

Evaluation of News Photographs on Front-Pages of Select Nigerian Newspapers

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Abstract

The front page of every newspaper commands special attention as readers' first view of the day's news. Editors use news photographs as the most prominent story telling element to welcome readers to the newspaper. This study analyses select Nigerian newspapers' front page news photographs in terms of sources, categories and issues over a three months period. Five privately-owned media organisations with a national reach and one state-owned media were purposively select for the study using content analysis. The findings revealed that less than half of the entire news photographs were taken by in-house photojournalists while there is a growing trend in the usage of many without by-line and thus sources classified as "unidentified." Majority of the news photographs are also of daily routine activities categorised as "general news" photographs. "Politics" is the major issue in all the newspapers to further confirm the view that news is elitist. The researcher concluded by suggesting that news photographs should dwell more on issues to reduce reliance on routine events while visual literacy should be promoted in the newsroom through staff training to improve the gatekeepers' knowledge of what makes good news photographs.

Keywords: News Photography, Issues, Category, Sources, Newspapers, Gatekeeping Theory