

**PERFORMANCE OF NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS IN
SELECTED POLITICAL CRISIS SITUATIONS**

BY

Raphael Olugbenga ABIMBOLA

B.A (Hons), Communication and Language Arts, (Ibadan), 1999

M.A, Communication and Language Arts, (Ibadan), 2005

Matric No: 72692

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ABSTRACT

The press in a democratic setting sets the agenda for the society through news reports, incisive features, editorials and commentaries. Previous studies on press performance, especially during political crisis situations, concentrated more on the extent of reports of such crises and rarely investigate the factors that influence the reportage. This study, therefore, evaluated the performance of the Nigerian newspapers in their coverage of selected political crisis situations in terms of magnitude and frames with a view to identifying how ownership, editorial policies and other factors influenced such performance.

The study was anchored on News Framing theory and it adopted the Propagandist, Commercial *laissez-faire* and Public service models. The selected political crisis situations covered the period between 2005 and 2011: President Obasanjo's alleged third-term agenda; the constitutional crisis arising from President Yar'Adua's absence from office and the violent protests that greeted the 2011 presidential elections in the northern part of Nigeria. *Daily Trust*, *The Punch*, *The Guardian*, *Nigerian Tribune* and *The Sun* were purposively selected because of their locations and ownership. Five hundred editions were selected through the systematic random sampling technique while ten editors of the newspapers were purposively selected for in-depth interviews. A nine-item coding sheet and a nine-item in-depth interview guide were the instruments of data collection. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, and chi-square at $P=0.05$ level of significance. Explanation building through thematic approach was used to analyse the qualitative data.

Yar'adua's illness featured more in the newspapers with 37.0% reports than the third-term agenda and election protests with 31.0% each. Small-sized reports were more prominent than large-sized. The newspapers were more negative in framing election protests (51.3%) and Yar'adua's illness (45.4%) than the third-term agenda (37.2%). The *Daily Trust* had more favourable reports on Yar'adua's illness and third-term agenda, while other newspapers had more negative reports on the issues. All the newspapers had more negative reports on the election protests. There was a significant difference in the framing of reports among the newspapers: *Nigerian Tribune* ($x = 70.3$), *Daily Trust* ($\bar{x} = 65.0$), *The Sun* ($\chi = 64.8$), *The Guardian* ($x = 63.8$), and *The Punch* ($x = 60.1$). There was no significant relationship between the editorial policies and performance of the newspapers. The performance rate across the five newspapers differed: *Nigerian Tribune* (74.4%), *The Guardian* (71.1%), *The Punch* (55%), *The Sun* (51.8%) and the *Daily Trust* (37.3%). However, the editors perceived that editorial policies, rather than ownership, covertly guided the newspapers' operations during the political crisis situations. Ethnicity or sectional interest, funding, production deadline and access to information were other factors that influenced performance.

The performance of the newspapers during the political crisis situations varied slightly in terms of magnitude and report framing due to editorial policies. To enhance performance, newspapers should evolve editorial policies that will guarantee fair and balanced report framing and put the public interest above the primordial, sectional and commercial interests of the owners.

Key words: Nigerian newspapers, Political crisis situations, Newspapers performance, Ownership of newspapers, News framing.

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by Raphael Olugbenga ABIMBOLA under my supervision in the Department of Communication and Language Arts, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) of the University of Ibadan.

.....
Date

.....
Ebenezer Oludayo Soola, PhD

B.A, (Ife), M.Sc, (CUNNY), PhD (Ibadan)
Professor,
Department of Communication and Language
Arts, University of Ibadan

DEDICATION

To the glory of God who saw me through the programme.

And

to the memory of one of the in-depth interview respondents, Suleiman Bisalla, former Deputy Editor of *The Sun*, who died in the April, 2014 Abuja bomb blast.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Scholars have approached performance studies from different academic backgrounds, covering the natural sciences, engineering, law and humanities. A few have researched into the concept from the fields of arts and behavioural sciences. Performance studies incorporate theories of drama, dance, art, anthropology, philosophy, cultural studies, psychology, sociology, comparative literature and music performance, among other fields. Thus, performance studies as an academic discipline has multiple narratives. Schechner (2002) approached the concept from the theoretical and anthropological perspectives which stress the importance of intercultural performance as an alternative to either traditional proscenium theatre or traditional anthropological fieldwork. From the media perspective, Case (2009) has adapted performance to the study of media and religion, while Kratz (1994) developed a mode of performance analysis that emphasises the role of multimedia communication in performance. Performance can also be used to describe reporters' activities on the field in news gathering and news production. Writing on performance, Westgate (2013: 998) asserts: "An emerging area of scholarship on performance journalism—defined here as news performances created by performers for audiences—has referred to reporters as protagonists on stage or as active agents in the field."

Performance is thus a broad term which includes artistic and aesthetic displays such as concerts, theatrical events, and performance art. It also includes reporting social, political and religious events such as rituals, ceremonies, proclamations and public decisions. Press performance deals with the activities and functions of the press and how it carries out such functions. The society expects the media to fulfill certain goals. Writing on the issue, Norris (2000:1) states:

Commentators commonly suggest newspapers or television should fulfill certain goals, such as raising public awareness about AIDS, encouraging interest in international affairs; or stimulating community activism during campaigns. Many believe that the news media has (sic) a particular responsibility to strengthen democracy, through political coverage that should educate the public about major issues, inform citizens about the contenders for office, and mobilize people to turn out.

Press performance in a democratic setting like Nigeria can be better evaluated on the basis of how the media strive to uphold the basic norms, and help to resolve conflicts which are inevitable in any human society. James (2012) is of the opinion that the coverage of conflicts without jettisoning the ethics of journalism has been one of the most daunting challenges facing journalists and media organisations. The Director-General of Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Dr. Joseph Golwa, cited by James (2012), opined that the manner of media coverage of any conflict would have a significant impact on the conflict itself saying the media often 'dichotomise and dramatise' conflicts, thereby inflaming passions which tended to further worsen situations. Citing a resource person, Prof Umaru Pate, at a workshop for journalists, James (2012) argued that the choices or decisions made by a journalist covering a conflict could determine the course of the conflict, noting that Nigeria's population, as well as its ethnic and cultural diversities had placed a high degree of responsibility on journalists, while reporting conflicts. According to Pate, there is always a correlation between media performance, credible elections and good governance.

The press performs a vital role in the development of any given society. Scholars have posited that the press, among its other functions, is expected to perform the role of informing, educating and entertaining the public (Campbell, 2000; Baran, 2002; Bitner, 2005; Branston & Stafford, 2006.). The extent to which the press performs these functions is largely dependent on several factors, including the environment in which it operates (society), ownership pattern (public versus private) and editorial policy (guided by the vision and mission of the publisher).

The Nigerian press history dates back to 1859 when the first newspaper *Iwe Irohin Fun Awon Ara Egba ati Yoruba*, established by an Anglican Missionary,

Reverend Henry Townsend, was published in Abeokuta, South West of Nigeria (Daramola 2014; Duyile, 2007). Townsend had, in 1854, established a printing press and set up a printing school in Abeokuta prior to the publication of the newspaper which was first mainly in Yoruba (1859-1866), and later bilingual (1866-1867). Townsend had made it clear from the outset that the paper was established with the aim of providing information for the Egba people and the Yoruba community. This underscores one of the primary functions of the press: information.

The first newspaper to be published in English at that time was *The Anglo-African*. It was established in Lagos in 1863 by Robert Campbell, a British Jamaican, who served both as editor and proprietor. The purpose of the paper was to stimulate the interest of Africans in Western education (Daramola, 2006). Though the newspaper covered several issues affecting the society objectively, it did not oppose the colonial administration, contrary to the fears raised by Freeman, then Governor of Lagos Colony.

Other newspapers, established mostly by Africans, sprang up during this time and this began what could be termed as the beginning of a revolutionary press. This is because these papers were set up by Africans who had suffered racial discrimination and segregation in the United Kingdom and the United States (Daramola, 2006). Thus, the papers were critical of the British colonial administration and seriously agitated for representative government and ultimately for the actualisation of Independence. A list of such newspapers, according to Daramola (2012) and Duyile (2007), included: *The Poet* by Mojola Agbebi (1860); *The Lagos Times* by Olamilege Blaize (1880); *Nigerian Times* by Sapara Williams (1914); *African Pioneer* by Kitoyi Ajasa (1914); *The Spectator* by Akin Savage (1923); *Lagos Daily News* by Herbert Macaulay (1925); *Daily Times* by Adeyemo Alakija (1926); *The Comet* by Duse Mohammed Ali (1933); *West African Pilot* by Nnamdi Azikiwe (1937).

The pre-Independence period of the press in Nigeria was dominated by Europeans whose aim was to use the newspapers to promote western education and subtly publicise the activities of the British colonial administration across Africa and elsewhere. This period ran between 1859 and early 1900s (Duyile, 2007 and Daramola, 2006). Later (from 1900s upward), Africans, indeed Nigerians, began to

publish newspapers with the aim of fighting for freedom from colonial rule. Citing Biobaku (1968), Olatunji (2009:2) sums up the attitude of the press at this period as 'be just and fear not'. He further describes the era thus:

The press was hyper critical of the colonial government. It was therefore, not surprising, that the colonial government soon began to enact laws to regulate the establishment and running of newspaper. One of the steps taken in this regard was the enactment of the Newspaper Ordinance of 1903 which defined what constituted a newspaper and who could start one. This was followed in 1909 by the Seditious Offences Ordinance which was included in the Criminal Code of 1916, the Newspaper Ordinance of 1917 and the Press Regulation Ordinance of 1933. Under these laws, newspaper owners and editors were regularly tried and jailed.

At Independence, newspapers earlier established by the nationalists to fight colonial administration turned out to be weapons of propagating the activities, principles and missions of the political parties of their owners. For instance, most Nigerian newspapers in the 1960s could be linked to the then regions and their political leaders. Thus, the *Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo* and *The Citizen* newspapers were the mouthpiece of the Northern Region; the *Nigerian Outlook* and Azikiwe's chain of newspapers were used to promote the government of the Eastern Region; and the *Nigerian Tribune*, established by Obafemi Awolowo, served as the official newspaper of the ruling party in the Western Region, the Action Group (AG).

The euphoria which greeted Nigeria's Independence was short-lived, as a result of the military coup d'état of January 15, 1966. Consequently, the military incursion into the Nigerian political system formed an era in the post-independence history of the Nigerian press. While some heads of state allowed the press to operate with minimal influence, others issued obnoxious decrees to gag the press. It is noteworthy that the regimes of Yakubu Gowon promulgated the Newspaper (Prohibition of Circulation) Decree in 1967; Obasanjo announced the Newspaper Prohibition of Circulation (Validation) Decree in 1976 and Buhari issued the Public Officers (Protection Against False Accusation) Decree in 1984, which subverted the constitutional provisions of press freedom. Also, the Babangida regime promulgated

the Newspaper Registration Decree No 43 which introduced stringent guidelines for newspaper and magazine operations.

Interestingly, the military era created a sort of 'survival of the fittest' scenario for the Nigerian press. While government-owned newspapers remained loyal to their respective owners, private newspapers which dared to be objective faced the dire consequences of frequent closures, arrest of editors and outright ban on circulation. This period also witnessed the emergence of news magazines which were very critical of the military juntas. Notable among them were *Newswatch*, *The News* and *Tell*. These magazines made a robust contribution to investigative journalism and dared the various military regimes in spite of the consequences they risked.

Nigerian political system also witnessed a lot of instability, with each period in history having its attendant crisis. This ranged from the 1962/63 general elections during the First Republic to the latest 2011 presidential elections in the current dispensation. Since Independence, Nigerian press has been in the vanguard of challenging political leaders to provide good governance during civilian regimes, and championing the cause of return to civilian rule during military regimes.

This study seeks to find out how the Nigerian press has fared in performing its functions during the selected political crisis situations, especially in this current political experiment. The selected political crises situations are listed below:

1. President Obasanjo's alleged third-term agenda.
2. The power vacuum created by President Yar'adua's absence.
3. Violent protests in the North, following the 2011 presidential election results.

The above political crisis situations reflect both the constitutional and electoral aspects of politics in Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Much research has been conducted by scholars on media coverage of violence and political crises. Some of them include: the press coverage of religious violence in Nigeria (Umechukwu, 1995); the press as an ideological apparatus of state (Agbaje, 1988); crisis, Nigerian press and the politics of meaning (Adebanwi, 2002); the Nigerian press and group identity promotion in the 2003 and 2007 presidential elections (Galadima, 2011); media coverage of Middle East crisis (Gerner and

Schrodt, 1998); Dafur conflict in Sudanese and non-Sudanese media (International Media Support, 2009); and the media coverage of Lebanon's political crisis (Fadit, Karamand Blanford, 2011). However, most of the studies have concentrated on the extent of report in terms of frequency and prominence, leaving out the factors that influenced such reports. Studies bordering on the analysis of the media content in their coverage of politics and crisis would be much more desirable when the factors that combine to influence such reportage are also investigated. This study sought to evaluate the performance of the Nigerian press in reporting political crisis situations by not only analysing the newspaper content, but also investigating the factors that influenced such reportage.

The issue at stake in this study is, what was the performance of the Nigerian newspapers in reporting the selected political crisis situations? In determining press performance during political crisis situations, some of the questions that readily come to mind include: how fair was the press to the parties concerned in its reportage of the crises? What was the magnitude of its report on the crises? Of what effect was the press report on the crisis situations? What factors combined to influence the press in its reportage of the crises? The above issues were used to determine the level of Nigerian press performance during political crises which is the major pre-occupation of this study.

1.3 Research questions

This study sought to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. To what extent did the selected newspapers report the Nigerian political crisis situations?
2. How did the selected newspapers frame their reports on the political crisis situations?
3. In what way(s), if any, did ownership influence the performance of the selected newspapers during the political crisis situations?
4. How did the editorial policies of the selected newspapers influence their performance during the political crisis situations?
5. What other relevant factors influenced the selected newspapers' performance during the political crisis situations?

1.4 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study:

Hypothesis one

Ho: There is no significant difference in the framing of political crisis situations in Nigeria among the selected Nigerian newspapers.

Hypothesis two

Ho: There is no significant imbalance between positive framing and negative framing of political crisis situations in the selected Nigerian newspapers.

Hypothesis three

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the editorial policies of the selected newspapers and their performance during political crisis situations.

1.5 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Assess the extent that the Nigerian press reported the selected political crisis situations.
2. Find out how the selected newspapers framed their reports on the political crises.
3. Determine whether ownership structure influenced the performance of the selected newspapers during political crises.
4. Evaluate how editorial policies of the selected newspapers influenced their performance during political crisis situations.
5. Ascertain other relevant factors that influenced the selected newspapers' performance during the political crises situations.

1.6 Significance of the study

The Nigerian political system has witnessed a lot of instability, with each period in history having its attendant crisis. Since independence, Nigerian press has been in the vanguard of challenging political leaders to provide good governance. When expectations of certain groups or interests in the society are not met, friction occurs. Both media professionals and the society the press mirrors have high expectations. While the press hopes to remain vibrant and continue to serve the society as the fourth estate of the realm, the society in turn, expects the press to be above board in the discharge of its functions.

The study will be beneficial to government which makes laws that regulate press operations, as it will provide empirical data for government on what actions and regulations enhance or inhibit press performance, especially during political crisis situations. Findings of this study will also assist owners and managements of newspapers to review their editorial policies towards achieving a better performance. The models of press performance discussed in this study will be useful to communication scholars in relating press theories to performance.

1.7 Scope of the study

The study is limited to press performance in Nigeria's current democratic experience, specifically between November 2005 and May 2011 from which the following political crisis situations were selected for investigation: the constitutional crisis provoked by President Obasanjo's alleged Third Term Agenda; the vacuum created by President Yar'adua's absence from office as a result of prolonged illness, and the attendant constitutional crisis occasioned by his failure to officially transmit power to his deputy; and the violent protests in Northern Nigeria, following the declaration of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan as the winner of the 2011 presidential election. The selections were made to reflect the constitutional and election-related issues in the selected Nigeria's political crisis situations. Five national newspapers were also selected for investigation. They are: *The Sun*, *The Guardian*, *The Punch*, *Nigerian Tribune* and *Daily Trust*.

1.8 Limitations

The study focused only on newspapers reports concerning the selected political crisis situations as well as the assessment of such reports by stakeholders. The restriction of this research to newspaper reports, leaving out magazines and other media of communication like radio and television, may limit the generalisation of the results of the study. Moreover, the researcher decided to use private newspapers, excluding government newspapers, since there were virtually no thriving government newspapers operating on a national scale during the period of study. The non-inclusion of government-owned newspapers may also limit the scope of assessment of the Nigerian press performance in the selected political crisis situations.

However, the newspaper reports that were content analysed covered varied types like news, opinions, comments and feedback from the readers. Although only privately-owned newspapers were used, the select newspapers were of diverse ownerships, origins, philosophies and locations. These helped to address, to some extent, the limitations stated above.

1.9 Operational definition of terms

1. Nigerian press

This term is used in this study to refer to the newspapers published in Nigeria, particularly *The Sun*, *The Guardian*, *The Punch*, *Nigerian Tribune* and *Daily Trust*.

2. Press performance

Press performance in this study refers to how the select newspapers fared in its professional duties during the period of study. It specifically refers to the level of reportage of events during the political crisis selected for this study, using certain indicators such as intensity and frame of the reports to determine the level of the select newspapers performance during the period.

3. Political crisis

This is referred to as an expressed struggle or differences between politicians, political parties and government, which affects the peaceful coexistence of the society.

It covers both violent and non-violent political crises such as protests, election manipulation, intra and inter party conflicts.

4. Framing

Framing refers to how the press promotes a version of an issue by giving saliency to certain elements of their reports above others. In this study, it means the direction or angle from which the select newspapers reported the crises under investigation in terms of positive, negative and neutral reports.

5. Neutral reports

Newspaper reports that are fair to all parties concerned over the issues under investigation. In other words, reports which did not take sides with any party in the political crisis situations.

6. Positive reports

Newspaper reports that favoured one party over another. They were reports which took sides with any party in the selected political crisis situations.

7. Negative reports

Newspaper reports that were antagonistic of a party to an issue under investigation, or presented a party to an issue in bad light.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

In this chapter, relevant theoretical and empirical literature on the key concepts and issues of the current study are reviewed. The concepts include: press and politics, political crisis, and models of press performance. The study is anchored on framing theory, while some of the normative theories were reviewed to support the framework.

2.1 Press and politics

Press and politics, as stated earlier in this study, are mutually related as they both function, in concert, to structure and influence human societies. In democracies, the media have a complex relationship with sources of power and the political system, as they (the media) provide channels by which the state and powerful interests address the people, as well as provide platforms for the views of political parties and other interest groups (McQuail,2010). He further states:

In respect of politics, the mass media provide an arena of debate and set of channels for making policies, candidates, relevant facts and ideas more widely known as well as providing politicians, interest groups and agents of government with a means of publicity and influence (McQuail, 2010:4).

Because of the indispensable role the press performs in a given society, governments and the political class always curry its favor to achieve certain goals, chief of which is propaganda. In Nigeria, for instance, government is deeply involved in press activities as it engages in ownership of certain media outfits such as radio, television, and newspapers at both the federal and state levels, with the sole aim of promoting its (government's) programmes and policies. Apart from direct government ownership, certain politicians and public office holders establish and run private newspaper, radio and television outfits to primarily promote their own agenda and, perhaps, to also make profit.

Just as the press is important to coverage of events, so is politics to the press. As a matter of fact, media content, the world over, is dominated largely by politics, economy and entertainment. And of these, politics tends to enjoy the widest coverage in most countries. The Nigerian press, for example, cannot ignore politics because it is, as it were, the biggest and most lucrative industry or enterprise today. It is worthy of note that the bulk of the advertisements in the media in Nigeria today is from government and the political class. Thus, the press also needs government and political activities to survive. McQuail (2010:241) has summed it up thus: "Politics cannot do without the media, and the kind of (news) media we have would struggle without politics". Egbon (2001:66) has noted:

Although government and press always assert that they protect public interest, they are suspicious of each other...the press and the government usually say they are both dedicated to the interest of the people, but very many times the people's interests are seen differently by both the inevitable confrontation that eventuates in the media-government relationship in a democratic government.

This view is supported by Gurevitch and Blumler (1977) as they identify four main components of a political communication system which link the press with politics. Such components include: political institutions in their communication aspects; media institutions in their political aspects; audience orientations to political communication; and communication-relevant aspects of political culture. To them, the interactions of the two institutions (politics and the media), are largely conditioned by mutual power relationships. This implies that both political and media institutions have an independent power base in the society which can be traced to their respective relations with the audience. In other words, political institutions have communication aspects (the media), while media institutions also have political aspects. Comparing the two, Gurevitch and Blumler (1977: 273-274) opine:

Boundary problems arise in defining what counts as the 'communication aspects' of the activity of political institutions and as the 'political aspects' of mass media performance. For one thing, it is possible to argue that all actions of political institutions have some communication relevance... Similarly, political aspects are so intricately interwoven with all other aspects of the performance of media institutions as they preclude the possibility of either isolating them empirically or even of analytically denoting some part of media content entirely 'non-political.'

The authors further identify three sources of media power which are structural, psychological, and normative in origin. Structurally, mass media have the unique capacity to deliver to the politician, an audience which, in size and composition, is unavailable to him by any other means, while the psychological root of media power is hinged on the credibility and trust members of the audience have in different media organisations. The normative source of media power is better appreciated during conflict (between the media and the political class). When such arises, the recognition of the tenets of freedom of expression in competitive democracies is brought to the fore. This freedom empowers the media and some other specialised organs to safeguard citizens against possible abuses by political authority.

2.1.1 Press and political crisis

Crisis is precipitated by unresolved conflicts and conflicts are caused by unresolved issues. In other words, issues when not properly addressed, lead to conflicts and conflicts not properly managed, snowball into crisis (Abimbola, 2008a). Political crisis is a product of an unresolved political conflict. Abimbola (2008b) defines political conflict as an expressed struggle or differences between politicians, political parties and government. Political crisis, therefore, is a situation in which there are lots of political challenges threatening the coexistence of a society. Political crisis can assume different dimensions including political violence.

Defining political violence, Honderish (1989), cited in Alanamu (2005:3), says:

Political violence, roughly defined, is a considerable or destroying use of force against persons or things, a use of force prohibited by law, directed to a change in the policies, personnel or system of government, and hence also directed to changes in the existence of individuals in the society and perhaps other society.

The press as a vital organ of the society is supposed to perform its traditional function of informing, educating, sensitising and entertaining the citizenry. During crisis situations, the press is supposed to act as a catalyst for conflict resolution and peace building. This is what some scholars refer to as advocacy and peace journalism. No society is immune to crisis, Nigeria inclusive. Therefore, Nigerian press has a major role to play during political crisis situations in the country.

Highlighting the significant role of the press in political crisis periods in Nigeria, Adedimeji (2005:121) says: “Among other agencies or social organs that have risen to the challenge of redressing the wounds of conflicts and addressing the problems engendering violence, the media tower high”.

On the other hand, Nigerian press has also been accused of poor performance in crisis resolution and peace building. Reacting to the various ethno-religious violence in the country, former Minister of Internal Affairs, Col. John Shagaya, in an interview he granted *This Week* magazine in 1987, was quoted as saying:

But the journalists too are to be blamed. The mass media today concentrate more on sensationalist (sic) rather than unifying points. If only the mass media can recollect the havoc done by this kind of reporting, that is, sensationalizing tribal or religious issues, then I think there will be no ground(sic) for what the press is trying to make out of these activities that are criminally oriented (Umechukwu, 1995:6).

Alanamu (2005) thus lists types of political violence to include: coup d’etat, riot and rebellion, separatist violence, revolution, war, terrorism, insurgency and guerilla warfare, sabotage, assassination, hijacking, party clashes and election violence.

Similarly, Galtung (1965), cited in Isola (2008), says violence could come in three forms: direct physical violence, indirect violence and structural violence. Direct physical violence involves a deliberate act of inflicting injury on another person to cause him pain, while indirect violence entails harming another person by overt and covert verbal attacks like gossips, rumour spreading, and character assassination. Structural violence is institutional. It involves causing harm to a fellow human through institutions of society. Such harm may be in form of slavery, racism or class system which tends to deny members of society equal rights.

Conflict and crisis are a major element of news which is why, in journalistic parlance, 'bad news is good news'. One major event/occurrence the press cannot afford to ignore in the society is crisis. Supporting this view, Tehranian (1996) describes the press as having a nature that is naturally attracted to conflict as magnet attracts iron. Press reportage of events, especially crisis, has a great influence on such events in the minds and attitude of the audience. Atim (2010:24) quoted a former President of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, as saying: "The press is capable of making or destroying governments given appropriate conditions: it can cause war, create conditions for peace. It can promote development or create difficulties in the way of development."

Corroborating this assertion, McQuail (1977:90) argues: "The media can attract and direct attention to problems, solutions or people in ways which can favour those with power and correlatively divert attention from rival individuals or groups." Similarly, Gardner (2001) identifies hate content as a perennial problem associated with some contemporary news media, especially during conflict. Hate contents in the news media, according to her, includes media encouragement of violent activities, tension, or hatred between races, ethnic or social groups or countries for political goals and/or to foster conflict through one-sided or biased view or opinion.

What then should be the role of the press in mitigating crisis (especially political crisis)? Isola (2008) reports, that, in this regard, opinions vary among the broad spectrum of politicians and journalists. He presented two extremes that illustrate this divergence of views. At one extreme, Isola (2008:340-341) quoted a veteran journalist and former Governor of Lagos State, Lateef Jakande, as saying:

It is not the function of the press to reconcile in any conflict, but it is the function of the press to state as clearly as possible the facts of the matter, whether those who matter feel comfortable with the truth or not. The press is a mirror; it mirrors what goes on in the society, whether good or bad. To take on the job of reconciliation is not the function of the press.

Isola (2008:341) also presents the opinion of another author, veteran journalist and diplomat, Segun Olusola, which was in sharp contrast with Jakande's thus:

The press must assume the role of mediators for peace in national (political) conflicts. Since what the public read in the press is interpreted either as call to war or a call to peace, and the politicians are only concerned with power; for the press not to assume the role of mediators could mean self-consuming of themselves and destruction for our society.

It is therefore apt to cite here the role of the media, especially radio, in fuelling the Rwandan genocide which led to the mass slaughter of the Tutsis by the Hutus in 1994; an action considered the most organised genocide of the 20th Century. Some scholars believe that the genocide, coordinated by the national government through the local military and civil officials, was mainly fuelled and supported by the media, especially two radio stations sympathetic to the Hutu-led government (Chalk, 1999; Kuperman, 2003; Shah, 2006 & Braisley, 2013). While the western media blamed the international community for not intervening quickly, Kuperman (2003) opines that the media should be blamed, instead, for not immediately recognising the extent of the carnage and mobilising world attention to it. He scored the performance of the western media low as far as the crisis was concerned saying: "they failed to report that a nationwide killing campaign was under way in Rwanda until almost three weeks into the violence. By that time, some 250,000 Tutsi had already been massacred."

However, Chalk (1999) and Braisley (2013) analysed the role of radio propaganda in fuelling the genocide. The critical roles played by two radio stations: Radio Rwanda and Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM), both agents of the Hutu-led government, is noteworthy. The hate propaganda by these stations, according to Braisley (2013), was confirmed by the United Nations International

Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)'s conviction of two radio journalists (Ferdinand Nahimana and Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza, founders of RTLM) and a print journalist (Hassan Ngeze, the founder and editor of *Kanguara*, a local newspaper). See more on this in the empirical studies review (Radio propaganda and Rwandan genocide) on page 34.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the press has a major role to play during crisis situations through its reportage of events. Such a role may be either as an agent of peace and reconciliation or that which aggravates the situation by taking sides. Whichever of these positions the press takes depends on several factors such as ownership, editorial policy, and social milieu, among others.

2.1.2 The Press and the struggle for democracy in Nigeria

Nigerian press has come of age in its struggle for good governance. Since its inception in 1859, it has stood its grounds in criticising government policies and educating the citizens on their rights. According to Odozi (2005), Nigerian press, having existed for a century before the emergence of the country as an independent nation, is therefore, a very credible witness and also a participant in the evolution of Nigeria as a nation. Before independence, the Nigerian press was in the forefront of the struggle for self-rule, and after independence, it has continued to clamour for core democratic values and good governance. That it fought the various military regimes to pave the way for a democratic system of government is an attestation to the fact that the Nigerian press has always played its watchdog role in making government accountable to the people. This role of the press was clearly provided for in Section 22 of the 1999 Constitution which states: "the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people".

How far the Nigerian press has performed its constitutional role in the struggle for democracy in Nigeria is perhaps a subject of debate. Fatile (2004:59) argues:

A critical analysis of the Nigerian press has shown that it has not fared well in the various regimes it find (sic) itself (military or civilian) with the 141 years of its patchy but meritorious service to the nation... the media have come under criticisms as a troublemaker, and a destructive influence by institutions and at times by the very people they are protecting and fighting for.

The above argument notwithstanding, the Nigerian press has paid its dues in performing its constitutional role of holding the government accountable to the people. This is because it has remained the court of public opinion where complaints, criticisms of the ruled against the rulers are heard as well as where the activities and intents of the rulers are judged. Corroborating this view, Iyare (2003:1) states, “it is the common view that the press in Nigeria is aggressive and vibrant. This is opposed to the setting in many countries of Africa where the press is whipped into line and hamstrung by the little finger of the ruling elite.”

2.1.3 Ownership structure and performance of the Nigerian press

The Nigerian press ownership structure can be divided into two broad categories: those that are owned and run by private individuals or groups other than government, on one hand, and those that are owned and run by the government, on the other. The first category can be sub-divided into private, nationalist and religious ownership structures. Newspaper started from private ownership in Nigeria, with the establishment of *Iwe Iroyin fun awon Ara Egba ati Yoruba* in 1859, by a European, Rev'd. Henry Townsend. Although the paper was established by a priest, it carried stories on politics, immigration, commerce and culture and thus became critical of the colonial government. Since then, private individuals have set up newspapers and magazines in the country.

Currently, a majority of the newspapers and magazines in the country are privately-owned. Nationalist newspapers were established by Africans (Nigerians) during the colonial administration to advance their struggle for self-rule. From 1860, when Mojola Agbebi established *The Poetto* 1949 when Obafemi Awolowo established the *Nigerian Tribune*, most newspapers established by Africans during this period were nationalist in nature. After independence, many of the newspapers faded

away, while the surviving ones became political tools in the hands of the owners who occupied political offices in the newly independent Nigeria. Religious ownership comprises newspapers and magazines set up by religious bodies or individuals for the primary purpose of propagating their faith. Duyile (2007) identifies such newspapers as *Unwana Efik and Obupong Efik* established by the Church of Scotland Mission in the 1880s, *African Church Gleaner* by Rev. G.A Oke of the African Church in 1917, and later, *African Hope* by the Church in 1919, followed by *Nigerian Methodist* by the Methodist Mission in 1925.

Government ownership in Nigerian press history dates back to the 1930s with the establishment of newspapers such as *Jarida Nigeria Ta Arewa* and *Gaskiya Tafikwabo* by the Northern Nigeria, *Western Ijaw News* by the Western Ijaw Province and *Egba Bulletin* by the Abeokuta Province (Duyile, 2007). The Federal Government's first shot into newspaper ownership was in 1961 when it established the Nigerian National Press Limited, publishers of the *Sunday Post* and the *Morning Post*. Since independence, various regional governments, and later state governments, have established newspapers many of which have been rested, while some are still circulating within their geographical areas.

That the ownership factor influences press reportage of events in the society, especially the political crisis situations, is an understatement. The popular axiom "he who pays the piper dictates the tune", cannot be ignored under these circumstances. This is because owners of newspapers and magazines set them up with certain motives and ideologies which, in turn, guide those publications. Corroborating this, Umechukwu (1995:19) writes:

Mass communication experts are all agreed that when a country's ownership of the media is vested in the hands of government or concentrated in the hands of a group or a few individuals, the media tend to become megaphones of those in control. Instead of performing the functions of surveying the environment, transmitting culture, and providing entertainment which are the basic tasks of the media; they are turned into "indispensable tools" for retaining power by those controlling them.

Galadima (2010:311) aptly illustrates the relationship between the ownership structure and performance of the Nigerian press as he cites the following examples of

newspaper ownership and performance in the north: *Daily* and *Weekly Trust* promotes the interest of Hausa-Fulani Muslims more than other interests. In the southwest, *The Westerner*, *Western Voice*, *Oodua News*, and *Akede Oduduwa* have emerged to support *Nigerian Tribune* and *Alaroye* in the promotion of the political interests of the region. The Southeast group has *Daily Champion*, *Daily Sun*, and *The New Republic* newspapers to promote their interests, while the South south zone has *Vanguard*, *The Guardian*, *Daily Independent* and *Thisday* which subtly promote the interest of the zone.

2.1.4 Editorial polices and press performance

Press performance cannot be assessed without taking a cursory look at the factor of editorial policy in newspaper operations. This is because editorial policy is the guiding principle of any newspaper operations in terms of content and style. Owners' preference and beliefs are captured in the editorial policies enunciated for their respective newspapers. Professionals running the newspapers are expected to adhere strictly to the tenets of the editorial policy in their day-to-day activities within the industry. Such editorial policies reflect the vision, mission and objectives of the owners in setting up such newspapers. Writing on the subject, Momoh (2010:36) opined:

The medium is a business and he who owns it must provide guidelines for the operators... The guidelines are reflected in the mission statement, the editorial policy and the house style... for the guidelines indicate what rules and regulations moderate the internal operation of the medium.

The author, Momoh, a former editor of the defunct *Daily Times*, listed some core areas covered by the newspaper's editorial policy which include accuracy in reporting, non-distortion of facts, non-suppression of news, constructive comments and criticisms, and simplicity of words. *The Guardian* (2015:2) observes:

The most important currency of *The Guardian* is trust. This is as true today as when CP Scott marked the centenary of the founding of the paper with his famous essay on journalism in 1921. The purpose of this code is, above all, to protect and foster the bond of trust between the paper and its readers, and therefore to protect the integrity of the paper and of the editorial content it carries.

The United Kingdom based newspaper thus listed some core areas of its editorial policy to include issues about professional practice, personal behaviour and conflict of interest. It is therefore noteworthy that editorial policy plays a vital role in performance as attested to by the editors who served as respondents to the in-depth interviews analysed in Chapter Four.

2.1.5 The selected political crises

2.1.5.1 *President Obasanjo's alleged third-term agenda*

In what began as a rumour, President Obasanjo's third-term bid, otherwise known as tenure elongation, became public knowledge in the last quarter of 2005. The *Daily Sun* newspaper had, on November 18, 2005, carried a front page lead story entitled: "3rd term campaign – NLC slams MAN... anger in the land". This story and those carried by other national dailies brought the proposed third term agenda to a public discourse. Between January and February 2006, front pages and other vital sections of Nigerian newspapers were awash with headlines, reports, comments and analyses of the debate, thus making it a running story in the print media.

President Olusegun Obasanjo's eight-year tenure of two terms of four years was due to end on May 29, 2007, the maximum tenure allowed by the nation's constitution. However, proponents of the agenda mooted an idea of constitutional amendment which his administration accepted and consequently sent a bill to the National Assembly, seeking the amendment of certain clauses in the constitution, including the tenure of political office holders. His government had consequently set up the National Political Reform Conference in the early part of 2005. Writing on the issue, Adedugbe (2006:23) asserts:

Many people believed that President Obasanjo hurriedly instituted the National Political Reform Conference of 2005 with high expectations that the conference would endorse an alteration with respect to the presidential term limit. The conference did not. And the chances that the National Assembly would pass the constitutional amendment bill with respect to the presidential term limit were very slim.

After a thorough debate on the constitutional amendment bill, the National Assembly, on May 16, 2006, rejected the bill in its entirety, thus ending the third term ambition of the president as well as an amendment of other relevant clauses in the constitution. In other words, the National Assembly could be said to have thrown away the baby together with the bath water. Some scholars (Oyebode, 2006; Olurode 2006; Momoh, 2006) are of the opinion that the Nigerian press played a vital role in the events that led to the collapse of the Third-Term Agenda.

2.1.5.2 President Yar'Adua's absence and constitutional crisis

Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua became Nigeria's president on May 29, 2007. Unfortunately, he did not enjoy his presidency due to ill health which eventually prevented him from completing his four-year tenure. He was not the first president to fall ill and undergo treatment at both home and abroad, but his long absence from office created a vacuum when he left Nigeria for Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, for medical treatment on November 23, 2009, without officially handing over power to his deputy. The vacuum created thus led the country into a constitutional crisis, as the presidency was enmeshed in a controversy of whether the Vice President, Goodluck Jonathan, should assume the Office of the President in an acting capacity, pending Yar'Adua's return, or steer clear of the office for lack of proper transmission of power.

The controversy was brought before the Chief Judge of the Federal High Court, Justice Dan Abutu, for judicial interpretation and he delivered three separate judgments on January 13, 22 and 29, 2010, to the effect that there was no vacuum whatsoever in discharge of the president's office. According to him, the vice-president was already acting for the president in his capacity as his deputy. The Chief Judge was not categorical on whether the vice-president could assume duties as president in

acting capacity pending the time the president would resume (Adeniyi, 2011). To salvage the situation, the National Assembly (Senate and House of Representatives), in what it dubbed as “the doctrine of necessity”, jointly passed a resolution on February 9, 2010 that the vice president should become the acting president even without a written letter from the president transmitting such powers as enshrined in section 145 of the 1999 constitution. The legislature based its resolution on the BBC interview President Yar’Adua granted on his sick bed in Jeddah, which was widely published by both local and foreign media.

The respite the nation got over the crisis following the National Assembly’s resolution and subsequent assumption of duties as acting president by Vice President Jonathan was, however, short lived, as President Yar’Adua made a dramatic return to Abuja from Saudi Arabia on February 24, 2010. This sparked-off another round of controversy. The National Assembly nonetheless stood by the Acting President and resolved that Yar’Adua could only resume his position as president if and when he officially transmitted a letter to its leadership that he was fit to do so, which he never did, as he eventually died on May 5, 2010, thus putting an end to the political imbroglio.

2.1.5.3 Post 2011 elections violent protests in the northern part of Nigeria

The 2011 Presidential Election, earlier scheduled to hold on April 9, was eventually held on April 16. Leading contenders for the exalted position were the incumbent, President Goodluck Jonathan of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP); General Muhamodu Buhari (Rtd) of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), and Alhaji Ibrahim Shekarau of the All Nigeria’s Peoples Party (ANPP). Of the four, Jonathan was the only Southerner, while the rest were from the North.

The outcome of the election was greeted with violent protests in the North, as results trickled in in favour of President Goodluck Jonathan. Worst hit were the Northern states of Bauchi, Adamawa, Katsina and Kaduna. Scores of youths took to the streets in these and other states, killing innocent citizens and destroying properties to express their dissatisfaction with the outcome of the election (*Vanguard* April 18,

2011). The crisis which lasted several days, was, however, put under control ahead of the May 29 inauguration of the new regime. Claims and counter claims trailed the crisis as politicians pointed accusing fingers at one another as the masterminds of the violence (*Sunday Sun*, May 15, 2011).

2.1.6 Brief history of the selected newspapers

The newspapers selected for this study are: *The Sun*, *The Guardian*, *The Punch*, *Nigerian Tribune* and *Daily Trust*. The newspapers were so selected because of their individual characteristics. *The Guardian* and *the Punch*, for example, are believed to be more elitist with least emphasis on sensation. *The Punch* is adjudged to be the newspaper with the highest circulating figure and geographical spread. *Nigerian Tribune* and *Daily Trust* are believed to be hovering between the elitist and popular press, but with much leaning on the popular press. The *Tribune*, though based in Ibadan, south-west Nigeria, is also a national newspaper with a little more emphasis on human angle stories, while the *Daily Trust* has a northern bias. Published in Abuja, *Daily Trust* circulates more in the north than in the south. *The Sun*, on the other hand, is a bit different from the others in that it is probably the only national newspaper that belongs to the popular press, with much emphasis on sensational, human angle and human interest stories that appeal to the lower nature of man.

2.1.6.1 Daily Trust

The *Daily Trust* is published by the Media Trust Limited, Abuja. The company first established the *Weekly Trust* in March 1998 and launched the *Daily Trust* in January 2001. The two papers are, currently, the largest circulating newspapers in Northern Nigeria. The group of newspapers, according to its owners, ranks among the top seven in Nigeria in advertising revenue (Media Trust Limited, 2014).

The Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer is Kabiru Abdullahi Yusuf. He was a Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Usmanu Dan Fodio University, Sokoto and has worked as a columnist and commentator for media organisations that include the *Daily Triumph*, *Citizen Magazine*, *Newswatch* and BBC Africa Service. The newspapers have online editions, accessible through

www.dailytrust.com and content from the newspapers is republished by *All Africa and Gamji*. The company presents the "Daily Trust African of the Year" award, recognising and celebrating Africans who have made positive contributions that impact the lives of other people and elicit a pan-African attention during the award year.

2.1.6.2 *The Punch*

The Punch claims to be a very popular and independent newspaper geared towards the emancipation of the Nigerian citizenry from the shackles of ignorance (Punchng.com, 2013). It was founded by two friends, James Aboderin, an accountant and Sam Amuka, a columnist and editor at the *Daily Times*, in November 1976. It has, as its major pillar, the promotion of national interest and the fostering of peace and unity within the Nigerian nation. *The Punch*, according to its owners, is regarded as the undisputed voice of the Yoruba cultural zone in south western Nigeria (Punchng.com, 2013). It espouses the ideals of democracy and human freedom, with a deep sense of cultural focus in an environment of social responsibility.

Sam Amuka became the first editor of the *Sunday Punch* in November 1976. A few years after the first print of its Sunday edition, the duo started printing its trademark daily newspaper. Both editions were designed to favour a friendlier, apolitical approach to news reporting, combining footages of social events with everyday political news. The paper sustains itself by delving into the issues that interest a myriad of people.

However, during the twilight of the Second Republic, political experiences had introduced conflicts to its original intentions, Aboderin and Amuka parted ways due partly to political conflicts. Aboderin later secured the support of his former foe, MKO Abiola, after the latter left the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). The newspaper began to take on a political stance, mostly against the Shagari regime.

2.1.6.3 *The Sun*

The Sun Publishing Limited was incorporated on 29 March, 2001, to undertake the business of printing and publishing. The company's flagship title - *The Sun* -

joined the ranks of the Nigerian press on Saturday, 18 January, 2003 as a weekly and 16 June, 2003, as a daily. It has as its mission: “To practise journalism in the classical tabloid newspaper tradition of presenting the news and features in an exciting style, with impact, objectivity and appeal that generate returns to all stakeholders: the society, the investors and the practitioners”.

The newspaper’s editorial policy can be assessed by its style found on its website, <http://www.sunnewsonline.com/about.html> :

The Sun is a special newspaper that looks at news – whatever the subject of the news – largely from the human angle. *The Sun* therefore is a paper of human voices, capturing the unpredictable and unexpected rhythms of life and existence, the daily heartbeat of humanity in lucid and crisp prose. *The Sun* is a mirror that reflects reality. And, like a good mirror, it reflects life from all nuances – politics, economy, crime, religion, sports, arts and culture, fashion and lifestyle, the rich, the poor, the stars and the ordinary, the sinners and the saints, warts and all. In other words, *The Sun* mirrors the totality of people’s actions or inactions in bold and dramatic language. Little wonder that since its debut, it has really been *Sunsational!*

The paper is headed by Femi Adesina as Managing Director/Editor-in-Chief, with Eric Osagie as his deputy, while Onuoha Ukeh is the Editor. For its readership profile, *The Sun*, according to its editorial statement, is a newspaper that focuses on news from the human perspective. It also reports politics, sports, entertainment, celebrities, arts and culture, crime, economy and religion. Its editorial menu appeals to anyone who is passionately interested in humanity. The paper claims to have as its primary target group young adults (male & female) in the 18 – 45 years age bracket. This class, according to the paper, is the largest socio-economic class, hence the popularity of *The Sun* among the group. Psycho-graphically, they are ambitious, fairly sophisticated, independent, career conscious and upwardly mobile. The secondary target group is of the age bracket of 45 – 70.

For its distribution network and sales strategy, the paper says it has eight zones— Abuja, Kano, Jos, Enugu, Ibadan, Benin, Aba and Lagos—to meet its distribution and marketing objectives. Within these zones, a number of towns have

been designated as distribution hubs. From its Lagos base, *The Sun* is currently distributed in 260 towns, including the 36 state capitals. It claims to have a daily print-run of 130,000 copies, 135,000 for weekend titles, and an average of 80 percent sales.

2.1.6.4 *The Guardian*

The Guardian is an independent daily newspaper published by Guardian Newspapers Limited. *The Guardian* was established in 1983 by the Late Alex Ibru, an entrepreneur and Stanley Macebuh, a top journalist then with the *Daily Times* newspapers. *The Guardian* was a pioneer in introducing high quality journalism to Nigeria with thoughtful editorial content (The Guardian, 2014). The paper was first published on 22 February, 1983, as a weekly, appearing on Sundays. The paper started daily publication on 4 July, 1983. In the early 1980s, *The Guardian* had a long-running campaign against the use of traditional chieftaincy titles, calling for Nigerians to be addressed simply as "Mr" or "Mrs".

During the administration of General Muhammadu Buhari, reporters Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor were both sent to jail in 1984 under Decree No. 4 of 1984, which suppressed journalistic freedom. On 26 August, 1989, *The Guardian* published a long letter by Dr. Bekolari Ransome-Kuti, a human-rights activist, entitled "Open Letter to President Babangida" in which he criticised what he saw as an increasing government suppression of free expression of ideas.

The owner, the Late Alex Ibru, escaped an assassination attempt during the military regime of General Sani Abacha. On 2 February 1996, his car was fired upon and Ibru was hit. He was rushed to the hospital with one of his eyes dangling from its socket. Following Abacha's sudden death in June 1998, legal proceedings began against his son Mohammed Abacha and his Chief Security Officer, Major Hamza al-Mustapha. Eventually, in December 2010, a Lagos High Court acquitted those accused of the attempt. Ibru eventually died on 20 November, 2011 at the age of 66 years.

The Guardian is owned by a member of an ethnic minority and has a national outlook in terms of reach and content. It claims to be independent of any ethnic group, religious community, political party or other interest groups (The Guardian, 2014). *The Guardian* is read by the most educated section of the elite, while *The Punch* can

be understood by anyone with basic literacy. Other Nigerian newspapers fall between these extremes.

The paper is one of the few relatively long lasting national papers in Nigeria. It is believed that its durability is a result of its broad range of issues, and contacts, its close link to the Ibru family, and non-partisanship. In its early stages of circulation, *The Guardian* was one of the few national dailies that did not publish advertised obituaries. Since 1989, the policy has changed and elite advertisement now makes a large percentage of the newspaper's revenue.

2.1.6.5 Nigerian Tribune

Nigerian Tribune is published in Ibadan in Nigeria. It was established in November 1949 by Obafemi Awolowo and is the oldest surviving private Nigerian newspaper. In the colonial era, the newspaper served as the mouthpiece for Awolowo's populist welfarist programmes. It also played an important role in defending the interests of the Yoruba people at a period when different ethnic groups were struggling for ascendancy (Nigerian Tribune, 2014). From Independence in 1960 until the 1990s, most newspapers and magazines were government-owned, but private newspapers such as the *Nigerian Tribune*, *The Punch*, *Vanguard* and the *Guardian* continued to expose public and private scandals despite government attempts at suppression. General Ibrahim Babangida once said that of all the Nigerian newspapers, he would only read and take seriously the *Nigerian Tribune's* editorial column.

The fundamental thrusts of *Tribune's* editorial policy were encapsulated in the statement of its founder in 1949— Chief Obafemi Awolowo in the article “A paradox of freedom” published in its maiden edition:

Two most potent weapons should be adopted: a frank tongue and pungent pen, a tongue and pen that will care less of what the opponents might say, how they might feel, and will have enough courage to call hypocrisy, humbug and tyranny their true names. Such tongue, such a pen will mortify the proud and provoke despotism to repent its ways (*Nigerian Tribune*, November 16, 1949, p. 1).

However, in 1977, a comprehensive editorial policy of this paper was enunciated and it was tagged “The Five Dimensions of Our Editorial Policy”. The first dimension holds that a newspaper owes tremendous responsibility to the public it serves and must not compromise such for hope of reward or fear of adverse consequence from any quarter. Secondly, *Nigerian Tribune* as an independent newspaper is absolutely committed to publishing every report of public interest, subject only to the constraints imposed by law. Thirdly, the *Nigerian Tribune* will publish pleasant and unpleasant news, regardless of the personalities involved. The fourth dimension holds that the *Nigerian Tribune* has a definite and recognisable standpoint on how the affairs of this nation should be managed; and the fifth dimension stipulates that *Nigerian Tribune* will now and in the next millennium remain constructive, balanced and courageous in its analyses and comments.

2.2 Models of press performance

Models of press performance are the symbolic representations or tools designed to assist the researcher in explaining how the press functions in a given society. Some scholars have described the models of the press in relation to theory, while others have described it in relation to the role and purpose of the media. McQuail (2010:184-5) belongs to the former as he presents four models in relation to normative media theory; a liberal-pluralist or market model, a social responsibility or public interest model, a professional model, and an alternative media model. Watson (2008:91), on the other hand, hinged the purpose and role of the media on what he calls models of media function. According to him, “...how the media are constituted – as primitive or public enterprises – governs how they perform and what principles inspire practice”. He listed the three broad models of media function as; propagandist, commercial laissez-faire and public service. For the purpose of this study, the latter (Watson’s models) shall be our guide.

2.2.1 Propagandist model

This model classifies the purpose of the press as that of propaganda or mass manipulation. The idea is that knowledge is power and those who have interests to

advocate (whether government or power elite of the society) must control, diffuse or restrict its spread by the power of the press. Watson (2008) quoted a British media baron and Canadian-born Lord Bearbook (1879-1964), owner of the *Express* as claiming that he ran his newspapers “purely for propaganda, and with no other purpose”. Similarly, radical newspapers in the nineteenth century Europe functioned in the propagandist mode in their demand for economic, industrial and parliamentary reform. Watson (2008:92-93) further links the propagandist nature of the press barons in contemporary Europe and America to the lure of power. He therefore states:

And with most of the press barons, the lure of power—the power to influence society and those who governed it—was a decisive factor in the content and style of their publication...Newspapers were weapons of influence with which the press barons could attempt to impose their views on the widest possible readership. Such barons also delighted in the prestige their newspapers gained for them along the corridors of power.

Under this model of press performance, newspapers, for instance, are established mainly to champion a cause by the owners. Other considerations such as profit or public interest are secondary, if not ignored altogether. Ownership in this case is both private and public as evident in the case of Nigeria. It is common place to see some notable individuals in the corridors of power or those aspiring to get there floating newspapers to champion their political cause.

Also, government newspapers in Nigeria are established as agents of propaganda—to ‘propagate’ government activities and sing its praise among the people even if such newspapers are being run at a loss (Duyile, 2007). The intention of newspapers established under this mode will be known to the reading public as long as the public is able to identify their owners and their motive for establishing such papers.

On the other hand, for a newspaper to be successful, it has to provide more than propaganda. This is because readers seek to be entertained as well as informed. If a newspaper continues to champion its proprietor’s agenda at the expense of audience preferences, such a medium may lose readership sooner than later, as the audience will

most likely seek alternative news media that can satisfy both its information and entertainment needs.

2.2.2 Commercial laissez-faire model

Commercial laissez-faire model views media ownership and production as a financial enterprise with the sole aim of making profit (Watson 2003). Here, the audience, that is the readers, are simply regarded as consumers whose interest needs to be won and sustained so that they can continue to patronise press products. It further states that for proprietors to be able to maximise profit, ownership and production should be as free and as unrestricted by regulation as possible. Hence, the term 'laissez-faire', which literally, means 'leave alone.' This model is supported by McQuail's liberal-pluralist or market model of press theory which is based on the original free press (libertarian) theory.

[This model] identifies press freedom with the freedom to own and operate the means of publication without permission or interference from the state. It emphasises the individual and his needs, and defines the public interests as what interests the public (McQuail, 2010:184).

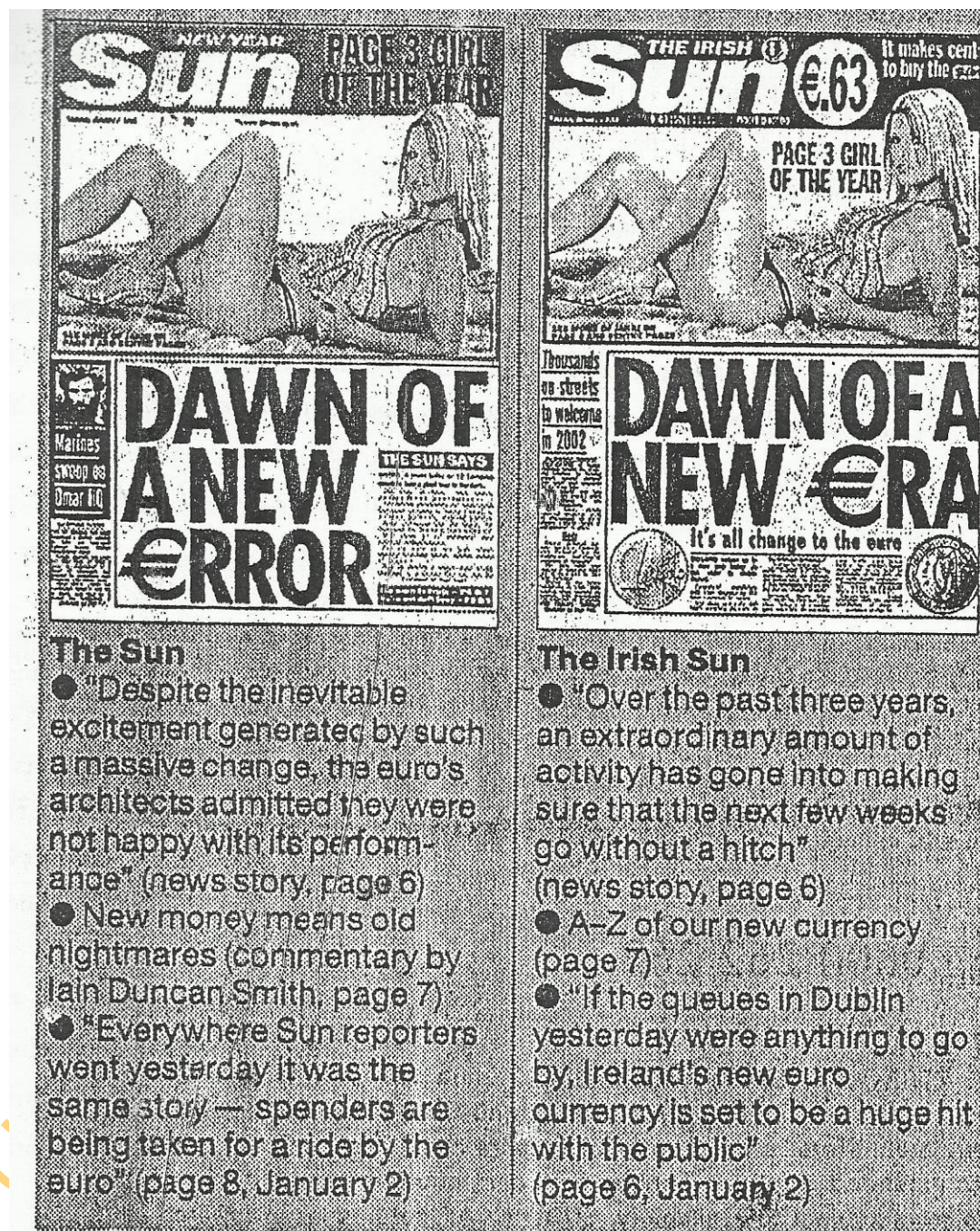
An example of a newspaper operating under this model is the United Kingdom tabloid, *The Sun*, which considers what the readers want above any other consideration in its editorial content. A particular reference was made of the newspaper's reportage of the launch of Euro currency on common market on January 1, 2002, which drew *The Guardian's* criticism of the paper's front pages circulated to both the British and Irish audiences. *The Guardian*, on January 8, 2002, published the two front pages of the *Sun* of January 2, 2002, accusing it of speaking with a forked tongue (See figure 2.1 below). Because Britain refused to surrender its Pound Sterling to the Euro, the UK *Sun* expressed its traditional antipathy to the currency and described the Euro symbol 'E' as an Error. The Irish edition of the same paper, however, described the symbol as the dawn of a new Era in recognition of Ireland's acceptance of the Euro, and in acknowledgement that the Irish people would be using the new currency from then on (Watson, 2003). The implication of the above is that *The Sun* is in business

and it must give its readers what will interest them (as in the case of British and Irish readers), so it can continue to enjoy patronage from the reading public.

Viewed critically, this model may be criticised on the strength that it suppresses public interest and public good for profit interest and pursuits. In other words, what matters is audience preference which dictates content and not necessarily what may benefit the entire society after all. That is why government sometimes accuses newspapers of being unpatriotic and undermining national interest in pursuit of profit as the case is in Nigeria where bad news most often is adjudged good news by newspapers, even when such stories are capable of smearing the nation's corporate image, both locally and internationally.

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Figure 2.1: *The Sun* speaking with forked tongue? *The Guardian* of London, January 8, 2002.



Source: Watson, J. (2008). *Media communication: an introduction to theory and process*, second edition, New York: Palgrave Macmillan. p.96.

2.2.3 Public service model

The public service model centres essentially around concepts of responsibility, working according to codes of ethical and professional conduct, and in the public interest (Watson, 2008). This is similar to McQuail's social responsibility or public interest model. Here, the right to freedom of publication is accompanied by obligations to the wider society that go beyond self-interest (McQuail, 2010). This implies that the press is established mainly to serve the public interest and not for propaganda or profit making, although the latter factors may come into play subtly. Though not fully pronounced in the print industry, a notable example of a news media under this model is the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) whose establishment in the 1920s was greeted with suspicion and later hostility by newspaper barons in Britain because they saw radio as a serious threat to their media hegemony (Watson, 2008).

A major challenge of the public service model to the print industry is that of survival. By this, we mean how to sustain regular production, circulation and readership of newspapers, for example. This is because operating a newspaper purely as public service may not yield much income in terms of sales and advertisement, as the interest of readers as well as that of advertisers, need to be considered in content development if a newspaper must continue to enjoy patronage from both sets of audience.

It should be noted, however, that no newspaper can successfully operate on the basis of one model of performance in isolation of the other. This implies that the press should strive to serve the public interest and at the same time make profit in order to stay afloat as well as to propagate the mission for which it is established.

2.3 Theoretical framework

Theory, according to communication scholar Wilbur Schramm (1963), cited in Folarin (1998), is described as a crap detector which enables us to separate scientific statements from unscientific ones. Citing Severin and Tankard (1982), Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso (2008:42) define theory as "a set of ideas of systematic generalisations based on scientific observation (and) leading to further empirical

observation". Kerlinger and Lee (2000:11) give a comprehensive and celebrated definition of theory as "a set of inter-related constructs, definitions and propositions that give a systematic view about phenomena" (cited in Anaeto, et al, 2008:42). Press theory, therefore, is a set of ideas or propositions explaining how the press functions.

Against this background, framing theory has been adopted to provide necessary explanation for the contextual performance of the press in this study. This theory is so selected because news framing, that is, how the press frames its reports in terms of objectivity and balance, can largely be used to determine the performance level of the press.

2.3.1 Framing theory

Framing as a concept has attracted the attention of scholars across disciplines, including Sociology, Economics, Psychology, Cognitive Linguistics, Political Science and Communication. The major premise of framing theory is that an issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives and can be constructed as having implication for multiple values or consideration (Chong and Druckman, 2007). What then is framing? Vraneski and Richter (2002) define framing as a psychological trait and a cognitive process which enables us to receive and organise information in patterns which resemble cognitive maps. Framing, simply put, involves a communication source presenting and defining an issue (de Vreese, 2005). It is a process by which people develop a particular conceptualisation of an issue or re-orient their thinking about an issue (Chong and Druckman, 2007) and a way of giving some overall interpretation to isolated items or facts (McQuail, 2010).

Pekar (2009:1) uses the metaphors of landscape and a house-building to explain framing thus:

In its purest form, framing is focusing on a particular aspect of a landscape so as to change the **meaning** that is found there... think of the act of framing metaphorically as **dropping a picture frame** down on a specific portion of a large landscape. We are consistently dropping frames down on a big picture to better understand them to simply comprehend and process what we are seeing alongside all the other information in our brains. Dropping a frame helps us decide where we will focus. It forces us to make choices about foreground and background. A frame directs the viewers to consider certain features of the landscape and to ignore others... framing helps establish parameters: who is in, and who isn't in, the story.

Framing in the media involves selection, emphasis and exclusion. By this, we mean the media frame news by selecting certain aspects of events, emphasising and elaborating such aspects, while excluding others to achieve certain aims. For instance, in reporting a crisis situation, a particular medium may decide to isolate certain aspects of the crisis, say the cause of the crisis, the gladiators in the crisis, the victim of the crisis or the future implication of the crisis; and emphasise any of these aspect by consistently elaborating it in order to create a particular impression in the minds of the audience. Media frames refer to patterns of representation and interpretation of symbols and things that organise a discourse and these enable reporters to sort and package the information effectively for their audience (Vraneski and Richter, 2002).

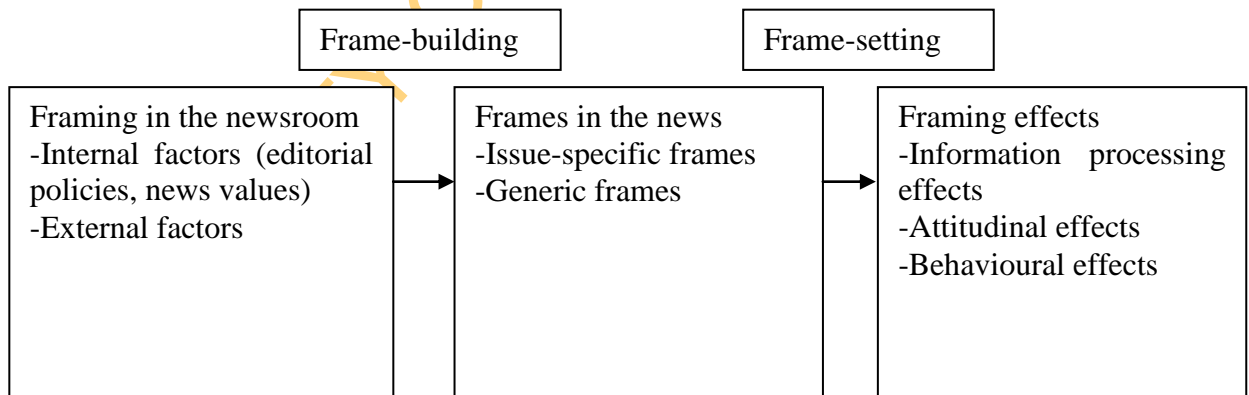
From the foregoing, framing can be conceptualised by the media and also by the audience. Scheufele (1999) identifies the two concepts as media frames and individual frames. Citing Modigliani (1987), Scheufele (1999) defines a media frame as a central organising idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events. Thus, the frame suggests what the controversy is all about and the essence of the issue. Media frames therefore, serve as working templates for journalists upon which they effectively identify and classify information to be relayed to their audience. Entman (1993:52) further explains media framing thus:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.

Individual frames, on the other hand, deals with the way people (individuals) conceptualise an issue or shape their thinking about such an issue. Entman (1993:53) defines it as “mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide individuals’ processing of information.” Our focus in this study is on media framing of events, particularly their framing of political crisis stories.

de Vreese (2005:51-52) has presented two distinct stages of framing in the media: frame-building and frame-setting. Frame-building, according to him, refers to the factors that influence the structural qualities of news frames, which may be internal or external, as both combine to determine how journalists and news organisations frame issues. Frame-setting, on the other hand, involves the interaction between media frames and individuals’ prior knowledge and predispositions, which may affect learning, interpretation, and evaluation of issues and events. The relationship between the two: frame-building and frame setting is graphically illustrated in Figure 2.2 below.

Fig. 2.2: An integrated process model of framing



Source: de Vreese C.H (2005). “News framing: theory and typology.” *Information Design Journal*. 13 (1) p.51.

Some scholars have attempted to link framing with agenda-setting and priming as the three media effect models (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007; de Vreese 2005). Agenda-setting, according to Scheufele and Tewksbury, is hinged on a notion that there is a strong correlation between the emphasis that mass media place on certain

issues (e.g. based on relative placement or amount of coverage) and the importance attributed to these issues by mass audience. Similarly, priming occurs when news contents suggest to news audience that they ought to use specific issues as benchmark for making political evaluations. Based on common theoretical foundations; some researchers have argued that priming is a temporal extension of agenda-setting (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987 cited by Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007).

Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) are of the opinion that framing differs significantly from agenda-setting and priming in that framing is based on the assumption that how an issue is characterised in news report can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences. He further states that framing can be constructed at both macro and micro levels. At macro level construct, framing refers to modes of presentation that journalists and other communicators use to present information in a way that resonates with existing underlying schemas among their audience; while framing describes, at micro construct level, how people use information and presentation features regarding issues as they form impressions. Corroborating this view, de Vreese (2005:53) says: “while agenda-setting theory deals with the salience of issues, framing is concerned with the presentation of issues”.

From the foregoing, it is clear that news framing is an integral part of press performance process. In other words, how the press frames news (events) in terms of directions, selections, emphasis, elaboration and exclusion can be used to assess its performance level. Simplifying the process of identifying news frames in the media especially in the newspapers, Tankard (2001:101) suggests a list of eleven framing mechanisms or focal points which include:

1. Headlines
2. Sub-head
3. Photos
4. Photo captions
5. Leads
6. Source selection
7. Quote selection
8. Pull quotes

9. Logos
10. Statistics and charts, and
11. Concluding statements and paragraphs

In Nigeria, some studies which employ news frames analysis include Galadima (2012), Rodney (2006) and Okunna and Omenugha (2006). Galadima (2010) investigated the types of group identity promoted by the Nigerian press, motivation for such promotion, as well as strategies and framing of such identities in the context of the 2003 and 2007 presidential elections and found out that the coverage of elections by the Nigerian press is always framed predominantly in terms of conflict among different ethnic, regional, religious, political and zonal groups in the country. Rodney (2006), cited by Galdima (2010), used the editorial of *New Nigerian* newspaper to investigate how the interest of people in Northern Nigeria is presented and found that the newspaper never explicitly or even implicitly canvassed for northern interest in all editorials on political issues; while Okunna and Omenugha's (2006) study of religious crises revealed that the selected newspapers (*Daily Champion, New Nigerian*) framed Nigerians in terms of Eastern Christians versus Northern Muslims (Galadima 2010:36).

Framing is used as the framework for this study because a major yardstick to measure press performance is how the selected newspapers framed their reports of the crisis situations in terms of direction and balance. However, framing as a theory is not without criticisms. One of such is that it does not fully bring to the fore the factors that determine what editors select, elaborate and exclude in their reportage of events. This study therefore, uses some normative theories which explain the rationale behind press operations in the society to support the theoretical framework (framing).

2.3.2 Normative theories of the press

Some scholars, such as McQuail (2010) and Watson (2008), have attempted to create a more complex taxonomy of purposes of the press as they operate in varying contexts. These are referred to as normative theories originally propounded as four theories of the press by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm in 1956. Watson (2008:100) says of normative theories: "By this we mean functions as they should be according to

dominant criteria; in some cases, an ideal, in others a necessity; and they constitute guidelines to performance". Six normative theories of the press have been identified by Denis McQuail as: authoritarian theory, libertarian or free press theory, soviet-communist theory, social responsibility theory, development media theory, and democratic participant theory (Folarin, 1998; Daramola, 2001; Watson, 2003; Anaeto, et al, 2008; McQuail, 2010 & Papermasters, 2010). For the purpose of this study, three of the theories: social responsibility, democratic participant, and development media theories shall be discussed because they are believed to be more relevant to press performance in the current democratic setting in Nigeria.

Social responsibility theory

This theory, also propounded by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, upholds some of the principles of the libertarian or free press theory but with a condition that freedom of the press imposes on it the concomitant obligations (responsibility) to the society. Soola (2007), Anaeto, et al (2008), and Ekeli (2008) list the following as specific functions of the press which social responsibility theory postulates:

1. Serving the political system on the basis of information, discussion and debate on public affairs.
2. Enlightening the public so as to make it capable of taking self-determined action.
3. Safeguarding the rights of the individual by acting as watchdog against government.
4. Serving the economic system by bringing together buyers and sellers through the medium of advertising.
5. Preserving financial autonomy in order not to become dependent on special interests or influences.

The obligations which this theory imposes on the press are a form of public stewardship. It regards the press as the guardian of the democratic process with a duty to be honest and fair to all citizens. Contrasting social responsibility theory with the free press theory, Watson (2008:101) writes:

In party-political matters, free press theory insists on the right to be biased in favour of one party against another, to flatter the one and disparage the other, whereas the social responsibility theory would urge that, in the public interest, and in the interests of true representation... both sides of a case should be put.

The burden of responsibility or obligation on the part of the press has implications for both ownership and control. For ownership, Watson suggests a pluralist media (press) in a pluralist society which, according to him, is only really possible through multiple ownership patterns. On the issue of control, Folarin (1998:29) asserts: "The major problem confronting the efforts to ensure social responsibility in press performance in Nigeria is that... the only relevant structures are mainly legal and statutory."

Supporting this view is the claim of those who propounded this theory (Siebert et al, 1956), as cited by McQuail (2010:170-1), that:

Social responsibility theory holds that the government must not merely allow freedom; it must actively promote it... when necessary, therefore, the government should act to protect the freedom of its citizens. The acts of government mentioned include legislation to forbid 'flagrant abuses' and it may also 'enter the field of communication to supplement existing media'.

By implication, if multiple-ownership is encouraged, government control through legal and statutory means may impose certain limitations on such efforts and this may, in turn, impinge on the freedom of the press, which this theory seeks to uphold.

Democratic-participant theory

Propounded by Dennis McQuail in 1983, democratic-participant theory is a response to the public disillusionment with both the libertarian and social responsibility theories because of their failure to deliver social benefits expected of them (Folarin, 1998; Anaeto et al, 2008). McQuail (2010) sees the theory as reflecting public reaction against what he calls the commercialisation and monopolisation of

privately-owned media and against the centralism and beaureacratism of public broadcasting institutions which are established according to the principles of social responsibility. Ojorbor (2002:16), citing McQuail (1987), listed the principles of democratic participant theory as:

1. Individual citizens and minority groups have rights of access to media (right to communicate) and rights to be served by the media according to their own determination of need.
2. The organisation and content of the media should not be subject to centralised political or state bureaucratic control.
3. The media should exist primarily for their audiences and not for media organisations, professionals or clients of the media.
4. Groups, organisations and local communities should have their own media.
5. Small-scale, interactive and participative media forms are better than large-scale, one-way, professional media.
6. Certain social needs relating to the mass media are neither adequately expressed through individual consumer demands nor through the state and its major institutions.
7. Communication is too important to be left to professionals.

The theory, no doubt, has the potential of enhancing press performance because of its insistence that the existing bureaucracy as well as commercial and professional hegemony in media system be broken down in order to guarantee easier media access for all potential users and consumers. It therefore, calls for pluralism in place of monopolisation, localism and decentralisation in place of centralism (Folarin, 1998). Thus, local and community newspapers are encouraged under this theory which will no doubt bring the media closer to the grassroots.

A major criticism of this theory is its tendency to undermine professionalism in media practice, as it holds that the mass media have become too socially important to be left in the hands of professionals. One may then ask, 'is this theory not encouraging and harbouring charlatans and quacks in the practice of journalism?' This

position, Folarin (1998) asserts, may be irritating or downright insulting to some of the conservative media professionals.

Development media theory

This theory, also propounded by McQuail in 1983, is designed to suit the peculiar needs and aspirations of less developed countries that may not have the wherewithal – money, infrastructure, skills and audiences—to sustain an extensive free market media system being pursued by the western press. According to McQuail (2010:176), “A more positive version of media theory is needed which focuses on national and developmental goals... in the circumstances it may be legitimate for government to allocate resources selectively and to restrict journalistic freedom in some ways.” He summed up the major tenets of this theory as follows:

1. Media must accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy.
2. Freedom of the media should be open to economic priorities and development needs of the society.
3. Media should give priority in their content to the national culture and language(s).
4. Media should give priority in news and information to links with other developing countries which are close geographically, culturally or politically.
5. Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities as well as freedoms in their information gathering and dissemination tasks.
6. In the interest of development ends, the state has a right to intervene in, or restrict, media operations; and devices of censorship, subsidy and direct control can be justified.

The strength of this theory lies in its principle that the press must partner with government in developmental efforts in line with the needs and aspirations of the so called ‘third world’ nations. It recognises the autonomy of the developing nations and resists the competition and domination from the developed nations’ media. Watson (2008:103) captures this:

Development theory requires that bad news stories are treated with caution, for such stories can be economically damaging to a nation in the delicate throes of growth and change. Grim headlines can put off investors; even persuade them to pull out their investments. As an antidote to the bad news syndrome, development theory seeks to accentuate the positive; it nurtures the autonomy of the developing nations and gives special emphasis to indigenous cultures.

However, this theory has been criticised for having a potential for threatening press freedom, especially its principle which empowers government to intervene in or restrict media operations in the interest of development. Anaeto et al (2008:64) report that, “they (scholars) argue that it (government control) goes against the workings of press freedom and makes nonsense of the idea of development”. An experience of this researcher, as news editor of a government-owned newspaper in Nigeria, illustrates this position. Sometime in 2005, the newspaper in one of its weekend editions, carried a grim headline on its front page about a man who was reportedly killed in a shrine for lying, having been made to swear before the shrine over a disputed matter. The governor of the state (owners of the newspaper) summoned the whole editorial team, expressing his disgust with the story on the grounds that it was capable of driving out investors from the state. That affected the prominence given to human angle stories in the papers as long as the governor’s tenure lasted!

Nevertheless, the theory, if embraced and applied according to each nation’s peculiarity, will no doubt enhance development. Folarin (1983:33) therefore, fine-tunes the tenets of the theory as enunciated by McQuail to suit developing nations as follows:

1. Media should accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with national ideology, without prejudice to their traditional functions of information, education and entertainment.
2. Media should also accept and help in carrying out the special development tasks of national integration, socio-economic modernisation, promotion of literacy and cultural creativity.

- 3 (a) “National” media should give priority in their content to the national macro culture in so far as this can be abstracted from the national milieu; then to regional cultures and then to local cultures, all in a descending order of priority.
(b) “Regional” media are of course normally expected to accord priority to regional cultures (and languages), while;
(c) “Local” media give priority to local culture(s) and language(s).
- 4 Media should carefully identify, and give due attention in their foreign news to links with, other countries with similar socio-cultural orientations and/or political and economic aspirations.
5. In order to safeguard the ideals of press freedom, journalists and other media workers should at all times faithfully fulfill their obligations and stoutly defend their rights in the course of their information gathering and dissemination tasks.
6. The state with its systems has a duty to see to it that media or journalists presumed to have contravened any national law(s) in the course of their information gathering and dissemination tasks can conveniently face prosecution, expecting a fair and speedy trial.

2.4 Related empirical studies

A few studies carried out on press coverage of crises, both locally and internationally, are discussed in this section. Methodologies and findings of the researchers are particularly mentioned as they serve as a guide to the issue under investigation in this study.

2.4.1. Crisis, Nigerian press and the politics of meaning

Adebanwi (2002) investigated the contending narratives on the Nigerian ‘nation’ as reflected in the Nigerian press within the context of other narratives in the polity. The researcher studied how meaning is deployed or mobilised in the press to establish, nourish and sustain relations of domination/power; or to counteract, subvert and deflect power within and among ethnic nationalities in the context of the evolving

idea of the Nigerian nation. The study specifically examined four crises in the history of Nigeria and how media narratives provide the interpretative lens through which the ethnic-nationalities and meta-nation are viewed. The crisis include the following: The crisis on the date of independence and related issues; the post-independence crisis of statehood, particularly the events before the civil war; the crisis following the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election; and the crisis following the restoration of democracy in May, 1999.

The study selected sixteen newspapers/magazines for the four crisis situations (four for each crisis) and gathered the data through archival and library-historical method. It further used the depth-hermeneutical frame-work to investigate how the interpretation of ideology—recast as meaning in the service of power—in the press serves to stimulate critical reflections on the relations of power and domination in the grand narrative.

Findings revealed that the Nigerian newspapers and news magazines, in their interpretation and articulation of the notion of nationhood, cross and transverse the register from the notion of nation as country, state or ethnic group or ethnic-amalgam to political region. The study further held that the Nigerian press, in their narratives of power, use the nation as it is expedient in the context, whether as a grand nation that already exists, or as an ethnic-nation such as Igbo nation, Hausa nation or Yoruba nation. At the level of practice or performance, the study put in bold relief, the role of the press in igniting, exacerbating and perpetuating differences, crisis and hatred. Specifically, the press helped to subvert the possibilities of national unity by emphasising divisive factors and tendencies where the interests they represent are compromised and promoting particular versions of ‘unity’ only where their interests are served. Thus, there was an absence of what is described as “overriding national interest” in the pursuit and protection of set agenda through press narratives.

Even where it is excusable that the press pursue such agenda—largely sectional, where not personal or selfish—for which the newspapers and news magazines are set up, the discourses of passionate hatred that override the clashing narratives of power, occlude national conciliation and reconciliation (Adebanwi, 2002:58).

The study, therefore, concludes that unless the press in the narrative of national crisis desists from using the lexicon that expresses ethnic hatred and ethnic slurs, the nation-of-aspiration to which the press sometimes points would be a pipe dream.

This researcher finds the above study useful as it reveals how narratives provided the interpretative lens through which the ethnic nationalities and meta-nation are viewed during crisis situations. Some of the findings of the study reviewed, especially in terms of press practice or performance, are pointers to this research exercise which sought to evaluate the performance of the Nigerian press in the reportage of political crisis situations. However, it must be pointed out that the above study only examined the content of the newspapers and how meanings are created in the context of domination or power among ethnic nationalities. It dwelt elaborately on editorials, news reports, select opinion articles and features, thus concentrating on the textual analysis of the newspaper contents without recourse to the producers of such contents (journalists) or the audience (readers). This current study is a departure from the above study in that it not only examined the contents of the newspapers but also collected oral information through in-depth interviews, from the gatekeepers (editors and political editors) to determine the factors which influenced their reportage of the issues under investigation.

2.4.2. The press as an ideological apparatus of state

Agbaje (1988) investigated the link between the state and ideology. His investigation focused on the operation of one ideological apparatus within a subsidiary form of the state, using the Nigerian newspaper press (1960-1983) as a case study. The study was anchored on the liberal/plural theory of the state and ideology; as well as Maxian theory of the state and ideology.

The researcher employed four methods. First, the historical/library research used to provide materials for the analyses of the legal and social contexts of the operation of the Nigerian press. This method was also used by Adebani (2002) in the study earlier reviewed. Second, the researcher employed the informal (unstructured) interview, through which the responses of living actors of the period covered were used to fill gaps in data collected through library research. The researcher also made

use of observation method, where he was a participant observer as a senior journalist with some media organisations during the period of study. Finally, the study employed content analysis to quantify and aggregate the content of the Nigerian newspapers. Systematic random sampling technique was used to pick three years (1964, 1972 and 1980) from the sampling frame consisting of a list of all the twenty-four years (1960-1983); the study population comprised all Nigerian newspapers published during the period of the study and eight newspapers were picked as sample for each of the three years selected for the study.

The analysis of the newspaper content revealed the extent to which the powerful social classes, the elite, the urban areas, and with regard to foreign news; western Europe/North America; dominated press communication at the expense of other classes, the rural areas, the non-elite, and the Communist Bloc. A cursory look at the frequency distribution of attributes of the 1,208 stories content analysed in the study gave a first impression of the aggregate of spatial, class and other sectional characteristics of stories that got published in the newspapers.

For the national stories, the study established a pattern of media ownership and the country's political history. Nigerian newspapers had, traditionally, been concentrated in the Lagos/Western area (predominantly Yoruba) and, to a little extent, in other parts of the South. The three majority ethnic groups (Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba) were the subjects of reports in 61.8% of the stories whose subjects could be identified on ethnic bases – Hausa-Fulani 10.9%, Igbo 21%, and Yoruba 29.9%. Those of the minorities accounted for 30% and non-Nigerians 6.5%. It was apparently the need to seek to break this pattern that, in the Second Republic, led to the citing of general newspapers in the northern and eastern parts of the country. However, the logic of that enterprise, according to the author, was not to get the newspaper press closer to the people. Rather, the enterprise was motivated by intra political-class considerations that considered it necessary to establish more newspapers in order to enhance the position of one fraction of that class over the other.

The study further established that there was no qualitative change in the role of the Nigerian press as an ideological apparatus in the period under review. The social, economic and political pressures that impinged on the press remained essentially the

same whether under military or civil rule, be it in the First or Second Republic. The press was subject to jingoistic claims of ethnicity, petty rivalries, personal ambitions, regionalism, and the like, all filtered through the predilection for power struggles by the two most powerful social classes with interchangeable membership—the political and bourgeois classes. It was these two classes which continued to dominate ownership of the newspaper industry and to dictate the parameters for the operation of both government and private newspapers.

The above study is related to this research as it not only analysed the content of the newspapers in terms of their coverage of events in the post-colonial Nigeria, but also examined the factors which influenced such coverage. Such factors include ownership pattern and ethnicity which were similar to the findings of Adebawo (2002). Ownership is also a factor for consideration in press performance which this study sought to investigate.

2.4.3. Nigerian press and group identity promotions in elections

Galadima (2011) investigated the types of group identity promoted by the Nigerian Press during the 2003 and 2007 presidential elections in the country. The study examined motivations for such promotions as well as the strategies and framing of such identities. The author anchored the study on news framing theory which explains how the press promotes a version of an issue by giving saliency to certain elements of their reports above others. The researcher employed frame analysis and content analysis as the methodology for the study. A sample of 376 editions of eight national newspapers was selected for the study through a composite week sampling technique; a nine-item content category and a six-item frame analysis guide were used as instruments of data collection. The researcher also supported the quantitative data with qualitative data obtained from the in-depth interviews held with eight political editors of the newspapers.

Findings revealed that the Nigerian Press gave greater attention to five types of group identity during the 2003 and 2007 elections. These include political, ethnic, religious, regional and zonal group identities with political and religious group identities having the greatest and least promotions respectively. The press largely

abstained from promoting religious identity in covering elections because of its volatile nature in the country. The findings further revealed that the press employed editorials, opinion articles and sensational headlining as tools in promoting these group identities. The elections were framed mainly as conflicts reporting above issues-centered reporting. Political editors of the newspapers confirmed that they deliberately sensationalised group issues to give them saliency and prominence. The study also confirmed ownership influence in the coverage of the elections as political editors confirmed their inability to publish certain stories that were of good quality just because such stories were against the interest of the newspapers and their associates.

The above study is a pointer to this research as its methodology is adapted to investigate press performance in political crisis situations by content analysing the newspaper editions as well as conducting in-depth interviews on editors of the selected newspapers.

In another study, Edemode (2001) examined the coverage of Nigerian newspapers on issues relating to women candidates for elective political positions. Ten newspapers (both government-owned and privately-owned) were selected for this study which covered an eighteen-year period of 1975 to 1993. Content analysis method was adopted and a sample of 2,240 editions was analysed.

Findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between ownership and space allotted to women in elections. The study also established a significant relationship between newspaper location and space allotted to women in elections. According to the author, the finding concerning the significant relationship between newspaper ownership and space pointed to the fact that government-owned newspapers devoted more space to women candidates as a reflection of positive government's pronouncements and actions towards women generally. The researcher suggested "a need for an alternative complementary research approach to content analysis with a view to identifying the nature of newspaper reporting on issues concerning women not only in elections but also in other situations and areas such as women in crisis situations..." This suggestion, no doubt, established a relationship between the above study and this research which investigated Nigerian press performance during political crisis situations.

The research, just like Adebani (2002), only employed content analysis to investigate Nigerian press coverage of women candidates for elective positions. The study did not take into consideration that certain factors accounted for such coverage. This current study sought to fill such a gap by interviewing the editors of the selected newspaper on the factors which influenced their coverage of political crisis situations, as evidenced in similar studies like Agbaje (1988) and Galadima. (2011).

2.4.4. Radio propaganda and Rwanda genocide

The Rwandan Genocide was a mass slaughter of the Tutsis by the Hutus between April and July, 1994, resulting in the assassination of the president, Juvenal Habyarimana and over 500,000 Tutsis, some 80% of the country's Tutsi population. An estimate death toll ranged from 500,000 to 1,000,000 or as much as 20% of the country's total population. This is because some Hutus, believed to be opposed to Tutsis killings, were also massacred (Chalk, 1999; Kaperman, 2003; Shah, 2006 & Baisley, 2013). The media role in the crisis drew the interest of the scholars cited above. While Kaperman concentrated on the actions and inactions of the western media in relation to the crisis, others (Chalk, Shah, & Baisley) focused on the role of the local media, particularly the Rwandan radio stations' activities on the crisis.

In a study entitled: "Genocide and Constructions of Hutu and Tutsi in Radio Rwanda", Baisley (2013) investigated which constructions of Hutu and Tutsi identifies Radio Rwanda (government owned) and RTLM (owned by president supporters) exploited. She based her analysis on English translations of eighty-six transcripts of radio broadcasts of both stations made available by the Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Right Studies (MIGS) with radio Rwanda transcripts totaling 1,377 pages and RTLM's 475 pages. Findings revealed that both radio Rwanda and RTLM broadcasts exploited constructions of Hutu and Tutsi as occupational/status, racial, and political groups—but not as ethnic groups in the objective sense, and that layers of meaning can only be revealed by applying all of these constructions to analyses of radio propaganda. It concludes that radio broadcasts were not only polyphonic, but they also 'othered' the target group or enemy by simultaneously

drawing upon multiple constructions of Hutu and Tutsi identities from many periods in Rwanda's history.

Similarly, Shah (2006) and Chalk (1999) had reported that the Rwandan media played a major part in supporting, or creating an atmosphere to sanction the terrible human suffering that ensued. Chalk (1999), a fellow at both MIT's Center for International Studies and Institute for the Study of World Politics, wrote:

The Rwanda media, encouraged by Akazu, played a major role in inciting genocide by convincing many Hutu that they themselves would soon become the victims of a genocide mounted by the Tutsi. The largely Tutsi Rwanda Patriotic Front's invasion of Rwanda from Uganda in October 1990 played into the hands of the campaign. While newspapers and magazines spread the message in urban areas among the small proportion of the population that was highly literate, the Akazu skillfully employed radio broadcasting to sow hatred and distrust among the much larger rural population, as well as the unemployed youth of Kigali.

On his own part, Kaperman (2003), in a paper entitled: "How the Media Missed Rwandan Genocide," x-rayed the role of the western media in the crisis and concluded that the lapses of the western media reporting created a gap which the perpetrators of the crime exploited.

The lapses, according to him, include:

1. The western media at the onset mistook genocide for civil war as western correspondents reported the initial burst of violence in the capital Kigali as resumption of a bloody civil war.
2. The exodus of reporters (following the evacuation of foreign nationals) was so thorough that it virtually halted western press coverage. For instance, European newspapers that had hitherto provided daily coverage of violence in Kigali stopped coverage between four and seven days from April 18, 1994, when the slaughter reached its peak.
3. Early published death counts were gross underestimates.

4. Western news organizations focused almost exclusively on Kigali, a city that contained only 4% of Rwandan's population, and did not report the far broader tragedy unfolding around them.

In relation to this study, the views and findings of the above scholars are very germane as they reveal the influence of media reports on the promotion or otherwise of violent crisis. The Rwandan genocide clearly shows that media propaganda, especially radio, can make or mar a political crisis situation as this was effectively used by the Rwandan Hutu's led government to carry out the massacre of the Tutsi's minority. The current study is a departure from the above studies in some ways. First, the researchers examined radio broadcasts' influence on the Rwandan genocide while this study examined newspaper coverage of political crisis situations. Second, and more importantly, the statistics, like Adebani (2002) and Edemod (2011) only analysed media content while this study employed both content analysis and in depth interviews to determine press performance in reporting political crisis situations.

2.4.5 Media coverage of Middle East crisis

Gerner and Schrod (1998) of the Department of Political Science, University of Kansas, USA, conducted a study on the effects of media coverage on crisis assessment and early warning in the Middle East, with particular reference to the Palestinian *intifada*. The study investigated two issues:

The first issue was that of "media fatigue", which the researchers described as a manner of change in the number and type of events, reported in public sources, as a conflict evolves. Using the first three years of the Palestinian *intifada* as a case study, the researchers compared the reports of use of force in event data sets based on three sources: Reuters, *New York Times*, and reports in an independently-collected data set from a human rights data center. As predicted in its media fatigue hypothesis, the study found that the correlation between the three sources declined over time.

Second, the researchers analysed the effects of various levels of event data aggregation on a cluster-based early warning indicator for political change in the Levant. The results show that very general levels of aggregation, for example,

distinguishing only between conflict and cooperation, or simply counting the number of events, provide almost as much predictive power as is provided by more detailed differentiation.

This research is very useful to studies in press coverage of political crisis as the researchers, in generalising their findings, conclude that “the media become very interested in a conflict, covers(sic) it intensely for six months to a year, and then loses(sic) interest” as predicted in the study’s hypothesis.

The researchers, however, took cognizance of some variables, as they noted that the final months of the intifada correspond to the Iraq- Kuwait crisis and that the decline in the correlation might be due to Reuters and *New York Times* having different reporting priorities. They also observed that after several months of reporting Israeli use of force against Palestinians (which were quite common), this phenomenon was no longer considered newsworthy, whereas Palestinian uses of force against Israeli (an activity that was relatively unusual in the early period of the intifada), continued to be newsworthy because of its novelty. This, the researchers attributed to what is known as the “man bites dog” effect in journalistic parlance.

2.4.6 Dafur conflict in Sudanese and non – Sudanese media

The International Media Support (2009) led a consortium of international research groups to conduct an elaborate study on media coverage of the Dafur crisis in both the Sudanese and non-Sudanese media. The groups included Amman Community Net in Jordan, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies in Egypt; Observatorio di Pavia in Italy; and the lead research body, International Media Support (IMS) based in Denmark.

Findings revealed that the Sudanese media provided more substantial coverage of the Dafur crisis than their non -Sudanese peers, as the non – Sudanese media did not give any significant priority to the crisis. The Content analysis of the research also indicated that the crisis was first and foremost framed in a political dimension as a struggle between local Sudanese actors, and a struggle between the Sudanese government and the international community. Next, the study also revealed that the

crisis was framed as a humanitarian issue caused by the international community instead of local causes.

Apart from the content, interviews with journalists and editors showed that lack of resources prevented many Arab media outlets from sending and maintaining correspondents in Dafur, thus, instead of using first-hand sources, many outlets sought alternative sources of information, most commonly Sudanese government authorities. Added to this was the role the deteriorating security situation played in limiting the ability of journalists to move in the Dafur region, thus allowing the authorities and the rebels to shape the media images they want to see published around the world. The researchers, however, identified a variable which affected the manner of coverage. This, they called an internal element. Editorial policy, for instance, was identified as an 'internal element' affecting the reportage thus:

The absence of a clear editorial policy for many of the media outlets covering the Dafur situation has increased the difficulty of accurate reporting and the ineffectiveness of their new product in the absence of a clear editorial policy; the work is carried out mechanically and coverage overlaps the political and the humanitarian, the national and the regional, all at the expense of professionalism.

The researchers deserve commendation, going by their findings and particularly the methodology they adopted for the study, which included: monitoring the content of selected media; interviewing a section of journalists and editors from the media that were monitored; and finally, having a roundtable which discussed findings from media content monitoring and interviews and developed options for media support.

The above research is very relevant to this study in the sense that it adopted both the content analysis and interview methods for data gathering and analysis which serve as the research designs used in this study.

2.4.7 Media coverage of Lebanon's political crisis

Beirut-based journalists, Fadit, Karam, and Blanford (2011) investigated how both the local and foreign media, operating in Lebanon's partisan environment, covered the country's latest political crisis. They particularly evaluated the style of

media coverage of the crisis which occurred in February 2011. The crisis, which lasted 14 days, led to the brutal killing of the nation's political leader, Rafik Hariri and the toppling of the Karami government by Cedar Revolution.

The report examined the coverage of the crisis by both the print and electronic media from both the local and foreign scenes. Against the backdrop of conspiracy theories, the study concluded that the local media, surprisingly, were more accurate and balanced in their reporting; while their foreign counterparts, especially those from the West (Europe and America), did scanty reports on the crisis and were more skeptical about its provenance. Specifically, the report indicated that, in the print media, the local *Daily Star* fulfilled its role as a regional English Language newspaper that provided value-added reporting and weighty editorials, while some elements of the foreign press often resorted to clichés, either out of ignorance or sloth. In the broadcast media, the local T.V stations were commended for their credible and in-depth coverage, while stations such as Qatar's Aljazeera TV, London's BBC and America's CNN were accused of providing only brief snatches of the tape. While CNN was lauded for its live coverage of Hariri's funeral, most of the mainstream American networks were condemned for their neglect as they were said to have "continued with their Michael Jackson obsession".

The authors, themselves reporters, concluded thus: "with any luck, we may be witnessing a move from partisan to truly national media in Lebanon if the momentum of unity initiated by Hariri's death and the downfall of the government is sustained and professional standards, encouraged by genuine change, become the defining goal of our profession".

Going by the findings, one is quick to state that the authors' conclusions on the media coverage of the crisis did not take into consideration some intervening variables. First, the local media were able to provide more in-depth and accurate report because they are based in Lebanon and have most of their reporters residing in Beirut and other cities across the country, while the foreign media are not so privileged, except a few like the CNN which has just a reporter living there. Second, some of the foreign media only dispatched their reporters to Lebanon when the crisis broke out, while some of them even depended on the report of the local media for their coverage.

Third, the audience of both media varies. While the local media reported for partisan audience which was deeply involved in the crisis, the foreign media reported for a more or less distanced audience which was detached from the crisis. Also, the opinions, analyses, commentaries and editorials of the local media could be more detailed and accurate than those of their foreign counterparts because they (local media) have background knowledge of the build-up to the crisis which most of the foreign media do not possess.

The above comments, notwithstanding, the study is significant in the sense that a local press, under a highly partisan environment, could be so neutral in its reportage of a political crisis despite lots of pressures that might have come from different authorities and interests. Besides, the study is relevant to this work as the factors of objectivity and bias as well as prominence in the coverage of political crisis, are part of the issues investigated in this study.

Apart from the above, other scholars have carried out more studies on press reportage of violence. For instance, Umechukwu (1995) did a content analysis of the press coverage of religious violence in Nigeria between January 1986 and December 1991, using two Nigerian magazines: *Newswatch* and *African Concord*. Against the backdrop of group conflict theory, the study sees violence as a product of struggle for hegemony among various religious groups in Northern Nigeria. With a focus on nine occurrences of major religious violence within the period of study, the researcher purposively selected a sample of 13 issues of the magazines (eight for *Newswatch* and five for *African Concord*) from the study population of all issues of the two magazines in the six-year period (1986 -1991). Findings from the analysis of the press reports by the two magazines revealed that religious violence is caused by security, political, foreign agent, fanatic, and governmental factors.

Nevertheless, the research is a springboard for further investigations on press coverage of religious violence and beyond, like political crisis which is the focus of this study.

2.5 Summary

The concepts and issues discussed in this chapter provided a theoretical base for this study. Specifically, various authors/scholars whose works were reviewed supported the view that press and politics are interrelated. Besides, some studies carried out by some researchers which were reviewed in this chapter pointed to the fact that the press has a major role to play during political crisis situations and, as such, should perform its functions accordingly, bearing in mind the environment where it operates.

The performance of the press in a given society cannot be critically assessed without using the yardstick of models and theories. This is because models and theories are interrelated. As Severin and Tankard (2001:47) put it: “A model is not an explanatory device by itself, but it helps to formulate theory. It suggests relationships and is often confused with theory because the relationship between a model and a theory is so close”. Models of press performance, as stated earlier, are the symbolic representations or tools designed to assist us in describing the relationship among press structures, systems and processes for the purpose of analysing how they function in a given society. Press theory has also been described as a set of propositions explaining how the press functions in a given society, especially in the normative sense.

Models of press performance discussed in this chapter—propagandist, commercial *laissez-faire* and public service—are not to be taken separately in isolation of others if the press is to perform at optimal level. This is because none of the models is devoid of strengths and weaknesses for where one is deficient, the other is complementary. It is therefore suggested that the press should strive to be guided by the principles of the models examined above however, with emphasis on the one that best suits the social, political and cultural contexts of its locale.

Framing theory formed the theoretical framework for this study because news framing by the press can largely be employed to assess press performance in the society. This theory was also supported by some normative theories believed to be relevant to the study. However, three (of the six) normative theories discussed in this chapter are by no means exhaustive for they have been selected as a result of their

relevance to modern democratic experience like ours. It should, however, be noted that a common denominator which serves as a guiding principle for press performance is that the press should be free to operate albeit with responsibility and government should collaborate (sometimes through resource allocation and control) with the press in the task of development in a given society, especially in a third world country such as Nigeria.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods in collecting relevant data. Specifically, content analysis and in-depth interviews were used to represent the quantitative and qualitative methods respectively. Content analysis was used to study the contents of the selected newspapers during the period of investigation, while in-depth interview was used to collect data from relevant individuals about their opinions on press performance during the selected crisis situations.

Content analysis is a systematic procedure that is designed to identify and examine the content of a text or recorded information (Frey, Botan, Friedman and Kreps, 1991; Kerlinger and Lee, 2000; Walizer and Wienir 1978 & Berelson, 1952). It is also a useful technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context (Krippendorf, 1980). Content analysis was chosen for the study because the content of the selected newspapers during the period under investigation served as reliable data for measuring their performance. This view is supported by Bordens and Abbott (2008: 238) who counseled: “Use content analysis when you want to analyze a written or spoken record for the occurrence of specific categories or events...”

In-depth Interview, otherwise known as Intensive Interview research design, generally uses smaller samples; it is used to obtain elaborate data concerning respondents’ opinions, values, motivations, recollections, experiences and feelings (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006). Defining the concept, Boyce and Neale (2006:1) say:

In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, programme, or situation.

In-depth interview design was considered appropriate for the study because it enabled the researcher to get detailed information about the respondents’ thoughts and

views concerning Nigerian press performance during the selected political crisis situations.

3.2 Period of the study

The study covered the period between November 1, 2005 and May 30, 2011, that is, part of the tenure of President Olusegun Obasanjo, full tenure of President Musa Yar'Adua and part of the tenure of President Goodluck Jonathan. This was the period Nigeria witnessed the political crises selected for investigation in this study. Specifically, a breakdown of the period of the study is as follows:

1. President Obasanjo's Third-Term Agenda— November 1, 2005 to May 31, 2006.
2. Constitutional crisis over power vacuum created by president Yar'Adua's absence from office – November 23, 2009 to May 23, 2010.
3. Violent protests in the North, which followed INEC's declaration of President Goodluck Jonathan as winner of 2011 Presidential election— April 17, to May 30, 2011.

3.3 Study population

The population for this study is both human and non-human. For the content analysis approach, editions of select Nigerian newspapers between November 1, 2005 and May 30, 2011 served as the non-human population. The select newspapers are: *Nigerian Tribune*, *The Sun*, *The Guardian* and *Daily Trust*. The newspapers were purposively selected, bearing in mind their individual characteristics. *The Sun* is owned by a South East politician; *The Guardian* is owned by the a South South business mogul, now late, while *The Punch* is owned by a businessman from the South West; *The Tribune* was founded by a politician, the Late Obafemi Awolowo, also from the South-West. *The Trust* is owned by a northerner who has worked as an academic as well as a newspaper columnist.

The Guardian and *The Punch* are generally regarded as being more elitist with less emphasis on sensations, and *The Punch* is adjudged to be the newspaper with the highest circulating figure and geographical spread while *The Guardian* is mostly

subscribed to by the elite and corporate organisations. *The Sun* and *Nigerian Tribune* belong to the popular press with much emphasis on human angle stories. *The Sun*, though published in Lagos, circulates more in the South East while the *Nigerian Tribune*, published in Ibadan, circulates more in the South West. *The Trust* operates from the northern part of Nigeria (Abuja) and circulates more in the North. More newspapers were picked from the south because most of the national newspapers operating in the country are located in the south, especially the Lagos-Ibadan axis, while only a few ones are based in the north.

For the human population, editors of the select newspapers were chosen for interview. These groups of individuals were chosen as the study population because they take decisions on which stories to be published and are therefore qualified to speak on such issues.

3.4 Sampling techniques

Two sampling techniques were employed in this study: the systematic random and the purposive non- random methods. The systematic random technique was used to pick the sample for the content analysis, while the purposive sampling technique was used to pick the sample for the in-depth interviews.

Systematic random sampling is a procedure in which every n th subject or unit is selected from a population after a random start (Kish, 1965 & Wimmer and Dominick, 2006). This kind of technique requires a sampling frame from which the sample is picked, using a sampling rate or interval. For the purpose of this study, all editions of the newspapers selected for this research in the periods of study constituted the sampling frames from which the sample was drawn. In other words, all editions in each period of study for the selected political crisis situations constituted a sampling frame (See Table 3.1 for the sample size and Appendix 1a-c for the sampling frames).

Purposive sampling technique, on the other hand, involves the selection of subjects who possess specific characteristics or qualities and eliminates those who fail to meet these criteria (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006). Though not a random technique, purposive sampling can be compared to the scientific method of stratified random sampling. Drawing the comparison, Frey et al, (1991: 135) write that “a purposive

sample is similar superficially to a stratification sample in that the characteristic chosen is a stratification variable”.

Thus, editors and political editors of the selected newspapers were purposively chosen for the in-depth interviews. The researcher was of the opinion that their responses would be appropriate for the study since the political editors are directly in charge of political coverage for the newspapers and the editors have the final say on which stories to be published.

3.5 Sample size

The systematic sampling technique was employed to pick the sample of newspaper editions for the content analysis, as contained in the table below. The table shows the sample size of the five newspapers during the periods of study.

Table 3.1: Breakdown of sample size of newspaper editions

S/N	Political Crises	Periods of Study	Total Editions	Sampling Interval	Sample Size
1.	President Obasanjo's Third-Term Agenda	November 1, 2005 to May 31, 2006	212 x 5 (1,060)	5.0	42 x 5 (210)
2.	Power vacuum created by President Yar'Adua's absence from office	November 23, 2009 to May 23, 2010	182 x 5 (910)	5.0	36 x 5 (180)
3.	Violent protests in the North over the declaration of Goodluck Jonathan as the winner of 2011 Presidential Poll	April 17, to May 30, 2011	44 x 5 (220)	2.0	22 x 5 (110)
TOTAL			447 x 5 (2,235)		100 x 5 (500)

Table 3.1 shows that 212 editions constituted the study population for each of the four newspapers (*Daily Trust, The Guardian, The Punch, Daily Sun* and the

Nigerian Tribune) whose reports were selected for investigation during the President Obasanjo's Alleged Third-Term Agenda, spanning the period between November 1, 2005 and May 31, 2006 and bringing the total number of editions for the four newspapers to 1,060. The researcher employed systematic random sampling technique to pick 42 editions of each newspaper at an interval rate of 5.0. A simple random sampling technique was used to decide the random start within the first five editions in the sampling frame and the fifth number (i.e. 005) was selected. A total of 210 editions formed the sample for the period of the first crisis situation investigated. See Appendix 1a for details.

The second crisis situation--power vacuum created by President Yar'Adua's absence from office (November 23, 2009 to May 23, 2010)—has a population of 182 editions for each of the newspapers, making a total of 910 editions. A total of 180 editions (i.e 36 editions per newspaper) constituted the sample for the second crisis situation at a sampling interval of 5.0. The technique of random start used for the first period of study was applied to this period too. See Appendix 1b for details.

For the third crisis situation, spanning the period between April 17 and May 30, 2011; 110 editions (22 editions per newspaper) were systematically picked as the sample at an interval of 2.0 out of a study population of 220 editions (44 editions per newspaper). Since the sampling interval was 2.0, the researcher decided to pick the second edition in the sampling frame as the starting point to conform with the earlier two periods where the random start fell on the last edition within the sampling interval. See Appendix 1c for details.

For the in-depth interview, ten respondents(editors as well as the political editors of the five select newspapers) were purposively chosen as the sample for the in-depth interview (IDI).

3.6 Instrumentation

The tools employed in collecting data for the study were the in-depth interview (IDI) guide as well as the coding sheet.

3.6.1 In-depth interview guide

This tool was designed in a flexible manner as to allow the interviewer to probe deeper into the views, thoughts and feelings of the interviewees (respondents) on the issue under investigation. It contains a set of questions as well as a brief meant to guide the interviewer in conducting the interview. The brief included, purpose of the interview, personality interviewed (name, title, status, address of the respondents), and subject areas covered in the interview. Areas covered in the interview were selected, bearing in mind the research questions earlier raised in Chapter One and this was to guide the interviewer to ask specific, peculiar and follow-up questions from each interviewee based on his/her initial responses to issues raised during the interview (See Appendix 3a for the In-depth Interview Guide).

3.6.2 The coding sheet

A ten-item coding sheet was designed by the researcher in line with the research questions and hypotheses. It contains relevant units of analysis as well as the categories of analysis that were used to gather the quantitative data from the five newspapers (see appendixes 2a and 2b for details). To ease coding, copies of the editions that formed the sample were photocopied from public libraries and in some instances, the newspaper morgues. Six research assistants (graduates of Mass Communication and a post-graduate student) were trained on how to use the coding sheet. The research assistants thus helped in the coding process.

Units of analysis

The unit of analysis is the basic unit of text to be classified during content analysis (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2005; Wimmer and Dominick, 2000). It is therefore, the thing that is counted wherever it is encountered. For this study, the units of analysis include every news story, feature article, opinion, editorial comment, interview, picture, cartoon, letter/text message to the editor and reactions.

Categories of analysis

They are a category system used to classify media content (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006; Frey et al, 1991). They are like pigeon holes into which units can be sorted. For the purpose of this study, intensity of reports as well as frame of reports will form the categories into which the units of analysis will be classified.

Intensity: Intensity of reports has to do with the volume and magnitude as well as the emphasis placed on such reports. This (intensity) was measured by the frequency of reports and the prominence attached to such reports. **Frequency** of reports was determined by the number of reports or how many times each unit occurred. This helped to determine the number of times each newspaper reported each of the selected political crises. **Prominence** refers to the level of importance attached to the reports. This was determined by the size of the reports and the position the reports occupy in the newspapers. To this end, the *size* of reports was determined by the amount of space allocated to each report in terms of columns and inches. Reports that occupied a quarter of a page or less were grouped into small size, while those that occupied half a page or less, but more than a quarter were classified into medium size, and those that occupied more than half a page were grouped into large size. Where a report contains more than one unit of analysis, for instance, a story and a related photograph or cartoon, such items are grouped together in terms of size, as opposed to frequency of reports where each unit of analysis is counted separately. The *position* the reports occupied was classified into front page, inside page and back page. In other words, front page reports are considered most prominent, back page more prominent and inside page less prominent.

Frame has to do with the manner the newspapers treated the reports in terms of objectivity and balance. This was determined by how each crisis is reported in relation to the parties involved. If the report is fair to all parties concerned, it was termed **neutral**, while a report that is either negative to a party or parties or too patronising to a party or parties was classified as being **negative** and **positive** respectively. Blankenship (2011) has described positive frames as reports that are favourable to or argue in favour of an issue and negative frames as reports that are against or oppose an issue. He described neutral frames as reports that demonstrate

both a positive and negative stance towards an issue. In this study, positive refers to reports that favoured a party in a political crisis situation while negative refers to reports that opposed a party in a political crisis situation. Neutral, however, refers to reports that neither supported nor opposed a party in a political crisis situation.

3.7 Validity and reliability

Reliability is the consistency of results through the use of specific research instruments. This translates that the research instrument consistently measures what is intended. According to Biddex (2012), the estimators that a researcher can use in reliability test are stability, external consistency, internal reliability and equivalence. The whole test is not just an event, but an exercise or process. The extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure is what is referred to as validity. There is a strong connection between validity and reliability. While validity is about the effectiveness and efficiency of research instruments, reliability is concerned with the consistency of such effectiveness and efficiency. Biddex (2012) sustains that the correlation coefficient r , is one of the statistical formulas to use for the test of validity and reliability.

In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the coding sheet and the respective data, six coders were purposively selected. They were selected in order to speed-up the coding process. However, to ensure that the coding time was limited without affecting reliability and validity of the instrument and eventually, the study, the coders were selected based on their disposition to the study. They were also considered because they were graduates Mass Communication and were deemed mentally capable and stable. Most importantly, the coders were trained and monitored by the researcher, as well as provided with all the needed coding materials—rulers, pencils, inks, erasures, sharpeners to avoid possible distractions and excuses—after which samples for the study (selected newspapers containing the expected and needed data) were appropriately distributed.

In order to test the reliability of the coders and hence, the validity of coded data, a set of three samples of the coded data were randomly obtained from each coder after the first coding session that was done with the supervision of the researcher.

Another set of three samples of the coded data were also randomly obtained from each coder after the second coding session that was done without the supervision of the researcher. Each of the three randomly selected coded items was compared and contrasted with the original items as contained in the newspapers.

The extent to which each randomly selected coded item that was compared and contrasted matched the standard expected by the researcher was rated on a scale—**very poor = 1; poor = 2; good = 3; very good = 4; excellent = 5**. The total score per coder, as obtained after each coding session—first and second—was then used for the test of reliability and validity. The foregoing means that the total (maximum) score for each coder as obtained for each coding session was expected to be 15. The scores obtained for each coder from the first sample (sample X) and the second sample (sample Y) were then used for the test of reliability of coders and validity of coded item.

The result—correlation coefficient **r**, as calculated via **SPSS Statistics 17.0** was **0.3**. Details of the test are as follow:

Table 3.2: Calculation for the test of reliability of coders and validity of coded items

1 st Sample (X)	2 nd Sample (Y)	XY	X ²	Y ²
12	12	144	144	144
8	12	96	96	144
10	8	80	80	64
12	12	144	144	144
10	10	100	100	100
12	12	144	144	144
Σx = 64	Σy = 66	Σxy = 708	Σx² = 696	Σy² = 740

Formulae:
$$r = \frac{N\Sigma xy - (\Sigma x)(\Sigma y)}{[\Sigma x^2 - (\Sigma x)^2][\Sigma y^2 - (\Sigma y)^2]}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
\text{Solution: } r &= \frac{4248 - (64)(66)}{\sqrt{[(4176) - (64)^2] [(4440) - (66)^2]}} \\
&= \frac{4248 - 4224}{\sqrt{[4176 - 4096] [4440 - 4356]}} \\
&= \frac{24}{(80)(84) \text{ square root}} \\
&= \frac{24}{6720 \text{ -square root}} \\
&= \frac{24}{81.98} \\
&= 0.3
\end{aligned}$$

The same details of the test of validity and reliability are shown in Appendix 4. Since the researcher only allowed an interval of 3 hours between the two samples obtained for the test of reliability and validity, a correlation score of **0.3** which Buda and Jarynowski (2010) believe is a fair or medium level score was deemed appreciable. However, the researcher decided to monitor and ensure further and higher compliance with the coding standards set for the study. This was considered a valid step since the test was conducted before the actual coding process. Improvements made for the rest of the coding sessions meant that reliability and validity of coded data were very high, hence the validity of the study.

3.8 Method of data collection

The researcher employed and trained research assistants who helped in collecting relevant data for the study. The researcher personally conducted the in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted in a face-to-face manner with the use of audio tape, biro and notebook to record the proceedings. The sessions were conducted at the interviewees' convenience because of their busy schedules. Specifically, political editors of the *Daily Trust*, *The Punch*, and *The Sun* were interviewed in Abuja on different days of the same week, while those of *The Guardian* and *Nigerian Tribune* were later interviewed separately in Lagos. The editors of *The Guardian*, *The Sun*, and *The Punch* were interviewed at their head offices in Lagos. That of the *Tribune* was interviewed at the newspaper's head office, Ibadan, while the interview with the *Trust's* editor was conducted via the telephone.

Quantitative data were derived from the content of the newspapers, while qualitative data were obtained from the interview records. Interview record, according to List (2007), includes an interviewer's notes from a notebook, the responses written

into a questionnaire, and a full or partial transcript of the tape for that interview. To further simplify the process, a Daily Interpretive Analysis (DIA) of each interview was made from the field. DIA is described as a review of the notes and the tapes used for an interview in a particular day and a report that summarises and interprets the information obtained (Miami, 2000). With DIAs, the full transcription of the tapes merely provided a back-up for the researcher during analysis. This is because the DIAs contained a summary of responses on each topic or sub-topic during the interview sessions (See Appendix 3b for the DIA Guide). The briefs from each topic or sub-topic in the DIAs were collated from all the interviews and the comments aggregated to draw a conclusion on such topics or sub-topics in order to answer the research questions.

Editions of newspapers that form the sample were sourced from public libraries or morgues of the newspapers concerned, as the case may be. Trained coders (research assistants) assisted in using coding sheets to collect data for content analysis (See Appendices 2a and 2b for the Coding Sheet and the Coder Instruction Sheet respectively).

3.9 Method of data analysis

The researcher used the discursive and narrative techniques to analyse data for this study. This is because data from both the qualitative and quantitative approaches used in this study comprise human comments (views and opinions) as well as contents of the print media. Quantitative data were presented in tables of frequency count and simple percentages, and a discussion and interpretation of the data followed each table with its accompanying figure, based on each research question. The hypotheses were tested using the Chi-square contingency test via **SPSS Statistics 17.0**.

Data from the in-depth interview were analysed through explanation-building technique with the use of emerging themes. Explanation-building is used to develop a general explanation that can be applied to each individual case, thereby supporting the hypothesis (Yin, 2009). Explanation building is suitable for the analysis of the interview data in this study because it helped in providing answers to the research questions based on the interpretation of the responses to the interviews. Corroborating

this, Belk (2010) says: “an explanation—a good, successful, satisfactory, adequate, or acceptable explanation—is intended to act as an answer to a specific research question. What counts as an explanation depends on the interest of the researcher.” Other scholars refer to this method of data analysis as Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA). In what is best described as hermeneutic perspective, Long-Suthehall et al (2010:340) maintain that the researcher doing qualitative data analysis will have to construct meaning through a thematic and personal interpretation of text as provided by the subjects in the original sources of the text; the researcher has to be focusing progressively in order to interact with the data and gradually.

The data were therefore qualitatively presented through a combination of epic focusing (representing data with interviewees’ terms and viewpoints) and etic focusing (representing data with the researcher’s terms but from the stand point of the interviews). In support of such qualitative data presentation, Long-Suthehall., Sque, and Addington-Hall (2010:340) state that a researcher is expected to use a thematic approach where meaning construct can be seen clearly. Such meaning constructs were therefore clearly presented in tables.

To answer Research Question One which seeks to find out the extent to which the selected newspapers reported the Nigerian political crisis situations, the intensity category comprising frequency of reports and prominence of reports in the content analysis was used. Research Question Two which examines how newspapers frame their reports on the political crisis situations was answered using the frame of reports from the content analysis data and supported by the responses to the in-depth interviews.

Research Questions Three to Five which border on ownership influence, editorial policies as well as other factors that influenced the newspapers’ performance were answered using the data from the in-depth interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data collected in the course of the study were analysed in this chapter. The data are both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data comprise the content of the selected newspapers while qualitative data are the responses to the in-depth interviews. The data were analysed bearing in mind the objectives of the study which were to: assess the extent to which the Nigerian press reported the selected political crisis situations; find out how the selected newspapers framed their reports on the political crisis; investigate the influence of ownership structure on the performance of the selected newspapers during political crises; evaluate how editorial policies of the selected newspapers affected their performance during the political crisis situations; and investigate other relevant factors that affected the selected newspapers' performance during the political crisis situations.

To achieve these objectives, 500 editions of five selected newspapers: *Daily Trust*, *The Guardian*, *The Punch*, *Daily Sun*, and *Nigerian Tribune* were analysed. The 500 editions were picked, using systematic random sampling technique at the three sub-periods of the study, representing the three selected political crisis situations being investigated. The crisis situations were: former President Obasanjo's alleged third-term agenda (November 1, 2005 to May 31, 2006), power vacuum created by former President Yar'Adua's absence from office (November 23, 2009 to May 23, 2010), and violent protests in Northern Nigeria, following the result of the 2011 Presidential Elections (April 17, to May 30, 2011). A total of 1,135 items relating to the political crisis situations were coded from the 500 editions. A summary of the data obtained from the five newspapers' reportage of each of the three political crisis situations is presented in Tables and Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3; and a cumulative data of the three presented in Table 4.4 below with its accompanying figure. Responses to the in-depth interviews were also analysed to complement the analysis of the quantitative data (newspaper content).

To answer the research questions, data from the content analysis were presented in tables of frequency counts and simple percentages, while responses to the

in-depth interviews were presented in discussion format. The chi-square contingency test was used to test the hypotheses.

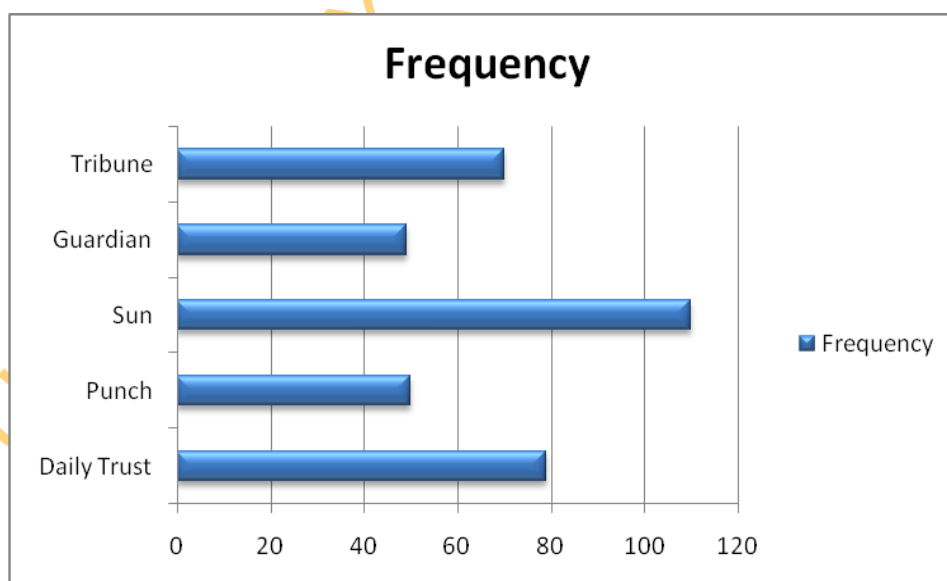
Table 4.1: Obasanjo’s third-term agenda –frequency of reportage

Newspaper	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily Trust	79	22.1
Punch	50	14
Sun	110	30.7
Guardian	49	13.7
Tribune	70	19.5
Total	358	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2014

According to the data in Table 4.1, out of a total of 358 items that were coded on the President Obasanjo’s third-term bid, 79 (22.1%) were from the *Daily Trust* newspaper, 50 (14%) were from *The Punch*; *The Sun* newspaper accounted for 110 (30.7%); *The Guardian* accounted for 49 (13.7%), while *Tribune* had 70 (19.5%). These data simply show that *The Sun* newspaper had the highest number of coded items on Obasanjo’s third term agenda.. Data in Table 4.1 are graphically presented in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1: Obasanjo’s third -term agenda –frequency of reportage



Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Data in Table 4.2 show that out of a total of 420 items that were coded on the Late President Yar'Adua's illness, 138 (32.8%) were from *Daily Trust* newspaper, 50 (12%) were from *The Punch*; *The Sun* newspaper accounted for 79 (18.8%); *The Guardian* accounted for 68 (16.2%), while *Tribune* had 85 (20.2%). These data simply show that *Daily Trust* had the highest number of newspaper items on the Yar'Adua's illness and eventual absence from office.

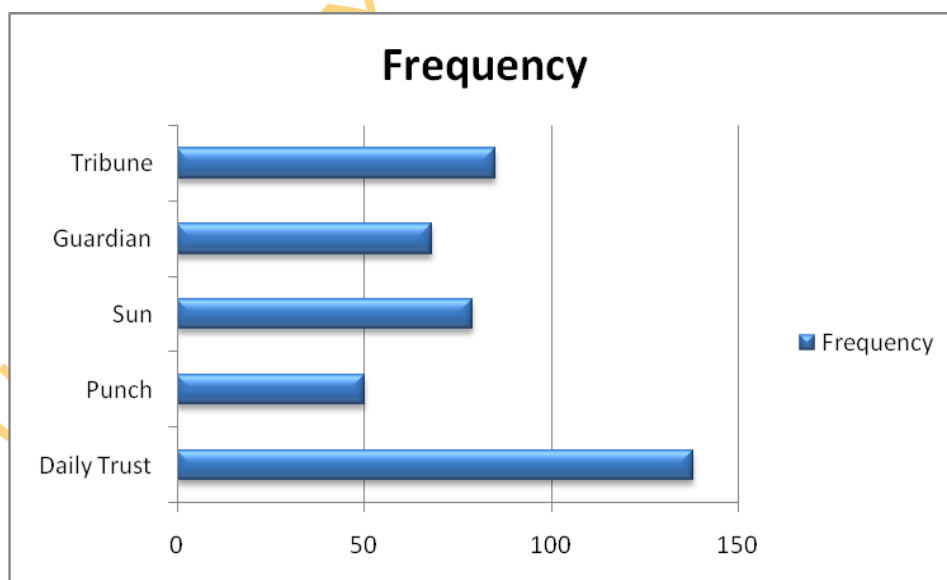
Table 4.2: Yar'Adua's illness –frequency of reportage

Newspaper	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily Trust	138	32.8
Punch	50	12
Sun	79	18.8
Guardian	68	16.2
Tribune	85	20.2
Total	420	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Data in Table 4.2 are graphically shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2: Yar'Adua's illness –frequency of reportage



Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Data in Table 4.3 show that, out of a total of 357 items that were coded on the post-election protests, 179 (50.1%) were from the *Daily Trust*, 27 (7.6%) were from *The Punch*; *The Sun* newspaper accounted for 113 (31.7%); *The Guardian* accounted for 28 (7.8%), while *The Tribune* accounted for just 10 (2.8%). These data simply show that *Daily Trust* had the highest number of newspaper items on the Yar'Adua's illness and eventual absence in office.

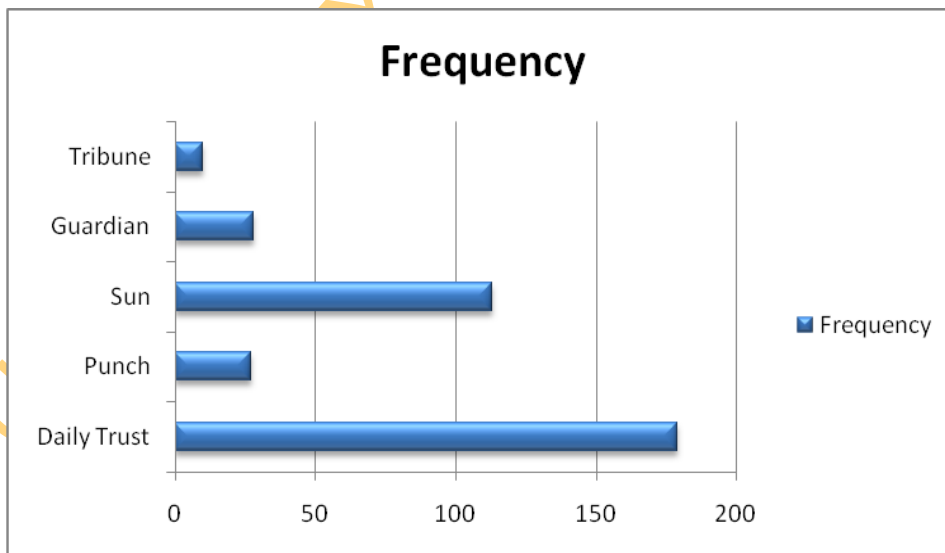
Table 4.3: Post-election protests –frequency of coded items

Newspaper	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily Trust	179	50.1
Punch	27	7.6
Sun	113	31.7
Guardian	28	7.8
Tribune	10	2.8
Total	357	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Data in Table 4.3 is graphically shown in Figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4.3: Post-election protests –frequency of coded items



Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Table 4.4 is a cumulative table which shows that out of a grand total of 1135 newspaper items on the various political crisis situations in Nigeria that were studied, the Late President Yar'Adua's illness and subsequent absence in office had the highest number of 420 (37%) newspaper coverage/items, while the third-term agenda and the post-election protests had 358 (31.5%) and 357 (31.5%) respectively. The data simply show that Late President Yar'Adua's illness and subsequent absence from office got the most attention of the press.

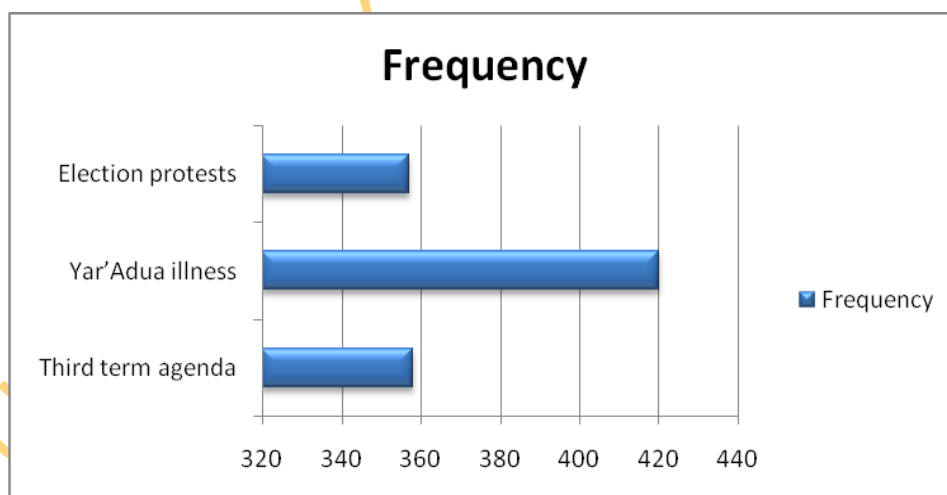
Table 4.4: Cumulative data on frequency of reports

Political crisis	Daily Trust	Punch	Sun	Guardian	Tribune	Frequency	(%)
Third-term agenda	79	50	110	49	70	358	31.5
Yar'Adua' illness	138	50	79	68	85	420	37
Election protests	179	27	113	28	10	357	31.5
Total	396	127	302	145	165	1135	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Data in Table 4.4 are nevertheless graphically illustrated in Figure 4.4 below.

Figure 4.4: Cumulative data on frequency of reports



Source: Content Analysis, 2014

4.1 Research Question One

To what extent did the selected newspapers report the Nigerian political crisis situations?

To answer this question, the intensity of report in the content analysis category formed the major data that were analysed. The intensity of the newspaper reports was measured by the frequency of such reports as well as the prominence accorded the reports in terms of size and placement (position) in the selected newspapers. Data from the content analysis were represented in tables of frequency counts and percentages. Each table was further illustrated by the accompanying bar charts labeled as figures.

4.1.1 Frequency of newspaper reports on political crisis situations

The analysis of the frequency of newspaper reports on the three political crisis situations is presented in Tables 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 with the accompanying figures.

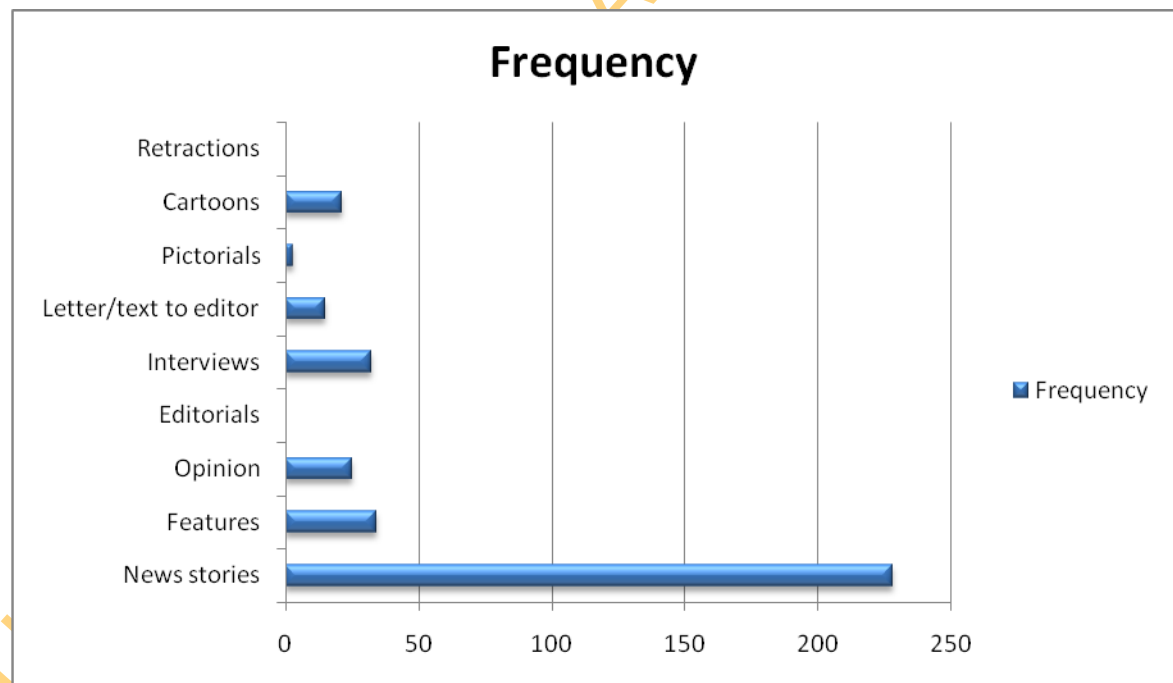
Table 4.5: Frequency of newspaper reports—Obasanjo's third-term agenda

Type	Daily Trust	Punch	Sun	Guardian	Tribune	Frequency	(%)
News stories	52	38	67	35	36	228	63.7
Features	7	0	11	8	8	34	9.5
Opinion	9	3	5	0	8	25	6.9
Editorials	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Interviews	3	2	17	3	7	32	9
Letter/text to editor	5	5	1	1	3	15	4.2
Pictures	0	2	1	0	0	3	0.8
Cartoons	3	0	8	2	8	21	5.9
Retractions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	79	50	110	49	70	358	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Data in Table 4.5 depict that *The Sun* newspaper had 110 items -the highest number of coded items on the President Obasanjo’s third-term bid. This is followed by 79 items from the *Daily Trust*; 70 items from *Tribune*; 50 from *The Punch* and 49 from *The Guardian*. Table 4.5 further shows that news items accounted for 228 (63.7%), features accounted for 34 (9.5%), opinions accounted for 22 (6.1%), interviews accounted for 32 (9%), letter/text to-the-editor accounted for 15 (4.2%), pictures accounted for 3 (0.83%) and cartoons accounted for 21(5.9%). There were no editorials and retractions. These data show that the majority of the press items on President Obasanjo’s third term bid, just like the other political situations studied, were significantly news stories. This implies that news stories still hold a significant sway in press performances on contemporary issues such as politics. The details of the data in Table 4.5 are graphically illustrated in Figure 4 thus:

Figure 4.5: Frequency of newspaper reports—Obasanjo’s third-term agenda



Source: Content Analysis, 2014

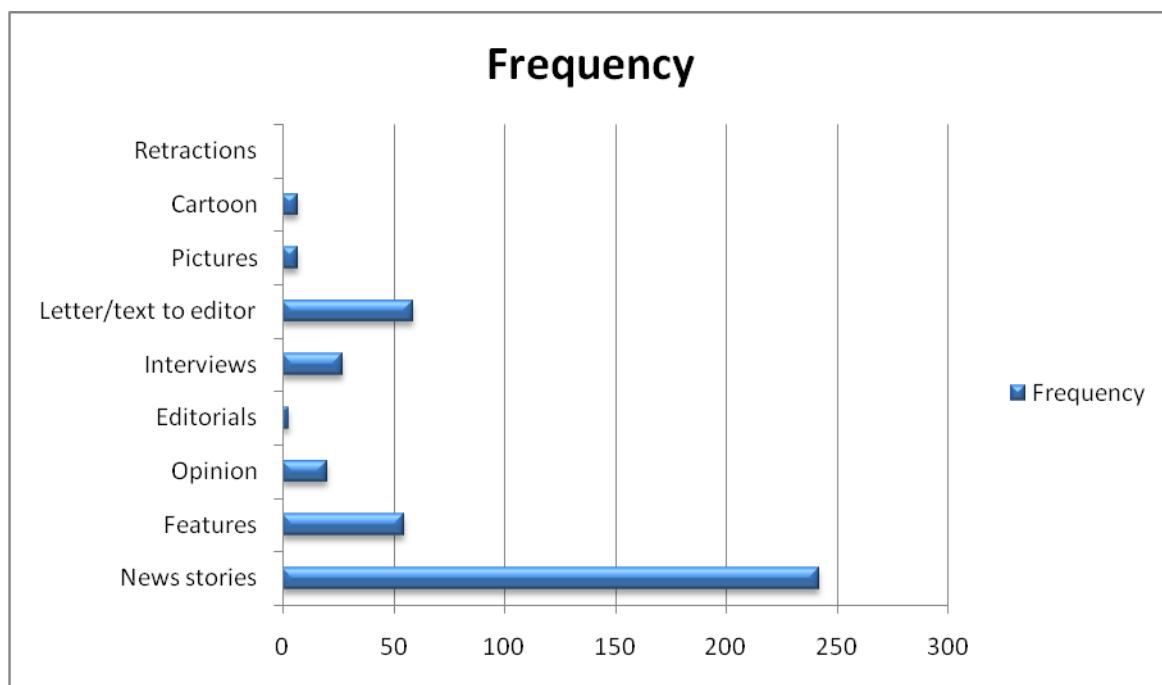
Table 4.6: Frequency of newspaper reports—Yar’Adua’s illness

Type	Daily Trust	Punch	Sun	Guardian	Tribune	Frequency	(%)
News stories	73	42	35	40	52	242	57.6
Features	3	04	22	9	17	55	13.1
Opinion	6	0	5	4	5	20	4.8
Editorials	0	1	0	0	2	3	0.7
Interviews	2	03	9	11	2	27	6.4
Letter/text to editor	53	0	4	1	1	59	14
Pictures	1	0	1	2	3	7	1.7
Cartoons	0	0	3	1	3	7	1.7
Retractions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	138	50	79	68	85	420	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Data in Table 4.6 depict that *Daily Trust* had 138 items -the highest number of coded items on the issue of Yar’Adua’s illness. This is followed by 85 items from *Tribune*; 79 from *The Sun* newspaper; 68 items from *The Guardian*, and 50 from *The Punch*. Table 4.6 further shows that news items accounted for 242 (57.6%), features accounted for 55 (13.1%), opinions accounted for 18 (4.3%), editorials accounted for 3 (0.7%), interviews accounted for 27 (6.4%), letter/text to-the-editor accounted for 59 (14%), pictorials accounted for 7 (1.7%) while cartoons accounted for 7 (1.7%). There were no retractions. These data show that a majority of the press items on the Yar’Adua’s illness, just like the other political situations studied, were significantly news stories. News stories are therefore, shown to still hold sway in press performance on significant contemporary issues such as politics. Details of data in Table 4.6 are graphically illustrated in Figure 4.6 below.

Figure 4.6: Frequency of newspaper reports—Yar’Adua’s illness



Source: Content Analysis, 2014

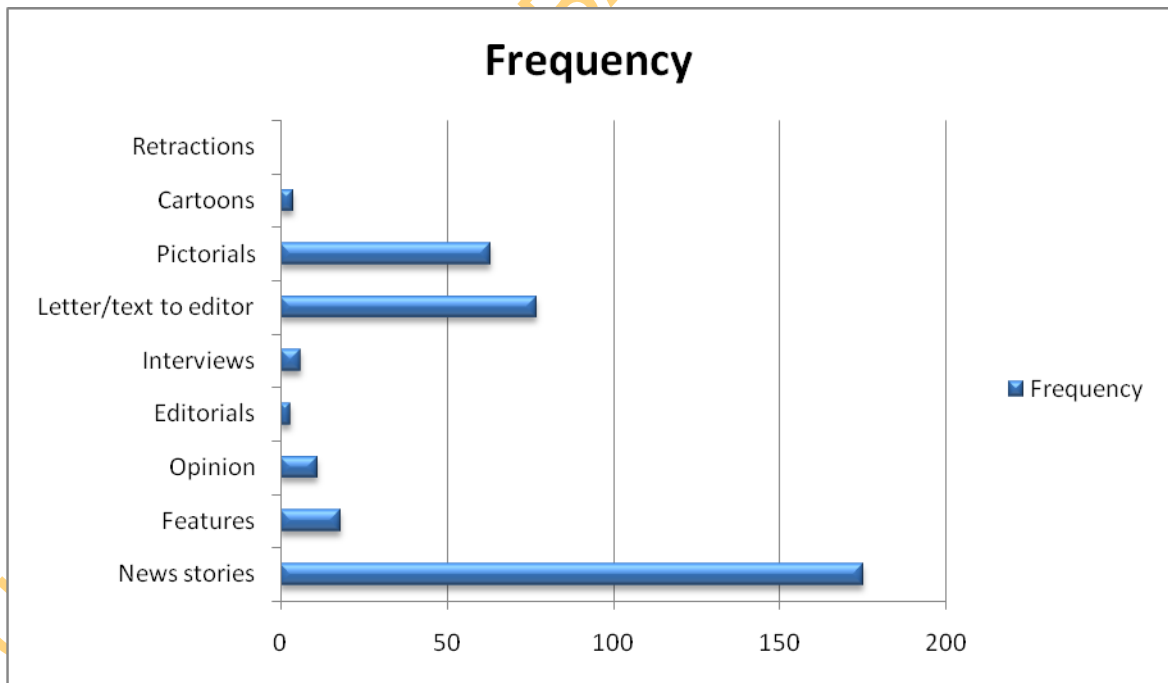
Table 4.7: Frequency of newspaper reports—Post election protests

Type	Daily Trust	Punch	Sun	Guardian	Tribune	Frequency	(%)
News stories	85	21	47	14	8	175	49.1
Features	6	1	8	03	0	18	5
Opinions	4	1	2	3	1	11	3.02
Editorials	0	1	1	0	1	3	0.8
Interview	1	0	5	0	0	6	1.7
Letter/text to editor	73	2	2	0	0	77	21.6
Pictorials	8	0	47	8	0	63	17.7
Cartoons	2	1	1	0	0	4	1.1
Retractions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	179	27	113	28	10	357	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Data in Table 4.6 show that *Daily Trust* had 179 items -the highest number of coded items on the post-election protests. This is followed by 113 items from *The Sun* newspaper; 28 items from *The Guardian*; 27 from *The Punch*, while *Tribune* had 10 coded items. Table 4.7 further shows that news items accounted for 175 (49.1%), features accounted for 18 (5%), opinions accounted for 8 (2.2%), editorials accounted for 3 (0.8%), interviews accounted for 6 (1.7%), letter/text to the editor accounted for 77 (21.6%), pictorials accounted for 63 (17.7%), cartoons accounted for 4 (1.1%), while there were no retractions. These data show that the majority of the press items on the post-election protests, just like the other political situations studied, were significantly news stories. News stories are therefore, shown to still hold sway in press performances on significant contemporary issues such as politics. The details of data in Table 4.7 are graphically illustrated in Figure 4.7 below.

Figure 4.7: Frequency of newspaper reports –Post election protests



Source: Content Analysis, 2014

4.1.2 Placement of newspaper reports on political crisis situations

Placement has to do with the position in which the reports appear in the newspapers. These include front page, inside page and back page reports. They are presented in Tables 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 below with accompanying figures.

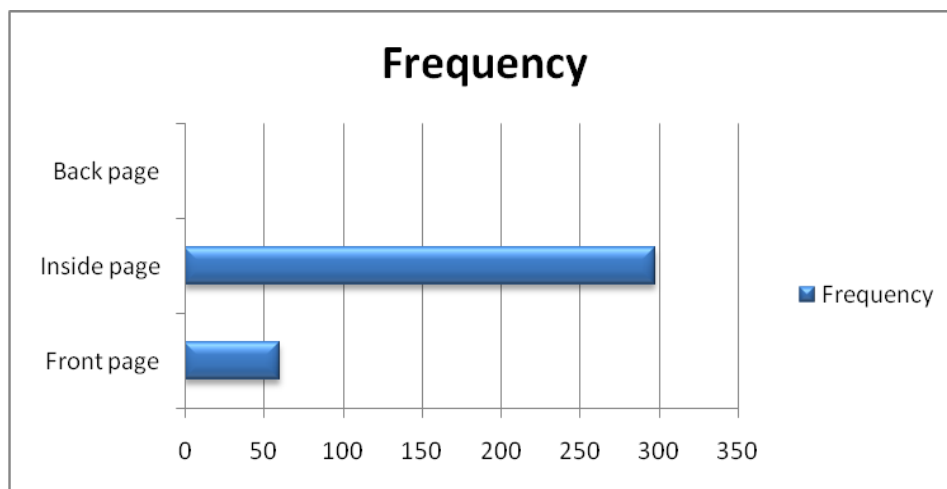
Table 4.8: Placement of reports—Obasanjo’s third-term agenda

Placement	Daily Trust	Punch	Sun	Guardian	Tribune	Frequency	(%)
Front page	12	6	21	10	11	60	16.8
Inside page	67	44	89	39	59	298	83.2
Back page	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	79	50	110	49	70	358	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2014

According to the data contained in Table 4.8, *The Sun* newspaper had 110 items -the highest number of coded items on President Obasanjo’s third-term agenda. This is followed by 79 items from the *Daily Trust* newspaper; 70 from *Tribune*; 50 items from *The Punch*, and 49 items from *The Guardian*. Furthermore, Table 4.8 shows that only 60 (16.8%) of the coded items were on the front pages; while 298 (83.2%) of the coded newspaper items were inside page items. None of the coded items on Obasanjo’s third term bid were on the back page. The reason for this is obvious. Apart from *The Guardian* which devoted its back page to news from Mondays to Fridays, and to sports on weekends, other newspapers devoted their back page to sports. These data show that the majority of the press items on the President Obasanjo’s third term bid, just like in the other political situations studied are normally placed inside. Data in Table 4.8 are graphically captured in figure 4.8 thus:

Figure 4.8: Placement of newspaper reports—Obasanjo’s third-term agenda



Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Data in Table 4.9 show that, out of 420 items coded, the *Daily Trust* accounted for the highest number of newspaper items (138) on the Late President Yar’ Adua’s illness. In a descending order, the *Tribune* accounted for 85 items, *The Sun* had 79 items, and *The Guardian* had 68, while *The Punch* had 50. However, only 18.6% of the coded items on Yar’ Adua’s illness were on the front pages of the newspapers, 81% of the newspaper items that were coded were on the inside pages. A very insignificant 0.4% of the coded items were on the back pages. These data mean that though Nigerian press covered the Late President Yar’ Adua’s illness more than any of the other issues studied, just like the other issues, the majority were inside page items. Nevertheless, the Late President Yar’ Adua’s illness issue had the highest front page reportage among the issues that were content analysed.

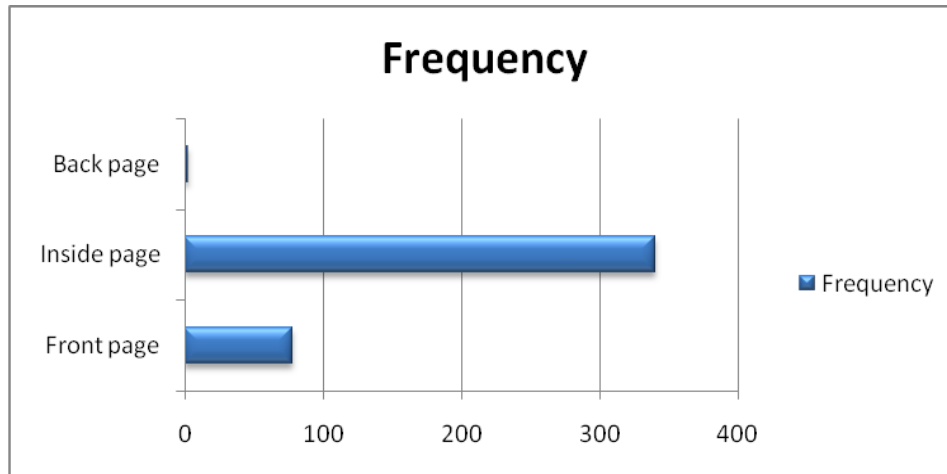
Table 4.9: Placement of newspaper reports—Yar’ Adua’s illness

Placement	Daily Trust	Punch	Sun	Guardian	Tribune	Frequency	(%)
Front page	14	12	11	16	25	78	18.6
Inside page	123	38	68	51	60	340	81
Back page	1	0	0	1	0	2	0.4
Total	138	50	79	68	85	420	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Data in Table 4.9 are graphically supported by figure 4. 9. below.

Figure 4.9: Placement of newspaper reports–Yar’Adua’s illness



Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Data in Table 4.10 reveal that *Daily Trust* had 179 items -the highest number of coded items on the post-election protests. This is followed by 113 items from *The Sun* newspaper; 28 items from *The Guardian*; 27 from *The Punch*, while *Tribune* had just 10 coded items. Nevertheless, Table 4.10 further shows that 22 (6.2%) were on the front pages, while 334 (93.5%) of the coded newspaper items were on the inside pages. Only 1 (0.3%) was at the back page. These data show that the majority of the press items on the post-election protests, just like the other political situations studied, were significantly placed in the inside pages.

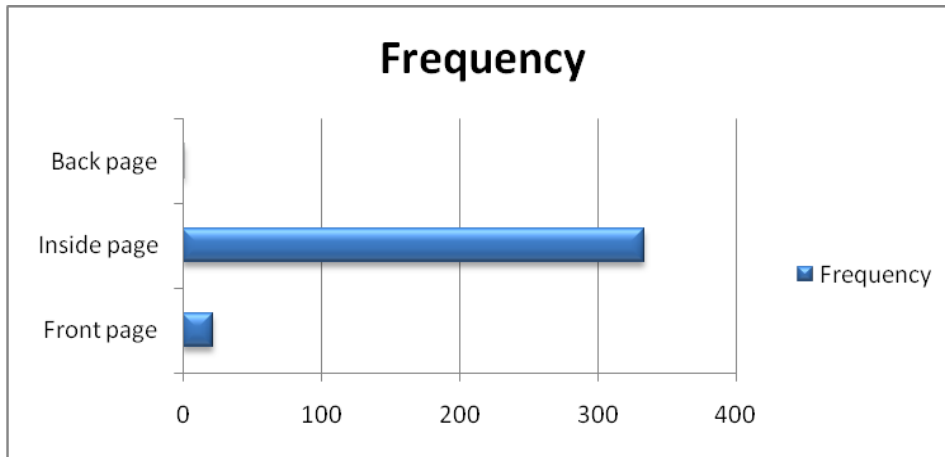
Table 4.10: Placement of newspaper reports –Post election protests

Placement	Daily Trust	Punch	Sun	Guardian	Tribune	Frequency	(%)
Front page	8	5	7	2	0	22	6.2
Inside page	171	22	105	26	10	334	93.5
Back page	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.3
Total	179	27	113	28	10	357	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Data in Table 4.10 are graphically illustrated in Figure 4.10 below.

Figure 4.10: Placement of newspaper reports –Post election protests



Source: Content Analysis, 2014

4.1.3 Size of newspaper reports on political crisis situations

The size of reports was determined by the amount of space allocated to each report in terms of columns and inches. Reports that occupied a quarter of a page or less were grouped into small size, while those that occupied half a page or less, but more than a quarter were classified into medium size, and those that occupied more than half a page were grouped into large size. The sizes of the newspaper reports are thus presented in Tables 4.11, 4.12 and 4.13 below, with accompanying figures.

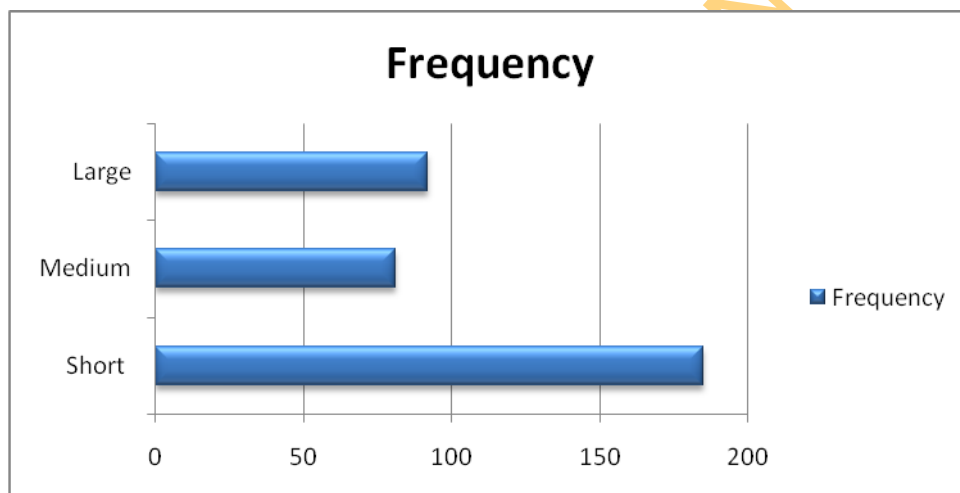
Table 4.11: Space/size of newspaper reports—Obasanjo's third-term agenda

Space/size	Daily Trust	Punch	Sun	Guardian	Tribune	Frequency	(%)
Short	47	33	57	23	25	185	51.7
Medium	14	15	25	8	19	81	22.6
Large	18	2	28	18	26	92	25.7
Total	79	50	110	49	70	358	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2014

According to the data contained in Table 4.11, *The Sun* newspaper had 110 items -the highest number of coded items on the President Obasanjo’s third-term bid. This is followed by 79 items from the *Daily Trust* newspaper; 70 from *Tribune*; 50 items from *The Punch*, and 49 items from *The Guardian*. Furthermore, Table 4.11 shows that 185 (51.7%) of the coded items were short/small; 81 (22.6%) of the coded newspaper items were medium; while 92 (25.7%) of the coded items on Obasanjo’s third term bid were large. These data show that the majority of the press items on the President Obasanjo’s third-term bid were short/small. Data in Table 4.11 are graphically captured in Figure 4.11 thus:

Figure 4.11: Space/size of newspaper reports—Obasanjo’s third-term agenda



Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Data in Table 4.12 show that, out of 420 items coded, the *Daily Trust* accounted for the highest number(138) of newspaper items on the Late President Yar’ Adua’s illness. In a descending order, the *Tribune* accounted for 85 items, *The Sun* had 79 items, *The Guardian* had 68, while *The Punch* had 50. On the whole, 52.4% of coded items on Yar’ Adua’s illness were short, 22.4% were of medium space/size, while 25.2% of the coded items were given large space. These data simply show that the majority of the press reports on Yar’Adua’s illness were short.

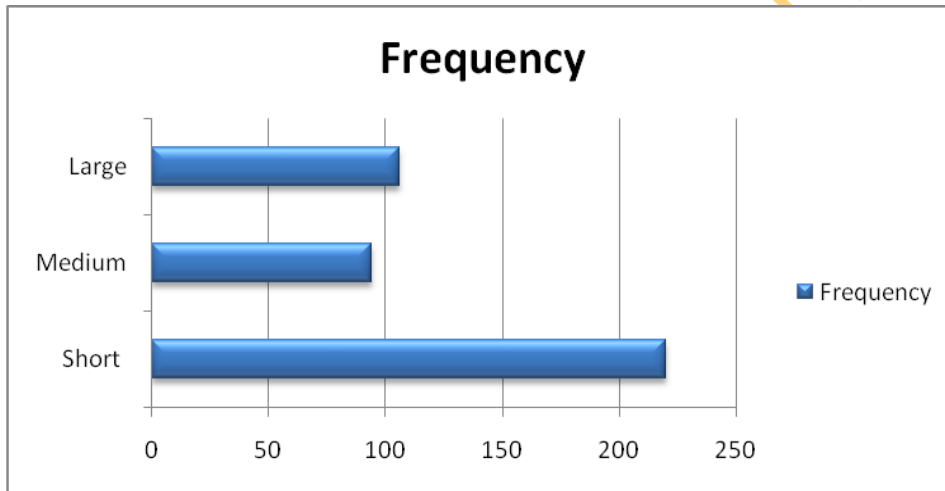
Table 4.12: Space/size of newspaper reports–Yar’Adua’s illness

Space/size	Daily Trust	Punch	Sun	Guardian	Tribune	Frequency	(%)
Short	114	27	35	7	37	220	52.4
Medium	12	15	24	28	15	94	22.4
Large	12	8	20	33	33	106	25.2
Total	138	50	79	68	85	420	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Data in Table 4.12 are graphically supported by Figure 4.12 below.

Figure 4.12: Space/size of newspaper reports–Yar’Adua’s illness



Source: Content Analysis, 2014

According to the data in Table 4.13, *Daily Trust* had 179 items -the highest number of coded items on the post-election protests. This is followed by 113 items from *The Sun* newspaper; 28 items from *The Guardian*; 27 from *The Punch*, while *Tribune* had just 10 coded items. Table 4.13 however, shows that 284 (79.6%) were short/small; 48 (13.4%) of the coded newspaper items were medium in space or size; while 25 (7%) were large. These data show that the majority of the press items on the post-election protests were significantly short.

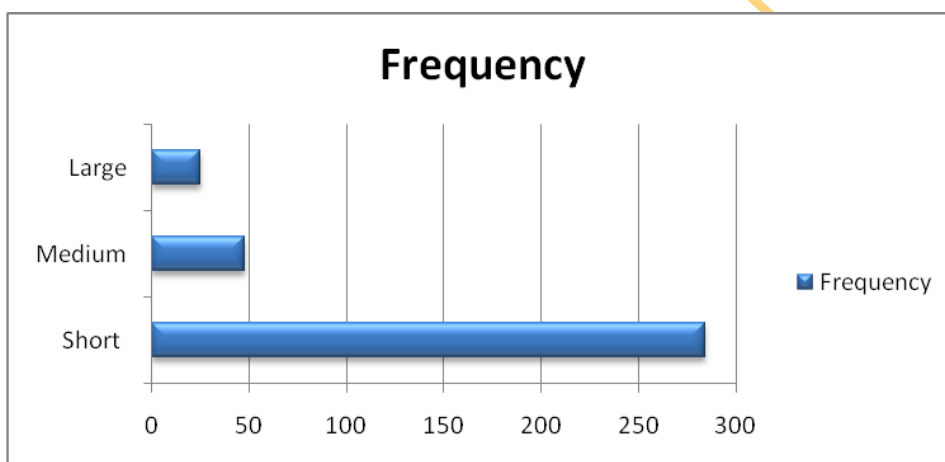
Table 4.13: Space/size of newspaper reports–Post election protests

Space/size	Daily Trust	Punch	Sun	Guardian	Tribune	Frequency	(%)
Short	152	21	98	6	7	284	79.6
Medium	24	3	7	13	1	48	13.4
Large	3	3	8	9	2	25	7
Total	179	27	113	28	10	357	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Data in Table 4.13 are graphically illustrated in Figure 4.13 below.

Figure 4.13: Space/size of newspaper reports –Post election protests



Source: Content Analysis, 2014

4.1.4 Summary of data analysis for Research Question One

From the foregoing, research question one is therefore answered thus: The selected newspapers reported the political crisis situations to a great extent, with the issues surrounding Yar'Adua illness featuring more frequently with 37%, followed by the Third-Term agenda and Election protests which scored 31% each. The frequency of political crisis reports supports the opinion of some scholars that press and politics cannot be separated as the former feeds on the latter especially during crisis (McQuail, 2010 & Gardner, 2001). This is because politics affects the greatest number of people in a society and the press cannot afford to ignore political crisis so as to sustain

readership. This view is further supported by the commercial laissez-faire model enunciated by Watson (2008). Ownership and location of newspapers also played out in the frequency of newspapers' reports as the *Daily Trust* had the highest number of reports on Yar'Adua's illness and post-election crisis compared to other newspapers under investigation. This is because the newspaper (*Daily Trust*) is based in the north and circulates more in that region. Yar'Adua who was absent from office from 2009 to 2010 was from the north and the violent protest in 2011 occurred in north which made the *Daily Trust* to report the two events more frequently than other newspapers.

Notwithstanding the frequency of the reports, the prominence accorded the stories was below average both in terms of placement and size. Most of the reports appeared on the inside pages, with a few on the front page of the newspapers. This is understandable as only a few stories are accommodated on the front page due to its competitive nature as more pages are available inside. The back page recorded fewer stories on the issues under investigation than front page because only *The Guardian* devoted its back page to general interest stories, except weekend editions (Saturday and Sunday) it devoted to sports, while the other four newspapers devoted their back page to sports all the days of the week. Also, more than half of all the reports in the newspapers were short in size, while less than half were medium and large in size.

4.2 Research Question Two

How did the selected newspapers frame their reports on the political crisis situations?

Frame in this study has to do with the manner the newspapers treated the reports in terms of objectivity and balance. To answer this research question, the content categories of positive, negative and neutral frames were used. Neutral frames refer to the reports that were fair to all the parties concerned in the political crisis situations, while reports that were too favourable to a party were termed positive and those that were antagonistic of a party were termed negative.

4.2.1 Direction of newspaper reports on Obasanjo's third-term agenda

Data on the angle from which the newspapers framed their reports on Obasanjo's third-term agenda bid are presented in Table 4.14 and Figure 4.14 below.

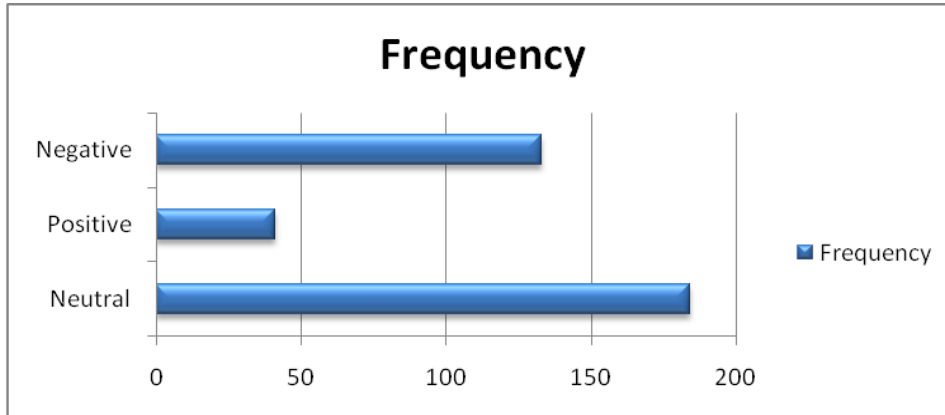
Table 4.14: Direction of newspaper reports—Obasanjo's third-term agenda

Slant	Daily Trust	Punch	Sun	Guardian	Tribune	Frequency	(%)
Neutral	42	16	54	39	33	184	51.4
Positive	24	9	7	1	0	41	11.4
Negative	13	25	49	9	37	133	37.2
Total	79	50	110	49	70	358	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2014

According to the data contained in Table 4.14 *The Sun* newspaper had 110 items -the highest number of coded items on President Obasanjo's third-term agenda. This is followed by 79 items from the *Daily Trust* newspaper; 70 from *Tribune*; 50 items from *The Punch*, and 49 items from *The Guardian*. Furthermore, Table 4.14 shows that 184 (51.4%) of the coded items were neutral –without any obvious direction in opinion; 41 (11.4%) of the coded newspaper items were positive–favouring/supporting President Obasanjo's third term bid ; while 133 (37.2%) were negative–against President Obasanjo's third term bid. These data show that the majority of the press items on the President Obasanjo's third term bid were neutral in nature. Data in Table 4.14 are graphically captured in Figure 4.14 thus:

Figure 4.14: Direction of newspaper reports—Obasanjo’s third-term agenda



Source: Content Analysis, 2014

The Punch and *The Tribune* framed most of their reports from the negative angle; more reports were framed neutrally, while fewer reports were positively framed. The frames of the newspapers’ reports could be traced to the position they (*The Punch* and *The Tribune*) took on the issue from the outset—the agenda according to them was unconstitutional and against the people and as such, should be criticised or condemned (see Appendix 8A and D for details).

The Sun, *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* were neutral in most of their reports. However, there was a slim margin between neutral and negative frames by *The Sun* (54 items and 49 items respectively), while *The Guardian* and *Daily Trust* had very minimal negative frames. From the interview data, *The Guardian* was of the opinion that issues should be reported objectively, without taking sides no matter who or what are involved. *The Daily Trust* was however, of the opinion, like other newspapers, that the agenda should not be supported in any form (see Appendixes 8A, B and E).

4.2.2 Direction of newspaper reports on Yar’Adua’s illness

The angle from which the selected newspapers framed their reports on Yar’Adua’s illness is presented in Table 4.15 and Figure 4.15 below.

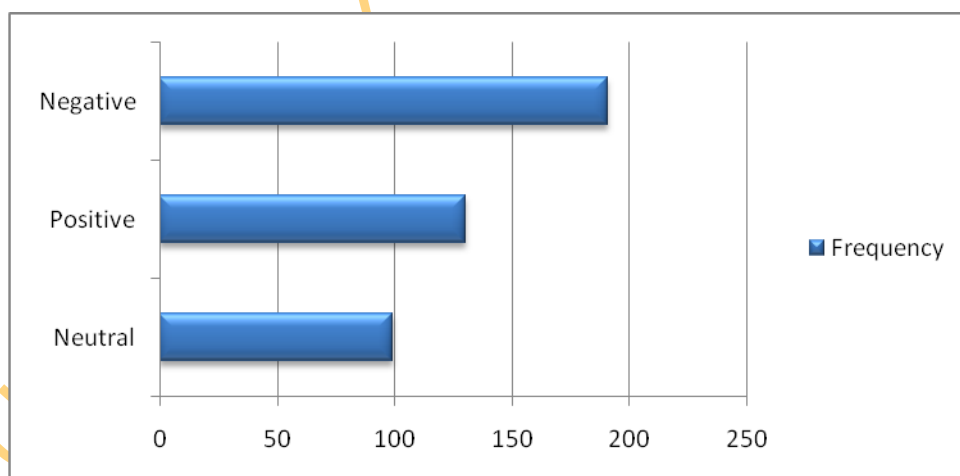
Table 4.15: Direction of newspaper reports -Yar'Adua's illness

Slant	Daily Trust	Punch	Sun	Guardian	Tribune	Frequency	(%)
Neutral	26	20	16	10	27	99	23.6
Positive	77	10	30	3	10	130	31
Negative	35	20	33	55	48	191	45.4
Total	138	50	79	68	85	420	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Data in Table 4.15 show that out of 420 items coded, the *Daily Trust* accounted for the highest number of newspaper items on late President Yar'Adua's illness. In a descending order, the *Tribune* accounted for 85 items, *The Sun* had 79 items, *The Guardian* had 68, while *The Punch* had 50. On the whole, 23.6% of coded items on Yar'Adua's illness were neutral, 31% were positive, while 45.4% were negative. These data imply that the majority of the press reports were against the then vacuum in Nigeria's presidency due to Yar'Adua's illness. Data in Table 4.15 are graphically shown in Figure 4.15 below.

Figure 4.15: Direction of newspaper reports—Yar'Adua's illness



Source: Content Analysis, 2014

In other words, more reports were negative on the issue, while only a few were positive and neutral. Specifically, *The Punch*, *The Sun*, *The Guardian* and *the Tribune* framed their reports more negatively than positively, while *The Daily Trust* framed

more of its reports positively. The dichotomy between the Southern press and the northern press comes to play here as the *Daily Trust*, being a northern newspaper, was sympathetic to the Yar'Adua, being a northerner (see Appendix 8C), while other newspapers which were based in the south were more critical of the vacuum created by Yar'Adua's absence from office (see Appendix 8 A, B, D and E).

4.2.3 Direction of newspaper reports on post-election protests

Data on how the selected newspapers framed their reports on post-2011 presidential election protests in the northern part of Nigeria are presented in Table 4.16 and Figure 4.16 below and analysed accordingly.

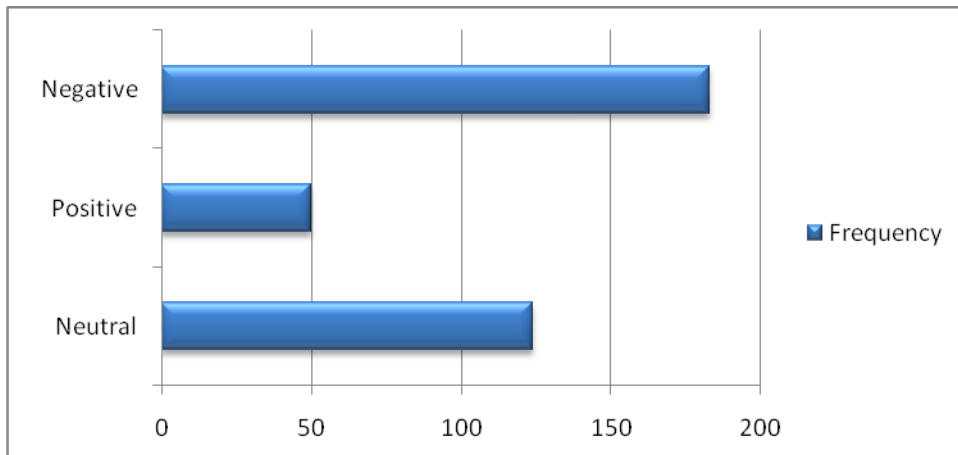
Table 4.16: Direction of newspaper reports—Post-election protests

Slant	Daily Trust	Punch	Sun	Guardian	Tribune	Frequency	(%)
Neutral	59	19	41	4	1	124	34.7
Positive	27	2	21	0	0	50	14
Negative	93	6	51	24	9	183	51.3
Total	179	27	113	28	10	357	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2014

The data in Table 4.16 reveal that *Daily Trust* had 179 items—the highest number of coded items on the post-election protests. This is followed by 113 items from *The Sun* newspaper; 28 items from *The Guardian*; 27 from *The Punch*, while *Tribune* had just 10 coded items. Furthermore, Table 4.16 shows that 124 (34.7%) were neutral—without any obvious direction in opinion; 50 (14%) of the coded newspaper items were positive—favouring/supporting the protests; while 183 (51.3) were negative—against the post-election protests. These data show that the majority of the press items on the post-election protests were against the protests. Data in Table 4.16 are graphically illustrated in Figure 4.16 below.

Figure 4.16: Direction of newspaper reports–Post-election protests



Source: Content Analysis, 2014

It is interesting to note that all the selected newspapers framed their reports on the protests negatively. In other words, the newspapers were against the protests. A sizeable number of their reports were neutral, while the least of their reports were positive. The issue of ethnic consideration did not affect the press performance on this issue, even though some of the interviewees mentioned it as a factor (which, indeed, played out on the two previous issues). This implies that the newspapers were sensitive to the security dimension of the protests since the protests were violent in nature, claiming lives and damaging property.

4.2.4 Responses of the interviewees

Responses of the interviewees are graphically illustrated in Table 4.17 below.

Table 4.17: Qualitative data –Direction of newspaper reports on the political crises

Newspaper	Theme: Newspapers’ dominant slants on the political crisis situations
Daily Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Negative frames for third-term agenda. ● Positive frames for Yar’Adua illness. ● Views are based on newspaper’s news and editorials only. ● Editors believed their views were fair and objective. ● Denied been sensational.
The Punch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Negative frames on all the three political crisis situations ● Views were based on newspaper’s news and editorials only. ● Editors believed their views were fair and objective. ● Denied been sensational.
The Sun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Negative frames on all the three political crisis situations ● Views were based on newspaper’s news and editorials only. ● Editors believed their views were fair and objective. ● Admitted the newspaper was a bit sensational.
The Guardian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Negative frames on all the three political crisis situations. ● Views were based on newspaper’s news and editorials only. ● Editors believed their views were fair and objective. ● Denied been sensational.
Nigerian Tribune	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Negative frames for OBJ third-term agenda and Yar’Adua illness. ● Views were based on newspaper’s news and editorials only. ● Editors believed their views were fair and objective. ● Denied been sensational.

Source: In-depth interviews, 2014

Data in table 4.17 show that the editors of five newspapers agreed they negatively framed the third-term agenda and post-election violence. All the newspapers negatively framed Yar’Adua’s illness, except *Daily Trust*. The editor of the *Daily Trust* admitted that the newspaper positively framed Yar’Adua’s illness because he was a northerner, and given that the newspaper is a northern based newspaper, was to them an “objective” position to take. All the editors of the newspapers strongly felt the frames of their respective newspapers were objective. None admitted to have sensationally reported any of the political crisis situations except the editor of *TheSun* who admitted that sensationalism is part of the newspaper’s house style but insisted it did not affect the newspaper’s objectivity.

4.2.5 Summary of data analysis for Research Question Two

From the above analyses, research question two can be answered as follows:

1. The newspapers reports on the political crisis situations had more negative frames than positive and neutral frames except on Obasanjo's alleged third term agenda.
2. Specifically, about half of the reports of the selected newspapers on Obasanjo's third-term bid were neutral (51.4%), while less than half were positive and negative. For the Yar'Adua illness and post-election protests, the selected newspapers' reports had more negative frames than neutral frames. Reports on Yar'Adua's illness had 45.4% negative frames while those of violent protests had 51% negative frames.

This therefore confirms the framing theory which involves selection, emphasis and exclusion. That is, the press frames news by selecting certain aspects of events, emphasising and elaborating such aspects while excluding others to achieve certain aims. To this end, Nigerian press decided to emphasize the negative side of the crisis situations by framing their reports more negatively against the gladiators (especially the two former presidents) than the positive aspects that favour them. This can also be linked to the commercial laissez-faire model of press performance which seeks to serve the readers what they want in order for the media to continue to enjoy patronage. Newspaper editors believed that the majority of Nigerians (readers) are opposed to; say President Obasanjo's third-term bid and President Yar'adua's inability to officially hand over power to his deputy when he was incapacitated, a situation which created a constitutional crisis. As a result, whatever reasons the supporters of these actors gave to justify the two presidents' actions did not enjoy as much prominence as the views opposed to their actions.

3. Quantitative data are largely corroborated by the qualitative data. The qualitative data as shown in table 4.17 above reveal that the editors of five newspapers agreed they negatively framed the third term agenda and post-election violence. All the newspapers negatively framed Yar'Adua's illness, except the *Daily Trust* which was sympathetic to Yar'adua because he was a northerner like the owners of the newspaper. One of the editors of *Daily Trust* during the in-depth interview

argued that his newspaper was not as adamant as the southern newspapers were on the issue because the north felt it was going to lose out if Yar'Adua was removed as president (see Appendix 8c).

The newspapers negatively framed all the political crises. Noteworthy, however, is that the views of the editors were based on the newspapers news stories and editorials only.

4.3 Research Question Three

In what way(s), if any, did ownership influence the performance of the selected newspapers during the political crisis situations?

To answer this research question, responses of the interviewees are thematically presented in table 4.17 below.

Table 4.18: Showing whether ownership influenced newspapers performances during the political crisis situations

Newspaper	Theme: Relationship between ownership influence and the newspapers' coverage of the three political crisis situations	
	Ownership influenced performance? No	Ownership influenced performance? Yes
Daily Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Most professionals don't tolerate influence. ●Owner's most times not noticed.. ●No serious ownership pressure ●There is media market competition. ●Readers have alternatives ●Some professionals may quit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Ownership had some interest. ●Ownership pressure sometimes felt. ●News stories sometimes questioned. ●Was biased during Yar'Adua's illness because he was a northerner. ● Some professionals tolerate influence.
The Punch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Ownership never had an interest. ●No professional tolerates influence. ●News stories/editorials are never questioned. ●No ownership pressure. ●There is media market competition. ●Readers have alternatives. 	Nil
The Sun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Owners never had an interest. ●Owners most times not noticed. ●Some professionals may quit ● News stories/editorials are never questioned ●No ownership pressure ●There is media market competition. ●Readers have alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Owners had some interest. ● Some professionals tolerate influence. ●Newspaper is most times sensational.
The Guardian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Ownership never had an interest. ●All professionals will quit. ●News stories/editorials are never questioned. ●No ownership pressure. ●There is media market competition. ●Readers have alternatives. 	Nil
Nigerian Tribune	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Ownership never had an interest. ●All professionals will quit. ●News stories/editorials are never questioned. ●No ownership pressure. ●There is media market competition. ●Readers have alternatives 	Nil

Source: In-depth interviews, 2014

Qualitative data show that only the *Daily Trust* experienced some sort of ownership influence sometimes. However, such influence, as in the case of how the newspaper (*Daily Trust*) reported Yar'Adua's illness and subsequent absence in office, is rare. Nevertheless, the *Daily Trust*, just like the other four newspapers—*The Punch*,

The Sun, *The Guardian*, and *Nigerian Tribune*—did not experience any ownership influence in reporting the third-term agenda and the post-election violence. Largely, the data show that all the newspapers performed well as shown in Table 4.17 above. This is because of the following factors: ownership interests are very rare; the newspapers are edited by professionals who may quit if ownership interest is overbearing; owners know that there is serious print media market competition in Nigeria, and readers can always turn to other newspapers if vested interests override professional content. Public interest is also a strong consideration. The responses were aggregated as follows:

No Influence

The general theme that runs through the responses of the interviewees is that ownership did not influence the newspapers' reportage of the crisis situations. The editors argued that the proprietors of their respective newspapers gave the professionals in their employment a freehand to decide editorial matters. This, they said, is necessitated by the market forces as the readers have alternatives to patronize other newspapers if their own newspapers sacrifice objectivity on the altar of ownership interest.

The Editor of *The Guardian*, Martins Oloja, and the Political Editor, Ehichioya Ezomon, claimed that owners of *The Guardian* do not interfere in the decision about what to publish. According to the political editor, there is a clear distinction between the owners and the managers of the newspaper. In other words, the publisher of the newspaper separated himself completely from the editorial decisions of the newspaper, as he allowed the professionals there to handle such without any interference. According to him:

Since I joined the paper in 1997, there has been no influence from the owners on what is published and how it is published. Before the original publisher died, I never saw him one day suggest anything to be published by the paper. Even when he was a minister, *The Guardian* was still criticising the Federal Government by writing the truth as if the owner was not in government. From what we gathered, this led to an attack that was made on him because the government wanted to use *The Guardian* but the man said no, insisting that the newspaper was outside of his influence in editorial matters.

Judging by the content of what the newspaper published on the political crisis situations earlier analysed, one can rightly deduce that *The Guardian*, owned by a Nigerian from the south-south region, published its reports on the political crisis situations which affected political leaders from both its region and elsewhere without any consideration for the owner's interest.

Mr. Fabiyi of *The Punch*, like his *Guardian's* counterparts, revealed that the newspaper operates on the principles of press freedom and that its reportage of political crisis situations is not influenced by its owners. To him, reporters are free to report events as they occur, provided such reports are based on facts. "It did not in any form. *The Punch* is one of the newspapers where you can express yourself, where nobody will censor your story so far you have your facts and you can defend the documents. Even if the aggrieved finds it libelous, *The Punch* will stand by you." Editor of *Sunday Punch*, Toyosi Ogunseye, said what existed between her and the publisher is that of a boss-employee relationship but added that the publisher did not use that to dictate what should be published:

The publisher is my boss so we have a boss-employee relationship. His business is to ensure that everything is running smoothly and to ensure we are giving our best but outside that, no interference when it comes to editorial operation. *The Punch* is one of the few newspapers, and I say that with all sincerity, where editors have 100% independence because before you are an editor, it is assumed that you can make the right judgment.

From the content of its report analysed, the level of fairness *The Punch* gave Obasanjo's third term agenda (Obasanjo, a Yoruba man like *Punch's* owners), was the same it gave to Yar'Adua's illness (a northerner) and post-election protests that had to do with President Jonathan, a south-south man.

Mr. Nwosu, *The Sun's* coordinator of politics, insisted that ownership factor did not influence the newspaper's reportage of political crisis situations. "For us at *The Sun*, it is the people (readers') interest that determines what is published and not the owner (publisher). It is a business enterprise and if it shuts out some people, it is shutting out some portion of its business empire".

The editor's response agrees with the political editor's view that there was no ownership interference. According to Onuora Ukeh, Editor Daily:

The publisher is the chairman of the board. He is the chairman of the board of directors and the chairman does not have anything to do with the production of a newspaper. He does not tell us what to put in the paper and he does not interfere. For instance, I was editor of *Saturday Sun* for five years and throughout that period the publisher only spoke to me twice and that was after I had done over four years. And even now as editor daily, he has never called me to say this is how you should treat this story for him; he has set up a newspaper to create employment, inform Nigerians and then run as business. We do it as professionally as we can and there is no interference whatsoever.

The reports of the newspaper analysed showed that it was moderate in its coverage of the political crisis situations.

Mr. Adisa, Group Political Editor of the *Nigerian Tribune*, like his counterparts from *The Punch*, *The Guardian* and *The Sun*, stated that ownership had no influence on the newspaper's reportage of political crisis situations as, according to him, the founding fathers of the newspaper set the ground rules for its operations at inception and those rules had been guiding the operators without taking orders from the owners on editorial matters. Mr. Adisa said: "Good enough, the owners of the *Tribune*, after setting up the newspaper, set up the ground rules according to the mission of the paper. After setting those rules, nobody comes to the management to say do this, and don't do this. The owners allow the management (professionals) to evolve the day-to-day running agenda."

Speaking in a similar view, Editor of *Nigerian Tribune*, Debo Abdulahi, said:

The Awolowo family is one of the best families you can work with. I was editor of *Sunday Tribune* for about four years, and I am almost three years as Head of the *Nigerian Tribune*, and I will tell you that there is no interference. I determine my front page; I determine the stories and pictures I want to use. I am free. I am not an editor in Nigeria that will wait for his publisher to vet his front page before it goes to bed. So, I have not had interactions with Mama HID Awolowo, for instance, or with any of the directors. They don't call me; they don't give me stories; they don't give me perspectives to stories.

However, data from content analysis revealed that the newspaper's frames on Yar'adua's illness and post-election protests were more negative while it was more neutral in its reportage of the third term agenda.

Minimal Influence

Mr. Bisalla, Deputy-Editor (Politics) of the *Daily Trust*, however, admitted that ownership played some role in the newspaper's reportage of the political crisis situations. His response to the ownership question was:

Yes of course. We were told even in school that ownership is a major factor, as the axiom; 'he who pays the piper dictates the tune'. In *Daily Trust*, it slightly happens; maybe we cannot rule it out completely". His editor, Theophilus Abbah, was, however, of the contrary opinion as he said ownership had no influence. According to him, "I am the editor of *Sunday Trust* and am a Christian. There has never been a day that the chairman of the newspaper called me to say, do this story or don't do this story. So, as the editor I have my independence to decide what story to run and you know what happened if I run into trouble as editor; I would take responsibility. I have absolute independence on editorial content.

An analysis of the newspaper content showed that it was relatively fair in its coverage of the political crisis situations except the Yar'adua issue where it was biased by framing the issue in support of the former president, probably because both Yar'adua and the publisher were from the north.

4.3.1 Summary of data analysis for Research Question Three

To answer research question three, therefore, it can be concluded that the ownership factor did not play much role in the performance of the newspapers during political crisis situations, as most of the interviewees were of the opinion that their proprietors did not influence their reportage of the political crisis situations claiming that such decisions were left for the professionals handling editorial matters.

With reference to the models of the press performance and the theories reviewed in Chapter Two, it is clear that the newspapers framed their reports bearing

in mind their readers as well as the public interest. The editors were of the opinion that they would probably lose their readers if they were biased in their reportage of the events, which would in turn lead to loss of revenue. Hence, the economic interest (profit) is highly prioritised here in line with the profit-making model of press performance. Therefore, ownership influence would jeopardise the economic interest if not checked. The performance of the newspapers during the period under review also agreed largely with the propositions of the social responsibility theory discussed in Chapter Two.

4.4 Research Questions Four

How did the editorial policies of the selected newspapers influence their performance during the political crisis situations?

Data from the in-depth interviews were analysed towards answering this research question. The qualitative data are thematically shown in Table 4.19 below. Consequently, the direction of the editorial policy of each newspaper dictated the angle of its reportage of the political crisis situations.

Table 4.19: Editorial policies' influence on the performance of the newspapers

Newspaper	Theme: How editorial policies of the selected newspapers influenced their coverage of the political crisis situations			
	Political crisis situation: Third-term agenda			
	Type of editorial policy	Influence on coverage	Extent of influence	Comment
Daily Trust	Restrictive and Conservative	yes	Strong	Fairly firm
The Punch	Strict and Unbiased Policy	yes	Very strong	Firmly
The Sun	Populist Policy	Yes	Strong	Fairly firm
The Guardian	Strict and Unbiased Policy	yes	Very strong	Firmly
Nigerian Tribune	Populist Policy	Yes	Strong	Fairly firm
Political crisis situation: Yar'Adua's illness and absence in office				
	Type of editorial policy	Influence on coverage	Extent of influence	Comment
Daily Trust	Restrictive and Conservative	yes	Very strong	Firmly
The Punch	Strict and Unbiased Policy	yes	Strong	Fairly firm
The Sun	Populist Policy	Yes	Strong	Fairly firm
The Guardian	Strict and Unbiased Policy	yes	Very strong	Firmly
Nigerian Tribune	Populist Policy	Yes	Strong	Fairly firm
Political crisis situation: Post election violence				
	Type of editorial policy	Influence on coverage	Extent of influence	Comment
Daily Trust	Restrictive and Conservative	yes	strong	Fairly firm
The Punch	Strict and Unbiased Policy	yes	Strong	Fairly firm
The Sun	Populist Policy	Yes	Strong	Fairly firm
The Guardian	Strict and Unbiased Policy	yes	Very strong	Firmly
Nigerian Tribune	Populist Policy	Yes	Very Strong	Firmly

Source: In-depth interviews, 2014

Data contained in table 4.19 above are interpreted as follow:

Strict and unbiased policy

The responses of the editors of *The Guardian* and *The Punch* showed that the newspapers' editorial policies have the following common traits: non-biased, non-political, non-religious and non-racial. These, according to the editors, helped their newspapers to report the political crisis situations as objectively and fairly as possible, thus leading to a positive influence on their performance.

According to the Group Political Editor of *The Guardian*,

The Guardian was set up as a market place of ideas, on the principles of free economy, no bias; and a free press, for a free people. That has been driving *The Guardian*. We follow that philosophy. That is why we don't publish anything we see. Even in adverts, *The Guardian* does reject adverts sometimes, especially those that impinge on somebody's character. *The Guardian* can turn down up to twenty million naira worth of adverts in a day if such tend to violate its principles, whereas some other papers do grab such and publish lavishly.

The position of *The Guardian's* Editor Daily, Oloja, is in tandem with that of his political editor discussed above. In his words: "*The Guardian* is an independent newspaper, established for the purpose of presenting balanced coverage of events and promoting the best interests of Nigeria. It owes allegiance to no political party, ethnic community, religious or other interest groups... The motto of *The Guardian* is Conscience, Nutured by Truth. We have not deviated from the original objective set out from foundation since 1983".

Based on the comments above, one can say that *The Guardian's* editorial policy has positively influenced its performance in covering political crisis situations.

The Punch's story is similar to *The Guardian's*. In the words of *The Punch's* political editor, "We follow the ethics of journalism. You know you must give a voice or you must hear from the other party. You don't just allow somebody to come and tell you what happened and you take it hook line and sinker. You take it as a pinch of salt and get in touch with the other side or sides. We weren't going to press, or reporting an issue when we had heard from only one person." Similarly, *The Punch's* Editor, Ogunseye, said:

At *The Punch*, we are very strong in ethical issues. It is written in our editions on daily basis and we do not compromise on that because at *The Punch* we believe that what we sell is trust, not news. News is secondary and once you lose the trust of your readers, then you are gone. So, we are very huge when it comes to ethical issues. We are a very ethical newspaper with ethical reporters and editors. We also believe in objectivity, fairness and balance, ensuring that nobody is oppressed in the news. That is basically the policy, ethical journalism objectivity, fairness and balance.

This implies that the editorial policy of *The Punch* has helped it to give a balanced coverage of political crisis situations.

Populist policy

The common denominator in the editorial policies of *The Sun* and the *Nigerian Tribune* is that both newspapers are populist in nature. While *The Sun* claims to be the voice of the nation, *Nigerian Tribune* says it is the voice of the people, which means both of them share the vision of reporting events from the side of the mass populace by attempting to give the reader what they want. This perhaps accounted for the newspaper's display of bogus and sometimes sensational headlines in order to arouse the readers' interest.

For *The Sun*, its editorial policy has reflected in its human angle sides to all stories. This, according to the editors, is because its readers must be served what they want so that they can continue to patronise the newspaper. This is akin to the commercial laissez-faire model of press performance discussed in Chapter Two.

Excerpts of *The Sun*'s political editor's response include:

The editorial policy of the paper has affected its reportage of these issues positively. According to its motto of being the voice of the nation, whenever we the reporters go out to look for stories, we are always looking at what we think Nigerians would like. We have to take care of the downtrodden as well as the privileged. When people talk about sensationalism, it is because they do not understand us, especially with our screaming headlines. Even in that, the stories still take care of the headlines. Every of our stories is taken from an angle that will attract the reader, especially the headline, and this does not preclude us from presenting the facts and details that any other newspaper would give.

The editor of the newspaper, Ukeh, also added his voice in this regard: “ *The Sun* is a tabloid and we are out to practice journalism in a classical tradition of reporting the news, and our policy is to report the news in an exciting way. That is our policy, and that is why sometimes we scream. They are not sensational but to make news exciting. And it takes a lot of credibility to even do this. When you look at the headlines we write, you have to think it out. It is not sensational but we follow our policy of reporting in an exciting way. Apart from reporting news in an exciting way, fairness is paramount. When we need to state the facts, we do and we report all sides.”

The Tribune’s story is similar to *The Sun’s*, as the group political editor of the *Tribune* said: “Every paper must have an editorial policy that would dovetail into its mission. It is a people’s paper. Although it is doing business, basically, *Tribune* has been known as a strong voice in the polity and when you are seen as a strong voice in the polity, you mirror the interest of the people. So, *Tribune* strives to go down to the people at all times. It is a mass movement and a mass audience paper.” The response of the Editor Daily, *Nigerian Tribune*, is similar to that of the newspaper’s political editor. According to the editor:

The name ‘*Tribune*’ itself means the voice of the populace. Then truth, courage and fairness are our motto. We have been fair, we have been courageous and we have spoken the truth to the government and the people. As long as what anybody is doing against the people is unconstitutional, *Tribune* will not support. It is not as if the people are always right because there is always a mob action; but *Tribune* will always speak the truth both to the people and the government.

This implies that the editorial policies of *Nigerian Tribune* and *The Sun* were the reason behind their bogus and sensational headlines, and human angle stories like.

Restrictive and conservative

The editorial policy of the *Daily Trust* is somehow conservative and restrictive in line with the owner’s ethnic and religious leanings. The *Daily Trust’s* political editor revealed that the editorial policy of the newspaper, though encourages the dissemination of credible information for the good of the public, forbids the reportage

of certain issues based on the moral and religious persuasion of its owners. This, according to him, influenced its coverage of issues generally, including politics. In his words:

The founders of the *Daily Trust* had a vision. And that is said to be a world class company that has public trust. They also had a vision to disseminate credible information for the good of the public. They also designed some core values to guide the conduct of reporters which include editorial integrity, ethical conduct, professionalism and constant innovation. The goal of the paper is also market-driven because if you don't have cash, you will not grow. The paper was also set up to achieve national unity and African brotherhood.

The *Trust's* Editor on Sunday, Abbah, described the editorial policy of the newspaper thus: "Our editorial policy is that we want a newspaper that can be trusted by everybody. But the true side of trust is that we give in-depth coverage to northern issues. In-depth coverage, however, is different from supporting the northern agenda. These are two different things. For instance, if you want to read anything about the politics in Katsina, the first newspaper to read is *The Trust*. If you want to read about polio crisis in any part of the world, the place to read in-depth report where reporters go to the grassroots to do serious investigation is *The Trust* ."This also implies that the editorial policy of *The Trust* influenced its coverage of political crisis situations.

4.4.1 Summary of data analysis for Research Question Four

To answer research question four, it is evident that the editorial policies of the selected newspapers influenced their performance in covering political crisis situations both positively and negatively. For instance, some of the selected newspapers, like *The Guardian* and *The Punch*, whose editorial policies are strictly based on journalistic principles of truth, fairness and balance in all issues, were a bit more neutral in covering the crisis situations. Others, like *The Sun* and *Tribune*, whose editorial policies encouraged human interest or readers taste had more sensational reports; and the *Daily Trust* whose editorial policy accommodated the religious sentiments of the owners, focused more on the north, restricted the coverage of certain issues, especially those that have to do with alcoholic products and cigarette. In other words, the

editorial policies of these other newspapers tend to have a negative influence on their performance in covering political crisis situations.

This, therefore, supports the integrated process model of framing (discussed in Chapter Two) which identifies editorial policies and news values as the internal factors that affect frame-building in the newsroom. In other words, newspapers frame stories based on the direction of their editorial policies, which are the guiding principles for their operations. To this end, the performance of the Nigerian press in political crisis situations was greatly influenced by the editorial policies of the newspapers set up by the proprietors through the management, and not by the direct owners' interference.

4.5 Research Question Five

What other relevant factors influenced the selected newspapers' performance during the political crisis situations?

Responses of the interviewees indicated that a number of factors, aside ownership and editorial policies, influenced the selected newspapers' performance during the political crisis situations. These factors include ethnicity or sectional interest, business environment or financial strength of a newspaper, production deadline, poor electricity supply and poor communication signals.

Table 4.20: Other factors that possibly influenced the performance of the newspapers

Newspaper	Theme: Factors that possibly influence the newspapers' coverage of the three political crisis situations
	Factors
Daily Trust	Ethnicity or sectional interest Access to Information and Communication Signals Proximity, prominence and urgency of reports
The Punch	Business environment/funding Access to information and communication signals
The Sun	Access to Information and Communication Signals Production Deadline and Poor Electricity Supply
The Guardian	Ethnicity or sectional interest
Nigerian Tribune	Business environment/funding

Source: In-depth interviews, 2014

Data contained in table 4.19 are interpreted as follow:

Ethnicity or sectional interest

This implies a newspaper reporting certain issues in favour of the ethnic group of its owners and reporting same against other ethnic group(s). The use of hate radio to engineer the Rwandan genocide involving the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups (discussed in Chapter Two) is a good example. Some of the respondents admitted that ethnicity or sectional interest affected Nigerian press coverage of political crisis situations. Those who shared this view were the political editors of the *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian*. This goes against the public service model of press performance in which, according to McQuail (2010), the right to freedom of publication is accompanied by obligations to the wider society that go beyond self-interest.

To the *Daily Trust*, ethnicity is a factor that affected newspapers' performance in political crisis coverage. This accounts for the ethnic coloration of the selected crisis situations. For instance, the *Daily Trust*, being a northern paper, was sympathetic to former President Yar'Adua, even when he was absent from office without officially transmitting power to his deputy. Thus, the *Daily Trust* had the highest number of favourable (positive) reports on Yar'Adua's side as against its negative and neutral frames on the issue, whereas it joined other newspapers to oppose former President Obasanjo's third term bid. The political editor of the newspaper admitted: "Ethnicity affects reportage of issues by Nigerian press. Honestly, we cannot run away from that. As a good journalist, one should try to distance oneself from some of these sentiments as much as possible. But sometimes, the political issues out there tend to affect us as reporters, even though we try as much as possible to distance ourselves."

Business environment / funding

This factor has to do with the economic viability of a newspaper. In other words, an economically viable and financially stable newspaper can afford to be fearless and down-to-earth in its treatment of stories without succumbing to pressure from any quarters while a financial dependent newspaper may easily bow to pressure

from certain quarters, especially who support it financially, either through advertisement, supplement or direct funding in handling stories that comes from those quarters. This factor negates the public service model of press performance as well as the social responsibility theory of the press, while it supports the profit making model. Respondents who said the business environment or funding influence their coverage of political crisis situations include the editors of the *Nigerian Tribune* and *The Punch*. While *Tribune* editors saw funding as a major challenge to their performance, *The Punch* editors saw it as an asset which strengthens the newspaper (*Punch*) to be independent since it is economically viable and financially stable.

Nigerian Tribune's political editor cited the business environment or the financial strength of a newspaper company as a major factor that affected performance in political crisis situations. To him, when a newspaper is unable to meet its financial obligations in terms of payment of staff salaries, allowances and other running costs, such a newspaper cannot be free from external influence in its reportage of issues, especially when such external forces are willing to assist the paper either through advertisements or direct funding. "Generally, the business environment is one of the problems. Some of the papers were not making it good in terms of business, in terms of adverts, in terms of paying salaries, in terms of meeting their basic needs business wise. So, those factors would undermine the consistency of any publisher in defending the interest of the people at all times." The view of the political editor of the *Nigerian Tribune* was corroborated by the Editor Daily, who said:

Our major challenge is funding, because we need money. *Tribune* circulates in every part of the country, and we have to get there very early in the morning. We need to print in different locations, just like some newspapers owned by politicians and some rich and influential people, that have enormous resources, and some of them have printing machines, in at least three different locations, nationwide like Lagos, Abuja and one in the South-South, whereas, *Tribune* has one here in Ibadan.

Conversely, *The Punch* saw the business environment as an impetus that enhanced its performance in reporting political crisis situations as, according to its political editor and the Sunday editor, the newspaper was financially independent and

stable in meeting its obligations which was why its staff had no reason to be influenced by external forces through financial inducement. “The only thing that affected us, and that positively, is that, we are being paid on time; even when you have claims to make, it is approved; before you go on a journey, you have the money approved and paid to you. Thus, the idea of getting to an event and being induced or influenced by monetary gratification does not arise,” *The Punch* political editor said.

Proximity, prominence and urgency of reports

Newspapers cover issues in their immediate environment more elaborately than it covers issues from distant locations. Also, the personalities involved in event/issues dictate the level of its reportage as well as how timely the issue/event is (the urgency involved). This view was shared by the editor of the *Daily Trust*.

Proximity is a factor. This is because you have to cover events that are close to the people who read you. You also consider prominence; that is a serious issue. Then you look at the urgency. For instance, if two councillors fight in a local government, I may just give it two paragraphs but if two senators exchange blows at the National Assembly, that is a front page story. Really, we give attention to political stories that are closer or affect the people that read our newspaper who are mainly from the north.

Access to information and communication signals

Other factors that affected press performance included journalists’ access to information from official sources as well as access to modern communication facilities such as the Internet. *The Punch* editor and her *Sun*’s counterpart listed, respectively, access to information and communication signals as factors affecting press performance. According to Ogunseye,

I think the biggest challenge at the moment, not just in *Punch* but for every newspaper in Nigeria, is the freedom of information. You still find that it is difficult to get crucial information. The people that should give the information are not willing to and you find that the people that are willing are not the people who should be talking. The most recent example is this Chibok crisis where a particular government official said the government will negotiate and another government official said the government will not negotiate. The Chibok crisis just brought to light the information crisis in Nigeria as it is difficult to get information, especially when it comes to the federal government. Really, I think that is the biggest challenge every journalist is facing.

“Communication is also a problem. There is a challenge with the internet, and it is not peculiar to *The Sun*. If the server is down, it affects everybody on that network and we depend on the internet to gather and process news from our reporters nationwide. We also rely on the internet to transmit the production materials from the headquarters to our other press designations in Aba and Abuja where we print simultaneously with Lagos. So, Internet connectivity is a problem”, *Daily Trust* editor, Ukeh, said.

Production deadline and poor electricity supply

A newspaper report that is time bound, for instance, cannot get much attention and elaborate treatment if such arrived late (not meeting production deadline) even if it is considered for usage at a later date. This factor as well as unstable electricity supplies in the country all combined to affect press performance in selected political crisis situations. These were the views shared by *The Sun* editors.

The Sun's political editor mentioned production deadline as a factor that affected its performance in reporting political crisis situations. “In our own case, the only thing that would affect your story is if it came late, that is, after production deadline, and there is no way it could be accommodated in that particular edition. Other than that, I have not really seen anything that has actually affected our coverage of political crises,” *The Sun's* editor said. By implication, when a report failed to meet the production deadline, it was dropped and that would affect the prominence it would

get even if it was used in subsequent editions. The Editor, Ukeh, however listed unstable public electricity supply and communication signals (internet network) as factors that affected newspapers performance in covering political crisis situations. “First is the issue of electricity. Even if there is public power supply, by 7pm we switch the generating set and it will run till the next morning because that is when the main operation at the press starts and there shouldn’t be a break. So much money goes into this.

4.5.1 Summary of data analysis for Research Question Five

To answer research question five, ethnicity or sectional interest, business environment or financial standing of a newspaper, as well as production deadline were the other factors that affected the selected newspapers’ performance during the political crisis situations. Other factors included difficulty in accessing information from official sources, poor electricity supply, and poor communication signals (internet access).

4.6 Test of Hypotheses

4.6.1 Test of Hypothesis One (Ho₁):

Ho: There is no significant difference in the framing of political crisis situations in Nigeria among the selected Nigerian newspapers.

The test of hypotheses was done via **SPSS Statistics, version 17.0**. Steps towards calculations (test of respective hypotheses) are manually shown or displayed in order to aid understanding of how testable variables were arrived at, and hence, computed. Tables 4.21A to 4.21C show how the variables for the test of Hypotheses One and Two were obtained. Nevertheless, the negative frames of the respective (selected) newspapers as shown in Table 21.C were combined with data (ratings of the newspapers’ editorial policy/strength) obtained via interviews with the editors of the selected newspapers for the test of Hypothesis Three.

Table 4.21a: Step 1 of 4 Cumulative table –frequency and percentages of frames and neutrality

Political crises	Slant	Daily Trust	Punch	The Sun	Guardian	Tribune
OBJ Third Term Agenda	Neutral	42 (53.2%)	16 (32%)	54 (49.1%)	39 (79.6%)	33 (47.1%)
	Positive	24 (30.4%)	9 (18%)	7 (6.4%)	1 (2.0%)	0 (0%)
	Negative	13 (16.4%)	25 (50%)	49 (44.5%)	9 (18.4%)	37 (52.9%)
	Total	79 (100%)	50 (100%)	110 (100%)	49 (100%)	70 (100%)
Yar'Adua illness						
Yar'Adua illness	Neutral	26 (18.8%)	20 (40%)	16 (20.2%)	10 (14.7%)	27 (31.8%)
	Positive	77 (55.8%)	10 (20%)	30 (38%)	3 (4.4%)	10 (11%)
	Negative	35 (25.4%)	20 (40%)	33 (41.8%)	55(80.9%)	48 (56.4%)
	Total	135 (100%)	50 (100%)	79 (100%)	68 (100%)	85 (100%)
Post-Election Violence						
Post-Election Violence	Neutral	59 (33%)	19 (70.4%)	41 (36.3%)	4 (14.3%)	1 (10%)
	Positive	27 (15%)	2 (7.4%)	21 (18.6%)	0 (%)	0 (0%)
	Negative	93 (52%)	6 (22.2%)	51 (45.1%)	24 (85.7%)	9 (90%)
	Total	179 (100)	27	113	28 (100)	10 (100%)

Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Table 4.21a—the cumulative frequency and respective percentages of the direction or otherwise of coded newspaper contents' on the various political situations in Nigeria that were studied are calculated for all the newspapers. This is step one of three towards the appropriate test of hypotheses one (H_{o1}) and two (H_{o2}).

Table 4.21b -: Step 2 of 4 Cumulative table showing only percentages of frames and Neutrality

Newspaper	Political situation	Frames		Neutral	%
		Positive	Negative		
Daily Trust	OBJ Third Term Agenda	30.4	16.4	53.2	100
	Yar'Adua's illness	55.8	25.4	18.8	100
	Post-Election Protests	15.0	52.0	33.0	100
Punch	OBJ Third Term Agenda	18.0	50.0	32.0	100
	Yar'Adua's illness	20.0	40.0	40.0	100
	Post-Election Protests	7.4	45.1	70.4	100
Sun	OBJ Third Term Agenda	6.4	44.5	49.1	100
	Yar'Adua's illness	38.0	41.8	20.2	100
	Post-Election Protests	18.6	45.1	36.3	100
Guardian	OBJ Third Term Agenda	2.0	18.4	79.6	100
	Yar'Adua's illness	4.4	80.9	14.7	100
	Post-Election Protests	0	85.7	14.3	100
Tribune	OBJ Third Term Agenda	0	52.9	47.1	100
	Yar'Adua's illness	11.8	56.4	31.8	100
	Post-Election Protests	0	90.0	10.0	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2014

Table 4.21b is cumulative and shows only the respective percentages of frames and Neutrality, as determined from the respective frequencies. This is the step 2 of the 3 step process of the test of hypotheses one (H_{01}) and two (H_{02}). While the total for coded contents that are neutral are avoided, the total for each frame –positive and negative- of all the newspapers studied is obtained and divided by 3 –the total number

of political crisis situations studied. The answer to the above stated process and calculation for the respective newspapers is therefore used as the variable towards the respective test of hypotheses one (Ho₁) and two (Ho₂).

Table 4.21c: Step 3 of 4 –Overall positive frames and overall negative frames

	Positive frames	Negative frames	Total
Daily Trust	33.7	31.3	65.0
Punch	15.1	45.0	60.1
Sun	21.0	43.8	64.8
Guardian	2.1	61.7	63.8
Tribune	3.9	66.4	70.3
Total	75.8	248.2	324.0

Table 4.21c simply shows the variations in the frames of the selected newspapers. The *Daily Trust* had overall positive frames of 33.7% and overall negative frames of 31.3% while The *Punch* has 15.1% overall positive frames and 45% overall negative frames. The *Sun* has 21% overall positive frames and 43.8% overall negative frames while The *Guardian* has 2.1% overall positive frames and 66.7% overall negative frames. Nigerian *Tribune* has 3.9% overall positive frames and 66.4% overall negative frames. The data for each newspaper (percentages of frames) do not have any direct implication until being subjected to contingency test as shown Table 4.21c.1- 4.21.c.10 below.

Table 4.21c.1: Contingency test of frames between Daily Trust and Punch -Ho₁

	Positive frames	Negative Frames	Total
Daily Trust	a 33.7	b 31.3	65.0
Punch	c 15.1	d 45.0	60.1
Total	a+c 48.8	b+d 76.3	a+c+b+d 125.1

$$X^2 = (a+b+c+d) (ad-bc)^2 / (a+b) (c+d) (b+d) (a+c)$$

$$= 125.1 [(33.7) (45.0) - (31.3) (15.1)]^2 / (65.0) (60.1) (76.3) (48.8)$$

$$\begin{aligned}
&= 125.1 [1516.5 - 472.63]^2 / 14545618 \\
&= 125.1 [1043.87]^2 / 14545618 \\
&= 125.1 [1089664.6] / 14545618 \\
&= 130588.137 / 14545618 \\
&= 8.98
\end{aligned}$$

P < 0.05

Details of the calculation of the test of positive and negative frames between *Daily Trust* and *Punch* in Table 4.21c1 show that $X^2 = 8.98 = P < 0.05$. This means there is Significant Difference between the positive and negative frames of *Daily Trust* and *Punch*.

Table 4.21c.2: Contingency test of frames between Punch and Sun –Ho₁

	Positive frames	Negative Frames	Total
Punch	15.1	45.0	60.1
Sun	21.0	43.8	64.8
Total	36.1	88.8	124.9

$$\begin{aligned}
X^2 &= (a+b+c+d) (ad-bc)^2 / (a+b) (c+d) (b+d) (a+c) \\
&= 124.9 [(15.1)(43.8) - (45.0)(21.0)]^2 / (60.1)(64.8)(88.8)(36.1) \\
&= 124.9 [(661.38)-(945)]^2 / 12484457 \\
&= 124.9 [-283.62]^2 / 12484457 \\
&= 124.9 [80440.304] / 12484457 \\
&= 10046993.97 / 12484457 \\
&= \mathbf{0.804}
\end{aligned}$$

In Table 4.21c2, details of the calculation of the test of positive and negative frames between *Punch* and *Sun* show that $X^2 = 0.804 = P < 0.05$. This means there is No Significant Difference between the positive and negative frames of *Punch* and *Sun*.

Table 4.21.c.3: Contingency test of frames between Sun and Guardian –Ho₁

	Positive frames	Negative Frames	Total
Sun	21.0	43.8	64.8
Guardian	2.1	61.7	63.8
Total	23.1	105.5	128.6

$$\begin{aligned}
 X^2 &= 128.6 [(21.0)(61.7) - (43.8)(2.1)]^2 / (64.8) (63.8) (105.5) (23.1) \\
 &= 128.6 [1295.7 - 91.98]^2 / 10075349.59 \\
 &= 128.6 [1203.72] / 10075349.59 \\
 &= 128.6 [1448941.8] / 10075349.59 \\
 &= 186333920.4 / 10075349.59
 \end{aligned}$$

$$= 18.49 = P < 0.05$$

In Table 4.21c.3, details of the calculation of the test of positive and negative frames between *Sun* and *Guardian* show that $X^2=18.49 =P < 0.05$. This means there is Significant Difference between the positive and negative frames of *Sun* and *Guardian*

Table 4.21.c.4: Contingency test of frames between Guardian and Tribune – Ho₁

	Positive frames	Negative Frames	Total
Guardian	2.1	61.7	63.8
Tribune	3.9	66.4	70.3
Total	6.0	128.1	134.1

$$\begin{aligned}
 X^2 &= (a+b+c+d) (ad-bc)^2 / (a+b) (c+d) (b+d) (a+c) \\
 &= 134.1 [(2.1) (66.4) - (61.7) (3.9)]^2 / (63.8) (70.3) (128.1) (6.0) \\
 &= 134.1 [139.44 - 240.63]^2 / 3447278.604 \\
 &= 134.1 [-101.19]^2 / 3447278.60 \\
 &= 134.1 [10239.416]^2 / 3447278.604 \\
 &= 1373105.7/ 3447278.604 \\
 &= 0.398 = P > 0.05
 \end{aligned}$$

In Table 4.21c.4, details of the calculation of the test of positive and negative frames between *Guardian* and *Tribune* show that $X^2 = 0.398 = P < 0.05$. This means there is **No Significant Difference** between the positive and negative frames of *Guardian* and *Tribune*.

**Table 4.21.c.5: Contingency test of frames between Tribune and Daily Trust-
Ho₁**

	Positive frames	Negative Frames	Total
Tribune	3.9	66.4	70.3
Daily Trust	33.9	31.3	65.0
Total	37.6	97.7	135.3

$$\begin{aligned}
 X^2 &= (a+b+c+d) (ad-bc)^2 / (a+b) (c+d) (b+d) (a+c) \\
 &= 135.3 [(3.9) (31.3) - (66.4) (33.7)]^2 / (70.3) (65) (97.7) (37.6) \\
 &= 135.3 [122.07 - 2237.68]^2 / 16786149.64 \\
 &= 135.3 [-2115.61]^2 / 16786149.64 \\
 &= 135.3 [4475805.672] / 16786149.64 \\
 &= 135.3 [4475805.672] / 16786149.64 \\
 &= \mathbf{36.075 = P < 0.05}
 \end{aligned}$$

In Table 4.21c.5, details of the calculation of the test of positive and negative frames between *Tribune* and *Daily Trusts* how that $X^2 = 36.075 = P < 0.05$. This means there is **Significant Difference** between the positive and negative frames of *Tribune* and *Daily Trust*.

Table 4.21.c.6: Contingency test of frames between Sun and Daily Trust – Ho₁

	Positive frames	Negative Frames	Total
Sun	21.0	43.8	64.8
Daily Trust	33.7	31.3	65.0
Total	54.7	75.1	129.8

$$\begin{aligned}
 X^2 &= (a+b+c+d) (ad-bc)^2 / (a+b) (c+d) (b+d) (a+c) \\
 &= 129.8 [(21) (31.3) - (43.8) (33.7)]^2 / (64.8) (65) (75.1) (54.7)
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
&= 129.8 [657.3 - 1476.06]^2 / 17302769.64 \\
&= 129.8 [- 818.76]^2 / 17302769.64 \\
&= 129.8 [670367.9376] / 17302769.64 \\
&= 870137534.42 / 17302769.64
\end{aligned}$$

$$\mathbf{X^2 = 5.028 P < 0.05}$$

In Table 4.21c.6, details of the calculation of the test of positive and negative frames between *Sun* and *Daily Trust* show that $\mathbf{X^2 = 5.028 = P < 0.05}$. This means there is **Significant Difference** between the positive and negative frames of *Sun* and *Daily Trust*.

Table 4.21.c.7: Contingency test of frames between Guardian and Punch – Ho₁

	Positive frames	Negative Frames	Total
Guardian	2.1	61.7	63.8
Punch	15.1	45.0	60.1
Total	17.2	106.7	123.9

$$\begin{aligned}
\mathbf{X^2} &= (a+b+c+d) (ad-bc)^2 / (a+b) (c+d) (b+d) (a+c) \\
&= 123.9 [(2.1) (45) - (61.7) (15.1)]^2 / (63.8) (60.1) (106.7) (17.2) \\
&= 123.9 [94.5 - 931.67]^2 / 7037007.551 \\
&= 123.9 [-837.17]^2 / 7037007.551 \\
&= 123.9 [700853.6089] / 7037007.551 \\
&= 86835762.14 / 7037007.551 \\
&= \mathbf{12.3 P < 0.05}
\end{aligned}$$

In Table 4.21c.7, details of the calculation of the test of positive and negative frames between *Guardian* and *Punch* show that $\mathbf{X^2 = 12.3 = P < 0.05}$. This means there is **Significant Difference** between the positive and negative frames of *Guardian* and *Punch*.

Table 4.21.c.8: Contingency test of frames between Tribune and Punch – Ho₁

	Positive frames	Negative Frames	Total
Tribune	3.9	66.4	70.3
Punch	15.1	45.0	60.1
Total	19	111.4	130.4

$$\begin{aligned}
 X^2 &= (a+b+c+d) (ad-bc)^2 / (a+b) (c+d) (b+d) (a+c) \\
 &= 130.4 [(3.9) (45) - (66.4) (15.1)]^2 / (70.3) (60.1) (111.4) (19) \\
 &= 130.4 [175.5 - 1002.64]^2 / 8942698.498 \\
 &= 130.4 [684160.5796] / 8942698.498 \\
 &= 89214539.58 / 8942698.498 \\
 &= \mathbf{9.976 P < 0.05}
 \end{aligned}$$

In Table 4.21c.8, details of the calculation of the test of positive and negative frames between *Tribune* and *Punch* show that $X^2 = 9.976 = P < 0.05$. This means there is **Significant Difference** between the positive and negative frames of *Tribune* and *Punch*.

Table 4.21.c.9: Contingency test of frames between Sun and Tribune – Ho₁

	Positive frames	Negative Frames	Total
Sun	21.0	43.8	64.8
Tribune	3.9	66.4	70.3
Total	24.9	110.2	135.1

$$\begin{aligned}
 X^2 &= (a+b+c+d) (ad-bc)^2 / (a+b) (c+d) (b+d) (a+c) \\
 &= 135.1 [(21) (66.4) - (43.8) (3.9)]^2 / (64.8) (70.3) (110.2) (24.9) \\
 &= 135.1 [1394.4 - 170.82]^2 / 12500036.25 \\
 &= 135.1 [1223.58]^2 / 12500036.25 \\
 &= 135.1 [1497148.016] / 12500036.25 \\
 &= 202264.697. / 12500036.25 \\
 &= \mathbf{16.18 P < 0.05}
 \end{aligned}$$

In Table 4.21c.9, details of the calculation of the test of positive and negative frames between *Sun* and *Tribune* show that $X^2 = 16.18 = P < 0.05$. This means there is **Significant Difference** between the positive and negative frames of *Sun* and *Tribune*.

Table 4.21.c.10: Contingency test of frames between Guardian and Daily Trust – H_{01}

	Positive frames	Negative Frames	Total
Guardian	2.1	61.7	63.8
Daily Trust	33.7	31.3	65.0
Total	35.8	93.0	128.8

$$\begin{aligned}
 X^2 &= (a+b+c+d) (ad-bc)^2 / (a+b) (c+d) (b+d) (a+c) \\
 &= 128.8 [(2.1) (31.3) - (61.7) (33.7)]^2 / (63.8) (65) (93) (35.8) \\
 &= 128.8 [65.73 - 2079.29]^2 / 13807021.8 \\
 &= 128.8 [-2013.56]^2 / 13807021.8 \\
 &= 128.8 [4054423.874] / 13807021.8 \\
 &= 522209.795 / 13807021.8 \\
 &= \mathbf{37.82 P < 0.05}
 \end{aligned}$$

In Table 4.21c.10, details of the calculation of the test of positive and negative frames between *Guardian* and *Daily Trust* show that $X^2 = 37.82 = P < 0.05$. This means there is **Significant Difference** between the positive and negative frames of *Guardian* and *Daily Trust*.

**Table 4.22: -Cumulative result of test of hypothesis one via SPSS Statistics 17.0 -
df = (c-1) (r-1) = (1) (2) = 2[Each selected newspaper tested against each of the other
four]**

Test series	Newspapers	Result	Interpretation
1	Daily Trust/Punch	8.98 =P<0.05	Significant Difference
2	Punch/Sun	0.804 =P>0.05	No Significant Difference
3	Sun/Guardian	18.49 =P<0.05	Significant Difference
4	Guardian/Tribune	0.398 =P>0.05	No Significant Difference
5	Tribune/Daily Trust	36.075 =P<0.05	Significant Difference
6	Sun/Daily Trust	5.028 =P<0.05	Significant Difference
7	Guardian/Punch	12.3 =P<0.05	Significant Difference
8	Tribune/Punch	9.976 =P<0.05	Significant Difference
9	Sun/Tribune	16.18 =P<0.05	Significant Difference
10	Guardian/Daily Trust	37.82 =P<0.05	Significant Difference

Table 4.22 -cumulative result of test of hypothesis two, shows the result of the test of Hypothesis one (H_{01}). Variables used for the test are obtained from tables 17 A, B, and C above. The same details of this test of hypothesis are shown in Appendix 6A-J.

4.6.2 Test of Hypothesis Two: H_{02}

Ho: There is no significant imbalance between positive framing and negative framing of political crisis situations in the selected Nigerian newspapers

Table 4.23: Step 4a: Test of Ho₂: via SPSS Statistics, version 17.0

Observed	Expected	(O - E)	(O - E) ²	(O - E) ² /E
33.7	20	13.7	187.69	9.3845
31.3	60	-28.7	823.69	13.72817
15.1	20	-4.9	24.01	1.2005
45.0	60	-15.0	225.0	3.75
21.0	20	1	1	0.05
43.8	60	-16.2	262.44	4.374
2.1	20	-17.9	320.41	16.0205
61.7	60	1.7	2.89	0.04817
3.9	20	-16.1	259.21	12.9605
66.4	60	6.4	40.96	0.6827

Based on data in table 4.23 above contains test of Hypothesis two (Ho₂) as **computed data via SPSS Statistics, version 17.0** Degree of Freedom = (c-1) (r-1) = (1) (4) = 4; the result of the test of Hypothesis two (Ho₂) show that $X^2 = 62.199 = P < 0.05$. This means that there is a significant imbalance between positive framing and negative framing of political crisis situations in the selected Nigerian newspapers. Hypothesis two (Ho₂) is therefore rejected.

4.6.3 Test of Hypothesis Three: Ho₃

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the editorial policies of the selected newspapers and their performance during political crisis situations.

Table 4.24a: Test of relationship between editorial policy and performance—*Daily Trust*

	Observed	Expected	(O - E)	(O - E) ²	(O - E) ² /E
Editorial Strength	6	10	-4	16	2.7
Performance	31.3	60	-28.7	823.7	13.7
Total	37.3	70			16.4

$$X^2 = 16.4$$

Test of relationship between editorial policy and performance – Daily Trust via SPSS Statistics, version 17.0 -df = (c-1) (r-1) = (1) (2) = 2; $\chi^2 = 16.4 = P < 0.05 = \text{Sig. Difference} = \text{No Sig. Relationship.}$

Table 4.24b: Test of relationship between editorial policy and performance - *Punch*

	Observed	Expected	(O - E)	(O - E) ²	(O - E) ² /E
Editorial Strength	10	10	0	0	0
Performance	45	60	-15	225	5
Total	55	70			5.0

$\chi^2 = 5.0$

Test of relationship between editorial policy and performance – Punch via SPSS Statistics, version 17.0 -df = (c-1) (r-1) = (1) (2) = 2; $\chi^2 = 5.0 = P < 0.05 = \text{Sig. Difference} = \text{No Sig. Relationship.}$ See appendix 7B for manual details of the test.

Table 4.24c: Test of relationship between editorial policy and performance - *Sun*

	Observed	Expected	(O - E)	(O - E) ²	(O - E) ² /E
Editorial Strength	8	10	-2	4	0.5
Performance	43.8	60	-16.2	262.44	6.0
	51.8	70			6.5

$\chi^2 = 6.5$

Test of relationship between editorial policy and performance – Sun via SPSS Statistics, version 17.0 -df = (c-1) (r-1) = (1) (2) = 2; $\chi^2 = 6.5 = P < 0.05 = \text{Sig. Difference} = \text{No Sig. Relationship.}$

Table 4.24d: Test of relationship between editorial policy and performance - *Guardian*

	Observed	Expected	(O - E)	(O - E) ²	(O - E) ² /E
Editorial Strength	10	10	0	0	0
Performance	61.7	60	1.7	2.89	0.05
Total	71.1	70			0.05

$\chi^2 = 0.05$

Test of relationship between editorial policy and performance –Guardian
via SPSS Statistics, version 17.0 -df = (c-1) (r-1) = (1) (2) = 2; $\chi^2 = 0.05 = P > 0.05 =$
No Sig. Difference = Sig. Relationship.

**Table 4.24e: Test of relationship between editorial policy and performance -
*Tribune***

	Observed	Expected	(O - E)	(O - E) ²	(O - E) ² /E
Editorial Strength	8	10	-2	4	0.5
Performance	66.4	60	6.4	41	0.7
Total	74.4	70			1.2

$\chi^2 = 1.2$

Test of relationship between editorial policy and performance –Tribune
via SPSS Statistics 17.0 -df = (c-1) (r-1) = (1) (2) = 2; $\chi^2 = 1.2 = P > 0.05 =$ No Sig.
Difference = Sig. Relationship.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated the performance of the Nigerian press in selected political crisis situations between 2005 and 2011. Data were collected from both the content of the selected newspapers and the interviews with the editors of the newspapers thus necessitating the use of content analysis and in-depth interviews as the research design. This chapter therefore presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations, as well as suggestions for further studies.

5.1 Summary of findings

In gathering and analysing data for this study, it was discovered that the Nigerian press reported the political crisis situations to a great extent as issues about the crises featured very frequently in the newspapers editions. Of the three crisis situations investigated, the Late President Yar'Adua's illness featured most with a total score of 37% followed by the President Obasanjo's third term bid and 2011 Post-election protests scoring 31.5% each. This confirms one of the factors that determine news worthiness: conflicts, in which a crisis situation is more news worthy than a peaceful situation as evidenced in the empirical studies reviewed in Chapter Two of this study where the media, in the entire crises studied, covered them elaborately. This supports the popular view, that negative stories sell more than the positive ones. However, the frequency of the reports notwithstanding, the prominence accorded the reports was below average in terms of placement and size. This is because more reports were published on the inside pages of the newspapers than those placed on the front and back pages. Also, the reports that were short in size outweighed those that were of large and medium sizes.

An analysis of the data for research question two showed that Nigerian press was more biased than neutral in framing their reports on the selected political crisis situations. That their negative frames outnumbered their neutral and positive frames further confirmed their subjectivity in reporting political crisis situations. In other words, the selected newspapers played up the negative side of the crises. For instance,

views of those opposed to President Obasanjo's third term bid and Yar'Adua's absence from office without proper handing over, enjoyed more prominence in the newspapers than those in favour of the former leaders.

From the data collected for the study, it was discovered that ownership factor did not play a significant role in the performance of Nigerian press in political crisis situations. Rather, the decision on what to publish and how to publish was left to the respective managements of the newspapers. The freedom of the selected newspapers from ownership influence in reporting the political crisis situations is probably due to the readers' consideration, which in turn, places profit interest above propaganda, and public service under the models of press performance discussed earlier. Responses of the editors showed that they enjoyed editorial freedom because their publishers see them as professionals who have the technical-know-how to decide what to publish that would make their respective newspapers as competitive as their counterparts in the industry.

In answering research question four, it was found that the editorial policies of Nigerian newspapers had a great influence on their performance in reporting political crisis situations. Some of the selected newspapers that had rigid editorial policies on fairness and balance were a bit more neutral in their reportage of the situations, while those whose editorial policies encouraged human interest or readers taste were a bit more sensational in their reportage of the crisis situations.

The analysis of research question five which sought to establish other relevant factors that influenced the selected newspapers performance during the political crisis situations revealed that ethnicity or sectional interest, business environment or financial standing of the newspapers, as well as production deadline combined to influence press performance during political crisis situations. Other factors included proximity, prominence, urgency of the stories, access to information from official sources as well as internet access. Since Nigerian's geographical, cultural and religious structures can be viewed along north-south dichotomy, newspapers of northern origin tend to favour the cause of northerners. Also, a financially independent newspaper tends to be freer from external influence than financially unstable ones. This study found that ethnicity and sectional interest influenced press

performance and this was also found in other studies. For instance, the negative propaganda by the hate radio that led to Rwandan genocide is a ready example at hand. The radio propaganda was used to amplify the suspicion, mistrust and hatred between the ethnic groups of Hutus and Tustis.

Results of the test of hypothesis one indicate that there is a significant difference in the framing of political crisis situations in Nigeria among the selected newspapers. This is because the positive, negative and neutral frames enjoyed varying degrees of percentage in the newspaper's reports. Similarly, results of the test of hypothesis two indicate a significance imbalance between the positive framing and negative framing of the political crisis situations in the selected newspapers.

Result of the test of hypothesis three shows a significant relationship between the editorial policy and the performance of *The Guardian* and *Tribune* newspapers, while it establishes a significant difference between the editorial policy and the performance of *The Punch*, *The Sun* and *Daily Trust* newspapers.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn: Nigerian press performed below average during the political crisis situations. Media framing which involves selection, emphasis and exclusion of items is evident in political crisis situations. It is also concluded that ownership had no significant influence on press performance in the selected political situations. Rather, it is the editorial policies of the respective newspapers that guided their operations during the political crisis situations. Editorial policies that are based on business interest or the readers' taste encouraged sensationalism. Although this supported the commercial laissez-faire (profit) model of press performance discussed in chapter two, it, however, negated the social responsibility theory of the media discussed in the same chapter. Beyond ownership and editorial policy, ethnicity or sectional interest, business environment or financial standing of the newspapers, production deadline, as well as poor access to information and communication signals had influence on their performance during the political crisis situations.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Newspaper proprietors, especially those who are not journalists or part of the editorial staff, should refrain from interfering in newspaper operations and allow the editorial policies set up as grand rules to guide the editorial team in the day to day running of the organisations.
2. Editorial policies should be based on core journalistic values and ethics such as truth, objectivity, fairness and balance. Such policies should not be influenced by the proprietor's political, ethnic or religious sentiments.
3. To enhance better performance of the press, public interest should override the profit interest of the owners in the day to day running of the newspapers. Thus, the press should go beyond primordial sectional interest of the political groups to an all-encompassing national interest by engaging the political class and the general public in robust debates towards solving national problems.
4. Journalists, especially political reporters and editors, should be trained regularly and re-orientated on the core values of journalism and principles to enhance better performance.

5.4 Suggestions for further studies

This study evaluated the Nigerian press performance in selected political crisis situations, focusing mainly on Nigerian newspapers. Newspaper ownership in Nigeria, as it is today, is lopsided in terms of public (government)/private classification as most of the viable newspapers in the country are privately-owned, while only a few are owned by some state governments. In contrast, ownership of the broadcast industry is dominated by the government as almost all the state governments own radio and television stations, with the federal government controlling the largest number of radio and television networks in the country. A sizeable number of radio and television stations are, however, being run by private individuals. By implication, a further study on media performance will have a basis for comparison in terms of ownership influence on the broadcast media performance in crisis situations.

Furthermore, the crisis situations selected for this study are by no means exhaustive. Other crisis situations that have political, economic and security implications for the peaceful co-existence of the country can be explored in further studies of press performance.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1A: showing sampling frame of newspaper editions from Nov. 1 2005 to May 31, 2006(Actual numbers picked are highlighted).

<i>Days of the Month</i>	Nov 2005	Dec 2005	Jan 2006	Feb 2006	Mar 2006	Apr 2006	May 2006
1.	001	031	062	093	121	152	182
2.	002	032	063	094	122	153	183
3.	003	033	064	095	123	154	184
4.	004	034	065	096	124	155	185
5.	005	035	066	097	125	156	186
6.	006	036	067	098	126	157	187
7.	007	037	068	099	127	158	188
8.	008	038	069	100	128	159	189
9.	009	039	070	101	129	160	190
10.	010	040	071	002	130	161	191
11.	011	041	072	103	131	162	192
12.	012	042	073	104	132	163	193
13.	013	043	074	105	133	164	194
14.	014	044	075	106	134	165	195
15.	015	045	076	107	135	166	196
16.	016	046	077	108	136	167	197
17.	017	047	078	109	137	168	198
18.	018	048	079	110	138	169	199
19.	019	049	080	111	139	170	200
20.	020	050	081	112	140	171	201
21.	021	051	082	113	141	172	202
22.	022	052	083	114	142	173	203
23.	023	053	084	115	143	174	204
24.	024	054	085	116	144	175	205
25.	025	055	086	117	145	176	206
26.	026	056	087	118	146	177	207
27.	027	057	088	119	147	178	208
28.	028	058	089	120	148	179	209
29.	029	059	090		149	180	210
30.	030	060	091		150	181	211
31.		061	092		151		212

ACTUAL SAMPLE PICKED

1. 005 November 5, 2005
2. 010 November 10, 2005
3. 015 November 15, 2005
4. 020 November 20, 2005
5. 025 November 25, 2005
6. 030 November 30, 2005
7. 035 December 5, 2005
8. 040 December 10, 2005
9. 045 December 15, 2005
10. 050 December 20, 2005
11. 055 December 25, 2005
12. 060 December 30, 2005
13. 065 January 4, 2006
14. 070 January 9, 2006
15. 075 January 14, 2006
16. 080 January 19, 2006
17. 085 January 24, 2006
18. 090 January 29, 2006
19. 095 February 3, 2006
20. 100 February 8, 2006
21. 105 February 13, 2006
22. 110 February 18, 2006
23. 115 February 23, 2006
24. 120 February 28, 2006
25. 125 March 5, 2006
26. 130 March 10, 2006
27. 135 March 15, 2006
28. 140 March 20, 2006
29. 145 March 25, 2006
30. 150 March 30, 2006
31. 155 April 4, 2006
32. 160 April 9, 2006
33. 165 April 14, 2006
34. 170 April 19, 2006
35. 175 April 24, 2006
36. 180 April 29, 2006
37. 185 May 4, 2006
38. 190 May 9, 2006
39. 195 May 14, 2006
40. 200 May 19, 2006
41. 205 May 24, 2006
42. 210 May 29, 2006

Appendix 1B: showing sampling frame of newspaper editions from Nov. 23, 2009 to May 23, 2010(Actual numbers picked are highlighted).

<i>Days of the Month</i>	Nov 2009	Dec 2009	Jan 2010	Feb 2010	Mar 2010	Apr 2010	May 2010
1.		009	040	071	099	130	160
2.		010	041	072	100	131	161
3.		011	042	073	101	132	162
4.		012	043	074	102	133	163
5.		013	044	075	103	134	164
6.		014	045	076	104	135	165
7.		015	046	077	105	136	166
8.		016	047	078	106	137	167
9.		017	048	079	107	138	168
10.		018	049	080	108	139	169
11.		019	050	081	109	140	170
12.		020	051	082	110	141	171
13.		021	052	083	111	142	172
14.		022	053	084	112	143	173
15.		023	054	085	113	144	174
16.		024	055	086	114	145	175
17.		025	056	087	115	146	176
18.		026	057	088	116	147	177
19.		027	058	089	117	148	178
20.		028	059	090	118	149	179
21.		029	060	091	119	150	180
22.		030	061	092	120	151	181
23.	001	031	062	093	121	152	187
24.	002	032	063	094	122	153	
25.	003	033	064	095	123	154	
26.	004	034	065	096	124	155	
27.	005	035	066	097	125	156	
28.	006	036	067	098	126	157	
29.	007	037	068		127	158	
30.	008	038	069		128	159	
31.		039	070		129		

ACTUAL SAMPLE PICKED

1. 005 November 27, 2009
2. 010 December 2, 2009
3. 015 December 7, 2009
4. 020 December 12, 2009
5. 025 December 17, 2009
6. 030 December 22, 2009
7. 035 December 27, 2009
8. 040 January 1, 2010
9. 045 January 6, 2010
10. 050 January 11, 2010
11. 055 January 16, 2010
12. 060 January 21, 2010
13. 065 January 26, 2010
14. 070 January 31, 2010
15. 075 February 5, 2010
16. 080 February 10, 2010
17. 085 February 15, 2010
18. 090 February 20, 2010
19. 095 February 25, 2010
20. 100 March 2, 2010
21. 105 March 7, 2010
22. 110 March 12, 2010
23. 115 March 17, 2010
24. 120 March 22, 2010
25. 125 March 27, 2010
26. 130 April 1, 2010
27. 135 April 6, 2010
28. 140 April 11, 2010
29. 145 April 16, 2010
30. 150 April 21, 2010
31. 155 April 26, 2010
32. 160 May 1, 2010
33. 165 May 6, 2010
34. 170 May 11, 2010
35. 175 May 16, 2010
36. 180 May 21, 2010

Appendix 1C: showing sampling frame of newspaper editions from April 17, to May 30, 2011(Actual numbers picked are highlighted).

Days of the Month	April 2011	May 2011
1.		015
2.		016
3.		017
4.		018
5.		019
6.		020
7.		021
8.		022
9.		023
10.		024
11.		025
12.		026
13.		027
14.		028
15.		029
16.		030
17.	001	031
18.	002	032
19.	003	033
20.	004	034
21.	005	035
22.	006	036
23.	007	037
24.	008	038
25.	009	039
26.	010	040
27.	011	041
28.	012	042
29.	013	043
30.	014	044

ACTUAL SAMPLE PICKED

1. 001 April 17, 2011
2. 003 April 19, 2011
3. 005 April 21, 2011
4. 007 April 23, 2011
5. 009 April 25, 2011
6. 011 April 27, 2011
7. 013 April 29, 2011
8. 015 May 1, 2011
9. 017 May 3, 2011
10. 019 May 5, 2011
11. 021 May 7, 2011
12. 023 May 9, 2011
13. 025 May 11, 2011
14. 027 May 13, 2011
15. 029 May 15, 2011
16. 031 May 17, 2011
17. 033 May 19, 2011
18. 035 May 21, 2011
19. 037 May 23, 2011
20. 039 May 25, 2011
21. 041 May 27, 2011
22. 043 May 29, 2011

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Appendix 2a: Content Analysis Coding Sheet

Newspaper:		Date Published:						Analyst:	
UNITS OF ANALYSIS		CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS							
		FREQUENCY Total Number of Reports	PROMINENCE			DIRECTION			
			<i>POSITION</i>			<i>SIZE</i>			<i>NEUTRAL</i>
FrontPage	Back Page	Inside Page	Large	Medium	Small		Positive	Negative	
1	News Stories								
2	Feature Article								
3	Opinion Article								
4	Editorial Comment								
5	Letter/ Text Messages to-the- Editor								
6	Pictures								
7	Cartoon								
8	Retractions								
9	Others								

Appendix 2B: Coders Instructions Guide

The instructions below serve as a guide in completing the coding sheet.

A. NEWSPAPER IDENTITY

- (i) **Name:** particular name of newspaper being coded should be written in the space provided.
- (ii) **Date of publication:** The day, date, month and year of publication must be indicated in the space provided (i.e Tuesday 1st November, 2005).

(B) UNITS OF ANALYSIS

1. **News:** All news stories (i.e. straight news) as different from opinion or analysis.
2. **Feature Article:** This covers articles like news feature and news analysis.
3. **Opinion:** Refers to opinion articles including those of staff, regular and guest writers as well as columnists.
4. **Editorial:** The official comments of the newspaper.
5. **Picture:** All photographs except those in adverts.
6. **Cartoons:** Cartoons, caricatures and comic strips.
7. **Letter/Text Messages to-the-Editor**
8. **Retractions**
9. **Others:** Any other item apart from the above

(C) INTENSITY

(i) **Frequency:** Write the number of reports of each unit of analysis (i.e the number of time, say news stories/letters-to-the editor on the issue under investigation, was reported in the particular edition of the newspaper – 1, 2, 3 and so on). This accounts for frequency of reports.

(ii) **Prominence:** *a.Position:* If the report occurs on the front page, write the number of such a report under FP. Those that occur on the inside and back pages write IP and BP accordingly. *(b).Size:* The size of stories- news, features, opinions, interviews, editorials and letters/text messages to the editor- is determined by the number of paragraphs of such reports. The *size* of reports is determined by the amount of space allocated to each report in terms of columns and inches. Reports that occupied a quarter of a page or less should be grouped into small size while those that occupied half a page or less, but more than a quarter should be classified into medium size, and those that occupied more than half a page are grouped into large size. Where a report contains more than one unit of analysis, for instance, a story and a related photograph or cartoon, such items are grouped together in terms of size.

(E) FRAME

Mark (X) each unit of analysis that occurs in the edition as either neutral or biased. If the report is fair and balanced, i.e not taking sides with any of the parties involved, mark as neutral but if the report is subjective i.e taking sides by being negative or too patronising to any of the parties, mark as biased.

Appendix 3A: In-depth Interview Guide

The following issues should be raised with the interviewees. The interviewer should not hesitate to ask follow-up questions either to clarify or to probe further into the issues raised as may be necessary.

1. In your opinion, how will you describe the extent to which your newspaper covers political crisis in Nigeria?

Interviewer: Determine the extent of report by frequency and magnitude.

2. Can you identify the major actors in the political crisis situation in Nigeria?

Interviewer: Actors refer to personalities and institutions that are visible during the crises.

3. Comment on the role your newspaper played in the political crisis occasioned by the Obasanjo's aborted Third Term Agenda.

Interviewer: professional role or otherwise.

4. Comment on your newspaper's coverage of the constitutional crisis created by Yar'Adua's ill health and power vacuum between November 2009 and May 2010.

5. Assess your newspaper's reportage of the violent crisis that erupted in the northern part of Nigeria, following INEC's declaration of Goodluck Jonathan as the winner of April 2011 presidential elections.

6. To what extent has the editorial policy of your newspaper affected the coverage of the political crises above?

7. Assess the role of ownership on the framing of your reports of the political crises

Interviewer: Direction or angle of reports.

8. What other factors, apart from ownership and editorial policy, do you think influenced your coverage/ reportage of the political crises?

9. Holistically assess the performance of Nigerian newspapers in the coverage of political crises in the country.

Interviewer: Use intensity, frame and balance to determine performance in terms of professionalism.

Appendix 3B: Daily Interpretive Analysis (DIA) Guide

SECTION A

Name of Interviewee.....

Designation:.....

Place of Interview.....

SECTION B (Please write out the comments)

1(a) Summary of responses on the extent (frequency) of newspaper reports on the crises.....

(b). Interpretation: What do the responses mean in relation to the research questions and/or hypotheses?.....

(2)a. Summary of responses on the frame of reports by the newspapers during the crisis situations.

(b).Interpretation.....

...

(3) (a). Summary of responses on how ownership factor affected the Nigerian press performance during political crises.

(b) Interpretation.....

(4)a. Summary of responses on how editorial policy affected Nigerian press performance during crises.

(b) Interpretation.....

(5)a. Summary of responses on which other factors (apart from 2 & 3 above), affected Nigerian press performance during crises.....

(b).Interpretation.....

.....

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APPENDIX 4A: DAILY INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW I

Interviewee: Olusola Fabiyi

Designation: Assistant Editor, Political Desk

Newspaper: *The Punch*

Place of interview: Abuja

1. Summary of responses on the extent (frequency) of newspaper reports on the political crisis situations.

Responses

The Punch newspaper has not done badly when it comes to political reporting especially when it comes to the issue of political crisis. We have never shied away from performing our constitutional role when it comes to the issue of political crisis.

Interpretation

The Punch newspaper covered the political crisis situations to a great extent.

2. Summary of responses on the frame of reports by the newspapers during the crisis situations.

Responses

i. *Third term agenda*: The only role we played was to stay by the constitution. The constitution allows the president to serve for a maximum of two terms of four years and you cannot change the rule in the middle of a game. We believe it was wrong for Obasanjo to attempt to go beyond the tenure he signed for when he became the president. So we stayed by the people.

Interpretation

The Punch newspaper was objective in its coverage of the political crisis situation.

ii. *Yar'Adua's illness*: What we were doing was to report events as they happened. We reported that he was sick; we reported that they brought in equipment into the presidency to take care of him, even when they said he was not ill. We reported when he travelled to Saudi Arabia and refused to transmit power. We also reported when the Save Nigeria Group (SNG) and other civil societies also came to stage protest in condemnation of the president's refusal to transmit power even when he was away and

he knew he won't be able to carry on due to his failing health. We also reported the cabal that shielded him from people even from his own deputy. That was all we did.

Interpretation

The *Punch* framed the stories more negatively than positively.

iii. *Post-election protests*: Like every responsible newspaper, as far as *The Punch* was concerned, reporters were deployed to cover the crisis without taking sides. The event was well covered. We even gave one of the best coverage to the young Nigerians, the NYSC members who were killed during the crisis.

Interpretation

The Punch newspaper was objective in its coverage of the political crisis situation.

3. Summary of responses on how ownership affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

It did not in any form. *The Punch* is one of the newspapers where you can express yourself, where nobody will censor your story so far you have your facts and you can defend the documents

Interpretation

Ownership factor had no influence on *The Punch*'s reportage of the political crisis situations.

4. Summary of responses on how editorial policy affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

We follow the ethics of journalism. You know you must give a voice or you must hear from the other party. We weren't going to press, or reporting an issue when we have heard from only one person.

Interpretation

Editorial policy of *The Punch* positively affected its performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

5. Summary of responses on which other factors affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

The only thing that affected us and that positively is that, we are being paid on time; even when you have claims to make, it is approved; before you go on a journey, you have the money approved and paid to you. Thus the idea of getting to an event and being induced or influenced by monetary gratification does not arise.

Interpretation

Prompt payment of salaries and claims enhanced better performance from The Punch's staff in reporting the political crisis situations.

6. Summary of responses on the general assessment of the Nigerian press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

Nigerian press has done well and there are some hazards like assassinations, assaults, and the like. Even with all these, Nigerian journalists do not shy away from their responsibilities. Yet, there could be some limitations like some media houses that do not pay salaries on time thus killing the urge to do the job as it ought to be done. But all the same, the performance of the Nigerian press in political crises reportage is very high.

Interpretation

Nigerian press performance in political crisis situations rated high.

APPENDIX 4B: DAILY INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS OF INDEPTH INTERVIEW II

Interviewee: Iheanacho Nwosu

Designation: Deputy Bureau Chief, Abuja and Coordinator of Politics

Newspaper: *Daily Sun*

Place of Interview: *Daily Sun* Office, Utako District, Abuja

1. Summary of responses on the extent (frequency) of newspaper reports on the political crisis situations.

Responses

So far, Nigerian press has done well. The coverage of the events was comprehensive and the newspapers have not left anything to chance. For *The Sun*, of course you will know that in Nigeria, there is nobody who would fault *The Sun* today as far as political coverage is concerned. Yes, very well; more than other newspapers even though most of the times we take the issues from human angle.

Interpretation

The Sun newspaper covered the political crisis situations to a great extent.

2. Summary of responses on the frame of reports by the newspapers during the crisis situations.

Responses

i. Third term agenda: We did very effectively. If not for the media, I don't see how that agenda would not have succeeded. Even *The Sun* at a point had to come out to display the identities of the lawmakers that were supporting the agenda and those opposed to it; and the reactions of their respective constituencies. In short, the coverage was okay.

Interpretation

The Sun newspaper gave a balanced report of the political crisis situation.

ii. Yar'Adua's illness: *The Sun* did report the issues very well. I remember the sale of the newspaper got to its peak because of the way it was covering the issue. The newspapers, *The Sun* inclusive, played up the issue. For instance, it was the newspaper

that played up the activities of the civil societies. The newspaper was reporting all sides.

Interpretation

The Sun reported all sides.

iii. *Post-election protests: The Sun* kept tab on the issue and all through the election, declaration of the winner and the protests; all these were well captured by *The Sun's* reports. The paper could not be found wanting in the reportage of the issue whether in terms of analyses, interviews, editorials and news. The point is that anytime we report an event we always look at the feelings of the people.

Interpretation

The Sun newspaper was sensational in its coverage of the political crisis situation.

3. Summary of responses on how ownership affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

I don't think the publisher has any overbearing influence on the paper. He was against the Third Term agenda as a state governor at that time, but *The Sun* was still reporting all sides.

Interpretation

There is no relationship between ownership and performance of the Sun's reportage of the political crisis situations.

4. Summary of responses on how editorial policy affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

The editorial policy of the paper has affected its reportage of these issues positively. According to its motto of being the voice of the nation, whenever we the reporters go out to look for stories, we are always looking at what we think Nigerians would like. We have to take care of the downtrodden as well as the privileged. When people talk

about sensationalism, it is because they do not understand us especially with our screaming headlines

Interpretation

Editorial policy of The Sun positively affected its performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

5. Summary of responses on which other factors affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

In our own case, the only thing that would affect your story is that if it came late, that is, after production deadline, and there is no way it could be accommodated in that particular edition. Other than that, I have not really seen anything that has actually affected our coverage of political crises.

Interpretation

No other factor affected The Sun's reportage of the political crisis situations except production deadline.

6. Summary of responses on the general assessment of the Nigerian press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

Nigerian press has performed creditably well in reporting political crises in this country. The press has weathered through the storm from the military era up to the current democratic dispensation.

Interpretation

Nigerian press performance in political crisis situations rated high.

APPENDIX 4C: DAILY INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS OF INDEPTH INTERVIEW III

Interviewee: Suleiman Bisalla

Designation: Deputy Editor (Politics)

Newspaper: Daily Trust

Place of interview: Daily Trust Headquarters, Utako District, Abuja.

1. Summary of responses on the extent (frequency) of newspaper reports on the political crisis situations.

Responses

Based on my knowledge and experience of the activities of the press in terms of political coverage, I would say that the press has done well. As journalists, particularly as political reporters, our job is to inform the public so that they can take informed decisions on issues and debates.

Interpretation

The press did well.

2. Summary of responses on the frame of reports by the newspapers during the crisis situations.

Responses

i. Third term agenda: It is not in doubt that the Nigerian press did what it should do at that time. I think the coverage, not only by the *Daily Trust*, but by every newspaper in this country, was clear that everybody was on the side of the constitution.

Interpretation

Daily Trust newspaper framed the reports negatively.

ii. Yar'Adua's illness: I must say that this country is so divided that when an issue comes up, because of that absence of nationality or nationhood, people bring up their ethnic and religious sentiments. In terms of the coverage of the Yar'Adua's illness saga, everybody did his part. In the *Daily Trust*, I must say that we reported all the sides for we do not deny people of their opinions in the newspaper. The northern papers at that time were not adamant as southern papers. In other words, the northern

papers were more sympathetic with Yar'Adua bearing in mind the so called zoning system between the north and the south, and the north saying we are going to lose now. The north believed Obasanjo just handpicked an unhealthy person.

Interpretation

Daily Trust, being a northern newspaper, framed the reports on Yar'Adua's illness positively.

iii. *Post-election protests*: I think we did very well. There was violence in the northern part of Nigeria and I think we covered it more than any other newspaper. This is because we have our roots here and understand the terrain more than any other person. There was nothing that we hid. To a very large extent we have done that.

Interpretation

Daily Trust newspaper covered the issue truthfully.

3. Summary of responses on how ownership affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

Yes of course. We were told even in school that ownership is a major factor as the axiom; he who pays the piper dictates the tune. In *Daily Trust*, it slightly happens; maybe we cannot rule it out completely. Since I came to *Daily Trust* seven years ago I have never been told that chairman does not want such and such story to be published, but it keeps happening, honestly. If you look at the *Daily Trust* even though people may brand it as a paper for the north, but our reporters sometimes write against some institutions and leaders in the north that are not doing well. But some aspects of our editorial policy are as a result of our beliefs and background of the owners. For instance, the non-reportage of alcoholic products can be traced to the religious belief of the owners. Even the newspaper is not allowed to publish adverts containing alcoholic products.

Interpretation

Ownership played some role in the *Daily Trust's* reportage of the political crisis situation.

4. Summary of responses on how editorial policy affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

The founders of the *Daily Trust* had a vision. And that is said to be a world class company that has public trust. They also had a vision to disseminate credible information for the good of the public. They also designed some core values to guide the conduct of reporters and that includes editorial integrity, ethical conduct, professionalism and constant innovation. The goal of the paper is also market driven because if you don't have cash, you will not grow. The paper was also set up to achieve national unity and African brotherhood. As part of its editorial policy, the paper does not allow reportage of alcoholic products and cigarette. It also forbids its reporters from accepting gifts from the public which it terms "no thank you policy"

Interpretation

Editorial policy of Daily Trust positively affected its performance in reporting the political crisis situation.

5. Summary of responses on which other factors affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

Ethnicity affects reportage of issues by Nigerian press. Honestly we cannot run away from that. As a good journalist, one should try to distance oneself from some of these sentiments as much as possible. But sometimes, the political issues out there tend to affect us as reporters even though we try as much as possible to distance ourselves. But sometimes you find out that in one way or the other, maybe because it happens inadvertently, but it does.

Interpretation

Ethnicity affects Nigerian press performance in reporting political crisis situations.

6. Summary of responses on the general assessment of the Nigerian press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

I think Nigerian Press has done excellently well. We in the press have set agenda for the politicians and we have brought down corrupt leaders.

Interpretation

Nigerian press performance in political crisis situations rated high.

APPENDIX 4D: DAILY INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS OF INDEPTH INTERVIEW IV

Interviewee: Mr. Taiwo Adisa

Designation: Group Political Editor

Newspaper: Nigerian Tribune

Place of interview: Protea Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos

1. Summary of responses on the extent (frequency) of newspaper reports on the political crisis situations.

Responses

Generally, Nigerian press is a product of the society. I have seen that in the media, we use politicians while politicians also use the media. How far the media fared has to be defined under that context of media use and media usage. Now, when the politician wants to spread something out either for genuine reasons or mischievous reasons, there will be mischief, there will be genuineness. As a result, it is the intention of the source (which the political environment creates for the press) that actually defines how far the media can go.

Interpretation

The press reported the crisis as far as the sources were willing to release information.

2. Summary of responses on the frame of reports by the newspapers during the crisis situations.

Responses

i. Third term agenda: The news that was coming out at that time was coming out from both ends to satisfy both groups. As the pro third term group was bringing out news, so the anti-group was bringing out theirs. On the role the media generally played and *Nigerian Tribune* in particular, what happened was that the media find a way to define national interest for Nigeria at every point in time. So, the role *Tribune* played at that point was that of nationalism. Basically, we have all agreed to promote anti third term agenda stories. It wasn't that a meeting took place. It was a visual thing; everybody (journalist) just looked at it and agreed that the thing was bad and then we took it up

like that. And when we took off that way, it became easy for negative stories about third term to thrive.

Interpretation

Tribune newspaper framed the reports negatively.

ii. *Yar'Adua's illness*: The Late President Yar'Adua did not hand over according to the dictate of the constitution and some people started using his powers; they left the VP hanging who unfortunately could not write the National Assembly according to our law; it is the president's duty. The senate was supposed to take a motion to address the issue. Somehow, some senators who were opposed to it moved against the motion and they watered it down. The thing didn't go down well with other senators who then started mobilizing and they needed two-thirds of their members to reverse the earlier motion being proposed. They then started mobilizing signatures from their colleagues to the effect that the Vice President be nominated as Acting President to address the issue. That was how those that believed in this formed that National Interest Group and started collecting signatures. That was where the media came in as well. I got to know of it and I got involved with them. So, we started promoting the stories in support of it.

Interpretation

Tribune newspaper framed the reports negatively.

iii. *Post-election protests*: The media did not play a united role in the aftermath of that election. The media got divided alongside the north and south. The papers that shared northern sentiments slanted the stories to downplay the protests or to paint it as if it was the government that was lax and allowing hoodlums to overrun communities. But basically, the vocal media largely from the south stood by the fact that this thing was condemnable and stood on the part of nationalism. On this particular 2011 crisis, there was division because some people brought in some agenda to developing issues and they used it to colour the reportage of their papers.

Interpretation

Tribune newspaper played up the protests.

3. Summary of responses on how ownership affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

Good enough, the ownership of the *Tribune* after setting up the newspaper set up the ground rules according to the mission of the paper. After setting those rules, nobody comes to the management to say do this, and don't do this. The owners allow the management (professionals) to evolve the day to day running agenda..

Interpretation

Ownership did not influence *Tribune's* reportage of the political crisis situation.

4. Summary of responses on how editorial policy affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

Every paper must have an editorial policy that would dovetail from its mission. It is a people's paper. So, *Tribune* strives to go down to the people at all times. It is a mass movement and a mass audience paper.

Interpretation

Tribune served the readers what they wanted.

5. Summary of responses on which other factors affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

Generally, the business environment is one of the problems. Some of the papers were not making it good in terms of business, in terms of adverts, in terms of paying salaries, in terms of meeting their basic needs business wise. So those factors would undermine the consistency of any publisher in defending the interest of the people at all times. Ownership is another factor in the sense that the way by which some of the papers came about, like getting money from sources who now get involved whether on the wrong or right side of politics.

Interpretation

Business environment and financial stability affected Nigerian press performance in reporting political crisis situations.

6. Summary of responses on the general assessment of the Nigerian press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

We can say that, basically, the media is running 60% on the good side.

Interpretation

Nigerian press performance in political crisis situations rated above average.

APPENDIX 4E: DAILY INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW V

Interviewee: Ehichioya Ezomon

Designation: Group Political Editor

Newspaper: The Guardian

Place of interview: Protea Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos.

1. Summary of responses on the extent (frequency) of newspaper reports on the political crisis situations.

Responses

Politics sells more than other stories. It is like when you are gossiping. That is the way I look at politics. Nigerian press has been reporting politics very well, from all angles even though some people would say we are too antagonistic

Interpretation

The Guardian newspaper covered the political crisis situations to a great extent.

2. Summary of responses on the frame of reports by the newspapers during the crisis situations.

Responses

i. Third term agenda: I think we at *The Guardian* told the people what the issues were without biases. You know *The Guardian* does not sensationalize news. We tell you the truth as captured in our motto: "Conscience Nurtured by Truth" We must have our facts and balance our story and where we make any mistake we quickly make a correction. On the Third Term, everybody knew that Obasanjo was interested in elongating his stay in office. We reported it, analysed all issues both ways: for and against.

Interpretation

The Guardian was objective in its coverage of the political crisis situation.

ii. Yar'Adua's illness: We did not stay on any side. We were just reporting the events. We only reported what we knew. We did not speculate. When we had the facts, we published and when we did not have the facts, we did not publish.. As far as we were

concerned at *The Guardian*, we did not speculate as some did. You can go to the archive and check our reports.

Interpretation

The Guardian was objective in its coverage of the political crisis situation.

iii. *Post-election protests*: Any person who was in Nigeria before that election knew that Jonathan would win. It was visible based on the facts on the ground. It was clear that the man would win in at least four of the six zones in the country- the three southern zones and the north central. But what caused the crisis, even from my own perspective, was the statement made by one of the contestants who said if his party did not win, they would make the country ungovernable for Jonathan. Consequently, violence erupted from the north immediately the result was declared and the crisis was limited to that area.

Interpretation

The Guardian was objective in its coverage of the political crisis situation.

3. Summary of responses on how ownership affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

Since I joined the paper in 1997, there has been no influence from the owners on what is published and how it is published. Before the late publisher died, I never saw him one day to suggest anything to be published by the paper. Even when he was a minister, *The Guardian* was still criticising the Federal Government by writing the truth as if the owner was not in government. To what we gathered, this led to an attack that was made on him because the government wanted to use *The Guardian* and the man said no; insisting that the newspaper was outside of his influence in editorial matters.

Interpretation

Ownership did not influence *The Guardian*'s reportage of the political crisis situation.

4. Summary of responses on how editorial policy affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

The Guardian was set up as a market place of ideas, on the principles of free economy, no bias and a free press, for a free people. That has been driving *The Guardian*. We follow that philosophy. That is why we don't publish anything we see. Even in adverts, *Guardian* does reject adverts sometimes especially those that impinge on somebody's character. The Guardian can turn down up to twenty million naira worth of advert in a day if such tend to violate its principles, whereas some other papers do grab such and publish lavishly.

Interpretation

Editorial policy of The Guardian positively affected its performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

5. Summary of responses on which other factors affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

There is the factor of ownership which plays a major role in some newspapers. Another factor is the financial standing of the medium. Sectional interest also has a role to play like ethnicity. If you take papers from the north, they focus their attention on the north. The way these papers report some issues that affect the north is somehow different from how the newspapers from the south report them as they (northern newspaper) tend to slant their report to favour the north.

Interpretation

Ownership, financial standing of a newspaper and sectional interest affected Nigerian press performance in reporting political crisis situations.

6. Summary of responses on the general assessment of the Nigerian press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

I will give the Nigerian press a pass mark. Nigerian press is the freest in the world. But there may be some biases along the way in some of the media.

Interpretation

Nigerian press performance in political crisis situations rated high.

APPENDIX 4F: DAILY INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW VI

Interviewee: Debo Abdulahi

Designation: Editor

Newspaper: Nigerian Tribune

Place of interview: Tribune Headquarters, Oke-Ado, Ibadan

1. Summary of responses on the extent (frequency) of newspaper reports on the political crisis situations.

Responses

Tribune is first and foremost a general interest newspaper. It is a family newspaper, a newspaper that was set up to be the voice of the voiceless. But then, it was set up by a politician in 1949, and over the years, *Tribune* has been a very strong voice in the political revolution of Nigeria. *Tribune* remains the only newspaper in Nigeria today that was part of the struggle for independence. So, we've seen it all and we've reported it all.

Interpretation

Nigerian Tribune newspaper covered the political crisis situations to a great extent.

2. Summary of responses on the frame of reports by the newspapers during the crisis situations.

Responses

i. Third term agenda: We stood with the people. We stood against the violation of the constitution. And if you ask Obasanjo, he will tell you that he dislikes the *Tribune*, not specifically because of third term, but also because of who we are as a newspaper, since 1979 when he gave the presidential election to Shagari against our own publishers and the leader of the Yoruba, Awolowo. It is not as if we will definitely stand against anything Obasanjo, no. So the third term agenda was evil, unconstitutional and wrong. A newspaper is the conscience of the people and it reflects public opinion. The *Tribune* is a voice of the voiceless. The people obviously did not want the third term because it was against the constitution, and we stood with the people.

Interpretation

Tribune newspaper framed the reports negatively.

ii. *Yar'Adua's illness*: As it was with the Third Term, so it was with the Yar'Adua's issues. Yar'Adua was ill in office, but then, the country is not owned by one person. There is no rule in this country for a cabal to rule. And we pointed all those out. I can't remember the number of editorials, comments or the number of stories and analysis that we did as a newspaper. But we stood against that violation..

Interpretation

Tribune newspaper framed the reports negatively.

iii. *Post-election protests*: We just did stories as they came at that time. A newspaper also has a responsibility to calm situations. We should not be irresponsible in the way we report skirmishes, violence or war. I don't think we took any particular stand against the looser of that election. We just did our reports as they came.

Interpretation

Tribune was objective in its coverage of the political crisis situation.

3. Summary of responses on how ownership affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

I was editor of *Sunday Tribune* for about four years, and I am almost three years as Head of the *Nigerian Tribune*, and I will tell you that there is no interference. I determine my front page; I determine the stories and pictures I want to use. I am free. I am not an editor in Nigeria that will wait for his publisher to vet his front page before it goes to bed. In twenty years that I have been here, of course, there would be mistakes; that makes you a human being. But then, one good thing about this family is that you are not harassed. The editors are not harassed.

Interpretation

Ownership did not influence *Tribune's* reportage of the political crisis situation.

4. Summary of responses on how editorial policy affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

We have books. It can be found in several books written about *Tribune* at different anniversaries of the newspaper. The name '*Tribune*' itself means the voice of the

populace. Then truth, courage and fairness are our motto. We have been fair, we have been courageous and we have spoken the truth to the government and the people. As long as what anybody is doing against the people is unconstitutional, *Tribune* will not support. It is not as if the people are always right because there is always a mob action; but *Tribune* will always speak the truth both to the people and the government. We will not encourage mob action and mass revolt.

Interpretation

Editorial policy of the *Nigerian Tribune* positively affected its performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

5. Summary of responses on which other factors affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

Our major challenge is funding, because we need money. *Tribune* circulates in every part of the country, and we have to get there very early in the morning. We need to print in different locations, just like some newspapers owned by politicians and some rich and influential people, that have enormous resources, and some of them have printing machines, in at least three different locations, nationwide like Lagos, Abuja and one in the South-South, whereas, *Tribune* have one here in Ibadan, still we meet at least more than half of the country by 5am on daily basis.

Interpretation

Funding affected Nigerian press performance in reporting political crisis situations.

6. Summary of responses on the general assessment of the Nigerian press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

I say we have done well. However, I must say that if you read the Nigerian press, you will see the bent of ownership in many newspapers. That in itself is a minus. I studied Mass Communication and I believe the newspapers should stand back and not be involved. I also believe that owners should stand back and not use the newspaper for their own political agenda. That is theoretical, but practically newspapers are set up for particular purposes. Then the media should strive to maintain the balance; sometimes a delicate balance because the person who set it up has a certain agenda and if you are bringing your professional into it, there are other colleagues out there who will do what the publisher wants. In that wise, I will just score the Nigerian Press above average.

Interpretation

Nigerian press performance in political crisis situations rated high.

APPENDIX 4G: DAILY INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW VII

Interviewee: Martins Oloja

Designation: Editor (Daily)

Newspaper: The Guardian

Place of Interview: Editor's Office, The Guardian Hqs, Isolo Lagos

1. Summary of responses on the extent (frequency) of newspaper reports on the political crisis situations.

Responses

The Guardian is a general interest newspaper and a quality newspaper. There is no way we can ignore politics. You will recall that we have had trouble with politics here and we got into this uninterrupted democracy about fifteen years ago, the longest we have had. And we still have problem with democratization. So, as a quality newspaper we have to be interested in politics and business, and this is one of the areas of strength that we have.

Interpretation

The Guardian newspaper covered the political crisis situations to a great extent.

2. Summary of responses on the frame of reports by the newspapers during the crisis situations.

Responses

i. Third term agenda: It was a controversial subject. This is because Obasanjo himself never admitted to anybody that he organized or had an agenda called third term. It was some people that were campaigning, even when it was reported that they moved money around and some of the people who collected money confessed that they did. So we reported it extensively because that was the issue or story of the moment. There was no other tone. It was just a normal news break and as development arose, we were reporting. In fact, I was the Abuja Bureau Chief of *The Guardian* at the time. I was at the center of it and I was presiding over the coverage in Abuja. So I saw it live in Abuja that there was an agenda and people were reporting this thing constantly. We saw the actors and the people driving it.

Interpretation

The Guardian was objective in its coverage of the crisis situation.

ii. *Yar'Adua's illness*: We covered it as events developed at that time and the illness was such a kind of mystery and the extent was not admitted. So we reported things as they were at that time. You know *Guardian* would never be an activist. We reported the issues and stated all the facts that were available to us within the limits of the law and ethics that guide our own profession. That is why we maintain our respectability and our influence. We do not take advantage of our influence, we guard it jealously. We didn't want to do anything that is unethical. You recall that I told you that we have always had a lot of these elders of the profession in the house for the purpose of quality control.

Interpretation

The Guardian was objective in its coverage of the crisis situation.

iii. *Post-election protests*: We reported it and this was widely predicted that it could occur like that because General Muhamadu Buhari was expected by a section of the country to win, and because he didn't win, their expectation was cut off and dashed. We reported too. We were not part of the political class but we have always conducted in such a way that people will not regard us as part of the political campaign or the political system. We reported it that there was violence here and there and people died. We reported the issues as they occurred with stories and photographs.

Interpretation

The Guardian was objective in its coverage of the crisis situation.

3. Summary of responses on how ownership affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

You see, the quality that you see in *The Guardian* is the quality of the publisher. The publisher does not say this is what you are going to publish. The board knows that the paper has a policy which the editor knows and it helps the editor to achieve the goal.

They just allowed the professionals to do their work; and even our late publisher said so and many people testified to this when he died.

Interpretation

Ownership did not influence *The Guardian's* reportage of the political crisis situation.

4. Summary of responses on how editorial policy affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

The Guardian is an independent newspaper, established for the purpose of presenting balanced coverage of events and promoting the best interests of Nigeria. It owes allegiance to no political party, ethnic community, religious or other interest groups... It is a liberal newspaper, committed to the best traditions and ideals of republican democracy... It is committed to the principle of individual freedom, but believes that all citizens have duties as well as rights... The motto of *The Guardian* is Conscience, Nutured by Truth. We have not deviated from the original objective set out from foundation since 1983. We have never reviewed it to say we are going to pursue a new deal. This principle drives us. For instance in our editorials board meeting every Wednesday, this is what drives us. We know what we stand for. It is part of our DNA now as no reporter can just go ahead and do anything that is different from these ideals as a liberal newspaper. We cannot say because one political party is going to win an election, then we are going to support the political party against the other or we join one opposition because the opposition is vulnerable, no. we report the issues as they occur and we balance our stories. If people complain about our stories, we correct our errors if we are convinced and if we are not convinced we stand by our story.

Interpretation

Editorial policy of the *The Guardian* positively affected its performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

5. Summary of responses on which other factors affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

For a newspaper editor to succeed, you must always remember the public interest. The day you ignore the public interest in your judgment, you have failed. Forget about profit; profit will always come if you do the right thing and control your cost, but if the stories you put in the newspaper are not guided by public interest, it will not lead you anywhere. As editor, if you pander to private interest of even the publisher, or a political party, or people in power, you are finished.

Interpretation

Putting owners, profit and sectional interests above the public interest affected Nigerian press performance in reporting political crisis situations.

6. Summary of respondent's advice to Nigerian journalists in reporting political crisis situations.

Responses

My advice is still traditional. We should not allow technology to pollute our role as defenders and reporters of the public interest. You know this is the age of digital journalism and the social media can confuse you with falsehood which they present on daily basis. We as professional journalists should be guided by thoroughness in finding out facts. I advise my colleagues and students of journalism to embrace the ideals of the profession because journalism is still the best profession in the world not because I am saying so, but because the World Bank Institute has documented an opinion like that in a book: *Journalism as the Best Profession in the World*.

Interpretation

Nigerian journalists should be thorough in finding facts in order to enhance their performance in political crisis situations.

APPENDIX 4H: DAILY INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW VIII

Interviewee: Onuoha Ukeh

Designation: Editor (Daily)

Newspaper: Daily Sun

Place of Interview: Editor's Office, The Sun's Hqts, Kirikiri Road, Apapa, Lagos

1. Summary of responses on the extent (frequency) of newspaper reports on the political crisis situations.

Responses

The sun is a newspaper, and for a newspaper, all news is important. We give political stories prominence much as we give other aspects of the economy. Since we are in democracy, it is also our duty to support democracy. So we go out of our way to report politics, do analysis; because by so doing we get the people informed about what is going on in the polity.

Interpretation

The Sun newspaper covered the political crisis situations to a great extent.

2. Summary of responses on the frame of reports by the newspapers during the crisis situations.

Responses

i. Third term agenda: As a newspaper *The Sun* stood for the constitution and we said no to that agenda. And we showed it by the reports we gave and also we rejected and adverts promoting third term. It was a wrap around on the cover, which was worth millions of naira but because of our stand that third term was unconstitutional and should not be, we rejected that advert. Some newspaper carried it though. Journalism is first about truth. Truth is scared and opinion is free. So, journalism is supposed to stand for the truth. Yes, we were supposed to report all sides, but there is a time that a newspaper should take a stand and that is why there is editorial in a newspaper, where newspaper is supported to take a stand and our stand here was for the truth.

Interpretation

The Sun was reported the crisis situation negatively.

ii. *Yar'Adua's illness*: As a newspaper we followed the news. Of course when the president was taken out, Nigerians were not informed. We just discovered that the president had been taken out of the country until much later they confessed that he was sick. It was natural for anybody to fall ill but the people in-charge owed Nigerians the true state of his health and should ask for support. This did not happen as the whole thing was shrouded in secrecy. So we reported all sides of the issue. The country was almost stagnant, nothing was coming as tensions were high especially when the vice president would not steer the ship of state on behalf of the president. Some people wanted to run the show and make it seem as if the president was still the one in charge just for their selfish interest. They thus caused of crisis that was unnecessary.

Interpretation

The Sun was objective in its coverage of the crisis situation.

iii. *Post-election protests*: No newspaper will support violence. Of course were against violence. There was an election duly conducted, results released and somebody declared the winner. The law states that if you are aggrieved, then go to the tribunal, but some people because of the fixation that a particular candidate would have won, resulted to violence. Innocent peoples were killed including corps member whose only offence was that they participated in the conducts of the election. We the reported the crises as events unfolded we were against the violence.

Interpretation

The Sun was objective in its coverage of the crisis situation.

3. Summary of responses on how ownership affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

The publisher is the chairman of the board of directors and the chairman does have anything to do with the production of a newspaper. He does not tell us what to put it in the paper and he does not interference. We do it as professionally as we can and there is no interference whatsoever.

Interpretation

Ownership did not influence *The Sun*'s reportage of the political crisis situation.

4. Summary of responses on how editorial policy affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

The Sun is a tabloid and we are out to practice journalism in a classical tradition of reporting the news and our own policy is to report the news in an exciting way. That is our policy, and that is why sometimes we scream. They are not sensational but to make news exciting. And it takes a lot of credibility to even do this. When you look at the headlines we write, you have to think it out. It is not sensational but we follow our policy of reporting in an exciting way. Apart from reporting news in an exciting way, fairness is paramount. When we need to state the facts, we do and we report all sides, we do and we report all sides. We also make comments when we need to do so. Our policy influenced how we treated news and fairness as well as balance would come in.

Interpretation

Editorial policy of *The Sun* positively affected its performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

5. Summary of responses on which other factors affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

First is the issue of electricity. Even if there is public power supply, by 7pm we switch the generating set and it will run till the next morning because the main operation at the press starts and there shouldn't be a break. So much money goes into this. Secondly, communication is also a problem. The challenge with the internet and it is not peculiar with *The Sun*. If the server is down, it affects everybody on that network and we depend on the internet to gather and process news from our reporters nationwide. We also rely on the internet to transmit the production materials from the headquarters to our other press designations in Aba and Abuja where we print simultaneously with Lagos.

Interpretation

Poor electricity supply as well as incessant internet network breakdown affected Nigerian press performance in reporting political crisis situations.

6. Summary of respondent's advice to Nigerian journalists in reporting political crisis situations.

Responses

Journalists should maintain the cardinal principle of fairness. In reporting, you have to be fair to all parties. So, you report news as they are. When it comes to taking a position, that is editorial but taking a position should not influence what you report.

Interpretation

Nigerian journalists should maintain the cardinal principle of fairness in reporting political crisis situations.

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APPENDIX 4I: DAILY INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW IX

Interviewee: TOYOSI Ogunseye

Designation: Editor (Sunday)

Newspaper: The Punch

Place of Interview: Editor's Office, The Punch's Place, Magboro, Lagos-Ibadan Expressway

1. Summary of responses on the extent (frequency) of newspaper reports on the political crisis situations.

Responses

Political issues in Nigeria are front page issues not because of the news itself but because of the environment we find ourselves. You find that in Nigeria if not because of the current security challenges, it has always been politics. The newspaper does not exist in a vacuum; it is what the readers want to read that you publish. That is why you find that politics is always given much attention.

Interpretation

The Punch newspaper covered the political crisis situations to a great extent.

2. Summary of responses on the frame of reports by the newspapers during the crisis situations.

Responses

i. Third term agenda: *The Punch* does not have a stand on any issue (laughs). We just report the news as they broke. It is the people's newspaper and when it comes to political issues, we really do not have a stand. We report the news as they break. And whatever our stand is, if there is any stand at all, it is what the Nigerian people want. I think you will see that in the content of our newspaper at that time.

Interpretation

The Punch was objective in its coverage of the crisis situation.

ii. Yar'Adua's illness: The same way as the news was breaking. I remember *The Punch* was very effective when it came to that issue because we followed the event

even when the president was abroad and people were giving false report; we were able to get the true situation of things. At *The Punch* it is very difficult to say we took a position on it. We just reported it as it broke. What we did was that we ensured we covered all sides of the story, because it will be very dangerous to learn to one side.

Interpretation

The Punch was objective in its coverage of the crisis situation.

iii. *Post-election protests* :One thing about the northern part of the country that most people do not realize is that the coverage of the northern part is very low media wise. You find that the media is stronger in the south west and the south generally and you find that in the north, you don't have serious newspapers or media coverage and so many things can be attributed to this. You find the language barrier, you find the religion barrier, ethnic barrier. So, for example, if you are going to send a correspondent to the north, the person must be proficient in Hausa. It will help if the person is a Muslim and then the security of the northern part of the country. At the end of the day, you find that most newspapers rely on stringers. These are indigenes of the place, they are safe and they string for you. Now, there is a challenge in using stringer because we do not have the full loyalty of the stringer. It is whatever the stringer gives you that you can use and there's very little you can do about it.

Interpretation

The Punch was objective in its coverage of the crisis situation.

3. Summary of responses on how ownership affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

The publisher is my boss so we have a boss-employee relationship. His business is to ensure that everything is running smoothly and to ensure we are giving our best but outside that, no interference when it comes to editorial operation. But then, he is the boss and so, he can check in on what everybody does. We have an editorial board and

it's an independent body. *The Punch* is one of the few newspapers, and I say that with all sincerity, where editors have 100% independence because before you are an editor, it is assumed that you can make the right judgement. Your editorial judgement has been tested so many times. So it is expected that you will know how to handle matters the way they should be. People find it difficult to believe but that is what has kept *Punch* as a market leader for over 40 years understanding that the best way to run a newsroom is to make it as independent as possible and trust that the people you put in charge will make the right decision.

Interpretation

Ownership did not influence *The Punch's* reportage of the political crisis situation.

4. Summary of responses on how editorial policy affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

At *The Punch*, we are very strong in ethical issues. It is written in our editions on daily basis and we do not compromise on that because at *Punch* we believe that what we sell is trust not news. News is secondary and once you lose the trust of your readers, then you are gone. So, we are very huge when it comes to ethical issues. We are a very ethical newspaper with ethical reporters and editors. We also believe in objectivity, fairness and balance ensuring that nobody is oppressed in the news. That is basically the policy, ethical journalism objectivity, fairness and balance. In fact that is where everybody calls *The Punch* the people's newspaper because the average man on the street believes *The Punch* will be fair to him. Of course when it comes to fairness, you find that even the people involved in the political game do not even like the fairness as they rather wish you stay on their side but at the end of the day, we say we owe responsibility to the people and not any political organisation. So even if a political organisation is not happy with us and the Nigerian people are happy with us, we are fine.

Interpretation

Editorial policy of *The Punch* positively affected its performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

5. Summary of responses on which other factors affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

I think the biggest challenge at the moment, not just in *Punch* but for every newspaper in Nigeria, is the freedom of information. You still find that it is difficult to get crucial information. The people that should give the information are not willing to and you find that the people that are willing are not the people who should be talking. Really I think that is the biggest challenge every journalist is facing.

Interpretation

Limited access to information affected Nigerian press performance in reporting political crisis situations.

6. Summary of respondent's advice to Nigerian journalists in reporting political crisis situations.

Responses

It's not just about the coverage of political crisis but in journalism generally, the ethics of the profession should remain number one. I believe that Nigerians need their media more than ever now so we need to remain objective, we need to remain fair and we need to remain balanced because that is the best way to contribute our best to Nigeria.

Interpretation

Nigerian journalists should remain objective, fair and balanced in order to enhance their performance in political crisis situations.

APPENDIX 4J: DAILY INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW X

Interviewee: Theophilus Abbah

Designation: Editor (Sunday)

Newspaper: The Trust

Mode of Interview: Telephone Chat

1. Summary of responses on the extent (frequency) of newspaper reports on the political crisis situations.

Responses

Fundamentally, the philosophy of The Trust is to do a robust coverage of politics. We give ample attention to politics by doing in-depth report, interviews and look for breaking news, and investigative stories as well as intelligent analyses of political issues.

Interpretation

The Trust newspaper covered the political crisis situations to a great extent.

2. Summary of responses on the frame of reports by the newspapers during the crisis situations.

Responses

i. Third term agenda: Fundamentally, the said agenda was unconstitutional and therefore, we did not support Obasanjo's third term agenda. Fairness demands that we be fair to Obasanjo and his men in reporting the third term because in general reportage, fairness demands that you hear from the other side; that is what you should do when you are trying to assert your fairness. And all those involved in the amendment of the constitution, marshaled out their points; and as far as they continued to advance the reasons they wanted that section of the constitution amended, we reported it. We reported the arguments put forward for the third term till it came to the National Assembly where it was killed and we reported it.

Interpretation

The Trust was objective in its coverage of the crisis situation.

ii. *Yar'Adua's illness*: The fundamental issue about his illness was that there was no full disclosure. You know if you were terminally ill, then you should have disclosed you were terminally ill. That is number one. Also, there was this measure of secrecy around the man's health condition. What we did was to report the developments. For instance, if a medical doctor spoke, if a person close to him, who knew his condition, spoke, we reported. Then if Jonathan's men reacted, we reported. We reported exclusive details about his health condition and then listening to what he had to say.

Interpretation

The Trust was objective in its coverage of the crisis situation.

iii. *Post-election protests*: As a newspaper editor, the first thing I do is that I report events. If you look at the picture of the protest, it occurred in Kano, then you had it in Bauchi, some measure in Niger and then in Kaduna. If you look at the nature of that protest, it did not start from the opposition; but it started from the ruling party (PDP). Then we also did some analysis and covered probe that came after it as well as the report of the probe panel.

Interpretation

The Trust was objective in its coverage of the crisis situation.

3. Summary of responses on how ownership affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

I am the editor of *Sunday Trust* and am a Christian. There has never been a day that the chairman of the newspaper called me to say, do this story or don't do this story. So, as the editor I have my independence to decide what story to run and you know what happened if I run into trouble as editor; I would take responsibility. I have absolute independence on editorial content.

Interpretation

Ownership did not influence *The Trust's* reportage of the political crisis situation.

4. Summary of responses on how editorial policy affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

Our editorial policy is trust. We don't take sides; we don't collect money to write any stories, we do balanced reporting. But the true side of Trust is that we give in-depth coverage to northern issues. In-depth coverage, however, is different from supporting the northern agenda. These are two different things. So, The Trust is not a newspaper that is established by the northern oligarchy to protect the interest of the region.

Interpretation

Editorial policy of the *The Trust* positively affected its performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

5. Summary of responses on which other factors affected press performance in reporting the political crisis situations.

Responses

Proximity is a factor. This is because you have to cover events that are close to the people who read you. You also consider prominence; that is a serious issue. Then you look at the urgency. For instance, if two councilors fight in a local government, I may just give it two paragraphs but if two senators exchange blows at the National Assembly, that is a front page story. Really, we give attention to political stories that are closer or affect the people that read our newspaper who are mainly from the north.

Interpretation

Proximity and prominence were part of the factors that affected Nigerian press performance in reporting political crisis situations.

6. Summary of respondent's advice to Nigerian journalists in reporting political crisis situations.

Responses

You must not be partisan when covering political crisis. If you take sides, the person reading your paper who belongs to the other camp will be disappointed. If I know the truth and a reporter reports falsehood, I would be disappointed in the reporter. So, a reporter must write the truth and make sure that he covers all the sides. If you become partisan by being a consultant to some politicians, it means that you cannot do your job as a reporter effectively because you would be biased.

Interpretation

Nigerian journalists should not be partisan when covering political crisis situations.