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The Hope Newspaper's Coverage of APC 2024 Gubernatorial Primary Election in Ondo State

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Abstract

This study examined *The Hope* newspaper's coverage of the APC 2024 gubernatorial primary election in Ondo State using the content analysis research method. Specifically, it investigated the prominence of reportage, the types of reportage, and the frames used. The research covered a three-month period from 2nd February 2024 to 29th April 2024 and was anchored on Framing Theory as the theoretical framework. Five different frames were identified. Given the small size of the study population, a census approach was adopted, and a purposive sampling technique was used to select 38 newspaper editions for analysis. Data were collected using a coding sheet and analysed using descriptive statistical tools. Findings revealed that *The Hope* newspaper's coverage of the APC 2024 gubernatorial primary election consisted of 78.2% news stories, 9% feature articles, 6.8% opinion pieces, 4.5% editorials, 2.2% pictures, and 0% interviews. The study also found that the newspaper gave moderate prominence to the primary election coverage, as most stories were placed on the inside pages. Additionally, the majority of reports were presented in a straightforward news format, with conflict/rivalry emerging as the dominant framing approach.

Keywords: APC, Coverage, Ondo State, Primary Election, *The Hope* Newspaper

Introduction

A newspaper is a publication that provides a regular, periodic, and sustained record of current events, news, and opinions (Stephens, 2007, p. 12). Historically, newspapers have been a cornerstone of modern society, offering timely information, news, and analysis to the public (Stephens, 2007). Newspapers play a vital role in shaping public opinion, influencing policy, and documenting history (Picard, 2010). Merrill (2017) describes a newspaper as "a mass medium that provides news, information, and entertainment to the public through a variety of formats" (Merrill, 2017, p. 5). Since the publication of the first newspaper, *Relation*, in Germany in 1605 (Bleyer, 1927), newspapers have evolved to become an essential part of daily life, providing readers with news, entertainment, and education. Newspapers serve as a platform for diverse voices, perspectives, and opinions (Cole & Harcup, 2010), offering in-depth coverage of local, national, and international events. The primary function of newspapers is to inform and educate readers (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001), keeping them engaged with current affairs, trends, and societal issues.

Beyond information dissemination, newspapers act as watchdogs, holding those in power accountable for their actions (Schudson, 2003). Investigative journalism and exposés have contributed to major reforms and social change. Additionally, newspapers provide entertainment, lifestyle, and cultural content (McQuail, 2010), featuring reviews, columns, and commentary on arts, sports, and leisure. The newspaper industry has adapted to technological advancements, transitioning from print to digital formats (Paterson & Domingo, 2008). Despite the rise of digital media, print newspapers remain relevant (Gripsrud & Andersen, 2016), offering in-depth analysis and curated content that continues to attract loyal readers. Newspapers have documented significant historical events, providing context for political, economic, and social transformations (Nerone, 2015).

The Nigerian newspaper industry dates back to the 19th century, with the first Nigerian newspaper, *Iwe Irohin*, published in 1859 (Adebayo, 2013). Since then, the industry has expanded, with numerous publications emerging to serve the country's diverse population. Today, newspapers in Nigeria play a crucial role in shaping public opinion, holding leaders accountable, and providing essential information on national and local issues (Obasanjo, 2014). The Nigerian newspaper landscape consists of both state-owned and private publications, with many adapting to digital platforms to enhance accessibility. Despite challenges such as financial constraints and government interference, Nigerian newspapers continue to thrive, offering a platform for diverse perspectives (Omu, 2015). Notable publications include *The Punch*, *The Guardian*, *Vanguard*, and *ThisDay* (Ugochukwu, 2017).

Nigerian newspapers have also played a pivotal role in the country's democratic development. During the colonial era, newspapers such as the *Lagos Weekly Record* and *Nigerian Daily Times* advocated for independence (Olaniyan, 2018). In the post-colonial period, newspapers like *The Punch* and *The Guardian* have continued to promote democratic values and hold leaders accountable (Agbaje, 2016). Through investigative journalism and editorial commentary, Nigerian

newspapers have contributed to the country's ongoing struggle for good governance and social justice. This role play by newspapers are pronounce during electioneering period.

Elections in a democratic are avenues for citizens to elect leaders of their choice after a given period as stipulated in the constitution. Elections in most societies are categorized into primary and the general elections. The primary election which is the focus of the current study is a critical component of democratic processes, allowing political parties to select candidates for general elections (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000). The concept of primary elections originated in the United States in the early 20th century as a response to political corruption and party control (Key, 1964). In Africa, primary elections have gained significance, particularly in nations transitioning from authoritarian rule to democracy (Lynch & Crawford, 2011). Nigeria, as one of the largest democracies on the continent, has faced significant challenges in conducting credible primary elections (Obasanjo, 2014). Given the influence of the media in shaping public perception of elections, investigating newspaper coverage of primary elections is a worthwhile academic endeavour. This study, therefore, examines *The Hope's* newspaper coverage of the 2024 APC gubernatorial primary election in Ondo State.

Statement of the Problem

Newspaper coverage of political activities, particularly elections, plays a crucial role in promoting democratic processes. However, concerns have been raised regarding biases, framing, and Agenda-setting in the reportage of political events. Existing studies on newspaper coverage of elections in Nigeria have largely focused on general elections (Ogbodo, 2022; Oloyede & Owolabi, 2024), with limited attention given to gubernatorial primary elections. Moreover, most prior research has concentrated on national dailies, overlooking the role of local and regional newspapers such as *The Hope* in shaping political discourse, especially during primary elections. This is despite the fact that intra-party contests in Nigeria are often marked by heightened tensions and conflicts. Given this gap, this study examines *The Hope* newspaper's coverage of the 2024 APC gubernatorial primary election in Ondo State. This study is particularly significant because primary elections serve as a critical stage in the democratic process, determining the candidates that proceed to the general elections. The way the media reports such elections can shape public perception, influence party unity, and even impact the overall credibility of the electoral process.

Objectives of the Study

i. To examine the prominence given to the coverage of the 2024 APC gubernatorial primary election by *The Hope* newspaper.\
ii. To analyse the types of reportage employed by *The Hope* newspaper in covering the 2024 APC gubernatorial primary election.
iii. To investigate how *The Hope* newspaper framed its reports on the 2024 APC gubernatorial primary election.

Literature Review

Conceptual Clarifications

Newspaper

Various scholars have provided insightful definitions and perspectives on the concept of a newspaper. Ali & Mehak (2022) describe newspapers as serially published printed materials that

serve as one of the most significant sources of information, offering updates on current events. They emphasize that newspapers provide essential information on diverse topics, including news, sports, market updates, entertainment, and other significant occurrences around the world. Similarly, Bharucha (2017) also defines a newspaper as a serial publication that includes news, various articles, and advertisements, typically published on a daily or weekly basis. Newspapers are structured in different sections to cater to the varied interests of their audience. According to Okunna & Omenugha (2012), a newspaper can simply be defined as a "news-carrying paper," as it provides timely and current news updates. Sanderman et al., cited in Okunna & Omenugha (2012), further define newspapers as unbound printed publications issued at regular intervals, presenting information through words, often accompanied by pictures. Corroborating, Nwodu (2006) notes that newspapers are printed, unbound materials containing information on current political, economic, socio-cultural, educational, environmental, scientific, technological, and other matters of public interest. Similarly, Samuel and Okoro (2020) define a newspaper as a set of large, folded sheets of printed paper that contain news, articles, pictures, advertisements, and more.

Samuel and Okoro (2020) further note that newspapers are published daily, weekly, or monthly. Additionally, with the development in new communication technologies, there has been an upsurge of online newspapers (Solihin, et al. 2023). Newspaper can also be classify according to geographical coverage, in this regard, there are international newspapers, national, regional, local and even community newspaper (Apuke, & Omar, 2020). In terms of ownership patterns, newspapers in Nigeria are predominantly owned by individuals and operate either as business ventures or as tools for political influence. However, a small number of government-owned newspapers also exist within the country. The Hope Newspaper, which serves as the focal point of the current study, is owned by the government of Osun State. While it was originally designed to bridge the information gap between the government and the governed, like other public media outlets in Nigeria, it remains susceptible to the influence of the prevailing government.

Primary Election

A primary election is a preliminary electoral process through which voters select candidates to represent their political parties in general elections (Norris, 2017). These elections function as a filtering mechanism, narrowing down the pool of contenders and enabling political parties to nominate their preferred candidates (Patterson, 1993). Primary elections are particularly significant in countries with two-party systems, such as the United States, where the Democratic and Republican parties hold primaries to choose their respective nominees. The origins of primary elections can be traced to the progressive movement in the United States, which sought to transfer the power of candidate nomination from party leaders to the general electorate. Despite this shift, political parties continue to control the nomination process, which is conducted in the name of the party. In addition to primary elections, other methods for selecting candidates include internal party selection processes, such as conventions or party congresses, direct nominations by party leaders, and nomination meetings.

Primary elections can take various forms, including open, closed, semi-closed, and blanket/nonpartisan primaries (McQuail, 2013). Open primaries allow voters to participate in any party's primary regardless of their affiliation (Scheufele, 1999), while closed primaries restrict

participation to registered party members (Entman, 2007). Semi-closed primaries permit unaffiliated voters to participate, while party members are restricted to voting within their own party (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009). The primary election process empowers voters to shape their party's nomination and, by extension, influence the outcome of general elections. On April 20th, 2024, the All Progressives Congress (APC) conducted its gubernatorial primary election in Ondo State, resulting in Lucky Aiyedatiwa's selection as the party's representative. However, the primary election was marred by skirmishes, accusations, and counter-accusations among party members. In such a context, the role of media, particularly public media outlets like *The Hope Newspaper*, cannot be overlooked. Media outlets significantly influence public perception and set the agenda during key events such as primary elections, shaping the way the public engages with and interprets political events.

Empirical Review

Several studies have examined newspaper coverage of elections both globally and within Nigeria, providing valuable insights into how media coverage shapes political discourse. For instance, Ojebuyi & Salawu (2018) conducted a study on the objectivity of Nigerian newspapers in their coverage of the 2015 presidential election. Through textual analysis, the study investigated the electioneering activities of the two main political parties—the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC)—as reported by *The Nation*, *Nigerian Tribune*, *The Punch*, and *Vanguard*. Their findings revealed that the newspapers selectively foregrounded some stories while downplaying others, influenced by ownership and political alignments. Similarly, Zannu et al. (2024) explored the coverage of the 2023 presidential election campaigns in *The Punch*, *Vanguard*, and *The Guardian*. The study examined not only the frequency of election-related coverage but also the prominence and depth of the stories between November 2022 and January 2023. The findings indicated that *The Punch* had the highest frequency of reporting, and all three newspapers dedicated significant prominence to election stories.

In a similar vein, Taiwo et al. (2023) investigated the frequency, genre, and prominence of election coverage in *The Guardian*, *The Nation*, *The Punch*, and *Vanguard* during the last four months leading up to the 2023 presidential election. Drawing on Agenda-Setting Theory, the study found that news articles were the most common form of coverage, with slight prominence given to front-page stories. Notably, *The Nation* allocated more space to election coverage, possibly due to its ownership connection to one of the presidential candidates, Bola Ahmed Tinubu. This finding adds to the body of research highlighting the influence of media ownership on election coverage and underscores the importance of understanding ownership structures in electoral media reporting. Furthermore, Onwubuoya, et al. (2023) examined the coverage of the 2023 presidential election campaigns by *The Sun* and *Vanguard* newspapers. The study employed content analysis of news reports and found that both newspapers predominantly used the "strategy frame" in their election reporting. However, while *The Sun* applied an "indifference frame," *Vanguard* favoured an "attack frame." This shift in framing strategies adds another layer to our understanding of how newspapers shape election narratives, showing that the framing technique varies not only by newspaper but also by editorial stance.

In addition, Yadima (2024) compared *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers' coverage of political parties during the 2023 presidential election. The study found that the APC garnered the most

attention, particularly in *Vanguard*, which provided more frequent coverage than *Daily Trust*. Additionally, policy issues emerged as the most common theme in *Vanguard's* coverage, a finding that reinforces the importance of thematic focus in political reporting. Moreover, Agberu & Odebiyi (2021) analysed *Vanguard* and *Daily Trust* newspapers' coverage of the 2015 and 2019 presidential elections. Their study identified consistent themes across election periods, including calls for national unity, economic diversification, anti-corruption measures, and critiques of the electoral commission.

Also, Oloyede & Owolabi (2024) examined the framing of presidential primaries, specifically the APC and PDP primaries, in the lead-up to the 2023 elections. Their study found that newspapers focused heavily on regional interests, personality projections, and candidates' character assessments, rather than on their policy proposals. This study adds a crucial dimension to the framing discourse by highlighting the tendency of the press to prioritise factors unrelated to the candidates' actual plans for the country, suggesting that future media coverage should pivot more towards substantive campaign issues. In another study, Eneome, et al. (2022) investigated how *Daily Sun*, *The Guardian*, and *Vanguard* covered the conflicts arising during the 2021 gubernatorial primaries in Anambra State. Their study reinforced the findings of previous studies by showing that the depth and direction of coverage were influenced by journalistic framing, with conflict and informative frames being most dominant. This reinforces the notion that framing significantly impacts how the public perceives election-related events and crises.

Most existing research has primarily focused on prominent national dailies such as *The Nation*, *The Punch*, and *Vanguard*, often overlooking the impact of regional newspapers, which may offer different perspectives based on local interests and political dynamics. Additionally, while general elections attract considerable media attention, less attention has been paid to the media coverage of party primaries, which play a crucial role in shaping political narratives and influencing voter perceptions. This lack of focus on regional papers and primary elections highlights an opportunity for further exploration into how local media outlets report on these key stages of the electoral process and how they contribute to the broader political discourse.

Theoretical Review

The study is anchored in Framing Theory, developed by Erving Goffman (1974), which suggests that media frames significantly influence how individuals interpret information. Goffman defined frames as "schemata of interpretation" that guide individuals in organising and making sense of their experiences (1974, p. 21). These frames highlight certain aspects of an issue while downplaying others, shaping people's perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours. Entman (1993) further expands on Goffman's theory, proposing that framing involves selecting, emphasising, and organising elements of a message to create a particular interpretation. This process shapes how audiences understand and respond to information. Scheufele (1999) applied Framing Theory to media studies, illustrating how news frames shape public opinion and influence policy debates by emphasising specific aspects of an issue. In the political context, Framing Theory explains how media coverage can affect voters' perceptions of candidates and issues. For example, how a newspaper frames a politician's speech can influence public opinion about their policies. Tewksbury and Scheufele (2009) further explored how media frames interact with audience frames, underscoring the importance of considering both media and audience frames in

understanding public opinion. In the context of this study, Framing Theory provides a valuable lens to analyse how *The Hope Newspaper* covers the APC 2024 gubernatorial primary election in Ondo State, offering insights into how media framing shapes public perceptions of candidates and political events, potentially influencing the outcome of the election.

Research Methodology

The researcher adopted a quantitative research method for this study. Wimmer & Dominick (2011) posit that quantitative research requires that the variables under considering be measured. Content analysis was adopted for this study. Daramola & Daramola (2011) see content as a research method or technique that enables researcher to study written works systematically and quantitatively. Since this study focuses on examining the prominence and extent of coverage of the 2024 Ondo APC gubernatorial election, qualitative method is most appropriate. The study population used by the researchers include the editions of *The Hope newspaper* published between the periods under review; February 2nd 2024 to April 29th 2024 (3months). The researcher sampled Monday, Wednesday, and Friday editions of *The Hope newspaper* the period under review because three editions are published every week. Therefore, the total population of the study is 38 editions of *The Hope* newspaper. The period was selected based on the fact that it includes the period in which political parties including APC and their candidates prepared and campaigned for the primary elections leading to the 2024 gubernatorial elections in Ondo state. Also, the period includes the time that INEC, through its time table, had mandated all political parties to conduct their primaries. The researchers, considering the small size of the study population adopted a census of the entire study population. As explained by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023), a population may be studied using one or two approaches; taking a census, or selecting a sample. A census is a study of every unit, everyone, or everything in a population. In simpler terms, taking a census of a study population involves studying the whole study population as opposed to selecting a portion of the study population for study purposes. The coding sheet served as instrument of data collection.

The unit of analysis include news, feature articles, editorials and pictures while the content categories are prominence, type of stories and frames used in the reportage. Prominence means the importance given to stories on the subject matter. It was determine by the placement of stories about the primary election in the newspaper, whereby front page indicate high prominence, center pages represent moderate prominence while back page represent minimal prominence. Types of stories is determined by the genre or format of report indicating whether the stories are straight news, features, opinion writing, editorials, interviews and pictures. A frame refers to the way media shape the presentation and interpretation of news, events, or issues by selecting, emphasising, and structuring specific aspects of a story. In this study frames were determine by determine the issues emphasized by the Hope Newspaper in its reportage of the election in Ondo. A story that focuses on rivalry and clashes is classify as conflict frame, one that stress the place of religion as key factor in the election is religiosity frames, while the anyone that stress the ethnicity of the actors and the role of tribe in the election is considered as Ethnic/regional frame. Others are gender frames which stress issue of gender imbalance or related matter and another frame used was good governance frame which focuses on the issues and characters of the key actors that has implication on the quality of governance in the state.

Table 1: Table showing the sample size of *The Hope* Newspaper between the selected periods of February 2nd, 2024, to April 29th, 2024.

Year 2024	Months	Days Selected	Total
	February	2,5,7,9,12,14,16,19,21,23,26,28	12
	March	1,4,6,8.11,13,15,18,20,22,25,27,29	13
	April	1,3,5,8,10,12,15,17,19,22,24,26,29	13
		Total	**38**

Source: Content Analysis, 2024

The research question sought to discover the prominence *The Hope* newspaper gave to the coverage of the APC 2024 gubernatorial primary election in Ondo State. Since the newspaper editor places the most important lead stories on the front, it is only logical that the most important news stories are placed sequentially on the front page, followed by the inside pages and the back page.

Table 2: Table showing the monthly distribution of stories in both newspapers according to placement.

Types	*Frequency*	Percentage
Front Page	11	23.9%
Inside Page	34	73.9%
Back Page	1	2.1%
Total	**46**	**100%**

Source: Content Analysis, 2024

From Table 4, the data showed the placement of APC 2024 gubernatorial primary election stories in *The Hope* newspaper on the front page, inside page, and back page. The data also revealed that *The Hope* newspaper published 11 stories (representing 23.9%) on the front page. Furthermore, it published 34 stories (representing 73.9%) on the inside page, while it published only one story (representing 1%) on the back page, out of a total of 46 reports. As shown in the table, the findings revealed that *The Hope* newspaper treated the election coverage with moderate prominence.

Table 3: Type or format used in reporting APC gubernatorial primary election by The Hope newspaper

Story Type	Frequency	Percentage
News stories	36	78.2%
Features	4	9%
Opinion	3	6.8%
Editorial	1	2.2%
Picture	2	4.5%
Interview	0	0%
Total	**46**	**100%**

Source: Content Analysis, 2024

In Table 3, news content in *The Hope* newspaper has 34 items, representing 78.2%. The feature section has four items, accounting for 9%. In the newspaper, the opinion section contains three

items, representing 6.8%, while *The Hope* newspaper has one item in the editorial section, which is 1%. Additionally, the newspaper has one picture item, also representing 1%, and no interview items. The findings from this table show that more attention was placed on news stories than on any other aspect of the newspaper's coverage of the APC 2024 gubernatorial primary election in Ondo State. The implication of this data is that *The Hope* newspaper had more news stories on the APC 2024 gubernatorial primary election, with lower reportage in the feature, editorial, and picture sections, and no coverage in the interview section during the election in Ondo State.

Table 5: Table showing the dominant frames of stories reported on APC gubernatorial primaries in *The Hope* newspaper

Frames	*Frequency*	Percentage
Conflict/rivalry	13	28%
Religiosity frame	3	6.5%
Gender	9	19.5%
Ethnic/regional frame	7	15.2%
Good governance	2	4.2%
Total		**100%**

Source: Content Analysis, 2024

The data presented in the table above revealed the dominant frames given to the APC 2024 gubernatorial primary election by *The Hope* newspaper. It was found that the conflict/rivalry frame, which accounted for 13 (28%), dominated the framing approach. This was followed by the gender frame, which accounted for 9 (19.5%) of the story frames. On the other hand, the ethnic/regional frame had 7 (15.2%), the religiosity frame had 3 (6.5%), and the good governance frame accounted for 4.2%. These results revealed that *The Hope* newspaper focused more on conflict/rivalry, gender, and ethnic/regional frames compared to religion and good governance.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined *The Hope* newspaper's coverage of the APC 2024 gubernatorial primary election in Ondo State. Tables 2 and 3 were used to answer research question one, which focused on determining the prominence given to stories on the APC gubernatorial primary election in Ondo State. Prominence, which refers to the importance given to stories on the subject matter, was determined by the placement of stories about the primary election in the newspaper. The front page indicates high prominence, the centre pages represent moderate prominence, while the back page signifies minimal prominence.

The data showed the placement of stories on the APC 2024 gubernatorial primary election in Ondo State by *The Hope* newspaper on the front page, inside page, and back page, as presented in the table. Findings revealed that *The Hope* newspaper published the majority of its APC gubernatorial primary election stories on the inside page, with only a few stories on the front page. Only one story was placed on the back page from its total of 46 reports. This implies that *The Hope* newspaper treated the primary election coverage with moderate prominence. The finding contradicts previous research by Besley & Prat (2016) and Oloyede & Owolabi (2023), which

found that Nigerian newspapers provide extensive coverage of presidential election primaries to inform and influence public opinion.

The study also analysed the types and formats of reportage employed by *The Hope* newspaper in covering the 2024 APC gubernatorial primary election. The types of stories were determined by the genre or format of the report, indicating whether the stories were straight news, features, opinion pieces, editorials, interviews, or pictures. Findings revealed that the majority of stories related to the APC 2024 gubernatorial primaries were reported in a straightforward news story format, with very few features, editorials, opinion pieces, and pictures. Reportage in the interview format was absent, as no interview items were recorded.

The predominance of straightforward news reporting on the APC gubernatorial primary election in Ondo State suggests that *The Hope* newspaper prioritised factual reporting to satisfy readers' demand for current information before using feature articles, editorials, and opinion pieces to set the agenda and provide context. The implication of this finding is that *The Hope* newspaper was objective in reporting stories related to the APC gubernatorial primary election in Ondo State. This finding aligns with previous studies by Ogbodo et al. (2022), which revealed that newspapers tend to prioritise election-related issues through frequent reporting and diverse formats, especially during election periods. It also supports Merrill's (2017) statement that newspapers serve as a medium for providing news, information, and entertainment to the public through various formats.

The final objective of this study was to determine the dominant frame used in reporting issues related to the APC 2024 gubernatorial primary election by *The Hope* newspaper. A total of five frame types were identified, with the conflict/rivalry frame having the highest occurrence, followed by the gender frame, ethnic/regional frame, religiosity frame, and good governance frame. With the conflict/rivalry frame as the dominant frame in the 2024 APC gubernatorial primary election in Ondo State, this finding contradicts the study by Ekeanyanwu (2015), which found that human interest and historical narratives were the most significant frames during the 2015 general election. It also contradicts Oloyede & Owolabi (2024), who found that the ethnic frame was the dominant frame in the 2023 presidential election. Furthermore, this finding differs from Ogbodo et al. (2022), who established that the political interest frame dominated the coverage of general elections in Nigeria. The implication of this finding is that newspapers set the agenda through their dominant frames, where the conflict/rivalry frame takes precedence over coverage of candidates' policies and plans for the state during the 2024 APC gubernatorial primary election in Ondo State. Relating these findings to framing theory, this study is based on the assumption that *The Hope* newspaper's framing of the APC 2024 gubernatorial primary election influences how readers interpret and understand the election. With conflict/rivalry, gender, and ethnic/regional frames being the most dominant, readers' perception and understanding of the APC gubernatorial primary election will be shaped by these frames compared to minimal coverage of electoral violence, religion, and good governance.

Conclusion

This study examined *The Hope* newspaper's coverage of the APC 2024 gubernatorial primary election in Ondo State. It adopted the content analysis research method and specifically

investigated the prominence of reportage, the types and formats of reportage, and the frames used. Findings from the study indicate that *The Hope* newspaper gave moderate prominence to the APC 2024 gubernatorial primary election in its coverage. As a government-owned newspaper, its placement of stories showed that most reports were published on the inside pages, while only a few stories about the party primary election appeared on the front page. The majority of stories related to the APC 2024 gubernatorial primaries were reported in a straightforward news story format, with very few feature articles, editorials, opinion pieces, or interviews. The prominence and news format adopted by *The Hope* newspaper in covering the Ondo 2024 primary election align with the fact that the election dominated public discussion during the period under study. Additionally, the dominant frame used in reporting issues related to the APC 2024 gubernatorial primary election was the conflict/rivalry frame. Therefore, while *The Hope* newspaper performed well in covering the 2024 primaries, its reports were primarily centred on conflict and rivalry issues.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Greater prominence should be given to primary election activities during election periods by placing related stories on the front page. This will ensure that the public remains well-informed about this crucial formative stage of the electoral process.
2. *The Hope* newspaper should diversify its election coverage beyond straightforward news reports. Incorporating more opinion articles, opinion polls, and news analysis on party primary election events would provide readers with deeper insights and varied perspectives.
3. Nigerian newspapers play a significant role in shaping public opinion, particularly during primaries and elections. To maintain credibility and fairness, it is essential for newspapers to adopt an impartial approach in their choice of words, phrases, adjectives, and lexical categorizations when reporting on politicians.

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