhile, global breakthrough was achieved through the United Nations efforts that brought about The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol (CRPD) which was adopted on December 13, 2006 at the UN Headquarters in New York. Nigeria is also a signatory to this international law.

The Convention was a follow up to several years of campaign to change attitudes of people towards persons with disabilities who they see and treat as objects of charity, medical treatment and social protection than those who can make decision, advocate for their rights. Article 8 (c) of the CRPD defined the role of the media in the area of creating awareness thus: "encouraging all organs of the media to portray persons with disabilities in a manner consistent with the purpose of the present Convention" This article acknowledges the innate power of the media to shape public perception and possibly influence attitudinal and behavioural disposition through their images. As a party to this domesticated international law, Nigerians are obligated to hold the media to the prescribed standard of the CRPD.

Despite the prevalence of media organizations in Nigeria, social alienation and non-inclusiveness of people with disabilities are enormous. This raises concern on what the media are doing to reduce or remove this neglect. This is contrary to the traditional role of the media

which is expected to create awareness of the challenges facing people with disabilities and matters surrounding disability, and factors that contributed to the problem and which often lead to stigmatization of people with disabilities.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Discrimination against persons with disabilities appears to be very rampant globally especially among the developing countries in the areas of health, education, job provision, housing, public utilities and cultural life. Persons with disabilities do suffer both direct discrimination and indirect discriminations which include deprivation of educational opportunities and isolations through social and physical obstacles. In the southwest part of Nigeria, people with disabilities are seen as carrying contagious diseases and were given derogatory name (Abirun), which connotes 'someone who is contagious' (Ogundola, 2013). Some pregnant women always avoid persons with disabilities believing that getting close to them can make their unborn babies develop deformities. In some communities in Northern Nigeria, people with disabilities are addressed not by their names but by the nature of their disabilities, which exposes them to ridicule. They are regarded as unfortunate and left to fend for themselves mostly through begging for alms. Some families see disability as affliction from God and children born with disabilities are restricted and never allowed to intermingle with other children. In most part of the country, persons with physical impairment like leprosy are banished and ostracised from the community.

The media are expected to play a crucial role in the integrating people with disabilities into the mainstream of the society. The media are also expected to ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are not infringed through constant advocacy, awareness campaigns to engender social inclusion.

There have been various legislations on disability and PWDs in Nigeria including the Policy on Albinism in 2012, the National Health Act, 2014, the National Health Policy in 2016, the National Policy on Inclusive Education 2016, Framework on Access and Participation of the Electoral Act of 2016 which is to facilitate inclusion of PWDs in electoral process as well as Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities Prohibition Act of 2018 signed into law by President Muhammadu Buhari in January, 2019 all aimed at making people with disabilities to be integrated into the mainstream and enjoy inclusiveness.

This study has examined the perspective in which issues related to people with disabilities were reported in the Nigerian media especially the selected newspapers and the effects they have on the newspapers' audience.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study was to examine the relationship between selected national newspapers' coverage of disability issues and the perception of newspaper reading public in Lagos state, Nigeria on what they read on disability issues. The specific objectives were to:

1. Identify the pattern of coverage of disability issues in the selected Nigerian newspapers



2. Determine the direction of Nigerian newspapers' representation of disability issues.
3. Establish relationship between the Nigerian newspapers' representation (agenda setting) and Lagos state audience's perception of people with disabilities.
4. Find out the relationship between Nigerian newspapers treatment (Framing) of PWDs and Lagos state audience perception of PWDs
5. Find out the effect of demographic variables (age and gender) on Lagos state audience's perception of people with disabilities.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

- H₁: There is no significance difference in pattern of coverage (total number of stories and placement of stories) of PWDs by Nigerian Newspapers.
- H₂: There is no significant difference among Nigerian newspapers representation (Agenda setting, and framing) of stories on PWDs.
- H₃: There is no significant relationship between Nigerian newspapers representation (Agenda setting) of stories on PWDs and Lagos state audience perception of PWDs.
- H₄: There is no significant relationship between Nigerian Newspaper treatment(framing) of stories on PWDs and Lagos state audience perception of PWDs
- H₅: There is no significant effect of demographic variables (gender and age) on Lagos state audience perception of PWDs.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Media and Disability

The media play important role in shaping the views of its audience especially through conferment of salience and repetition of issues considered as germane thereby shaping and influencing their understanding of those issues. Media contributions come in the form of straight news, features, commentaries, editorials, letter to the editor, press releases, cartoons, photos and supplements. Article 8(2) (c) of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states the role of the media; thus, "Encouraging all organs of the media to portray persons with disabilities in a manner consistent with the purpose of the present Convention". Croteau & Hoynes (2003) write: "news is the product of a social process through which the media personnel make decisions about what is newsworthy and what is not, about who is important and who is not, about what views are to be included and what views are to be dismissed" (p. 135).

This process presents effort of the media to influence audience perception of issues. Research evidence have shown that media play critical roles in shaping public attitude towards people with disabilities, Accordingly, Hannon (2007) in his study, "Literature review on attitudes towards disability" states that in the absence of personal experience and contact with persons

with disabilities on the part of many members of the public, the media may play a considerable role in shaping attitudes and knowledge towards disability. He added that there is the need for an enlightened, responsible and non-discriminatory media culture.

Media coverage of an issue can shape public opinion, perception and attitude of the society on that issue. The agenda setting function of the media underscores the capability of the media to determine the direction of issues and influence public perception through selective coverage of issues in the news (McCombs, Reynolds 2002).

According to Stadler (2007), in considering the relationship between media and disability, a number of aspects need to be considered which includes: media content (representations, stereotypes, and absences), media technologies (issues of access and technological determinism) and media policies (which address language, technology, content and scheduling). Media content, technologies and policies all convey discourses about disability that frame the manner in which disability is constructed and viewed in society. The media have raised the bar of rejection and negative portrayals of PWDs (Ansah, 2018). The society itself, cannot afford to ignore this set of people who have been found to be useful in all facets of human endeavours. If the society rejects PWDs, the implication is that they would become liabilities and burdens to the society, their potentials will be lost and they will remain dependants and unproductive in spite of their potentials

Previous studies have shown that media messages can shape, define and transform the identity of people with disabilities (Haller, Doriss, Rahn 2006). Due to negative evaluation and judgement by the media, some people with learning disabilities may tend to hide the information from the public (Quinlan, Bates 2009). Attitudes towards people with disabilities can be a key facilitator or a serious barrier to their inclusion and participation in society.

Research evidence suggest that public opinion and attitude towards issues are shaped and influence by media portrayal and representation (Berry, 2006; de Vreese & Boomgaarden 2006). Haller (2012)

2.2 Disability in Nigeria

Nigeria as a country share a percentage of the total global disability prevalence rate, The Nigeria National Assembly (2013) put the population of the disabled persons at 20 million (www.nassnig.org/nass) while the Centre for Disability and Development Innovations (CeDDI, 2016), estimates the number of people living with disability as 25 million. These persons are either disabled from birth or suffered disability as a result of accident or diseases. Most of these persons with disabilities live below poverty line attributed to lack of employment, inadequate health care, social exclusion, inaccessibility to quality education, incessant discriminations and lack of access to public facilities (Haruna, 2017). Akinkugbe et al (2010) identify major causes of increasing disabilities among Nigerians to include fatal road accidents that lead to impairments, stroke, paralysis, and mental illness as well as prevalence of infectious diseases. They listed others to include polio, smallpox, meningitis, tuberculosis, small pox, polio and life style diseases like; cardiovascular, hypertension, diabetes and cancer.



In Nigeria, persons with disabilities suffer untold hardship with discrimination being the worst form of treatment ranging from non- provision of infrastructure that can aid their mobility in motor parks, government and private offices to total neglect even within their families' settings. More than 5,000 persons with disabilities in Anambra state staged a protest denouncing humiliation they were subjected to on daily basis as part of the activities to celebrate International Day of Persons with Disabilities. *The Guardian* newspaper of January 31, 2010 captured their ordeals as they protested what they described as inhumane treatment accorded them by officials of the Anambra state government when they seek audience with the state governor. The newspaper further highlighted conditions of people living with disabilities in Nigeria which it said, in most cases, not accorded the same privileges extended to the abled persons.

Haruna (2016), writing on the plight of persons with disabilities in Nigeria and what could be done to integrate them into the mainstream, proffered focusing attention on right to education especially vocational education and rehabilitation centres for those with special needs. Most of the persons living with disabilities in Nigeria suffer discriminations and stigmatization which hinder them from realizing their full potentials. A study by Lawal (2013) in Kano and Katsina revealed that women who became permanently disabled due to Vesicovaginal Fistula status were rejected by their husbands and relatives. According to the study, 95.53 percent of the women were rejected by their husbands, 66 percent by their parents and 90 percent by their communities

2.3 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Disabilities

By 2018, the United Nations launched its flagship report on disability and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Disability Development Report on the "Realisation of Sustainable Development Goals by, for and persons with disabilities". The report shows that persons with disabilities are still at disadvantage with regard to most Sustainable Development Goals. This report recommended concrete and urgent action to accommodate world's one billion persons with disabilities by 2030, which represents 15 percent of world's population of 8 billion. However, in December 2019, two resolutions of the UN were adopted by member states. The first resolution was "Promoting social integration through social inclusion" and the second was titled "Implementation of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto accessibility". This report was necessitated by the need to continuously advance the course of persons with disabilities through implementation monitoring and evaluation of the Sustainable Development Goals (UN, DESA)

However, it is pertinent to mention that aside from promotion of social integration through social inclusion which is slowly but steadily gaining ground not much effects of the SDGs have been felt by persons with disabilities especially in the developing countries, where poverty, hunger, insecurity and lack of access to education and good healthcare are still high.

2.4 Theoretical framework

2.4.1 Framing Theory

Framing theory has to do with media effect on contents sent to the media audience. It is one of those media effect theories that were used to investigate the indoctrination of American soldiers through the World War II (McQuail, 2005). Framing presents issues from the perspective of the message originator which present, organize and shape the perception of the receiver. The proponents of conditionally powerful media effect believe in exploring media and audience variables in effect production.

According to Chong and Druckman (2007) framing theory is built around issue viewed from multiple perspectives which have implications for multiple values and considerations. Frames in thought refer to an individual's valuation of the dimensions of an issue, which influences his opinion and attitude about an issue. By extension framing has the potential to shape people's perceptions, opinions and attitudes about issues (Oriola 2017) In another study, de Vreese (2005) draws link between framing (frame production) and societal level consequences (framing effects). Frame production consists of frame building — a combination of internal and external newsroom factors that shape the pattern of news construction — and frame setting — an interaction between media frames and audiences' information seeking pattern, attitudes and media use behaviour. Framing effects are the consequences generated under the combination of the conditions of frame production as media variables and individual audience member's prior knowledge and attitude. Therefore, framing can be considered as a conditionally powerful media effect theory because it put into consideration conditions of effects of media messages.

The theory takes cognizance of people's information procession which include; behaviour, attitudes and predispositions about issues - such variables that moderate framing effects at the audiences' domain. Within the media space, the theory considers journalists' professional judgments and organisational variables that shape frame production.

The relevance of the theory to this study is underscored in narrative devices journalists use in framing news stories about people living with disabilities that set the boundaries for the understanding of the issue, the problems related to it and the possible solutions.

2.4.2 Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda setting is a theory of media effect which highlights the importance of mass media in shaping of the consciousness of the society. As a result of this dependency, the media have become capable of shaping what people know about the world in which they live. The proponents of this theory are Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw. Agenda setting is one approach through which the pictures in people's heads are created by the media. Its assumptions are that; the mass media do not reflect the reality in the society but that they reshape and filter what goes into the public, that the public select contents from mass media who they have built reliability over the time and the issue of discourse in the public space are largely shaped the media who attach so much importance to them.



Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso (2008) believe the high frequency of reportage, strategic use and placement of headlines with pictures and aesthetic allocation of points reinforce setting agenda for media audience. The empirical evidence of agenda setting influence of the mass media cited above, and numerous others, give credence to the power of the mass media in building agenda of newsworthiness on issues and presenting such agenda to the public. Dominick (2011) identifies agenda setting process to start with agenda building when the media selectively cover events, treat and emphasize them based on the media's consideration of their salience. The pattern of coverage of issues by the media underscores the media's agenda in which case some issues are given intense coverage and emphasis in their treatment.

Several studies on agenda setting have confirmed this principle as having high correlation between media and public agenda. Griffin (2012) summarizes agenda setting theory as the media's "ability to transfer the salience of issues on their news agenda to the public agenda" (p. 378). Griffin position was collaborated earlier position of Baran and Davis (2003) which captured agenda setting as "the idea that the media do not tell people what to think but what to think about" (p. 311).

Do media audience always place importance to issues given prominence by the media? The agenda setting theory relevant to the understanding of gauging the perception of the public on manner of coverage which the Nigerian newspapers have been representing persons with disabilities. Nigerian newspapers in the last decades have been playing certain roles in portraying and presenting issues related to disability to their audience and elicit certain reactions

3.0 Methodology

The research design used for this study is descriptive design of correlational type. This study established the degree of relationship between two research variables, which are newspaper representation (independent variable) and Lagos newspaper audience's (readers) perception of people with disabilities (dependent variable) as being framed and portrayed by the newspapers in Nigeria. In line with the research design, a triangulation approach was used which combined content analysis with survey research method to give balanced, credible and valid result for the study.

This study has two sets of population. For content analysis, multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select sample based the research objectives. At first, four national newspapers were randomly selected for the study through balloting without option of replacement. They are: *The Punch*, *New Telegraph*, *Nigerian Tribune* and *Vanguard* newspapers published between January 1st, 2016 and December 31st, 2017, covering a period of 24 months were selected. This was the period when the clamour for the passage of disability bill was heightened before it was passed and signed into law by President Muhammadu Buhari on January 23, 2019. A total population of 2,920 editions of four selected newspapers published during the period of study. The formula developed by Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill (2009) was used to determine the sample size for the study. The formula has three stages. The first stage involved estimation of the

proportion of respondents that probably has the characteristics of the phenomenon that will be studied.

The total adjusted sample size for each newspaper was 135. A systematic nth technique was used to select specific editions to be analysed, where 730 is a two-year interval of reading the newspapers (365 multiply by 2), 730 divided by 135 = 5. Every 5th edition was selected from each newspaper's sampling frame.

Also, for descriptive study, the model developed by Sanders, Lewis, Thornhill (2009) was used as the formula for sample size determination. The formula had three stages; the first stage involved estimation of the proportion of respondents that probably has the characteristics of the phenomenon that will be studied. Therefore, it is assumed that 87% of Lagos literate population might be interested on issues on disability, while 13% might not be interested on disability related issues. Z value for 0.87 Confidence Interval is 1.51 from Z distribution table

This was the final stage, where the response rate according to the formula, was factored into the equation. Here, the researcher projected the proportion of the response rate that probably might be attained putting the characteristics of the respondents into consideration. The response rate for this study was projected to be 87% (*re*); while 15.27 was substituted for *n* in the following formula. $n^a = 1755$. Therefore, the sample size for the conduct of the survey was ($N = 1755$ respondents)

From the above analysis, it shows that a sample size of $N = 1755$ respondents were given questionnaire to elicit their responses

To arrive at the number of streets where questionnaires was administered to respondents in selected local governments, multi-stage sampling technique was adopted for the study. The six selected local governments have a total of eighty-five wards out of which twenty wards were selected through systematic selection of every fifth ward in each local government.

The next stage was the administration of the instrument on 1755 respondents drawn from 40 streets selected from six local governments in the research field through proportionate sampling. This was done to give adequate representation to all elements in the population. Every fourth house was picked and questionnaire was given to every adult of twenty years and above with qualification of at least Senior Secondary School Certificate. This study used two instruments to gather data. They were: Coding sheet and structured questionnaire.

3.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

For the survey a total of 1755 copies of questionnaire were administered on respondents who met the set criteria in 40 streets from six local governments, while 1580 copies of questionnaire were returned representing 90%. return rate. However, a total number of 1549 questionnaire were available for analysis while 31 questionnaires were found not usable.



Data for content analysis were generated through coding exercise. The study examined the direction of Nigerian newspapers coverage and Lagos state audience perception of people with disabilities, with a view to establish correlation between the two variables.

In terms of gender distribution, 71% percent of respondents were male while 29% percent were female. In terms of age group distribution, 15 % of the respondents were within 20-29 years; 35% are in 30-39 years; 31% were in 40-49 years and 19% are in 50-60 years' category. In terms of educational categorisation, 16% of the respondents were holders of Senior Secondary School Certificate, 39% are holders of NCE certificate, 41% were first degree holders while 4% have postgraduate certificates. In the four selected newspapers for content analysis, *The Punch* with 46 (51%) has the highest number of published stories on people with disabilities, while *Nigerian Tribune*, *Vanguard* and *New Telegraph* each has 15 (16%), Available data show that issues on disability and persons with disabilities did not enjoy regular coverage in all the selected newspapers.

4.0 Discussion of Findings

Objective 1: Identify the pattern of coverage of disability issues in the selected Nigerian newspapers

H₀₁: There is no significance difference in pattern of coverage (total number of stories and placement of stories) of PWDs by Nigerian Newspapers.

Table 1 Types of stories published on PWDs by Nigerian Newspapers

Newspaper Category	TYPES OF STORIES	
	Straight News	Features
<i>The Punch</i>	47	60
<i>Nigerian Tribune</i>	18	12
<i>Vanguard</i>	20	12
<i>New Telegraph</i>	15	16
Total	100	100
	n=51(56%)	n=40 (44%) N=91

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Hypothesis 1 could only explain 0.0 % in variation of influence total number of stories on PWDs published by Nigerian newspapers on placement of news stories on PWDs. This indicate that there are no variations caused by the independent variable (total number of stories published) on the dependent variable (placement of news stories on PWDs published by Nigerian Newspapers ($R^2=1.000$; $\beta=1.000$; $p<0.05$).

The implication of this findings was that prominence was not given to Disabilities issues by Nigerian Newspapers, therefore it can be concluded that the pattern of representation of people with disabilities is probably low and given less attention and prominence.

Objective 2 determine the direction of Nigerian newspapers’ representation of disability issues.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference among Nigerian newspapers representation (Agenda setting and framing) of stories on PWDs.

Table 2: Differences among Nigerian Newspapers Treatment of Issues relating to PWDs

Newspaper Category	DIRECTION OF TREATMENT(Tone)			
	Pity	Derisive	Advocacy	Persuasive
<i>The Punch</i>	68.4	67	43.2	2
<i>Nigerian Tribune</i>	10.5	-	19.4	-
<i>Vanguard</i>	10.5	-	19.4	-
<i>New Telegraph</i>	10.5	33	18	-
Total	100	100	100	-
	n=19	n=3	n=67	n=2 N=91

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Analysis of findings revealed that majority of stories on all newspapers under review, were advocacy oriented. This indicated that there is probably a consistent pattern and approach in the direction of Nigerian newspapers’ representation of People with Disabilities, Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the direction of Nigerian newspapers representation of disability issues thereby providing answers to hypothesis two.

Therefore, changes in Nigerian newspapers treatment of issues on PWDs are explained by other factors that are not considered but can cause variation in the dependent variable. As a result of these analyses, the null hypothesis was rejected. It was discovered that total number of stories on PWDs published by Nigerian newspapers did not have significance influence on direction of Nigerian newspapers’ treatment of issues on PWDs ($p < 0.05$).

Objective 3: Examine relationship between the Nigerian newspapers’ representation (agenda setting) and Lagos state audience’s perception of people with disabilities.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between Nigerian newspapers representation (Agenda setting) of stories on PWDs and Lagos audience perception of PWDs.

Table 3: Newspaper Representation of Disability issues (Agenda setting) influence Audience Perception of PWDs

Newspaper Representation Of Disability Issues	Direction of Audience Perception of PWDs	
	Favourable	Indifferent
Positive	23	26
Neutral	40	53
Negative	37	21
Total	100	100
	n=947	n=602 N=1549

Source: Field Study, 2022



On the nature of influence Nigerian Newspapers Representation (Agenda Setting) of Disability issues exert on audience based on their perception of PWDs, it was discovered that majority of the audience has favourable perception of PWDs (40%) and Indifferent perception of PWDs (53%) believed Nigerian Newspaper Representation of Disability issues did not influence their perception of people with disabilities.

This could only explain 1.0 % in variation of influence on direction of audience opinion on Nigerian newspapers treatment of stories published on PWDs and audience perception of PWDs. These factors indicate that there were no variations caused by the independent variable (direction of audience opinion on Nigerian newspapers treatment of PWDs) on the dependent variable (audience perception of PWDs.) ($R^2=.010$; $\beta=.082$; $p<0.05$).

Therefore, changes in audience perception of PWDs are explained by other factors that are not considered but can cause variation in the dependent variable. As a result of these analyses, the null hypothesis was rejected. It was discovered that direction of audience opinion on Nigerian newspapers treatment of stories published on PWDs has no significant influence on audience perception of PWDs ($p<0.05$)

Objective 4: Find out the relationship between Nigerian newspapers treatment (Framing) of PWDs and Lagos state audience perception of PWDs.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between Nigerian Newspaper treatment (framing) of stories on PWDs and Audience perception of PWDs

Table 4: Newspaper treatment of Disability issues influence Audience Perception of PWDs

Newspaper Treatment of Disability Issues	Direction of Audience	Perception of PWDs	
	Favourable	Indifferent	
Positive	23	11	
Neutral	60	73	
Negative	17	16	
Total	100	100	
	n=947	n=602	N=1549

Source: Field study, 2022

Based on Table 4, it can be concluded that the nature and dimension of Nigerian newspapers treatment of disability issues probably does not have significant influence on audience perception of PWDs. ($R^2=.010$; $\beta=.082$; $p<0.05$). Therefore, changes in audience perception of PWDs are explained by other factors which can cause variation in the dependent variable. As a result of this, the null hypothesis was rejected. The implication of this is that audience have their own mind frames irrespective of what the media placed before them.

Objective 5: Examine the effect of demographic variables (age and gender) on Lagos state audience's perception of people with disabilities.

H₀₅: There is no significant effect of demographic variables (gender and age) on audience perception of PWDs

Table 5: Gender distribution influence on Audience Perception of PWDs

Direction of Audience of Audience Perception of PWDs	Gender Distribution of Audience		
	Male	Female	
Favourable	23	11	
Indifferent	60	73	
Total	100	100	
	n=1108	n=441	N=1549

Source: Field Study, 2022

Table 6: Age group distribution influence on Audience Perception of PWDs

Direction of Audience of Audience Perception of PWDs	Age Group Distribution of Audience		
	Young Adult (20-39years)	Adults (40-59years)	
Favourable	46	75	
Indifferent	54	25	
Total	100	100	
	n=761	n=757	N=1549

Source: Field Survey, 2022

This finding indicated that audience perception is not a function of gender, as both gender categories have indifferent perception. Therefore, it can be concluded that gender does not have influence on audience perception of people with disabilities.

In the age group category, finding showed audience perception of PWDs is a function of age of the audience. It was discovered that the older the audience, the more favourable their perception towards PWDs, therefore, it can be concluded that audience perception of PWDs may be a function of age.

5.0 Conclusion

This study emanated from the background that the media are indispensable and play important role in social integration and inclusiveness. The pervasive status of the media explains the society reliance on them in the provision of information, analysis, and interpretation which have direct and persuasive influence on the society.

The study discovered that there was paucity of literate on media representation and public perception of issues being presented in the media. Majorly, available studies concentrated on issues the media presented while perception of media audience were not reflected. Secondly, the study observed dearth of empirical literature on media and disability in Nigeria even as more organisations are becoming aware of the need to mainstream disability issues. Lastly, the



study discovered no significant effect of agenda setting and media framing on the relationship between Nigerian newspapers' representation and Lagos state audience perception of people with disabilities. Ezech (2017) study on Media Campaign on exclusive Breastfeeding and its acceptability among mothers in Anambra State Nigeria, found that the persistence of media campaign and coverage of an issue may not actually be responsible for public acceptability nor influence people's understanding of the issue. The study used survey method through questionnaire to seek views of 400 nursing mothers in Anambra State and discovered that despite massive media campaigns on the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding of their babies, almost all the respondents attributed their adoption of exclusive breastfeeding to efforts of opinion leaders and social structures within their communities

6.0 Recommendations

The study has been able to update knowledge about the contributions of Nigerian newspapers to the global campaigns on disability inclusion as perceived by Lagos state audience. It therefore, recommends that:

1. Nigerian newspapers should increase coverage of disability issues in their editorial contents. They should devote more time and space to the coverage of issues on disability with a view to promoting the course of people with disabilities as well as facilitating societal integration and inclusiveness.
2. The Nigerian newspapers are also expected to set agenda for the public with regards to disability issues through placement of stories of PWDs in their front pages to confer prominence and importance as well as enhance public understanding.
3. The media should step up their advocacies on people with disabilities so that the public would see them as valuable members and not vulnerable members of the society.
4. Government on its own part has a lot to do to ensconce people with disabilities towards promotion of their inclusion and integration into the mainstream. It is a right move to have law in place against discrimination of persons with disabilities, however the implementation of such law and its domestication at the state level are equally important. Governments at all levels should also embarked on massive campaign on inclusiveness of persons with disabilities. National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) set up by the federal government to promote equalization of opportunities and realization of human rights for PWDs to live decent livelihoods should be strengthened to discharge its responsibilities.
5. NCPWD should also partnered with the media to publicise its activities. In the same manner, other opportunities provided by various organisations to promote inclusiveness of PWDs which include; the recent creation of disability desk by the Nigerian Police, allocation of slots to PWDs in the political parties elective positions, federal government directive to all TV stations to use sign language interpreters, creation of Office of Disability Affairs at the state level and special attention given to PWDs at the

poll stations by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) among others should be encouraged, strengthened and given adequate media coverage

NOTE: The five objectives of the study were retained in the paper to amply capture the bigger focus of the study including respondents' views in the distributed questionnaire. The hypotheses too, complimented research objectives, hence the five were retained. Meanwhile, all observations by the reviewer have been given consideration.

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