

# Newspaper Framing of Domestic Violence against Women during the COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown



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## Abstract

Domestic violence against women is a critical issue, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. This study examines how domestic violence against women was framed in select Nigerian newspapers during the lockdown. The research aims to understand the frequency of reporting, types of reports used, the nature of domestic violence, and framing patterns in the newspapers. The study used content analysis to analyze 459 newspaper editions from April 2020 to August 2020. A total of 98 stories on domestic violence against women were published within the period under study. Cochran's formula was used to calculate the sample used for the survey. The instrument used was a coding sheet to generate data on the manifest contents of the reports in the selected newspapers. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability value for the construct ranged from 0.7 to 0.95. Findings show that *The Punch* Newspapers had the highest number of stories, with 53.1%, 62.2% of the stories were written in news format, 60% of the stories were placed in the inside pages of the paper and 58.8% of photos were used representing the highest number of frames.

**Keywords:** COVID-19 pandemic, domestic violence, newspaper framing, Nigerian women.

## Introduction

The issue of newspaper framing of domestic violence against women is one that has been discussed by many authors and scholars with various perspectives on the issue, most coming at it from different sides than the others during the corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic lockdown (Odoemelam, 2021; Ekweonu, 2020; Nkwam-Uwaoma, Ojiakor-Umenze & Nwamadu, 2020; Ilesanmi, Ariyo & Afolabi, 2020). Women form a greater percentage of the population of human population around the globe and as well play significant and varying roles both at home and at their places of work (Sambe, 2015). Unfortunately, this set of people faces the highest level of unimaginable inhuman treatment globally, tearfully from their much-needed spouses who are expected to provide for them and protect them from all kinds of harm. On the contrary, their

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husbands unleash harm on them at the slightest provocation. Violence generally is a threat to the globe, with women and children as the most vulnerable, and its outcome is highly devastating (Ilesanmi *et al.*, 2020).

Domestic violence against women is a global infestation that transcends boundaries and occurs in all cultures and societies around the world (Albana, 2017). Culturally, some societies have long historical records of male domination, in which women were mostly taught how to obey their husbands; accept their submissive roles and subscribe to be under their first male child when their husband dies. This reflects the strong patriarchal traditions dominant among the majority of human societies. These traditions and cultures at varying degrees provide the templates for the relegation of the women to the background. This makes domestic violence very common and a global issue of concern. It is widespread; often considered socially acceptable among some cultures and globally underreported. Significantly, the most worrisome situation of universal interest is that women hardly report or disclose physical, sexual, and or any other forms of violence, especially when committed against them by an intimate partner (Sutherland, McCormack, Pirkis, Easteal & Vaughan 2015). Surveys undertaken in 2012 and 2013 indicated that around 30% of women had experienced some form of physical, sexual, or emotional domestic violence during their lifetime (IAGCI, 2016). Although there seems to be a change in attitude among some societies, recent reports demonstrated a surge in the rate of domestic violence around the globe owing to this lockdown (Wikipedia, 2021; UN, 2020; Lennard, 2020; Townsend, 2020).

For instance, the call to helpline in Tunisia increased by fivefold in the first days of the lockdown (Graham-Harrison, Glufrrida & Ford, 2020). In UK, the first week of the lockdown witnessed an increase in the number of calls to the helpline by 25% with 150% increase in the number of visits to the website (Fraser, 2020). In Cyprus and Singapore, helpline calls increased by 30% (NDVH, 2020) within the first week of lockdown, 40% in Australia and 67% in Argentina (UN Women, 2020). Globally, domestic violence is one of the most pervasive violations of fundamental human rights that affects women of all ages, races, creed, and economic backgrounds (Sutherland, McCormack, Pirkis, Easteal, & Vaughan, 2015). It is harm that goes beyond the physical realm and transcends into perpetual emotional feeling leading to torture, severe pain, and depression.

According to Galvao (2015), there is a shred of strong evidence establishing links between women's exposure to violence and direct health outcomes. Reports from the review revealed that domestic violence against women could be as dangerous as leading to mental health problems, subscription to substance use, and the desire to commit suicide and harm oneself, and unleash fatal and non-fatal injuries on oneself. Drawing from the above research reports, it can be seen that the effects of domestic violence are enormous and all-encompassing, ranging from the individual victims to the entire society where such lifestyles are harboured. Considering the impact of domestic violence, Sutherland *et al* (2015) argue that domestic violence influences the health, welfare, and development of individuals and families, the communities in which they live and the entire society as a whole. Generally, domestic violence or violence of any kind is overwhelmingly committed against women by men. Such violence includes direct and indirect threats of physical assault, sexual assault, emotional and psychological torment, economic control, social isolation and any related and similar behaviours that result or can force women to live in perpetual fear (Cripps & Davis, 2012; WHO, 2013; Sutherland, *et al.*, 2015).

Drawing from the facts provided above on the influence of domestic violence against women to the victims, the families and the larger societies, it is imperative that the mass media must make some moves in exposing the causes of domestic violence and to provide precautionary measures to restrict the surge. Efforts should be geared towards unraveling the underlying causes and, at the same time, providing primary preventive measures, owing to the negative impacts of the menace on society, to restrict the rise in domestic violence. For instance, in Australia and overseas, public policies addressing violence against women are increasingly focused on primary prevention strategies targeted at preventing violence before it occurs (VicHealth, 2017). In the context of addressing violence against women, the target of primary prevention should be to reduce the incidences leading to its occurrence by targeting factors that give rise to or create conditions in which violence against women sets in (Quadara & Wall, 2012). Against this background, this study examines newspaper framing of domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

To achieve this aim, the specific objectives are to

1. Find out how frequently *The Sun*, *The Punch*, and *The Vanguard Newspapers* report cases of domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.
2. Ascertain the type of report used by the newspapers to present stories relating to domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown by the newspapers.
3. Examine the nature of domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, as found in newspaper reports.
4. Identify the frames adopted in reporting domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

### **Literature Review**

Related studies on domestic violence have predominantly focused on Western perspectives and have not adequately addressed the unique scenarios and practices related to domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in developing countries like Nigeria (Ekweonu, 2020; Nkwam-Uwaoma *et al.*, 2020).

### **The Nature of Media Framing:**

The media serves as a platform through which societies communicate and attempt to come to terms with social issues, including domestic violence (Ravi, 2012; Nwabueze & Oduah, 2018). The media's framing of domestic violence influences how audiences interpret and understand the issue (Ndinojuo, Ihejirika & Okon, 2018), although individuals are rational enough to form their own conclusions and judgments (Pratt, 2011).

However, researches suggest that media descriptions and narratives surrounding gender-based violence can shape audience perceptions and understanding (Shehu & Dalhatu, 2020). The media's framing of events and social issues, such as gender-based violence, can provide audiences with words and phrases they use to describe and understand the issue (Shehu & Dalhatu, 2020). Framing also influences the attribution of responsibility for gender-based violence (Morgan & Politoff, 2012).

Media framing can perpetuate gender stereotypes and reinforce traditional gender roles, such as depicting women as more competent in handling issues related to poverty,

education, and childcare, while men are viewed as more proficient in dealing with issues related to the economy and national security (Lacey, 2011; Carroll & Ronnee, 2017).

Framing also highlights traditional public versus private distinctions and reinforces gender distinctions and stereotypes prevalent in many societies (Fox & Oxley, 2003) by focusing on personal qualities and characteristics of female political candidates, while male candidates receive more attention regarding policy expertise (Deb & Charvak, 2015; Carroll & Ronnee, 2017).

### **News Framing and the Print Media (Newspapers)**

News framing in the print media refers to the way journalists organize and present events and issues to the public, influencing the interpretation and understanding of these events and issues (Obaje, 2017; McQuail, 2010). Framing devices, such as metaphors, exemplars, and catchphrases, summarize information and emphasize specific themes or ideas (Koga, 2014; Fawole *et al.*, 2021; Odoemelam, 2021).

The prominence of certain stories in terms of frequency, placement, and size, as well as the use of specific sources, quotes, and visual images, influences the salience and interpretation of news content (Entman, 2004; Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

Media frames can influence public opinion through agenda setting, priming, and framing effects (McCombs & Shaw, 1968; Scheufele, 1999, 2007). Media frames act as interpretive structures that shape how audiences understand and perceive social issues, including gender-based violence (Entman, 2004; Scheufele, 2007).

The building and setting of frames in the media lead to the selection and emphasis of certain events and issues, influencing audience perceptions and understanding (De Vreese, 2005). Framing devices, such as headlines, photos, and leads, contribute to the manifest part of a frame and shape the overall narrative presented to readers (Tankard, 2001; Entman, 2004).

Studies have shown that event-based news stories on gender-based violence tend to depict incidents in isolated and individualistic terms, while thematic framing provides a broader context by considering socio-cultural and political factors contributing to gender-based violence (Linos, 2013; Morgan & Politoff, 2012). Episodic framing focuses on individual responsibility for gender-based violence, while thematic framing attributes causes and solutions to broader institutions and cultural contexts (Dorfman, Meija, Cheyne, & Gonzalez, 2011; Scheufele, 1999).

### **Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence, a global phenomenon, exists in various forms across societies (Nkwam-Uwaoma, Ojiakor-Umenze & Nwamadu, 2020). In Nigeria, cultural practices, such as male dominance and gender inequality, contribute to the acceptance and perpetuation of domestic violence (Sardinha & Catalan, 2018). Traditional norms that support male dominance and gender inequality contribute to violence against women in Nigeria (Variants, 2017). Women in Nigeria face social and cultural norms that tolerate and excuse violence, limiting their access to education and opportunities (Bakare, Asuquo & Agomoh, 2016).

Domestic violence is influenced by socio-cultural context, economic stress, and mental health issues (Moreira & da Costa, 2020; Abdullah, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic lockdown exacerbated domestic violence rates globally, including Nigeria, due

to the increased time spent together and economic stressors (Peterman *et al.*, 2020; UK Women, 2020).

### **Source of Interventions for Victims of Domestic Violence against Women**

The media can play a vital role in creating awareness, providing information about support services, and challenging cultural norms that tolerate violence against women (The Guardian Editorial, 2017). Media campaigns should target different age groups and involve communities to prevent and address domestic violence (Above Whispers Organization, 2015). Media coverage can shape public understanding and awareness of gender-based violence (Sutherland *et al.*, 2015).

The print media's coverage of gender-based violence has been criticized for perpetuating stereotypes and marginalizing women's issues (Omari, 2018). Women are often portrayed negatively and are given less space in print media (Kingori & Ojiambo, 2016). The media's coverage of gender-based violence tends to be event-based and lacks in-depth analysis and contextualization (Nzuma, 2015).

Newspaper coverage of sexuality issues and entrepreneurship reinforces gender stereotypes and marginalizes women (Igbino, 2008; Okere & Sam-Okere, 2013). The print media's reporting on road safety and women's issues is often limited and influenced by editorial policies and advertising (Anini, 2014; Nwaolikpe, 2014).

The media's representation of women plays a significant role in shaping public perception and understanding of gender issues (Kay, Matuszek & Munson, 2015). Media representation of women in Nigeria often portrays them negatively or reinforces stereotypes (Ukozor, 2007). Women's issues are often marginalized in print media coverage (Gakahu & Mukhongo, 2007).

Metaphors and media framing influence public perception and understanding of gender issues (Bates, 2004; Charteris-Black, 2004). Media framing shapes audience interpretation through the selection and presentation of news content (Bell, 1991; Entman, 2004). Media frames can perpetuate gender stereotypes and reinforce traditional gender roles (Montiel, 2018).

The print media's representation of gender-based violence can contribute to public understanding and awareness of the issue (Huda & Ali, 2015). However, media coverage may perpetuate gender stereotypes and marginalize women (Huda & Ali, 2015; Sufficiency, 2015).

### **Areas of Controversy and Contested Claims**

In the context of domestic violence against women, newspapers may use different frames and metaphors to portray the issue. For example, they may use metaphors such as "battle" or "war" to depict the struggle against domestic violence, or they may use metaphors that portray women as victims or objects. These metaphors can shape public understanding and perceptions of domestic violence and influence attitudes and behaviors towards the issue.

Additionally, newspapers may also use different tones in their reporting on domestic violence against women. They may use sensationalist or dramatic language to capture readers' attention, or they may take a more objective or neutral tone. The tone of reporting can influence how the issue is perceived and understood by audiences.

Overall, the framing, metaphors, and tone used by newspapers in their coverage of domestic violence against women can have significant effects on public perception, understanding, and responses to the issue. It is important to critically assess and analyze these aspects in order to identify any biases or gaps in the reporting and to ensure a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the issue.

**Method of the study**

For this study, the researcher used content analysis, which is the quantitative, objective, and systematic analysis of media reports (Tejumaiye, 2003). This method was chosen because it outlines processes that allow the researcher to comb through media reports in line with the study objectives.

To make the study as scientific as possible, the researcher selected three newspapers for the analysis using a purposive sampling technic.

It encompasses measurement procedures used to measure different relationships and answer research questions with clearly defined information.

The population of the study is a census of all items that possess knowledge of the phenomenon being studied. These, therefore, are *The Sun*, *The Vanguard*, and *Punch Newspapers*. The researcher focused on reports from April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, to July 31<sup>st</sup> 2020, in the newspapers. These newspapers were selected because they are national papers. The papers are also read widely, both locally and internationally.

The sample size for this study is four hundred and eighty-eight newspapers drawn from *The Sun newspapers*, *The Vanguard newspapers*, and *Punch newspapers*. It consists of April 1st through August 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. April - 30 days, May - 31 days, June - 30 days, July - 31 days, and August - 31 days.

**Sample size Table**

| NAMES OF NEWSPAPERS           | MONTH          | DAYS |
|-------------------------------|----------------|------|
| <i>The Punch Newspaper</i>    | April-August   | 153  |
| <i>The Sun Newspaper</i>      | April-August   | 153  |
| <i>The Vanguard Newspaper</i> | April - August | 153  |
| Total                         |                | 459  |

April: 30X3 = 90, May: 31X3 = 91, June: 30X3 = 90, July: 31X3 = 91, August 31X3=91  
Total= 459 newspapers

This indicates that for each newspaper, four months editions of each newspaper will be analyzed bringing the total newspapers to be analyzed to 459 editions.

The study made use of purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique in which researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of population to participate in a study.

Unit of analysis are specific element or unit that are being analysed within the content.

Five variables were measured under the unit of analysis: frequency, placement, nature, solution, tone. To measure them the researcher analysed all stories on domestic violence reported in the papers during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown because the study focus is on violence during the lock down.

To determine frequency the researcher counted every story on domestic violence. For placement the researcher checked the pages that the stories were placed. The researcher

also looked at the nature of attack on the victim. For solution, the researcher looked out for whether the reporter proffered solution to the situation and for tone, the researcher looked out for the tone used in reporting the violence.

### Results

Stories related to domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown were analysed in three national newspapers- The Sun, Vanguard and Punch newspapers. Four months of each edition of the newspapers for April, May, June, July and August were analysed.

This researcher discovered that 98 stories on domestic violence against women in the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown were published during the period analysed.

52 of the stories were published in The Punch newspapers, 24 were published in Vanguard, while 22 were published in The Sun newspapers.

We found out that more stories were published in June (46) than in July (23) followed by April (14), August (11) and May (4).

Also, 61 of the stories were news reports, 25 were features, seven were editorial, while five were interviews.

Thus, the researcher presents the findings in line with the research questions.

### Research question 1: How often do the newspapers' report cases of domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown?

*Table 1: Frequency of stories on domestic violence against women during the covid-19 pandemic lockdown in the newspapers*

| Newspapers | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| The Punch  | 52        | 53.1       |
| Vanguard   | 24        | 24.5       |
| The Sun    | 22        | 22.4       |
| Total      | 98        | 100        |

After reviewing the editions of the newspapers for a five months period, this researcher coded ninety-eight (98) stories across the selected newspapers. Punch had 53.1, Vanguard had 24.5 and The Sun, 22.4 respectively.

### Research question 2: What type of report is used by the writer to present stories relating to domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown?

| Placement | Percentage |
|-----------|------------|
| Feature   | 25 25.5    |
| News      | 61 62.2    |
| Interview | 5 5.1      |
| Editorial | 7 7.2      |
| Total     | 98 100     |

After carrying out the research, this researcher found out that the newspapers did not give enough placement to the reports as they were mostly reported as news stories than features or editorials

The frequency for features is 25 (25.5%), news is 61 (62.2), interview is 5, (5.1%), and editorial is 7, (7.2%).

**Research question 3: What is the prominence of domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, as stated in the report?**

| <i>Nature</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Inside Story  | 59 60             |
| Brief Page    | 26 26.5           |
| Front Inner   | 8 8.5             |
| Front Page    | 5 5               |
| <u>Total</u>  | <u>98 100</u>     |

The research showed that the papers reported more stories in the inside pages. Front page had 5 reports (5%), Front inner page had 8 reports (8.5%), Brief page had 26 reports within the period (26.5%) and Inside page had 59 reports (60%).

**Research question 4: What frames did the paper give in its report on domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown?**

| <i>Frames</i>        | <i>Percentage</i> |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Photo                | 17 17.35          |
| Lead                 | 3 3.06            |
| Concluding statement | 0 0               |
| Statistics           | 14 14.29          |
| Quotes selection     | 31 31.63          |
| Headlines            | 33 33.67          |
| <u>Total</u>         | <u>98 100</u>     |

The result of research question four showed that some Nigerian newspapers are still very conservative when it comes to concluding statement. None (0%) of the newspapers used concluding statement.

More of the reports -33 (33.67%) used headlines on domestic violence that conveyed the message that domestic violence is a grave problem in the society.

In the analysis, it was found that out that 31 (31.63%) of the reports emphasized the voices and experiences of survivors.

17 (17.35%) photos used depicted scenes of domestic violence, implying the visual representation of the issue, 14 (14.29%) of the reports uses statistics to emphasize the prevalence and impact of domestic violence on women while 3 (3.06%) lead reports highlighted the severity and urgency of addressing domestic violence.

**Discussion**

The focus of this study was to examine Newspaper Framing of Domestic Violence Against Women During the COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown.

98 editions that touched on domestic violence against women during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown were put to analysis from the 459 weekend and weekday editions of *The Punch* and *Vanguard* and *The Sun* Newspapers published between April 2020 and August 2020 that was gathered.

*The Punch* Newspapers had the highest contents on domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown with 52 stories representing 53.1%, *Vanguard* Newspapers followed with 24 reports representing 24.5% while *The Sun* Newspapers followed with 22 reports representing 22.4%.

Within the five-month study timeline, *The Punch* recorded a total of 52 (52.1%) reports, *The Vanguard* had 24 (24.5%) and *The Sun* recorded a total of 22 (22.4%). Therefore, cumulatively, there was a total of 98 (21.4%) domestic violence stories in the selected newspapers during the lockdown. This is low because (UN Women, 2020) suggests that during the lockdown in Nigeria, partner violence was shown to have increased significantly to as much as 56%. In the first two weeks of lockdown, domestic violence cases rose from 346 (March) to 794 (early April).

The second objective was to ascertain the type of report used to present stories relating to domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown by the *newspapers*. The result depicted that the newspapers used formats such as news stories, news features, interview and editorial. Features had 25 (25.5%), news 61 (62.2%), interview 5, (5.1%), and editorial 7 (7.2%).

The *Daily Sun* had 11 features (44%), 10 news (16.4%), 1 Editorial (14.3%) and 0 interview (0%) stories on domestic violence against women during the COVID 19 pandemic lockdown.

*The Punch* had 8 features (32%), 40 news (65.6%), 2 Editorial (28.6%) and 2 interviews (40%) stories on domestic violence against women during the COVID 19 pandemic lockdown.

*Vanguard* newspaper had 6 features (24%), 11 news (18%), 4 Editorial (57.1%) and 3 interviews (60%) stories on domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

This result agrees with Omari 2018 who asserts that as fillers of space in the daily newspapers, stories about females and their issues are accorded less space and are portrayed more negatively compared to their male equivalents. However, Omari (2018) further identified several factors, which contribute to the marginalization and low coverage of females in the print media including the idioms and values of patriarchy, a small percentage of female professionals in the print media industry, and the fact that the media industry in Nigeria is largely owned and dominated by males.

The third objective set out to investigate the level of prominence given to reports on domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. The result generally indicates that majority of the stories 59 (60%) on domestic violence during the lockdown were placed on the inside pages of the newspapers. On *The Punch* newspaper, stories on domestic violence during the lockdown that were placed in the inside pages were dominating 39 (66%), which could be as a result of the Female editor of the health and gender page of *The Punch* newspapers.

This agrees with Okere (2013) who asserts that *The Punch* newspapers can fulfil its mission of being a veritable tool by increasing its numerical quota of positive images of female entrepreneurs in Nigeria.

The last objective was to identify the frames adopted in reporting domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. The analysis focused on the use of photos, lead stories, concluding statements, statistics, quotes selection, and headlines to understand how these newspapers covered the issue.

The data indicate that *Punch* newspaper used the highest percentage of photos (58.8%) related to domestic violence against women during the lockdown, while *The Sun* newspaper had the lowest percentage (11.7%). *Vanguard* newspaper fell in between, with 29.4% of photos dedicated to this topic. This suggests that *Punch* newspaper prioritized visual representation of the issue more than the other two newspapers.

Furthermore, none of the newspapers included concluding statements in their articles on domestic violence, implying that there was a lack of emphasis on discussing the negative consequences of such violence. Only *Punch* newspaper utilized lead stories specifically addressing the topic, achieving a 100% coverage rate. In contrast, both *The Sun* and *Vanguard* newspapers did not dedicate any lead stories to the issue.

Regarding the inclusion of statistics, *The Sun* newspaper had the highest percentage (42.9%) of reports that incorporated statistics on domestic violence during the pandemic lockdown. *Vanguard* newspaper followed closely with 35.7%, while *Punch* newspaper had the lowest percentage (21.4%). These statistics suggest that *The Sun* newspaper placed a greater emphasis on providing numerical evidence to support their coverage of the issue.

In terms of quotes selection, *Punch* newspaper utilized this framing technique the most with 55% of reports incorporating quotes related to domestic violence during the lockdown period. *Vanguard* newspaper had 29% of reports with quotes selection, while *The Sun* newspaper had the lowest percentage (16%). This indicates that *The Punch* newspaper relied heavily on direct quotes from relevant sources to present a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

Finally, when analyzing the use of headlines, *Vanguard* newspaper had the highest percentage (42.4%) of reports with strong headlines against domestic violence during the COVID-19 lockdown. *Punch* newspaper followed with 33.4% of such headlines, while *The Sun* newspaper had the lowest percentage (24.2%). These findings suggest that *Vanguard* newspaper dedicated more attention to creating impactful headlines condemning domestic violence, compared to the other two newspapers. The frames used by the researcher agrees with Tankard (2001) who provides a list of framing devices that the media can apply in characterizing and evaluating new frames.

Obaje (2017) on his part notes that to bring in the frame building process, similar narratives are continuously espoused by journalists and on a regular basis employing mechanisms such as bold headlines and more.

## **Conclusion**

Domestic violence against women is a pervasive problem in Nigeria, and the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown has succeeded in worsening the issue.

This study indicates that *The Punch* had the highest focus on domestic violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown among the selected newspapers. The frequency of coverage varied across months, with June 2020 having the highest number of reports. In terms of coverage, it is important that media houses increase their coverage of issues of domestic violence especially in preparation for another outbreak of viruses which may lead to another lockdown.

News stories were the most commonly used format, followed by features, editorials, and interviews. Media houses should do more in-depth reporting of the cases under review so that they can allocate more space for these reports.

The majority of the articles were placed on inside pages, particularly in *The Punch*. Moving forward, it is important for newspapers to continue raising awareness and covering this important issue, while also considering the use of different reporting formats to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

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