CENTRAL ASIAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HISTORY

VOLUME: 02 ISSUE: 10 | OCT 2021(ISSN: 2660-6836)



Available online at www.cajssh.centralasianstudies.org

CENTRAL ASIAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HISTORY

Journal homepage: www.http://cajssh.centralasianstudies.org/index.php/CAJSSH



Relevance of Photographs in Newspaper Journalism

Buike Oparaugo

Former Lecturer, Mass Communication Department, The Polytechnic of Sokoto State, Sokoto

Abstract:

Photographs are very important in mass communication as a whole and specifically for newspaper/print journalism. Photographs on newspaper pages greatly stimulate public interest in current events and human angle stories by attracting and retaining their attention. These photographs are mainly used for two purposes - to supplement news stories and for advertisements. The absence of photograph on newspaper pages would make the publication dull and unattractive. These photographs can either be aware, semiaware or candid photographs. Some of the prominent Nigerian newspapers of today are Vanguard, The Guardian, The Sun, This Day, The Punch, The Nation, etc.A major function of a photograph in newspaper/print journalism is that it jumps or eliminates literacy barrier by visually you are communicating to the illiterate what he can't understand in a written words. A very important aspect of photograph on newspaper is that while it attracts attention, it communicates and gives credibility as readers will almost certainly believe stories with accompanying pictures as evidence the event actually happened as reported. Dominant photographs appearing on the front pages of newspapers should be representing a news story in the newspaper which should also be highlighted on the page of the same edition.

ARTICLEINFO

Article history:
Received 29 Aug 2021
Received in revised form
30 Sep 2021
Accepted 21 Oct

Available online 22 Oct 2021

Keywords: Photograph, Photojournalism, Newspaper

Introduction

The use of photograph in the press is known as photojournalism. For many years, photography has played an increasingly important role in the various media of mass communication that use visual

E-mail address: editor@centralasianstudies.org (ISSN: 2660-6836) Hosting by Central Asian Studies. All rights reserved..

messages to disseminate information (i.e. books, newspapers, magazine, film, television; and the internet – based media) (Ijeh, 2015). Photographs have been known to greatly stimulate public interest in current events and human angle stories presented by the visual media of mass communication, and have also made tremendous contributions to the civilization and advancement of mankind (Yaroson and Asemah, 2008).

The power of photographs in mass communication stems from the common knowledge that photographs are more powerful than words in message dissemination hence the dictum; "A picture can speak more than a thousand words". This is because photographs speak a universal language and are better able to elicit the same emotions from people on different sides of languages and educational divides (Yaroson and Asemah, 2008; Fasheke 2004). In addition to creating a greater emotional response, photographs are used to capture a readers' attention to an article. Visual images are the gateway to a news story.

Graphics especially photographs at glance trap the readers. If a photo is interesting enough, the reader will stop to it and read the caption and if is interesting you will move a little bit to read the headlines of the article. If the beginning of the article is catchy enough, the reader will read all of it. In view of this, only few of readers read an article but almost all the photos get noticed. Photos are of primary importance when selling magazine or newspaper. The photos are actually magazine or newspaper marketing.

Print media are over the years compete and struggling to survive and one basic tactic newspapers and magazines have often used to put message across is the use of photographs to draw readers attention. Photographs are used extensively by newspapers and magazines to convey information and advertise products and services. Practical application of photography is found in nearly every human endeavor from astronomy to medical diagnosis to industrial quality control. Photography extends human vision into the realm of objects that are invisible because they are too small or too distant, or events that occur too rapidly for the naked eye to detect. A camera can be used in locations too dangerous for humans. Photographs can also be objects of art that explore the human condition and provide aesthetic pleasure. For millions of people, photography is a satisfying hobby or a rewarding career.

The public wants to spend more time with pictures than text, and the immediacy and availability of photography makes that possible. Consumers want a photo with every story they read, but that it can cause strong emotions since a photograph can tell an entire story.

Visuals can have a dramatic impact on a reader's involvement and feelings towards an event or issue. Images on newspapers have a powerful impact on readers' attitude and understanding, and this impact and understanding cannot be created by text alone. In a news context, the presence of a photograph can significantly affect the consumer's attitude towards the framed issue. While some readers might perceive pictures in newspapers as a support for the texts, others perceive it as something used in filling up the newspaper and making the pages numerous. To some also, it is just an act which serves to draw attention to a big story and to further illustrate statements made in the story and give the readers' more details about the information presented.

Despite the fact that photojournalists are using their camera to tell stories by bringing the source of the events closest to their readers, yet it needs to be interpreted most of the time even the STAND ALONE PHOTO need some wording to accompany it, called caption. However, a good photograph without

> E-mail address: editor@centralasianstudies.org (ISSN: 2660-6836).. Hosting by Central Asian Studies. All rights reserved.

caption may mean little or no meaning to some readers. Conversely to Anderson 1989 cited in (Kepplinger, 1976) argues that, "though the photographic image may have powerful visual impact, it does not have the ability to give any in-depth explanation of the event it presents to a world eager to be informed. It cannot tell what happened before or after an event; it cannot give political or social context, much less an analysis. The camera does not know which of the events it captures is historically significant and which are not.

The Meaning and Origin of Photojournalism

Photojournalism is an arm of journalism that uses images to tell stories and report events. It is different from other forms of photography such as commercial, Architecture and industrial photography. This could be seen in its adherence to certain journalism norms like News, Timeliness Objectivity, fairness and accurate representation of the events. Photojournalism involves the use of camera to record events as they happen. Like a news reporter, a photojournalist is a reporter but he or she writes with camera and disseminates news events through images. Photojournalists use pictures to tell stories interpret event and communicate their feelings about the society as Journalists hoping for a better society.

Photojournalism is as old as life itself because it is the originator of all other forms of communication. A quick flash back to the assertion made in the preceding part of the discourse will put us once more in better perspective. God being the prime communicator created images first and not words-He perfected the work of creation through visual style (Nnadiukwu and Anih, 2019). Photojournalism differs from other types of commercial photography which involve people. Like in traditional print journalism, the photojournalist's job is to document a real story in the most authentic manner possible and with the utmost journalistic integrity. These documentary photographs are delivered to the public as a visual complement to a written article, television newscast or sometimes even on their own.

The word "photography" was derived from the two Greek words, photo and graphein. Photo means light while Graphein means draw. Nicephor Niepce in the past, made use of "heliography" and "'sun drawing" till Sir Herschel brought in the advent of photography in 1839Photojournalism, according to Oduh (2011), is a representation of pictorial images with a written copy as a subordinate in news story presentation.

Using images to communicate the news, photojournalism has shaped the way we view the world since the mid-19th century. The history of photography has roots in remote antiquity with the discovery of principle of the camera obscura and the observation that some substances are visibly altered by exposure to light. As far as is known nobody thought of bringing these two phenomena together to capture camera images in permanent form until around 1800, when Thomas Wedgewood made the first reliable document, although unsuccessful attempt. In mid -1820s, Nicephore Niepee succeeded, but several days of exposure in the camera where required and the earliest result were very crude. Niepce's associate Louis Daguerre went on to develop the daguerreotype process, the first publicly announced photographic process which required only minutes of exposure in the camera and produced clear, finely detailed result. It was commercially introduced in 1839, a day generally accepted as the birth year of practical photography.

During that war, the most dramatic pictures of the conflict came not so often from the newspapers as from the weekly photojournalism magazines, photos that still are famous today. The drama of war and violence could be captured on those small, fast 35 mm cameras like no other, although it had to be said that through the 1950s and even 1960s, not all photojournalists used 35s. During World War II W.

Eugene Smith and Robert Capa became well known for their gripping war pictures. Both were to be gravely affected by their profession. In fact, Capa was killed on assignment in Indochina, and Smith was severely injured on assignment in Japan.

The beginning of modern photojournalism took place in 1925, in Germany. The event was the invention of the first 35 mm camera, the Leica. It was designed as a way to use surplus movie film, then shot in the 35 mm format. Before this, a photo of professional quality required bulky equipment; after this photographers could go just about anywhere and take photos unobtrusively, without bulky lights or tripods. The difference was dramatic, for primarily posed photos, with people award of the photographer's presence, to new, natural photos of people as they really lived.

The combination of photography and journalism, or photojournalism--a term coined by Frank Luther Mott, historian and dean of the University of Missouri School of Journalism--really became familiar after World War II (1939-1945). Germany's photo magazines established the concept, but Hitler's rise to power in 1933 led to suppression and persecution of most of the editors, who generally fled the country. Many came to the United States.

The Eliot Elisof on Photographic Archives maintains a rich visual history of Nigeria through its collection of late 19th- to early 20th-century albums, postcards, glass plate negatives, archival photographs, and color slides. This year marks the 100th anniversary of Nigeria's existence as an amalgamated country (1914-2014), and we celebrate this history by looking at 100 years of photography in Nigeria with a special focus on African photographers. Through the archival record, the history of African photography by African photographers is now being rediscovered by researchers and scholars of African art, history, and photography. While photography was introduced in Africa shortly after its invention in 1839, it was limited to entrepreneurs or expatriates who could afford large format cameras and equipment and had access to chemicals for the wet plate process. When dry glass plates and later roll film became available in the late 19th to early 20th century, many West Africans took up the profession of photography. Some were highly successful and profited from this new venture. Solomon Osagie Alonge was one of these early photographers; his images have not circulated outside Nigeria and are, until now, unknown to most Western audiences.

Postcards became an important commercial enterprise for local photography studios and businesses in the late 19th to early 20th centuries. Early postcards from Nigeria show cased local cultures, personalities, industries, and hand-colored views of Lagos and surrounding areas. Today, these postcards preserve an important record of the work of local photographers and are critical resources in researching the histories of African photography.

The Meaning and Origin of Newspaper

Newspapers are journals of record and opinion, and as journals of record, events in the society are recorded daily, weekly or monthly depending on their frequency. Newspaper refers to a daily or weekly publication used to disseminate news to a mass audience. A newspaper is a wholesome package of news, events, people and places in a given area and published on a predetermined frequency (Nwosu, 2003). Newspapers carry information on a broad spectrum of issues which include: news, advertisement, politics, education, science and technology, religion, commerce, etc. (Ani, 2019).

The history of newspapers goes back to Rome where official documented information was displayed for the public. The daily events in the life of Romans were collected by reporters (known as actuarii), officially appointed by the state. These reports were displayed on a board. Acta Diurna means daily acts' in Latin. The Acta Diurna were also known as Acta Populi (Acts of the People), Acta Publica (Public Acts), or Acta Urbana (Municipal Acts) (Oparaugo, 2021).

"Iwe Irohin fun awon Egba ati Yoruba" was the first newspaper published in Nigeria by Reverend Henry Townsend, missionary in Abeokuta in 1859. Subsequently, other newspapers were published by different people in the pre-colonial and post colonial era. Today, there are over 100 newspapers published either daily or weekly in Nigeria. As a medium that furnish readers with News, information in the Newspaper is expressed through linguistic, typographic and graphic forms which are defined by the media organisation's house style. This in its totality affects the way news are gathered and reported in the newspaper including the use of photographs on the front-page.

The second quite popular and influential newspaper of the time was "The Anglo-African" established in Lagos in 1863 by Robert Campbell. Its primary goal was to increase the level of knowledge among the population. The third Nigerian newspaper came out in 1880 and was called "The Lagos Times and Gold Coast Colony Advertiser." Its cost was 6 pence, and it was published every 15 days. The main topics the newspaper covered were the current issues of that time. Even though the paper was quite useful and relevant, it didn't last long. It was closed in 1883 and reopened in 1890 with little success.

The development of Nigerian newspapers wouldn't be adequately described without mentioning the "West African Pilot" – printed press that appeared in 1937. The particular interest in this newspaper was its aim – to fight for independence from the British government. It was a powerful media, due to which lots of different newspapers emerged in the 1960s. In 1936, the Northern Nigerian Government established a Hausa newspaper called "Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo." Later, in 1965, it got an English version and changed the name to "New Nigerian."

Most well-known newspapers of that times set their goal to fight for independence. However, till the 1990s most publications were government-owned. Only private papers continued to uncover public and private scandals, despite governmental suppression. Among them were: Daily Trust; Nigerian Tribune; The Punch; Vanguard; Guardian.

Nigerian media today faces several problems. The major one is the lack of funding. To stay afloat, the papers have to publish advertisements, which influence the quality of the articles. The problem is that often exclusively powerful individuals or companies place the ads. Therefore sometimes the newspaper clearly misleads readers, for example, by covering up the apparent corruption. With the emergence and spread of the Internet in the country, the online newspapers appeared. More and more Nigerians rely on online publications. Plus, online media increases the prompt submission of information and can deliver texts on various topics.

Some of Nigerian newspapers today are: Vanguard, The Guardian, The Sun, This Day, The Punch, P.M. News, Daily Post, Daily Trust, The Telegraph, Mirror, Nigeria Daily Times, Tribune, The Nation, etc.

Front-page photographs should draw a reader's attention and communicate a message. The front-page is a well thought out extension of the values and themes that a Newspaper wants to communication to its target audience. It is often seen as the major selling point of the Newspaper because it attracts the

potential readers to buy the paper and read further. Readers enter the newspaper pages through large pictures and a headline, thus adding a visual element makes the stories more likely to be read. From a population of 857 daily newspapers with circulations of 10,000 and above 300 were selected in 2002 by Editor and Publisher International Year Book for a series of study on the Newspaper design trends. From the findings, almost half of the newspapers run two photographs everyday on the front-page while others run three or more.

However, 98 percent of those newspapers use a dominant photograph. Editors choose front-page picture carefully to attract readers. The layout of the newspaper front-page, headline and photographs used are important factors that determine the level of attention given to the newspaper. For example, the Frankfurt Allegemeine Zeituny, one of Germany's leading daily newspapers published a colour photograph on its front-page for the first time on October 5th 2007, since its 58 years of existence. This was part of an effort to create a modern layout that would make the traditionally sober-looking broadsheet fresher and more appealing to readers.

A photograph is a picture produced through the chemical action of light sensitive film, or as a Digital photography that records images on memory card and processed on the computer.

Uses of Photographs in Newspapers

The newspaper is one of the largest users of still pictures. In this contemporary digital media space where all the media of mass communication (both offline and online) compete for audience and readership; pictures have become a veritable asset for these media outlets. This competition has necessitated and propelled newspaper to become more innovative in their use of photographs to attract and sustain readership. While some schools of thought argue that pictures aid readership of newspapers, others argue that they are irrelevant and make little or no impact on readers.

To the general public, photographs are deemed as credible sources of information. Viewers are more susceptible to believe images that they visually see, rather than what they hear or read (Pfau, Haigh, Fifrick and Holl, 2006). Photographs tend to be taken at face value, exactly for what they represent, while a photograph and text seems to be less credible because readers sense that the words are authored, but the image is a true representation (Kepplinger, 1976).

Photographs take two dimensions in newspaper either tell the story in all (Stand Alone Photo) or to complement story. It is important to realize that for information or photographs to have any substantial impact, influence and effect on the readers it must be well snapped and pass message.

The advent of photographs mechanically printed into newspapers opened up market for press photography. Pictures were mostly taken for their action and content rather than any aesthetic consideration. Today, they are used in the newspapers for different reasons. Photographs in journalism inform, educate and enlighten readers about current issues and also reflect on the past as well. Photographs in newspaper enhance the credibility of the stories. As they depict reality, they also furnish evidence to show the authenticity of a news story or give proof of an event that occurred. Its aesthetic values enable a photograph to serve as a tool to attract reader's attention and break the monotony of news content. Thus, photographs enhance and beautify the pages of a newspaper. A photograph in newspaper speaks more than a thousand words. No formal education is required to understand a picture. Photographs are therefore able to break through literacy barrier to effectively communicate a message. It is a universal language.

> E-mail address: editor@centralasianstudies.org (ISSN: 2660-6836).. Hosting by Central Asian Studies. All rights reserved.

Newspapers use photographs for basically two things – for news reporting and advertisements.

News Reporting: Photograph appearing in newspapers can either stand alone with their own message or used to supplement a news story or feature article. News stories as well as features and articles appearing on the pages of newspapers are most times accompanied with photographs/pictures (Okoye and Oparaugo, 2019). These pictures further illustrate the content of the news.

Advertisements: The print medium is a sight only medium, hence the use of still images (pictures) in its advertisements. Adewunmi and Onuora (2012, p.90) write that "photography is used to make important contributions to advertisements". Photographs on newspaper ads enhance realism in the advertisements, stimulates the feelings of the readers.

Functions of Photographs

Photographs can grab our attention and speak directly to our emotions. It embodies the power of a single image. At a more subtle level, we can learn lessons about a whole range of emotions. Grief has the power to wash away the luminance and chrominance of our lives. Photography, at its best, is a powerful language which speaks to our emotions. It allows us to tell our story and show others our framing of the world around us.

However, the following are specifically the functions of photographs in newspaper:

- > It serves as record of an event.
- It supplements written information i.e. it explain the written information.
- It also authenticate the written information, a picture does not lie unless it is contrived.
- > It serves as a form of illustration, information may need to be well illustrated, pictures are more illustrative than written words.
- > Photograph jumps or eliminates literacy barrier by visually you are communicating to the illiterate what he can't understand in a written words.
- Photographs are not limited by language. It is the only language understood in all part of the world. A photograph has an appeal. A wedding ceremony in Nigeria will communicate the occasion to Scottish or German.
- > Photograph makes reading material dramatic, the more the picture; the more encouraging and attractive audience find it.
- A good picture tells the story and disseminates information.
- Photograph gives emphasis to human nature, it appeals to the sense of sight.

Types of Photographs

Aware: The person being photographed in this case is fully aware of the fact that his photograph is being taken (Nwabueze, 2012). He even poses for the picture.

Semi-aware: As the name implies, the person being photographed is not completely aware that the photographer is taking the picture (Okoro and Nnadiukwu, 2017). While he or she is aware of the presence of the photographer, he or she does not know when the photographer will take the picture.

Candid: In this type of photograph, the subject is absolutely unaware of the presence of a camera let alone the cameraman (Orukamayan and Morka, 2016). The subject is completely unaware that an exposure is done because there is no pre-arrangement or knowledge of the presence of the cameraman.

Importance of Photographs

According to Uwakwe (2015, pp. 94-95) the following are the importance of photograph:

Communication: A photograph is an instrument of communication. In journalism parlance, we say it tells the story. A photo album tells a story. When sequentially arranged, it promotes a historical picture as good as literature does.

Adds Credibility: Photographs add credibility to stories. An axiom is that a picture is worth more than a thousand words. What's more? A real picture tells no lies.

Explains Mood: Pictures explain the mood of an event and people. The late Prof. Chinua Achebe had always pensive pictures. Many have interpreted it as a show of disbelief at the waste, pomp and imperviousness that have characterised the Nigerian leaders who have left Nigerians irredeemably poor. Other journalistic real situations captured in pictures such as a State of the Nation address by Goodluck Jonathan regarding the activities of Boko Haram go to show mood.

Vitality: Photographs add life and heighteners readers' interest. A newspaper without a photograph is dead and can hardly be read. We also know that a story, no matter the vitality it has, needs a photograph to enhance the strength.

Breaks the Monotony of text: Photographs are a breaker of boredom. Imagine a newspaper with a long list of grey matter. This most likely will lead to boredom. Photographs break this boredom.

Provides Variety to Readers: Evidences are on people who devote time to assessing pictures other than reading accompanying grey matter. We then see that photographs offer opportunity for different categories of readers to thrive.

Attracts Attention: Photographs are visual magnets and they arrest the attention of readers. In modemday journalism, glossy pictures and even black and white pictures of celebrities thrill readers. For these reasons, we say that pictures are entry points to a page. Readers might first see the loud headlines, but from literature, readers first cast a glance on picture before continuing with grey matter.

Samples of Some Pictures on Newspaper Pages









E-mail address: editor@centralasianstudies.org (ISSN: 2660-6836).. Hosting by Central Asian Studies. All rights reserved.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Newspaper industries use photography to create effects in their daily endeavours to achieve their set aims and objectives. Readers will hardly read texts/stories without an accompanying photograph on newspapers. The need for photograph has increased in the media business world in order to meet the rapid technological changes in our society. Photograph is a must in the media business, and the task has been made even easier by the advent of camera mobile phones.

Dominant photographs appearing on the front pages of newspapers should be representing a news story in the newspaper which should also be highlighted on the page of the same edition. Often time, Sun newspaper has been found guilty of using a dominant photograph on their publication that do not really have a correlation with a story published on the same edition. A law should be made against attack on any journalist in the course of performing their reportorial duties around the world. In some places, depending on what is being done there at that moment, taking of photograph of the environment and/or the people/things there is not allowed, and anyone who does take photograph there could have their cameras seized and/or even beaten up.

References

- 1. Adewunmi, A. & Onuora, N.G. (2012). *Basic photography: Digital and creative photography*. Enugu; Rock Communications.
- 2. Andersen, R. (1989). Images of war: Photojournalism, ideology, and Central America. *Latin American Perspectives*, 16(2), pp. 96-114
- 3. Ani, G.E. (2019). Newspaper & magazine production: The printed image. Enugu, Enugu: Glanic Ventures.
- 4. Fasheke, D. O. (2004). *The practice of photojournalism: Techniques and career*. Lagos: Keystone Books.
- 5. Ijeh, P.N. (2015). An appraisal of photojournalism practices in government newspapers in Nigeria: Insights from The Observer and The Pointer. *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(12), P. 58-69.
- 6. Kepplinger, H. M. (1998). Visual biases in television campaign coverage. *Communication Research*, 9(3), 432-446.
- 7. Nnadiukwu, I. & Anih, C.A. (2019). Pictorial communication in digital era: Challenges and prospects. *Journal of Mass Communication and Journalism*, 9(1), 1-7.
- 8. Nwabueze, C. (2012). *The art of investigative reporting: A practical guide*. Owerri, Imo: Top Shelve.
- 9. Nwosu, I. (2003). Basics of newspaper journalism. Enugu, Enugu: Cecta Books.
- 10. Oduh, K. (2011). Practical photography and photojournalism. Oko, Anambra: Kelv-Tech Press.
- 11. Okoro, N. & Nnadiukwu, I. (2017). *Perspectives of photography and photojournalism*. Enugu: Foramak Press.
- 12. Okoye, J.I. & Oparaugo, B. (2019). *An introductory text on political communication*. Enugu, Enugu: Enizol Ventures.

- 13. Oparaugo, B. (2021). Introduction to mass communication, media and culture. USA: Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing.
- 14. Orukamayan, E.A. & Morka, O.E. (2016). Principles and practice of photography and photojournalism. Benin City, Edo: Justice Jeco.
- 15. Pfau, M., Haigh, M., Fifrick, A. & Holl, D. (2006). The effects of print news photographs of the casualties of war. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 83(1), 150-168.
- 16. Uwakwe, O. (2015). Specialisedjournalism. Enugu, Enugu: Cecta Books.
- 17. Yaroson, E. & Asemah, E.S. (2008). *Photographic communication*. Jos: Great Future Press.