

Pattern of Journalists' Reportage of Security Issues in Anambra State, Nigeria, in 2023

Nnaemeka, Obidike Frank¹ & Ogunbadejo, Samuel Idowu²

¹Associate Professor, Department of Mass Communication, Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu University, (COOU), Igbariam Campus, Anambra State.

²Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State.

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.802050>

Received: 12 January 2024; Revised: 26 January 2024; Accepted: 31 January 2024; Published: 06 March 2024

ABSTRACT

Security in Anambra State in the Southeast geopolitical zone is a priority issue. This is because the free movement of people doing business and pursuing their goals, the prosperity and happiness of citizens, the freedom to go about achieving ones purposes is dependent on a secure State. Journalists on the other hand have a duty under their surveillance and correlation functions to provide news and information on the state of security within their areas of jurisdiction. It thus becomes imperative to evaluate the pattern of media reportage of security issues in Anambra State from the perspective of the journalists themselves. The objectives of the study were to; determine if security issues are well reported by the media in Awka, Anambra State, examine the slant of media reportage of security issues in terms of favour to some group, determine the basic challenges faced by the media in reportage of security issues and find out the level of cooperation between security agencies and journalists in the media reportage of security Issues. The study is anchored on Social Responsibility Theory and Framing Theory. It adopted a survey research approach and drew a sample size of 162 respondents based on census sampling. Questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. Major findings from the study reveal that journalists in Awka report security issues fairly well, that majority of the journalists do not slant their news, that fear was the basic among the challenges faced by the journalists in the reportage of security issues and that journalists in Awka do not have free access to the PPRO or DPO and other security agents in the State. Among others, the study recommended that media organisations, the security formations and the State government should pay careful attention to journalists in this sensitive and hazardous line of duty, that seminars and workshops involving journalists and security agents should also be organized from time to time in order to foster unity among journalists and security agents and government should also empower security agencies and journalists with requisite resources and motivation to do more in securing lives and property.

Keywords: Insecurity, Media Reportage, Surveillance, Journalists, Anambra State

INTRODUCTION

Security of lives and property is one of the fundamental expectations and right of every human. The whole essence of the State at all levels is the security and welfare of the citizens. Power is transferred to the elected leaders to protect the people and advance their interests in the pursuit of happiness. Where the government and the leaders fail to provide security through policies and programmes that guarantee employment, keep poverty at low level, provide sufficient public utilities and enable economic and social equity, there may be insecurity. Security has been defined as all measures designed to protect and safeguard the citizenry and the

resources of individuals, groups, businesses and the nation against sabotage or violent occurrence; freedom from danger or threats and the ability of a nation to protect and develop itself, promote and cherish values and legitimate interests and enhance the well-being of its people.

However in Anambra State today there is measure of insecurity. In the days before the 2023 Christmas, the convoy of a popular politician in Anambra State, Chris Uba of Uga was attacked by gun men. Two security aids and two others lost their lives that day at the Uga Junction traffic (Vanguard, 2023). This and some other security events threats in the State led another political leader in the State, Mr. Nicholas Ukachukwu to petition the Nigerian army for 16 soldiers, 20 policemen, 12 DSS to travel to Anambra during the Christmas (Vanguard, 2023). Ndi Anambra are killed, local government headquarters are set ablaze, cars are burned, Ndi Igbo are threatened in viral videos, letters of impending violence are posted to local councils, commuters are scared, everyone and everything now lives with caution. In Anambra State, there are different types of insecurity, physical, social and psychological among others. Some of these align what the categories identified by Nwolise (2018) which include aggression by hostile forces of state and non-state actors, cyber-attacks (hacking of systems and data bases), subversive penetrations by gunmen and militia from other neighbouring and distant states, human traffickers who abduct and trade minors and vulnerable members of the population, separatist agitation including the IPOB conflicts, subversion of government institutions political groups, religious denomination conflicts, kidnapping, armed robbery.

How has Anambra State government tackled these issues of insecurity? In the time past, it used military might through collaborating with the Nigerian army in different phases of operations including Operation Crocodile Smile (Egwu Eke) I & II. It used the police and secret policing strategies in identifying culprits and their hideouts. It also used local vigilante groups (the AVG) set up in the over 170 towns of the 21 local government areas of Anambra State. One other measure for checking insecurity was diplomatic shutter and political pressure as applied by Governor Chukwuma Soludo when he visited the IPOB leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, held in DSS custody while he was also working with other Southeast governors to release Mazi to deescalate insecurity in the Southeast.

To secure Anambra State, the government needs to have the human resources for protection, the economic capacity for long term sustenance of her fight against rogue elements, the technological capability to deter misreants, the political maturity for cooperation with different sectors and denominations in the State and the military power for offence and defense where and when necessary to stop armed aggression with gun power. The government of Chukwuma Soludo has engaged aspects of these strategies to curb the escalation of insecurity in the State. It achieved a level of success but insecurity still remains a thorn in the flesh of the State.

On a broader scale, Nigeria has faced high level of insecurity in the past and from daily media reports, insecurity is rising. Indeed, Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria under the Ministryship of Nyesom Wike former governor of Rivers State, in the first quarter of 2024 has come under attacks from bandits and gunmen. Some factors have given rise to insecurity in Nigeria and they include: kidnapping, proliferation of arms, religious extremism/fanaticism, desire to actualize ethnic agenda, fear and distrust on government, ethnic violence, wrong political ambition, Illegal armed groups, unemployment, elections, particularly the just concluded General elections in the country. Before now, the northern part of the country was believed to be having the most cases of insecurity, (Osaghe and Suberu, 2005). But lately, it seems the narrative is gradually taking another turn as the Southeastern part of the country is being affected seriously.

Anambra has had its fair share of insecurity. Its capital city, Awka has also experienced the impact of insecurity. The media which are also believed to be the fourth estate of the realm has a significant role to play in this scene of insecurity. Conflict is one fundamental impediment to the advancement of any society. It encourages stagnation as well as retrogression of the socio-economic constructions of any given society. It equally engenders acrimony and hatred amongst the inhabitants of such society. Development

communication scholars (Bright 2010, Charles 2009, Kane 2010) have contended that no development agenda (be it political, economic, social, etc) can thrive in the face of crisis or insecurity. They further posit that crisis dethrones developmental quests, while further impoverishing the people. This sums it all as it can be depicted from the above statement by these scholars that on the face of insecurity, the people or masses become more impoverished or poor while developmental quests become abated because no development can take place when the people who are meant to implement it are poor themselves.

In the Southeast and particularly Anambra, the detainment of the IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra) leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu has caused security challenges relating the sit-at-home every Monday with some youths growing restive while destroying some vital and essential properties most importantly, human lives. IPOB is a group that seeks to have its freedom and wishes to be on its own as an independent nation no longer under the government of Nigeria. Thugs and touts now hide under the auspices of IPOB and use it as an avenue to exercise illegal and harmful activities especially during the days of the mandatory Sit-at-home order in the South-eastern region and has made the very people of the eastern states to be in constant fear. Thugs have hijacked the campaign for an independent Igbo nation.

For about two years now, people live in constant fear of the activities of the members of a so-called Unknown Gunmen. Unknown Gunmen kill people, bomb places, and destroy so many valuable assets through their actions. They have kept the entire nation in constant fear as they usually kill and slaughter people constantly and instil fear. There are also cases of cult clashes and casualties in Awka. Chikundi (2021) reports a Keke operator saying that “there may be no end in sight for the persistent cult clashes in Awka, the capital of Anambra State. Some big men who get revenue from Keke operators are not happy that some people want some part of Awka to be given to them to be collecting toll from Keke riders, and once that happens, it will automatically reduce the revenue of the main man, and that is what has been causing all these killings for years now”. Furthermore, from late 2022 to January 2023, students living in Ifite axis of Awka have been in constant fear as a result of robbery, and rape by people who come to the different lodges occupied by students and cart away with students’ valuables. This has become a very serious issue as robbery in the Unizik vicinity is still on the rise and on-going.

The mass media have been adjudged by conflict resolution experts as indispensable tools for the management of crisis. Nwosu, (2004) affirms that the mass media are considered to be very important in conflict management because they are information merchants, conduits or carriers of various shades and colours of information. And in times of conflicts, or even wars, adequate or inadequate management of information is considered to be a critical factor in the emergence, escalation or reduction of tension points at various levels, tensions which depending on how they are managed, can determine the end or continuation of conflicts.

Obot (2004) asserts that in resolving conflict in modern societies, the mass media to a great extent provide a rendezvous for all the interest groups or aggrieved parties to ‘sit’ and express their minds on issues in contention. This will be possible by providing and guaranteeing every citizens easy access to media facilities. All the groups in a conflict have to be represented in news and other programmes in which issues in conflict are discussed. The fact that divergent views are represented in the news or discussion programmes usually goes a long way to calm frayed nerves. Insecurity is a major problem which the media should be able to report it in a way that would not escalate or generate crisis. Anyanwu (2011), further asserts that the mass media can generate and escalate conflicts through inciting coverage, inadequate reporting, none reporting etc., while conflicts can be resolved/managed by the mass media through objective, balanced, adequate, non-sensational, and surveillance reportage.

Statement of the Research Problem

Journalists in different countries and different States in a country play their surveillance roles in different

ways. Their reportage of events and occurrences, in this case insecurity, often has impact on how the populace perceive the fight against insecurity and how they respond to calls for cooperation with government agencies. Thus, the patterns of media reports on issues of security has influence on the campaign against insecurity. In Anambra, journalist through their various channels of radio, television, newspaper etc seem to be sensationalizing and slanting their stories especially that which has to do with the State government and some powerful elites in the State. There have been accusations and counter-accusations on how the media, particularly the broadcast media are reporting these crises. Some argue that government-owned broadcast stations have not fared well in reporting security issues. They contend that government stations have been very economical with facts on the crisis. They further alleged that only the views of government officials on the crisis are given undue prominence in their reports.

On the other hand, other school of thought contend that the privately-owned broadcast stations are the stations escalating the crisis by way of sensationalising their reports on insecurity in the State. These school of thought argue that the privately-owned broadcast stations have been breeding a brand of insecurity through their reports which tend to defend some big names who play a part for instance in the cult killings that play out in Awka metropolis and how some actors are later granted bail in a suspicious process. These patterns of reportage of security issues by the media in cases like this becomes a problem and raises concerns about how media patterns of reportage help or harm the efforts to curb insecurity. Furthermore, journalists are professionals in their field. Their perceptions, outlook and opinions matter in how they relay news and information. They belong to journalistic associations and guilds and these boddies regulate professional conducts and ethics of reportage. It thus becomes imperative to look at how journalists in the print and electronic media report of security issues in Awka metropolis from their own perspective and angle. The particular media organisation surveyed include; ABS (Anambra Broadcasting Service), FIDES Newspaper, Unizik 94.1 FM, NTA (Nigeria Television Authority).

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to elicit the perspectives of journalists in Awka on the patterns of media reports on insecurity in Anambra. The specific objectives are;

1. Determine if security issues are well reported by the media in Awka, Anambra State.
2. Examine the slant of media reportage of security issues in terms of favour to some group.
3. Determine the basic challenges faced by the media in reportage of security issues.
4. Find out the level of cooperation between security agencies and journalists in the media reportage of security Issues.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social Responsibility Theory

The theory originated in the United States in 1974 from the Hutchins Commission Report on a Free and Responsible Press. The enquiry by this commission became necessary because the Press was not behaving the way it was expected to behave. The underlying principle of the Social Responsibility Theory is that the Press should be free to perform the functions which the Libertarian Theory had granted it freedom to perform, but that this freedom should be exercised with responsibility. The theory advocates that if journalists cannot control themselves and make themselves responsible, then the government should control them. Self-control entails that journalists should put in place certain measures that are designed to make them responsible in the discharge of their professional duties known as “Self-regulatory mechanisms, these measures revolve around the concept of ethics in Journalism. Applying this theory to this research work, it can be deduced that the media ought to be responsible in their reportage and discharge of their duties in

reporting security issues in Anambra State.

Framing Theory

The framing theory, as observed by Coleman (1999), was first introduced by sociologist Erving Goffman in the 1970s to “systematically explain that humans use their ingrained expectations to make sense of their lives”. He cites Severin & Tankard as stating that events are framed or given a field of meanings within which they can be understood. Goffman used the idea of frames to label “schemata of interpretation” that allow individuals or groups “to locate, perceive, identify, and label” events and occurrences, thus rendering meaning, organizing experiences, and guiding actions (Myles, 2009). In the field of communication, framing defines how news media coverage shape mass opinion. To be specific, framing refers to behavioural or attitudinal outcomes that are due to how a given piece of information is being framed in public discourse (Kaswe, 2010). Framing theory is of the assumption that the way media frame words in their reportage impacts on public understanding of the issue and consequently determine their responses. Fairhurst and Star (1996) assert that “a frame refers to the way media and media gatekeepers organize and present the events and issues they cover, and the way audience interpret what they are provided. Frames influence the perception of news by the audience”. Scheufele (2004) asserts that “many of the images and opinions held by the audience members have in fact been created by prior media coverage. Entman (1993) in McQuail (2007, p.378) summarises the main aspects framing by saying that “framing defines problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements and suggest remedies”. Entman further asserts that it is very clear that a very large number of textual devices can be used to perform the above mentioned framing activities. These devices include using certain words or phrases, making certain contextual references, choosing certain pictures or films, giving examples as typical, referring to certain sources and so on. Since the framing theory has to do with how the media arrange their words, organize and report them, it becomes imperative that the media should try their utmost best in the process of their framing to avoid words, pictures, images that would cause or stir problems or cause psychological tensions among the passive and active citizens as was the scene with the Rwanda Genocide.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Insecurity

Insecurity, according to Udoh (2015), is the state of being subject to danger or injury. The anxiety that is experienced when one feels vulnerable and insecure. Ezemonye (2011) affirms the above definition of insecurity as “a state of being not secure, lack of confidence”. The Oxford Advanced English Dictionary (2020) defines insecure as ‘not confident about yourself or your relationships with other people; not safe or protected’. Insecurity is also defined as lack of confidence or a feeling of uncertainty and inadequacy that drives one to be anxious about one’s self and one’s abilities. For the general public or the masses at large, insecurity varies. It no longer has to do with those fears or threats the individual fights within. It now goes further to mean the fear which the general public is posed with on grounds of being vulnerable to danger or being insecure. Insecurity issues can come in form of theft, banditry, insurgency, terrorism, etc.

Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria and Anambra State

Udoh (2015) maintained that the phenomenon ‘insecurity’ has been extended to cover other spheres like economic, and political insecurity. Insecurity in the many parts of Nigeria affect the lives and property of all citizens whether at minor or major scale. Due insecurity traders in different parts of the country can lose millions of naira from a single incident of arson or armed robbery. Further still, a small family can experience gigantic and unquantifiable loss when a member of that family is kidnapped and killed. Kidnappings, killings, destruction of property and social obstructions at national or State level are caused by identified factors. These factors include;

Porous borders: The free flow of migrants from other countries to Nigeria through our unguarded borders allows criminals to enter the country without check.

Proliferation of arms and ammunitions: Several arms hauls have been ceased at our air and sea ports, some in very large quantities. This is not good for the country. These arms and ammunition end up in the hands of criminals who apply same in their nefarious activities in the country thereby making life insecure for the people of their locality.

Illegal armed groups: Illegal importation of arms and ammunitions has made possession of arms by individuals and groups very easy. We can name groups like Niger Delta Militants, Oodua People's Congress, 'Bakassi Boys', MASSOB that possess arms and ammunitions.

Oil bunkering: Nigeria being one of the largest oil producing nation suffers from the activities of illegal oil bunkering. This activity is promoted by the spate of insecurity in the country. This is back-up with criminals who are ready to die in Nigeria water-ways. This therefore makes the coastal areas of our oil producing states unsafe.

Kidnapping: This is another visible sign of insecurity in the country. The perpetrators of this crime do not spare anyone in this new wave of crime that seems to have supplanted armed robbery and other non-contact crimes. Since this act began in Nigeria, aged, children, male and female have been kidnapped for ransom. This has made life unbearable to the citizens. People now live in fear of falling victims to these criminals.

Militancy: According to criminal law, militancy is violence, illegal force or the illegal use of unjustified force or the intimidating effect created by the threat of this act. This word became pronounced in Nigeria when the Niger Deltans took up arms against government exploitation and environmental degradation of their area due to oil exploration and exploitation. This does not only exist in the Niger Delta area. Other parts of the country have witnessed militants who commit atrocities worse than the youths of Nigeria Delta whose area is given the 'brand'.

Security Issues in Awka

The security issues which has been ongoing in Awka has raised public concern, it is demeaning how youths of a nation will continue to die carelessly on any slightest provocation. Chukindi (2021) in his report in *Daily Post* newspaper gave some reasons why the capital city has become involved in the insecurity saga. He writes that 'there may be no end in sight for the persistent cult clashes in Awka, the capital of Anambra State, *Daily Post* findings have revealed. This is as known sponsors of cult groups in the capital city have remained untouchable, as some of them have been identified to be top members of a ruling party in the state, while others are known to have the ear of the government of the state. Investigations in Awka has shown that just as the security operatives are working hard to contain the activities of cultists, more people are on a daily basis being recruited into cult groups in the state, with the Vikings said to be the most popular and highly populated among them' (www.dailypost.ng).

Empirical Review

Ikezue, C.E (2022), examined the relationship between governance and security in Anambra state. The study was a cross sectional survey design and the multi stage sampling technique was adopted for selection of the 240 respondents chosen from Awka, Nnewi and Onitsha. It was found that government in Anambra state has failed in its basic responsibility to the people of the state. This led to increase in crime rate and the springing up of vigilante groups in the state. The paper therefore recommended among others accountability on the part of public office holders and prosecution of corrupt ones to enhance good governance.

Odiegwu, Oso, Amodu, Okorie & Enwerem (2021) examined media's perspective on insecurity in Nigeria against the background of herdsmen and farmers conflict in Benue, State, North-central and Enugu States, Southeast Nigeria. The study examined the newspapers' reporting and coverage of the conflict to highlight how and what issues are portrayed for public understanding. Adopting Content analysis, four national newspapers and two community newspapers were analysed. Findings show that of the 159 stories carried by the selected newspapers during the period studied, reports focused themes on the public condemnation/protests and government/public intervention while Peace Journalism and the economic/social implications of the conflicts received minimal attention. It further shows that correspondents and herdsmen agents were the major sources of information while a third of the reports were given prominence in the front page, back page or centrespread. The study recommends that journalists should endeavour to be conflict-sensitive in their reports and draw attention to the economic implications of the conflict in addition to sourcing for reliable and balanced information on the conflict.

Nwodu, Ezeoke, and Ezeaka (2021) examined *Audience Perception of Social Media Messages on Security Challenges in the South East, Nigeria: The Implication for Audience Gate Keeping*. The study used Four Index Perception Evaluation Scale (FIPES): hatred-support perception dimension, propaganda-disinformation perception dimension, conversationality-tone perception dimension, and believability dimension, to investigate the situation. Survey research design was used in the study. The population comprises two categories of social media users. A sample size of 310 respondents was used and determined by Cochran approach. A web-based questionnaire worded in five-point Likert was used to collect data; while data were analysed using descriptive statistics. Decision making was done using mean score of Five-point Likert scale. Findings show that audience perceived social media messages on southeast insecurity to portray hatred or support for either of the two principal actors (IPOB & Federal Government of Nigeria) in the imbrioglio.

Omega (2015) assessed Press Coverage of Insecurity in Nigeria using *Vanguard* and *Sun* Newspapers. He combined content analysis and in-depth interview methods to obtain relevant data. Framing theory was also adopted. Findings revealed that Nigerian journalists are not fully adopting conflict-sensitive journalism in their reportage. It also shows that the identity of Boko Haram is Islamist sect with the motive of establishing an Islamic state. It indicates that the major solution is fighting the insurgents and the perceived risk is the collapse of the economy. The study concludes that the coverage of Boko Haram by the Nigerian newspapers is sensational, war-inclined and falls short of the solution-driven approaches encouraged in conflict-sensitive journalism. The study recommended that Nigerian journalists should increase their knowledge of the conflict-sensitive journalism so that they can make important contributions in finding solutions to the problem of Boko Haram insurgency.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted in this study is the survey method. The population of the study covers all the practicing journalists in Anambra State. According to the Chairman of Anambra state chapter of Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), there are 502 register broadcast journalists in the state as at November, 2022. However, the population of interest for this study comprise journalists in select media houses (ABS, NTA, UNIZIK FM, FIDES) in Awka metropolis whose population data were given as 162. It is the opinion of these journalists that were sought and analysed. The study adopted census sampling method since the population size is manageable. The data collection instrument was the questionnaire. The copies of questionnaire which had both open-ended and multiple choice questions (close-ended) were distributed purposively on a face-to-face basis. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentages while informal interview was used to buttress some areas where information from the questionnaire was insufficient.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

Research Question 1: Are security issues well reported by the media in Awka, Anambra State?

Table 1: Do you report security issues?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	162	100%
No	–	–
Total	162	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2: How often do you report security issues?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Regularly	70	43%
Occasionally	65	40%
Rarely	27	17%
Never	–	–
Total	162	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3: Which of these do you mostly report on?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
IPOB	16	9.50%
Cultist Activity	79	49.40%
Armed Robbery	46	28.50%
Kidnapping	21	12.60%
Total	162	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4: What pattern does the above news take?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
News	103	64.20%
Feature	12	7.40%
Editorial	26	15.80%
Commentary	21	12.60%
Total	162	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Research Question 2: What is the slant of media reportage of security issues in terms of favour to some group in Awka?

Table 5: To what extent are you free to report on security issues in your organization?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
To a large extent	32	20%
To some extent	114	70.50%
Not free at all	16	9.50%
Total	162	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 6: Have you been tempted to slightly slant the news to avoid threat to you or to your organization?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Sometimes	34	35.80%
Occasionally	18	18.90%
Always	3	3.20%
Never	40	42.10%
Total	162	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Research Question 3: What are the basic challenges faced by the media in reportage of security issues in Awka?

Table 7: which of these factors do consider as the most alarming in the cause of your reporting security issues in Anambra?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Safety in movement	35	21.30%
Fear of unknown	84	51.50%
Molestaion by State agents	29	18.10%
Accusations of sabotage	14	9.10%
Total	162	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 8: How often do you entertain fear in the cause of reporting security issues?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Very often	11	6.30%
Often	16	9.50%

Sometimes	100	62.10%
Never	35	22.10%
Total	162	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 9: Have you received threat in the cause of reporting on security issue?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Sometimes	44	27.40%
Always	3	2.10%
Often	16	9.50%
Never	99	61%
Total	162	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 10: Has any group personally attacked you based on your reportage on security issue?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Sometimes	32	20%
Always	3	2.10%
Often	16	4.20%
Never	110	73.70%
Total	162	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 11: Has your organization asked you to pull down a report on security issue before?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Sometimes	52	31.60%
Always	3	2.10%
Often	7	4.20%
Never	100	62.10%
Total	162	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Research Question 4: What is the level of cooperation between security agencies and journalists in the media reportage of security issues in Awka?

Table 12: Do you work hand in hand with security agencies?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Sometimes	46	28.40%
Always	37	23.20%

Often	32	18.90%
Never	47	29.50%
Total	162	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 13: Which of the security agencies do you work with?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Police	105	65.30%
Road safety	11	6.30%
Vigilante Group	37	23.10%
Army	9	5.30%
Total	162	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 14: Do you have free access to the PPRO or DPO?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Sometimes	52	33.70%
Always	24	14.70%
Often	23	13.70%
Never	63	37.90%
Total	162	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 15: Do you normally have regular meeting as a media practitioner with security agent?

Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Sometimes	68	42.10%
Always	20	11.60%
Often	32	20%
Never	42	26.30%
Total	162	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Security issues and their reportage is critical function of journalists in any country. The surveillance function makes it incumbent on the journalists to give timely and correct information and news to members of the public with a view to securing lives and property. Thus, in regards to question one of this work, journalists in Awka were found to be doing credibly well in terms of actual reporting of insecurity issues in the State just like their counterparts in other States of Nigeria. This is in tandem to the findings of Ezegwu, Obichili, Agbasimelo and Omakpue (2022) who show that a majority (74%) of the respondents clearly

agreed that the broadcast media clearly covered the issue of banditry and kidnapping in Nigeria to reasonable extent and that armed robbery was also discovered to be the highest security issue reported with a percentage of 49.5%.

For research question two, analysis of data reveal that the greater percentage of the journalists in Awka maintain that majority of their professional colleagues do not slant their news to favour any groups involved in insecurity in the State especially the the cult wars and the killings in the State. It was found that though though there are accusations of some journalists knowing more about the insiders in the conflicts, for the most part, the greater number of journalists report with a good level of objectivity. Moreover, majority of the journalists are very comfortable handling security beats or reports on security issues in Awka metropolis. This may reflect the fact that some of the journalists in the select media houses are independent minded and report the news as is despite editorial interferences. Thus, even though Ikezue, C.E (2022), as seen in the empirical review, found that government in Anambra state had failed in its basic responsibility to the people of the State the journalists in the Anambra have not failed iin their reportorial duties on matters of insecurity.

Research question three looked at the basic challenges faced by journalists in Awka in reportage of security issues. The variables listed as challenges in the line of duty of reporting crime and insecurity were safety in movement, fear of unknown molestaion by state agents and accusations of sabotage. Out of these, more than half of the journalists (51.50%) ticked off fear of the fear, fear of the unknown. The journalist who report security issues in Awka state that they experience fear in the course of doing their job, fear of attacks from several quarters, fear of others tracking their families for harm, fear of going to their work place and never returning home again. One other factor which is a challenge is the issue of journalists not receiving special security packages from security agencies. Many of the journalists who report security issues in Awka do not receive special packages for the work they do. This needs to be addressed positively as it impacts dedication to this hazardous beat.

The last question in this paper dwelt on the level of cooperation between security agencies and journalists in the media reportage of security issues in Awka. Finding from the data reveal that security agencies in Awka metropolis do not largely extend a free hand of fellowship to journalists in the course of their reportorial duties. This factor is tied to the sometimes cold relationship between some of the journalists and the security agents who see the journalists as intruders who may not trusted to follow security cues. Regarding having access to the PPRO or DPO, journalists do not have free access. However, the security agencies seem to co-operate with journalist in Awka in some areas as they, the journalists, are not often arrested in the course of discharging their duties. As suggested by Omego (2015) Nigerian journalists and specifically journalists in Anambra should increase their knowledge of the conflict-sensitive journalism so that they can make important contributions in finding solutions to the problem of insecurity.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Security reporting is serious business that needs certain level of skills and journalistic experience. The ways journalists report events that threaten the security of State in important as it impacts the opinion of the citizens of the State about the efforts of the government in fighting the menace. It is clear from the outcome of this work that indeed journalist credibly report issues of insecurity. It is also established that they, the journalists, are to a good extent objective in their reports by not favouring group interests. However, it remains to be seen whether these factors have helped in de-escalating violence and insecurity in the Anambra State. For instance, beyond reportage, are there arms of the media that are playing effective advocacy roles in the matters of insecurity in the State? What airtime and slots are given the campaigns against insecurity where they exist? Though journalists in Awka have valid grounds to harbour fears regarding their beat, it is important to recognise that every job has associated professional hazards. Despite

these fears, cooperation with agencies of government in the war against insecurity should be maintained for rapid achievement of mutually accepted objective of checking insecurity.

From the foregoing, journalists in Awka would require some of level of professional training for better skills and ethics in their journalistic work. For instance, the security beat is hazardous; anything can happen to journalists following in the trail of unknown gunmen, covering the killings by cult members in parts of Awka or they can be caught in the line of fire between the police and armed robbers exchanging gun fires. It is therefore important that these journalists get careful attention from their media organisations, the security formations and the State government. Furthermore, seminars and workshops involving journalists and security agents should also be organized from time to time in order to foster unity among journalists and security agents. Handling beats on security issues is a sensitive one and should be treated with utmost care and attention. Cooperation is needed from all involved in matters of State security. Government on their own part, should also empower security agencies and journalists with requisite resources and motivation to do more in securing lives and property.

REFERENCES

1. Adeyemi, S.T. (2011). Audience perception of mass media surveillance in crisis. *In Journal of Communications Studies*. 6(3). 1-10
2. Alrah (2021). Media coverage of the Boko Haram crisis. *In Journal of Crisis and Development Studies*. 6 (3). 65- 75
3. Anyanwu, C. (2004). Mass media and management of conflicts: *An analytical discourse*. In I.
4. Bakare, W. (August 2011). Nigeria ranks 19th among countries prone to terrorist attacks. *In The Punch Newspaper*.
5. Berkeley(2022) The Socio-Economic Determinants of Corruption in Nigeria. *European Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. 19(1) 923-938.
6. Bright, S.I. (2010). An assessment of crisis reportage in Nigeria. *In Journal of Crisis. Reportage*. 7 (1). 10-21.
7. Charles, K.S. (2009). Conflict and national development: *A critical discourse*. *In Journal of Development Studies*. 17 (15). 91-103
8. Chikundi, J. (2021) Insecurity in Awka. Daily Post Newspaper, 19th December.
9. Odiegwu, C.I, Oso V.E, Amodu D.R, Okorie S.A & Enwerem W.S(2021) Adoption of African Traditional Religious Practices in combating Corruption in Nigerian Education System. *Journal of Education and Practice* 5(5) 93-105.
10. Emewu, I. (October 2011). Bombings, one year after. *In Guardian Newspaper* 68
11. Ibrahim, I.F. (2011). Curbing the menace of the boko haram sect in Nigeria. *In Journal of Conflict Studies*. 13(10). 1-16.
12. Ezegwu C.O, Agbasimelo C.J, Obichili E.A & Omokapue (2022) Democracy, Internal Security and the Challenges of Policing in Nigeria. In Mbachu O and Eze CM (eds) *Democracy and National Security: Issues, Challenges and Prospects*. Kaduna: Medusa Academic Publishers.
13. Hassan E.W, Sani A.A & Ibrahim I.F (2011). Media coverage of the Niger Delta crisis. *In Journal of Media and Conflict Studies*. 5 (3). 46-61.
14. Ikezue CE (2014) Governance and Security Challenges in Anambra State. *Journal of Religion and Human Relations*, 1(6): 159-170.
15. C (2021, December 19). No end in sight for Awka cult Clashes as sponsors walk freely. Retrieved from <https://dailypost.ng/2021/12/19/no-end-in-sight-for-awka-cult-clashes-as-sponsors-walk-freely/>
16. Kane, W.J. (2010). Communicating development for national transformation. *In International Journal of Development and Policy Studies*. 3 (2). 83-95
17. Macaulay, Etumnu, & Akwari (2021) Corruption and Development in Africa: Challenges for Political and Economic Change. *Humanity & Social Sciences Journal* 2 (1): 01-07.

18. Madike, I.(June 2011). Boko Haram: Rise of a deadly sect. Retrieved August 12, 2011 from <http://nationalmirroronline.net/sunday-mirror/big-read/14548.html>
19. Mayer, Adam , Allison, Nwonwu (2023). Objectivity and mass media coverage of crisis in Nigeria. *In Journal of conflict research*. 7(1). 52-66
20. Media and Conflict Management in Nigeria. Enugu: Prime Target Limited.
21. Nwodu U.I, Ezeoke S.T,& Ezeaka Z.O (2012) *Governance and insecurity in Southeast Nigeria*. CLEEN Foundation.
22. Nwolise, O.B.C. (2018) Security challenges, peace building and nation building in Nigeria. In Obi, E.A & Alumona, I.M (Eds) *Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies: Security Challenges and Peace Building in Nigeria*. Onitsha: Bookpoint Educational Ltd
23. Nwosu I.E & Wilson E.S (eds.) *Communication, media and conflict management in Nigeria*. Enugu: ACCE, Nigeria.
24. Nwosu, I.E. (2004). Conflict management, communications and mass media: A conceptual, theoretical and introductory analysis. *In Nwosu and Wilson (Eds.) Communication, Media and Conflict Management in Nigeria*. Enugu: Prime Target Limited
25. Obot, C. (2004). Mass media and conflict management. In Nwosu and Wilson(eds.) in *Communication, Media and Conflict Management* Enugu: Prime Targets Limited.
26. Omego(2015). Mass media coverage of the Niger Delta crisis. *In Journal of Media Research*. 4(1). 57-69
27. Osaghae, E., & Suberu, R. (2005). History of violence and stability in Nigeria. *In Crises Working paper 6 of centre for research on inequality, human security and ethnicity Crises* .Lagos
28. Owolabi H.U & Siarhei J.O (2011). Mass media coverage of the Syrian crisis. *In International Journal of Research and Conflict Studies*. 9 (7). 49-60
29. Owolabi S.U,Bamidele N.S,& Oluwasanmi O.J(2020). The Boko Haram attacks and media reportage . *In Journal of Media Studies*.
30. Suleiman, H.A. (2011). Tracing the origin of the boko haram sect in Nigeria. *In Journal of Islamic Studie* 2(1). 11-23.
31. Suzan, E. (2012, January 23). DSP, army corporal, 8 others killed as explosions rock Bauchi . *Vanguard Newspaper, p.6*
32. Tukur O.J & Ayuba S.A (2020) The Socio-Economic Determinants of Corruption in Nigeria. *European Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. 19(1) 923-938.
33. Udoh (2015) Governance and security challenges in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences and Public Affairs* 2(2): 77-85.
34. Vanguard (Dec. 29, 2023) 2 policemen, 2 others killed as gunmen attack Chris Uba's convoy in Anambra. vanguardng.com
35. Vanguard (Dec. 29, 2023) Anambra businessman requests 16 soldiers, 20 policemen, 12 DSS for security. vanguardng.com