

## **Newspaper Coverage of President Muhammad Buhari’s Anti-Corruption Crusade: a Study of *the Vanguard* and *the Nation* Newspapers**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines newspaper coverage of President Muhammadu Buhari’s on-going anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria, using *Vanguard* and the *Nation* Newspapers. The study adopted the content analysis method as its research design. The agenda setting theory and social responsibility theory of the press were frameworks used for the study. The study used multi-stage sampling technique, whereby different sampling techniques were used in the selection process. The population of the study included all editions of the two selected newspapers published between 7 November, 2015 and 7 November, 2016. This totaled 732 editions but using the constructed and continuous week sampling technique, the study arrived at 42 editions of the selected newspapers as sample size. The Holist’s and Krippendorff’s inter-coder reliability check were used. Findings from the study show that though newspapers covered President Buhari’s anti-corruption crusade positively, it was given low coverage. The study also found that the crusade was not given sufficient prominence as majority of the stories lacked front, back or centre spread pages treatment, and that the coverage of the crusade lacked depth. The study concludes that newspaper coverage of President Buhari’s anti-corruption crusade is unimpressive. The study therefore recommends among other things that the media should give the crusade more prominence in terms of story placement as well as more in-depth analysis of the crusade, based on their social responsibility and agenda setting roles.

**Keyword:** Corruption, Anti-Corruption Crusade, President Muhammadu Buhari, Newspapers, Coverage.

### **Introduction**

According to Olubukola (2003, p.12), “One of the major problems confronting the world is corruption. It has become one of the symbols of

popular discontent across the globe”. Aderogba (2013, p.1) also stated that, “Corruption is a worldwide phenomenon and there is hardly any society without one form of corruption

or the other”.

As a concept, Rotimi, Obasaju, Lawal and Ise (2013, p.3) explained that corruption has suggested different meanings to different scholars from different schools of thought. According to World Bank (1996) corruption is “the abuse of public power for private benefit”. The Transparency International (2005) defined corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain”. Scholars despite their various definitions and interpretations of the phenomenon are unanimous that corruption is anti-development.

In view of the havoc corruption often wreaks on societies, Tanzi (1998, p.4) noted that the fight against it has been in existence since thousands of years ago. As a major societal problem in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Arinze, 2013 p. 19), Daniel (2007, p. 54), noted that “anti-corruption strategies have now become the focus of policy makers, watchdog groups, and scholars, most of whom share a more or less explicit assumption that corruption is inimical to good governance and economic productivity”.

Igbuzor (2008, p. 19), opined that the renewed efforts in recent years to wage war against corruption across the globe have taken international, regional and national dimensions. Tanzi, (1998, p.6) contends that the increasing attention being paid to corruption reflects the fact that corruption has increased in recent decades.

From the foregoing, Opara (2007, p.2) pointed out that “as the global world embarks on the fight against

corruption, there is much need for a developing country like Nigeria to join the fight”. Buttressing her argument, she said: “the fact that the anti-corruption organization, Transparency International (TI), has consistently ranked Nigeria as one of the top three most corrupt nations in the world on its Corruption Perception Index makes it clear that the Nigerian government had to take action against the corruption issue plaguing the country”.

This informed President Muhammadu Buhari’s ongoing anti-corruption crusade. The fight against corruption was one of his major campaign promises ahead of 2015 general elections due to the alleged unabated level of corruption that reigned during the uninterrupted 16-year rule of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP), and many believed this eventually led to his victory at the polls.

As a result of the increasing global attention given to corruption in the world, it is imperative that the media, (newspapers) as the fourth estate of the realm should be at the fore-front of this fight. It is also expected of the media, through their analysis of past anti-graft campaigns – contribute to the on-going debate about the anti-graft war, particularly in ensuring that the campaign is taken beyond mere rhetoric and the witchhunt of those in the opposition.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

Corruption has been Nigeria’s greatest problem since independence (Mike, 2015). Haarhuris (2005) and Nadiz (2004) noted that “although corruption

is a major challenge for several other developing states, very few countries have been so ravaged by graft as Nigeria". Studies suggest that public funds of between US\$300 billion and US\$400 billion have been lost to corruption since Nigeria became independent in 1960 (Amundsen, 2010).

As a result of its negative effects on socio-economics developments, successive administrations in Nigeria have made efforts to curb the menace but it still continues unabated. Recently, the fight against the scourge has intensified with the election of President Muhammadu Buhari, who promised to nip corruption in Nigeria in the bud.

Aderogba (2013, p.120) pointed out that one of the major issues that should engage the attention of Nigerian media today is the anti-corruption war. According to him, how much Nigeria would succeed in the current battle (against corruption) depends largely on how effective the media would be. The media profession is expected to be above board so that journalists could confidently champion the anti-corruption campaign" It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to find out how the media, newspapers, especially, as the fourth estate of the realm, have fared in discharging this critical role. How have the media covered President Buhari's anti-corruption crusade?

#### **Objective of the study**

The broad objective of this study is to examine the newspaper coverage of President Muhammadu Buhari's anti-

corruption crusade. The specific objectives are:

- 1.To determine the frequency of coverage of President Buhari's anti-corruption crusade by *Vanguard and The Nation* newspapers.
- 2.To ascertain the prominence given to President Buhari's anti-corruption crusade.
- 3.To determine the direction of coverage given to President Buhari's anti-graft crusade.
- 4.To ascertain the depth of coverage of President Buhari's anti-graft crusade.

#### **Research Questions:**

In order to achieve the research objectives, the following research questions were drawn:

1. What is the frequency of coverage of President Buhari's anti-corruption crusade by the selected newspaper?
2. What is the prominence given to President Buhari's anti-corruption crusade?
3. What is the direction of coverage given to President Buhari's anti-corruption crusade?
4. What is the depth of coverage given to President Buhari's anti-corruption crusade?

#### **Literature Review**

##### **Conceptual Review**

##### ***Overview of Past Anti-Corruption Campaign in Nigeria***

Given the inimical nature of corruption to development of nations, the concern to every serious-minded government is often weaved around how best it can be tackled, and Nigeria is no

exception. Since the country's independence, one major question that has continued to fuel many answers remains: How can Nigeria wipe out corruption? Successive governments, in a bid to provide a befitting answer to the question; have tried different initiatives aimed at nipping the scourge in the bud. Reinforcing the above assertion, Ogbeyi (2012) observed that:

Nipping corruption in the bud has thus been one of the key issues articulated by most developing nations deepened in corrupt practices. Various government regimes in Nigeria, since independence, have reacted in different ways to deter the spread of corruption. Anti-corruption laws have severally been enacted, repealed and re-enacted. Agencies commissioned and committees set up. Infact, the 1983 coup led by, Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, was said to have been carried out with the aim of halting corruption and restoring discipline, integrity and dignity to public life (p.8).

Enweremadu (2010) noted that "ever since Nigeria's First Republic collapsed in July 1966 amid allegations of massive corruption, the fight against corruption has developed into an important public policy issue" Rotimi *et. al.* (2013) stated that the unstoppable spread of corruption has necessitated anti-corruption measures and strategies by successive governments to curb corruption. This includes the establishment of agencies, commissions and other bodies charged

with the responsibility of curbing corruption. It also involves initiatives tailored at minimizing corruption to the barest minimum" (p.7).

In the same vein, Benjamin (2007) asserted that the issue of corruption keeps reoccurring in every academic and formal discussion in Nigeria simply because of its danger towards meaningful development. Aderogba (2013) pointed out that " ... successive governments (in Nigeria) pursued policies against corruption and it was the main reason why the military made incursions into politics" (p.120).

In the words of Igbuzor (2008),

The war against corruption in Nigeria dates to a very long time. Every community in Nigeria has mechanisms for dealing with corruption with appropriate sanctions for corruption. The fight in the public sector came to the limelight in 1966 when the military identified corruption of the politicians as one of the reasons for taking over (p.19).

Recounting some efforts taken by past administrations to rid Nigeria of corruption, Enweremadu (2012) stated:

Before the Buhari administration, preceding administrations have instituted various legal instruments, measures and policies designed to combat corruption in the country. Some of these include the criminal code: the Penal Code (applicable in the North; The criminal justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Decree 1996; The Corruption Practices, Decree 1975 which established the corrupt practices investigation bureau, the

ethical revolution of President Shehu Shagari; The War Against Indiscipline (W.A.I) of Buhari/Idiagbon, Mass Mobilization for Self-Reliance, Social Justice, and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) by General Babangida; The Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act (Cap56, Law of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990); The Recovery of Public Property (Special Military Tribunal Act (Cap 387, Law of the Federation of Nigeria) as amended in 1991; The War Against Indiscipline and Corruption of Late Gen. Sani Abacha; The Failed Banks Recovery of Debts and Financial Malpractices in Banks, Decree 1994 as amended in 1999, The Recovery of Public Property Special Military Tribunal Act, Cap. 389, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990, as amended in 1999 by Gen. Abudulsalami Abubakar, and many others (p.18).

According to Igbuzor (2008) "When President Olusegun Obasanjo was sworn in May 1999, to spearhead the country's return to democratic government, he made it clear in his inaugural speech that the fight against corruption would be one of his major programmes. In his speeches, he continued to sing the anti-corruption song. One of the first bills, initiated by the executive, was the one on anti-corruption. The bill was passed into law as the Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Act, 2000. In 2002, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) was established" (p.19).

Ademola (2011) observed that "the menace of corruption and the lack of effectiveness of the existing institutions to fight corruption prior to 1999 led to the establishment of the ICPC (2000) and EFCC Act (2004) and the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act, 2004. These Acts made comprehensive provisions to prohibit the laundering of the proceeds of a crime as an illegal act, provide appropriate penalties and expands the interpretation of financial institutions, it also provides scope of supervision of regulatory authorities on corrupt activities among others" (p. 10).

In spite of the acclaimed successes attained by these measures, the situation remains unacceptable as corruption continues to permeate and pervade every facet of national life in Nigeria (CLEEN Foundation Monograph Series, 2010). Aderogba (2013) observed that despite various policies adopted by governments, corruption is ever increasing in Nigeria. Ademola (2011), while trying to gauge how the various strategies put in place to curb corruption in Nigeria have panned out, pointed out that "The effect have not yielded the desired results. Rather than abating it (corruption), it is festering uncontrollably ..."

According to Odekunle (1986) the "... purported crusades against corruption often are reduced to occasional intra-elite struggles, squabbles and backstabbing. Our corrupt elite have controlling influence on the form, pattern, and degree of effectiveness of control of corruption in

Nigeria, and have always frustrated laws and structures erected against corruption” Igbuzor (2008) argued that “ the war against corruption is being lost in many countries including Nigeria for several reasons. He noted:

First, most countries do not utilize universally accepted and time tested strategies. In most cases, the policies and strategies utilized in fighting corruption are not holistic and comprehensive. In most countries, there are elaborate legislative framework and policies for fighting corruption. Perhaps, what is missing is a freedom of information regime and protection of whistle blowers. But political will and commitment of a critical mass of people (both leaders and followers) is lacking. Secondly, there is a disconnect between the utterances of the warriors of the fight and their conduct... for any crusade to succeed, the leaders of the crusade must match their actions with their words. Thirdly, for any war to be won, soldiers are required. In many African countries, those who should be playing the role of soldiers for the war (the judiciary, legal enforcement institutions, police and other such official legal bodies) are the biggest part of the problem of corruption rather than the solution. Therefore, winning the war against corruption will require struggle for societal transformation. We have argued elsewhere that for change to occur in any society requires the presence of objective and subjective conditions. Objective conditions exist when situations are evidently abnormal

with huge contradictions, which can only be resolved by change (p.22).

Scholars, therefore contend that the failure (s) of previous administrations to wage a successful war against corruption was largely due to their inability to address the underlying causes of corruption, and the implementation of mechanisms needed to carry out the fight.

### **Media as veritable tool in fighting corruption**

A critical element of a country’s anti-corruption programme is an effective media. That is why Ayoola (2008) opined that if democracy is to survive and be a fruitful concept; the role of the media in sustaining it through anti-corruption crusade cannot be overemphasized.

Oladokun (2010) explained that the natural inability of the citizens to monitor the conduct of officials makes it imperative for the media to do the job. Media performance is therefore germane to democracy. Poor media performance seriously puts the citizenry under the yoke of political office holders or civil servants who seem to have the natural tendency to be corrupt. Touitou (2016) noted that in fighting corruption, “the media have a dual role: to raise public awareness about corruption and to investigate and report incidences of corruption in a professional and ethical manner.

However, how well the media perform the role of a watchdog depends on a number of factors

defined by the political, economic and legal environment in which media operate: media freedom of expression, access to information, ownership, competition, credibility and outreach are some of the key factors that have been identified as affecting the quality and effectiveness of media performance on corruption (Vogl, 1999, Djankoy, 2000; Staphenurst, 2000; Bruneti and Weder, 2003; Okoro, 2004, 2005 Suphachalasai, 2005)

According to Rose-Ackerman (1999), "Qualitative, independent media reporting on corruption can play an important role in pressuring the government to act in the public interest. By drawing the attention to behaviour that is generally perceived as acceptable and exposing such behaviour as corrupt, media can raise public awareness; activate anti-corruption values; and generate outside pressure from the public against corruption"

Rodney (2014) in his work titled: "Newspapers' Constitutional Responsibility of Holding Government Accountable to the People in Nigeria: Some Seemingly Unassailable Challenges?" argued that while newspapers can fulfill their social and constitutional responsibilities in both tangible and intangible ways as stated in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), the effectiveness of newspapers in acting as forces against corruption in Nigeria is, however, threatened by factors both intrinsic and extrinsic to the media such as official immunity and secrecy, lack of access to official

responsibility, editorial independence, physical threats, harsh economic realities etc which make fighting corruption in Nigeria impracticable. He concluded that unless those challenges are surmounted, newspapers in Nigeria may remain stymied in their roles and functions and doomed to failure in any anti-corruption efforts (Rodney 2014).

World Association of Newspapers says "coverage of organized crime and corruption has put journalists in the line of fire" (UNESCO, 2012). That is, the risks associated with reporting corruption are so high that journalists often are subjected to threats, intimidations, physical force, and outright loss of life. These numerous incidents are stifling and neither support free, independent, effective, and proactive media nor defend journalism to fight corruption.

### **Empirical Review**

In their work: "Media Coverage of Corruption in Nigeria: Analysis of *The Sun* and *New Nigerian* Newspapers", Bello, Abubakar and Abba (2014) examined the coverage of corruption issues by the Nigerian Newspapers. At the end of their study' it was discovered that the newspapers did not indeed fulfill their statutory responsibility of being the watchdog of the society. They also pointed out that the stories are not in-depth as there was little investigation and follows-up enough to set precedence for public discourse.

Olushola, Fadairo and Aminu (2014) in their work titled: "Coverage of

Corruption News by Major Newspapers in Nigeria”, sought to determine the Newspaper coverage of corruption news in the major sectors of the Nigeria economy over a period of 5 years (2006-2010), using three newspapers namely *Tribune*, *The Nation* and *The Guardian*; and a total of nine hundred and thirteen (913) corruption articles generated from the 540 issues analysed in their study. The study concluded that there is an increase in the coverage of corruption articles by the media but articles are concentrated more on the inside pages of newspapers and space allotment to corruption articles is small as majority of these articles occupied one-quarter page of the newspaper. They recommended in their study that it is necessary to place the reportage of corruption articles on the front burner of Nigeria newspapers agenda giving the pervasiveness of the problem in the country.

#### **Theoretical framework**

This work is premised on two theories of the mass media which are the Agenda setting theory and Social responsibility.

#### **Agenda Setting Theory**

According to Popoola and Lawal (2013) Agenda setting theory” presupposes that people consider as important those things reported in the media, and that major issues discussed in the society are introduced by the media”. The selection of the theory for this study is borne out of its relevance to the subject

of discourse. This is because agenda-setters, the media can show how significant President Muhammadu Buhari’s on -going anti-corruption crusade is. In the same vein, the theory is relevant to this theory because by constantly reporting issues bordering on the crusade, giving them in-depth analysis and the required prominence, the print media will go a long way in making the government, relevant stakeholders and the general public understand how important it is to join the fight against the corruption in Nigerian. The media are also expected to point out, when and where necessary, loopholes in the fight against corruption by Buhari, if detected, and make recommendations to ensure the campaign achieve the desired result.

#### **Social Responsibility Theory**

The theory assigns serious responsibilities to the press in addition to certain freedom. It presupposes that freedom is concomitant with obligations. The selection of the theory for this research is also informed by its relevance to the subject of discourse. This is because it is the responsibility of the media, newspapers especially, as a social institution and as the watchdog of the society to help in fighting corruption through their coverage, now that President Muhammadu Buhari has identified war against the scourge as top- notch goal of his administration. It is also considered relevant to this study because it guides the media in the course of discharging this duty without flouting the provided legal and



regulatory frameworks, within which they are expected to operate.

### **Research Methodology**

**Population of study:** According to Bryman and Bell (2007), population refers to “the universe of units from which a sample is to be selected” (p. 736). Therefore, the population of this study includes all issues published by Vanguard and The Nation Newspapers from November 7 2015 –November 7, 2016.

**Sample size:** Using the purposive sampling techniques, two newspapers were selected out of 28 leading national dailies in Nigeria listed in 2016 newspapers’ Web Ranking ([www.4imin.com/ng/](http://www.4imin.com/ng/)). They include: Vanguard and the Nation Newspapers. Vanguard is owned by a South-South businessman, Sam Amuka-Pemu while The Nation is owned by a politician, former Governor of Lagos State and presently a chieftain of the ruling APC-led government, Bola Tinubu. Since ownership is one of the key factors that determine how media organizations are being run, the selected newspapers would enable the researcher to do a comparative analysis on how both of them covered President Muhammadu Buhari anti-corruption crusade.

In determining an appropriate sample size for the study, the

continuous and constructed week selection techniques were adopted. In arriving at the continuous week for the two newspapers, the dates from November 7, 2015 to November 7, 2016 were stratified according to weeks giving a total of 52 weeks. Thereafter, these weeks were written on separate sheets of paper in two places (that is week 1 along was written on two papers), cast into two labeled with the name of each newspaper (e.g the first box was labeled ‘Vanguard’), and the researcher, using the simple random sampling technique, randomly picked one week from each of the boxes which serves as the continuous week for the two newspapers.

For the constructed week though, the period of study (November 7, 2015 to November 7, 2016) was clustered into week days. All Mondays within the study were written down with their dates, separated and then stacked together in a box labeled as such. The same was done with the other days giving a total of seven different boxes representing the week days. From each of the boxes, thereafter, a day was randomly selected making a total of 7 days. This process was repeated again to achieve the different constructed weeks for the two newspapers. Therefore,  $14 \times 2 = 28$  editions. Thus the sample size is 28.

**Table1: Representation showing selected week days from constructed week for the period of study, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015-November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

Week day	Vanguard	The Nation
Mondays	3 <sup>rd</sup> October, 2016	29 <sup>th</sup> May, 2016
Tuesdays	5 <sup>th</sup> April, 2016	June 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2016
Wednesdays	2 <sup>nd</sup> December, 2015	August 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2016
Thursdays	15 <sup>th</sup> September, 2016	3 <sup>rd</sup> December, 2015
Fridays	25 <sup>th</sup> March, 2016	1 <sup>st</sup> January, 2016
Saturdays	30 <sup>th</sup> July, 2016	26 <sup>th</sup> March,
Sundays	29 <sup>th</sup> November, 2015	2016 <sup>1st</sup> February, 2016

**Source:** Field work, 2017

**Table 2: Representation showing selected weekdays from continuous week for the period of study, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015 -November 7<sup>th</sup> 2016**

Week day	Vanguard	The Nation
Mondays	7 <sup>th</sup> November, 2015	4 <sup>th</sup> July, 2016
Tuesdays	8 <sup>th</sup> December, 2015	5 <sup>th</sup> July, 2016
Wednesdays	9 <sup>th</sup> December, 2015	6 <sup>th</sup> July, 2016
Thursdays	10 <sup>th</sup> December, 2016	7 <sup>th</sup> July, 2016
Fridays	11 <sup>th</sup> December, 2016	8 <sup>th</sup> July, 2016
Saturdays	12 <sup>th</sup> December, 2015	9 <sup>th</sup> July, 2016
Sundays	13 <sup>th</sup> December, 2015	10 <sup>th</sup> July, 2016

**Source:** Field work, 2017

**Units of Analysis:** The unit of analysis for this study comprises of all news stories, feature stories, editorials, opinion articles, letter-to editors, columns, analysis (special reports), cartoons and advertisements.

**Instrument of Data Collection:** The instrument used for collecting data for the purpose of this research is the code-sheet which explains the content categories that guided the researcher in collecting data for the study.

**Table 3: Content categories**

**Category A: Media**

1. Vanguard (A1)
2. The Nation (A2)

**Category C: Story length:**

- 1- Quarter page (C1)
- 2- Half page (C2)
- 3- Full page (C3)
- 4- Above 1 page (C4)

**Category E: Story Type**

**Category B: Page Placement / Position**

- 1- Front page (B1)
- 2- Back page (B2)
- 3- Inside page (B3)
- 4- Centre spread (B4)

**Category D: Illustration**

- 1- Photos (D1)
- 2- Cartoons (D2)
- 3- Charts (D3)
- 4- Tables (D4)
- 5- No illustration (D5)

**Category F: Direction of the Story**

- 1- News (E1)
- 2- Editorials (E2)
- 3- Features (E3)
- 4- Columns (E4)
- 5- Opinion articles (E5)
- 6- Letters -to- the editor (E6)
- 7- Advertisements (E7)
- 8- Cartoons (E8)
- 9- Analysis (E9)

- 1- Positive (F1)
- 2- Negative (F2)
- 3- Neutral (F3)

**Reliability of the research instrument:**

In testing the reliability of the researcher's coding decisions, the researcher used inter-coder reliability test. As suggested by scholars, a subsample of 10 percent was selected and this gave a subsample of 3 editions (Lacy & Riffe, 1996: Lombard, 2010). That is, 20/10 =2.8 which is approximately 3. The Holsti's inter-

coder reliability test was coded thus:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$$

Where:

M = the number of coding decisions which two coders agree.

N1 = number of coding decisions by the first coder.

N2 = number of coding decisions by the second coder.

**Table 4: Showing Inter Coder Reliability Using Holsti's Formulae**

Coders	Categories				
	B	C	D	E	F
Coder 1	3,3,1	2,1,3	5,1,2	1,3,6	3,1,3
Coder 2	3,3,1	2,1,3	5,1,2	1,3,5	2,1,3

In applying the above formulae  $2M/N1 + N2$

The total number of coding decisions by coder 1 (N1) = 15

The total number of coding decisions by coder 2 (N2) = 15

The total number of coding decisions where coders agree (M) = 13

$2(13)/(15+15) = 2 \times 13/30 = 26/30 = 0.87$  and  $100 = 87\%$

However, Andale (2016); stated that this method which uses the percentage agreement calculation formulae does not take chance into agreement and overestimate the level of agreement. He recommended that other methods be used alongside this method, thus study made use of a second formulae

by Krippendorff to support the above.

The Krippendorff's alpha is such that requires coincidence within units, matrices of which produce marginals indicating the total number of times each category is employed in the data set (Krippendorff, 2007).

**Table 5: Inter coder reliability using Krippendorff's Alpha**

		Coder 1 (Categories)					
Coder	2	B	C	D	E	F	Totals
Categories	B	3	0	0	1	1	5
	C	0	3	0	0	0	3
	D	0	0	3	0	0	3
	E	0	0	0	2	0	2
	F	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total		3	3	3	3	3	15

$$\frac{(n-1) \sum occ - \sum nc(nc - 1)}{n(n-1) - \sum nc(nc - 1)}$$

where n represents the total number of coding decisions, occ represents each agreement coincidence (diagonal cells in the coincidence matrix), and ncis each coincidence marginal. Inserting the matrix values into the formula produces the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned} R &= \frac{(15-1) (3+3+3+2+2) - [3(3-1)]}{15(15-1)-3(3-1) + 3 (3-1)} \\ &= \frac{(14) (13) -(6+6)}{15(14)-(6+6)} \\ &= \frac{14 \times 13-12 = 182 -12}{15 \times 14 -12 = 210 -12} \end{aligned}$$

$$170 / 198 = 0.86$$

$$0.86 \times 100 = 86 \%$$

Therefore, the reliability coefficient is relatively high taking into considerations the result accrued from the two formulas used above. The first gave 87% and the other resulted in 86%. A rule of thumb, according to

Poindexter and McCombs (2000), for and acceptable reliability is 80 percent or above.

**Method of Data Analysis and presentation:** The data collected from the selected newspapers analysed using frequency distribution tables, percentages, numbers as well as charts for easy interpretation.

**Data Presentation and Analysis:** This chapter is concerned with the presentation of data generated in course of the research. To achieve this, the contents of the two newspapers used for this study (*Vanguard* and *The Nation*) were grouped into content categories and analyzed.

This represents the total distribution of stories according to frequency of coverage of President Buhari's anti-corruption war in the selected newspapers. It shows that *Vanguard* had a total of 69 stories, representing 100% on President Buhari's anti-corruption crusade.

**Table 6: Total Distribution of stories according to story type**

Story Type	Frequency	Percentage
News	50	73%
Editorials	1	1%
Features	2	3%
Columns	4	6%
Opinion articles	2	3%
Letters to the editor	0	0%
Advertisements	7	10%
Cartoons	3	4%
Analysis		
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 6 shows that a total of 50 stories, representing 73% were reported as news stories in the two selected newspapers, 1 story was reported as an editorial, 2 representing 3% were reported each as feature stories and opinion articles, 4 representing 6% were reported as columns, 7 stories representing 10% were reported as cartoons, 3 stories representing 4% were reported as analysis while no story was recorded as letters- to -the editor and advertisements.

**Table 7: Total Distribution of stories according to page placement**

Page placement	Frequency	Percentage
Front page	28	71%
Back page	4	6%
Inside page	36	52%
Centre spread	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 7 showed a total of 28 stories representing 41% appeared on the

front pages of the two selected newspapers, with 10 of the stories making the banner head, while 4 stories representing 6% appeared on the back of the newspapers. In the same vein, the table further revealed 36 stories, representing 52% appeared on inside pages of both publications while 1 story representing 1% made the centre spread.

**Table 8: Total Distribution of stories according to story length**

Story length	Frequency	Percentage
Quarter page	40	58%
Half page	19	28%
Full page	8	11%
Above 1 page	2	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 8 shows that the selected newspapers had 40 of their stories, representing 58% on President Buhari's anti-corruption war as a quarter page, 19 of the stories representing 28% as half page, 8 representing 11% as full page and 2 stories representing 3% as above one page.

**Table 9: Total Distribution of stories according to direction**

Direction	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	63	91%
Negative	4	6%
Neutral	2	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 10: Total distribution of stories according of illustration**

Illustration	Frequency	Percent
Photos	18	26%
Cartoons	7	10%
Charts	0	0%
Table	0	0%
No Illustration	44	64%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 10 shows that the total distribution of stories in the selected newspapers according to illustration. It shows that the two selected newspapers had 18 of their stories representing 28% were accompanied with photos. It showed that 7 stories representing 10% were illustrated with cartoons while 44 of their stories had no illustration.

#### **Discussion of findings**

Findings from this study indicated that newspapers did not show much interest in covering President Buhari's anti-corruption crusade as expected. Findings from this study corroborates a study by Halilu, Garba and Abdulmumin (2013) who in their findings on 'Media Coverage of Corruption in Nigeria: An Analysis of *The Sun* and *New Nigerian Newspaper*' stated that Newspapers in Nigeria are yet to give adequate coverage to anti-corruption campaigns in Nigeria.

It was also found that the coverage of the campaign by the newspapers lacked the prominence expected of such issue. The implication of this is that anti-corruption campaign might

not be successful based on the fact the media are failing in their responsibilities of attaching the needed importance to such an issue. Since there are many issues jostling for the attention of the audience, they might not consider the campaign a serious one. Findings from the study also support the study as above where they stated that Nigerian newspapers do not give adequate prominence to coverage of corruption issues, when compared to other national issues like politics and economy.

The study also discovered that despite the low coverage of President Buhari's anti-corruption crusade, most of the reported stories were positive and far outweigh the negative and neutral, showing that newspapers are in support of the fight against corruption in the country. The implication of finding from this study therefore is that newspapers regarded corruption as a negative phenomenon which undermines development in the country, thereby mobilizing individuals and government agencies to stand up against the scourge.

Similarly, the study found that the newspaper coverage of President Buhari's anti-corruption crusade lacked the needed depth to spearhead such issue of national interest. The implication of this is that, despite the global increase in the fight against corruption, the Nigerian newspapers are failing in their role as powerful agents of President Buhari's anti-corruption drive by failing to create the needed in-depth analysis of issues that would not create awareness but

also lead to arrest of corrupt officials, which would subsequently reduce the rate of corruption in the country. Another implication of these findings is that public trust in the media as a time-tested watch-dog of the society against societal ills, especially against corruption, might be on the wane. By supporting the fight against corruption by covering it positively but not giving the desired prominence and depth, Nigerians might begin to see the media as a mere political tool by politicians to cover up evils.

As regards the country, the lack of prominence and depth in coverage of President Buhari's anti-corruption campaign shows Nigerian might continue to lag behind in the community of developed countries, as it was shown in the literature reviewed that corruption is Nigeria's greatest impediment to development. It also shows Nigeria would be left behind in the increasing global fight against corruption, which might further deteriorate the image of the country in the international community.

In terms of the theoretical underpinning of this study, findings showed that the agenda setting and social responsibility theories of the press here failed to be used effectively in drawing attention to President Buhari's anti-corruption campaign. It shows that the media do not have the capability and the tendency to set agenda for issues of great importance in the society and also perform their constitutional role in the society. This is as a result of not giving prominence to the issues raised and this will enable

the general public not to put their trust, hope and interest to the media.

### **Conclusion**

Across the world, the media are known for their time-tested abilities of setting agenda, initiating social discourse, spearheading issues of national interest and generally advancing the well-being of society. Therefore, this study concludes by calling on the media to wake up to their agenda setting and social responsibility role in Nigeria by giving more coverage to President Buhari's anti corruption crusade to ensure that fight remain on course.

### **Recommendations**

First and foremost, Nigerian newspapers should give more prominence to the current crusade against corruption in the country by the President Muhammadu Buhari-led administration, in terms of story placement. To this end, corruption stories should be given more front page treatment to demonstrate the significance people should attach to such issues and its consequences.

Also, newspapers in Nigerian should embark on investigative and interpretative reporting of corruption stories to unearth corrupt practices in Nigeria. They should not just continue the trend to straight news reporting on who is being arrested by anti-corruption agencies and government activities against corruption, which in most cases do not exceed quarter and half pages of newspapers, but rather focus on the implications and interpretation of such

issues.

In the same vein, government should therefore ensure a media friendly environment is provided to enable them operate very well.

Finally, scholars should constantly embark on researches to evaluate media coverage of anti-corruption campaigns in Nigeria to serve as a wake-up call for Nigerian media as little literature exists on anti-corruption in the country.

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