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## Africa Through the Lens of South Korean Media : How the South Korean Press Views Africa and Sets the Agenda

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# Africa Through the Lens of South Korean Media: How the South Korean Press Views Africa and Sets the Agenda

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## Abstract

Certain countries receive more international news coverage than others, and African countries fall in the latter group. Additionally, people's direct experience with Africa compared to other countries is scarce, so they have to rely on the media to understand the situation of African countries. Therefore, understanding the media's representation of Africa is vital as media reports affect an individual's perception, which can influence policy decisions. This study reveals the South Korean media's reporting trends regarding Africa and examines the factors that influence how Africa is covered in the media. To elucidate the reporting trends and determinants of African coverage, content analysis was conducted through *The Chosun Ilbo*. Determining which factors influences the report were shown by focusing on the interaction with and relatedness to the home country and the external influence of other countries, especially globally leading and neighbouring countries. The findings indicate that the amount of coverage was small and disproportionate in terms of country and topics being covered. Moreover, it was impacted by external influence; thus, the news value was not independent, and geopolitical factors were a predictor of the news coverage. The study supplements the understanding of the problems in African news coverage by South Korea amid South Korea reinforcing its African relations and contributing to media's agenda-setting.

**Keywords:** Africa, South Korea, media representation, news values, content analysis

## Introduction

As globalization has progressed, the role of the media has become increasingly more pronounced. The balance of stories has become more important as mainstream news media plays a pivotal role in setting agendas for policy and public discourse. However, it remains difficult to say that the content covered within the news is truly 'global'. As news outlets have limitations in what they can cover and how much emphasis can be given on certain issues, there is a disparity in media attention within global news. For example, Reuters, despite having 200 global locations, gives issues in other Western countries such as the United States and geographically small European countries greater attention in international

news whereas issues in other regions, such as Asia and Africa, are considered less important (Chang, 1998). Africa is an example of a continent whose issues that still receives relatively little attention from the global media. However, recently, there has been growing recognition of Africa within the news of Asian countries, such as China, Japan, and India as they strengthen their relations with the continent. For example, China has exerted efforts and hosted forums to engage with African countries through the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation. Additionally, Japan has bolstered its Africa engagement with the Tokyo International Conference on African Development. Similarly, India held the India–Africa Forum Summit to complement its efforts in Africa. Through these platforms, these nations seek to not only contribute to Africa’s development but also pursue their own national interests (Hirano, 2012). South Korea is no exception to this practice. However, although activities to gain a better understanding of Africa and experience the continent have increased at the government and public level, there are still relatively limited chances for Koreans to experience countries that are geographically far from South Korea.

Individuals attempt to understand an object through indirect experience when direct experience is limited, usually through the media (Soroka, 2002). In other words, because travelling to countries to experience other countries directly is restricted, to understand what is happening worldwide and other countries’ foreign policy, secondary experience is important. This secondary experience comes from international news. Thus, international news can be said to be a pivotal actor influencing public perception and the formation of public opinion. However, media is limited in that it cannot cover everything that happens worldwide. Indeed, the proportion of international news in South Korea constitutes less than 10% of the total news, which shows a tendency toward regional bias (Ha, 2000). For a long time, despite Africa’s large geographical scale, issues that occurred in the African continent have been classified in the periphery, not the core, from the international news perspective (Ginneken, 1998). This means that Africa has not received much attention in international news compared with other regions such as the United States and Europe. Since African coverage is particularly lacking, understanding the ‘real Africa’ through the media is difficult.

However, can the limited news coverage be interpreted as Africa having few events worthy of being covered in international news? Certainly, we cannot be sure. There have been countless events worthy of coverage in Africa, which the international community and news could have focused on regardless of whether the event was negative or positive, such as political corruption, civil war, economic booms, or peaceful democratic power transfers.

Considering these events, why did its coverage so unbalanced? Moreover, what factors caused this trend of under-reporting? At a point when Africa is gaining attention at both government and public levels in South Korea, these questions are important and should be investigated.

Although the media plays a significant role in setting the public agenda and potentially influencing the country's foreign policies, when it comes to reporting on African countries, various problems beyond the aforementioned amount of coverage emerge. For example, the most frequent mistake by South Korean media is that 'Africa', rather than the specific country name, is often used in article titles since people's awareness and recognition of Africa and its individual countries remains low (Ubuntu International Education Institute, 2020). Moreover, it is important to highlight the fundamental problems in South Korea's media market. In a survey, one-third of South Korean respondents answered that they were more interested in 'soft news' such as entertainment or celebrity news and sports news rather than 'hard news' such as international news even if timely and globally significant (Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2016). Considering this situation, international news coverage in South Korea, particularly coverage of Africa, must be re-examined. Hence, this study examines the South Korean media's reporting trends of Africa. It will analyse which country is reported, how it is portrayed in the media and will gauge how 'newsworthiness' shapes aspects of news coverage.

## Literature Review

Various factors play roles in decision-making to determine international news coverage (Kariel & Rosenvall, 1984; Wu, 2000; Golan, 2008). According to existing studies, determinants influencing international news coverage can be classified into the following two categories: interaction with and relatedness to the home country and external influence from other countries and entities.

### *Interaction with and Relatedness to the Home Country*

The economic, political, security and social relationships with a media outlet's home country have been confirmed as a key variable for determining coverage in various existing studies (Charles et al., 1979; Jones et al., 2011; Hester, 1973). Additionally, when the media reports international news, they tend to report events from the perspective of what is

considered important for the country in which they are based, and thus news items that are directly related to a media outlet's home country tend to account for a substantial proportion of coverage (Larson, 1984). Larson analysed the content of international coverage by the media in the United States from 1972 to 1981 and found that half of the coverage on international affairs concerned domestic affairs with the United States. Another later study of coverage of Japan in South Korean media found that 44% of the coverage appeared to be directly related to South Korea (E, 2007).

The presence, or lack, of news bureaus and foreign correspondents in a reported country should also be examined, considering their influence in terms of the journalists' perspective as well as for simple logistical reasons relating to access. When analysing the content of six American newspapers, a study dividing countries into those with overseas staff and those without found that countries where a correspondent was stationed covered those countries' issues more thoroughly (Adams, 1966). Therefore, countries in which there are news bureaus and foreign correspondents are more likely to receive coverage.

### *External Influence: Other Countries and Entities*

According to Hopkins et al. (1996), international news coverage reflects the global system in several ways, implying that there is a probability that certain powerful countries influence news coverage. Previous studies have also highlighted a nation's position in the global system as a decisive factor in the coverage (Chang, 1998; Kim & Barnett 1996; Wu, 2003). For instance, international news analyses from 44 countries revealed vast coverage focused on the United States. Other economic, political, and military powers, such as China, Russia and the G7 nations also received extensive coverage (Wu, 2003).

Drawing on the above literature review, we can set forth two hypotheses. First, we can expect that if incidents and issues occurring in Africa are directly related to South Korea, it can be predicted that they will be more likely to be included in the Africa-related coverage of South Korean news outlets. Second, as issues related to globally powerful countries are featured the most in the media, African stories which involve these countries will receive greater attention.

Considering South Korea's growing interest in Africa and the media's function of setting the public agenda, which denotes the "ability (of the news media) to influence the importance of the public agenda", clarifying what influences coverage is vital. Thus, the trend in African coverage and elements that make African countries newsworthy in South Korean media

deserves a focused analysis drawing on objective data.

## Methodology

To clarify the reporting trends of Africa in South Korean media, *The Chosun Ilbo*, which has the highest circulation rate in South Korea and is evaluated as the most-read offline newspaper in the country (Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2021), was analysed. First, 2015 to 2017 was set as the target period. Next, data containing the word Africa and the names of 55 African countries was collected from this period. Although Africa has often been deemed 54 countries excluding the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (United Nations, n.d.), Africa in this study denotes 55 countries including the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic which is a member of the African Union (AU) (African Union, n.d.). [Africa] was set as a search term following the names of all 55 countries because some articles did not mention the name of the country concerned but used 'Africa' instead in the title. After gathering the articles, those that did not primarily cover African countries were excluded.

In the case of the media, it is unfeasible to provide a balanced report on all countries (in this case, all 55 countries in Africa) or on all issues or topics due to time and space limitations. To explicate which countries and topics have or have not received attention in the media, in other words, to clarify the trends of African coverage, the examination of the data begins with content analysis of the coverage of Africa. Content analysis is widely used by mass media researchers to understand the media agenda. The content analysis mixed methods approach clarifies the meanings of the messages found within articles, presents them systematically and compares them qualitatively or quantitative as appropriate for examining South Korea's coverage of Africa by country and topic. Moreover, content analysis is used in this study to analyse the topic of African coverage based on the following 16 categories: politics, economics, war/conflict, military, demonstration, terrorism, incidents, accidents, environment, weather, education, health/medicine, society/life, science, art/culture, and sports.

The determinants behind this news flow are identified by focusing on two aspects, namely, (1) interaction with and relatedness to the home country and (2) external influence; other countries and entities.

First, for interaction with and relatedness to the home country, this study covers a coverage volume analysis and examination of content related to countries that appeared in

the Africa-related coverage of South Korea to assess whether an African country's relationship with the home country of a media outlet influences continent-wide coverage. Additionally, this seeks to clarify whether external influences, especially Africa-related issues involving internationally influential countries, determined the coverage of Africa in the examined countries. Coverage volume and content of the leading powers appearing in South Korea's Africa-related news are explored using content analysis to verify whether African issues related to the world's major powers were a factor in their coverage. Regarding leading core countries, according to the world system theory of Wallerstein (1974), countries can be divided into three main categories: core, peripheral and semi-peripheral. The categories to which countries belong can vary at times, and there are some differences in the classification of countries by scholars. Based on the research results of Chase-Dunn et al. (2000) and Stief (2020), the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, Denmark, Italy, Sweden, Spain, Japan, the Netherlands, Austria, Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, New Zealand, Ireland, Norway, Finland, and Portugal were established as the 'core countries' and they were the focus of this study.

## Findings

### Coverage Analysis Data

A total of 342 relevant articles were collected during the period, with entire stories as units of analysis. From 2015 to 2017, 37, 26 and 27 countries received coverage. This shows that, except for 2015, only half of all African countries were covered by *The Chosun Ilbo* each year. There were certain differences over the years, but as shown in Figure 1, the top 10 countries made up 68.2% in coverage 2015, and in 2016 and 2017 accounted for more than 80% of the total coverage (2016: 86.5%, 2017: 81.9%). Five countries—Libya, Egypt, South Africa, Kenya, and Ethiopia—were always ranked in the top 10 countries. In terms of other countries, their proportion of the related news coverage tended to decrease slightly (2015: 27 countries (32%), 2016: 16 countries (14%), 2017: 17 countries (18%)). Particularly, five countries, namely, Egypt, Libya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Ethiopia, constituted half of the total coverage during the applicable years. Stories comprised of African countries' elections, strengthening economic relations between foreign countries, social impacts owing to economic crises, political corruption, terrorist attacks, and so on. These results indicate that South Korea's interest in certain countries resulted in their news coverage almost every

year; however, of those selected countries, only a few were given the media spotlight. This disparity in coverage generated an imbalance in the reporting trends.

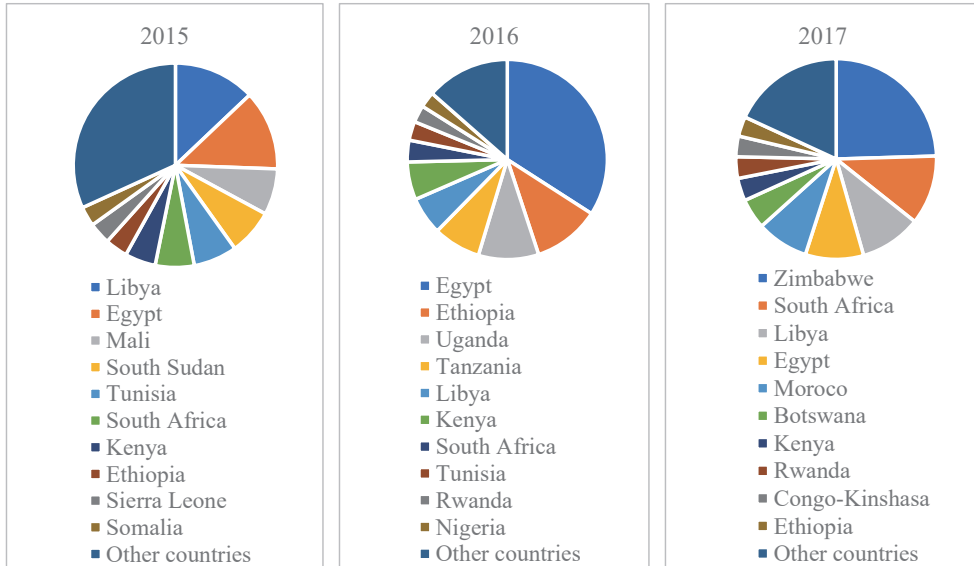


Figure 1. Coverage of Africa by country in *The Chosun Ilbo*: Top 10 countries

To clarify which story was covered by the media, stories were analysed by the aforementioned 16 topics. This found that [society/life], [politics] and [economics] made up a large proportion of the overall coverage. As shown in Figure 2, [society/life] gradually decreased (28.7% → 24% → 15.3%) over time but was still found to occupy a relatively high proportion of total report volume throughout the year. Additionally, much coverage contained content that helps the basic understanding of African countries. Conversely, articles related to [politics], which accounted for the second-largest proportion in 2015, gradually increased every year, accounting for about 30% in 2017 and becoming the largest topic (13.3% → 15.8% → 29.7%). Specifically, considering that 56.9% of the content related to politics was overwhelmingly related to the dictatorship of President Mugabe of Zimbabwe, previous research by Schraeder and Endless (1998), which claimed that negative political issues in Africa are more easily reported, was confirmed to some extent. However, in addition to reports on political corruption in African countries, news on political relations between South Korea and Africa (such as political summits, diplomat visits, political treaties, etc.) was also featured. Furthermore, notably, in the case of [economics], there were relatively few



mentions in 2015, but in 2016 and 2017, it became the second-most important topic (7.4% → 24% → 18.1%). There were articles on the economic status of Africa as a great economic power, financial trouble or the economic relationship between South Korea and Africa, such as economic involvement, cooperation, and aid. Interestingly, among the articles related to [economics], there were numerous articles on China and Japan's engagement with Africa. From this, presumably, the importance of Africa in terms of economy and politics is being emphasised by the media, and simultaneously promoting the awareness of other countries' relations with African countries.

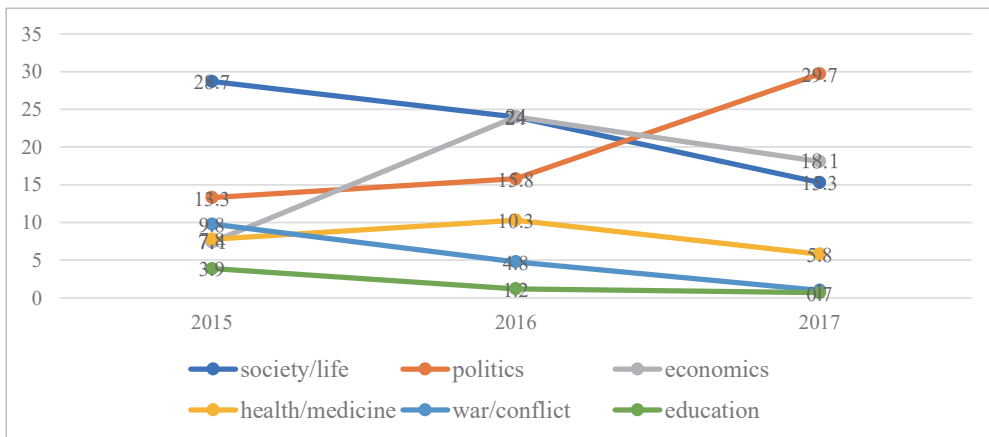


Figure 2. Coverage of Africa by topic in *The Chosun Ilbo* (%)

However, [health/medicine], [war/conflict] and [education] made up only a small proportion of coverage despite public health and education being among the focus areas for South Korea's ODA for Africa. Likewise, [education] (3.9% → 1.2% → 0.7%) and [health/medicine] (7.8% → 10.3% → 5.8%) appeared to be less focused on by the media. These are not only ODA focus areas for South Korea but also problems for Africa that have related UN-adopted sustainable development goals. Additionally, in the case of [war/conflict], the proportion of total coverage decreased (9.8% → 4.8% → 0.7%). To clarify whether outbreaks of war and the number of war refugees decreased in 2016 and 2017 in comparison to 2015, and whether these outcomes influenced the [war/conflict] coverage trend, the actual number of war casualties was also analysed. The findings revealed that the 2015 numbers were overwhelmingly high in comparison with the other two years. In 2015, the number of fatalities from the war in Nigeria, especially, was huge. But, interestingly, coverage of [war/

conflict] in Africa highlighted cases in multiple nations, of which Nigeria was just one of them. Additionally, South Sudan was the country with the largest number of refugees in Africa during the three-year study period, especially in 2017; despite that, the international coverage was minimal. Through these results, it was possible to clarify that there was a slight difference from the previous research by Bunce (2017), which shows the tendency to focus on negative topics such as [war/conflict] when it covers African countries.

### What Shapes the Coverage of Africa in *The Chosun Ilbo*?

This study has focused on the trends in African coverage and clarified how a South Korean media outlet has portrayed African countries. This revealed that few countries and topics appeared in the coverage. These results therefore trigger the following question: what factors contribute to the trend of reporting? In other words, who, or what, sets the media agenda for African news?

### Coverage of South Korea in Articles on Africa in *The Chosun Ilbo*

Table 1 illustrates the percentage of articles in which South Korea was mentioned in Africa-related news by *The Chosun Ilbo* between 2015 and 2017. South Korea appeared the most frequently in 2016, with articles containing content about the country accounting for 17.2% of the total coverage, whereas the year with the smallest proportion of such articles was 2017, with 8.1%. Contrary to what was asserted in previous studies, the proportion of home-country-related coverage was relatively small in this study.

Table 1. South Korea mentions in articles about Africa in *The Chosun Ilbo* (%)

	2015	2016	2017
<b>Home country [South Korea]-related</b>	14.4%	17.2%	8.1%
<b>Solely Africa-related total</b>	64.1%	65%	68.5%

First, the coverage that included content about South Korea and articles related to various themes, such as [social/life] issues, [health/medicine] and [terrorism] was found in 2015. Among the topics, the proportion of articles related to social issues was the highest (49.5%). For example, articles concerning South Korea's role in addressing social issues resulting from war and poverty in African countries (ODA-related) were prevalent.

Additionally, content related to the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)'s support for the healthcare sector in African countries, as well as coverage of efforts to dispatch South Korean medical staff to Sierra Leone, where an outbreak of Ebola occurred, were observed. Furthermore, the 2015 terrorist attack on the South Korean Embassy in Libya was covered several times, and the content was also relatively extensive. Of the three years, the year when content about South Korea appeared the most in Africa-related coverage was 2016, and South Korea was mentioned particularly often in articles related to [social/life] issues (23.3%) and [politics] (20.8%). The social issue-related articles that featured South Korea included content covering the operation of a programme to support the independence of young people in Ethiopia and Kenya, support for water purification in countries such as Ethiopia and Uganda, and support for refugees in Tanzanian refugee camps. Moreover, there were a small number of articles related to African politics, likely due to South Korean President Park Geun-hye's visit to three countries in Africa in 2016: Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya. Specifically, articles related to the beginning of President Park's trip to the three countries, meetings with the heads of the African countries, and her speech at the AU were reported several times. Lastly, in 2017, the year when the volume of South Korean coverage of Africa-related topics was lowest, most of the articles were related to [economics] (60.1%). For instance, there were articles meant to enable readers' understanding of South Korean companies' entry into African countries, as well as South Korean-African economic relations.

The content analysis of each year's Africa-related articles showed South Korea featuring in various themes. Additionally, the countries and themes that were featured were not consistent, showing irregular, surface level and only partial coverage of African affairs. Of the 16 topics used for content analysis, 9 were covered in 2015, 10 in 2016 and 7 in 2017, thereby becoming determinants of coverage in this regard. However, given that the proportion of the related press volume was not large in general, the degree to which it influences the coverage of Africa in this newspaper is somewhat unclear. Considering these results, other considerable influences on the media in South Korea should be examined.

### **Coverage of Other Countries and Entities in *The Chosun Ilbo***

This section focuses on the proportion of coverage of Africa that contained content related to other countries and entities by *The Chosun Ilbo*. From 2015 to 2017, it occupied 21% of the total coverage, as represented in Figure 3. This was greater than the

corresponding percentage of coverage in South Korea and African countries, which was 14%.

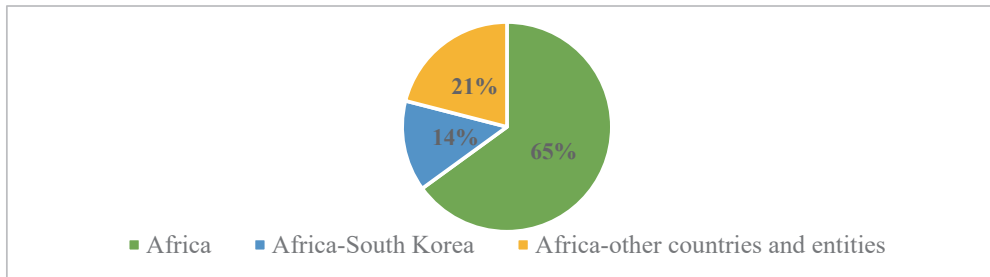


Figure 3. Coverage of other countries in article on Africa in *The Chosun Ilbo* (2015-2017)

As shown in Table 2, among the other countries mentioned in Africa-related coverage in *The Chosun Ilbo*, five countries comprised more than half (65.8%) of the total and most were internationally influential core countries (39.2%) such as the United States, Japan, and France.

Table 2. Other top five countries in Africa-related coverage by *The Chosun Ilbo* (2015-2017)

Country	Character count (%)
United States	13002.9 (21.7%)
China	8329.6 (13.9%)
North Korea	7628.3 (12.7%)
France	6070.3 (10.1%)
Japan	4460 (7.4%)

Among these countries, the Africa-related coverage related to the United States accounted for the largest proportion of the data. Specifically, the coverage included President Barack Obama's tour of Kenya, Americans killed by a terrorist attack in a hotel in Libya, US investment in Africa, and the US's aid competition with China. Content related to France included coverage of the involvement of French forces in a serious situation at a hotel in Burkina Faso and the killing of the hostage-taker, as well as the French president's attendance at the opening of the second Suez Canal and the French government's poor management of Sudanese refugees. Japan was also found in the coverage, such as an item about the passing of a new security legislation in Japan whereby the government is considering ordering their Self-Defense Force troops that are participating in UN

peacekeeping operations in South Sudan to perform ‘rush and rescue’ missions. These missions offer assistance when armed groups attack UN and NGO staff and officials in remote locations; however, South Korea is concerned that this may lead to a revival of Japanese militarism.

Besides the core countries, China received the second-most Africa-related coverage in *The Chosun Ilbo*. For example, several articles have been about China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which is China-led geopolitical global strategy to extend Chinese economic and political influence in the world (Griffiths, 2017). 148 countries are involved in the BRI, and 50 African countries are listed as participants. In this regard, there was coverage of the initiative’s aim that Africa will become an ‘economic battlefield’ for China, shown by China’s advances into Africa. Japan, which wishes to serve as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, was also reported as counting on African countries to secure their votes in the UN. The article states the necessity of South Korea to actively engage in the ‘economic battlefield’. Additionally, among the top five countries covered, North Korea appeared the third most often in Africa-related coverage. The content of the related coverage included information about a North Korean diplomat being expelled for trafficking rhinoceros’ horns, the status and problems of North Korean hospitals that had opened in Tanzania to earn foreign revenue, as well as African countries’ severing of diplomatic relations with North Korea.

From these findings, it can be observed that the countries with the greatest economic and military power have been the focus of *The Chosun Ilbo* media coverage when events related to them occurred in Africa. Such a trend establishes the same conclusion as existing studies. Moreover, its coverage of Africa was also influenced by the proximity of China and North Korea as neighbouring countries (26.6%) with which it has a deep political relationship. If Japan is included, as a country that has a status qualifying as a core country and geographically close country to South Korea, this would be further supported. In other words, when deciding how to cover issues related to Africa, *The Chosun Ilbo* reports focused on not only core countries but also neighbouring countries. Furthermore, typically for the neighbouring countries, the discourse of rivalry with South Korea was easily found compared with reports about core countries’ relations with Africa. From this, when determining how to cover issues related to Africa, *The Chosun Ilbo* was conscious of and influenced by various geopolitical factors.

## Discussion

Given the strengthening policy interest toward Africa, a substantial degree of media interest in South Korea could have been expected. However, the current research demonstrated that despite strengthening of political, economic, and social relations with Africa, the volume of reports about Africa remains small in the South Korean *The Chosun Ilbo*. Moreover, its reports solely focusing on Africa accounted for around 65%. Although time has passed since Ginneken (1998)'s study, their findings, which showed that the African issues were classified as peripheral issue, remains valid. Specifically, it was possible to confirm that most of the articles reported on limited issues and topics and focused only on certain African countries. As Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) stated in a TED Talk, Africa is still negatively covered by the world's media, and the focus of coverage remains on a 'single story'. Such a single story creates a stereotype, and the problem with this is not that it is untrue, but it is incomplete. This study also showed that *The Chosun Ilbo*'s case was not very different from Adichie's findings, and this might have formed a stereotype of Africa within readers. Although the existence of bureaus makes the issue of access to sources and information easier, i.e., it simplifies the logistics of news gathering, South Korean media does not have any permanent bureaus in Africa. This could cause a lack of in-depth reporting and excessive citation from other media outlets, which is a problem in international news coverage in South Korean media. Thus, placing more reporters in African countries should be reconsidered as it may influence both the quantity and quality of the coverage.

Additionally, in clarifying the factors that cause disproportionality in African news, within *The Chosun Ilbo* it was found that the reporting country was not a key predictor in deciding African coverage. Previous studies predicted that if incidents occurring in Africa are directly related to South Korea, they are more likely to be included in Africa-related coverage of South Korean media outlets. As E (2007) discovered, almost half of the content of reports on Japan in the South Korean media were related to the home country, South Korea. Similarly, when reporting on a country that has a deep political, economic, and historical relationship with South Korea (for instance, Japan), there is a tendency to report not only content related to South Korea but also aspects favourable to it. However, in contrast to previous studies, for African coverage, relatedness to the home country was not a key factor.

The results of this study suggest that most of the coverage of Africa was written to

facilitate a better understanding of the continent. South Korea has made efforts to improve relations with Africa in terms of policy, however, regarding the frequency and amount of coverage, the relationship and interaction with the continent have not served as a key news value. Nevertheless, as the relationship strengthens, the news values and relatedness to the home county in the coverage of Africa may become important. Therefore, it is necessary to address the unbalanced reporting trend according to future news values.

Furthermore, the news value was not entirely independent. It is worth noting that the dynamics of international relations could be found in the coverage of *The Chosun Ilbo*. When reporting on Africa, the coverage of leading global and neighbouring countries partially affected the newspaper's coverage. This is similar to reports in former studies; for example, Wu (2003) stated that leading core countries received media attention than others. Moreover, one unexpected finding is that when *The Chosun Ilbo* reports on Africa, geographically close countries affect the coverage flow. In other words, the African-related news was covered from the aforementioned countries' perspectives. Certainly, considering South Korea's situation and national interests, it is important, for instance, to pay attention to Japan's contribution to Africa to gain African votes for its securing of a permanent member seat at the UN. Likewise, China's intensive engagement with African countries deserves a high level of attention. However, considering the agenda-setting function of the media, if reporting is confined to those issues, it does not entirely help enhance the public's genuine understanding of African countries. Additionally, there is also a possibility of a long-term negative influence on South Korea's policy towards Africa and the enhancement of their relationship.

Presently, South Korea is attempting to strengthen its cooperation with Africa in various fields, such as education, international exchange, travel, and training of experts. To achieve these goals, the media's role remains indispensable. Thus, to improve South Korea's understanding of the 'real Africa' and develop better relations with the countries, now is the time for diversified reporting with a comprehensive and balanced focus on African countries.

## Conclusions

Although globalisation and technological advancement have connected the world and made news information freer than ever, media coverage of news appears unbalanced, and African countries have received less coverage than others. However, it should be noted that the media is pivotal in setting the agenda for the public and government. Under these

circumstances, this study investigated the trends in news coverage of African countries by *The Chosun Ilbo*, in terms of country and topic. Through integrated analysis, it examined the elements that acted as conducive factors in deciding Africa-related news coverage.

Notably, *The Chosun Ilbo* published only a few stories on Africa. Countries and themes covered were also unbalanced, thus generating piecemeal and superficial coverage. Moreover, it is apparent that the first hypothesis that pertains to the incidents that directly related to South Korea are more likely to be covered in the news outlet is not fully supported. However, the second hypothesis that globally powerful countries-related events in Africa draws media attention is supported. It can therefore be concluded that *The Chosun Ilbo* is conscious of other entities when reporting on Africa. In this respect, not only contrary to the need to reinforce its relations with Africa in the foreseeable future but also considering the expanding role of the media in politics in light of its agenda-setting function, the findings of this study helped to reveal problems and limitations of *The Chosun Ilbo*'s African news coverage.

Finally, several limitations to this study should be mentioned. By focusing on one of South Korea's main news outlets' coverage of Africa, its attention was focused on the relationship between the core and neighbouring countries, such as the United States, China, and Japan, with Africa. In other words, not only from the perspective of international relations but also from the perspective of media studies, it is impossible to ignore considerations about neighbouring and core countries in news selection. From these outcomes, international comparison, especially with those countries interested in Africa, would be worthwhile.

Additionally, regarding the external factors affecting African coverage, this study only considered other countries and entities. However, other external factors could affect media coverage. Inter-media agenda-setting holds that the news agenda set by one news source can influence the agenda of other news sources and act as a determinant of the newsworthiness of those news sources. This denotes that the more a leading newspaper addresses a certain major topic, the more likely it is to influence other media, thereby reflecting a similar pattern of coverage (López-Escobar et al., 1998). *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* are among the most globally influential news sources in this regard. In terms of inter-media agenda-setting effects, these media outlets have a strong influence, and their news stories are echoed by other media outlets worldwide. Thus, *The New York Times* can be said to represent, to a degree, the Western media agenda as a whole; and by understanding the



coverage of *The New York Times*, it is possible to gauge Western media's interests. However, research on news coverage determinants generally ignores the factor of inter-media agenda-setting. Accordingly, verifying whether *The New York Times'* coverage of African countries is a factor determining South Korean coverage of Africa, in the light of inter-media agenda-setting theory in international news coverage, will be worthwhile.

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