

## Communicating With Pictures In Artistic And Aesthetic Forms: The Role Of The Newspaper Photo Editor

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### Abstract

Newspaper is a mass medium capable of offering textual, photographic and general graphic or visual experiences. Such experiences should be made interesting through the application of certain principles, which may be classified as artistic and aesthetic principles. In view of this, this article examines the role of the photo editor as the organiser of photographs and ancillary materials particularly on news pages of a newspaper. The aesthetic analysis, as applied in this discourse, is based on the responsibilities of the photo editor or any other editor saddled with the responsibility of handling photographs, and this is in relation to his role in the process of applying the artistic and aesthetic elements available for a typical news page. The suggestions made regarding news photograph aesthetic indices are a print media confirmation of Herbert Zettl's artistic and aesthetic concepts of clarification, intensification and interpretation of a significant experience through a significant form. And the conclusion is that, from any angle one may decide to look at it, the photo editor, who may also be the news editor, is, through his artistic application of news photographs, an important factor in the final aesthetic look of the news page, specifically, and the newspaper generally.

Key words: art, aesthetics, photo editor, news editor, aesthetic analysis, aesthetic indices, photographer, significant vision and form.

### Introduction

The history of newspapers is often a dramatic chapter in man's media experience. This is so especially when viewed from newspaper's birth and progression in the last few centuries. In Renaissance Europe, the early newspapers were said to have been handwritten. The handwritten newsletters circulated privately among merchants, passing along information about everything from wars to economic conditions to social customs and human interest stories. There are so many claims as to the origin of newspaper as a mass medium; hence there may be no clear record as to when the first newspaper came to being. But as reported in Hasan (2013), the first printed newspapers appeared in Germany in the late 1400. The news pamphlet or broadsheets, which were textually inclined, carried sensational stories, principally reporting atrocities against Germans in Transylvania. In the English speaking world, the earliest predecessors of the newspaper were small news pamphlets published occasionally, especially during important events. In the American continent, the first newspaper appeared in Boston in 1690, and it was named *Publick Occurrences*. And in Africa, particularly Nigeria, the first newspaper, entitled, *Iwe Irohin*, was launched in the western part of the country in 1859.

Going by the little or no awareness that may have been there regarding photo journalism at that time, one may not be wrong to assume that a high percentage of the content of the early newspapers were text-based. Even though Germany's printed news pamphlets might have carried few photographs and illustrations in their early editions, it is doubtful how such pictures were meaningful to the extent of attracting the serious attention of taste-seeking newspaper readers of today. And even Henry Townsend's *Iwe Irohin*, in Nigeria, published in 1859, in Yoruba Language, was said to have contained pages that could not command instant attention of many readers, mainly due to its over-dependence on words. Colour printing might not have been the order of the day at that time; hence *Iwe Irohin* seemingly lacked colour and convincing graphics. The front page, through the back page was predominantly filled with textual news and feature items. And, generally, the use of newspapers or magazines for advertisements, which in a way could have necessitated the use of pictures, may not have been a common media practice then, since a newspaper's general makeup is a factor in its readership pull and by extension, patronage, by advertisers.

The trend may have changed for the better today, as newspaper pages, particularly news pages, now appear dramatic and dynamic. A reasonable portion of the contents of newspapers, magazines, radio, television and even the new media, even in developing countries, contains graphics and, importantly, photographs, which are key aesthetic components. In Nigeria, it is observable that an average newspaper carries at least one photograph or any other graphic material on a news page that may contain an average of four different news stories. The same thing happens on a feature page that carries more than one feature story. One can imagine the ability of photographs, in particular, to attract attention to a page. This trend subsists for many reasons including the level of exposure of different third world media operators to the principles of certain media productions. Such exposure includes aesthetic exposure. This is where aesthetics and aesthetic experience come in.

#### **Newspaper, art, aesthetics, and aesthetic experience**

Since it takes painstaking creativity for a newspaper editor to produce a newspaper that commands the serious attention of a reader, then newspaper is art itself. And because his intention is to give his newspaper a finishing that should make it stand out positively and pleasurable, the newspaper editor himself is primarily an artist. According to Akpan (1987), art is an imaginative creation produced to give pleasure and enjoyment. From here, it can be said that art imitates nature. As an imitation, art appears to be man's own addition or contribution or explanation to what nature has provided, and art has its own clearly defined elements or properties. Again, Akpan (1987) identifies three key elements of art to be: substance, form and technique. From his explanation, substance, otherwise called, vision, is what the artist specifically wants to say, especially the aspect of nature that he wants to present to his audience. The duty of an artist is to select, from a world of multiple visions, only those visions or substances that are significant for sharing with his audience. On the other hand, form is the particular medium, channel, or structure in which the artist has chosen to present his imagination. An art form is the structure of art, which is designed to take the human being through an emotional experience structured by the artist. Form involved the accepted principles in that medium, because, while rules must never confine art, art does consistently produce rules.

Technique has to do with the method of fitting or blending the substance into the form. Form and techniques are the elements that differentiate art from life or nature. Each art medium has its unique technique, and that is the artist's personal means of accomplishing

his end and it involves the selection and arrangement of his materials for a particular effect. It therefore behoves the media artist or editor to identify and apply the appropriate technique of presenting his vision through a form that will command the serious attention of the onlooker. To achieve this, he must apply the artistic and aesthetic technique.

In relation to the duties of a news editor, or photo editor, it can be said that such an editor needs a vision or substance, form and a technique to communicate his vision to his audience. While the vision, in this case, is the photograph, the form is the news or news page, and the technique is a combination of art and aesthetic principles or fields.

One may, at this point, wonder about the art and aesthetics combination mentioned above. The primary function of any work of art is to stimulate the imagination through the senses. It may appeal to, or sensitize any of the human senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell or taste. A work of art must cause the audience (in this case newspaper reader) to feel and experience what the artist (photo editor or news editor) has felt and experienced. That feeling is therefore what is called aesthetic experience. So, since art gives rise to aesthetic feeling, it may be regarded as the non-negotiable raw material for an aesthetics feeling or experience.

From the foregoing, it can be re-emphasized that newspaper is an art. As an art, it demands creativity in finishing; it involves the re-ordering and assemblage as well as presentation of visual or readable messages into a structure. It is an art because it involves the selection, ordering, clarifying, interpreting and magnifying the editor's experience such that the reader feels the same way the editor is feeling. The pages through which such messages are presented are usually judged by their ability to catch attention through aesthetic packaging, such that a trained aesthetic eye finds something in the beholding. All the spatial relationships on the pages – the gutters, the font size, graphics (including pictures and photographs) are all a part of the space and should be structured in such a way that they give a structure to the news space and creates an acceptable standard. Such a standard is what may be termed as aesthetic standard.

In the case of news photograph, which is the thrust of this work, a newspaper is an art because it involves the selection and presentation of news photographs that can both communicate on their own (photo news or photo speak), or communicate their idea of the textual news placed side by side with them. A newspaper editor with an aesthetic hindsight does not accept news photographs as they come from the photographer, because such photographs usually come in their raw forms. He rather looks beyond and ahead of the conceptual ability of the photographer, and re-orders whatever is filed in, thus giving it a new and enjoyable look. The photo editor should be guided by the fact that there is hardly any photograph that comes from a photographer that cannot be edited. Therefore photographs are edited for their aesthetics to come out.

The concept of aesthetics has continued to enjoy universality. Zettl (1990 and 2005) illustrates this universality in his home decoration, car speed limit, and dressing analogies. He explains that aesthetic feeling is no longer a visual but a sensory or perceptual issue. The universality of the concept of aesthetics has made aesthetics a major factor and consideration in newspaper editing generally and newspaper photograph editing in particular. Its companion concept, applied media aesthetics, provides criteria for examining how an editor manipulates certain aesthetic elements in photography to give news photographs in particular a structure that commands the serious attention of readers. Therefore, the underlying principle when discussing aesthetics and newspaper, and particularly aesthetics in photo editing, is that newspaper is not just a channel

through which messages (including pictures and photographs) are distributed, but also is a mass medium that fine-tunes and magnifies that message for a particular response. Zettl (1990 and 2005) asserts that aesthetics in television is to clarify, intensify and interpret events for a large audience in order to help the audience to see the world from a new perspective and a experience it in heightened ways. This experience, which is also applicable to newspaper and specifically photo editing, is what Akpan and Etuk (1991) explained as aesthetic experience. A newspaper editor therefore requires proper understanding of the aesthetic characteristics and the contextual functions of page elements, particularly photo elements, combining them knowledgeably into artistic patterns that clarify, intensify and interpret the significant experience.

### **News pictures and photographs**

All photographs are pictures but it is not all pictures that are photographs. Whereas a picture is any printed, non-textual image, especially something drawn or painted; a photograph is a picture produced with camera, and, as the name implies, is done in the presence of light. It is the camera's capacity to show us more than the reader should see that makes photojournalism such a potent tool in the hands of an accomplished photographer and a professional editor. Like the studio photographer, the reporter or writer composes his story out of the elements at hand. The news photographer or photojournalist has no such option; he must report what his camera sees through its lenses. Unlike a common picture, a photograph cannot be produced without proper lighting because like the human eye, the camera lenses do not see through darkness.

In journalism, especially print journalism, the two words, pictures and photographs are usually used interchangeably especially in the newsroom and during production, where some members of production staff are non-journalists. But whatever name the workers choose to call them may not be the issue. The issue is that in journalism, a picture, photograph or visual speaks louder than words and should be presented as such. One picture does the work of a million words.

A professionalism-minded news editor, news writer or reporter should therefore always think and write in terms of pictures. For the radio news writer, pictures are turned into words because radio is basically aural. That is why it is always advisable for radio news writers to use pictorial words in their news writing – words that conjure mental pictures in the minds of the listener. For television news writing, the pictures are the visuals or camera images carefully followed and captured by the trained video cameraman and given appropriate mix. The visuals add meaning to television news, without which such news is said to be incomplete, both in professional and technical sense. It is unprofessional and un-aesthetic for a television news reporter or presenter to rely only on the verbal version of the news while on air. This is the problem and challenge that most television stations in developing countries including Nigeria face. So, the television news must be written with the expectation that there are visuals to complement and strengthen the texts. There should be no excuse about word and visual synchronization in television production and the news writer or reporter has an important role to play.

In the same manner, print media news writers look more professional and aesthetic in their writing if they write in terms of pictures. The commonest forms of pictures in print media news writing are photographs. Photographs enliven news stories. They make the stories real, human, demonstrative and rhythmic. A news writer appears complete in an event arena when he goes there with all the tools that will help him file in a good and defensible as well as dependable story. Such tools are pen, jotter, recorder, and

importantly, a digital camera. Oftentimes, it is necessary for the photographer to be a different individual who can follow up the events as they unfold, so that the news writer can concentrate on the verbal details. But the two must work or think in terms of each other.

A news story on an accident scene is best presented with the communicative photographs or visuals of the accident. A communicative photograph or visual takes the reader or viewer to the scene of the accident by emphasising or zooming on the aspect that makes the news and discarding the non-news details mistakenly captured by the camera. Readers and viewers are always interested in the pictorial or visual side of a story. And because photographs should not lie, they naturally draw attention to the story or the news page, even more than headlines, sometimes. News writers must understand this aspect of writing and note that it is not all about verbosity, but also the picture. Even though it is traditionally the place of the news editor to assign photographers to cover formal news events, a news writer or reporter has a duty to come back to the office with relevant pictures or visuals. In that case, the relevant editor's job becomes easy as he now only works and improves on the picture or visual elements. This is a part of professionalism in journalism.

A newspaper page that is designed without a photograph or an illustration that is relevant to that page is said to be grey, banal, repulsive, and generally weak, no matter the strength of the textual content of the page. In the same vein, a radio news story that is written or reported in a language that conjures no picture in the minds of the listeners may be lacking in clarity. And clarity is an aesthetic element in news writing and reporting. Similarly, a television news presentation that does not follow the rules of synchronization will leave the viewer half-informed. Of course a television news viewer would not be satisfied if he has to be presented with the face of the news presenter only, instead of the face of the armed robber mentioned in the news. The news writer has a big role to play here because a synchronised script makes editing very easy.

However, some pictures do not need an accompanying news story; not even a cutline. They can be a story on their own because they have something to communicate. This is particularly applicable to print media news pictures. For instance, a photograph of a baby hugging its pet, or a mother embracing her baby are examples of photographs that may stand on their own and give warmth to the newspaper or magazine. Whatever is the case, news writers and reporters must think in terms of pictures and illustrations because the relevant editor may decide to use them as they deem it fit. In other words, pictures, especially in newspapers, can be used singly or with accompanying news stories.

### **The challenge**

A number of writers have discussed the principles and challenges faced by photo and other editors, especially in the print media industry. Some writers and researchers, who discuss the creative challenge faced by photo editors, are: Anim (2003), Batchen (1999), Evans (1978), Goldberg (1988), Ikpe and Anim (2006), and Kobre (2004), as well as Udoh, (2014). Their general opinion is that news editors and photo editors should place creativity, and by extension, aesthetics, first, while making efforts to communicate through photographs.

One challenge faced by print media, especially newspaper and magazine, today, as far as photograph is concerned, is the challenge posed by the emergence of the new and more dramatic media, especially the internet. Today, internet enabled mobile phones tend to access photo news on the spot. In this case, some important news photographs become "stale" to many readers by the time they are used on news pages in the print media. This

may have inspired Okoye (2004) to ask: if a picture in a news magazine or newspaper had already been seen on television, and on the internet, how can the magazine or newspaper picture be relevant? To Okoye, for such a picture to be appreciated by the reader, there must be art in it. What Okoye, perhaps means here is that the newspaper or magazine editor needs to be creative in the use of the picture. And one way of being creative is by capitalizing on the aspect of the picture that was down-played by the dramatic media that used the picture. However, Kobre (2004), advises art and photo editors to always find a news peg in their photographs before using them. The news peg encompasses all the processes involved in taking photographs, principally the editing process. Again to Kobre, a news peg tells the reader why the photo story is being seen now, instead of six months ago, or in the future.

### **The responsibilities of the newspaper photo editor**

Acclaimed “father” of television aesthetics, Herbert Zettl, says that for a media producer to be at his best, he must first see himself as a psychologist, second as a technical adviser, and third as a production coordinator. This principle, again, applies to a news or photo editor of a newspaper organisation.

First, a photo editor should see himself as a psychologist. As a psychologist, the photo editor deals with and manages a variety of people who see photo production from different perspectives. Often, he works with a photographer who has finance problems, which of course is the reason he is not up to date in his production facilities. He may try to make meaning from an important photograph that comes from an analogue camera. He may have to work with a slow-in-learning photographer. He may work with people or photographers or news writers with different psychological make-ups. He has to make them work as a team.

Second, a photo editor should see himself as a technical adviser as well as technician. A typical photo editor is like a football coach. As a coach, he issues instructions to those who work under and for him. In the same vein, a photo editor issues out instructions that the photographic crew may need for optimal production. Mboho and Udousoro (2011, p. 98) explain this better in their television aesthetics, as they point out that “the media director acts as the symphony orchestra conductor who knows the sound of each of them and how they can be played to produce good music.”

Finally, he must be a coordinator. The photo editor must be able to coordinate the different graphic production details and processes by way of providing the needed facilities and other enablement. He must ensure that to get high quality photographs, the photographers must be equipped with modern cameras and gadgets. He must train them on appropriate camera shots. He must in essence teach them how to snap for news and for aesthetic experience.

### **Artistic and aesthetic indices in edited news photographs**

Evans (1978) simply entitles his photojournalism book, *Picture a Page*. This goes a long way to confirm that a news story on a newspaper page appears more lively, dramatic and interesting if it is accompanied with a well edited and well synergized photograph or illustration. Also a news page becomes more interesting when such a page carries an action photograph which can, on its own tell an independent or dependent story. A four by four inches photograph of a project inauguration, which clearly shows how a tape is being cut by a state governor or any other public figure, may tell a story more dramatically and interestingly than a 15-graph textual story on the same subject matter. The same thing goes for a disclaimer portrait of an expelled member of staff of a company printed alongside a news story on the inside page of a newspaper. Pictures or



specifically, photographs, animate and complement texts, and if well manipulated, render an aesthetic experience. According to Udoh and Obot (2013) whereas the text of the news does the singing, an accompanying picture or illustration does the drumming, thus leaving the reader with no other activity than dancing. A disclaimer news story in a newspaper or television, for instance, looks structurally incomplete if it does not carry the photograph or visual of the disclaimed person, and so on. But it does not end in carrying such a photograph as the complementary picture must meet certain conditions or attain a certain acceptable standard. This is where aesthetic considerations or indices come in. What then constitutes aesthetics in news photographs, visuals or pictures generally? As a makeup property of a newspaper or magazine, professionally handled news photographs should have the following aesthetic elements: sharpness, bluntness, largeness, orderliness, specificity, freshness, space, mood, legality and decency, and completeness.

**Sharpness:** Just as clarity is the first aesthetic field in news writing and reporting (Udoh and Obot, 2013), sharpness remains the first aesthetic field in news photography. In order to command the serious attention of readers and make them satisfied, a news photograph should not be noisy. A photograph is noisy if it is in any way blurred or unclear. It is noisy if it carries extraneous features. Extraneous features on a photograph are those features that have nothing to do with the main issue in the news it seeks to tell. Often, such photographs are taken by an unprofessional hand and they oftentimes cause a newspaper reader to be confused as to whose photograph he is viewing on a news page. Naturally, a portrait used to identify a newsmaker who is an old man must be able to reveal the contour or signs of old age on the face of the newsmaker. In other words, sharp photographs show the “hidden” realities on the object of news. It magnifies and shows reality. There should be no doubt about who is being depicted in any news photograph, if that photograph is sharp enough. To get this kind of photograph, the cameraman must himself be up-to-date. He must use a digital camera which of course is everywhere today. Whether printed in colour or black and white, sharp pictures usually stand out and are bestsellers anywhere. But it should be noted that no matter how digital a camera is, it would not perform any magic until it is manipulated by a professional photojournalist.

**Bluntness/originality:** Closely related to sharpness, as an aesthetic field, in photo journalism is bluntness. While sharpness shows clarity and reality, bluntness shows originality and “truth”. A news picture or photograph is blunt if it is not made up or overworked for artificial effect. The trend in today’s digitalized or computer-based photojournalism has brought a situation where a photograph of a typically ugly human face is doctored up such that a gulf is created between the photograph and the person or object that it represents. Usually, this is done to create either a false impression of the person or object represented, or an attempt to please the person or object represented. There are situations where a person’s flat nose is replaced by a pointed one on account of beauty and photo trick. In this computer age, certain enlargement photographs of personalities are often overworked to produce an impression of youthfulness or good health for an individual, who at the moment that he is being represented, is not appearing so. Such a photograph may possess all the properties of sharpness, but is lacking in bluntness or originality as an aesthetic field. Since there should be no makeup or deception in aesthetics, they should not have a place in the news pages, which are the key pages of a newspaper. A photograph is blunt if it presents the exactitude of the object it represents, and not a mere colouration.

**Largeness/appeal:** One of the functions of an art piece is magnification of experience. For any news photograph to be fully appreciated by a reader or viewer, it has to be large

or magnified enough. Largeness here is relative. It does not mean that all news photographs have to be large and, perhaps the same in size. Photographs on the front page of a newspaper should not be the same in size with those inside. To be able to sell the newspaper, front page news photograph or illustration should be easily seen from a long distance. In other words, large news photographs appear nearer to the eye than small ones. Photograph or any other news picture is near and appealing, if it is relatively large enough. Such a photograph commands serious attention.

**Order/protocol:** Another function of art is order. A photo editor is an artist. As an artist, a photo editor orders or re-orders experience. Photographs should not be scattered inartistically on pages. Orderliness in news photography is most applicable where the photographs to be displayed are more than one on a page. Newspapers and magazines usually present photo news pages, which seek to tell the news in their “live” forms. For photographs on a photo page to be fully appreciated, they should be presented in such an order that the reader easily appreciates them. The sequence should follow a certain pattern. A series of photo news on a particular page, which is on a specific event, should be arranged in an order which depicts sequence or the way the event took place, and of course personalities represented. Just as a textual story is written in a structure, particularly the inverted pyramid structure, pictures in display (photo news, photo file, news in pictures, etc) should be arranged in an easy-to-follow pattern and like straight news, in their order of diminishing importance. In other words, there should be protocol in display of pictures on a page and among pages. Depending on the effect the editor wants to create, photo news meant for a half, a full page, or more pages which are on a particular or related event or situation, should be arranged either in a story telling or news format. This aids quick understanding, and is aesthetic.

**Specificity:** News presentation is an ordered, clarified, intensified and interpreted experience. It does not thrive on confusion. In other words, news, whether textual or pictorial, should be specific if it must be fully appreciated. In the same vein, photo news should be specific on an issue, or at worst emphasize an idea or point, if it must be understood by its viewers. This point of emphasis must be given prominence in the picture. In order to be specific about the size or kind or colour of eyeballs possessed by a person in the news, the person’s face, in relation to the position of the eyes, must be emphasized during editing or cropping by the relevant photo editors. Another word for specificity as an aesthetic field in picture journalism is emphasis. And, as pointed out by Ikpe and Anim (2006, p. 61), “the item to form the focus of the picture and transmit the relevant news should be specified”.

**Freshness:** In journalism, timeliness or currency is an important determinant of news. What this means is that for a particular news item to sell, and be more interesting, it must be anchored on a recent development. Even feature stories possess this value because for a feature story to be more interesting, it must be linked with the current situation. Similarly, photographs which seek to tell a news story must be fresh in outlook. Freshness as an aesthetic field demands the photograph to bloom like a healthy teenager on one hand and on the other hand address a current issue. This does not however mean that pictures of old events should not be used. The emphasis is that such a picture must be used in such a way that it has relevance with the currency or freshness of the news package it may seek to complement. In any case, it is aesthetic to use fresh or current pictures as news.

**Locale/wordiness:** For a news photograph to communicate effectively, it should contain enough information on the location or background of the event being reported. A



photograph taken in a rainy day or rain-soaked object, for instance, must reflect signs of rain drops; otherwise the photograph may be at variant with the accompanying story. The same principle should be applied while using a photograph to show inauguration of a project. Apart from cutting of tape, the background of the ceremony should have a place in the photograph. This principle is most applicable where the photograph is standing on its own to make news. But even where a photograph is used alongside a textual story, these features would also help in adding more meaning to it. In any case, news photographs should be accompanied with words or captions, which are explanations or descriptions of photographs. As an aesthetic consideration, photo words should say exactly what is in the photograph. The editor can do this by clearly identifying the persons or objects appearing in the picture, providing details on the other angles of the story, avoiding unnecessary adjectives and adverbs, and using relatively short sentences. Importantly too, captions should be written in the present tense, should provide elements of 5Ws and one H, and should not be editorialised.

**Space:** If there are things that should be taken seriously by any newspaper editor, they should include space management. It is space management that puts a particular news story on one page rather than the other. It is space management that makes one story long and the story short. It is the lack of space that causes an editor to drop a story and use the other. The same principle is applicable to picture space management. But space, as applied here, has to do with the size and proportion of the news picture. A photograph used as a complement to a news story must be allotted a space and size proportional to the story it is complementing. For uniformity, a 12-graph straight news story has nothing in common with a three column by three inches portrait of the person or object in the textual part of the news. Even though in the artistic point of view, big photographs are good enough for news stories, most page designers and sub editors oftentimes use exceedingly large photographs to make up for news holes, which, due to poor planning, could not be filled by the stories allocated to such holes. This is not aesthetic, as there is no makeshift in aesthetics. This calls for proper character count and measurement by those saddled with the responsibility of page planning. To avoid this makeshift and filler problem, especially as it affects the size of a news picture, there should be proportionality in space allocation. In other words, space allotted a news photograph should not be outstandingly larger than the space meant for the news which it complements. The reverse also applies.

However, actions photograph on a tabloid's news page, which is there as a news story in its own right, can be blown to a reasonably large size. This is because together with the cutline, it tells its own story without textual support. But such a picture should not be blown up in such a way that it diminishes the value of other competing stories on the same page. The usual aesthetic size of this kind of photograph is four by four inches landscape. It is equally important to note that like human beings, photographs can breathe, or should be made to breathe. Accordingly, there is a need for a news photograph to be placed such that it has white breathing space around it. In other words, there should be a spatial contrast between a photograph and textual matters placed near it, so that the picture can breathe.

**Mood/theme:** Photograph generally complements or supports a textual story. This support also covers the story mood or purpose or theme. The mood field of news photographs requires those who select news photographs to consider the situation of the story under consideration. This is most applicable when the picture is placed side by side with the story. An obituary news story on a sudden death, maybe of a youthful achiever

or bread winner requires an appropriate photograph. A photo that complements that kind of story should be the one that clearly shows an uncontrollable flow of tears from the survivors. It shows the theme and the mood of the burial. This is aesthetic. The accompanying photograph may also depict or capture the free-for-all wailing at the burial ceremony, rather than the photograph of a choral group hired for the solemn event. But for choices that are independently news, the choice of mood is that of the editor, especially when such a picture is placed on a key page, such as the cover. The mood of a photograph can either attract or repel news readers or viewers. For aesthetic reason, the mood of a news photograph should be seen in the mood of the story, and so on.

**Legality/decency:** A photojournalist is under the same legal, decency, and ethical obligation as the news writer or reporter. Therefore, the training in photojournalism helps the writer, reporter or editor to impart knowledge in the law and ethics of photojournalism for an enlightened professional journalism practice. The photo editor must work within the confines of the law. He must know and guard against unpalatable legal implications of a particular picture. Ikpe and Anim (2006) list the legal and ethical issues, as they apply to news photographs, to include defamation, invasion of privacy, copyright, contempt of court, contempt of parliament, obscenity and malicious damage, as well as decency, etc. Like textual news sources, the source of a particular news photograph should always be identified. A news photo editor relatively guards against the above listed legal and ethical issues, if his newspaper must attract patronage of a great majority of readers who have aesthetic mindsets.

**Completeness:** Completeness as an aesthetic field sees the afore-explained fields as a unit that must be taken into consideration for a news picture to do what is expected of it. A picture that is sharp, blunt, specific, spatial, and mood-conscious and so on is complete and is altogether aesthetic. Similar principles should be followed when handling news visuals for the television and similar media.

### **Conclusion**

From the discussion so far, it is obvious that depending on its use, a photograph, which is the centre of attraction in a newspaper is often, can either draw or repel a reader. It is also obvious that as the last man in the handling of photograph, the photo editor is responsible for the aesthetic outlook of a photograph presented on a particular news page. Knowledge of aesthetic principles is therefore a sine qua non for a successful photo editor. In other words, achieving aesthetics in photographs rests much with the photo editor, who, in some newspaper organisations may be called, the news editor. Whether the photograph was taken by him personally or by a separate photographer, the photo editor, or news editor has a duty to manipulate the photograph so that the significant vision is communicated through a significant form, which is the news from. The significant vision in the photograph, however, is that portion of the photograph that is most relevant to the news. The editor has to be both a learner and teacher. He has to learn so many things and everything about photography in order to adapt the photographic message to the various news page requirements.

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