



Open Access Journal, Available Online

# Democratic Participant Media Theory in the Nigerian Context

Nnanyelugo Okoro & Kemi Abodunrin

University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria.

*kemiabod@yahoo.com*

Received: March 18, 2019 Accepted: Nov. 26, 2019

Date of Publication: December, 2019

**Abstract:** This work examines how effective democratic participant media theory (DPMT) is in the Nigerian media context, in terms of the tenets upheld, tenets not upheld as well as tenets marked with ambiguities. Data from the analysis of the editorials of three national newspapers –The Nation, The Sun and Vanguard - show that only The Sun - has editorials published daily, which supports the theory's tenet of the citizen's need for content. Political issues emerge fifth among six other sub-themes in their coverage and the citizen's determination of the need for media content turns out to be the purview of the journalists who are centrally controlled.

**Keywords:** Content analysis, Democratic participant theory, editorials, media professionals, Nigeria.

## Introduction

The mass media is an integral part of the society. In Nigeria, like elsewhere, it substantiates societal issues by bringing them to the fore. The Democratic Participant Media

Theory (DPMT) propounded in 1987 by Dennis McQuail furthers the discourse on traditional four normative theories - authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and soviet-communist - of the press

and captures how development unfolds in a democratic environment of monopolized, centralized and bureaucratic media institutions. Nigeria currently operates a democratic form of government and we put DPMT to the test to see which tenets are upheld, not upheld or half-upheld. The core tenets of the DPMT are the following:

- The mass media exist for the individual citizens who need content daily for information, amongst other things.
- Individual citizens determine the need for media content.
- Emphasis is on small-scale interactive media, non-centralized media control, and
- Communication should not be left solely in the hands of professionals (Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso 2008).

Television, radio, billboards, newspapers, and the internet are the major channels with the mass effect (Morah & Omojola, 2014). This study focuses on the newspaper due to its remarkable attribute of easier investigation compared to radio and television. McQuail (2010) says concerning newspapers: “the first media were print media, and the most significant freedoms are those gained and still claimed by and for print media” (p.168).

Newspapers trade in the news (John & Silberstein-Loeb in Nielsen, 2017). It is important, therefore, to understand how the citizens get involved with the news and what their interests are within the context of DPMT. McQuail (2010) argues that “...the media's view of what is the public interest tends to equate it with what interests the public. This shifts the responsibility for norms, ethics, and values to the society” (p. 164). Since the argument centers on what public interest is and the responsibility thrust on the media, it makes some sense to examine the specific genre of media content within the DPMT context that is relevant to this argument, which is newspaper editorial. Ukonu (2013) asserts:

Research indicates that readership of editorials or search for editorial comments on burning issues is highest during crises, tension or periods of important developments. One study found that, generally, editorials were read 10 – 15 percent more than other newspaper contents apart from news (p. 16).

The critical nature of editorials is supported by Amodu, Yartey, Ekanem, Oresanya and Afolabi (2016) who refer to the genre as extremely important to newspaper subscribers. Oso (n.d) avers that an increasing amount of editorial matter is linked directly to products

and services that the media publicize. The question then arises: despite the critical importance of editorials to newspaper readers, do they uphold the tenets as embodied in DPMT?

Scholars argue that the editorials that reflect the views of newspapers should not be at variance with DPMT. Schudson, cited in McQuail (2010), posits: “Journalists are professionals who hold citizenship in trust for us” (p.182). Jethwaney (2010) reiterates this: “there is no avoiding or evading the media.... Media has a job to perform” (p.180) when performance means upholding those tenets. Stiglitz (2017) remarks that “...cognitive capture by media can lead to cognitive society” (p.14). Schudson (1997) in Dahlgren (2014) argues: “... political discussion, on the other hand, is about solving problems, finding solutions to conflicts; it is purposive, goal-oriented...” (p. 11). When political discussions in the media are geared toward development, the possibility is high that these tenets are upheld.

### **Statement Problem**

Prominent scholars have looked into the commercialization mentality of the Nigerian media ownership and concluded that the content they published could hardly be in line with the tenets of DPMT. Tuchman (1976), in Oso (n.d),

chides the media for contents that hardly satisfy the quest by readers for knowledge. Oso (n.d) submits that the powerful people in the country are the most beneficiaries of the content of the dominant Nigerian media. This assertion is investigated within the context of DPMT as one of the most recent normative theories of the press and the investigation focuses on the content categories – editorials - which reflect the views of the newspapers and their editors. Thompson (2012, p.12) notes in an article published in *The Sun* of 9<sup>th</sup> January of 2012 that such investigation is necessary to frequently audit what media organizations present as editorials and opinion articles to monitor the degree of responsiveness to the expectations of readers – an assertion of intellectual engagement supported by Hagher (2018). This study is situated within Nigeria’s democratic dispensation.

### **Study Objectives**

The objectives of the study are the following:

1. To determine the tenets of DPMT that are held in the Nigerian media.
2. To ascertain the tenets of DPMT that are not held by the Nigerian media
3. To clarify those tenets of DPMT that are ambiguous in

the context of the Nigerian media.

### **Significance of the Study**

From time to time, nations endeavor to sustain the will to protect democracies in the face of instability, volatility and other realities that are concomitant with globalization. The responsibility of equipping the citizenry with information for survival and development amidst these realities is that of the mass media especially newspapers, the widely-held view that their influence is waning due to internet, notwithstanding. It is meaningful, therefore, to investigate how the performance of the newspapers pans out in this regard within the context of DPMT.

This article aims that the findings of this study can add to the understanding of the citizens on the way the media perform their responsibility. It can also contribute to literature on the subject matter as conceptual definitions are implemented to offer explanations for seemingly bandied concepts in furtherance of research.

### **Literature Overview**

DPMT aims to establish the place of the individual in the media space and for him or her to have practicable channels of communication that are community-based (Ndolo, 2005; Atal, 2017; Nelson 2017). Mojaye

and Lamidi (2015) assert the need for democratic values as the basis of participation, adding that democratic values entail civility justice, critical examination of issues, leading to a fuller understanding of issues and a more reflective set of references. Amodu et al. (2016), in their assessment of the media's watchdog role in ensuring the accountability of the Nigerian government, report that 88 percent of their respondents affirmed the information-provision role of the media concerning government activities. Moreover, about half of the respondents also agreed on the fairness and balanced perspective in the reportage of government activities. Zhao (n.d) writes of the state, the market, and control in China, noting that the transformation of the Chinese political economy from rural to capitalism with Chinese characteristics features a voiceless populace who are subalterns in a commercialized and globalized media system.

On a related topical issue – the fuel subsidy removal strike of the year 2011 in Nigeria - Ezeah and Abodunrin (2016) understudied three Nigerian national daily newspapers to establish the extent of coverage. The dailies are *The Sun*, *The Punch* and *Daily Trust*. They found that of the ten content categories (with each category

having sub-themes of: positive, negative and neutral) – *advertorial, column, feature, editorial, photograph, cartoon, opinion, letter to the editor, interview* and *news* the newspapers were subjected to, entries for editorials ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in order of relevance. The finding appeared surprising as publishing an editorial was the discretion of the publisher, unlike news which should be published as it broke.

While considering the place of editorials in the reportage of 2011 and 2015 general elections Abodunrin (2015) found that concerning other thematic considerations, the year 2011 had editorial mention of 23 (44.4%) as against the year 2015 mention of 20 (3.7%). This revealed a drop in political contents of editorials toward the general elections as well as an intrigue of post-electoral upheavals in the year with more reportage and relative calm in the year with minimal reportage asserts.

Still, on citizens' role as newsmakers, Ndolo (2005) reiterates "...no nation can develop using institutions developed by other societies, cross-fertilization [of ideas between citizens] becomes the answer" (p. 7) and this happens in the public space provided by the media. This is

supported in the submission of Ezekwesili (2011) while explaining the role of the media in providing the space for the citizens to make news:

Studies have highlighted the importance of voice. A recent survey of 6,000 poor people from across all regions of the world found that the vast majority of respondents considered that they were poor not because they did not have money, but because they did not have a say in how their fate was determined; in how their countries were run; in how development priorities were decided (p.22).

Ibelema (2012) argues for the inclusion of the citizens as critics in the watchdog role-playing of the press to enhance civic vitality, which is a necessity for a vibrant democracy. The author stresses that the press is referred to as watchdog because it ensures probity in governance, makes the government accountable and gives the citizens the chance to freely express their views about government. This assertion implies that the press is called the fourth estate of the realm because it accommodates the opinions and perspectives of citizens that crosscheck for veracity those of the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of government.

Ndolo (2011) delineates the influence of the fourth estate in five major areas - economic/technological, political, legal/administrative, cultural and communication - and places emphasis on communication. He reasons that society revolves around the communication sector. The communication function, according to the author, is categorized information (surveillance), correlation (establishing the meaning of events), cultural transmission, entertainment, mobilization (promoting, mobilizing and advancing national interest) on all fronts (politically, economically, religious, sports, etc.). He contends that the adversary, watchdog and agenda-setting functions of the media are in stages as one step leads to another. It is a critical role at the point of scrutinizing the leadership. It becomes a watchdog role when the scrutiny is maintained and agenda-setting role when it prioritizes what is important and trivial. He clarifies the context of good press practice as a reflection of the society, as supported by Akinfeleye (2003):

a nation that is socially responsible both in concept, structure, ideology, and governance, its press would tend to be

responsible in their practice... But on the other hand, a socially irresponsible nation, its journalists would be contaminated with irresponsible instincts and thus would practice irresponsible journalism, sensationalism, fatherhood bias, outright lies, propaganda journalism, and unethical practice which if not quickly checked may lead the *Fourth Estate of the Realm* to metamorphose into the *Fourth Estate of the Wreck*.

The author's opinion on objectivity in reportage by the press is that such an ethical principle is impossible since the society that produces the journalist is morally weak and socio-economically frustrated. These weaknesses strongly affect the welfare that reporters get in the workplace. They are weaknesses that they must overcome to be able to fulfill their watchdog roles.

In his report on good governance and the challenges of public relations in Africa, Akinfeleye (2011) observes that good government and good governance are intertwined. By his account, good governance eliminates secrecy, corruption in government,

involves openness while protecting and guaranteeing the security of life and property at all times. Education, participation, information, communication and effective public relations are essential in achieving good governance. To make good governance possible, all and sundry must be involved as it is a joint venture arrangement.

Nnamani and Iloh (2014) appraise Nigeria at 53 years in 2014, noting that much of the ills which plagued the country at independence in 1960 were still prevalent – political crises, ethnicity, corruption, bad governance contrary to the expectations of improvement. According to them, most viable nations are noted for good governance. The World Bank defines governance as how power is exercised in the management of the country's economic and social resources for development. Attributes of good governance are democratic participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, equity, inclusiveness, efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision all of which are key indicators when the viability of a nation is being analyzed. The role of free press is a central factor that permeates all these attributes and embedded in the press role is the voice of the citizenry that keeps demanding accountability and

development from government and giving commendations when they get the same.

What makes news is discussed by Tandoc, Lim and Sung (2017). Of note is the allusion to Jamieson and Campbell (1997) who define news as a dramatic account of something novel or deviant. McManus (1992), cited in Tandoc et al (2017) and Omojola (2008) reveal the commercial value of news, explaining that “news is also a unique commodity, for while it is sold to audiences, news audiences are subsequently sold to advertisers” (p.7).

Adeyemi (2013) supports this view, saying that the media industry has in its kitty a product – news – whose publishing must be premised on some ethical standards or principles with a premium placed on the integrity of the news source and news gatherers. Adeyemi, in his report, says that the majority of respondents in three of the six states of Nigeria studied attributed reasonable ethical status to the media, judging from the contents of the journalism code of ethics. News content was also adjudged as reliable and credible with no ethnic allegiance. However, the media were found wanting in editorial independence as traces of government influence could be seen while their content could not be divorced from corruption.

The disappointment that people experience with media content has elicited citizen journalism, which is regarded as a departure from the conventional pattern of filtering news items before making them known to the public. While it negates the top-down information flow, it is participatory according to Okoro, Diri and Odii (2013). The authors, cited in Nam (2008, p.12) allude further to the origin of citizen journalism:

The roots of citizen journalism lie in the program of civic journalism, which developed as a reform movement among journalists in the United States. Facing the readership crises of the US newspaper industry in the late 1970s some newspaper executives, journalists and intellectuals tried to improve the relationship between the press and the public by developing new ways of listening to citizens (p.3).

The advent of citizens has further widened the public sphere and subsequently the scope of the role of the individual citizen under a democratic government, hence the motivation to study the situation in the context of DPMT.

In their presentation on the misbehavior of the mass media in Nigeria under the nation's nascent democracy, Ojo and Adebayo (2013) expatiate on the role of leaders who use the press to

dominate the minds of the people (what they think about) by selling political ideologies through persuasion, owing to their preponderance of ownership. The authors aver that healthy democracies of Western Europe and North America are subject to a liberalized media where governments operate with restraint and tolerance as reflective of the citizens' interests. This is happening because the media have fulfilled their role of educating the citizens and serving as the conduit through information about government flows to them. They serve as the day-to-day parliament of the people as against the conventional parliament, perform as the watchdog with the interest of the people as a core reason for performance as well ensure that government is accountable.

However, in the case of Nigeria, they contest the watchdog responsibility of the media because they reason the media is not effectively watchful. Their argument concerning this is that the media pays more attention to government actions than development issues. The point raised dovetails into the economic viability of the government as a big spender and advertiser, which then affects the editorial slant and space of most media content.

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## Theoretical Framework

We support the study of the media and citizens in the Nigerian context via the DPMT with the knowledge gap theory, propounded by Tichenor, Donohue and Olien in 1970. The theory has undergone reviews, leading to some variations but the key assumptions as stated by Ojobor (2002) cited in Anaeto et al (2008) subsist and they are:

- that knowledge gap is widened as media output grows in a given society,
- that information increase in media output rather than allow for parity between the information-rich and the information-poor,
- that the gap is further widened due to the advantage the former have; there is a saturation point for the information-rich which the poor strive to attain and catch up with, and
- finally, that concentrating on one media of the lot may not yield as much results.

The information-rich have access to the mass media and make optimal use of them while the information-poor have inconsequential group of friends or associates, are economically challenged and might be educationally disadvantaged. Therefore, the credential of an individual confirms his or her exposure level to the mass media.

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The author adduces possible reasons for the knowledge gap as communication skills/competence, access to background knowledge, access to relevant social contact, a discretionary disposition to valued judgments and mass media system suitability to the upwardly mobile people. A revision in 1975 of the theory suggests such ways of reducing or eliminating the knowledge gap. To avoid further gaps, the infusion of information into the environment was mooted. Some opinions are contrary. Dervin (1980), in Anaeto et al. (2008), queries the traditional source-sender-message-receiver process due to unexpected assumptions and craves for user-based communication research.

## Method

Content analysis research design readily lends itself to this study. The constructed and continuous week principle as espoused by Ohaja (2003) states that "to arrive at the issues to study, we can decide to have one continuous week and one constructed week for each newspaper per year" (p. 78). Hester and Dougall (2007), in Wimmer and Dominick (2017, p. 178), clarifies this by comparing the accuracy of the constructed week sample, the simple random sample, and the consecutive day sample of online news content. They found that the constructed

week sample was more efficient than those needed for sampling print newspapers.

Three national newspapers – *The Nation*, *The Sun*, and *Vanguard* were investigated. A total of 14 editions per daily newspaper were studied in nine categories namely: *length font, style, direction, number of editorials published, currency, area, sector, and theme*. The editorial genre was adopted as the unit of analysis. Wimmer and Dominick (2011) state that “two dimensions are usually used to determine the appropriate universe for a content analysis – the topic and time period” (p. 161). This made the sampling method strategic. Stressing further (in p.104) that: “sample quality is always more important in sample selection than mere size.”

The following editions were selected September 16, 17, 22, October 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 25 and 26. Mindful of the choice of national newspapers but cognizant of the submission of Jodoin (2014, pp.51-58), Zyngintas (2016, p.241), on the influence factor in comparing traditional and new media clarifies that: “In the centralized hierarchy of mass communication, the greatest influence comes from the owners of the means of information production and dissemination,

whereas in the digital era anyone can have influence on others” a view supported by Rodman (2010).

Purposive sampling was adopted as the appropriate method for the study. The three national newspapers constitute a significant component of the dominant media in Nigeria (Omojola 2011a; 2011b; Odiboh et al., 2017a; 2017b; Okorie et al., 2017). They are based in the southwest geopolitical zone of the country. Entries by two coders exhibited significant inter-coder reliability. This sets the stage for the consideration of the data in the critical discourse mode. Ndiribe (2017) asserts:

Critical discourse analysis emphasizes the importance of studying texts in their social and historical context...the analysis of context assesses the relationship between the text and the broader social processes and ideologies: for example, what social issues are of particular importance at the time the texts were created (pp. 139-140).

Paltridge (2006) operationalizes social discourse analysis as involving framing, backgrounding, foregrounding and topicality while for Ezeifeke (2018) it involves structure and stricture or the micro level and macro level respectively.

**Findings**

The following 10 tables show the analysis of the editorials of three newspapers which enables

the determination of the tenets of DPMT in the Nigerian context. The discussion segment expatiates on the analysis.

*Table 1: Lengths of editorials*

S/N	Newspapers	Length				
		2/5	1/3	1/2	2/3	O
1	<i>The Nation</i>	10	-	2	-	-
2	<i>The Sun</i>	-	-	-	14	-
3	<i>Vanguard</i>	-	10	-	-	-
	Grand Total	10	10	2	14	-

*Key: 2/5, 1/3, 1/2, 2/3 are page sizes. O represents other length categories not captioned. Paper size is A3 approximately.*

Table 1 shows 10 entries for the 2/5page size, 10 entries for 1/3, 2 entries for 1/2 and 14 for 2/3 accordingly. *The Sun* had an entry

daily. *The Nation* did not have editorials on Saturdays while *Vanguard* did not have editorials in their weekend editions.

*Table 2: Font of editorials*

S/N	Newspapers	Font	
		N	B
1	<i>The Nation</i>	-	12
2	<i>The Sun</i>	-	14
3	<i>Vanguard</i>	-	10
	Grand Total	-	36

*Key: N – Normal and B- Bold*

In the case of font, all the dailies gave the bold treatment to the

editorials in contrast to the *normal* font treatment.

*Table 3: Style of editorials*

S/N	Newspapers	Style			
		C	AR	AD	AN
1	<i>The Nation</i>	2	-	4	6
2	<i>The Sun</i>	2	4	6	2
3	<i>Vanguard</i>	7	-	3	-
	Grand Total	11	4	13	8

*Key: C - Criticising, AR – Argumentative, AD – Advocacy and AN – Analytical*

Table 3 shows that 11 units of editorials were criticizing, 4 units

argumentative, 13 units advocating and 8 units analytical.

*Table 4: Direction of editorials*

S/N	Newspapers	Direction		
		P	N	NT
1	<i>The Nation</i>	2	6	4
2	<i>The Sun</i>	2	7	5
3	<i>Vanguard</i>	-	8	2
	Grand Total	4	21	11

*Key: P- Positive, N- Negative and NT – Neutral*

According to Table 4, four units of editorials were cumulatively in support of the general discourses,

21 units were against (meaning this topped the category) and 11 units in the neutral sub-category.

*Table 5: Editorials in each paper*

S/N	Newspapers	F
1	<i>The Nation</i>	12
2	<i>The Sun</i>	14
3	<i>Vanguard</i>	10
	Grand Total	36

*Table 6: Currency of editorials*

S/N	Newspapers	Currency	
		R	P
1	<i>The Nation</i>	12	-
2	<i>The Sun</i>	13	1
3	<i>Vanguard</i>	9	1
	Grand Total	34	2

*Key: R – Recent, P – Past*

*Table 7: Editorials area of coverage*

S/N	Newspapers	Area		
		M	D	A
1	<i>The Nation</i>	4	1	5
2	<i>The Sun</i>	7	1	4
3	<i>Vanguard</i>	6	-	2
	Grand Total	17	2	11

*Key: M – Ministries, D – Departments and A- Agencies.*

Table 8: Editorials sectoral coverage

S/N	Newspapers	Sector			
		NGO	P	3P	G
1	<i>The Nation</i>	-	3	2	7
2	<i>The Sun</i>	-	2	-	12
3	<i>Vanguard</i>	-	1	3	6
	Grand Total	-	6	5	25

Key: NGO – Non-Governmental Organisations, P- Private, 3P – Public-Private Partnership and G – Government.

These resulted in six entries for the private sub-category, 5 for the 3Ps and 25 for government sub-categories.

Table 9: Editorials coverage of subcategories

S/N	DAILIES	THEME									
		B	T	E	H	C	H <sup>+</sup>	A	P	I	O
1	<i>The Nation</i>	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	5	2
2	<i>The Sun</i>	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	1	6	2
3	<i>Vanguard</i>	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	3	3	2
	Grand Total	-	-	10	1	-	1	-	4	14	6

Key: B- Beverages, T- Tobacco, E- Economy, H- Household, C- Consumables, H<sup>+</sup> – Health, A – Agriculture, P- Politics, I- Image and O – Others.

In Table 9, though no entries suited the subcategories of beverage, tobacco, consumables, and agriculture, yet, image holds the ace, economy coming second. Politics being the core of the study emerges 4<sup>th</sup>. *Vanguard* has 3 of the 4 entries and *The Sun* following with one. The nation has none. The total entries for *The Nation*, *The Sun* and *Vanguard* in all categories were 106, 124 and 88 entries in that order meaning that *The Sun* had a better output. It is

important to also note that only *The Sun* had editorials the days of the week.

**Discussion**

Editorials are informed conclusions representing the views of newspapers. They exhibit good communicating skills, reliable background information, and valid judgments, which make them the archetype for investigation in the context of the knowledge gap theory. In line with Evatt’s (1998,

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in Anaeto et al., 2008) skepticism on the use of surveys as producing the ideal results, we have explored the content analysis design in effecting a discursive construction of the democratic participant media theory in the Nigerian context.

The DPMT's tenet one (*the mass media existing for the individual citizens, not for the media organizations, professionals or clients of the media*) is evidenced by the diverse sub-themes for which allowance was created for amorphous/uncovered/untreated aspects. The notable activities of individuals and government would normally inform editorial comments (Ike, Omojola & Aririguzoh, 2018; Folayan et al., 2018; Bisola et al., 2018). This supports Nielsen's (2017) and Oso's (n.d) assertion of news as a commodity. Besides that, news is taken to more serious levels through editorials in line with Ukonu's (2013) submission. This unknots Ezekwesili's (2011, p. 22) stance, in that people's voice holds the ace. McQuail (2018, p.182) affirms this while Oso (2012, p. 56) reaffirms with his presentation on media coverage and the actors' debate, the quipping of Ibelema (2012, p.6) notwithstanding.

Concerning the next tenet (*individual citizen's determination of need of media context*). Since the media makes choices for the people

according to McQuail's (2010, p. 256) argument, individual citizen's determination of the need for media content then becomes a fallacy. This brings to question the view of Akinfeleye (2003, p.7) cited in Ndolo (2011) wherein Ndolo (2011) maintains the need for: correlation, mobilization, watchdog and agenda-setting roles of the media.

Concerning tenet 3 - *small-scale interactive media, non-centralized media control* - small media is upheld in Nigeria following the regional ownership pattern of the newspapers by proprietors/promoters (though with national outlook) as Wilson (2015) hints at the need for small media. *Non-committing of communication to professionals* as tenet four further relates to tenet 2 (*individual citizen's determination of need of media context*) as communication is committed to the hands of the professionals. Though Kern and Nam (2008, p.12) in Okoro et al. (2013, p.3) suggests "...improving the relationship between the press and the public by developing new ways of listening to citizens" as it finds resonance in Ndolo (2011) on the surveillance role as well as Ojo and Adeyemi (2013), concerning being the day-to-day parliament of the people.

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We equally bring to the fore the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) which is not as effective as the spirit and letter connotes, as well as the inchoate Nigerian Press Council Bill, 2018; having the trappings of the press in chains. The watchdog role of the media concerning this study under the style category indicates most of the editorial reportage was advocating but under the direction caption with particular emphasis to the sub-category, editorial reportage against the issues of discourse was more with 21 entries across the three dailies.

Connecting the foregoing to the currency category with 34 entries mainly of ministry extraction with 17 entries and government sub-category leading with 25 entries in the sector category, the preponderance of government, which Ojo and Adebayo (2013) argue against, is hereby reaffirmed. The contrary view of the authors aligns with that of Mojaye and Lamidi's (2015, p.65) support for the core tenet (*the mass media existing for the individual citizens*) and connects with the position of Amodu et al. (2016) on the issue. Ezeah and Abodunrin's (2016) study that found editorials emerging second from the rear plays out again in this study, as editorials with political slants have

such rating under the thematic distribution. This resonates in Abodunrin's (2015) assertion of the need for an increase in editorials with political slant especially in the build-up to an election. This position is also supported by Adeyemi (2013).

### **Summary of findings**

Succinct explanations therefore reveal:

- 1) Tenet one is not upheld.
- 2) Tenet two is being fulfilled by the inverse role switch of the media.
- 3) Tenet three is upheld.
- 4) Non-committing of communication to professionals as tenet four turns out ambiguous.

### **Recommendations**

- 1) Positioning editorials on the front cover with the concluding part in inner pages is strongly advised in case there are issues with space.
- 2) Citizens' opinions should be routinely taken to know what principal issues the populace wants to be addressed. Such should then form topical issues for editorial output even if they are not issues in the news.
- 3) Editorial subjects should inform other media content to allow for the reinforcement of the ideals.

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