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INSPIRING SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTAL HABITS: TWO ONLINE NEWSPAPERS SYSTEMS

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Abstract

Societies are built up from resources extracted from the environment but the cost of such extraction may be unsustainable especially with the steady increase in human population and progress termed as development. Environmental issues thus featured as the 7th of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). While such global commitment is essential, they require the right policies and these will only work if the world population is aware of the pressing issues, impact of bad environmental judgements, the need for change and how to effect those changes. This chapter was informed by a study which focused on the strategic approach to this task by four newspapers from two different media systems. How did these online papers approach the task of increasing awareness and support for environmental sustainability? Using Agenda setting and framing theory, the chapter explores the patterns of coverage – issues and responses evoked by Nigerian newspapers - Punch, Vanguard and UK newspapers - the Guardian and Independent of environmental issues. While all four newspapers engaged in creating awareness about the environment, the study found foreign newspapers were more deliberate and systematic in their coverage of such stories and their engagement of the public whose actions they intend to inspire towards greater responsibility. In practical terms, it discovered that the Nigerian newspapers need to develop a strategic map on what they intend to achieve and how and work towards it systematically.

Key words: *Environmental Sustainability, MDGs, Change, Agenda Setting, Framing*