

## LEXICALISATION OF THE ENDBADGOVERNANCE PROTEST# IN SELECTED NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the Lexicalisation of the #EndBadGovernance protest in selected Nigerian newspapers, focusing on how specific word choices shaped public perception and representation of the protests. The importance of this research lies in its exploration of the intersection between language and political discourse, particularly in a context marked by socio-economic challenges and governance failures. The primary objectives include identifying the lexical terms used in reporting the protests, analyzing their implications for public perception, and examining the ideological meanings embedded within these choices. Employing a qualitative methodology, the research utilizes textual, content, and descriptive analysis of headlines from ten national newspapers. The findings reveal that media outlets strategically employed lexical framing to portray the protests either as legitimate civic resistance or as threats to national stability. This study contributes to the fields of media studies, discourse analysis, and political communication by highlighting the role of language in shaping public memory and national discourse, ultimately demonstrating how lexical choices can influence the legitimacy of dissent and collective identity.

**Keywords:** Lexicalisation, #EndBadGovernance, Nigerian Newspapers, Protest, media discourse.

### **Introduction**

Language serves as a powerful tool in shaping societal interpretations of events, particularly through the lens of media representation. Lexicalisation, the process of selecting specific words to depict people, events, or issues, plays a crucial role in influencing public opinion. In journalism, especially during politically charged protests, word choices are rarely neutral; they reflect underlying ideologies and values (Baranov et al., 2021). In Nigeria, where media narratives intersect with intense political and economic struggles, understanding the language used in headlines is vital for comprehending how public anger is either echoed or silenced (Baranova et al., 2023). The #EndBadGovernance protest emerged as a direct response to widespread dissatisfaction with governance, economic inequality, and institutional failures (Edem & Aluya, 2019). This movement encapsulated a growing public rejection of elite impunity and systemic failure, with media coverage playing a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of the protests. Lexical choices such as “killing its youth,” “cry for change,” and “agent of oppression” carried significant emotional and political weight, framing protesters variously as

victims, disruptors, or moral actors (Ganzallo, 2024). This research aims to investigate how Lexicalisation in selected Nigerian newspapers influenced public discourse surrounding the #EndBadGovernance protests, thereby contributing to broader conversations about media, protest, and the politics of language in Nigeria.

### **Literature review**

The literature on lexicalisation within media discourse highlights its role in shaping public understanding of political events and social protests. Scholars have examined how media utilise language to construct ideological meanings through lexical choices. Ajewole-Orimogunje and Oyelekan (2016) assert that lexicalisation serves as a tool for ideological expression, revealing that media are not neutral observers but active participants in meaning-making. Their study on Nigerian media during politically active periods demonstrates how lexical choices can project positive self-presentation of ruling parties while negatively portraying opponents. Similarly, Oyeleye and Osisanwo (2013) explore the ideological bias embedded in media representations during Nigeria's 2003 and 2007 general elections, illustrating how lexicalisation functions as a mechanism for positioning media institutions within political power struggles. Aluya and Jime (2024) further discuss the framing of electoral violence, showing how lexical choices shape public perception of political unrest. Olawe (2024) examines the strategic role of lexicalization in framing public health crises, emphasising how media language can evoke urgency and fear. Baranova et al. (2023) highlight the emotionally loaded nature of media language, demonstrating that lexical choices reflect societal attitudes and influence public perception. Collectively, these studies underscore the significance of examining lexical framing in the context of the #EndBadGovernance protests, where media language similarly shapes public understanding and legitimacy of citizen resistance.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Framing theory explains how the media highlight certain aspects of reality while downplaying others to influence how people interpret news. Developed by scholars like Gregory Bateson and Erving Goffman, the theory suggests that people view the world through “frames,” which act as cognitive structures for understanding events. Frames are abstractions that work to organize “or structure message meaning” (Arowolo, 2017). (Goffman, 1974). These frames are shaped and reinforced by media, creating particular angles through which stories are told. As Arowolo (2017) notes, “Framing theory suggests that how something is presented to the audience (called ‘the frame’) influences the choices people make about how to process that information” (Arowolo, 2017). The media create this frame by introducing (Gitlin, 1980). “organize and present the ideas, events” (Arowolo, 2017). The theory is especially relevant when covering protests, where media can frame actors as either peaceful citizens or as threats to public order “frames influence public perceptions, attitudes” (Arowolo, 2017). According to Arowolo (2017), “Frames can be designed to enhance understanding or are used as cognitive shortcuts to link stories to the bigger picture.”. According to Arowolo (2017),

“Frames can be designed to enhance understanding or are used as cognitive shortcuts to link stories to the bigger picture.” However, a criticism of the theory is that framing can be subtle and difficult to detect because, as Entman puts it, “frames are difficult to detect fully and reliably, because many of the framing devices can appear as ‘natural,’ unremarkable choices of words or images” (Arowolo, 2017). Such choices are not inevitable or unproblematic (Entman, 1993).

In the context of this study, framing theory is used to examine how Nigerian newspapers portrayed the #EndBadGovernance protest through lexical choices. The media’s role in shaping the narrative becomes critical when language like “hoodlums,” “prayer walk,” or “massacre” is used to frame protest events. Creating the mood and giving good coverage (Scheufele, 1999). The theory is helpful in identifying whether newspapers framed the protests as civic resistance, criminal unrest, or moral action. Arowolo (2017) explains that “the media focuses attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning,” allowing them to subtly influence public sentiment. They not only tell the audience what (Entman, 1993). This is particularly important in politically charged environments where news framing can affect legitimacy and response to social movements frames influence public perceptions, attitudes (Olawe, 2024). The study also considers Entman’s model, where “attributing responsibility, either for a cause or a solution” is one of the common framing methods used in protest coverage (Arowolo, 2017). The media as gatekeepers... organize and present (Gitlin, 1980) media’s use of frames influences importance (Olawe, 2024). Therefore, framing theory serves as the foundation for this research in identifying and interpreting how selected newspapers used lexicalisation to construct meaning around the #EndBadGovernance protest.

## **Methodology**

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore how lexical choices in Nigerian newspaper headlines shaped the framing of the #EndBadGovernance protest. The qualitative design allows for deeper interpretation of meanings, ideologies, and intentions behind specific word use in media discourse. This study adopted a qualitative research approach due to its strength in exploring meanings embedded in human language and communication. As Creswell (2018) explains, qualitative methods are suitable when researchers seek to “honor an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of reporting the complexity of a situation” (p. 4). This aligns with the study's aim to examine how seemingly ordinary words carry ideological weight. The data was sourced from ten national newspapers: Premium time news, Punch, Vanguard, The Guardian, The Nation, Daily Post, Premium Times, Business Day, The Tide, and Daily times. These outlets were selected based on their wide readership, national relevance, and the variety in their editorial tones. Purposeful sampling was used to ensure “the researcher intentionally selects individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon” (Creswell, 2018). Three methods were applied to analyze the data: textual analysis, content analysis, and descriptive analysis. Textual analysis helped examine how

specific lexical items function within broader semantic and ideological contexts (Babbie, 2020). Content analysis allowed for the identification of repeated word patterns and their association with protest narratives (Silverman, 2021). Descriptive analysis was used to interpret the tone and framing of each headline, categorizing them as positive, negative, or neutral. Lexical items such as “killing its youth”, “punitive”, “cry for change”, “agent of oppression”, and “unwanted protest” were specifically selected for their emotional and ideological significance within the protest discourse.

### **Analysis and Findings**

#### **Punch News**

**November 28, 2024**

**Headline:** “*24 killed, over 1,200 detained during #EndBadGovernance protest – Amnesty International*”

#### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “**24 killed**” – Brutal and confrontational; centers death and loss.
- “**1,200 detained**” – Emphasizes mass crackdown and state control.
- “**Amnesty International**” – Invokes external legitimacy and human rights gravity.

**December 22, 2024**

**Headline:** “*#EndBadGovernance protest: Police reject Amnesty report, demand retraction, apology*”

#### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “**Reject**” – Assertive denial; pushes back against accountability.
- “**Retraction, apology**” – Positions the state as aggrieved, not guilty.
- “**Police**” – Puts institutional power under the spotlight.

**January 22, 2025**

**Headline:** “*#EndBadGovernance protest: Jigawa lost N5bn, fact-finding C'ttee reveals*”

#### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “**Lost N5bn**” – Reduces the protest to economic damage.
- “**Fact-finding Committee**” – Implies state-led legitimacy.
- “**Reveals**” – Frames the report as factual and authoritative.

#### **Punch News – Contextual Insight**

Punch News constructs a narrative arc from violence to denial and finally to damage control. It opens with raw, statistical confrontation using terms like “24 killed” and “1,200 detained”, which frame the protest in the context of state-inflicted brutality. However, rather than acknowledging these human rights concerns, later headlines show the government pushing back. The police's use of “reject” and demand for a “retraction” and “apology” represent an institutional refusal to accept blame, attempting instead to discredit Amnesty International. By January, the focus pivots toward financial loss with “Jigawa lost N5bn”, reframing the protests as economically destructive rather than socially justified. Lexical shifts from mortality to money reflect a calculated re-narration of the movement by state-affiliated voices.

## **The Guardian**

**August 3, 2024**

**Headline:** *"#EndBadGovernance Day 3: Protester recounts attack"*

### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- **"Protester recounts"** – Focuses on personal experience and witness testimony.
- **"Attack"** – Implies victimhood and violent disruption.

**August 4, 2024**

**Headline:** *"#EndBadGovernance Day 3: Citizens continue call for change"*

### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- **"Citizens continue"** – Demonstrates endurance and collective effort.
- **"Call for change"** – Embeds the protest within reformist discourse.

**August 20, 2024**

**Headline:** *"Fearless in October: #EndBadGovernance organisers plan second nationwide protest"*

### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- **"Fearless"** – Conveys bravery and resistance.
- **"Plan"** – Strategic, deliberate; not spontaneous.
- **"Second nationwide protest"** – Implies expansion and long-term intent.

## **The Guardian – Contextual Insight**

The Guardian presents a protest narrative grounded in personal dignity, collective persistence, and ideological clarity. Early on, phrases like "Protester recounts" and "attack" humanize the movement by highlighting firsthand trauma. The use of "Citizens continue" and "call for change" frames the protests not as chaos, but as organized civic participation with a defined purpose. By August 20, the movement is portrayed as fearless and tactical, with protesters "planning" a "second nationwide protest". The shift from street-level testimonies to organized strategic planning signals the protest's maturation into a sustained political force, while "fearless" casts its leaders as morally and emotionally resolute.

## **Daily Trust**

**August 6, 2024**

**Headline:** *"Nigeria's cry for change: The #EndBadGovernance protest"*

### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- **"Cry for change"** – Emotional, urgent, and collective.
- **"Protest"** – Civic action seeking redress.

**September 5, 2024**

**Headline:** *"Aftermath of End Bad Governance in Nigeria Protests – Daily Trust"*

### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- **"Aftermath"** – Suggests unresolved consequences and continuity.
- **"Protests"** – Remains neutral, but rooted in mass civic action.

**September 6, 2024**

**Headline:** *“End Bad Governance Movement: Govt’s convoluted responses”*

**Lexical Content Analysis:**

- **“Movement”** – Indicates ideological structure and momentum.
- **“Govt’s convoluted responses”** – Critiques the government as unclear, disorganized, or evasive.

**Daily Trust – Contextual Insight**

Daily Trust’s framing emphasizes the emotional and ideological weight of the protests, beginning with “Nigeria’s cry for change”, which captures national desperation and hope. The term “protest” is used not as chaos but as a legitimate civic plea. By September, the protest’s legacy is seen in the “aftermath”, indicating it has lasting effects beyond the street. The government is portrayed critically, with its “convoluted responses” framed as muddled and insufficient. The shift from emotional urgency to structural critique shows a movement whose impact has outlived its moment, forcing the state to scramble for legitimacy while the public maintains pressure through the continuing “movement”.

**The Nation**

**December 22, 2024**

**Headline:** *Police knocks Amnesty International's report on EndBadGovernance protest*

**Lexical Content Analysis:**

- **“Knocks”** – Informal and aggressive; attempts to discredit.
- **“Amnesty International's report”** – Introduces external human rights authority.
- **“EndBadGovernance protest”** – Connects the state reaction directly to public dissent.

**February 20, 2025**

**Headline:** *10 died in 2024 protest against hardship, panel confirms*

**Lexical Content Analysis:**

- **“10 died”** – A quantified death toll; emphasizes seriousness.
- **“Protest against hardship”** – Grounds the protest in economic suffering.
- **“Panel confirms”** – Adds official, investigative legitimacy.

**March 22, 2025**

**Headline:** *DSS releases detained EndBadGovernance protesters*

**Lexical Content Analysis:**

- **“DSS”** – State intelligence agency; implies state control.
- **“Releases detained”** – Indicates prior state suppression.
- **“Protesters”** – Continues framing as civic actors, not criminals.

**Contextual Insight – The Nation**

The Nation’s headlines illustrate a movement from state resistance to reluctant acknowledgment. The police initially attempt to undermine criticism by aggressively “knocking” Amnesty’s findings, trying to delegitimize external judgment. However, the admission that “10 died” during a “protest against hardship” reveals the human cost and validates the protest’s motive. By



March, the “DSS releases detained protesters” shows that the state’s grip is loosening, whether due to pressure or procedural necessity. The lexical trajectory moves from deflection to partial accountability, revealing a reluctant state narrative shift.

### **Premium Times**

**February 28, 2025**

**Headline:** *EndBadGovernance Protest: Organisers declare 1 October 'National Day of Survival'*

#### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “Organisers declare” – Shows structure, intent, and leadership.
- “National Day of Survival” – Symbolic and emotionally charged; frames the protest as existential.

**March 7, 2025**

**Headline:** *EndBadGovernance: NLC speaks on protests, demands policy reversal*

#### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “NLC speaks” – Invokes institutional authority.
- “Demands policy reversal” – Signals strategic confrontation.

**March 15, 2025**

**Headline:** *Nigerians commence protests against 'bad governance'*

#### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “Commence protests” – Formal, calculated mobilization.
- “Bad governance” – Core grievance; broad and critical.

### **Contextual Insight – Premium Times**

Premium Times emphasizes coordinated civic resistance, connecting individual frustration to collective action. The phrase “Organizers declare” signals intentional leadership, while “National Day of Survival” dramatizes the stakes, implying that governance failures threaten basic existence. With “NLC speaks” and its “demands for policy reversal,” the movement gains institutional muscle. Finally, “Nigerians commence protests” underscores the recurring and organized nature of resistance, pointing to a society unwilling to normalize suffering under “bad governance.” The lexicon charts a shift from symbolic declaration to actionable, wide-scale mobilization.

### **This Day Live**

**August 13, 2024**

**Headline:** *Takeaways from the EndBadGovernance Protest*

#### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “Takeaways” – Reflective, indicating aftermath and analysis.
- “Protest” – Neutral term that still maintains civil resistance framing.

**March 20, 2025**

**Headline:** *EndBadGovernance Protest: Nigerian Couple Sends SoS to FG over Indictment*

#### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “Sends SoS” – Urgent and emotional; suggests desperation.
- “FG” – Federal Government; signifies direct appeal to central authority.

- “Indictment” – Legal term indicating state accusation or criminalization.

**March 21, 2025**

**Headline:** *Chronicling the EndBadGovernance Protest as Nigerians Cry for Change*

**Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “Chronicling” – Narrative-focused, long-term framing.
- “Cry for Change” – Deeply emotional and moral appeal.
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**Contextual Insight- This Day Live**

This Day Live’s coverage leans into emotional resonance and long-term societal reflection. With early mention of “takeaways,” the outlet immediately suggests that the protest left a meaningful impact. The March 20 headline introduces personal struggle through a “Nigerian couple” sending an “SOS” to the “FG,” highlighting perceived persecution and desperation. By March 21, the protest is immortalized through “chronicling,” while the phrase “cry for change” captures the public’s enduring emotional and moral plea. These lexical choices frame the movement as both historic and human, driven by the pain of ordinary citizens rather than political spectacle.

**Business Day Live**

**August 2, 2024**

**Headline:** *Conversations on EndBadGovernance across Nigeria*

**Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “Conversations” – Civil, ongoing, national in scope.
- “Across Nigeria” – Emphasizes scale and inclusion.

**August 11, 2024**

**Headline:** *EndBadGovernance protest: Use of out-of-school children dangerous for Nigeria*

**Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “Out-of-school children” – Highlights vulnerable demographics.
- “Dangerous for Nigeria” – Urgent and cautionary.

**August 19, 2024**

**Headline:** *EndBadGovernance: Nigeria must stop killing its youth. They are rightly aggrieved!*

**Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “Killing its youth” – Direct and provocative; high emotional charge.
- “Rightly aggrieved” – Morally justified frustration.

**Contextual Insight – Business Day Live**

Business Day Live focuses on societal impact, youth vulnerability, and national consequence. It frames the protest as a public discourse through terms like “conversations” and situates it “across Nigeria,” signaling wide relevance. The inclusion of “out-of-school children” and warnings that this is “dangerous for Nigeria” brings attention to long-term social destabilization. Most forcefully, the phrase “killing its youth” followed by “rightly aggrieved” signals that the protest is not only justifiable but a direct result of state violence. The emotional and cautionary tone highlights a nation at risk of destroying its future.



## **Daily Post**

**August 12, 2024**

**Headline:** *EndBadGovernance: Address demands of the youths – Musician Bongos Ikwue tells Nigerian Govt*

### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “Address demands” – Formal, constructive; implies existing grievances.
- “Youths” – Central demographic; represents national frustration.

**September 12, 2024**

**Headline:** *EndBadGovernance protests: You've become agent of oppression – HURIWA knocks judiciary*

### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “Agent of oppression” – Accusatory; suggests betrayal by authority.
- “Knocks judiciary” – Blunt criticism of legal institutions.

**November 8, 2024**

**Headline:** *Mixed reactions trail Nigerian Govt's release of EndBadGovernance protesters*

### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “Mixed reactions” – Ambiguity and division in public opinion.
- “Release of protesters” – Indicates previous state suppression.

## **Contextual Insight – Daily Post**

Daily Post positions the protest within an ongoing dialogue between civic society and government. “Address demands of the youths” signals a call for action, grounded in generational discontent. As things escalate, the protest gains sharper political tones, with watchdog group HURIWA accusing the judiciary of becoming an “agent of oppression.” This language breaks trust between citizens and state institutions. By November, the phrase “mixed reactions” surrounding the “release of protesters” reveals a nation unsure whether to see justice, fear, or appeasement in the government’s late response. The lexical field swings from appeal to accusation to uncertainty.

## **Vanguard News**

**August 10, 2024**

**Headline:** *EndBadGovernance: Why protest turned violent in the north — Northern leaders*

### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “Turned violent” – Signals escalation.
- “Northern leaders” – Regional authority perspective.

**August 10, 2024**

**Headline:** *EndBadGovernance Protest: A mixed outcome*

### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “Mixed outcome” – Suggests complexity, no clear resolution.

**October 29, 2024**

**Headline:** *EndBadGovernance protest, wake-up call — Northern govts*

### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “Wake-up call” – Metaphorical, urgent signal for reform.
- “Northern govts” – Regional institutional voice.

### **Contextual Insight – Vanguard News**

Vanguard's coverage explores regional complexity and political response. The phrase “turned violent” casts the northern protest space as unstable, while “Northern leaders” offer a filtered interpretation of events. By describing the movement as a “mixed outcome,” the coverage invites a neutral-to-critical assessment of results. However, the later term “wake-up call” used by “Northern govts” reflects growing institutional recognition of protest legitimacy. Lexically, the shift from violence to realization shows how even reluctant power centers are forced to engage with popular pressure.

### **The Tide**

**August 5, 2024**

**Headline:** *Hunger Protest Paralyzes Port Activities In Nigeria*

#### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “Hunger Protest” – Rooted in economic desperation.
- “Paralyzes Port Activities” – Disruption of economic function.

**August 7, 2024**

**Headline:** *The Unwanted Protest*

#### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “Unwanted” – Delegitimizing tone; protest as nuisance.

**September 13, 2024**

**Headline:** *EndBadGovernance Protesters’ Bail Conditions Punitive, Witch-hunt – AI*

#### **Lexical Content Analysis:**

- “Punitive” – Excessive punishment; harsh treatment.
- “Witch-hunt” – Politically motivated persecution.
- “AI” – Amnesty International; credible rights actor.

### **Contextual Insight – The Tide**

The Tide provides a perspective on disruption, legitimacy, and repression. The “Hunger Protest” ties protest motivation to survival, while “paralyzes port activities” implies high-impact resistance. The phrase “The Unwanted Protest” uses delegitimizing language, suggesting elite or state disapproval. Amnesty’s framing of “punitive” bail and “witch-hunt” adds a human rights lens, pointing to a state actively persecuting dissent. Overall, the language shifts from viewing protest as an inconvenience to acknowledging its moral weight through external validation.

### **Discussion**

Lexicalisation functions as a critical tool through which media outlets structure public perception of protests by foregrounding specific semantic frames. In the context of the #EndBadGovernance movement, terms like “killing its youth” and “punitive” evoke state-inflicted harm and position governmental institutions as hostile to their own population. This lexical construction resonates with Fairclough’s (1995) argument that discourse is “socially constitutive” and used to legitimize or challenge power structures. The Business Day Live headline, for instance, explicitly condemns state actions with the assertion “Nigeria must stop killing its youth”, framing the government

not only as violent but as morally bankrupt in the eyes of its citizens. As the document states, “the government’s heavy-handed response to the protests, including the use of force, mirrored the current situation and contributed to the escalation of public dissent” (Ganzallo, 2024, p. 25). Such lexical choices do not just inform but actively shape ideology and reinforce or resist dominant narratives (Wodak, 2001). The use of “punitive” in reports about bail conditions similarly casts the state as vindictive, extending punishment beyond lawful limits. This aligns with the framing of the protest as a historical rupture, where “visual memory becomes an alternative archive of truth” (Ganzallo, 2024, p. 31).

Alternatively, lexical constructions such as “agent of oppression”, “mixed reactions”, and “unwanted protest” function as mechanisms of delegitimization, redirecting public focus from systemic grievances to controversy, disruption, or disobedience. These terms shift the narrative from civic resistance to public nuisance or moral ambiguity, a strategy frequently observed in state-aligned or conservative media to preserve hegemonic order (Richardson, 2007). The phrase “agent of oppression”, directed at the judiciary by HURIWA in *Daily Post*, reframes legal institutions as complicit in repression rather than neutral arbiters of justice. In the document, this reframing is visible in how “instances of embezzlement, lack of accountability, and inefficient public service delivery created a sense of disillusionment among the populace” (Ganzallo, 2024, p. 23), but are eclipsed in certain media accounts by efforts to delegitimize dissent. Similarly, headlines citing “mixed reactions” to the release of protesters present ambiguity where there should be clarity, deflecting from the reality of wrongful detention. The term “unwanted protest” as seen in *The Tide*, recasts civic action as imposition—removing its legitimacy by implying a lack of public support. As lexical studies show, such language forms a “semantic barrier” between protest legitimacy and criminal behavior (van Dijk, 1998). The document’s reference to how “the disconnect between government and citizens breeds alienation” (Ganzallo, 2024, p. 20) underscores why protesters are easily othered and their grievances dismissed in state-leaning narratives.

On the other hand, lexical choices like “cry for change”, “National Day of Survival”, and “conversations across Nigeria” reflect resistance through moral, emotional, and civic framing, suggesting suffering, solidarity, and national consciousness. These terms echo what Reisigl and Wodak (2001) describe as “discursive strategies of legitimation”, where protesters symbolically align their actions with higher values like justice, equity, and survival. The *This Day Live* headline’s use of “cry for change” evokes a deep emotional and ethical claim, presenting activism as both desperate and dignified. As noted, “the growing disparity between the rich and the poor has been a major source of public frustration” (Ganzallo, 2024, p. 27), and the use of emotionally loaded language signals a moral rebuke of that inequality. Likewise, *Premium Times*’ designation of October 1 as a “National Day of Survival” elevates the protests to a symbolic struggle for existence itself, turning what could be framed as unrest into a civic ritual. Meanwhile, Business

Day Live's "conversations across Nigeria" constructs protest not as chaos but as discourse participatory, legitimate, and national in scope. These terms serve to affirm the protest's legitimacy while also asserting ideological resistance through culturally resonant, strategically framed expressions. The framing, therefore, becomes not only informative but transformative, altering the lens through which public resistance is interpreted.

### Conclusion

The analysis of lexicalisation in newspaper headlines has shown how language plays a powerful role in shaping public perception of protests like #EndBadGovernance. Lexical choices not only inform readers but also influence how protesters and their actions are interpreted by society delivering news that captures attention. The findings of this study align with the reality that the perception of corruption and the lavish lifestyles of the political elite have intensified public resentment. The use of terms such as "killing its youth", "agent of oppression", and "National Day of Survival" illustrates the ideological framing embedded within media discourse emphasize the emotional resonance. These protest movements did not emerge in isolation but were shaped by long-standing grievances, as the government's heavy-handed response to the protests... contributed to the escalation of public dissent. The lexical framing of protests reflects deeper issues such as inequality, corruption, and governance failures, confirming that social inequity... has driven many to participate in the protests, highlight the devastating consequences. Ultimately, this research underscores the need for more responsible media reporting and the critical examination of language in shaping national discourse shapes public understanding, influences perceptions

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