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## A Strategic Content Analysis of Media Reporting on Sports in Nigeria: A Case Study of National Newspapers.

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### Abstract

Sport and media has a long history of interconnectedness. This union has resulted to a marriage laced with tremendous benefits for both media and sport. As a result of their commercialization, sport and media has continued to grow globally. In spite of the contributions of the symbiotic relationship between media and sport in Nigeria to national economy, the mutuality has not received attention from researchers. Thus, the study is out to ascertain the status of newspaper reporting on sport in Nigeria with a view of using it to drive national sport development. The study used six (6) national newspapers in Nigeria spread across the 12 months of 2012 (January-December). The content analysis of the frequency of news items and photographs on education, business, health politics and sports were carried out. The total of 17,676 news and photographs were collated. The results showed that sport received more patronage from newspapers outlets in Nigeria than any sector of the national economy.

**Keywords:** Disport, Diversion, Amusement, Missionaries, Public Consciousness, meltdown, attraction.

### Introduction

Throughout history, man has invented sports as instrument of cultural assimilation, socialization, acquisition and display of physical skills prowess and entertainment. This was very evident in ancient Greeks and Egyptian modes of life. After the Nigeria Civil war (1966-1970), the federal government of Nigeria used sport as an instrument of national integration. Sport is an abbreviation or shorter form of disport meaning a 'diversion' and 'amusement' (Brasch, 1992). The history of the ancient Olympic was not silent on how communities were attracted to the games through town criers. It thus meant that sports and media have long history of interconnectedness. According to Dziubinski, Jankowski, Lenartowicz, Murrmanu and Rymarczyk, (2012) the first periodical was published in 1791 in London. They reported that newspaper was the oldest form of mass media. The origin of media in Nigeria dated back to around 1840s when European Missionaries established community newspapers to propagate Christianity in Southern part of Nigeria (Sulaiman, 2011). Similarly, Oyovbaire (2001) reported that media in Nigeria actually predated nationalist struggles for independent and that between 1842 and 1885, the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the Baptist, Methodist and Catholic Missions established their presence in southern part of Nigeria. As was reported, Rev. Henry Townsend of the Church Missionary Society established a newspaper in Yoruba named, 'Iwe Iroyin fun Awon Egba ati Yoruba (Newspaper for Egba people and Yoruba) in Abeokuta within the period mentioned earlier. Morakinyo and Emenike (2009) specifically stated that Rev. Henry Townsend established this newspaper on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December, 1859.

The introduction of sport to Nigeria also came with the advent of Christianity in Nigeria. According to Babalola (2011), sports was introduced to Nigeria between 1842 and 1882 in schools under the name 'Physical training'. Sport was used then as a means of attracting people to Christian faith. It is logical to infer that sport and media has the same origin in Nigeria because they were established by the same people for the same goal. There are several media outlets in Nigeria today which include newspaper, magazines, radio, television, films, posters, handbills and the internet. All these have contributed immensely to the growth of sport in Nigeria.

Sport and media are two of the largest influences that affects how community works in addition to how people think and shape their ideas and emotion (Australia Sport Commission, 2011).

Today, mass media has become an inseparable part of our daily life. It is considered as the modern ways of giving news, opinion, education, entertainment and setting agenda to large numbers of people (Onuoha and Chidebere, 2012). Media creates public opinion by providing information, description and analysis of various socio-economic activities including sports, politics, health, agriculture, education and culture. It provides platform for bringing the review and preview of happenings to public awareness (Paul, 2012). Lange (2002), surmised that it contributes significantly to the definition of the world around us and also to the definition of ourselves.

Studies have proved that sport has become a global phenomenon. This global impression may have propelled the insinuation that sport is very popular in Nigeria. It may be suicidal if national sport programme planning is based on this assumption without evidence-based data. All over the world now, decisions are made based on numbers,

to project programme planning and development. The purpose of this study was to find out, to what, was the extent of newspaper coverage of sporting properties and consequently its popularity in Nigeria with a view to using it to drive national sport development since sport has moved from being only physical adventure to a business venture. The study, is relevant as there is no comprehensive data set available at present to ascertain the status of media coverage of sport in Nigeria.

### Methodology

Methodology for this study was a quantitative analysis of news reporting of national newspapers in Nigeria. A convenience sampling technique was used to select six national newspapers, namely, The Guardian, Vanguard, The Sun, The Tribune, The Nation and The Punch. The study was carried out from January to December, 2012. The content analysis of frequency of news items and photographs on education, business, health, politics and sports were cut by four research assistants to determine which of them was greater. The medium score was 17, 672 news and picture cuttings. The score was spread among five (5) sectors of the national economy namely, business (3,967), education (3,098), politics (1,570), sport (7,412) and Health (1,625). These scores were ranked using percentage to determine which sector receives more newspaper coverage.

### Results

The data collected through content analysis of print media (Newspapers) were tabulated under six (6) tables and calculated in percentage. The analysis and interpretations, pie chart and Bar chart are as follows.

The analysis from the data collected from (table 1) Guardian Newspapers in Jan/Feb, 2012, a total of 699 articles were published in the first week. The table shows that 157 of the articles were for business. (22.5%); 54 of the articles were for education (7.7%); 33 of the articles were on political issues, (4.7%); 430 of the articles were for Sports, 61.5%; and 25 (3.6%) articles were for health matters. The lowest articles were on health matters while the highest articles were on Sports. The data from the table on week 2 shows that 117 articles were for business (19.8%); 114 articles were for business, (19.8%); 114 articles were for health issues, (3.1%). The total numbers of articles were 590 (100%). The lowest was health (3.1%) while the highest was on Sports, (51.4%). In week 3, 77 articles were published on business matters, (18%); 107 articles were published on education matters, (25%); 30 articles were published on politics, (7%); 207 articles were published on sport issues, (48.5%); and 6 articles were published on health matters, (1.4%). The analysis from the data in week 3 articles published on health matters recorded the lowest, 1.4% while sports news recorded the highest frequency 207 articles. (48.5%). The total number of articles was 427, (100%). The data in week 4 shows that 140, (18.4%); 124 articles were published on education, (16.3%); 101 articles were for politics, (13.3%); 364 articles published on sport issues (47.8%) , and 33 articles were published on health matters. The total numbers of articles published in week 4 were 762 (100%). Health matters in week 3 recorded the lowest publication (1.4%) while the highest publications were on sports issues in week 1, (61.5%).

The table of the data collected from (Table 2) the Sun Newspaper in March/April 2012 shows that 158 articles were published on business issues, (21.6%); 74 articles were published on education, (10.1%); 60 articles were published on politics, (8.2%); 420 articles were published on Sports, (57.3%); 21 articles were published on health matters, (2.9%). The total number of articles published in week 1 was 733 articles, (100%). Health had the lowest percentage of articles (2.9%) while the highest article was on Sports, (57.3%). In week 2, the data from the table shows that 118 articles were published on business matters, (21.6%); 661 articles were published on education, (58%); 35 articles were published on politics, (3.1%) 306 articles were published on sports, (20.9%); and 19 articles were published on health issues, (1.7%). The total was 1139 articles, (100%). The articles on health issues recorded the lowest (1.7%) while the highest was from education (58%). In week 3, 80 articles were published on business issues, (6.9%), 758 articles were published on education (65%), 111 articles were published on politics (9.5%). 208 articles were published on health issues (0.9%). The total was 1167 articles, (100%) the lowest percentage was health (0.9%) and the highest was on education (65%). In week 4, 145 articles were published on business issues (18.2%), 119 were published on education (15%), 128 articles were published on political issues (16.1%), 371 articles were published on sports, (46.7%), and 37 articles were published on health matters (4%). The total was 795 articles (100%). The lowest was health (4%) and the highest was sports (46.7%).

The data collected from (Table 3) The Tribune newspaper in May/June, 2012 shows that the week 1, 78 articles were published on business issues (13.7%), 39 articles were published on education (6.9%), 62 articles were published on political matters, (10.9%), 360 articles were published on sports ((63.3%) and 30 articles were published on health (5.2%). The total was 569 articles (100%). The lowest was health (5.2%) while the highest was sports (63.3%). In week 2, 216 articles were published on business issues (34.4%), 28 articles were published on education, (4.5%), 35 articles were published on politics (5.6%) 239 articles were published on sports (38.1%) and 109 articles were published on health (17.4%). Total was 627 articles (100%). The lowest

was education (4.5%) and the highest was sports (38.1%). In week 3, 170 articles were published on business issues, (31.4%), 30 articles were published on health, (5.6%). Total was 540 articles. The lowest were education and health each recorded (5.6%). In week 4, 150 articles were published on business issues, (17%), 46 articles were published on education (5%), 88 articles were published on politics (10%), 332 articles were published on sports (38%) and 262 articles were published on health, (30%). The total was 879 articles. The lowest was education (5%) and the highest was sports (38%).

The data collected from (Table 4) the Punch newspaper in July/August, 2012 shows that 220 articles were published on business issues (30.4%), 38 articles were published on education, (5.2%), 78 articles were published on politics, (10.8%), 301 articles were published on sports, (41.6%) and 87 articles were published on health matters, (12%). The total was 724 articles. The lowest was education, (5.2%) while the highest articles was sports, (41.6%). In week 2, 300 articles were published on business issues (38.2%), 55 articles were published on education (7%), 80 articles were published on politics (10.2%), 281 articles were published on sports, (35.8%) and 69 articles were published on health, (8.8%). Total was 785 articles. The lowest was education ((7%) while the highest was business (38.2%). In week 3, 206 articles were published on business issues, (31.1%), 40 articles were published on education, (6%), 60 articles were published on politics, (9%), 288 articles were published on sports, (43.4%) and 69 articles were published on health (10.4%). The total was 663 articles and the highest was sports (43.4%). In week 4, 243 articles were published on business issues, (29.3%), 79 articles were published on education, (9.5%), 77 articles were published on politics (9.3%), 353 articles were published on sports (42.6%) and 76 articles were published on health issues, (9.2%). The total was 828 articles. The lowest was health (9.2%) while highest was sports (42.6%).

The data collected from (Table 5) The Nation newspaper in September/October, 2012, week 1 shows that 87 articles were published on business issues, (15.7%), 30 articles were published on education, (5.4%), 61 articles were published on politics (11%), 347 articles were published on sports (62.6%) and 29 articles were published on health matters, (5.2%). The total was 554 articles. The lowest was health (5.2%) while the highest was sports, 62.6%. In week 2, 116 articles were published on business matters (23%), 29 articles were published on education, (5.7%), 36 articles were published on politics, (7.1%), 221 articles were published on sports (43.8%) and 103 articles were published on health issues (20.4%). The total was 505 articles. The lowest was education (5.5%). In week 3, 175 articles were published on business matters, (30.6%), 39 articles were published on education (6.8%), 41 articles were published on politics (7.2%), 279 articles were published on sports (48.8%) and 38 articles were published on health issues (6.6%). The total was 572 articles. The lowest was health (6.6%) while the highest was sports (48.8%). In week 4, 148 articles were published on business issues (16.8%), 49 articles were published on education, (5.6%), 86 articles were published on politics (9.8%) 337 articles were published on sports, (38.3%) and 260 articles were published on health issues (29.5%). The total was 880 articles. The lowest was education (5.6%) and the highest was sports (38.3%).

The analysis of data collected from (Table 6) Vanguard newspaper on November/December, 2012 shows that 210 articles were published on business issues (29.5%), 37 articles were published on education, (5.2%), 76 articles were published on politics (10.7%), 303 articles were published on sport (42.6%), and 86 articles were published on health matters (12.1%). The total was 712 articles. The lowest was education (5.2%) while the highest was sports (42.6%). In week 2, 200 articles were published on business issues (29.1%), 52 articles were published on education (7.6%) 86 articles were published on politics (12.5%), 282 articles were published on sports (41%), and 68 articles were published on health matter (9.9%). The total was 688 articles. The lowest was education (7.6%) while the highest was sports (41%). In week 3, 203 articles were published on business issues, (19.8%), 422 articles were published on education (41.3%), 53 articles were published on politics (5.2), 277 articles were published on sports, (27.1%) and 68 articles were published on health issues (6.6%). The total was 1023 articles. The lowest was politics, (5.2%) while the highest was education (41.3). In week 4, 253 articles were published on business issues, (31.2%), 74 articles were published on education (9.1%), 66 articles were published on politics (8.1%), 342 articles were published on sports (42.2%) and 76 articles were published on health issues, (9.4%). The total was 811 articles. The lowest was politics, (8.1%) while the highest was sports (42.2%).

Further analysis showed that of all the 24 weeks under observation, articles on education had the highest in three (3) weeks i.e. week 2 and week 3 from the Sun newspaper and week 3 from the Vanguard newspaper. Furthermore, business issues had the highest article publication in one week (week 2) from Punch newspaper while sports had the highest articles in the rest of the 21 weeks of the publications.

Fig. 1a and 1b summarized the results of the study. The analysis of the content of media coverage of critical sector of Nigeria economy for a year showed that the total of 17,672 news items and photographs were collected and this number was shared and ranked in this order Sport, 7,412 (42%), Business, 3, 967 (22%), Education 3098 (18%), Health, 1,625 (9%) and politics, 1570 (9%)

## Discussion

The results of this study indicated that sport has more patronage among national media outlets in Nigeria when compared with other major sectors of the national economy. This confirmed the impression of Lange (2002) that media plays pivotal role in producing, reproducing and amplifying many issues associated with sport. In other words, the well being of sport, depends majorly on media, because it presents platforms for bringing the review and preview of happenings in sport to the public consciousness. It has therefore become an inseparable part of sport (Lavrinc et. al., 2006). Dziubinski cited that every surge in the popularity of sport has been the result of increase in penetration of media. This surge has turned sport into a global phenomenon. That is why there is hardly a place in the world from which sport is totally absent today. Courtesy of the media, sport has become a native of all countries of the world. It has stimulated the globalization, professionalization and democratization of sport. Morakinyo and Emenike (2012) contented that competitive sport cannot thrive without media presence. Media interprets and represents sporting events to draw audience.

Helland (2007), however, pointed out that the appeal of sport is significant and that it has continued to fuel changes taking place within the broadcasting and Journalism. He was of the opinion that sport as 'attractions' have contributed to the development of new media markets and technologies. Now, several sporting events are being mid-wived for commercial and social breakthroughs of radio and television (Cashmore, 2000).

The intertwining relationship between media and sport has been corroborated by scholars in the field of sports and media. For instance, it has been espoused that media and sport are two domains which have effects on each other and each of them changes because of other. The duo cannot do without one another. The union is attractive that it draws marketing, big business and huge funds into its life. The relationship between sport and media is a marriage of convenience. Onoaha and Chidebere (2012) described the union as symbiotic. According to Daniel and Bosshart (2003) this very symbiotic relationship has profoundly affected sport and media. For instance, sport benefits from enormous attention created by media and media too benefits from sales by covering sport (Dziubinski, Jankowski, Leanartowicz, Murrmanu and Rymarczyk, 2012). Helland (2007) added that sport helps to shape media structures and practices, the same way media facilitates the reformation of sport. It is important to note that with the trends of things, this relationship will last long.

## Conclusion

The results of the study showed that sport had the highest number of media coverage in Nigeria. It can also be interpreted that sport is very popular among Nigerians. It is the rallying point even in the face of global economic meltdown. From the marketing point of view, the publishers published these articles from consumers' point of views in order to make maximum sales. Thus, the analysis shows that Nigerians were interested in sports news than any news from other sectors of the Nigerian economy namely, business, education politics, sports and health. This love and emotions that Nigerians have for sport can be used for social, cultural and economic gains, if properly harnessed.

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**A**      →      **BUSINESS**  
**E**      →      **EDUCATION**  
**P**      →      **POLITICS**  
**S**      →      **SPORTS**  
**H**      →      **HEALTH**

**TABLE 1: GUARDIAN NEWSPAPER. JANUARY/FEBRUARY**

	B	E	P	S	H	
<b>WK 1</b>	157	.54	33	430	25	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>%</b>	22.5	7.7	4.7	61.5	3.6	<b>699</b>
<b>WK 2</b>	117	114	38	303	18	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>%</b>	19.8	19.3	6.4	51.4	3.1	<b>590</b>
<b>WK 3</b>	77	107	30	207	06	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>%</b>	18	25	7	48.5	1.4	<b>427</b>
<b>WK 4</b>	140	124	101	364	33	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>%</b>	18.4	16.3	13.3	47.8	4.3	<b>762</b>
	4.91	399	202	1304	82	

**TABLE 2: THE SUN NEWSPAPER MARCH/APRIL**

	B	E	P	S	H	
<b>WK 1</b>	158	.74	60	420	2.1	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>%</b>	21.6	10.1	8.2	57.3	2.9	<b>733</b>
<b>WK 2</b>	118	661	35	306	19	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>%</b>	10.4	58	3.1	26.9	1.7	<b>1139</b>
<b>WK 3</b>	80	758	111	208	10	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>%</b>	6.9	65	9.5	17.8	0.9	<b>1167</b>
<b>WK 4</b>	145	119	128	364	33	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>%</b>	18.2	15	16.1	46.7	4	<b>795</b>
	501	1612	334	1304	82	

**TABLE 3: THE TRIBUNE NEWSPAPER MAY/JUNE**

	B	E	P	S	H	
<b>WK 1</b>	78	39	62	360	30	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>%</b>	13.7	6.9	10.9	63.3	5.2	<b>569</b>
<b>WK 2</b>	216	28	35	239	109	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>%</b>	34.4	4.5	5.6	38.1	17.4	<b>627</b>
<b>WK 3</b>	170	30	49	261	30	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>%</b>	31.4	5.6	9.1	48.3	5.6	<b>540</b>
<b>WK 4</b>	150	46	88	332	263	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>%</b>	17	5	10	38	30	<b>795</b>
	614	143	234	1192	432	

**TABLE 4: THE PUNCH NEWSPAPER JULY/AUGUST**

	B	E	P	S	H	
<b>WK 1</b>	220	38	78	301	87	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>724</b>
<b>%</b>	30.4	5.2	10.8	41.6	12	
<b>WK 2</b>	300	55	80	281	69	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>785</b>
<b>%</b>	38.2	7	10.2	35.8	8.8	
<b>WK 3</b>	206	40	60	288	69	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>663</b>
<b>%</b>	31.1	6	9	43.4	10.4	
<b>WK 4</b>	243	79	77	353	76	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>828</b>
<b>%</b>	29.3	9.5	9.3	42.6	9.2	
	969	212	295	1223	301	

	B	E	P	S	H	
<b>WK 1</b>	78	39	62	360	30	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>569</b>
<b>%</b>	13.7	6.9	10.9	63.3	5.2	
<b>WK 2</b>	216	28	35	239	109	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>627</b>
<b>%</b>	34.4	4.5	5.6	38.1	17.4	
<b>WK 3</b>	170	30	49	261	30	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>540</b>
<b>%</b>	31.4	5.6	9.1	48.3	5.6	
<b>WK 4</b>	150	46	88	332	263	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>795</b>
<b>%</b>	17	5	10	38	30	
	614	143	234	1192	432	

	B	E	P	S	H	
<b>WK 1</b>	78	39	62	360	30	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>569</b>
<b>%</b>	13.7	6.9	10.9	63.3	5.2	
<b>WK 2</b>	216	28	35	239	109	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>627</b>
<b>%</b>	34.4	4.5	5.6	38.1	17.4	

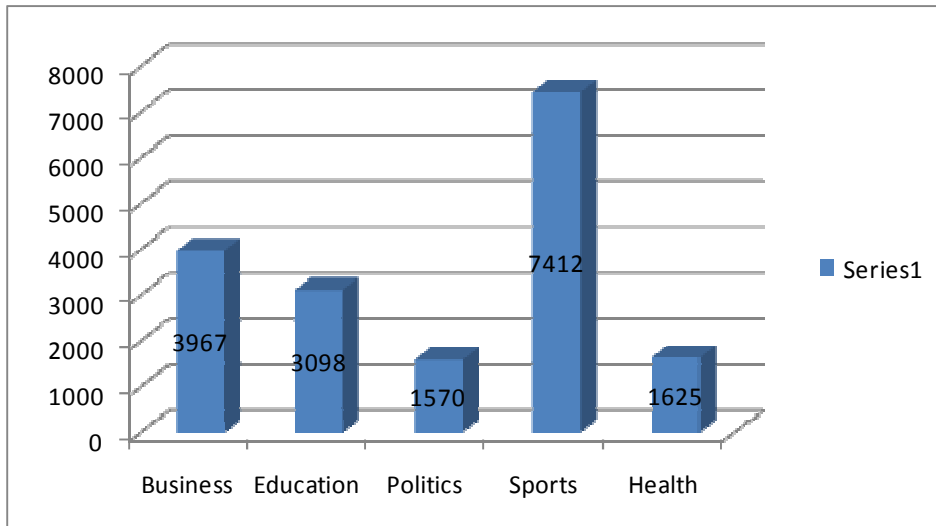
**TABLE 5: THE NATION SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER**

	B	E	P	S	H	
<b>WK 1</b>	87	30	61	347	29	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>554</b>
<b>%</b>	15.7	5.4	11	62.6	5.2	
<b>WK 2</b>	116	29	36	221	103	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>505</b>
<b>%</b>	23	5.7	7.1	43.8	20.4	
<b>WK 3</b>	175	39	41	279	38	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>572</b>
<b>%</b>	30.6	6.8	7.2	48.8	6.6	
<b>WK 4</b>	148	49	86	337	260	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>880</b>
<b>%</b>	16.8	5.6	9.8	38.3	29.5	
	526	147	224	1184	430	

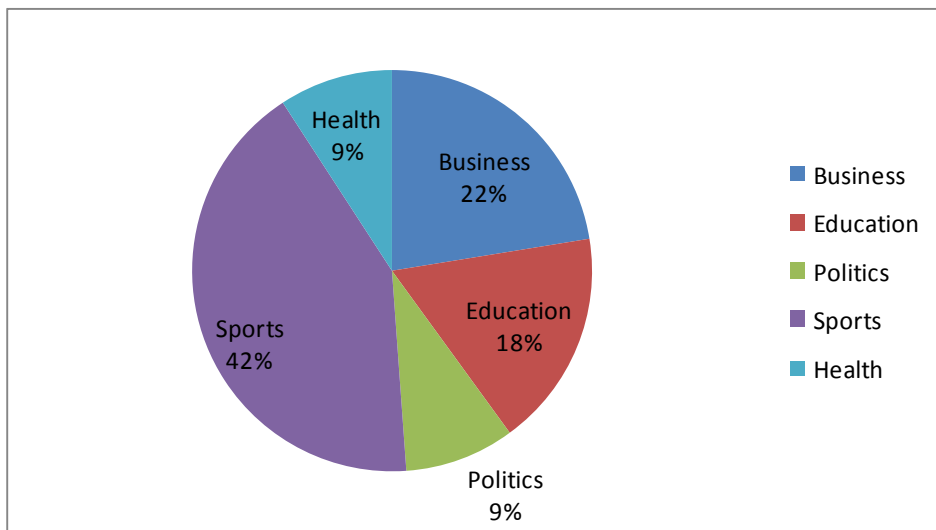
**TABLE 6: THE VANGUARD NEWSPAPER NOVEMBER/DECEMBER**

	B	E	P	S	H	
<b>WK 1</b>	210	37	76	303	86	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>712</b>
<b>%</b>	29.5	5.2	10.7	42.6	12.1	
<b>WK 2</b>	200	52	86	282	68	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>688</b>
<b>%</b>	29.1	7.6	12.5	41	9.9	
<b>WK 3</b>	203	422	53	277	68	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>1023</b>
<b>%</b>	19.8	41.3	5.2	27.1	6.6	
<b>WK 4</b>	253	74	66	342	76	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>811</b>
<b>%</b>	31.2	9.1	8.1	42.2	9.4	
	866	585	281	1204	298	

**Summary of Media Reporting on Business, Education, Politics, Sport and Health in Nigeria**  
**Fig.1a**



**Fig.1b**





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