**AN ASSESSMENT OF ERRORS IN EDITORIAL CONTENTS OF SELECT NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS**

**(A STUDY OF THE NATION AND THE DAILY SUN NEWSPAPERS**

**OF BETWEEN 1ST JANUARY TO 31ST MAY, 2016)**

**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

* 1. **Background of the Study**

Media are collections of information technologies that reach a large audience through mass communication. The technologies through which this communication takes place include but not limited to the newspaper, television, magazine and radio. The above media belong to either the print or the broadcast.

The print media refer to paper publications circulated in the form of physical editions of books, magazines, newspapers, journals, newsletters, among others. According to Flores (2008), the print media is the industry associated with the printing and distribution of news through newspaper and magazines.

As an area of concern, a newspaper is a serial publication containing news information articles and advertising. A newspaper is usually printed on relatively in expensive low-grade paper called newsprint. The news organizations that publish newspapers are themselves often called newspapers. Most newspapers are now published online as well as imprint. A newspaper is an unbound publication issued at regular intervals, which presents information in words, often supplemented with pictures (Omenugh, 2012).

Most newspaper typically publishes news articles and feature article on national and international news as well as local news. The news include political events/personalities, business and finance, technology, sports and entertainment, crime, weather and natural disaster as well as fashion and arts.

In addition to the above listed contents which make up a newspaper, a newspaper may also have an editorial; an editorial is an article that present the newspapers opinion on an issues. It reflects the majority vote of the editions much in the save manner of a lawyer; editorial writers build on an argument and try to persuade readers to think the same way they do. In other word, editorial are meant to influence public opinion, promote critical thinking and sometimes cause people to take action on an issue. An editorial is a corporate voice or position of a media organization on any given issue of public interest. (Clifford, 2008).

An editorial could be used as an instrument of persuasion to influence public views on pertinent national issues. Media organization which discovers that a particular event, situation or circumstance has to improve or change do write an editorial on that situation, thereby using the medium to orientate the public towards its belief or stand on the issue. The publication of an editorial in a newspaper gives the readers the benefit of knowing all the sides to a story with a goal of making him (the reader) to take a personal stand on the matter.

Moreso, an editorial also helps to uncover the “news behind the news”. This means that the part of the news left behind by reporters during their coverage of news situations are usually brought to light in an informative and incisive editorial, at this point critical and in-depth analysis of the issue are made. The critical analysis is very crucial because it serves as the justification for such editorial.

Meanwhile, the editorial in delivery the above functions may carry some errors in the publication. An error is a mistake made by the editorial writer in the editorial page, these errors as related may include spelling, grammar, syntax, punctuation, misleading headline etc. which may result in distorting the information thereby misleading the readers.

This work therefore, assesses errors in the editorial contents of the nation and the daily sun newspapers between January 1 to May 31, 2016.

* 1. **Statement of the Problem**

From their inception, the Nation and the Daily Sun Newspapers have through their editorials play a vital role in educating, entertaining, enlightening, setting agenda for discussion, informing as well as sensitizing the people on the happening in the society.

Furthermore, an editorial could be used as an instrument of persuasion meant to influence public opinion, promote critical thinking and sometimes cause people to take action on an issue. For instance, the editorial of the Daily Sun of Friday, May 6, 2016 which reads “The demand for a new minimum wage” and such in other editions of the two publications may have helped immensely by sensitizing the citizens on the issues in the society.

Most times, these editorials carry some errors like grammar, syntax, punctuation, misleading headlines and spellings. A cited case is that of The Nation Newspaper of Thursday, May 19, 2016 which was captioned **“Meltdown**. That appears the lot of general civil society, as divided organized labor becomes the prime casualty of the fuel pump price hike”. In the editorial, there is an error of spelling where the word “percent” was misspelled with a space in-between per and cent as “per cent”. Also in the same passage was a punctuation error where “, and” was used at the last item of a list.

However, this indicated that despite the role and impact of the editorial, it may still contain some errors.

Hence, this work is geared to assessing these errors as contained in the newspapers.

* 1. **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Find out if there are frequency of errors in the editorials of the nation and the daily sun newspapers.
2. Determine the types of error (s) in the editorials of the nation and the daily sun newspapers.
3. Identify the sources of error in the editorials of the nation and the daily sun newspapers.
4. Determine the dominant error in the editorials of the nation and the daily sun newspapers.
   1. **Research Questions**
5. What is the frequency of errors in the editorials of the nation and the daily sun newspapers?
6. What types of error are contained in the editorials of the nation and the daily sun newspapers?
7. What are the sources of error in the editorials of the nation and the daily sun newspapers?
8. Which is the dominant error contained in the editorials of the nation and the daily sun newspapers?
   1. **Scope of the Study**

The study which is on the assessment of errors in the editorial contents of the nation and the daily sun newspapers is limited to all the editorials of the two papers from January 1 to May 31, 2016.

* 1. **Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study will help the two papers to take note of errors and its readers as well.

For the editorial page writers of the two newspapers, it will help them to be awake and hardworking, since the findings have exposed their carelessness which portrays them in bad light.

The work will form a reference material for communication scholars and researches who may wish to embark on further studies of this nature.

* 1. **Limitations of the Study**

One of the major limitations was the long periods of assessing the two newspapers which were published daily from January to May 2016.

However, the researcher employed more analyzing skills to cover all their publications for the five months.

Another challenge was that of the level of professional experience of coders who had to be trained to understand the different units of analysis to be able to code. This however, paid off when consistently the researcher shows them what they needed to know.

* 1. **Definition of Terms**

Below are the operational definitions of major concept as used in this study;

1. **Assessment:** Assessment is the process of gathering, discussing and reviewing information from multiple sources, in order to bring forth a better understanding. Such as errors in editorials of the nation and the daily sun newspapers.
2. **Editorial:** An editorial is a content in the newspaper that carries the opinion of the newspaper, simply written for the understanding of readers leading them to take decisions on the issue concerned
3. **Editorial Content:** There are issues discussed in the editorial page that have been duely analyzed, for the best interest of the readers.
4. **Error:** This is a mistake found in the editorials of the Nation and the daily sun newspapers. The error may include spelling, grammar, syntax, punctuation, wrong headline, typographical etc.
5. **Media:** Media are the technologies used to reach mass audience. It is the primary means of communication used to reach the vast, scattered and undefined members of the public.
6. **Nigerian Newspaper:** These are newspapers published within the geographical boundaries of Nigeria.
7. **Print Media:** The industry that is associated with the printing and distribution of news through newspaper and magazines.