

Relationship between Newspaper Framing and Public Perception of Buhari's Anti-Corruption Crusade in Nigeria

¹Oriola M. Oluwakemi, ²Ojomo Olusegun & ³Ajilore Kolade

¹Department of Creative Arts,

Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria

^{2&3}Department of Mass Communication,

Babcock University, Ilishan Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria

Abstract

Political communication scholars have pointed attention to the relationship between media presentation of issues and the direction of public perception, opinion or attitude. News framing is a journalistic process that impacts on meaning-making of political issues among the audience. This study examined the relationship between newspaper framing and public perception of the anti-corruption crusade of the Buhari-led democratic administration in Nigeria. The study conducted a content analysis of 1,169 front-page anti-corruption stories published in The Guardian, The Punch, Vanguard and Nigerian Tribune newspapers between May 29, 2015 and September 29, 2016 and a survey of 1,200 literate adult workers in the capital cities of Lagos, Ogun and Oyo states, South-West Nigeria. The study found that the selected newspapers reported the anti-corruption crusade using issue-specific and generic frames, though the former was dominant. There was no significant difference in public perception of the crusade: respondents mostly rated the crusade as fair. A positive significant relationship was found out between newspaper framing and public perception of the crusade. The study recommended to politicians, consciously guided actions and speeches, and to journalists, cognizance of the use of framing devices due to their meaning-making potentials at the audience domain.

Keywords: *Newspaper framing, Issue-specific framing, Generic framing, Public perception*

Corresponding Author: Oriola M. Oluwakemi

Background to the Study

The concept of framing is fast gaining research attention in communication and media studies. This is arguably because political communication has gained more relevance in social and political discourse due to the over-bearing influence of politics on other spheres of every democratic society. Political communication is described as a discipline that studies the dynamic interaction among political actors, having its principal focus on the nature of the relationship between the media and government on the one hand, and media and society on the other (Burton, 2010). The research attention framing has gained in political communication could be adduced partly to the importance of the mass media in modern democracies on the one hand, and the influence of media presentation of political issues on audience perception, opinions and attitudes on the other hand. Framing underscores a characteristic presentational mode that points to news media construction and audience consumption chain of relationship.

Knudsen (2014) simply describes framing at a macro level as the way or pattern in which news is presented and at a micro level, "how certain elements in a news narrative would affect the reader" (p.209). Framing is a fast growing research subject in political communication, which scholars such as Aalberg, Stromback and de Vreese (2011) consider as one of the most fertile areas in recent research. The authors argue that framing of politics increases political distrust, has negative effects on citizens' knowledge acquisition, boosts public interest in politics, offers additional useful information and improves political participation. Framing is a research field about media contents and effects, which relates to how messages are presented (media frames) and the consequence of the patterned presentation on interpretation and/or perception (audience frames). Meanwhile, previous framing studies have established relationships between news frames and public perception. Zillmann, Perkins and Sundar (1992) found out that framing of issues in the news for instance, particularly information presented in the form of exemplars tends to influence audience judgments about those issues. Shrum (2002) also contends that there is a relationship between television viewing and perception of social reality. In their study of framing of politics, Aalberg, Stromback and de Vreese (2011) identify negative and positive consequences of framing in extant literature. In the light of the foregoing, this study examined the relationship between newspaper framing and public perception of Buhari's anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria.

Research Problem

This study investigated the patterns of newspaper framing of Buhari's anti-corruption crusade as a political issue, which may be constructed intentionally or inadvertently in subjective manners. Such framing patterns could have negative consequences including undermining of political information and engagements, promotion of politicians' self-interests, distraction of the audience from substantive issues in stories and promotion of spiral of cynicism in the public (Aalberget al, 2011) as regards the anti-corruption crusade, governance and Nigeria's democracy in general. Furthermore, Lippmann (1922) asserts that "the world that people have to deal with is out of reach, out of sight and out of mind" (p. 18). This assertion explains people's dependency on the mass media for information about events beyond their personal contacts, especially in today's complex post-modern

society. Their reliance on the media for news of the day thus places the media in a position to shape their perception of issues, especially an important issue such as corruption that has negatively affected Nigeria. PwC (2016) corroborates this by stating that “perception about corruption is subjective and may change drastically due to media attention and exposition of corruption” (p. 8). Media attention at one level and mode of presentation at another can therefore be consequential to public perception regarding Buhari's anti-corruption crusade, hence the relationship between newspaper framing and public perception. The basic consequence of frames in communication for instance, news presentation, is that they shape frames in thought - psychological frames - determined by a person's valuation of dimensions of an issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007) such as the anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria. The psychological frames shape people's perception of the issue and manifest in overt tendencies. If issues are framed subjectively, this would lead to uninformed perception or opinions about issues manifest in negative political attitudes and actions in the public. It should be noted that negative public disposition would affect the success of the anti-corruption crusade.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the patterns of framing in the presentation of Buhari's anti-corruption news stories in selected national newspapers in Nigeria;
2. To determine the direction of public perception of Buhari's anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria;
3. To establish the relationship between the selected newspapers' framing patterns and the direction of public perception of Buhari's anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

H₁: There is a significant difference in the patterns of framing of Buhari's anti-corruption news stories in selected national newspapers in Nigeria.

H₂: There is a significant difference in the direction of public perception of Buhari's anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria.

H₃: There is a significant relationship between the selected newspapers' framing patterns and the direction of public perception of Buhari's anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

This study is a framing research whose subject matter is situated in political communication. Its focus was to examine patterns of newspaper framing in news reportage of Buhari's anti-corruption crusade and the corresponding direction of perception of the crusade among the reading public in Nigeria. The study was conducted in South-West Nigeria between May 29, 2015 - when President Muhammadu Buhari assumed office - and September 29, 2016 - the period of data collection. It was delimited to the region because South-West is arguably the media hub of Nigeria, and to the period because of change of leadership between the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) after the former has led the country for 16 years. More importantly, President Muhammadu Buhari's declaration of war against corruption on assumption of office, accounted for the time scope of this study. Four national

newspapers on the news stand in South-West Nigeria were selected in study: *The Guardian*, *The Punch*, *Vanguard* and *Nigerian Tribune*. Front-page anti-corruption straight news stories in the editions of the selected newspapers published within the stipulated period were under focus. Participants in the study were literate male and female workers in the capital cities of Lagos, Ogun and Oyo states, South-West Nigeria, who have attained the minimum age of 20 years and have obtained a minimum of Secondary School Leaving Certificate.

Literature Review

Media management of public sphere is of concern to the field of political communication. The public sphere refers to a discursive space where citizens, as media audiences, can exchange ideas about a given (political) issue in order to arrive at certain valuation or opinion about the issue (Iberi, 2014). Research on media construction of the public sphere focuses on “news debate framework embedded within, and with regard to public opinion and policy decisions responsive to news coverage of a situation” (Idiong, 2010 p.101). One of the means by which the media shape the public sphere is through the journalistic service of news coverage of politics. Studies in political communication are aimed at understanding the interactions among government, the media and the audiences through political news as media output. Such interactions often lead to direct or indirect influences of news production practices on people's perception of political issues. One of the journalistic practices that produce effects on the audience is framing – the general pattern a news topic is presented by the media (Dominick 2011). Beyond the questions of what is reported and how important it is treated, which underlie agenda setting research, there is a growing interest in the study of how news messages are produced, the relationship between news attributes and consequences of their consumption such as public perception of, opinion about and attitude towards a given political issue. To this end, Idiong (2010) asserts that journalists do not stop at structuring news around political elites, they also influence public opinion through inclusion of certain cues in the news. Such cues are called frames - narrative devices by which journalists tell stories about political issues, events and personalities.

Citizens learn about political issues and events through the news media. The complexity of the post-modern society, coupled with growing importance of media in modern democracies, accentuates audience's dependency on the media for the news of the day about political issues. People learn about their environments from obtrusive sources - personal experience - and unobtrusive sources - issues learnt about only through the media (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002). An issue such as corruption in high places of government is unobtrusive to the audience and the media play key roles in fostering knowledge about it. McQuail (2010) outlines factors that shape news learning to include narrativity of text - the core of news framing. He asserts that media audiences are guided by journalistic frames in what they learn about political issues, which consequently impacts on their perception of the issues. Thus, there is bound to be a relationship between frames in news and frames in thoughts, which determine the perception of the audience.

Druckman (2011) defines frames as the narrative patterns by which journalists select, emphasize and present composed information about what exists, what happens and what

matters. This perspective is a consideration of frame production practice in the media domain by which journalists select some out of numerous details about an issue, use certain words and/or symbols in news narration as they apply a mix of their personal judgments, professional values, organizational guidelines and external factors such as interaction with political elites. A functional explanation of media frames is provided in Scheufele's (1999) synthesis of literature on the concept. He considers frames to be interpretative schema useful to different actors: they (frames) assist media audiences to understand and discuss issues, journalists use them to package issues and events into news reports, policy makers use them to define policy options and reach decisions. This perspective is important in the understanding of what frames do in various contexts. It also underlies its importance to political communication due to its relevance to various political actors.

Furthermore, news frames are described as “themes within news stories that are carried by various kinds of framing devices” (D'Angelo, 2002 p. 873). Entman (1993) states that news frames are first causes that shape various levels of reality, interact with cognitive and social behavior such that they shape public dialogues about political issues. Media frames shape schemas, which determine the direction of public perception and opinion (Entman, Mathes & Pelicano, 2009); provide particular definitions and interpretations of political issues (Shah, Watts, Domke & Fan, 2002); and affect public attitude and behaviour towards political issues (Chong & Druckman, 2007). To researchers, frames help in examining the direction and culture of media coverage as well as the cognition of media audiences about issues (Yan & Liu, 2016). The manifestations of the foregoing functions of media frames are in the effects generated at the audience domain. Frames in thought - audiences' mental or psychological frames - are determined by an individual's valuation of the dimensions of an issue persistently presented in a media message. The link between media frames and audiences' mental frames is accentuated by the latter's dependence on media for information about news events of the day. The media, being windows to the world of information (McQuail, 2010), present a view of the world to their audiences. The mental pictures the audiences get are thus shaped by the window: whether it is large or small, whether the glass is opaque or clear (Iorgoveanu & Corbu, 2012). The narrative framework into which a story is persistently fixed could shape the interpretative framework through which the audiences organise meaning about the issue and the personality in the story. Scholars have thus established the influence of frames in communication (media frames) on frames in thought (audience frames) (Druckman, 2001; Druckman, 2011; Scheufele, 1999). Public perception of the issue is a consequence that could be related to the patterns of the media frames.

Contemporary framing studies have established a positive relationship between media frames and public perception, opinion and/or attitude. Druckman's (2001) experimental study in the US examined the effects of simple cues, such as party endorsements, on the audience. Findings of the study showed that 59% of the respondents tended to prefer the risk-averse alternative when given a 'save' frame – benefit side of the alternative - and risk-seeking alternative when given a 'die' frame – loss side of the alternative. It was also discovered that political contexts limited framing effects under which people based their

preferences on systematic rather than arbitrary information. Slothus and de Vreese (2010) conducted a study in Denmark which was to determine how issues framing, especially those sponsored by political parties, motivated citizens' reasoning about the issues. Findings of the study showed that the prospect and consequence frames pushed opinions in opposing directions on both the conflict and consensus issues. Opinions were more supportive on welfare policy in the pro-frame than in the con-frame, just as in the case of trade agreement among participants exposed to pro-frame than those exposed to con-frame. Also, party attachment was instrumental to framing effects as opinions among Social Democratic Party voters tended to be more affected by frames sponsored by their party than when the same frames were promoted by Liberal Party. The same trend was observed in respect of Liberal Party supporters. Han and Wang (2012) conducted a study which examined the effects of valence news frames, in terms of risks and benefits, on the perceptions of, and attitudes of participants towards product-country image of 'made in China'. Findings showed that participants in the risk conditions had more negative perceptions of product-country image than those in benefits conditions and in the control conditions. Positive frames were observed to elicit positive evaluations of 'made in China' products as they perceived the product aspect of the frame more positively than the country aspect.

Mathes (2009) examined trends in media framing studies in the world's leading communication journals between January 1990 and December 2005. The study carried out a quantitative content analysis of a total of 131 framing studies in 15 international journals. Findings of the study showed that focus was most predominantly on newspaper framing (53%) followed by television (10%), television and newspaper (8%), magazine (5%), while press release and newspaper coverage ranked lowest (1%). Most of the studies used purposive sampling (79%) while the least used sampling technique was the constructed week (2%). Textual framing was more studied than visual framing, with only 5% of the studies coding on the latter. Of the studies, issues-specific frames ranked higher in focus (78%) than generic frames (22%). The extent to which framing studies were theory-driven was also examined and findings showed that majority of the studies (68%) did not test hypotheses regarding frames. The link between framing antecedents and consequences was predominantly not focused in the studies: 79% of the studies did not consider the antecedents while 80% did not consider consequences. This is a gap that this study sought to fill by considering the relationship between newspaper framing (antecedent) and public perception (consequence) of a crucial political issue in Nigeria – the anti-corruption crusade of Buhari's administration.

Furthermore, previous studies on the anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria predominantly focused attention on media coverage or framing, leaving a gap in the area of consequences of the framed messages. For instance, Fadairo, Fadairo and Aminu (2014) examined the coverage of corruption news by major newspapers. Findings of the study showed that frequency of coverage of corruption articles in year 2010 carried the highest percentage of 23.7% while the *Nigerian Tribune* ranked first on the coverage of corruption articles with a total of 381 (41.7%) articles. Overall, prominence was given to inside page articles (87.4%) in all the three newspapers but *The Guardian* newspaper reported the highest on the front

page, having 41.7%. Majority (76.7%) of the corruption articles were in the straight news category with the *Nigerian Tribune* having 42.4%. More than half (56.8%) of space allotted to corruption articles was one-quarter page while the *Nigeria Tribune* recorded highest (61.4%) space allotment of full page. The politics/governance sector ranked first in the focus of coverage with a total of 522 news items accounting for 57.2% of the entire corruption stories while agriculture, transportation and energy sectors occupied the lower rung of the ladder. Also, politics/governance sector had the highest level of prominence with score of 654.

Also, Agu (2015) conducted a study titled 'A Linguistic-Stylistic Analysis of Newspaper Reportage'. The focus of the study was the language and style of newspaper reportage on the theme of corruption story about the unspent 300 million naira of the Federal Ministry of Health in 2007, which indicted the daughter of former President Obasanjo. The study discovered that some journalists reported the corruption issue objectively, distancing themselves from the stories while some brought personal biases and emotions into their stories. Further on framing studies conducted in Nigeria, Lamidi and Olisa (2016) examined newspaper framing of the APC Change Mantra in the 2015 Nigerian Presidential elections. The study aimed at establishing the patterns of newspaper framing as well as the factors that influenced the framing of the APC Change campaigns by the selected newspapers. Findings of the study revealed that the newspapers adopted more of positive than negative and neutral frames in reporting the APC Change campaigns, with *The Punch* adopting the positive frame more than *The Guardian*. The primary factors that determined the patterns of newspaper framing were proximity, prominence and oddity, while the secondary factors were opposition status, individual interest, profit-making interest and political affiliation. In the bid to bridge the gap in literature, this study examined the relationship between newspaper framing and public perception of Buhari's anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria.

Framing as a Theory of Media Effects

This study is anchored on framing as a theory of media effects. Folarin (2002) explains that media effects theories are socio-scientific theories of mass communication, which consist of generalizations derived from systematic application of scientific methods. They are arrived at through objective analysis of mass media variables, employing methods associated with social science empiricism. Such theories are said to be testable in other socio-political environments after being discovered in certain milieus, because of the application of scientific methods in their discovery. The basic questions of mass communication research, which social-scientific theories attempt to answer are: What are the impacts of the mass media on the society? In what ways does the society influence the workings of the mass media? (Defleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1987). The focus of socio-scientific theories therefore is an explanation of the relational influence (or the relationship) between mass media variables – messages, their frequency and modes of presentation among others - and societal variables – reception based on audience needs, aspiration, individual differences, group dynamics, among others as well as audience's perception, opinions and attitudes. Framing is one of such theories in this category.

Chong and Druckman (2007) observe that framing theory is premised on the fact that an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and be constructed as having implications for multiple values or considerations. This assertion is in tandem with Duck and McMahan's (2009) idea that communication is presentational: it entails the communicator's ability to use the symbols to present a particular view, or perspective of the facts of an events or story. Communications frames are used to conceptualize issues, organize everyday reality, provide meaning to an unfolding strips of events and promote particular definitions and interpretation of issues (Shah *et al*, 2002). Moreover, Scheufele (1999) opines that framing as a concept is embedded in the larger media effects research paradigm. The theoretical principles underpinning framing, according to Scheufele, includes its social constructivism idea in which case framing is viewed as the construction of social reality. Framing is said to belong to the fourth stage of media effects research, which started in the 1980s, and recognizes the strong impact of the mass media on the audience in constructing social reality. This notion is in support of Gamson and Modigliani's (1989) earlier submission that media discourse is part of the social process of meaning construction by the audience while public opinion is part of the process of conceptualizing meaning by journalists. The theory takes cognizance of people's information processing behaviour, attitudes and predispositions towards issues. At the domain of the media, the theory considers journalists' personal factors, professional judgments and organizational variables that shape frame production.

Scheufele (1999) identifies media and individual audience frames, the link between which he postulates as the underpinning principle of the framing theory. Also, de Vreese (2005) establishes a link between framing (frame production) and societal level consequences (framing effects). Frame production consists of frame building – a combination of internal and external newsroom factors that shape the pattern of news construction – and frame setting – an interaction between media frames and audiences' information seeking pattern, attitudes and media use behavior. Framing effects are the consequences generated under the combination of the conditions of frame production as media variables and individual audience member's predisposition, prior knowledge and attitude. Therefore, framing can be considered a conditionally powerful media effect theory because it takes cognizance of conditions of effects of media messages. The relevance of this theory is that the narrative devices journalists use in packaging news stories about the anti-corruption crusade become frames that set the boundaries for the understanding of the issue, the problems related to it and the possible solutions. The interaction between journalists and political actors, who are news sources, shape what is reported and how, as well as the consequent public perception of the issues. Media organizations also set narrative frameworks into which journalists fix their stories through editorial policies, house styles and other guidelines. These shape news construction patterns which in turn is expected to determine public perception.

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive research design. Applied to this study, the design aimed to identify the pattern of newspaper framing of Buhari's anti-corruption crusade among the selected national newspapers and establish the relationship between such

framing patterns and public perception of the crusade. Content analysis of front-page straight news stories about Buhari's anti-corruption crusade published by the selected national newspapers during the period under focus and descriptive survey to determine the direction of public perception were carried out. In this study, there were two sets of population of interest: 1,960 editions of the four selected national newspapers published May 29, 2015 and September 29, 2016; and 566,020 male and female literate adult newspaper readers of between 20 years and above working in government and private establishments located in the capital cities of Lagos, Ogun and Oyo states in South-West Nigeria. Multi-stage technique was applied to select the study samples: 1,169 front-page anti-corruption stories were purposively selected from 1,960 editions of the selected newspapers published between the period under focus; purposive sampling was applied to select 1,200 respondents; 12 wards were chosen from the capital cities of Lagos, Ogun and Oyo states using the proportional technique; while the states were selected randomly. Validated coding guide and questionnaire were used to collect data in the content analysis and survey respectively. Inter-coder reliability result for the coding guide was 76.9%, while Cronbach's Alpha reliability co-efficient for the questionnaire was 0.81. Independent Sample Test, cross tabulation and Pearson's Correlation were employed in data analysis carried out with the aid of the Statistical Products and Services Solutions (SPSS) version 21.

Test of Hypotheses

Decision Rule

The pre-set level of significance for this study is 0.05. The alternate hypotheses assume that there is a relationship between the variables under consideration. If the P-value (that is, the significance or the probability value) exceeds the pre-set level of significance (that is $p > 0.05$), the alternate hypothesis is rejected; but if the P-value is less than or equal to 0.05 ($p \leq 0.05$), then the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

H₁: There is a significant difference in the patterns of framing of Buhari's anti-corruption news stories in selected national newspapers in Nigeria.

Table 1: Independent Samples Test for Significant Difference in Patterns of Framing of Buhari's Anti-Corruption Crusade among the Selected National Newspapers

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Newspaper Framing Patterns	Equal variances assumed	4.195	.041	-6.389	662	.000	-.531	.083	-.694	-.368
	Equal variances not assumed			-6.225	121.54	.000	-.531	.085	-.699	-.362

Table 2: Cross-tabulation of the selected Newspapers' Frame Categorisation

Frame categorisation of stories		Newspapers Publication Titles				Total
		<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>The Punch</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	<i>Nigerian Tribune</i>	
	Generic Frame	18	23	35	22	98
	Issue -Specific Frame	75	548	319	129	1071
Total		93	571	354	151	1169

The data in Table 1 show that there was a significant difference in the patterns of framing of Buhari's anti-corruption crusade among the selected national newspapers. Hypothesis one (H_1) is hereby accepted since the critical value is less than the pre-set level of significance ($t=-6.389$; $p=.000 < 0.05$). The result shows that the four selected national newspapers framed Buhari's anti-corruption crusade using different framing patterns: generic and issue specific (although the latter was used more) as indicated in Table 2. The stories framed generically among the newspapers – *The Punch* and *Vanguard* especially – were mostly those that were credited to President Muhammadu Buhari in his comments about the anti-corruption crusade. For instance, stories about the President's visit to South Africa and the USA in July, 2015 were framed generically in *The Punch* and *Vanguard* newspapers. Also in the category were the comments by former President Olusegun Obasanjo about the level of corruption under the Jonathan-led regime and the latter's responses to such allegations.

H_2 . There is a significant difference in the direction of perception of Buhari's anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria.

Table 3: Respondents' Distribution by their Perception of Buhari's Anti-corruption crusade

	Variable	Freq.	Percent (%)	Cum. Percent (%)
Anti-Corruption Policy Declaration	Very Poor	165	13.9	14
	Poor	170	14.3	28.2
	Fair	306	25.8	54
	Good	362	30.5	84.5
	Very Good	174	14.7	99.2
	Missing	10	.8	100
	Total	1187	100	
Public Access to Information	Very Poor	152	12.8	12.8
	Poor	204	17.2	30
	Fair	445	37.5	67.5
	Good	316	26.6	94.1
	Very Good	60	5.1	99.2
	Missing	10	.8	100
	Total	1187	100	
Transparency of Govt.	Very Poor	173	14.6	14.6
	Poor	261	22	36.6
	Fair	416	35	71.6
	Good	254	21.4	93
	Very Good	73	6.1	99.1
	Missing	10	.8	99.9
	Total	1187	99.9	
Accountability of Govt.	Very Poor	196	16.5	16.5
	Poor	217	18.3	34.8
	Fair	407	34.3	69.1
	Good	257	21.6	90.7
	Very Good	68	5.7	96.4
	Missing	42	3.5	99.9
	Total	1187	99.9	
Govt. Structure Discourages Corruption	Very Poor	123	10.4	10.4
	Poor	178	15.1	25.5
	Fair	359	30.4	55.9
	Good	371	31.4	87.3
	Very Good	150	12.7	100
	Missing	6	.5	100
	Total	1187	100	
Independence of Govt. Branches	Very Poor	171	14.4	14.4
	Poor	240	20.2	34.6
	Fair	456	38.4	73
	Good	252	21.2	94.2
	Very Good	55	4.6	98.8
	Missing	13	1.1	99.9
	Total	1187	99.9	
Anti-Corruption Agencies' Strength in Fighting Corruption	Very Poor	129	10.9	10.9
	Poor	227	19.1	30
	Fair	366	30.8	60.8
	Good	334	28.1	88.9
	Very Good	107	9	97.9
	Missing	24	2	99.9
	Total	1187	99.9	

Table 4: Independent Samples Test for the Significant Difference in the Direction of Public Perception of Buhari's Anti-Corruption Crusade

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
Direction of respondents' perception of Buhari's anti-corruption crusade	Equal variances assumed	.507	.477	-1.862	1184	.063	-.0798	.0429	-.164	.00431
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.860	1056.7	.063	-.0799	.0429	-.164	.00438

Table 5 presents the data for independent sample test for the significant difference in the direction of public perception about Buhari's anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria among the study respondents. Result of the analysis shows that hypothesis two (H_2) is hereby rejected since the significant probability value is greater than the pre-set level of significance ($t = -1.862$; $p .063 > 0.05$). To this end, the second hypothesis has thus been tested to show that respondents' perception about the crusade was generally not significantly different. Table 3 tested the direction of public perception of the crusade. Results show respondents largely considered Buhari's administration to be fair on most of the indices of anti-corruption: majority (30.5%) rated the declaration of anti-corruption crusade as good, while minority considered it as very poor (13.9%); majority considered the level of public access to information to be fair (37.5%), while minority considered this to be very good (5.1%); majority rated the administration's transparency to be fair (35%), while minority rated it as very good (6.1%); majority (34.3%) also considered accountability of Buhari's administration to the public to be fair, while minority viewed this to be very good (5.7%); majority (30.4%) rated the extent to which government structure discourages corruption to be fair, while minority (10.4%) rated this to be very poor; independence of government branches was considered by the majority to be fair (38.8%), while the minority considered this to be very good (4.6%); the strength of the anti-corruption agencies in the checking corruption was considered by the majority as being fair (30.8%), while the minority viewed it as very good (9%). The crusade was thus largely adjudged to be fair by the respondents.

H_3 . There is a significant relationship between newspaper framing and public perception of Buhari's anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria.

Table 5: Pearson's Correlation for the Relationship between Newspaper Framing and Respondents' Perception of Buhari's Anti-Corruption Crusade

		Direction of Public perception of Buhari's Anti-corruption crusade	Newspapers Framing of Anti-Corruption Crusade
Direction of Respondents perception on Government anti corruption drive	Pearson Correlation	1	.311**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1187	1187
Perception of Newspapers Framing of Anti-Corruption Crusade	Pearson Correlation	.311**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1187	1187

The correlation test in Table 5 shows that hypothesis three (H_3), which presumed a relationship between the two variables, is hereby accepted because the probability value is less than the pre-set level of significance ($r = 0.311$; $p .000 < 0.05$). This shows that there was a positive significant relationship between newspaper framing and public perception of Buhari's anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria. By implication, the patterns of framing the crusade were positively correlated to the direction of public perception, indicating a direct relationship.

Discussion of Findings

This study has revealed that the selected national newspapers used a combination of generic and issue-specific frames in presenting news about Buhari's anti-corruption crusade, though the latter was used more predominantly. On the other hand, results showed that there was no significant difference in the direction of public perception of the crusade as the reading audience predominantly perceived the administration's performance as fair on most of the indices of the crusade tested. More importantly, the study found a correlation between newspaper framing and public perception of the crusade, lending credence to the findings of previous studies. For instance, Zillmann, Perkins and Sundar (1992) found that framing of issues in the news for instance, particularly information presented in the form of exemplars tends to influence audience judgments about those issues; Slothus and de Vreese (2010) reported that the prospect and consequence frames influenced opinions in opposing directions on both the conflict and consensus political issues; Druckman's (2001) reported that the public tends to prefer the risk-averse alternative when given a 'save' or benefit frame and risk-seeking alternative when given a 'die' or loss frame; Han and Wang's (2012) study showed that participants in the risk conditions had more negative perceptions of product-country image than those in benefits conditions and in the control conditions, while positive frames were observed to elicit positive evaluations of 'made in China' products as they perceived the product aspect of the frame more positively than the country aspect. The results of this study and other previous ones have thus affirmed scholars' postulations about the relationship between media presentation (framing) of issues and the societal level consequence. For instance, de

Vreese (2005) establishes a link between framing and societal level consequences; Shrum (2002) contends that there is a relationship between television viewing and perception of social reality. In their study of framing of politics; and PwC (2016) assert that public perception about corruption is subjective and may change drastically due to media attention and exposition of corruption.

Conclusion

On the premises of the findings of this study, it can be concluded that media presentation of issues significantly influences the perception of the audience about such issues. The underlying fact behind this assertion is that the 21st century society is a post-modern society characterized by complex social structures and relations. This accounts for high media dependency, a situation in which people rely heavily on the mass media for information about events and issues mostly beyond their personal contacts. In their consumption of media information such as news, people get influenced, not just by the information substance, but also by their manners of presentation. A characteristic media production-consumption chain of relationship reaffirmed in this study is the positive significant relationship between newspaper framing and public perception of Buhari's anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria. This relationship has been earlier affirmed by modern framing scholars such as Chong and Druckmann (2007), de Vreese (2005), Entman, Matthes and Pellicano (2009) who attest to the potency of media presentation of issues through framing in producing considerable changes in the audience in terms of opinions, perception and attitudes. The findings of this study have reaffirmed their postulations, showing a strong connection between newspaper framing and public perception of Buhari's anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on its findings, this study hereby recommends that:

1. Research in framing should be redirected to consider the relationship between frame production and framing consequence or effects on perception, opinions, political attitudes and/or actions as this is crucial for proper understanding of framing effects.
2. News reporters should consider the sensitivity attached to their professional calling by taking cognizance of the usage of framing devices such as words, sentences, photographs and other illustrative devices due to their implications on meaning-making, perception and opinions at the domain of the audience.
3. Politicians and people in governance should guide that their speeches and actions as they are crucial to meaning-making in the public domain and have implications on political mobilization. This is because news framing is a process that begins with news makers such as politicians and top government officials who are at the centre of public speeches, official actions and political events that attract news attention.

References

- Aalberg, T., Stromback, J., & de Vreese, C. H. (2012). Framing of politics as a strategy and game: a review of concepts, operationaliations and key findings. *Journalism*, 13 (1), 162-178. Retrieved on Nov.23, 2015 from <http://jonathanstray.com/papers/The%20framing%20of%20politics.pdf>.
- Agu, I. E. (2015). A Linguistic-stylistic analysis of newspaper reportage. *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies*, 2 (8), 20-27. Retrieved on April 3, 2016 from <http://www.ijrhss.org/pdf/v2-i8/3.pdf>
- Burton, G. (2010). *Media and society: critical perspectives (2nd edition)*. New York: Open University Press.
- Chong, D., & Druckman, J. N. (2007). Framing theory. *Annual Review of Political Science*. Retrieved on Nov. 16, 2015 from http://www.communicationcache.com/uploads/1/0/8/8/10887248/framing_theory.pdf.
- D'Angelo, P. (2002). News framing as a multi-paradigmatic research programme: A response to Entman. *Journal of Communication*, pp. 870-888. Retrieved on Nov. 23, from <http://www.mmc.twitbookclub.org/MMC910/Readings/Week%2007/News%20framing.pdf>.
- DeFleur, M., & Ball-Rokeach, S. (1987). *Theories of mass communication (5th edition)*. New York: Longman.
- DeVreese, C. H., & Semetko, H. A. (2002). Cynical and engaged: Strategic campaign coverage, public opinion and mobilization in a referendum. *Communication Research*, 29 (6), 615-641.
- Dominick, J. R. (2011). *The dynamics of mass communication*. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies Incorporated.
- Druckman, J. N. (2001). The implications of framing effects for citizen competence. *Political Behaviour*, 23 (3), 225-256. Retrieved on Nov. 6, 2016 from <http://faculty.wcas.northwestern.edu/~jnd260/pub/Druckman%20Political%20Behavior%202001.pdf>.
- Druckman, J. N. (2011). What is it all about: Framing in political science. In Keren, G. (ed) *Perspectives on framing*, p. 22-40. New York: Psychology Press/Taylor & Francis.
- Duck, S. & McMahan, D. T. (2009). *The basics of communication: A relational perspective*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications Incorporated.
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43 (4), 51-58. Retrieved on Oct. 31, 2015 from <http://www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x/abstract;jsessionid=BOA85B715965F728584D0557F90675ED.f01t03>.

- Entman, R. M., Matthes, J., & Pellicano, L. (2009). Nature, sources and effects of news framing. In Wahl-Jorgensen, K. & Hanitzsch, T. (eds). *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, pp. 175-190. New York: Routledge. Retrieved on Nov 24, 2015 from <http://www.rasaneh.org/Images/News/AtachFile/3091390/FILE634600594129473750.pdf>.
- Fadairo, O. S., Fadairo, A. O., & Aminu, O. (2014). Coverage of corruption news by major newspapers in Nigeria. *New Media and Mass Communication*, 24, 53-60.
- Folarin, B. (2002). *Mass communication theory: An introductory text*. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers.
- Gamson, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1989). Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, 95, 1-37.
- Han, G., & Wang, X. (2011). Understanding 'Made in China: Valence framing and product country image. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 89 (2), 225-244. Retrieved on May 2, 2016 from <https://www.questia.com/read/1P3-2713162401/understanding-made-in-china-valence-framing-and>.
- Iberi, D. (2014). *Print media coverage of county governance in Kenya: An analysis of The Daily Nation and The Standard newspapers*. A research project submitted to the School of Journalism, University of Nairobi, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication Studies. Retrieved on Nov. 24, 2015 from [erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/76290/Iberi_Print media coverage of county governance in Kenya%3A a content analysis of the Daily nation and the Standard newspapers..pdf?sequence=1](erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/76290/Iberi_Print_media_coverage_of_county_governance_in_kenya%3A_a_content_analysis_of_the_Daily_nation_and_the_Standard_newspapers..pdf?sequence=1).
- Idiong, N. S. (2010). Expanding the relevance of political communication scholarship: A new research framework. In Okwilagwe, A. O. (ed) *Nigeriana Stirling-Horden Encyclopedia of Mass Media and Communication*, 1, p.97-107. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers.
- Iorgoveanu, A., & Corbu, N. (2012). No consensus on framing? Towards an integrative approach to define frames both as text and visuals. *Romania Journal of Communication and Public Relations*, 14 (3), 91-102. Retrieved on Nov. 24, 2015 from <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/84626817/no-consensus-framing-towards-integrative-approach-define-frames-both-as-text-visuals>.
- Knudsen, E. (2014). Media effects as a two-sided field: Comparing theories and research of framing and agenda setting. In Kramp, L., Carpenter, N., Hepp, A., Trivundza, I.T., Nieminen, H., Kunelius, R., Olsson, T., Sundin, E. & Kilborn R. (eds). *Media practice and everyday agency in Europe*, p. 207-216. Bremen: Edition Lumiere.

- Lamidi, I. K., & Olisa, D. S. (2016). Newspaper framing of the APC change mantra in the 2015 Nigerian Presidential election: A study of *The Punch* and *The Guardian* newspapers. *Journal of Communication and Media Research*, 8 (2), 201-218.
- Lippmann, W. (1922). *Public opinion*. New York: Pearson Educational. Retrieved on May 14, 2016 from <http://wps.pearsoncustom.com/wps/media/objects/2429/2487430/pdfs/lippmann.pdf>.
- Mathes, J. (2009). What's in a Frame? A Content Analysis of Media Framing Studies in the World's Leading Communication Journals, 1990-2005. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 86 (2), 349-367. Retrieved on May 2, 2016 from <https://www.questia.com/read/1P3-1860676051/what-s-in-a-frame-a-content-analysis-of-media-framing>.
- McCombs, M., & Reynolds, A. (2002). News influence on our picture of the world. In Bryant, J., & Zillmann, D. (eds). *Media effects advances in theory and research (2nd edition)*, p. 1-17. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. Retrieved on May 12, 2016 from <https://www.questia.com/read/105200348/media-effects-advances-in-theory-and-research>.
- McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory (6th edition)*. London: Sage Publications Limited.
- Pricewaterhouse Coopers Limited (PwC) (2016). *Impact of corruption on Nigeria's economy*. Lagos: PwC. Retrieved on March 31, 2016 from <http://www.pwc.com/ng/en/assets/pdf/impact-of-corruption-on-nigerias-economy.pdf>.
- Scheufele, D. A. (1999). Framing as a theory of media effect. *Journal of Communication*, Winter, 103-122. Retrieved on Oct. 31, 2016 from http://www.phil-fak.uni-duesseldorf.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Institute/Sozialwissenschaften/Kommunikations_und_Medienwissenschaft/Vowe/Forscherguppe/Scheufele_Framing_theory_media_effects.pdf.
- Shah, D. V., Watts, M. D., Domke, D., & Fan, A. P. (2002). News framing and cueing of issue regimes: Explaining Clinton's public approval in spite of scandal. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 66, 339-370.
- Shrum, L. J. (2002). Media consumption and perception of social reality: Effects and Underlying processes. In Bryant, J., & Zillmann, D. (eds). *Media effects advances in theory and research (2nd edition)*, p. 69-95. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. Retrieved on May 12, 2016 from <https://www.questia.com/read/105200348/media-effects-advances-in-theory-and-research>.

- Slothuus, R., & de Vreese, C. H. (2010). Political parties, motivated reasoning and Issues framing effects. *The Journal of Politics*, 72 (3), 630-645. Retrieved on Nov. 22, 2015 from <http://ps.au.dk/fileadmin/Statskundskab/Dokumenter/subsites/Forskersistider/runeslothuus/Dokumenter/JOP2010.pdf>.
- Snow, D. A., Benford, R. D., McCammon, H. J., Hewitt, L., & Fitzgerald, S. (2014). The emergence, development and future of the framing perspective: 25+ years since 'frame alignment'. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 19 (1), 23-45.
- Yan, Z., & Liu, Y. (2016). The competing media frame study in one country of two systems: The case study on scandal of Chen Liangyu. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 6 (1), 32-37. Retrieved on April 6, 2016 from [.](#)
- Zillmann, D., Perkins, J. W., & Sundar, S. S. (1992). Impression-formation effects of printed news varying in descriptive precision and exemplification. *Medienpsychologie*, 1 (4), 168-185.