
COMMUNICATIO

Mediology

Framing of the Postponement of 2015 Presidential Election by Selected Nigerian Newspapers

Tsegyu Santas¹

Abstract: This study investigated how Nigerian newspapers reported the postponement of the 2015 presidential elections. The objective of the study is to determine the kind of news frames used by Nigerian newspapers in their reportage of the postponement of the election, determine the prominence accorded to news stories that dominated the coverage of the postponement as well as the direction or tone the newspapers adopted in reporting the postponement of the election. Four national dailies were chosen for the study namely- *Daily Trust*, *The Nation*, *Guardian* and *Vanguard* newspapers. The study employed content analysis to analyze the research data while framing theory serves as the theoretical framework for the study. The research reveals that the selected newspapers use different kinds of frames to report the postponement of the election. The news frames includes rescue frame, political frame, ethnic frame, economic frame among several others. However, the study show that rescue frame is the most predominant frame adopted by the selected newspapers in their coverage of the postponement of the election. Findings further show that in terms of story types, most of the stories were reported in straight news, feature articles, opinion articles and editorials. In regards to the direction or tone given to the postponement of the election, the newspapers differ in their tone of coverage of the election. Some tilted their coverage towards negative issues while some newspapers were positive on the election. Based on these findings, the study concludes that Nigerian press is still projecting ethnic, political, and religious sentiment in the coverage of political parties' activities. Hence, we recommend the press to ensure that they detach themselves from partisan politics in order to provide objective coverage of political activities.

Keywords: Press; politics; Security; Framing; Election

1. Introduction

The 2015 presidential election is arguably one of the most keenly contested in the history of elections in Nigeria. For the first time, an incumbent presidential candidate was defeated and willing to concede power to the opposition party. One

¹ Department of Mass Communication, Nasarawa State University, Nigeria, Address: Keffi, P.M.B 1022, Keffi, Nigeria, Corresponding author: tsegyu@gmail.com.

remarkable dimension that characterized the 2015 presidential election was the role played by Boko Haram in the build up to the election which constituted a serious security threat to the conduct of the election. On the other hand, the desperation demonstrated by the two contending political aspirants of (APC and PDP) in the whole election process further heightened the already charged atmosphere brewing across the country. The political parties and candidates resorted to negative pronouncements and the use of hate speech to attack one another. For example, the director of publicity of the Goodluck Jonathan presidential campaign organization, Chief Femi Fani-Kayode, alleged that Muhammadu Buhari forged his secondary school certificate. Also, the wife of the former President, Dame Patience Jonathan in one of her campaign trail refers to General Muhammadu Buhari as a “brain death” (Yaqub & Maikudi, 2015, p. 13).

On the other hand, the APC campaign organization used negative words like Clueless, incompetent, and corruption infested administration to refer to the PDP sixteen years of holding the reins of power. It was against the backdrop of these accusations leveled by the opposition party about corruption in the PDP that the APC hinged their political campaigns slogan on “changed” (Egwemi, 2015). The press was not left out in the whole saga as they constitute an important fulcrum in bringing information to the electorate during electioneering campaigns. In discharging their constitutional mandate, the press in their reportage of the 2015 presidential election was biased and flippantly took side in pitching their loyalty to either the PDP or the APC political party. For instance, NTA and AIT aired series of advertisements that depicted Muhammadu Buhari in lurid and negative lights. The newspapers were not left out as many editors, editorials and reporters negatively reported the two contending presidential candidates in a bad light. Analysis of the following print media *The Nation*, *The News*, and *PM news* given close connection to the national leader of the APC (Bola Tinibu) did consistently portrayed the incumbent president and his political party in a disrespectful manner (Opanajo, 2015, p. 29).

The conduct of security operatives in preparation to the 2015 elections left much to be desired. Security agencies who are supposed to display high level professionalism by being neutral in political issues became infested with ethnicity and religious affinity. The police, army and department of security service (DSS) indicated bias for the ruling party, which increasingly generated fear for the opposition and electorate about security and electoral fraud (Onapajo, 2015, p. 13). The high point of this development led to the postponement of the 2015 general

elections by INEC which was initially slated for 14th and 28th February 2015 for federal and States elections to March 28th and April 11th 2015. The postponement of the election according to INEC was as a result of security concerns raised by security agencies on account of the insurgency in the North-eastern part of the country (Oguche, 2015, p. 67).

The first call for the postponement of the election was reported by President Jonathan's national security adviser, Sambo Dasuki at Chatham House, London. The call for the shift in the date for the election was precipitated on the grounds that several eligible voters were unable to collect their voter's cards. In addition, the security adviser to the president also noted that the North-eastern part of the country where the activities of the Boko Haram sect have heightened during the build up to the election and the subsequent takeover of six local government councils by the sect necessitated the postponement of the election by six weeks. The National Council of States which is made up of past heads of Nigerian State in their meeting on February 5th also supported the shift in the light of security concerns and safety of Nigerians.

The announcement of the postponement of the 2015 general elections by INEC boss professor Attahiru Jega was received with mixed reactions by Nigerians, civil society groups, international community, and political parties. The postponement of the election did not go down well especially with the opposition party. The opposition party saw the postponement of the election as a strategy by the ruling party to buy more time to perfect their plans of rigging the election. APC senators described the postponement as a teleguided move towards derailing Nigeria democracy. The APC caucus in a statement said the ruling PDP masterminded the postponement because of fear of imminent defeat. They further noted that the postponement revealed the helplessness of INEC in the hands of persons who want to truncate the present civil rule in the country (*This Day Live*, 2015).

However, the ruling party (PDP) saw the postponement of the election as a good development to Nigerian democracy since some certain Local government in the North-east were still in the grip of the Boko Haram sect. Thus extending the election for six weeks would enable the Nigerian military to reclaim those lost territories and enable the electorate inhabiting the areas to perform their civic responsibility. Arising from the above, this study examined newspaper framing of the postponement of the 2015 presidential election within the parameter of the security issues that informed the shift of date for the election.

2. Statement of the Problem

The postponement of the 2015 general elections was received with mixed feelings both in Nigeria and outside the shores of the country. The mass media and social media have been awash with the heartbreaking news of the long awaited historic election in the annals of Nigerian political history. The press in reporting the postponement of the election used different kinds of news frames to disseminate information to the electorate. The way and manner the press used these frames indeed had lasting effect on the perception of the public on the issues that surrounds the postponement saga. It is on this light that this study examined how the Nigerian press framed the news of the postponement of the election, the prominence given by the newspapers, and the tone or direction of the postponement of the election as reported by Nigerian press.

3. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Which type of news frames did Nigerian Newspapers reported the postponement of the 2015 general elections?;
2. What prominence was accorded to stories by Nigerian newspapers in their portage of the postponement of the 2015 general elections?;
3. What is the direction or tone of stories reported by Nigerian newspapers concerning the postponement of 2015 general elections?.

4. Theoretical Consideration

Framing theory has been one of the most abundant areas in recent research in communication, politics and sociology because framing can clarify and interpret the extent the media affect public's understanding of politics (Lecheler & De Vreese, 2012, cited in Adisa, Muhammed & Ahmad, 2015, p. 31).

Earlier, framing has its origin in politics and psychology, but was later applied in the study of how journalist's shape and control news by scholars like Todd Gitlin and Gaye Tuchman in the late 1970's (Karnes, 2008). Ever since that time several researchers on the impact of news coverage have come up with many overview of framing. News framing is a theory that emerged from the agenda-setting function

of the mass media. Framing theory therefore refers to a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration (Rhee, 1997; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000 cited in Galadima & Soola, 2012, p. 10). Frames are understood to be interpretative schemes, ways that journalists constitute news, so that a news report contains within it suggestions on how to interpret the news. These suggestions may be artistic (such as metaphors) or less artistic (such as an implied “if...then” logical connection). Often news framing relies upon a story or narrative that helps the reader to make sense of the news (Bruner, 2012, p. 64)

According to Entnan (1994), framing is the process of selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation and/or solution, this is often done to highlight the interest of elites. Alluding further to this assertion Noakes & Wilkins (2002), avers that frames are sometimes defined by those in power then picked up and used by the news media. This is so because, “journalists reflect the norms and values of the cultural context in which they work and thus draw on the tools provided by the hegemonic ideology when constructing news frames. Framing therefore explains how media information is used to make one issue more important than another. Framing theory offers the basis for understanding how conflict is reported in newspapers (Carpenter, 2007 cited in Adisa, Muhammed & Ahmad, 2015). According to De Vreese (2005), a frame is an emphasis in salience of various aspects of an issue such as conflict. According to Chong & Druckman (2007, p. 111) framing works on three levels:

By making new beliefs available about an issue, making certain available beliefs accessible, or making beliefs applicable or “strong” in people’s evaluation. Despite the connotations of these adjectives, there is nothing inherently superior about an applicable or strong frame other than its appeal to the audiences. Strong frame should not be confused with intellectually or morally superior arguments, they can be built around exaggerations and outright lies playing on the fears and prejudices of the public. Strong frames often rest on symbols, endorsements, and links to partisanship and ideology, and may be effective in shaping opinions through heuristics rather than direct information about the substance of a policy.

In the realm of conflict situation or communication, media framing of issues and events has a considerable influence on the public. The attitude of the people, most times, in political crisis can be traced to the kind of images the media placed on people’s minds. (Ngwu, Ekwe & Chukwuemeka, 2015). This assertion is further

alluded by Anaeto, Onabanjo and Osifeso (2008, p. 89), who states that the media may not always determine what we think, but what we think about. Although we have a right to think what we want to think, but surprisingly, we tend to think most of those things the media highlights as important.

This underlines the basic principle of Agenda setting theory. This is because the theory espoused that the more attention a media outlet pays to a certain phenomenon, the more importance the public attributes to such an issue. Communications research provides abundant evidence that the news media are the primary agenda-setting agent (Iyanda, 2010; Okunna, 1999; McQuail, 2005). This is because an issue that is covered by the news media will set the agenda for how the public reacts as measured in public opinion polls and how policy makers will respond through legislation. Agenda setting theory also refers to the ability that the media have to not only reflect reality but also determine reality. The media determine reality by how much attention they pay to any particular issue. For instance, if the news media cover violent crime extensively, the public and policy makers will respond accordingly through legislation.

In terms of news on different groups in the society, Aahley and Olson (1998) in Galadima & Soola (2012, p. 10) explain that the news media can frame a group in several ways. This is normally done by ignoring such group completely or burying the story about them in the inside pages of the newspapers. The press can also frame groups by the way they are described or by reporting the events rather than the goals and interest of that group. They can trivialize the action of the groups by dwelling on their dresses, age, language, style, etc. or marginalize the viewpoints of the groups by attributing them to social deviants. This explains why Viser (2003, p. 114) avers that “one of the most obvious ways in which the media content structures a symbolic environment is simply by giving great attention (in form of more time, greater prominence, and so on) on certain events, people, groups, and places than others.”

Applying the framing theory to this study, will show how the selected newspapers framed the postponement of the 2015 general elections. This is germane because the postponement of the elections was viewed from different perspectives by different media organizations and the public in particular. The theory will further help us understand how the various media interpreted the issue in the light of different vested interest in the political landscape of the country.

5. Literature Review

Okunna and Omenugha's (2006) study of religious crisis in Nigeria revealed that newspapers framed Nigerians in terms of eastern christian's versus northern muslims. This is because the newspapers-*Daily Champion* and *New Nigerian*- are dedicated to the cause of Igbo's and Hausa-Fulani ethnic groups who are widely separated by religious and geographical differences. Seriki (1993) cited in Adisa, Muhammed & Ahmad (2015) findings also supported Okunna and Omenugha's study by confirming that the 1991 Katsina riot in Nigeria was connected with a newspaper report. Also, part of the blame for the unprecedented conflict behavior among various ethnic groups in Nigeria has been blamed on how the press frames the reportage of the crisis.

Adisa, Muhammed & Ahmad (2015), in a study entitled "newspaper framing of conflicts: Perceptions of ethnic group leaders on conflict behaviors in a multiethnic society" explores the role played by ethnic groups or leaders and newspaper framing in influencing interethnic conflicts in Nigeria. The study adopted in-depth interview approach with 26 ethnic group leaders to probe into the ethnic group leader's catalyst for conflict behaviors on ethno-political conflict in Nigeria. The interview data were analyzed thematically using NVivo 8 software. The findings of the study show that ethnic groups leaders tend to blame the press, government and ethnic group attitudes. Specifically, the leaders fault the press for inflammatory reporting, name calling, double standards and for heavy ownership influence and ethnic interest. Those interviewed agreed that although media reports have influenced their decision and actions at one time or the other, individual's impunity among ethnic group's leaders is also a serious cause of conflict in Nigeria. This was also supported by Nnamdi (2015) in his study titled "Nigerian media, Boko Haram terrorism, and the politics of the 2015 Nigerian election". Using personal observation, evaluation of news reports and literature analysis as basis of his study, the author argues that Nigerian media have operated more as active players in the political crisis and conflicts that took place during the elections.

Furthermore, Ezumah (2013) conducted a study on "agenda setting, framing and news interpretation of mass media coverage of the 2013 Papal resignation. The study adopted focus group discussion to investigate the views and interpretations of the participant's knowledge on the functions of mass media as it relate to surveillance, correlation, transmission, entertainment as presented in the papal news coverage. The findings of the study show that participants believe that the press set undue agenda by prioritizing the story for several weeks and framing the

story in negative light. The study further raised questions on the legitimacy of agenda setting and framing influences in contemporary society.

In the same vein, Galadima and Soola (2012), examined “press and group identity politics in Nigeria: A study of newspaper framing of the 2003 and 2007 presidential elections”. Content analysis was employed as the method of data analysis. Eight newspapers namely; *New Nigerian*, *Daily Trust*, *Daily Sun*, *Daily Champion*, *The Guardian*, *Vanguard*, *Nigerian Tribune* and *The Punch* were the selected newspapers used for the study. In addition, two research questions were examined in the study. First, the study examined how Nigerian newspapers frame the campaign activities of the presidential candidates during the 2003 and 2007 elections. Second, the study sought to determine the type of news frame that dominated the coverage of group identity during the elections. Findings from the study revealed that the coverage of group identity in the 2003 and 2007 elections was dominated by conflict frame in the selected newspapers. This was followed by responsibility frame (with 40 and 24 for 2003 and 2007 respectively and morality frame (19 and 15). The economic consequences and human interest’s frames came third and fourth respectively. The study concludes by recommending that journalists should be trained in the techniques of reporting elections campaigns.

Biobaku, Oboh, & Atinuke (2012) in their study of “television framing of the 2009 Ekiti re-run election in Nigeria” investigated television framing of the 2009 Ekiti re-run election. The main objective of the study was to determine how television stations framed the election, and how political partisanship reflected in the framing of the election. The study use content analysis method to analyze the data for the study. Three televisions stations constitute the sample for the study. The stations include; Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Channel 10, Lagos, Lagos television and Channels Television were purposively chosen to represent government owned and private establishment for the study. The unit of analysis was daily evening news bulletin within the second quarter (April-June) of 2009. The unit of analysis was analyzed alongside three content categories- prominence, disposition, and major actors in the election. Findings of the study revealed that the private television stations gave more coverage (41.3%) to the election than the government owned stations (20.6%). The study further show that all the television stations studied gave prominence to the event by bringing most stories about the election at the beginning of their newscast. Findings also indicated partisan coverage by government stations (federal and state). The study concludes that government stations cover the elections from a partisan point hence it recommends that

journalists working in government media stations should strive to be non-partisan and professional in handling of political campaigns.

Furthermore, Ngwu, Ekwe, & Chukwuemeka (2015), carried out a research on “Nigerian newspapers framing of the Chibok school girls abduction: A study of *The Guardian, Daily Sun, Daily Trust and Leadership newspapers*. The major trust of the study examined how the newspapers reported the abduction of the school girls on April 14, 2014. The research focus was on how stories of the abduction were framed in two Southern and Northern Nigerian newspapers and how the frames influenced media audience. Content analysis was used to study the news frames by the selected newspapers while survey research method was employed to gauge the influenced of news frames on media audience. The findings of the study revealed that the selected newspapers used news frames like rescue frame, ethnic frame, political frame conspiracy frame, and economic frame among several others. However, the study further show that hopelessness frame was predominantly employed by the press in the coverage of the abducted school girls, and this made media audience believed that rescuing the girls would become a very difficult task to be achieved by the government security forces.

6. Methodology

The study adopted content analysis and survey research to examine how the press covered the postponement of the 2015 general election and the different types of frames used by the press to promote the interest of the two contending political parties (PDP & APC) during the postponement saga. The study employed content analysis and framing analysis to carry out the study. The population of the study comprised *Daily Trust, Vanguard, Guardian* and *The Nation* newspapers were all purposively sampled for the study. The rational for the choice of the newspapers is that they are national in outlook and their circulation is quite large. The sampled size of the study is made up of all editions of the newspapers published in the month of February and March 2015. The choice of these months by the researcher was to reflect the period the news on the postponement of the election was in most Nigerian national dailies.

Unit of Analysis and Content Categories

According to Wimmer & Dominck (2003), a unit of analysis is the manifest elements of communication which is counted. It also refers to the smallest yet the

most important element of a content analysis. For the purpose of this study, the unit of analysis was the news story. In this study news story is any write-up or expression of opinion on the postponement of the election were analyzed based on the prominence and direction. To achieve this, unit of analysis such as straight news, editorials, opinion articles, feature stories were developed and critically analyzed.

In the same vein, De Vreese (2005), Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) advised on the kind of frames to use in conflict reports. This is because frames like units of analysis are the centre of most content analytical studies. Base on this, the following frames were use in the study.

Religious frame: This has to do with news emanating from Christians or Muslims and any other religious group on the 2015 elections.

Rescue frame: News account that give information on the efforts made by Nigeria security forces to reclaim local government's areas under the siege of the Boko Haram and the rescue of the abducted girls.

Hopelessness frame: News reports, phrases or words that relate to the inability of security forces to rescue the areas captured by Boko Haram and rescue the girls.

Political frame: Stories that emanates from political parties suggesting that the postponement of the election is to allow the incumbent president or government to manipulate the election in their favor in order to win the election.

Conspiracy frame: Reports from any group in the society that reveal that the postponement of the election is believed to be conspiracy of the government or a political party.

Ethnic frame: These were for all news stories and words suggesting ethnic sentiment and motivation in the postponement of the 2015 election.

Economic frame: News reports about the implications or consequences of the postponement of the elections.

Responsibility frame: This has to do with any story or report that blame the government, political parties or any group for the postponement of the election.

7. Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1. Type of news frames Nigerian Newspapers reported the postponement of the 2015 general election

Types of frame	The Nation No. %	Guardian No. %	Daily Trust No. %	Vanguard No %	Total No%
Responsibility	2	1	5	5	13 (10%)
Economic	5	4	6	5	17 (14%)
Ethnic	3	1	5	5	17 (14%)
Conspiracy	2	3	2	4	9 (7%)
Religious	4	2	4	4	15 (12%)
Political	4	6	3	3	12 (10%)
Rescue	10	3	8	2	26 (21%)
Hopelessness	2		5	5	15 (12%)
Total	32 (25.8 %)	21(16.9%)	38 (30.7%)	33 (26.6%)	124 (100%)

The data in table 1 above reveal the kind of news frames the samples newspapers reported the postponement of the 2015 presidential election. Of the eight types of frame use for the study, rescue efforts frame was predominantly used by the selected newspapers. This is followed by ethnic and economic frames, religious frame and hopelessness frame among other frames. This pattern of coverage indicates that media reportage of the postponement of the 2015 general elections were centered on rescue efforts to reclaimed territories lost to the Boko Haram sect which was the bone of contention that precipitated the shifting of the election. In addition, the pattern of the coverage of the election also portrayed Nigerian press as being biased in the coverage of the postponement of the elections. At the individual level, the newspapers promoted ethnic, religious and political interest of the two contending presidential aspirants.

Table II: Stories types reported by Nigerian Newspapers during the postponement of the 2015 general election

Types of Stories	The Nation No. %	Guardian No. %	Daily Trust No. %	Vanguard No %	Total No%
Editorials	5	3	4	5	17 (14%)
Feature stories	7	5	7	7	26 (21%)
Opinion articles	6	2	6	6	20 (16%)
Straight news	6	5	10	7	28 (22%)
	8	6	11	8	33 (27%)
Total	32 (25%)	21(16.9%)	38 (30.7%)	33 (26.6%)	124 (100%)

Table 2 above, indicates that the *Nation* and *Vanguard* had the highest number of editorials, in terms of feature stories the papers had the same number of coverage

except *Guardian* newspaper which had 7. In the same vein, all newspapers had the same number of editorials except the *Guardian* newspaper which had 2. In terms of the highest number of straight news and articles *Daily Trust* had much articles more than the other newspapers. This shows that the newspapers focus most of their reports on straight news, articles, features and opinions about the postponement of the election.

Table III: Direction or tone of stories Nigerian newspapers reported the postponement of 2015 general elections?

Types of frame	The Nation No. %	Guardian No. %	Daily Trust No. %	Vanguard No %	Total No%
Positive	12	10	17	11	50 (40%)
Negative	13	9	13	14	49(39%)
Neutral	7	2	8	8	25 (21%)
Total	32 (25.8%)	21(16.9%)	38 (30.6%)	33 (26.6%)	124 (100%)

Data in table 3 shows that *Vanguard* had 14% negative stance as against 13 for *The Nation* and *Daily Trust*. While, *Guardian* had a total of 9. In terms of positive direction, *Daily Trust* had 17 which is the highest followed by *The Nation*, *Vanguard* and *Guardian* respectively. In terms of neutrality, there was a tie with *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers which had 8 while *The Nation* had 7 and *Guardian* had 2.

8. Discussion of Findings

The study was undertaken to find out the kind of news frames used by the Nigerian press in the coverage of the postponement of the 2015 general elections, the dominant frames employed by the press in the coverage of the postponement saga. In responds to the first research question findings indicated that rescue frame dominated most of the newspapers coverage of the postponement of the election. This implies that the six weeks period of grace given by the government to recapture the local government areas taken by Boko Haram is quite important. This is followed by ethnic and economic frames, religious frames and hopelessness frame among other frames. The coverage pattern of the election also portrayed Nigerian press as being biased in the coverage of the postponement of the elections. At the individual level, the newspapers promoted ethnic, religious and political frames in respect to the two contending presidential aspirants.

Research question two sought to determine the prominence accorded to stories by Nigerian newspapers in the coverage of the postponement of the 2015 general elections? A critical analysis of the findings in table 2 indicates that in relations to story types such as straight news, Opinions, features articles and editorials the newspapers devoted most of their effort in the coverage of the postponement issue. All the newspapers reported most of their stories as straight news and feature articles respectively. It can be seen from the findings that the newspapers took the reportage of the postponement very seriously. This largely explains why all the editions of the newspapers published the stories of shifting the elections. As noted by McQuail (2010, certain words, phrases and contextual references employed by the mass media can influenced people's thought and action. This argument becomes more meaningful when viewed in the context of framing model which suggest that how something is presented to the audience (frame) influences the choices people make about how to process certain information. Thus, the findings of this study further supported Clarke and Binns (2005) in their analysis of the print media that the media deal with issues that the members of the public believe are important.

The third research question was to determine the direction or tone of stories relating to the postponement of 2015 general elections in Nigeria. The findings of the newspapers differ in the direction or tone they reported the postponement of the election. The study shows that *Vanguard* gave more negative (14%) direction among the newspapers. On the other hand, *Daily Trust* gave more positive (17%) direction among all the newspapers studied. In terms of neutrality, there was a tie with *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers which had 8 while *The Nation* had 7 and *Guardian* had 2 except for the *Guardian* newspaper which had the lowest number. It should be noted that the reasons given for the postponement of the election was on the ground of security issues, poor collection of voter's cards and poor preparation by INEC to conduct the election.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examines the news framing of the 2015 postponement of the presidential election in Nigeria. The study among other things sought to determine the types of news frames adopted by the newspapers in covering the postponement of the election as well as the direction or tone of the stories covered. Findings from the study reveals that rescue frame and economic frame dominated the coverage of the

postponement. This was precipitated by the security challenges that confronted the military at the height of the electioneering campaigns. This further gave impetus to the press to give a substantial coverage to the news of shifting the polls. This the newspapers did through opinions articles, features, straight news and editorials. This provided ample information to the electorate on the matter and was able to downsize tension during the election in the country. It is also worthy to note that most of the direction of coverage given to the postponement by the various newspapers was both positive and negative. The study reveals that Nigerian press is still projecting ethnic, political, and religious sentiment in the coverage of political parties' activities. This findings is supported by Nwabueze, Uwaoma & Nwankwo (2016, p. 208) who found out that the 2015 presidential campaigns were dominated by provocative comments and hate speeches. According to them real issues which mattered to the populace were relegated by parties and aspirants who chose to use provocative languages to defame opponents. These hate comments and reports were published by leading media houses in the country. This was also evident in the use of ethnic, religious, political and conspiracy frames by the selected newspapers. Base on this conclusion, the press is charge to ensure that they detach themselves from political and sectional interest in order to provide objective coverage of future elections in Nigeria.

10. References

- Adisa, M.R.; Muhammed, R. & Ahmad, K.M. (2015). Newspaper framing of conflicts: Perceptions of ethnic group leaders on conflict behaviors in a multiethnic society. *Malaysian Journal of Media Studies*, 17(1), pp. 29-44.
- Anaeto, S.G.; Onabanjo, O.S. & Osifeso, J.B. (2008). *Models and Theories of Communication*.
- Asemah, E.S.; Gujbawu, M.; Ekharefo, D.O. & Okpanachi, R.A. (2012). *Research methods and procedures in mass communication*. Jos: Great future press.
- Biobaku, O.M.; Oboh, E.G. & Atinuke, O.A. (2012). Television framing of the 2009 Ekiti re-run election in Nigeria. *Journal of multimedia technology and communication studies*. 1,1323149. Bowie, Maryland: African Rennainace Books Incorporated.
- Brunner, S.M. (2012). News framing in the United States of the violence in Jos, Nigeria. *Journal of communication and media research*. 4(1), pp. 62-75.
- Chong, D. & Druckman, J.N (2007). Framing theory. *AR Journal: annual reviews.org*.
- De Vreese, C.H. & Peter. J. & Semetko, H. (2001). Framing politics at the launch of the euro: A cross-national comparative study of frames in the news. *Political communication*. 18, pp. 107-122.

- De, C.H. (2005). News framing: Theory and typology. *Information design journalist + documents design*, 13(1), pp. 51-62.
- Egwemi, V. (2015). Here we go again! A discourse on the gale of defections into the All Progressive Congress (APC). In the aftermath of the 2015 general elections in Nigeria. A paper presented at a two – day national conference on “the 2015 general election in Nigeria: The real issues”. Organized by the electoral institute, Abuja from the 26th to 29th July 2015 at Abuja, Nigeria.
- Entman, R.M. (1994). Framing: Towards clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of communication*. 43, pp. 51-59.
- Ezumah, A.B. (2013). Agenda setting, framing and news interpretation of mass media coverage of the 2013 papal resignation. *Journal of communication and media research*. 5(2), pp. 33-64.
- Galadima, J.D. & Soola, O.E. (2012). The press and group identity politics in Nigeria: A study of newspaper framing of the 2003 and 2007 presidential elections. *Nigerian Journal of Communication*. 10(1), pp. 1-27.
- Iyanda, M.L.U. (2010). Nigerian newspapers coverage of Ghanaian 2008 presidential election: Between journalism and national moralizing. A long essay submitted to the department of communication and language arts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of arts degree in communication and language arts.
- Karnes, K.O. (2008). What is the story? Framing of health issues by the US. Centers for disease control and prevention and major newspapers: A qualitative analysis. Communication theses. Paper.36 http://digitalarchives.gsu.edu./communication_theses.
- McQuail's, D. (2005). *McQuail's mass communication Theory*: London: SAGE Publication
- McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory*. (6th edition). London: Sage publications.
- Ngwu, C.C.; Ekwe, O.C. & Chukwuemeka, C. (2015). Nigerian newspapers framing of the Chibok school girls abduction; A study of Guardian, Daily Sun, DailyTrust and Leadership Newspapers. *Global journal of arts, humanities and social sciences*. 3(8), pp. 78-93.
- Nwabueze, C.; Uwaoma, A. & Nwankwo, N. (2016). A study of hate speech use in Nigerian's 2015 presidential elections campaigns. *The Nigerian journal of communication*. 13(1), pp. 192-210.
- Nnamdi, E. (2015). Nigerian media, Boko Haram terrorism, and the politics of the 2015 Nigerian election. Abstract submitted to the *17th annual conference of African council for communication education (ACCE)* held at University of Calabar from 20th to 23th October 2015.
- Noakes, J.A. & Wilins, K.G. (2002). Shifting frames of the Palestine movement in U.S. news. *Media, Culture and society*. 24, pp. 649-671.
- Oguche, S. (2015). Postponement of Nigerians 2015 general election: Interface of law and politics. *African journal of law and criminology*. 5(3), pp. 67-84.
- Okunna, C.S. & Omenugha, K.A. (2006). Media, ideology and the nation: An assessment of Northern and Southern newspapers reports of Denmark cartoon's crisis of February, 2006. A paper presented at *international conference on media and popular culture* in Nigeria held at Bayero University, Kano, July 12-13th.

Okunna, C.S. (1999). *Introduction to mass communication*. (2nd edition). Enugu. New generation books.

Opanajo, H. (2015). How credible were the Nigerian 2015 general election? An “electoral integrity framework of analysis. *African renaissance*. 12(3), pp. 11-39.

Semetko, H., & Valkenburg, P. (2000). Framing politics: A content analysis of press and television news. *Journal of communication*, 50, pp. 93-109.

ThisDayLive, (2015). *Mixed reactions trail postponement of elections*. Retrieved from <http://www.Thisdaylive.com/articles/mixed-reactions-trail-election-postponment/201364>, Accessed on 7/8/2016.

Viser, M. (2003). Attempted objectivity: Analysis of New York Times and Ha'aretz and their portrayal of the Palestinian-Israeli conflicts. *The Harvard international journal of press/politics*. 8(4), pp. 114-122.

Wimmer, R.D. & Dominick, J.R. (2003). *Mass media research*. (7th Ed.) Belmont: Wadsworth. Thomas learning.

Yaqub, N. & Maikudi, A.S. (2015). *The mass media and the 2015 General election*. A paper presented at a two – day national conference on the 2015 general election in Nigeria: The real issues. Organized by the electoral institute, Abuja from the 26th to 29th July 2015 at Abuja, Nigeria.