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# SATIRICAL COMMUNICATION: A STUDY OF CARTOONS IN SOME SELECTED NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examined the use of cartoons in three selected Nigerian newspapers. The rationale was to determine the types of cartoons, placement of cartoons, dominant themes of cartoons and also to examine the tone used to report cartoons in the selected newspapers. Content analysis research method was utilised to obtain data. Three national dailies were randomly selected. They were: The Punch Newspapers, ThisDay Newspapers and The Guardian Newspapers. Of 387 editorial items analysed, 501 cartoon items were extracted and studied. The study's time frame was from the 1st of January to 30th of June 2022 out of which Monday to Friday were selected in a week. Out of cartoons placed in the three newspapers, 264 cartoons were published by the Punch newspaper, 108 cartoons were published by the ThisDay newspaper and 129 cartoons were published by the Guardian newspaper. The study also found out that in terms of the types of cartoons published, findings revealed that 91 were political cartoons, 155 were comic strips, 255 were gag cartoons. Also, with regards to the placement of cartoons, 330 cartoons were placed in the editorial page, 132 were placed in the back page, 39 cartoons were placed inside the page. In terms of the dominant themes of cartoons, 301 cartoons were on political issues, 12 were on religious issues, 149 cartoons were on economic issues, 16 cartoons were on ethnicity issues while 23 cartoons had issues on hate. The data also revealed that political issues were the most published by the newspapers. Therefore, the study recommends that apart from placing the cartoons at the editorial page, inside page & back page, newspaper houses should also put cartoons at the front page of their newspapers so that it will attract the attention of the readers and that the study of editorial cartoons should be incorporated into the curricula of schools that teach Journalism/Mass Communication (universities and polytechnics inclusive).*

**Keywords: Cartoons, Satire, Communication, Study, Nigerian Newspapers.**

## INTRODUCTION

Journalism dates back to the time of Julius Caesar when the Acta Diurna of Rome (a series of hand written daily news bulletins can be measured as the pattern of the modern newspaper) was issued. In the 15th century, the invention of the printing press made available its rapid growth. Daniel Defoe who was different from a writer has been called the first journalist.

Modern journalism, however, began in the later years of the 18th century in Europe and the USA with each venture serving, as it does in many countries to this day, as the proponent and

voice of a political party or social group. Journalists were basically coordinated by political parties despite their increased freedom in England and the United States in the 19th century. However, Ganiyu (2004) defined journalism "as the job of gathering, writing and disseminating news and views about the society through the mass media". According to the Wikipedia, Journalism is the creation and dissemination of "news of the day" reports that, to some extent, accurately inform society about the interactions of events, facts, ideas, and people. Journalism can also be defined as the collection and regular publication or transmission of news and views through the use of the mass media such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio and the internet. Those who practice journalism are known as journalists, newsmen or the gentlemen of the press.

Unlike other professions, journalism is an odd business. Journalists in democratic societies do not consider themselves as working just for an organization or company rather, they consider themselves first and foremost as working for people. This is because journalism does not exist because of the company nor government nor editors and publishers but because of the people, Journalists work for their country, city or community.

Journalism is said to inform, educate and entertain. The most important function of journalism is to inform. It is natural for people to know what is happening in their environment, journalism provides information for the people, not only on what is happening in their immediate vicinity, but also in other parts of the world. Herbert Lee stated that newspaper has four roles to play in the society - as a bulletin board, as educator and promoter, as protector of freedom and as a communications leader. As a bulletin board, "a newspaper announces the time, place and the topics of meetings and chronicles births, deaths and marriages. It gives vital facts about current issues".

As an educator, "the newspaper instructs in numerous subjects such as international relations, history, geography, economists, science etc. through its editorial columns the editor interprets the thoughts of the community. The editor speaks and the readers talk back. Thus the public receives the opinion of both". As a protector and promoter of freedom, the newspaper guards the people's interests. It is also in this regard that we talk of the press as the watchdog of the society.

Journalism is not monolithic, it comes in different forms. In this regard, there are different types of journalism. They are print, broadcast, multimedia, gonzo, tabloid, satirical journalism among others. Satirical journalism is a form of journalism that entails the use of humor and satire to pass its messages to the readers. This type of journalism deals with the use of caricature, animation and comic strip to pass its information to the readers.

Despite the humorous nature of cartoons, they have been subjected to different interpretations. Those that have interpreted cartoons negatively have reacted angrily at them as well as the mass media that published such cartoons.

Some critics have reacted violently to cartoons. Much of the violent reactions have come from the religious fanatics who felt offended that some cartoons derided their religion.

In 2011 and 2015, there were attacks on a French satirical magazine, Charlie Hebdo due to its publication about the Prophet Mohammad. Muslims reacted negatively to the caricature of the prophet made by the magazine. Many people including some cartoonists were killed during the attack. In view of these developments, this study seeks to examine the use of cartoons in selected Nigerian newspapers.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Satirical journalism

Satirical means the state of being ironic, humorous, and sarcastic. Satirical can also mean satire. Satire is a genre of literature in which violence and flaws are held up to scorn, ideally with the intent to bring about improvement. Satire is usually humorous in nature. Journalism is the dissemination of information. Journalists provide people with information they need to make wise decisions and improve the lives of citizens. Journalists seek to inform and they believe information leads to improvement of life.

Satirical journalism can also be referred to as comic journalism and comedic journalism. According to Wikipedia (2016), satirical or comedic journalism refers as to "incorporate a comedic tone to transmit the news to mass audiences, using humor and satire to relay a point in news reports". It is not as objective as traditional forms of journalism found in mainstream news media. Comedic journalism can be applied to the print media in the past but has experienced rebirth through the medium of television. Satirical journalism is a form of journalism that entails the use of humor and satire to pass its messages to the readers. This type of journalism deals with the use of caricature, animation and comic strip to pass its information to the readers.

Satirical journalism, one type of media literacy, can challenge unquestioned beliefs about national discussion by managing the machinery of "the news" using satire and train audiences to identify quality journalism (Peters, 2013). Satirical user-generated content is also recognized as shaping social opinion due to the affordances of the internet and its interactive capabilities, whether in the form of comments posted to online news articles (Tang, 2013) or user-generated YouTube films pertaining to political news (El Marzouki, 2015).

### Cartoons

The term cartoon is changing as the world is developing. Cartoons were first referred to as a preparatory drawing for a piece of art when its original meaning was in the fine art of the late Middle age and Rebirth. Cartoons were referred to as witty artwork in the print media in the 19$^{th}$ century.

Cartoons are noted for their funny expression that is created in readers of newspapers. Most newspaper readers prefer to read the cartoon content in a newspaper because of its entertaining function and the funny messages it passes through the use of drawings rather than the education that it passes to them. Cartoons are used to stress a point of a particular thing and can be used to calm tension because of its funny expression. They can also be termed as exaggeration in which over emphasis can be done by the cartoonist concerning an issue in the society.

Many scholars defined cartoon in so many ways explaining how cartoons are funny drawings that are used to entertain or tell a story categorizing it has been humorous, satirical, a comic or a caricature and also animation. According to Longman's Contemporary English Dictionary, "cartoons are funny drawings in newspapers, often including humorous cartoons". The Oxford dictionary also brought out its own definition of cartoon by saying that "Cartoon is a funny drawing in a newspaper or mag, especially one about politics or events in the news".

According to Gonick (1987: 137), "cartoon is a humorous representation or symbolic drawings that entertain, teach or enlighten". This implication means that a cartoon is a valuable mass media content which strikes readers' visual and intellectual cord while stimulating laughter simultaneously. Nze (1989) noted that "cartoon is applied to a pictorial sketch, usually of humorous or satiric nature published in a magazine, journal or daily". Encyclopedia (1994: 263) defines cartoon as "a drawing or series of drawing which tells a story or expresses a message that entertain, teaches or enlightens".

Cartoon can be noted to be a drawing or series of drawings that tell a story or expresses a message. It can be a type of drawing, usually intended to be amusing used in newspapers, magazines and books Obasi (2011: 149). Ifedayo Daramola (2003: 148) made this clear by defining cartoon "as a humorous drawing that induces laughter by their humorous, satirical remarks of interest in the news that is current events."

**History of cartoons**

The origin of cartoon has been traced to 1843 when the Punch newspaper in the United Kingdom applied the term to satirical drawings. In that year, competitions for mural paintings to decorate the new houses of parliament in London were invited. The Punch newspaper in its regular series of political produced several mock entries which it called 'cartoons' for the occasion. The name stuck and is now generally associated with prints and drawings of a humorous, satirical and political nature.

The word cartoon originated in the Middle Ages and at first described as a preparatory drawing for a piece of art such as fresco, tapestry, or stained-glass window, and in the 19$^{th}$ century it was referred to as humorous illustrations in the print media and was later referred to as comic strips and animated films. Cartoon being gotten from the word "cartone" and "karton" in Italian and Dutch respectively can be explained to be "a strong, heavy paper or paste board of a full-size drawing made on solid paper as a study of model for a painting".

Before the advent of newspaper, drawings were used to describe things happening around the people and it later became cartoons so that stories would be told about themselves and their environment. The term "cartoon" stuck as a description of pictorial satire. Cartoons were later used in reference to any form of humorous drawing, and later became animated drawings.

**Types of cartoons**

Cartoons are of different types, as used in different contexts for different purposes. The essence of a cartoon is to tell a story of something about what is happening in the society.

There are different types of cartoons. They are: comic strip, political or editorial cartoon, single panel or gag cartoons, cartoon illustration.

**Comic strip-** This can also be known as the cartoon strip and it is found in the newspapers of the world. It dated in the late 19th century which appeared in the North America newspaper. Comic strips are usually a short series of cartoon illustration in order. Madhusudan (2000: 113) pointed out that "cartoon strips use balloons issuing from the heads of their characters to indicate what they are thinking or saying". According to Jegede (1999:182), "comic strips explore a series of panels often in narrative sequence which may be concluded with each publication or form a coherent continuation of an unfolding plot". A person who draws or write cartoon strips are known as comics' artist or cartoonist.

**Political cartoon-** This is a type of cartoon that focuses on political issues. Political cartoon is very common in the newspaper. They are also referred to as editorial cartoons because they are found on the editorial page of a newspaper. They are usually satirical in nature rather than being humorous. According to Wikipedia, "political cartoons are found on the editorial page of the newspaper and they draw on two unrelated events and brings them together incongruously for humorous effect".

**Gag cartoon-** Gag cartoon can also be referred to as the single panel cartoon. These cartoons consist of a single drawing with a caption. Gag cartoons entertain the readers by making fun of a group of people rather than ridiculing an individual. Jegede (1999: 182) refers to "this type of cartoon as a single panel cartoon which contains all activities within one panel".

**Cartoon illustration-** As the name implies as in illustrative cartoons, important points are illustrated. According to Jegede (1999: 182), "illustrative cartoon is often used to illustrate or compliment an article in a newspaper or magazine".

**The functions of cartoons**

Cartoons have many functions because a newspaper cartoon reader must have a purpose for reading cartoons in the newspaper. The basic function of cartoons in newspaper is for entertainment and also to educate the readers.

Another function of cartoon is that it is used as a tool to criticize the government. This can also mean political cartoon. Cartoonists use their cartoons to call to order, enlighten, and criticize issues destroying the country. According to Agberia (1993), "political cartoons are used to satirize current political matters and offer slight criticism cleverly coated with humor and satire". Political cartoons are used to inform the people about the actions of the government. This implies that cartoonist draws their cartoons in newspapers so that the society will be informed about the doings of the politicians or the government in general.

Cartoons can be used to ridicule the society. This means that cartoonist draw their cartoons in newspapers in order to make the readers mock the society. They are used to educate the readers and also pass information to the readers about the happenings in the society. They do not only inform about the occurrences but they also inform government about the reactions of the populace to issues and policies.

The functions of cartoon can also be that cartoons are to sanitize or clean the society and to bring back sanctity into our society through political, social, economic and religious cartoons, the cartoonist can adequately provide behind- the- scene information about the society which would otherwise have been impossible, or at best, burdensome for the writer. Cartoons give the advantage of both words and pictures which makes cartoonist comment knowledgeably on anything.

**The potency of cartoon as a communication tool**

According to Saint Martin (1990:36), "a good cartoon whether picture-driven or word-driven has proven to be a potent tool for diverting and reconstructing the socio-political reality of the society". The great influence of cartoon (especially political cartoon) is best appreciated through the painfulness of its satirical sting which has in many cases driven the targets beyond the edges of reasoning. Ridicule can be known to be one of the most potent weapons available to the media. It is also important to point out here that political cartoon played a very important role in communication communist ideas since the Bolshevik Revolution. Many editors understand the power of ridicule and do not hesitate to kill any cartoons, which they believe may generate controversy. The potency of cartoon as weapon of ridicule cannot be overemphasized and when efficiently deployed can go a long way achieving a positive result for the media. Many cartoons are published because editorial page should have a cartoon and some pages should have some artwork. Cartoons are meant to communicate ideas and attract readers. Humor which cartoons employs helps to make unpopular points more acceptable to reader. Most people will find a harsh truth less offensive if it has a smile on it. A Chinese proverb said that "picture paints a thousand words". This means that what a small picture could communicate would take more or a thousand words to put across. This adage simply emphasizes the wit of cartoon message, which hits render at a glance.

**Reactions to cartoons**

Cartoons have been subjected to different interpretations despite the humorous nature and their entertainment value. People who can be called the readers of cartoons have reacted negatively and angrily to the cartoons as well as the print media that published them because of the interpretation they gave them.

Politicians have also reacted negatively to political cartoons because of the way the cartoonists paint them in their cartoons. According to Jegede (1999:183), he stated that "in the eyes of the politician, the cartoonist is probably a mischievous opportunist who delights in presenting innuendoes as truth, an iconoclast who takes special delights in glorifying the ludicrous and the outrageous, and who constantly harps on things considered private or trivial". He further cited Duro Onabule who is the former press secretary to former military president, General Ibrahim Babaginda and also former editor of National Concord, who once asserted that "Nigerian cartoonists were guilty of trivializing important issues, of exaggerating the non-essential while harping on those topics that tended to inflame and incite, thus embarrassing government".

Violent reactions also come from different religious because of the way they feel offended that some cartoons have ridiculed their religion. Muslims are being offended because of the way cartoonist depicts their prophet Mohammad.

According to Esiri, he stated that in 2006, there were violent protests from Muslims around the world after a series of depictions of Prophet Mohammad in a Danish newspaper, Jyllands Posten. Any image of the prophet is regarded as blasphemy by the Muslims. He further stated that in 2007, "the Islamic world once again reacted violently to a series of cartoons by Swedish cartoonist, Lar Vicks that depicted Prophet Mohammad as a roundabout dog, several art galleries in Sweden declined to exhibit the cartoons citing security concerns and fear of violence. He noted that the controversy gained international attention after the Swedish newspaper, Nerikes Allehanda published one of the drawings to illustrate an editorial on self-censorship and freedom of religion. The violent protest generated from these cartoons led to the death of dozens of people.

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

**Reflective- projective theory-** This theory was propounded by Lee Loevinger who is a lawyer, judge and one- time Federal Communications Commissioner (FCC) in an article titled "The Ambiguous Mirror: The Reflective- Projective Theory of Broadcasting and Mass Communication". This theory postulate that "mass communications are best understood as mirrors of society that reflect an ambiguous image in which each observer projects or sees his own vision of himself and society". Cartoons serve as the mirror to the society. This means that they help us to reflect on what is going on in the society.

This theory also talks about the principle of selective perception that holds that people receive and decode communication messages in the light of our beliefs and moods. This means that cartoon messages that are passed to its readers are being received by the readers and the readers will have to decode the communication messages by interpreting it the way they understand the message the cartoon is passing.

**Symbolic interaction theory-** This theory was propounded by George Herbert Mead (Blumer) in the year 1993. Mead has the perspective that "people act towards things based on the meaning those things have for them, and these meanings are derived from social interaction and modified through interpretation". This theory also talks about the use of symbols to create meanings. Symbols are used as a sense making tools.

George Mead was engrossed with the way human beings use symbols which made him to propose that people act based on the symbolic meanings that are communicated in a given situation. This theory centers on the relationship between symbols and interactions between people that are using these symbols.

Mead opines that human beings interact in terms of symbols, the most important of which are contained in language. A symbol does not simply stand as an object of event; symbols define them in a particular way and indicates a response to them (Daramola, 2003).

Therefore, cartoons serve as symbols that are used to pass information in the newspaper to a large number of people. Cartoonist draws their cartoons so that readers will be able to interact with the symbols and also make them think about the symbols in order for them to get the message that is been passed across to them.It is said that without symbols, there would not be no human interaction and no human society. Man must construct and live in a world of

meaning, and social life can only proceed if members of a society share the meaning of symbols.

## METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

This study used the content analysis research method. Wimmer and Dominick (2014) defined content analysis as a method of analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables. Two main aims of using content analysis are to describe features of the message content and also to make predictions about the effect of what is being analyzed would have (Rose, Spinks &Canhoto, 2015).

Content analysis as a method was used for generating primary data for a study because it allows for an objective, systematic and qualitative description of communication content.

Content analysis will be used to sort out the study of cartoons in the newspaper reflecting the research focus of this study. Content analysis helps in the analysis of results and easy interpretation in order to achieve accurate judgments. The use of content analysis helps the researcher to classify and describe communication content in the selected newspapers.

Since it is impracticable to study all daily newspapers in Nigeria, the sample of the population was restricted to three national newspapers: *The Punch, The Guardian and ThisDay* newspapers. These newspapers were selected because of their geographical spread and circulation potentials. This is fundamental since the study examined is national in scope. Also, it was assumed that *The Punch* Newspaper has a strong presence, readership and wide coverage in southern Nigeria. *TheGuardian* Newspaper is widely read and acceptable in Nigeria as the newspaper of choice for information seekers and *ThisDay* Newspaper is a preferred newspaper among the business, political and diplomatic elites.

Therefore, daily issues of *The Punch, The Guardian and ThisDay* newspapers from January 1st, 2022 to June 31st, 2022 will be researched. That amounts to a cumulative total of 387 editions of the selected three newspapers which formed the actual sample size for this study.

The three newspapers, *The Punch, The Guardian and ThisDay* were purposely selected. The total sample size of 387 editions were used for this study by analyzing 5 editions each week for four weeks for each of the newspapers (*The Punch, The Guardian, and ThisDay)*,and later multiplied by 6 calendar months. A total of 21 issues were examined in January, 20 issues in February, 23 issues in March, 21 issues in April, 22 issues in May and 22 issues in June; making a total of 129 issues for each of the newspapers. These were multiplied by 6 calendar months of study to arrive at 387 issues.

This study adopts the coding sheet as the data collection instrument. Coding sheet was used to collect quantitative data from the content analyzed in the newspapers. The coding sheet contains five columns, each representing the variables to be measured in the study.

The content categories and variables for this study are the following:
**Frequency of Coverage:** The number of times the cartoons appeared in the newspapers.
**Format of Coverage:** Formats of coverage in this study were restricted to news reports, features, comedy, news analyses, editorials and columns.

**Position of Story:** The page placement of news releases that focuses on the Satirical Communication of Cartoons in Newspapers. This was used to measure the level of importance of cartoons in newspapers. Contents on the front and back pages were considered as the most prominent, those on the editorial (op-ed) pages were regarded as moderately prominent, and those on the inside pages were deemed the least prominent.

**Frame of Story:** The slants or angles of how the use of cartoons were used. This study finds out if the use of cartoons in the newspapers turned out to be on the human-interest frame, religious frame, ethnic frame, political response frame, economic consequence frame, and resolution frame.

**RESULTS**

The data analysis of this research work was based on the 129 editions drawn from the three selected samples. The newspapers were *The Punch*, *The Guardian* and *ThisDay*. Of 387 editorial items analyzed, a total of 500 cartoon items were extracted and studied.

The data was analyzed with the use of simple percentage and frequency tables. This study, in general terms, was aimed to find out the attention given by the Nigerian press to the use of cartoons.

**Table 1: Number of cartoons published in the selected Nigerian Newspapers**

| **Newspapers** | **No of Cartoons** | **Percentage of cartoons** |
|---|---|---|
| **The Punch** | **264** | **52.8%** |
| **The Guardian** | **129** | **25.8%** |
| **ThisDay** | **107** | **21.4%** |
| **Total** | **500** | **100%** |

Table 1 indicates that *The Guardian*, *The Punch* and *ThisDay* newspapers published 500 cartoons from January to June 2022. The Punch published 264 cartoon items which resulted in 52.8 percent, The Guardian published 129 cartoon items which resulted in 25.8 percent while ThisDay published 107 cartoon items which resulted in 21.4%.

**Table 2: Types of cartoons published in the selected Nigerian newspapers**

| **Publications** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Comic strips** | **Gag cartoons** | **Political cartoons** | **Total** |
| The Punch | 26 (16.8%) | 238 (93.3%) | - | 264 (52.8%) |
| The Guardian | 129 (83.2%) | 0 | - | 129 (25.8%) |
| ThisDay | - | 16 (6.7%) | 91 (100%) | 107 (21.4%) |
| **Total** | **155 (31%)** | **255 (51%)** | **91 (18.2%)** | **500 (100%)** |

Table 2, indicates how many news items were carried by each of the newspapers on types of cartoons. The total number of editorial items published within the period under review was 500.Of the total 500 editorial items, there were 155 comic strips, accounting for 31 percent; 91 percent on political cartoons, representing 18.2 percent; 255 gag cartoons, representing 51 percent. Of the total, The Punch published 264 (52.8%) cartoon items. The Guardian published a total of 129 (25.8%)cartoon items and ThisDay, 107 (21.4%) cartoon items.Table 2 revealed that The Punch published 26 Comic strips, representing 16.8 percent of the total cartoon items it carried; The Guardian recorded 129 Comic strips, representing 83.2 percent of cartoon items. ThisDay recorded no content on comic strips. Of the total 91 Political cartoons published, The Punch had no content on political cartoons ; The Guardian had no content on political cartoons while ThisDay recorded 91 political cartoons representing 100 percent.There were 255 Gag cartoons. The Punch published 238 gag cartoons, representing 93.3 percent; The Guardian had no gag cartoons recorded while ThisDay published 16 gag cartoons, representing 6.7 percent.

**Table 3: Placement of cartoons in the selected Nigerian newspapers**

| **Placement of cartoons** | **The Punch** | **The Guardian** | **ThisDay** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inside page (IP) | 1 (0.38%) | - | 37 (34.5%) | 38 (7.6%) |
| Editorial page (MP) | 131 (49.6) | 129 (100%) | 70 (65.4%) | 330 (66%) |
| Back page (BP) | 132 (50%) | 0 | - | 132 (26.4%) |
| **Total** | **264 (52.8%)** | **129 (25.8%)** | **107 (21.4%)** | **500 (100%)** |

Table 3 reveals the placement of cartoons in the selected newspapers. It reveals that out of 264 cartoon content in The Punch Newspapers, only one cartoon content was placed inside the newspaper which represents 0.38 percent; 131 cartoon content was placed in the editorial page which represents 46.9% while 132 cartoon content was placed on the back page which represents 50%.Out of 129 cartoon content in The Guardian Newspaper, no content was placed in the Inside page and back page but 129 cartoon contents were placed in the editorial page which represents a percentage of 100.It also reveals that out of 107 cartoon content placed in ThisDay Newspapers, 37 cartoon content was placed in the Inside page which represents 34.5 percent; 70 cartoon content was placed in the Editorial page of the newspaper which represents 65.4% and there was no placement of cartoons on the back page.

**Table 4: Dominant themes of cartoons published in the selected newspapers**

| **Cartoon types** | **The Punch** | **The Guardian** | **ThisDay** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Political Issues | 165 (62.5%) | 86 (66.7%) | 50 (46.7%) |
| Religious issues | 10 (3.7%) | 2 (1.6%) | - |
| Economic issues | 63(23.8%) | 32 (24.8%) | 54 (50.5%) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ethnic issues | 15 (5.68%) | 1 (0.77%) | - |
| Hate issues | 11 (4.17%) | 8(6.2%) | 3 (2.8%) |
| **Total** | **264** | **129** | **107** |

Table 4 reveals the dominant themes of the cartoons in the selected newspapers. It reveals that 10 or3.7 percent of the cartoons in *The Punch* are on religious issues; 63 or 23.8 percent are on economic issues; 15 or 5.68 percent are on Ethnicity issues while 11 or 4.17 percent are on hate issues.It also reveals that 86 or 66.6 percent of the cartoons in *The Guardian* are on political issues; 2 or 1.6 percent are on religious issues; 32 or 24.8 percent are on economic issues, 15 or 5.68 percent are on ethnicity issues while 11 or 4.17 percent are on hate issues. It reveals that 50 or 46.7 percent of the cartoons in *ThisDay* are on political issues; 54 or 50.5 percent of cartoons are on economic issues; 3 or 2.8 percent of cartoons are on hate. No cartoons on religious issues and ethnicity issues.

**Table 5: Tone of newspaper cartoon used in selected Nigerian newspapers**

| **Cartoon types** | **The Punch** | **The Guardian** | **ThisDay** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Peace | 6 (2.27%) | 0 | 0 | 6 (1.2%) |
| Conflict | 24 (9.09%) | 4 (3.1%) | 8 (7.5%) | 36 (7.2%) |
| Advocacy | 91 (34.5%) | 39 (30.2%) | 51 (47.67%) | 181 (36.2%) |
| Sensational | 21 (7.95%) | 54 (41.8%) | 3 (2.8%) | 78 (15.6%) |
| Neutral | 122 (46.2%) | 32 (24.8%) | 45 (42.05%) | 199 (39.8%) |
| | **264** | **129** | **107** | **500 (100%)** |

Table 5 reveals the tone at which the cartoons were being reported in the selected newspapers. It reveals that 6 or2.27 percent of the cartoons in *The Punch* had a peaceful tone; 24 or 9.09 percent had conflict tones; 91 or 34.5 percent had the advocacy tone, 21 or 7.95 percent had a sensational tone while 122 or 46.2% had a neutral tone.It also reveals that 4 or3.1 percent of the cartoons in *The Guardian* had conflict tones; 39 or 30.2 percent had the advocacy tone, 54 or 41.8 percent had a sensational tone, while 32 or 24.8% had a neutral tone.Also, 8 or7.5 percent of the cartoons in *The Guardian* had conflicted tones, 51 or 47.67% had advocacy tones; 3 or 2.8 percent had the sensational tones, 45 or 42.05 percent had neutral tones.

**Discussion of findings**

During the analysis, while reviewing 387 editions of the selected newspapers, it was shown that some months had more than one cartoon in each. The Punch newspaper had cartoons on the editorial page and also at the back page which is pages 16 and 36 respectively while ThisDay had cartoons scattered in each edition while The Guardian maintained consistency on page 12 of each day.

From the data presentation on the types of cartoons published in the newspapers, it is evident that each newspaper had the type of cartoon they focused on the most. The Punch, focused

on gag cartoons and had fewer comic strips cartoon types. The Guardian focused mainly on comic strips while ThisDay had more of Political cartoons and less gag cartoons. ThisDay had no comic strips.

From the data presentation on the placement of cartoons in newspapers, the Guardian placed its cartoons on the editorial page rather than the inside page and the back page. The Guardian maintained the consistency of placing cartoons on page 12 of each newspaper. The Punch newspaper maintained consistency of placing its cartoons on the editorial page and back page throughout the study. ThisDay had cartoons on the editorial page, opinion and business pages of the newspaper. It also had multiple cartoons placed on one page.

Findings showed that The Guardian and ThisDay place their cartoons in the editorial and inside pages rather than the back page. Only the Punch Newspaper placed cartoons on the Editorial page and Back page.

The findings reveal that the selected Nigerian newspapers hardly place cartoons on the back page. This is quite disturbing; going by the fact that cartoons often get people's attention. This vital function cannot be efficiently discharged if cartoons are not placed in such a way that the readers can easily see them. The Punch has efficiently deployed this weapon of satire by placing its cartoons on its back pages where they not only get the attention of the reader but also easily send across their messages.

From the data presentation on the dominant themes of cartoons, findings indicated that the selected newspapers did not really publish religious issues and hate. The Punch published religious issues and issues on hate more than any other newspapers. Most cartoons published in the newspapers were either on political issues which involved the upcoming election, corruption, bribery and insecurity or economic issues which talked about education, the state of the country, infrastructure disabilities, and poverty. Findings also indicated that ThisDay published most cartoon content on political issues and that's because they used cartoons to illustrate the headline that is being written about.

As regards the tone used to report the cartoons, it was shown that cartoons were used mostly as an advocacy for the people and The Punch, ThisDay and The Guardian utilized advocacy very well. Also, the Punch and the Guardian made use of the sensational tones while This Day made less use of the sensational. Only Punch newspapers had cartoons that used peaceful tones to portray its messages.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is an unquestionable fact that the cartoons have gradually become an essential and important content in modern newspapers. Cartoons can be seen as a weapon to pass messages across to the readers through the use of drawings. This study has examined the use of cartoons in some selected Nigerian newspapers. This study also helps us to know the types of cartoons, placement of cartoons and the dominant themes of cartoons in the Punch, This Day and the Guardian newspapers. The types of cartoons published in the newspapers were political cartoons, comic strips and gag cartoons.

The study has shown that the themes of the cartoon constitute a medium of communication through which the media set social agenda by attaching relevance to importance of issues and events through recurrent coverage aimed at shaping the people's understanding of the issues to bring positive change in the society.

From the analysis and findings, the researcher concludes that cartoons are to be used as a satirical tool to pass information to the public concerning the political, economic, ethnicity, and religious issues of the country.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Cartoons should be used more intentionally and efficiently to address relevant issues in humorous ways.
2. Newspaper houses should also try to put more cartoons at the back page of their newspapers and also create a small space at the front of their newspapers so that it will attract the attention of the readers.
3. Finally, the researcher suggests that further studies should be carried out on other related issues such as readers' perception of newspapers design: themes and effects of newspaper cartoons, roles and functions of newspaper cartoons in a democratic society and the influence of cartoons in newspaper readership.

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