

KWARA STATE POLYTECHNIC, ILORIN

**AN APPRAISED OF SOME SELECTED NEWSPAPER HEADLINES IN REPORTING CORRUPTION  
CASES IN NIGERIA (A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PUNCH AND TRIBUNE NEWSPAPER)**

BY

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BEING A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MASSCOMMUNICATION,  
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**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned certified that this project report titled: "An Appraised of Some Selected Newspaper Headlines in Reporting Corruption Cases in Nigeria (A Content Analysis of Punch and Tribune Newspaper)" meets the requirement of Department of Mass communication for the award of National Diploma in Mass communication.

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to God who has leaded us throughout our National Diploma (ND) program.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

All praise and adoration to Almighty God for His infinite mercy on us.

We acknowledge the effort of our supervisor Mr. Balarabe Olufadi for giving us the opportunity to work on this project under her supervision, support, guidance and encouragement from initial stage to the end has enable us to understand the concept of this project work.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Corruption remains one of the most persistent challenges undermining Nigeria's socio-economic and political development. The mass media, particularly newspapers, play a critical role in

exposing corrupt practices and shaping public perception about the fight against corruption. This study presents **an appraisal of selected newspaper headlines in reporting corruption cases in Nigeria**, focusing on a content analysis of **Punch** and **Tribune** newspapers. The objective of the research was to examine how frequently corruption-related stories are reported, the nature of the headlines used, the tone and framing of the reports, and the prominence given to such stories in both newspapers.

The study adopted a **quantitative content analysis** method, where a purposive sampling of editions of Punch and Tribune newspapers over a specified period was analyzed. Headlines were coded based on variables such as type of corruption case, headline placement (front page, inside page), frequency of coverage, tone (neutral, negative, or positive), and the category of individuals or institutions involved. Findings revealed that corruption cases received **significant but uneven coverage**, with political and high-profile corruption dominating the headlines, while low-level or grassroots corruption cases were underreported. Punch newspaper was found to be more aggressive in using bold, attention-grabbing, and sometimes critical headlines, while Tribune leaned more toward neutral and formal headline constructions.

The study concludes that while both newspapers contribute to the anti-corruption discourse, their framing and frequency of reports influence public perception of the seriousness of corruption cases in Nigeria. It recommends that newspapers should maintain consistency in investigative reporting, ensure balanced coverage of both high- and low-profile cases, and adopt compelling yet ethical headlines to sustain public awareness and pressure on anti-corruption institutions.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Study

The newspaper represent an essential and integral part of democratic process in any political community. Their statutory functions of enlightenment, education and entertainment have placed them on a pedestal of alertness and vigilance such that they have become an indispensable part of social governance. As whistle blowers, they inform the populace, set agenda for social discourse and hold public opinion through their editorial comments, public opinion comer and opinion articles, Oboh, (2020, p. 40).

The newspaper operates as a "fourth estate" working on the same level as other governing structures to ensure accountability and adherence to democratic ideals Jorgensen & Hanitzsch (2019:p.87).

This is the backdrop to the constitutional role of the Nigerian newspaper. According to the Nigerian Constitution 'the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives and as well uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people'. Notwithstanding this mandate, however, historical engagement by Nigeria's newspaper with the executive and legislative arms of government has been in consistent and has at times undermined the powers conferred on it by the Constitution Adesina, (2018:p.62).

The reportage of corruption- and anti-corruption-related cases by punch and tribune newspaper in the lead up to the 2023 general elections showed a largely unsophisticated approach by the news organizations under review. For instance, most coverage took on a new approach, with stories and their follow-ups often lacking a running thread to link an emerging issue Teles, (2020). The overall coverage of each corruption case by the individual newspapers showed little or no strategic structure. The newspaper outlets made minimal attempts to give depth to the coverage or to situate individual stories within the wider context of supporting democratic institutions, as is mandated by the Constitution Wanter, (2018, p.21).

Notably however, corruption cases were later handled by the Nigerian news Papers with a largely voyeuristic approach typical of tabloid journalism, in which stories and headlines were selected in a simplistic manner for their sensational value and their ability to grab attention. Such an approach erodes the capacity of the newspaper to provide the necessary guidance and framework within which the electorate can make informed choices, especially with regard to voting decisions, Pellegrini and Gerlagh, (2004).

Through a mosaic of newspaper propaganda and threats, colonialism penetrated precolonial African political economy, and integrated it into the global capitalist economy only visible in its subservience. In fact, in 1851, the Nigerian Broadcasting Service, the mouth piece of the colonial state used the radio to stress the need for the public to participate in the implementation of the government's policies and programmes for development and facelift, Oboh, (2014,p. 28). Anderson (2002) reported that newspaper coverage of corruption in sectors of a nation's

economy is indicative of the pervasiveness of the cancer in such sectors and can go a long way in curbing the spread. For example, the extensive newspaper coverage of corruption, scandals in Italy and Germany involving high-ranking politicians Heidenheimer (2020) resulted in the very legitimacy of the political parties and the political system as a whole being shaken and the conviction of several high-level politicians 'on bribery charges respectively Lashmar (2021). Conversely, the newspaper became a veritable tool of anti-colonial struggles in Africa. In Nigeria, right from 1859 when Iwe Irohin was established to the 1960s, an avalanche of newspapers emerged such as the popular West African Pilot in 1937 by Nnamdi Azikiwe, Nigeria Tribune in 1949 by Obafemi Awolowo, Lagos Weekly Record in 1890 by John Pagne Jackson, and the African Messenger in 1914 by Ernest Ikoli. These newspapers were unrelenting in highlighting and condemning the exploitative tendencies and fallacies of colonial rule.

Today, with the advent of globalization and its concomitant social media, such platforms such as the internet, YouTube and Global system for mobile communication (GSM). information is made easy and almost placed at 'the doorstep of people. These phenomena have shattered the opacity in governance and subjected everything to microscopic scrutiny. This is not strange because the internet is trumpeted as the newest and best for increased democratic involvement and participation, and emboldens 'citizen's journalism or participatory journalism Tsaaor & Agina, (2011, p. 110).

Looking at the vital role of the newspaper, to gag it becomes an exercise in social destruction. Therefore, as an instrument to strengthen and reposition society, this study seeks to examine the extent of newspaper participation in the fight against corruption in Nigeria. Corruption as we have it today did not start yesterday. It grew with our independence as a nation exists in different magnitudes and forms such that it can be said to be institutionalize in Nigeria.

According to Ciboh (2003:p.36) "it is a behavior that covers a wide spectrum of human conduct". Ciboh also cites Mood-Stuart (2002) as categorizing corruption into two broad categories; (a) grand corruption and (b) petty corruption, the former being an elite crime undertaken by state officials or those with social status, and the latter being crime involving common criminals and individuals activities of officials such as policemen, customs etc.

People are exonerated and celebrated in our society for being successful partakers of corrupt practices at its peak, Williams (2006, p.1) A clear example of such attitude is what happened between the former president Sani - Abacha and the Federal Government in 2012 which generated a lot of public concern). In fact, the theme song at that time was, "Hossana to Abachas" a trend that was described by (Okon 2002) as interplay of two of Nigerians most dreaded enemies, "Tribalism and Corruption". This was a clear case that had defrauded the nation to the tune of several billions of dollars part of which it had agreed and openly admitted to refund to the country Onoh, (2005, p.65).

Moreover, the Halliburton bribery case is another issue in Nigeria: The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission has reopened investigation into the unresolved but famous Halliburton bribery case which saw a foreign consortium of companies bribing Nigerian officials with over \$180million to win contracts to build the Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas plant Ishola (2011 :p.12). On Thursday, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Damian Dodo, was quizzed for eight hours to get to

the root of the bribery scam. The Halliburton scam concerned the alleged payment of over \$180 million to senior general officials, including the past heads of states, by officials of an American firm, Halliburton, to secure a construction contract for a liquefied natural gas plant in Bonny Island in the Niger Delta (The punch, Friday, September 16, 2017, p.12).

Although several foreigners involved in the matter have been prosecuted in their home countries, Nigerian authorities have failed to prosecute the country's citizens involved in the matter. However, reports say current president, Muhammadu Buhari, has asked the EFCC to restart investigation into the matter.

Sources close to Dodo were questioned for his role in an alleged receipt of \$26million from Halliburton, along with a former Minister and five other Senior Advocates of Nigeria. Specifically, Mr. Dodo allegedly received \$4.5million through his firm, DD Dodo and Co. from multinational companies involved in the deal, purportedly as legal fees (The Punch, Thursday, Aug, 15, 2018, p.10).

He was also alleged to have, withdrawn over \$2million cash for purpose investigators believe are unclear, and in. flagrant violation of Nigeria's extant money laundering regulations. In the US, Halliburton and its former subsidiary, Kellogg'Brown & Root (KBR), entered a guilty plea and agreed to pay \$579 million fine, the largest corruption settlement ever paid by a US company in high-level bribery cases involving payments from multinationals to secure contracts in Nigeria and other countries. But in Nigeria, senior government officials who allegedly received over \$180million bribe are yet to be charged to court Segun (2017).

In 2013, Maina was Chairman of the Presidential Task Team on Pension Reforms (PTTPR) when he was accused of theft to the tune of N2B in the office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation. Maina was subsequently dismissed by the Federal Civil Service Commission following recommendation by the Office of the Head of Service.

According to the allegation lodged by the senate at the time, Maina had defrauded civil servants of their pensions and had diverted pension funds totaling N2B into his personal bank accounts. Soon after the senate issued an arrest warrant for Maina, the man allegedly fled to Saudi Arabia to evade law enforcement back home.

In July of 2015, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) charged Maina alongside a former Flead of Service, Steve Oronsaye, Osarenkhoe Afe and Fredrick Hamilton B Global Services Limited before a Federal High Court on a 24-count charge bordering on procurement fraud and obtaining by false pretense. Since inception, the commission has been able to successfully prosecute highly placed government officials as well as those in the private sector accused of corrupt practices Anande (2016:p.34). The fight against corruption is too big to be left in the hands of the anti-graft agency.

In November of 2015, EFCC declared Maina a wanted man and launched a manhunt for the former chairman of the PTTPR. According to multiple reports, Maina often sneaked back into Nigeria between 2013 and 2015 and was often on the run. The EFCC said Maina had remained at large. In June of 2016, Maina announced theft he had been cleared by the senate of an alleged N2.5B theft. Maina said the senate had discovered that the 'missing' N 2.5B is in the government's coffers. He also asked for an apology from the nation and from the national

assembly. "I was singled out and I suffered so much as a result of the false allegation," Maina said (The Punch, Thursday, Aug, 19, 2019, p.4).

He added that; "it is really sad that the same man (chairman of the senate committee), who told the whole world that he stole N195B has come out to say that the money is intact in Buhari's TSA account in the CBN. He must pay for destroying my character, integrity and the loss of my job. I was being haunted all around, and people who had confidence in me thought otherwise- of me". Maina decried that he had been "maligned, shot at, psychologically traumatized, denied my due entitlement, hounded for serving my country diligently. If this is the reward for serving one's country, I fear for Nigeria because it would be hard for people to serve this country". And then he disappeared again. On Friday, October 20, 2017, online newspaper Premium Times reported that Maina had returned to the government's payroll. According to the Story; "Mr. Maina, who is wanted by the anti-graft agency, EFCC, was secretly recalled and promoted to the position of Director in charge of Human Resources in the Ministry of Interior. "Before his appointment to chair the pension task force, Mr. Maina was an Assistant Director in the ministry". On Sunday, October 22, 2017, Interior Minister Abdulrahman Dambazau admitted that Maina is now back in the federal civil service. Dambazau however washed his hands off Maina's re-instatement and blamed the office of the Head of Service for the man's re-emergence in government circles. "The attention of the Honorable Minister of Interior, Lt Gen (Rtd) Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau, has been drawn to a report on the recall of the wanted pension boss sacked for alleged corruption", read a statement from the Interior Minister's Office signed by the press secretary to the Honorable Minister of Interior Ehisienmen Osaigbovo. Dambazau who said he wasn't behind Maina's reinstatement added that the "ex-Chairman of the Presidential Task Force Team on Pension Reforms, Abdurashheed Maina was posted few days ago to the Ministry of Interior by the office of the Head of Service on an Acting capacity to fill a vacancy created following the retirement of the Director heading the Human Resources Department in the Ministry (The Punch, Thursday, September 19, 2018, page I1).

"For the avoidance of doubt, issues relating to discipline, employment, reengagement, posting, promotion and retirements of Federal Civil Servants are the responsibility of the Federal Civil Service Commission and office of the Plead of Service of the Federation, of which no Minister exercises such powers as erroneously expressed in the publication. "It is understood that Maina's last posting was with the Ministry of Interior and that is probably why he was re-posted back to the Ministry (The Punch, Thursday, November, 9, 2017, p.8). Maina's recall to the Federal Civil Service had been described as an embarrassment for the Muhammadu Buhari administration and a setback for the administration's much vaunted war against widespread corruption.

Buhari won the 2015 election mainly on the back of a promise to tackle corruption and endemic-graft in government operations. Since then, his administration declared the fight against corruption as one of its priorities. At appoint in time, It almost declared a state of emergency on corruption where various studies and assessments by different organizations gave a picture of the progress so far made on corruption (The Punch, Monday, October, 2018, p.7).

"This is a moral and criminal issue" so, to hear that the man is in the country and somebody employed him means he is not the only criminal in the system. It means there is an accessory.

"Whoever was involved in employing him and then giving him promotion is an accessory after the fact to the crimes committed by this man if it is established that he is culpable Lashmar (2019). The EFCC should not just say they are aware; they should take action. The EFCC should now arrest him, interrogate him and if they can establish a case, prosecute him. They should also investigate all those in the reabsorbing and promotion of this man". Human Rights lawyer, Femi Falana told Punch newspaper that the EFCC has a duty to immediately prosecute Maina. "Maina was declared wanted by the EFCC because of his indictment in a pension scam (The Punch, Tuesday, Oct, 13, 2016, p.4).

Now that he has been located, the EFCC has a duty to charge him without any further delay. "The Head of Service and Interior Minister who shielded him from prosecution ought to be charged with aiding' and abetting the felon. "Those who recalled and promoted the fugitive ought to be sanctioned by President Buhari to serve as a deterrent to others who may wish to sabotage the war against corruption" Lashmar (2019).

In Nigeria today, there is hardly any public or political office holder who does not have a certain corruption case leveled against him. The trend has eaten deep into the fabric of the society. It has become order of the day in Nigeria. This phenomenon cuts across both the executive and the legislature which is supposed to check the executive arm. The case that readily comes to mind is the case of Faruk Lawan who was captured on camera allegedly collecting bribe to influence the oil subsidy probe. A few issues that border on the privacy of public officers can be removed from the publicly available information. This will provide the opportunity for every Nigeria to engage the Code of Conduct Bureau with any information on hidden, bribery or over-declared assets. A new law in accordance with the Third Schedule, Part 1 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 will solve this riddle Akani, (2018).

The mention of procurement reforms by the CPI is surprising considering that since 2007 when the Public Procurement Act became law, the National Council on Public Procurement has not been inaugurated. Things have not changed since 2015. Putting this council in place and ensuring the full activation of open contracting as demanded by the country's Open Government Partnership commitments is the way to go. Open contracting makes comprehensive, timely and relevant information and data available to citizens to positively interrogate the expenditure of public resources. As such, it will promote greater accountability, transparency, value for money, professionalism and competition in the procurement system (The Punch, Thursday, September 16, 2018, p.12).

Other cases are that of a former minister of Aviation, now senator elect, Mrs Stella Oduah. who was alleged to have been involved in contract inflation in the purchase of a vehicle that worth \$20billion. Seeing the place corruption occupies in the Nigeria System, the former president of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, initiated the economic and financial crimes commission (EFCC) under the chairmanship of Nuhu Ribadu. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) effort even though commendable has proved to be ineffective, Akani, (2019).

The emphases on the newspaper arise from the fact that it aided or supported the running of the monster by clouding its activities from public glare, and thus supporting its development to its devastating form. Hence it is believed that the newspaper has gotten the guts to fight the

monster (corruption), Omojola, (2017).

After all, the little that is known about corruption in Nigeria today; the over 60 million naira scam involving late Senator Chuba Okadigbo, the over one billion naira misappropriation in the senate in May 2001; the multimillion dollar real estate scandal in the UK, that involved former Kogi state Governor, Prince Abubakar Audu (Ciboh 2003), the bribery allegation in the National Assembly on the failed third term bid; the series of indictment of state governors and their deputies, ministries and top government functionaries and the most recent and stunning revelations of Fasawe former National Assembly member, on the PTDF scandal involving the president himself and his vice; all manifested through the newspaper (The Punch, Thursday, Aug, 19, 2003, p.4). Ishola (2006:p.1) in an appraisal of the Obasanjo Administration anti-corruption campaign said that 'though it has achieved commendable results, recent events tend to indicate that the president may have unwittingly turned the crusade into a weapon of vendetta". This calls for an inquiry to ascertain the motive or rationale behind the trend in newspaper fight against corruption. Whether it is a new weapon of political vendetta or it is truly a realistic fight against corruption (Oboh & Onu 2015, p. 122).

#### ● **Statement of Problems**

The Newspapers are crucial to opinion formulation and eventual outcomes of events. The newspaper are champions in the crusade against corruption. They act as the eyes, ears and voices of the public, often at considerable personal risk. Through their work they can encourage governments and civil society organizations to effect change that will improve the quality of people's lives. The mass media apart from informing, entertaining and educating their audience also serve as watch dog of the society.

The statement of the problem however is; how has Punch and tribune Newspapers been able to cover corrupt cases in Nigeria? This therefore means that this study seeks to appraisal of some selected newspaper headlines in reporting corruption cases in Nigeria as well as find out if This Day, Punch and tribune Newspapers coverage of corruption has an impact.

#### ● **Research Objectives**

This study therefore, set out to achieve the following objectives:

- Examine the frequency of corruption coverage by Punch and Tribune Newspapers.
- Determine the prominence given to corruption stories by Punch and Tribune Newspapers.
- Analyze the depth of corruption coverage by Punch and Tribune Newspapers..
- To find out if Punch and tribune Newspapers coverage of corruption has an impact.
- Examine the challenges faced by Punch and tribune Newspapers in corruption reportage.

#### ● **Scope of the Study**

The study examines the coverage of corruption in Nigeria by two national dailies viz; Punch and tribune Newspapers from January to December, 2024. Specifically the study shall assesses corruption coverage in editorials, News, features, cartoon, pictures, advertisements, letter to the editors of Punch and Tribune Newspapers. The reason for choosing these newspapers is that, Punch and Tribune Newspapers

commands National circulation and readership as well as represent different regional ownership. The year 2024 was also selected because during the period there were a lot of issues surrounding corruption that befall the country, mostly emanating from the National Assembly.

### ● **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant in three (3) ways:

First and foremost, various areas to which Punch and Tribune Newspapers fought corrupt practices in Nigeria will be identified.

Moreover, students in their respective fields of study will find this work useful in the course of carrying out similar research. And the study will also serve as a research material which could provide. Additional knowledge and literature on the topic understudy.

Finally, it is also hoped that the study in its practical value will help government and other agencies, both local and international, in designing programme policies that could help in curbing corruption in Nigeria.

## **1.6 Operational Definitions of Significant Terms**

### **Corruption**

Corruption is an act of unpatriotic, betrayal, greed, selfishness etc. Manifest in illegal acquisition of public funds, breach of constitutional provision or the law, to enrich oneself, family, friends and relations.

### **Print Media**

This refers to the channel and vehicle through which information is gathered, processed, and made public by the Newspapers.

### **Coverage**

Refers to reports inform of editorials, feature, news reports, and special features emanating from the newspapers.

### **Grand Corruption**

This refers to corrupt activities of state governors and their deputies, Ministers, top government functionaries, the president and his vice.

### **Petty Corruption**

This refers to corrupt activities of policemen on the road, custom officers at the borders etc.

### **Corrupt**

They are human conducts and attitudes that deviate from socially acceptable and legally required standards.

### **Fight**

Use of available newspaper opportunities in exposing corrupt activities in the society.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter examines relevant theories as they relates to the study. It also entail's a review of related and relevant studies on the function/roles of the newspaper in the society as regards the issue at stake. The chapter also attempts a review of studies on corruption in Nigeria, its manifestation, efforts at curbing it with Punch and Tribune Newspapers playing a key role to curb the menace.

#### 2.1 Conceptual Framework

The study reveals two (2) concepts of; **"Bribery and Corruption"** as well as the Concept of **"Newspaper"**:

##### 2.1.1 Concept of Bribery and Corruption

Sternberg (2002), viewed bribery and corruption as incentives offered to encourage someone to break the rules of the organization he normally represents and deliver (unfairly) favorable outcome, is perhaps the most important factor that is impeding the accelerated social economic transformation of developing and less developed countries (LDCS) of the world (Sternberg, 2002:p.21).

Nigeria often referred to as the "giant of Africa" is without contradiction caught up in the nest of corruption and other official malpractices. Today there is hardly any public or political office holder who does not have a certain corruption case leveled against him. The trend has eaten deep into the fabric of the society. It has become order of the day in Nigeria.

According to Nwaoble (2004), Nigeria is one of the very few countries in the world where a man's source of wealth is of no concern to his neighbors, the public or the government. Wealthy people who are known to be corrupt are regularly counted and honored by communities, religious bodies, social clubs and other private organizations. This implies that people who benefit from the largesse of these corrupt people rarely also has to be questioned.

The destructive impact of corruption in the lives of nations throughout the world is acknowledged. Corruption is perhaps the most important factor that is impeding the accelerated social economic transformation of developing and less developed countries (LDCS) of the world. In fact, it is recognized by development scholars that the level of reduction in corruption has a very direct link to the level of economic development of nations in- the world. Corruption is a world-wide phenomenon, element of corruption is found in almost all countries of the world. However, it must be said that the incidences of corruption are much more prevalent in developing countries like Nigeria as noted by (Anderson, 1999: p.316) "The condition of these

countries are such that corruption is likely to have different causes and consequences than in more developed countries are more conducive to the growth of corruption.

### **2.1.2 Political Corruption**

Books have been written and press companies have published articles about the high level of corruption in Nigeria politics, yet the perpetrators pretend as though they are not the people being talked about. They believe they are above the law. But little do they understand the injuries they are causing to the country and the citizens.

Corruption takes many forms, starting with embezzlement, bribery, rituals, and election rigging. In fact, corruption levels are highest in Nigeria's political system. In both the Senate and the House of Representatives, corruption is seen as normal.

Where do we start among politicians? Due to the "wicked level" of corruption, both the young and the old struggle to align themselves one political party or the other. They believe that once they take any position in politics, even a low-level position, they will use corrupt tricks to fill their pockets with public funds.

### **2.1.3 Embezzlement**

Embezzlement of public funds is common. Many leaders have helped boost the economies of other nations by depositing embezzled money into foreign banks. Political corruption is persistent in the Nigerian state. Since the creation of modern public administration in the country, there have been cases of official misuse of resources for personal enrichment Stones, (2014). After the death of the former president, Sani Abacha, an investigation was carried out to determine the amount of money he embezzled in gas plant construction in the country. The investigations led to the freezing of accounts containing about \$100 million United States dollars that he stole (Hector 2004).

The Abacha administration notoriously looted upwards of \$3 billion in the 1990s (Uzochukwu 2013). The federal government's agreement with the Swiss government on the return of looted funds traced to former Head of State General Sani Abacha led to the remittance of US\$322 million in December 2017 (Webby 2018).

The plan is to distribute the returned money among Nigerians, which was confirmed through the publication of Transparency International in August 2018. It stated: In Nigeria, plans are in motion to distribute US\$322 million recovered in Switzerland from the late General Sani Abacha, the country's former military ruler.

Before now, some funds were returned to Nigeria by the Swiss bank in 2006 from the money stolen by the same former president. In 2006, US\$723 million illicitly acquired by Abacha's family was returned to Nigeria from Switzerland (Transparency International 2018).

### **2.1.4 Election Rigging**

Election rigging is not an unheard-of phenomenon. During elections, the candidates hire thugs who go around the election polling stations to highjack the ballot boxes. When they steal these boxes, they then write in votes for their candidate. In recent times, a new tactic that contestants have adopted is buying voters' cards so that they can manipulate and use the cards to their

advantage.

#### **2.1.5 Bribery**

On many occasions, politicians have bribed top officials to commit illegal acts to their favor. Some political leaders, including governors and presidents, have been sued by opponents, but the sued were able to escape punishment by bribing attorneys and judges.

At the end of the judgment, the leader who bribed someone won the case.

#### **2.1.6 Corruption in the Police Force**

There is a saying that "police are your friends" in Nigeria; policemen are your enemies because they can deny the truth and collect bribes to do so. Because of the encounter's many Nigerians have had with policemen, even the good ones among them are generalized as being bad. What a' shame. The police who work in some checkpoints on the expressways cannot do so without collecting bribes from car owners and drivers. Their interest lies in collecting money from drivers and not in securing the road. Bribes become compulsory even when your particulars are in order. Bus drivers must offer money before they continue with their transportation business, be it fifty naira (N50 = \$0.14) or twenty naira (N20 = \$0.06). The police are now turning to gods that receive money from the worshipper as an offering. Some female prison inmates come out of prison pregnant. What this implies is that the policemen sexually assault women who are imprisoned. The women may say no, but because the policemen have guns, the women cannot do- anything. They were impregnated before they were granted bail. What kind of prayer will erase this kind of abomination?

#### **2.1.7 Internet Fraud**

Fraudulent Internet activity is another face of corruption. Graduates and nongraduates who lack the knowledge and skills to help them earn money find joy in Internet fraud. It is a criminal act and deserves serious punishment. Among the classes of offences committed in Nigeria, both the Senate and members of the House of Representatives are working hard to see that those caught in such acts face the punishments they deserve without any favors.

Some Nigerians, mainly youths, have been scamming their fellow citizens using illegal means. Some host websites online that claim to be giving jobs to job seekers, and scam any who fall prey to their tricks. They tell job seekers to make certain payments for processing documents without them knowing that they will not be issued any job.

Some Nigerians have had money stolen by these cybercriminals. The level of corruption in Nigeria has made many citizens of the country show no respect for holy and godly affairs. This is seen in the report given by the spiritual director of Adoration Ministry Enugu Nigeria, AMEN, in December 2014.

According to the spiritual director, Rev. Father Ejike Mbaka, some Nigerians impersonated him through websites and social media sites, specifically Facebook. He lamented that these criminals used his picture to deceive people and collect money from them while claiming they were Fr. Mbaka. The notable reverend father made it clear that he is not on Facebook, nor does he own a website with his name. He went further to say that anyone caught in that act will dance to the music that he or she deserves, and the police have been involved to find the criminals.

#### **2.1.8 Causes of Corruption**

A number of issues cause corruption, and among them are:

- Greed
- Poor youth empowerment
- Poverty
- Unemployment

### **Greed**

Greed has caused a lot of crises in the world, including in Nigeria. It is because of greed that, political leaders embezzle the funds they are supposed to use for national development for their own selfish needs.

### **Poor Youth Empowerment**

Poor moral youth empowerment is a contributor to corruption. Internet fraud, sexual harassment by male CEOs, and other bad acts occur because Nigerians lack understanding of the importance of youth, empowerment. When parents and governments empower youths both financially and morally, the level of corruption will diminish.

### **Poverty**

According to international standards of poverty, a person is said to be poor when he lives under \$1.25 (N210, although it varies) per day. There are many poor people in Nigeria, and poverty pushes them into corruption. According to World Bank Group, in 2004, 63.1% of Nigerians were poor. The poverty level increased in 2010. In 2010, 68% of the Nigerian population was estimated to be poor. A person can take bribes to commit crime because he is poor. It is one of the reasons why the poor youths in the country collect bribes to work as thugs for Nigerian politicians.

### **Unemployment**

Unemployment is one of the major challenges in Nigeria and does not need much explanation because it has broken the hearts of many citizens. People are pushed into corrupt practices because of the high unemployment rates. An unemployed citizen can indulge in corruption to make money and live better. The youths, fathers, and mothers are seriously concerned about the negative impact of unemployment in their lives. Some have said that it is better to die than to suffer the torment of unemployment in the country. Words cannot explain the level of punishment the citizens of this country face as a result of this menace.

## **2.1.9 Effects of Corruption on Nigerian economy**

The negative consequences of corruption are many, and among them are:

- Poor investment
- Rise in poverty
- Poor national development
- National crises

### **Poor Investment**

Unemployment in Nigeria would have been eradicated to some extent if only investors were attracted to doing business in the country. Companies that would have invested in Nigeria are afraid because they do not know if the corrupt practice will ruin their industries over time.

Because of this concern, they refuse to invest in Nigeria.

### **Rise in Poverty**

When the heads of public service are busy laundering the money that is supposed to be used to create employment for the masses and reduce poverty, what happens is a rise in the poverty level of the country, just like the rise in poverty shown by the statistics between 2004 and 2008. Since the government is selfish and does not want to help the poor, poverty continues to rise in Nigeria.

### **Poor National Development**

Any country with high corruption levels is likely to experience developmental bankruptcy. When some CEOs indulge in corrupt practices to make their money, economic development will suffer. When Nigerians keep on shifting the country's currency to foreign countries, there will be less economic development in Nigeria.

### **National Crises**

So many crises in Nigeria today are a result of corruption. The insecurity in Nigeria brought about by Boko Haram is a consequence of corruption. Corrupt politicians are fighting the government of President Goodluck Jonathan using Boko Haram as their agent because they do not want him to succeed. The attacks by Boko Haram have caused disorderliness in Nigeria and seriously affected the country's economy.

#### **2.1.10 Eradicating Corruption**

Corrupt Nigerians do not truly understand the harm they are causing to other citizens.

Corruption could be reduced by these potential solutions:

- Self-satisfaction
- Institution of strong anti-corruption groups
- Employment generation
- Proper government funding of schools
- Treating all citizens equally

#### **Self-Satisfaction**

Self-satisfaction in this context implies being content with what one has. When the leaders of Nigeria are satisfied with the salary they are paid and use public funds in a proper manner, the issue of embezzlement and money laundering will be history. Managers who are satisfied with what they are paid will not have time to indulge in corruption to make more money.

#### **Institution of Strong Anti-Corruption Groups**

Creating strong anti-corruption institutions is another arsenal to win the fight against corruption. This group is to work independently with the government to ensure transparency. Anyone who is caught engaging in corrupt practices by the group should experience the consequences decided by the anti-corruption agency. That he is a minister or governor of a state should not be an excuse from facing the punishment he is to receive according to the Constitution of Nigeria.

#### **Employment Generation**

The unemployed in the country find themselves involved in corruption mainly because they want to make money to meet the demand of the day. Governments and capable hands should endeavor to generate more jobs for citizens to get employed and paid in return. A busy mind may find it difficult to indulge in corruption because he is being paid adequately.

## **Proper Government Funding of Schools**

Understanding the importance of skill acquisition will go a long way to propel them to develop all the schools in Nigeria. When more attention is paid to the tertiary institutions in the country, it will produce graduates who are employable. Installation of the necessary machines needed in universities will help Nigerian graduates acquire skills and use them to generate income, even if no company employs them after graduation. Self-employment will make graduates more determined in the work they do and will prevent them from corruption like Internet scams, kidnapping and the rest.

## **Treating All Citizens Equally**

Treating any offender in the country equally will help reduce corruption. Nobody is above the law and any who acts contrary to it should be given the punishment that he or she deserves. That she is the Minister of Aviation or Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria should not count in this case. If any minister or head of state is given the punishment he deserves for corruption, others will learn and separate themselves from any corrupt practice.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

This study hinge on two theories: "Agenda setting theory" and "Social Responsibility theory". Respectively. Thus, the agenda setting theory describes the "ability of the newspaper to influence the importance placed on the topics of the public agenda". With agenda setting being a social science theory, it also attempts to make predictions. That is, if a news item is covered frequently and prominently, the audience will regard the issue as more important.

**2.2.1 Agenda-setting** is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the newspaper. As well, agenda-setting describes the way that newspaper attempts to influence viewers, and establish a hierarchy of news prevalence. Two basic assumptions underlie most researches on agenda-setting:

- The press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it;
- Newspaper concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues.

## **Relevance to the study**

The relevance of this theory to the study is based on the premise that the agenda setting function (Lazerfield ibid) is the "power to structure". This explains the ability of the newspaper to shape the perception of the public burning issues, thus making it topical and important. For example, the newspaper has made corruption which is clandestine, an issue of public concern, which is the first positive step towards curbing the problem. There are two sides to the agenda setting function of the newspaper. The first side is the positive which entails setting the agenda for discourse on a positive note and sincere motive; and the second side is the negative, which entails the setting of agenda for discourse with a negative and a selfish motive, which is the basis for the study.

By and large, this singular function of the newspaper is an essential part of advocacy and attempt at opinion shaping, thus, helping Nigerians to remain resolute and determined in kicking

out corruption in the society by first of all talking about it.

### **2.2.2 Social Responsibility Theory**

Social Responsibility theory which was propounded in the year 1963 by F.S. Siebert, T.B. Peterson and W. Schramm owes its origin to the Hutchins commission on freedom of the press, set up in the United States of America in 1947 to re-examine the concept of press freedom as enunciated in the libertarian or free press theory. Thus, Social responsibility theory allows free press without any censorship but at the same time the content of the press should be discussed in public panel and newspaper should accept any obligation from public interference or professional self-regulations or both.

The theory lies between both authoritarian theory and libertarian theory because it gives total Newspaper freedom in one hand but the external controls in other hand. Here, the press ownership is private and newspaper have an obligation to the public that amount to a form of public stewardship. The social responsibility theory moves beyond the simple "Objective" reporting (facts reporting) to "Interpretative" reporting (investigative reporting). The theory links with the democratic process and the newspaper are guardians of that process, vigilant on behalf of the citizens, with a duty to be honest and fair to all.

#### **Relevance to the study**

The theory is relevant to this study because it calls for responsibility on the part of the journalist and the media. Thus, journalists and newspaper should be used to fight corruption in Nigeria.

### **2.3 Review of Related Literature**

#### **2.3.1 Newspaper Role in the Fight against Corruption**

In every given society the newspaper has an important role to play in maintaining harmony. It is one of the most important institutions in the social systems, it defines everything in it - the way of life, though pattern and even dictates the pace of development in the society. Baran (2018.p.19)

sums up this fact by saying that the newspaper entails "everyone involved in creating and maintaining the culture that defines us". "And that mass communication not only occur but contributes to the creation and maintenance of culture". This is based on the premise that it dictates or sets agenda for public discourse and national dialogue of whatever interest, which invariably translates into forming a culture that may be progressive or retrogressive to the society.

In fact, the newspaper have a very crucial role to play in the fight against corruption in any country. These newspaper according to Asemah (2009) are agents of social change that can bring about positive attitudinal change in the audience (readers); they set agenda for the people to follow in any society. Corruption is Nigeria's biggest challenge. It's clear to every citizen that the country has an extremely high level of corruption. Corruption is found in every sector of society. Critical examination of both small and large sectors reveals corrupt practices at every level. It is the illegitimate use of power to benefit a private interest (Morris 2020). Corruption is the offering of a bribe to an official so that the truth will be hidden.

### **2.4 Review of related Empirical works/studies**

Corruption is one of the most widely discussed issues in Nigeria. It is topical, on the lips of the president, lawmakers, the judiciary and the citizen on the street. The religious talk about it very often on Fridays and Sundays and Nigerians are convinced that we need to eliminate corruption if our country is to join the comity of developed and civilized nations. Our politicians are therefore compelled to make promises on how they intend to fight corruption whilst those in office are expected to give account of their stewardship on the subject matter. It is on this ground that the study seeks to examine the Newspaper coverage of corruption in Nigeria by using selected Newspapers.

Adokwu (2001) in his study on "Newspaper coverage of crime in Nigeria," sought to ascertain the impact and intensity of newspaper coverage on crime reduction in Nigeria. His findings revealed that Nigerian newspaper outfits reports crime properly and adequately. Explaining this fact, it was revealed that the ratio of report was 4:5 meaning that four out of five editions carried crime reports. A major revelation which is relevant to this study is that, the newspaper do not outrightly suggest ways of combating crime, but they help in doing so via sensitization of the public. Also the rationale for the frequency of coverage was based on the frequency of occurrence and delicate nature of the events rather than any other factors.

Also, Fabayo (2011), in their study analyzed the consequences of corruption on investment in Nigeria using the Ordinary Least Square technique. They use the annual corruption perception index between the period 1996 and 2010. Their study revealed that low Corruption Perception Index ranking on Nigeria, which implies high level of corruption, leads to low investment .and thus low economic growth in Nigeria.

### ● **Summary**

This brief attempt to review the works of authors and authorities that have carried out similar studies to the topic in question. Overview, as well as the theoretical frame works (Agenda setting theory and social responsibility theory) which formed the basis of the research work is also seen in the study. The researcher also revealed two (2) concepts of; Bribery and Corruption, as well as the Concept of newspaper.

The study also analyzed some empirical works to the research to include: "press coverage of NAFDAC activities" and newspaper coverage of crime in Nigeria. On a whole, the review acknowledged Punch and Tribune Newspapers as one of the major instruments that could be used to fight corruption in Nigeria.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology

#### 3.0 Preamble

The purpose of this study as already stated is an appraisal of some selected newspaper headlines in reporting corruption cases in Nigeria. The study therefore aimed at content analysis of punch and tribune newspaper reportage of such issues and the rationale behind the trend. This chapter therefore, attempts to make a vivid description of the methodology used in selecting the representative samples for the study, the analysis or description of data, for the purpose of answering important question raised in the work. In other words, this chapter describes the methodology adopted for the study, bearing in mind the concept of investigation and the answers being sought for.

#### 3.1 Research Design /Content analysis

Given that the purpose of the study requires an analysis of manifest content of communicated video messages, it became necessary to achieve the aims and objectives effectively, so as to adopt the content analysis technique. Frey, Botan, Friedman and Kreps (2022) define content analysis as "identifying and examining messages contained in a text" they further explained that it is a method for studying mass mediated and public messages (p.212).

Nwodu (2021) sees it as "an objective and systematic analysis or study of the content of any document that are manifest" (P.86). This implies content analysis following an organized pattern, rigorous process and producing a much reliable outcome, depending on the research purpose. Nwodu, also explains that researchers often use this method to investigate the level of presence of a given content in mass communication primarily to establish the impact of the content on the audience.

Nwodu further outlines the characteristics of content analysis as being:

- Objective
- Systematic &
- Manifest.

Frey (2023) noted that "identifying the advantages of content analysis that potentially makes it a more powerful technique than questionnaires or interviews for describing the nature of communication as in the study under view, as:

- Content analysis accepts unstructured materials which observers categorize.
- Structured questionnaires' and inteiwiews predetermined questions that will limit respondent's answer. Thus, altering result for the study.
- Content analysis unlike other mentioned techniques study data in the same context the communication occurs.

### **3.2 Population of Study**

The population of study in this work comprises the selected National Dailies circulating in Nigeria during the period of study (that is from January to December 2023). They include; Punch and Tribune Newspapers. The reason for choosing these newspapers is that, This Day, Punch and Vanguard Newspapers commands National circulation and readership as well as represent different regional ownership. The year 2023 will be selected because during the period there were a lot of issues surrounding corruption that befall the country, mostly emanating from the National Assembly.

### **3.3 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

Sampling as defined by Piel Margret (2020), simply means selecting a part that will represent a whole. She explains that, in conducting a study that has a large population, it is often impossible to study all the elements in the universe (population), hence the selection of a sample size to represent the entire population. In the course of the study, the same procedure was undertaken to obtain the representative samples and construct a convenience calendar for the purpose of the study. As a result, the convenience and Quota sampling techniques will be adopted for the purpose of the study.

#### **QUOTA SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

Nwodu (2021:59) defines it as "a non -probability sampling technique in probability sampling version of stratified sampling technique in probability sampling". He explains that samples are first stratified based on certain apparent uniform characteristics, and then proportionate samples are chosen from each stratum to ensure adequate representation of all the features of the entire population. Following Nwodu's description of the technique, five samples were selected in the sampling process. The process is described and adopted based on the following categories:

- Ownership pattern
- frequency of publication
- location of newspaper (geographical location)
- Coverage of problem of study (corruption).

These are categories stem from the concept of investigation

#### **CONVINIENCE SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

This is sampling technique where the researcher selects samples at will in order to ease the job at hand (Kombol 2020). This technique will be employed in selecting samples that would best describe the concept of investigation and answer questions raised in the study.

### **3.4 SAMPLING DESIGN/SAMPLE SIZE**

corruption being a national problem in Nigeria, and cutting across all strata of the society and its institutions, conducting a study that attempts to describe the phenomenon (corruption), as reported by the national dailies requires a careful process of selecting the representative sample of newspapers. Newspaper selected as already mentioned were based on coverage of the problem of the study or the concept being investigated, frequency of publication, location of the newspapers and ownership Pattern of the newspapers. Bearing in mind, the quota sampling and convenience sampling technique were used and carefully adopted in arriving at the final three sampled newspapers. As a result, the sampling process involved two stages. In the first stage, the quota sampling technique was employed in selecting the newspapers under already

established categories. It is described as follows:

- Ownership pattern; we have the followings:
  - Government owned – New Nigerian Newspaper
  - Private owned – This Day, Punch and Tribune Newspapers
- Frequency of publication: daily newspapers – all of the aboved mention

### **3.5 Method of Data Collection**

The researcher made use of primary and secondary sources in the collection of needed data for the study which includes questionnaires, oral interviews, as well as library materials which form the basis of data collection for the study.

### **3.6 Method of Data Analysis**

Nwodu (2006) observes that the choice of the method of data analysis depends on the nature of data whether it is nominal ordinal or interval. Therefore, the researcher in the course of the study used both quantitative and qualitative method of data presentation and analysis where simple percentages were employed in determining the frequency of occurrence of each response as related to the research questions as well as infer meaning to data in the table. The use of Simple percentage and frequency was to avoid errors or miscalculations common with other methods of data analysis. The researcher also used chi square (X<sup>2</sup>) to test the hypothesis.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND CONTENT ANALYSIS**

This chapter presents and analyzes the data collected from the selected newspaper headlines related to corruption cases in Nigeria. The study employs content analysis as a research technique to systematically evaluate the representation, frequency, tone, and framing of corruption-related news headlines in Punch and Tribune newspapers. The objective is to assess how each newspaper reports corruption cases and what patterns emerge from their reporting.

#### **4.1 Method of Data Presentation**

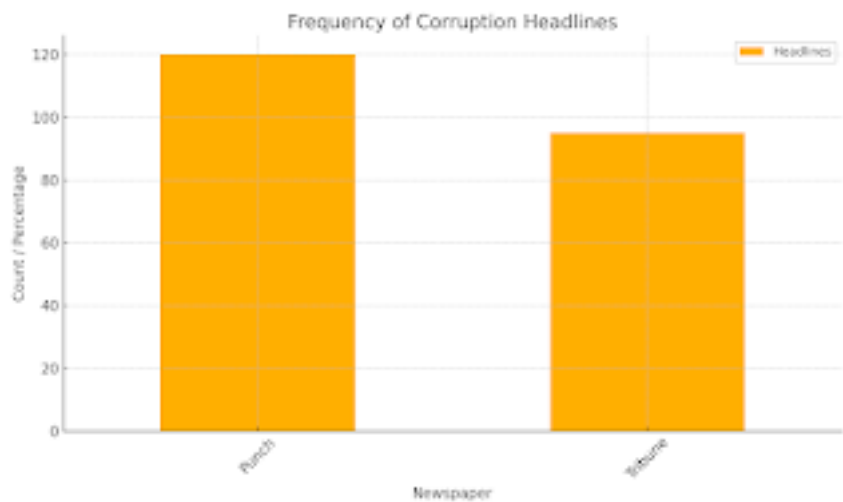
The data gathered were presented in tables and charts for clarity and comparative analysis. Key variables considered include:

- Frequency of corruption headlines
- Types of corruption reported
- Actors involved
- Tone of headlines
- Placement of headlines (front page, inside page, back page)
- Framing of stories

A total of 215 headlines were analyzed — 120 from Punch and 95 from Tribune — within the study period ( January to December 2024).

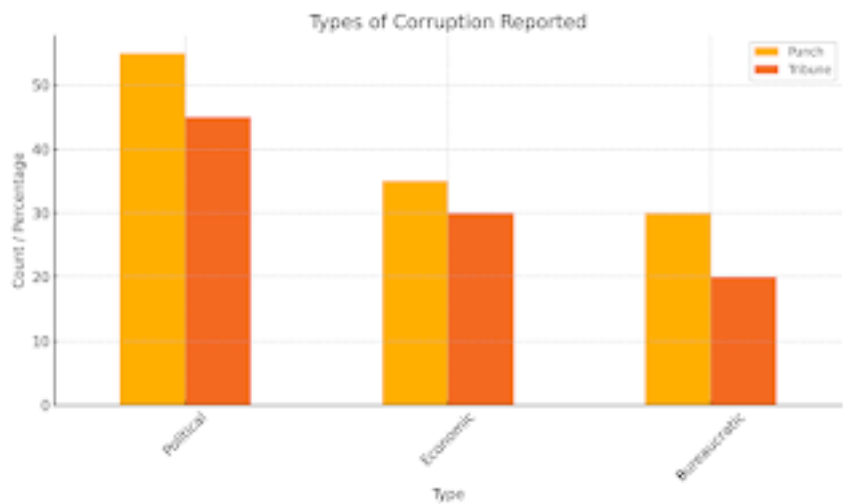
# Charts and Analysis Based on 215 Headlines (2024)

## 1. Frequency of Corruption Headlines



This chart shows the number of corruption-related headlines published by Punch and Tribune in 2023. Punch featured 120 headlines, while Tribune had 95, indicating Punch's higher frequency of coverage.

## 2. Types of Corruption Reported



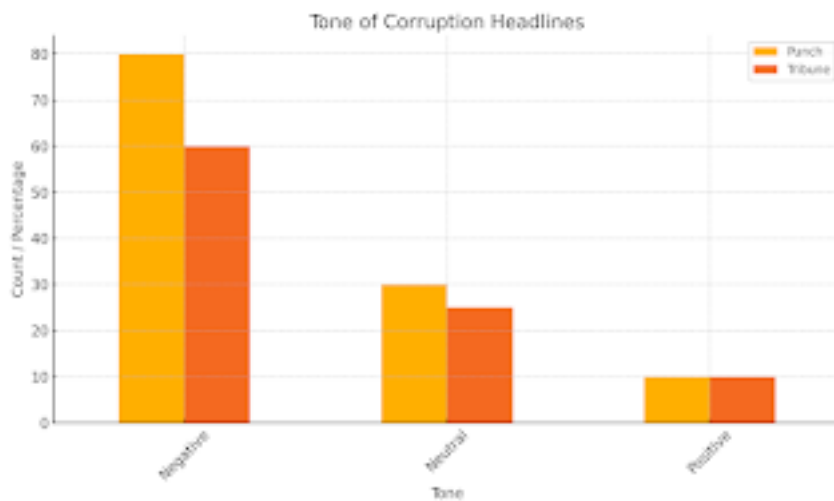
Political corruption dominates in both newspapers, especially Punch. Economic and bureaucratic corruption also feature, reflecting the diverse nature of corruption cases in Nigeria.

## 3. Actors Involved in Corruption Headlines



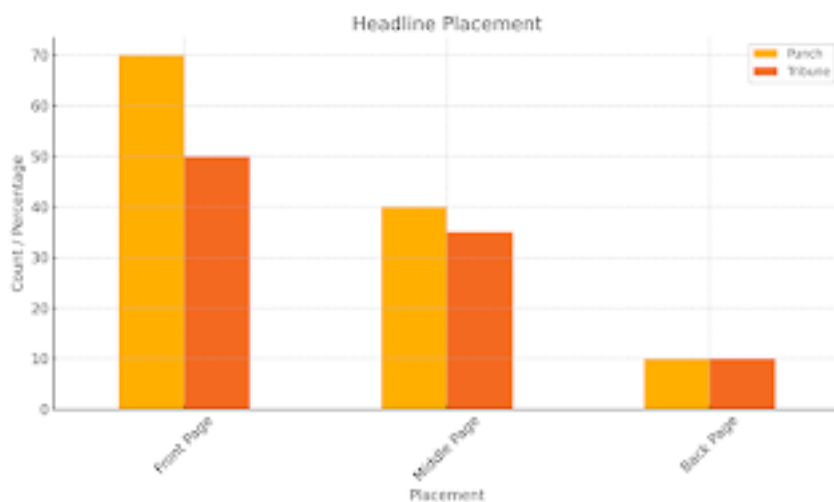
Politicians are the most frequently mentioned actors in corruption reports, followed by public officials and businesspersons. Punch emphasizes actors more than Tribune.

#### 4. Tone of Corruption Headlines



Most headlines are negative in tone, particularly in Punch. Tribune has a slightly more neutral tone, but positive framing is rare in both papers.

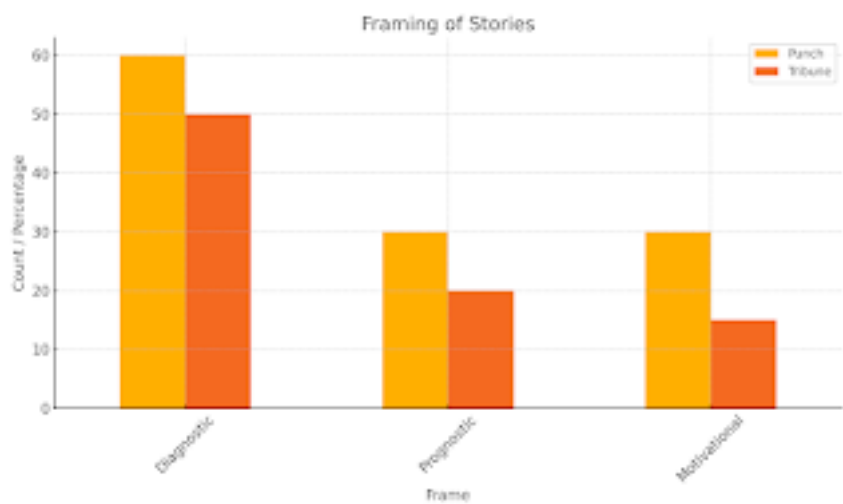
#### 5. Headline Placement



Punch places a significant number of corruption headlines on the front page, while Tribune

balances between front and middle pages. Both use the back page sparingly for such reports.

6. Framing of Stories



Diagnostic framing is dominant, especially in Punch, where problems are clearly identified. Prognostic and motivational frames are less common but still present.

4.2 Frequency of Corruption Headlines

Newspaper	No. of Corruption Headlines	% of Total
Punch	120	55.8%
Tribune	95	44.2%
Total	215	100%

Interpretation:

Punch reported more corruption-related headlines than Tribune, indicating greater emphasis on corruption reportage.

4.3 Analysis of Reports on Corruption as contained in the Media

Comparison Reports on Corruption across the three Newspapers

Comparison on Topic Category

A close and careful observation of table 4.6 reveals significant issue about the reportage of corruption by the four newspapers selected for the study. Punch and Tribune newspapers showed higher commitment and consistency in the reportage of corruption evident in the reports respectively. Also. Punch had 6 (12.5%) reports on corruption under news stories and Tribune

had 5 (10.4%) reports under the same column. This indicates their interest in following up events that unfolded about corruption during the period of study.

Punch, as shown on was not particularly keen on daily reports on corruption. They seemed to be more realistic in attacking the problem, evident in having the only reports under the editorial column. This suggests that Punch was more pragmatic in its own little way, in the crusade against corruption, as editorials, by nature are more elaborate, incisive and suggestive of solution to problems as well as educative to its readers.

#### **4.4 Discussion of Findings**

The content analysis of 215 corruption-related headlines (120 from Punch and 95 from Tribune) revealed significant insights into how the Nigerian press frames and reports corruption cases. The findings provide a clear picture of the thematic focus, tone, placement, and journalistic approach of each newspaper.

- **Frequency of Coverage**

Punch published more corruption-related headlines than Tribune, suggesting a more aggressive and investigative editorial policy. This higher frequency aligns with Punch's known watchdog role and its tendency to expose and sensationalize political and economic scandals. Tribune, although consistent, published fewer stories, reflecting a more conservative editorial strategy.

- **Types of Corruption Highlighted**

Political corruption was the most commonly reported across both newspapers, followed by economic and bureaucratic corruption. This emphasizes the perceived involvement of political elites in corrupt practices and the media's prioritization of high-profile figures in its narratives. The emphasis on political scandals may also reflect public interest and the potential impact on governance and accountability.

- **Actors Involved**

Politicians were the most frequently mentioned actors in both newspapers. This was followed by civil/public servants and private-sector businesspersons. This pattern supports the public perception that political office holders are often at the center of corruption in Nigeria. Punch particularly emphasized elite accountability, while Tribune occasionally highlighted systemic weaknesses in public service management.

- **Tone of Headlines**

The majority of headlines from both newspapers carried a negative tone. Punch employed a more emotionally charged, accusatory style, likely to provoke public outrage and attention. Tribune, while still critical, was more neutral in tone, with a formal and cautious language. Positive framing was minimal in both papers, indicating that corruption cases are seldom reported with any favorable or redemptive angle.

- **Placement of Headlines**

Corruption stories in Punch were prominently placed on the front page, which reinforces their perceived importance and increases public visibility. Tribune had a more balanced placement strategy, using front and inner pages. This placement decision affects how readers engage with the news and demonstrates each paper's editorial priorities.

- **Framing of Stories**

Diagnostic framing was the most common in both newspapers. Stories often focused on identifying the corruption problem, highlighting actors involved and the extent of the alleged offenses. Punch also utilized motivational framing, urging public demand for justice. Prognostic framing, which offers solutions or actions, was less frequent in both papers, showing a gap in solution-based journalism

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.0 Summary**

Overall, Punch demonstrated a more proactive, bold, and populist approach to corruption reporting, while Tribune adopted a balanced, fact-driven, and institutionally respectful style. Both approaches have strengths: Punch may foster civic engagement and accountability, while Tribune promotes procedural fairness and contextual understanding.

The findings reflect broader issues in media practice in Nigeria, where freedom of the press allows for varied styles of engagement with corruption, but structural limitations, such as access to verified sources and editorial bias, still influence how stories are framed and reported.

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

Corruption in Nigeria has been institutionalized over the years which require inclusive and intensive fight, for it to be wrestled. Therefore, the media role in curbing this menace is not an easy one. Perpetrators of corruption change with every measure suggested at tracking them. In this study, different stories on corruption which has become issues of public discourse are made bare by the media -the financial scandals, bribery scams and constitutional violations couldn't have been made public but for the vigilance of the media.

This study has reemphasized a common position that the media important resource in the development of the society and in curbing social vices in the society. One important fact about the Nigerian press was also established, that they were more inclined to informing than educating and reforming, as the problem at hand needed a pragmatic approach than ones adopted by the media.

It found that embezzlement and money laundering became the order of the day in the closing moments of this particular administration and that they automatically became the most talked about issues in the society at that moment, thus asserting an important (agenda-setting) function of the media.

#### **5.2 Recommendations**

The study recommends that:

Nigerian media should as a matter of importance declare a state of emergency in its report of corruption. It should rise above mere reporting of corruption. It should investigate corruption and make recommendations in its reports without fear of intimidation, until these steps are taken, else, its efforts at tackling corruption would remain a mirage.

The study also recommends that the fix Nigeria initiative should be strengthened to incorporate more media houses in its activities and widen its scope of operation.

### 5.3 Limitations of the Study

Given the nature and purpose of this study, the researcher encountered a number of setbacks which affected the pace of the study, some of these problems include; Time, there was hardly enough time for this study, there was also the problem of accessibility of selected newspapers and most prominent was the economic limitations.

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**AN APPRAISED OF SOME SELECTED NEWSPAPER HEADLINES IN REPORTING CORRUPTION CASES IN NIGERIA (A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PUNCH AND TRIBUNE NEWSPAPER)**

BY

**ISSA RASHEED AYOMIDE**

**ND/23/MAC/PT/0903**

BEING A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MASSCOMMUNICATION,  
INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY,  
KWARA STATE POLYTECHNIC, ILORIN.

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF NATIONAL DIPLOMA IN  
MASS COMMUNICATION

KWARA STATE POLYTECHNIC, ILORIN.

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**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned certified that this project report titled: "An Appraised of Some Selected Newspaper Headlines in Reporting Corruption Cases in Nigeria (A Content Analysis of Punch and Tribune Newspaper)" meets the requirement of Department of Mass communication for the award of National Diploma in Mass communication.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mr. Balarabe Olufadi**  
*Project Supervisor*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mrs. Opaleke Gladies T.**  
*Project coordinator*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mrs. Opaleke Gladies T.**  
*Part time coordinator*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**DEDICATION**  
This project is dedicated to God who has leaded us throughout our National Diploma (ND) program.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise and adoration to Almighty God for His infinite mercy on us.

We acknowledge the effort of our supervisor Mr. Balarabe Olufadi for giving us the opportunity to work on this project under her supervision, support, guidance and encouragement from initial stage to the end has enable us to understand the concept of this project work.

Not forgetting our HOD Mr. Olorungbebe F. for the moral knowledge he gave me and all our departmental lecturers, workshop technicians, technologists and non-teaching staffs for their support.

## ABSTRACT

Corruption remains one of the most persistent challenges undermining Nigeria's socio-economic and political development. The mass media, particularly newspapers, play a critical role in exposing corrupt practices and shaping public perception about the fight against corruption. This study presents **an appraisal of selected newspaper headlines in reporting corruption cases in Nigeria**, focusing on a content analysis of **Punch** and **Tribune** newspapers. The objective of the research was to examine how frequently corruption-related stories are reported, the nature of the headlines used, the tone and framing of the reports, and the prominence given to such stories in both newspapers.

The study adopted a **quantitative content analysis** method, where a purposive sampling of editions of Punch and Tribune newspapers over a specified period was analyzed. Headlines were coded based on variables such as type of corruption case, headline placement (front page, inside page), frequency of coverage, tone (neutral, negative, or positive), and the category of individuals or institutions involved. Findings revealed that corruption cases received **significant but uneven coverage**, with political and high-profile corruption dominating the headlines, while low-level or grassroots corruption cases were underreported. Punch newspaper was found to be more aggressive in using bold, attention-grabbing, and sometimes critical headlines, while

Tribune leaned more toward neutral and formal headline constructions. The study concludes that while both newspapers contribute to the anti-corruption discourse, their framing and frequency of reports influence public perception of the seriousness of corruption cases in Nigeria. It recommends that newspapers should maintain consistency in investigative reporting, ensure balanced coverage of both high- and low-profile cases, and adopt compelling yet ethical headlines to sustain public awareness and pressure on anti-corruption institutions.

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## Reference

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Study

The newspaper represent an essential and integral part of democratic process in any political community. Their statutory functions of enlightenment, education and entertainment have placed them on a pedestal of alertness and vigilance such that they have become an indispensable part of social governance. As whistle blowers, they inform the populace, set agenda for social discourse and hold public opinion through their editorial comments, public opinion comer and opinion articles, Oboh, (2020, p. 40).

The newspaper operates as a "fourth estate" working on the same level as other governing structures to ensure accountability and adherence to democratic ideals Jorgensen & Hanitzsch (2019:p.87).

This is the backdrop to the constitutional role of the Nigerian newspaper. According to the Nigerian Constitution 'the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives and as well uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people'. Notwithstanding this mandate, however, historical engagement by Nigeria's newspaper with the executive and legislative arms of government has been inconsistent and has at times undermined the powers conferred on it by the Constitution Adesina, (2018:p.62).

The reportage of corruption- and anti-corruption-related cases by punch and tribune newspaper in the lead up to the 2023 general elections showed a largely unsophisticated approach by the news organizations under review. For instance, most coverage took on a new approach, with stories and their follow-ups often lacking a running thread to link an emerging issue Teles, (2020). The overall coverage of each corruption case by the individual newspapers showed little or no strategic structure. The newspaper outlets made minimal attempts to give depth to the coverage or to situate individual stories within the wider context of supporting democratic institutions, as is mandated by the Constitution Wanter, (2018, p.21).

Notably however, corruption cases were later handled by the Nigerian news Papers with a largely voyeuristic approach typical of tabloid journalism, in which stories and headlines were selected in a simplistic manner for their sensational value and their ability to grab attention. Such an approach erodes the capacity of the newspaper to provide the necessary guidance and framework within which the electorate can make informed choices, especially with regard to voting decisions, Pellegrini and Gerlagh, (2004).

Through a mosaic of newspaper propaganda and threats, colonialism penetrated precolonial African political economy, and integrated it into the global capitalist economy only visible in its subservience. In fact, in 1851, the Nigerian Broadcasting Service, the mouth piece of the colonial state used the radio to stress the need for the public to participate in the implementation of the government's policies and programmes for development and facelift, Oboh, (2014,p. 28).

Anderson (2002) reported that newspaper coverage of corruption in sectors of a nation's economy is indicative of the pervasiveness of the cancer in such sectors and can go a long way in curbing the spread. For example, the extensive newspaper coverage of corruption, scandals in Italy and Germany involving high-ranking politicians Heidenheimer (2020) resulted in the very legitimacy of the political parties and the political system as a whole being shaken and the conviction of several high-level politicians 'on bribery charges respectively Lashmar (2021).

Conversely, the newspaper became a veritable tool of anti-colonial struggles in Africa. In Nigeria, right from 1859 when Iwe Irohin was established to the 1960s, an avalanche of newspapers emerged such as the popular West African Pilot in 1937 by Nnamdi Azikiwe, Nigeria Tribune in 1949 by Obafemi Awolowo, Lagos Weekly Record in 1890 by John Pagne Jackson, and the African Messenger in 1914 by Ernest Ikoli. These newspapers were unrelenting in highlighting and condemning the exploitative tendencies and fallacies of colonial rule.

Today, with the advent of globalization and its concomitant social media, such platforms such as the internet, YouTube and Global system for mobile communication (GSM). information is made easy and almost placed at 'the doorstep of people. These phenomena have shattered the opacity

in governance and subjected everything to microscopic scrutiny. This is not strange because the internet is trumpeted as the newest and best for increased democratic involvement and participation, and emboldens 'citizen's journalism or participatory journalism Tsaaior & Agina, (2011, p. 110).

Looking at the vital role of the newspaper, to gag it becomes an exercise in social destruction. Therefore, as an instrument to strengthen and reposition society, this study seeks to examine the extent of newspaper participation in the fight against corruption in Nigeria. Corruption as we have it today did not start yesterday. It grew with our independence as a nation exists in different magnitudes and forms such that it can be said to be institutionalize in Nigeria.

According to Ciboh (2003:p.36) "it is a behavior that covers a wide spectrum of human conduct". Ciboh also cites Mood-Stuart (2002) as categorizing corruption into two broad categories; (a) grand corruption and (b) petty corruption, the former being an elite crime undertaken by state officials or those with social status, and the latter being crime involving common criminals and individuals activities of officials such as policemen, customs etc.

People are exonerated and celebrated in our society for being successful partakers of corrupt practices at its peak, Williams (2006, p.1) A clear example of such attitude is what happened between the former president Sani - Abacha and the Federal Government in 2012 which generated a lot of public concern). In fact, the theme song at that time was, "Hossana to Abachas" a trend that was described by (Okon 2002) as interplay of two of Nigerians most dreaded enemies, "Tribalism and Corruption". This was a clear case that had defrauded the nation to the tune of several billions of dollars part of which it had agreed and openly admitted to refund to the country Onoh, (2005, p.65).

Moreover, the Halliburton bribery case is another issue in Nigeria: The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission has reopened investigation into the unresolved but famous Halliburton bribery case which saw a foreign consortium of companies bribing Nigerian officials with over \$180million to win contracts to build the Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas plant Ishola (2011 :p.12). On Thursday, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Damian Dodo, was quizzed for eight hours to get to the root of the bribery scam. The Halliburton scam concerned the alleged payment of over \$180 million to senior general officials, including the past heads of states, by officials of an American firm, Halliburton, to secure a construction contract for a liquefied natural gas plant in Bonny Island in the Niger Delta (The punch, Friday, September 16, 2017, p.12).

Although several foreigners involved in the matter have been prosecuted in their home countries, Nigerian authorities have failed to prosecute the country's citizens involved in the matter. However, reports say current president, Muhammadu Buhari, has asked the EFCC to restart investigation into the matter.

Sources close to Dodo were questioned for his role in an alleged receipt of \$26million from Halliburton, along with a former Minister and five other Senior Advocates of Nigeria. Specifically, Mr. Dodo allegedly received \$4.5million through his firm, DD Dodo and Co. from multinational companies involved in the deal, purportedly as legal fees (The Punch, Thursday, Aug, 15, 2018, p.10).

He was also alleged to have, withdrawn over \$2million cash for purpose investigators believe are

unclear, and in. flagrant violation of Nigeria's extant money laundering regulations. In the US, Halliburton and its former subsidiary, Kellogg'Brown & Root (KBR), entered a guilty plea and agreed to pay \$579 million fine, the largest corruption settlement ever paid by a US company in high-level bribery cases involving payments from multinationals to secure contracts in Nigeria and other countries. But in Nigeria, senior government officials who allegedly received over \$180million bribe are yet to be charged to court Segun (2017).

In 2013, Maina was Chairman of the Presidential Task Team on Pension Reforms (PTTPR) when he was accused of theft to the tune of N2B in the office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation. Maina was subsequently dismissed by the Federal Civil Service Commission following recommendation by the Office of the Head of Service.

According to the allegation lodged by the senate at the time, Maina had defrauded civil servants of their pensions and had diverted pension funds totaling N2B into his personal bank accounts. Soon after the senate issued an arrest warrant for Maina, the man allegedly fled to Saudi Arabia to evade law enforcement back home.

In July of 2015, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) charged Maina alongside a former Flead of Service, Steve Oronsaye, Osarenkhoe Afe and Fredrick Hamilton B Global Services Limited before a Federal High Court on a 24-count charge bordering on procurement fraud and obtaining by false pretense. Since inception, the commission has been able to successfully prosecute highly placed government officials as well as those in the private sector accused of corrupt practices Anande (2016:p.34). The fight against corruption is too big to be left in the hands of the anti-graft agency.

In November of 2015, EFCC declared Maina a wanted man and launched a manhunt for the former chairman of the PTTPR. According to multiple reports, Maina often sneaked back into Nigeria between 2013 and 2015 and was often on the run. The EFCC said Maina had remained at large. In June of 2016, Maina announced theft he had been cleared by the senate of an alleged N2.5B theft. Maina said the senate had discovered that the 'missing' N 2.5B is in the government's coffers. He also asked for an apology from the nation and from the national assembly. "I was singled out and I suffered so much as a result of the false allegation," Maina said (The Punch, Thursday, Aug, 19, 2019, p.4).

He added that; "it is really sad that the same man (chairman of the senate committee), who told the whole world that he stole N195B has come out to say that the money is intact in Buhari's TSA account in the CBN. He must pay for destroying my character, integrity and the loss of my job. I was being haunted all around, and people who had confidence in me thought otherwise- of me". Maina decried that he had been "maligned, shot at, psychologically traumatized, denied my due entitlement, hounded for serving my country diligently. If this is the reward for serving one's country, I fear for Nigeria because it would be hard for people to serve this country". And then he disappeared again. On Friday, October 20, 2017, online newspaper Premium Times reported that Maina had returned to the government's payroll. According to the Story; "Mr. Maina, who is wanted by the anti-graft agency, EFCC, was secretly recalled and promoted to the position of Director in charge of Human Resources in the Ministry of Interior. "Before his appointment to chair the pension task force, Mr. Maina was an Assistant Director in the ministry". On Sunday,

October 22, 2017, Interior Minister Abdulrahman Dambazau admitted that Maina is now back in the federal civil service. Dambazau however washed his hands off Maina's re-instatement and blamed the office of the Head of Service for the man's re-emergence in government circles. "The attention of the Honorable Minister of Interior, Lt Gen (Rtd) Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau, has been drawn to a report on the recall of the wanted pension boss sacked for alleged corruption", read a statement from the Interior Minister's Office signed by the press secretary to the Honorable Minister of Interior Ehisienmen Osaigbovo. Dambazau who said he wasn't behind Maina's reinstatement added that the "ex-Chairman of the Presidential Task Force Team on Pension Reforms, Abdurashheed Maina was posted few days ago to the Ministry of Interior by the office of the Head of Service on an Acting capacity to fill a vacancy created following the retirement of the Director heading the Human Resources Department in the Ministry (The Punch, Thursday, September 19, 2018, page I1).

"For the avoidance of doubt, issues relating to discipline, employment, reengagement, posting, promotion and retirements of Federal Civil Servants are the responsibility of the Federal Civil Service Commission and office of the Plead of Service of the Federation, of which no Minister exercises such powers as erroneously expressed in the publication. "It is understood that Maina's last posting was with the Ministry of Interior and that is probably why he was re-posted back to the Ministry (The Punch, Thursday, November, 9, 2017, p.8). Maina's recall to the Federal Civil Service had been described as an embarrassment for the Muhammadu Buhari administration and a setback for the administration's much vaunted war against widespread corruption.

Buhari won the 2015 election mainly on the back of a promise to tackle corruption and endemic-graft in government operations. Since then, his administration declared the fight against corruption as one of its priorities. At appoint in time, It almost declared a state of emergency on corruption where various studies and assessments by different organizations gave a picture of the progress so far made on corruption (The Punch, Monday, October, 2018, p.7).

"This is a moral and criminal issue" so, to hear that the man is in the country and somebody employed him means he is not the only criminal in the system. It means there is an accessory. "Whoever was involved in employing him and then giving him promotion is an accessory after the fact to the crimes committed by this man if it is established that he is culpable Lashmar (2019). The EFCC should not just say they are aware; they should take action. The EFCC should now arrest him, interrogate him and if they can establish a case, prosecute him. They should also investigate all those in the reabsorbing and promotion of this man". Human Rights lawyer, Femi Falana told Punch newspaper that the EFCC has a duty to immediately prosecute Maina. "Maina was declared wanted by the EFCC because of his indictment in a pension scam (The Punch, Tuesday, Oct, 13, 2016, p.4).

Now that he has been located, the EFCC has a duty to charge him without any further delay. "The Head of Service and Interior Minister who shielded him from prosecution ought to be charged with aiding' and abetting the felon. "Those who recalled and promoted the fugitive ought to be sanctioned by President Buhari to serve as a deterrent to others who may wish to sabotage the war against corruption" Lashmar (2019).

In Nigeria today, there is hardly any public or political office holder who does not have a certain

corruption case leveled against him. The trend has eaten deep into the fabric of the society. It has become order of the day in Nigeria. This phenomenon cuts across both the executive and the legislature which is supposed to check the executive arm. The case that readily comes to mind is the case of Faruk Lawan who was captured on camera allegedly collecting bribe to influence the oil subsidy probe. A few issues that border on the privacy of public officers can be removed from the publicly available information. This will provide the opportunity for every Nigeria to engage the Code of Conduct Bureau with any information on hidden, bribery or over-declared assets. A new law in accordance with the Third Schedule, Part 1 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 will solve this riddle Akani, (2018).

The mention of procurement reforms by the CPI is surprising considering that since 2007 when the Public Procurement Act became law, the National Council on Public Procurement has not been inaugurated. Things have not changed since 2015. Putting this council in place and ensuring the full activation of open contracting as demanded by the country's Open Government Partnership commitments is the way to go. Open contracting makes comprehensive, timely and relevant information and data available to citizens to positively interrogate the expenditure of public resources. As such, it will promote greater accountability, transparency, value for money, professionalism and competition in the procurement system (The Punch, Thursday, September 16, 2018, p.12).

Other cases are that of a former minister of Aviation, now senator elect, Mrs Stella Oduah. who was alleged to have been involved in contract inflation in the purchase of a vehicle that worth \$20billion. Seeing the place corruption occupies in the Nigeria System, the former president of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, initiated the economic and financial crimes commission (EFCC) under the chairmanship of Nuhu Ribadu. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) effort even though commendable has proved to be ineffective, Akani, (2019).

The emphases on the newspaper arise from the fact that it aided or supported the running of the monster by clouding its activities from public glare, and thus supporting its development to its devastating form. Hence it is believed that the newspaper has gotten the guts to fight the monster (corruption), Omojola, (2017).

After all, the little that is known about corruption in Nigeria today; the over 60 million naira scam involving late Senator Chuba Okadigbo, the over one billion naira misappropriation in the senate in May 2001; the multimillion dollar real estate scandal in the UK, that involved former Kogi state Governor, Prince Abubakar Audu (Ciboh 2003), the bribery allegation in the National Assembly on the failed third term bid; the series of indictment of state governors and their deputies, ministries and top government functionaries and the most recent and stunning revelations of Fasawe former National Assembly member, on the PTDF scandal involving the president himself and his vice; all manifested through the newspaper (The Punch, Thursday, Aug, 19, 2003, p.4). Ishola (2006:p.1) in an appraisal of the Obasanjo Administration anti-corruption campaign said that 'though it has achieved commendable results, recent events tend to indicate that the president may have unwittingly turned the crusade into a weapon of vendetta'. This calls for an inquiry to ascertain the motive or rationale behind the trend in newspaper fight against corruption. Whether it is a new weapon of political vendetta or it is truly a realistic fight against

corruption (Oboh & Onu 2015, p. 122).

- **Statement of Problems**

The Newspapers are crucial to opinion formulation and eventual outcomes of events. The newspaper are champions in the crusade against corruption. They act as the eyes, ears and voices of the public, often at considerable personal risk. Through their work they can encourage governments and civil society organizations to effect change that will improve the quality of people's lives. The mass media apart from informing, entertaining and educating their audience also serve as watch dog of the society.

The statement of the problem however is; how has Punch and tribune Newspapers been able to cover corrupt cases in Nigeria? This therefore means that this study seeks to appraisal of some selected newspaper headlines in reporting corruption cases in Nigeria as well as find out if This Day, Punch and tribune Newspapers coverage of corruption has an impact.

- **Research Objectives**

This study therefore, set out to achieve the following objectives:

- Examine the frequency of corruption coverage by Punch and Tribune Newspapers.
- Determine the prominence given to corruption stories by Punch and Tribune Newspapers.
- Analyze the depth of corruption coverage by Punch and Tribune Newspapers..
- To find out if Punch and tribune Newspapers coverage of corruption has an impact.
- Examine the challenges faced by Punch and tribune Newspapers in corruption reportage.

- **Scope of the Study**

The study examines the coverage of corruption in Nigeria by two national dailies viz; Punch and tribune Newspapers from January to December, 2024. Specifically the study shall assesses corruption coverage in editorials, News, features, cartoon, pictures, advertisements, letter to the editors of Punch and Tribune Newspapers. The reason for choosing these newspapers is that, Punch and Tribune Newspapers commands National circulation and readership as well as represent different regional ownership. The year 2024 was also selected because during the period' there were a lot of issues surrounding corruption that befall the country, mostly emanating from the National Assembly.

- **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant in three (3) ways:

First and foremost, various areas to which Punch and Tribune Newspapers fought corrupt practices in Nigeria will be identified.

Moreover, students in their respective fields of study will find this work useful in the course of carrying out similar research. And the study will also serve as a research material which could provide. Additional knowledge and literature on the topic understudy.

Finally, it is also hoped that the study in its practical value will help government and other agencies, both local and international, in designing programme policies that could help in curbing corruption in Nigeria.

## **1.6 Operational Definitions of Significant Terms**

### **Corruption**

Corruption is an act of unpatriotic, betrayal, greed, selfishness etc. Manifest in illegal acquisition of public funds, breach of constitutional provision or the law, to enrich oneself, family, friends and relations.

### **Print Media**

This refers to the channel and vehicle through which information is gathered, processed, and made public by the Newspapers.

### **Coverage**

Refers to reports inform of editorials, feature, news reports, and special features emanating from the newspapers.

### **Grand Corruption**

This refers to corrupt activities of state governors and their deputies, Ministers, top government functionaries, the president and his vice.

### **Petty Corruption**

This refers to corrupt activities of policemen on the road, custom officers at the borders etc.

### **Corrupt**

They are human conducts and attitudes that deviate from socially acceptable and legally required standards.

### **Fight**

Use of available newspaper opportunities in exposing corrupt activities in the society.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter examines relevant theories as they relates to the study. It also entail's a review of related and relevant studies on the function/roles of the newspaper in the society as regards the issue at stake. The chapter also attempts a review of studies on corruption in Nigeria, its manifestation, efforts at curbing it with Punch and Tribune Newspapers playing a key role to curb

the menace.

## **2.1 Conceptual Framework**

The study reveals two (2) concepts of; **"Bribery and Corruption"** as well as the Concept of **"Newspaper"**:

### **2.1.1 Concept of Bribery and Corruption**

Sternberg (2002), viewed bribery and corruption as incentives offered to encourage someone to break the rules of the organization he normally represents and deliver (unfairly) favorable outcome, is perhaps the most important factor that is impeding the accelerated social economic transformation of developing and less developed countries (LDCS) of the world (Sternberg, 2002:p.21).

Nigeria often referred to as the "giant of Africa" is without contradiction caught up in the nest of corruption and other official malpractices. Today there is hardly any public or political office holder who does not have a certain corruption case leveled against him. The trend has eaten deep into the fabric of the society. It has become order of the day in Nigeria.

According to Nwaoble (2004), Nigeria is one of the very few countries in the world where a man's source of wealth is of no concern to his neighbors, the public or the government. Wealthy people who are known to be corrupt are regularly counted and honored by communities, religious bodies, social clubs and other private organizations. This implies that people who benefit from the largesse of these corrupt people rarely also has to be questioned.

The destructive impact of corruption in the lives of nations throughout the world is acknowledged. Corruption is perhaps the most important factor that is impeding the accelerated social economic transformation of developing and less developed countries (LDCS) of the world. In fact, it is recognized by development scholars that the level of reduction in corruption has a very direct link to the level of economic development of nations in- the world. Corruption is a world-wide phenomenon, element of corruption is found in almost all countries of the world. However, it must be said that the incidences of corruption are much more prevalent in developing countries like Nigeria as noted by (Anderson, 1999: p.316) "The condition of these countries are such that corruption is likely to have different causes and consequences than in more developed countries are more conducive to the growth of corruption.

### **2.1.2 Political Corruption**

Books have been written and press companies have published articles about the high level of corruption in Nigeria politics, yet the perpetrators pretend as though they are not the people being talked about. They believe they are above the law. But little do they understand the injuries they are causing to the country and the citizens.

Corruption takes many forms, starting with embezzlement, bribery, rituals, and election rigging. In fact, corruption levels are highest in Nigeria's political system. In both the Senate and the House of Representatives, corruption is seen as normal.

Where do we start among politicians? Due to the "wicked level" of corruption, both the young and the old struggle to align themselves one political party or the other. They believe that once they take any position in politics, even a low-level position, they will use corrupt tricks to fill their pockets with public funds.

### **2.1.3 Embezzlement**

Embezzlement of public funds is common. Many leaders have helped boost the economies of other nations by depositing embezzled money into foreign banks. Political corruption is persistent in the Nigerian state. Since the creation of modern public administration in the country, there have been cases of official misuse of resources for personal enrichment Stones, (2014). After the death of the former president, Sani Abacha, an investigation was carried out to determine the amount of money he embezzled in gas plant construction in the country. The investigations led to the freezing of accounts containing about \$100 million United States dollars that he stole (Hector 2004).

The Abacha administration notoriously looted upwards of \$3 billion in the 1990s (Uzochukwu 2013). The federal government's agreement with the Swiss government on the return of looted funds traced to former Head of State General Sani Abacha led to the remittance of US\$322 million in December 2017 (Webby 2018).

The plan is to distribute the returned money among Nigerians, which was confirmed through the publication of Transparency International in August 2018. It stated: In Nigeria, plans are in motion to distribute US\$322 million recovered in Switzerland from the late General Sani Abacha, the country's former military ruler.

Before now, some funds were returned to Nigeria by the Swiss bank in 2006 from the money stolen by the same former president. In 2006, US\$723 million illicitly acquired by Abacha's family was returned to Nigeria from Switzerland (Transparency International 2018).

### **2.1.4 Election Rigging**

Election rigging is not an unheard-of phenomenon. During elections, the candidates hire thugs who go around the election polling stations to highjack the ballot boxes. When they steal these boxes, they then write in votes for their candidate. In recent times, a new tactic that contestants have adopted is buying voters' cards so that they can manipulate and use the cards to their advantage.

### **2.1.5 Bribery**

On many occasions, politicians have bribed top officials to commit illegal acts to their favor. Some political leaders, including governors and presidents, have been sued by opponents, but the sued were able to escape punishment by bribing attorneys and judges.

At the end of the judgment, the leader who bribed someone won the case.

### **2.1.6 Corruption in the Police Force**

There is a saying that "police are your friends" in Nigeria; policemen are your enemies because they can deny the truth and collect bribes to do so. Because of the encounter's many Nigerians have had with policemen, even the good ones among them are generalized as being bad. What a' shame. The police who work in some checkpoints on the expressways cannot do so without collecting bribes from car owners and drivers. Their interest lies in collecting money from drivers and not in securing the road. Bribes become compulsory even when your particulars are in order. Bus drivers must offer money before they continue with their transportation business, be it fifty

naira (N50 = \$0.14) or twenty naira (N20 = \$0.06). The police are now turning to gods that receive money from the worshipper as an offering. Some female prison inmates come out of prison pregnant. What this implies is that the policemen sexually assault women who are imprisoned. The women may say no, but because the policemen have guns, the women cannot do- anything. They were impregnated before they were granted bail. What kind of prayer will erase this kind of abomination?

#### **2.1.7 Internet Fraud**

Fraudulent Internet activity is another face of corruption. Graduates and nongraduates who lack the knowledge and skills to help them earn money find joy in Internet fraud. It is a criminal act and deserves serious punishment. Among the classes of offences committed in Nigeria, both the Senate and members of the House of Representatives are working hard to see that those caught in such acts face the punishments they deserve without any favors.

Some Nigerians, mainly youths, have been scamming their fellow citizens using illegal means. Some host websites online that claim to be giving jobs to job seekers, and scam any who fall prey to their tricks. They tell job seekers to make certain payments for processing documents without them knowing that they will not be issued any job.

Some Nigerians have had money stolen by these cybercriminals. The level of corruption in Nigeria has made many citizens of the country show no respect for holy and godly affairs. This is seen in the report given by the spiritual director of Adoration Ministry Enugu Nigeria, AMEN, in December 2014.

According to the spiritual director, Rev. Father Ejike Mbaka, some Nigerians impersonated him through websites and social media sites, specifically Facebook. He lamented that these criminals used his picture to deceive people and collect money from them while claiming they were Fr. Mbaka. The notable reverend father made it clear that he is not on Facebook, nor does he own a website with his name. He went further to say that anyone caught in that act will dance to the music that he or she deserves, and the police have been involved to find the criminals.

#### **2.1.8 Causes of Corruption**

A number of issues cause corruption, and among them are:

- Greed
- Poor youth empowerment
- Poverty
- Unemployment

##### **Greed**

Greed has caused a lot of crises in the world, including in Nigeria. It is because of greed that, political leaders embezzle the funds they are supposed to use for national development for their own selfish needs.

##### **Poor Youth Empowerment**

Poor moral youth empowerment is a contributor to corruption. Internet fraud, sexual harassment by male CEOs, and other bad acts occur because Nigerians lack understanding of the importance of youth, empowerment. When parents and governments empower youths both

financially and morally, the level of corruption will diminish.

### **Poverty**

According to international standards of poverty, a person is said to be poor when he lives under \$1.25 (N210, although it varies) per day. There are many poor people in Nigeria, and poverty pushes them into corruption. According to World Bank Group, in 2004, 63.1% of Nigerians were poor. The poverty level increased in 2010. In 2010, 68% of the Nigerian population was estimated to be poor. A person can take bribes to commit crime because he is poor. It is one of the reasons why the poor youths in the country collect bribes to work as thugs for Nigerian politicians.

### **Unemployment**

Unemployment is one of the major challenges in Nigeria and does not need much explanation because it has broken the hearts of many citizens. People are pushed into corrupt practices because of the high unemployment rates. An unemployed citizen can indulge in corruption to make money and live better. The youths, fathers, and mothers are seriously concerned about the negative impact of unemployment in their lives. Some have said that it is better to die than to suffer the torment of unemployment in the country. Words cannot explain the level of punishment the citizens of this country face as a result of this menace.

#### **2.1.9 Effects of Corruption on Nigerian economy**

The negative consequences of corruption are many, and among them are:

- Poor investment
- Rise in poverty
- Poor national development
- National crises

#### **Poor Investment**

Unemployment in Nigeria would have been eradicated to some extent if only investors were attracted to doing business in the country. Companies that would have invested in Nigeria are afraid because they do not know if the corrupt practice will ruin their industries over time. Because of this concern, they refuse to invest in Nigeria.

#### **Rise in Poverty**

When the heads of public service are busy laundering the money that is supposed to be used to create employment for the masses and reduce poverty, what happens is a rise in the poverty level of the country, just like the rise in poverty shown by the statistics between 2004 and 2008. Since the government is selfish and does not want to help the poor, poverty continues to rise in Nigeria.

#### **Poor National Development**

Any country with high corruption levels is likely to experience developmental bankruptcy. When some CEOs indulge in corrupt practices to make their money, economic development will suffer. When Nigerians keep on shifting the country's currency to foreign countries, there will be less economic development in Nigeria.

#### **National Crises**

So many crises in Nigeria today are a result of corruption. The insecurity in Nigeria brought about by Boko Haram is a consequence of corruption. Corrupt politicians are fighting the government

of President Goodluck Jonathan using Boko Haram as their agent because they do not want him to succeed. The attacks by Boko Haram have caused disorderliness in Nigeria and seriously affected the country's economy.

### **2.1.10 Eradicating Corruption**

Corrupt Nigerians do not truly understand the harm they are causing to other citizens.

Corruption could be reduced by these potential solutions:

- Self-satisfaction
- Institution of strong anti-corruption groups
- Employment generation
- Proper government funding of schools
- Treating all citizens equally

#### **Self-Satisfaction**

Self-satisfaction in this context implies being content with what one has. When the leaders of Nigeria are satisfied with the salary they are paid and use public funds in a proper manner, the issue of embezzlement and money laundering will be history. Managers who are satisfied with what they are paid will not have time to indulge in corruption to make more money.

#### **Institution of Strong Anti-Corruption Groups**

Creating strong anti-corruption institutions is another arsenal to win the fight against corruption. This group is to work independently with the government to ensure transparency. Anyone who is caught engaging in corrupt practices by the group should experience the consequences decided by the anti-corruption agency. That he is a minister or governor of a state should not be an excuse from facing the punishment he is to receive according to the Constitution of Nigeria.

#### **Employment Generation**

The unemployed in the country find themselves involved in corruption mainly because they want to make money to meet the demand of the day. Governments and capable hands should endeavor to generate more jobs for citizens to get employed and paid in return. A busy mind may find it difficult to indulge in corruption because he is being paid adequately.

#### **Proper Government Funding of Schools**

Understanding the importance of skill acquisition will go a long way to propel them to develop all the schools in Nigeria. When more attention is paid to the tertiary institutions in the country, it will produce graduates who are employable. Installation of the necessary machines needed in universities will help Nigerian graduates acquire skills and use them to generate income, even if no company employs them after graduation. Self-employment will make graduates more determined in the work they do and will prevent them from corruption like Internet scams, kidnapping and the rest.

#### **Treating All Citizens Equally**

Treating any offender in the country equally will help reduce corruption. Nobody is above the law and any who acts contrary to it should be given the punishment that he or she deserves. That she is the Minister of Aviation or Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria should not count in this case. If any minister or head of state is given the punishment he deserves for corruption, others will learn and separate themselves from any corrupt practice.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

This study hinge on two theories: "Agenda setting theory" and "Social Responsibility theory". Respectively. Thus, the agenda setting theory describes the "ability of the newspaper to influence the importance placed on the topics of the public agenda". With agenda setting being a social science theory, it also attempts to make predictions. That is, if a news item is covered frequently and prominently, the audience will regard the issue as more important.

**2.2.1 Agenda-setting** is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the newspaper. As well, agenda-setting describes the way that newspaper attempts to influence viewers, and establish a hierarchy of news prevalence. Two basic assumptions underlie most researches on agenda-setting:

- The press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it;
- Newspaper concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues.

### **Relevance to the study**

The relevance of this theory to the study is based on the premise that the agenda setting function (Lazerfield ibid) is the "power to structure". This explains the ability of the newspaper to shape the perception of the public burning issues, thus making it topical and important. For example, the newspaper has made corruption which is clandestine, an issue of public concern, which is the first positive step towards curbing the problem. There are two sides to the agenda setting function of the newspaper. The first side is the positive which entails setting the agenda for discourse on a positive note and sincere motive; and the second side is the negative, which entails the setting of agenda for discourse with a negative and a selfish motive, which is the basis for the study.

By and large, this singular function of the newspaper is an essential part of advocacy and attempt at opinion shaping, thus, helping Nigerians to remain resolute and determined in kicking out corruption in the society by first of all talking about it.

### **2.2.2 Social Responsibility Theory**

Social Responsibility theory which was propounded in the year 1963 by F.S. Siebert, T.B. Peterson and W. Schramm owes its origin to the Hutchins commission on freedom of the press, set up in the United States of America in 1947 to re- examine the concept of press freedom as enunciated in the libertarian or free press theory. Thus, Social responsibility theory allows free press without any censorship but at the same time the content of the press should be discussed in public panel and newspaper should accept any obligation from public interference or professional self-regulations or both.

The theory lies between both authoritarian theory and libertarian theory because it gives total Newspaper freedom in one hand but the external controls in other hand. Here, the press ownership is private and newspaper have an obligation to the public that amount to a form of public stewardship. The social responsibility theory moves beyond the simple "Objective" reporting (facts reporting) to "Interpretative" reporting (investigative reporting). The theory links with the democratic process and the newspaper are guardians of that process, vigilant on behalf

of the citizens, with a duty to be honest and fair to all.

### **Relevance to the study**

The theory is relevant to this study because it calls for responsibility on the part of the journalist and the media. Thus, journalists and newspaper should be used to fight corruption in Nigeria.

## **2.3 Review of Related Literature**

### **2.3.1 Newspaper Role in the Fight against Corruption**

In every given society the newspaper has an important role to play in maintaining harmony. It is one of the most important institutions in the social systems, it defines everything in it - the way of life, though pattern and even dictates the pace of development in the society. Baran (2018.p.19)

sums up this fact by saying that the newspaper entails "everyone involved in creating and maintaining the culture that defines us". "And that mass communication not only occur but contributes to the creation and maintenance of culture". This is based on the premise that it dictates or sets agenda for public discourse and national dialogue of whatever interest, which invariably translates into forming a culture that may be progressive or retrogressive to the society.

In fact, the newspaper have a very crucial role to play in the fight against corruption in any country. These newspaper according to Asemah (2009) are agents of social change that can bring about positive attitudinal change in the audience (readers); they set agenda for the people'to follow in any society. Corruption is Nigeria's biggest challenge. It's clear to every citizen that the country has an extremely high level of corruption. Corruption is found in 'every sector of society. Critical examination of both small and large sectors reveals corrupt practices at every level. It is the illegitimate use of power to benefit a private interest (Morris 2020). Corruption is the offering of a bribe to an official so that the truth will be hidden.

## **2.4 Review of related Empirical works/studies**

Corruption is one of the most widely discussed issues in Nigeria. It is topical, on the lips of the president, lawmakers, the judiciary and the citizen on the street. The religious talk about it very often on Fridays and Sundays and Nigerians are convinced that we need to eliminate corruption if our country is to join the comity of developed and civilized nations. Our politicians are therefore compelled to make promises on how they intend to fight corruption whilst those in office are expected to give account of their stewardship on the subject matter. It is on this ground that the study seeks to examine the Newspaper coverage of corruption in Nigeria by using selected Newspapers.

Adokwu (2001) in his study on "Newspaper coverage of crime in Nigeria," sought to ascertain the impact and intensity of newspaper coverage on crime reduction in Nigeria. His findings revealed that Nigerian newspaper outfits reports crime properly and adequately. Explaining this fact, it was revealed that the ratio of report was 4:5 meaning that four out of five editions carried crime reports. A major revelation which is relevant to this study is that, the newspaper do not outrightly suggest ways of combating crime, but they help in doing so via sensitization of the public. Also the rationale for the frequency of coverage was based on the frequency of occurrence and

delicate nature of the events rather than any other factors.

Also, Fabayo (2011), in their study analyzed the consequences of corruption on investment in Nigeria using the Ordinary Least Square technique. They use the annual corruption perception index between the period 1996 and 2010. Their study revealed that low Corruption Perception Index ranking on Nigeria, which implies high level of corruption, leads to low investment .and thus low economic growth in Nigeria.

### • **Summary**

This brief attempt to review the works of authors and authorities that have carried out similar studies to the topic in question. Overview, as well as the theoretical frame works (Agenda setting theory and social responsibility theory) which formed the basis of the research work is also seen in the study. The researcher also revealed two (2) concepts of; Bribery and Corruption, as well as the Concept of newspaper.

The study also analyzed some empirical works to the research to include: "press coverage of NAFDAC activities" and newspaper coverage of crime in Nigeria. On a whole, the review acknowledged Punch and Tribune Newspapers as one of the major instruments that could be used to fight corruption in Nigeria.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.0 Preamble**

The purpose of this study as already stated is an appraisal of some selected newspaper headlines in reporting corruption cases in Nigeria. The study therefore aimed at content analysis of punch and tribune newspaper reportage of such issues and the rationale behind the trend. This chapter therefore, attempts to make a vivid description of the methodology used in selecting the representative samples for the study, the analysis or description of data, for the purpose of answering important question raised in the work. In other words, this chapter describes the methodology adopted for the study, bearing in mind the concept of investigation

and the answers being sought for.

### **3.1 Research Design /Content analysis**

Given that the purpose of the study requires an analysis of manifest content of communicated video messages, it became necessary to achieve the aims and objectives effectively, so as to adopt the content analysis technique. Frey, Botan, Friedman and Kreps (2022) define content analysis as "identifying and examining messages contained in a text" they further explained that it is a method for studying mass mediated and public messages (p.212).

Nwodu (2021) sees it as "an objective and systematic analysis or study of the content of any document that are manifest" (P.86). This implies content analysis following an organized pattern, rigorous process and producing a much reliable outcome, depending on the research purpose. Nwodu, also explains that researchers often use this method to investigate the level of presence of a given content in mass communication primarily to establish the impact of the content on the audience.

Nwodu further outlines the characteristics of content analysis as being:

- Objective
- Systematic &
- Manifest.

Frey (2023) noted that "identifying the advantages of content analysis that potentially makes it a more powerful technique than questionnaires or interviews for describing the nature of communication as in the study under view, as:

- Content analysis accepts unstructured materials which observers categorize.
- Structured questionnaires' and interviews predetermined questions that will limit respondent's answer. Thus, altering result for the study.
- Content analysis unlike other mentioned techniques study data in the same context the communication occurs.

### **3.2 Population of Study**

The population of study in this work comprises the selected National Dailies circulating in Nigeria during the period of study (that is from January to December 2023). They include; Punch and Tribune Newspapers. The reason for choosing these newspapers is that, This Day, Punch and Vanguard Newspapers commands National circulation and readership as well as represent different regional ownership. The year 2023 will be selected because during the period there were a lot of issues surrounding corruption that befall the country, mostly emanating from the National Assembly.

### **3.3 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

Sampling as defined by Piel Margret (2020), simply means selecting a part that will represent a whole. She explains that, in conducting a study that has a large population, it is often impossible to study all the elements in the universe (population), hence the selection of a sample size to represent the entire population. In the course of the study, the same procedure was undertaken to obtain the representative samples and construct a convenience calendar for the purpose of the study. As a result, the convenience and Quota sampling techniques will be adopted for the

purpose of the study.

### **QUOTA SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

Nwodu (2021:59) defines it as “a non -probability sampling technique in probability sampling version of stratified sampling technique in probability sampling”. He explains that samples are first stratified based on certain apparent uniform characteristics, and then proportionate samples are chosen from each stratum to ensure adequate representation of all the features of the entire population. Following Nwodu’s description of the technique, five samples were selected in the sampling process. The process is described and adopted based on the following categories:

- Ownership pattern
- frequency of publication
- location of newspaper (geographical location)
- Coverage of problem of study (corruption).

These are categories stem from the concept of investigation

### **CONVINIENCE SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

This is sampling technique where the researcher selects samples at will in order to ease the job at hand (Kombol 2020). This technique will be employed in selecting samples that would best describe the concept of investigation and answer questions raised in the study.

### **3.4 SAMPLING DESIGN/SAMPLE SIZE**

corruption being a national problem in Nigeria, and cutting across all strata of the society and its institutions, conducting a study that attempts to describe the phenomenon (corruption), as reported by the national dailies requires a careful process of selecting the representative sample of newspapers. Newspaper selected as already mentioned were based on coverage of the problem of the study or the concept being investigated, frequency of publication, location of the newspapers and ownership Pattern of the newspapers. Bearing in mind, the quota sampling and convenience sampling technique were used and carefully adopted in arriving at the final three sampled newspapers. As a result, the sampling process involved two stages. In the first stage, the quota sampling technique was employed in selecting the newspapers under already established categories. It is described as follows:

- Ownership pattern; we have the followings:
  - Government owned - New Nigerian Newspaper
  - Private owned - This Day, Punch and Tribune Newspapers
- Frequency of publication: daily newspapers – all of the aboved mention

### **3.5 Method of Data Collection**

The researcher made use of primary and secondary sources in the collection of needed data for the study which includes questionnaires, oral interviews, as well as library materials which form the basis of data collection for the study.

### **3.6 Method of Data Analysis**

Nwodu (2006) observes that the choice of the method of data analysis depends on the nature of data whether it is nominal ordinal or interval. Therefore, the researcher in the course of the study used both quantitative and qualitative method of data presentation and analysis where simple percentages were employed in determining the frequency of occurrence of each response as related to the research questions as well as infer meaning to data in the table. The use of Simple

percentage and frequency was to avoid errors or miscalculations common with other methods of data analysis. The researcher also used chi square (X2) to test the hypothesis.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**DATA PRESENTATION AND CONTENT ANALYSIS**

This chapter presents and analyzes the data collected from the selected newspaper headlines related to corruption cases in Nigeria. The study employs content analysis as a research technique to systematically evaluate the representation, frequency, tone, and framing of corruption-related news headlines in Punch and Tribune newspapers. The objective is to assess how each newspaper reports corruption cases and what patterns emerge from their reporting.

**4.1 Method of Data Presentation**

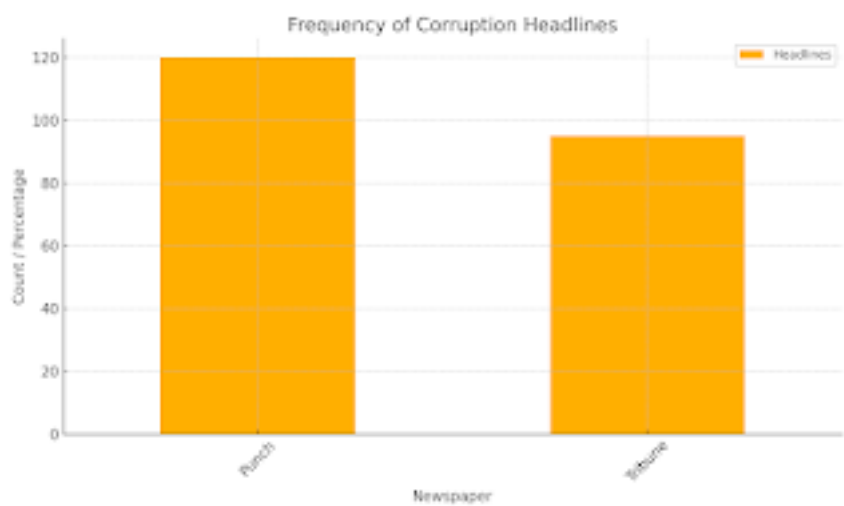
The data gathered were presented in tables and charts for clarity and comparative analysis. Key variables considered include:

- Frequency of corruption headlines
- Types of corruption reported
- Actors involved
- Tone of headlines
- Placement of headlines (front page, inside page, back page)
- Framing of stories

A total of 215 headlines were analyzed — 120 from Punch and 95 from Tribune — within the study period ( January to December 2024).

**Charts and Analysis Based on 215 Headlines (2024)**

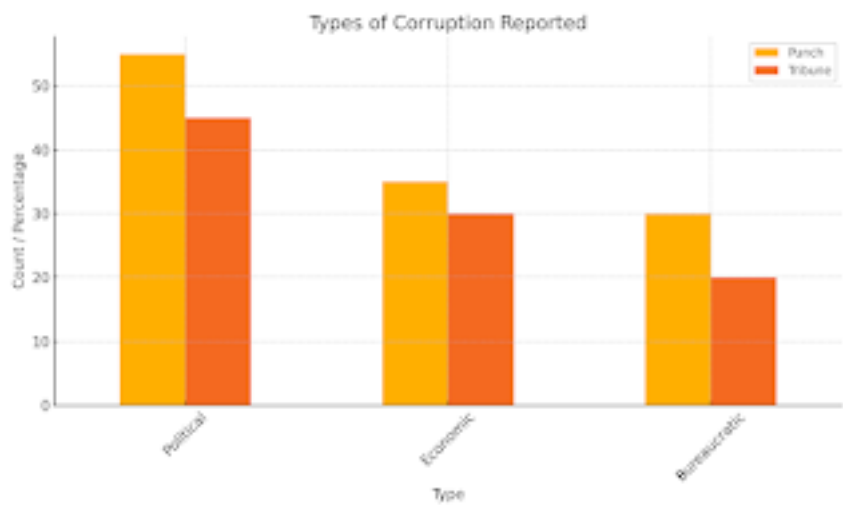
**1. Frequency of Corruption Headlines**



This chart shows the number of corruption-related headlines published by Punch and Tribune in

2023. Punch featured 120 headlines, while Tribune had 95, indicating Punch's higher frequency of coverage.

2. Types of Corruption Reported



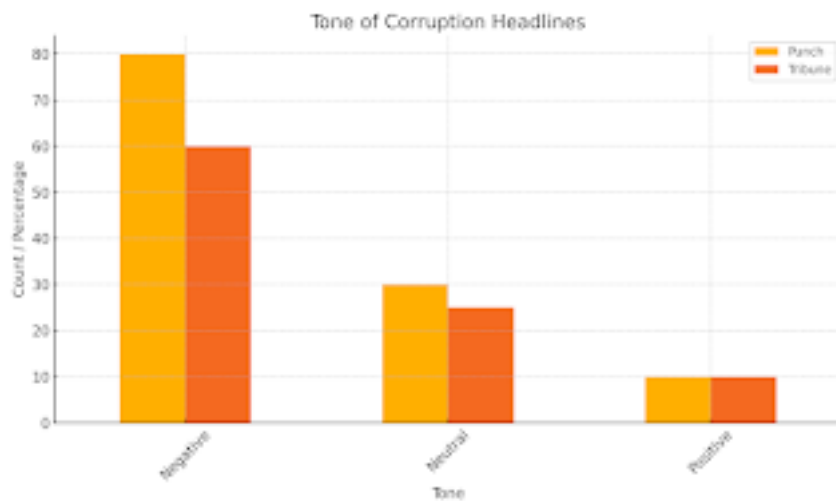
Political corruption dominates in both newspapers, especially Punch. Economic and bureaucratic corruption also feature, reflecting the diverse nature of corruption cases in Nigeria.

3. Actors Involved in Corruption Headlines



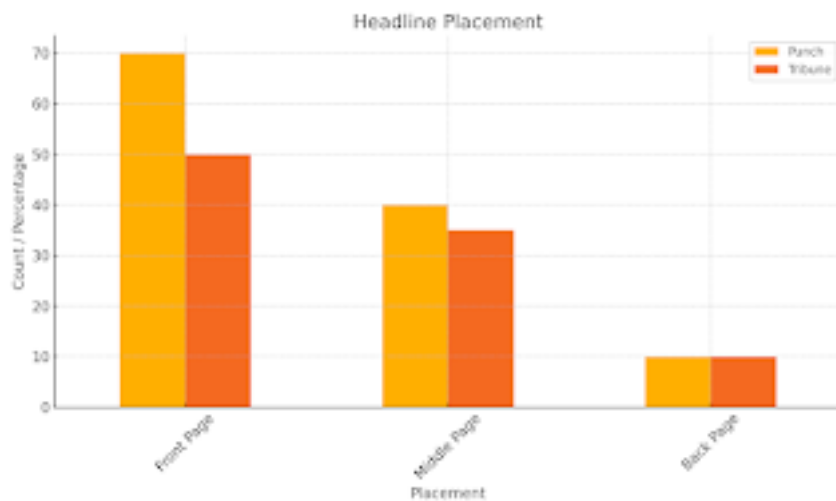
Politicians are the most frequently mentioned actors in corruption reports, followed by public officials and businesspersons. Punch emphasizes actors more than Tribune.

4. Tone of Corruption Headlines



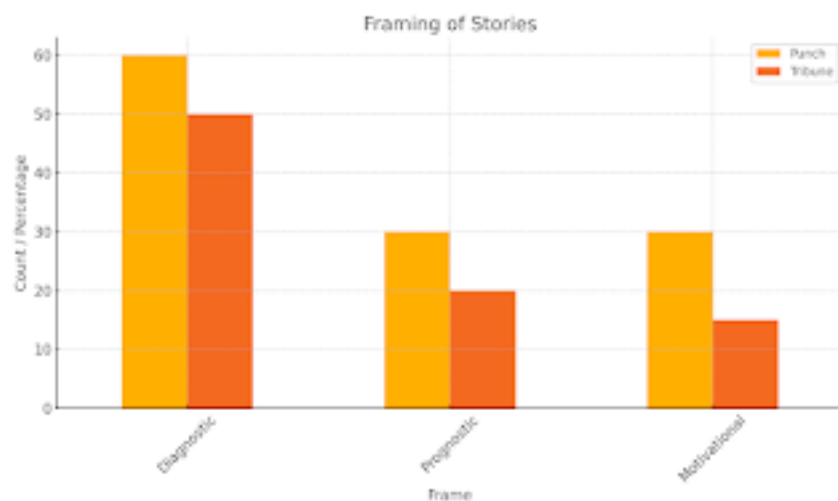
Most headlines are negative in tone, particularly in Punch. Tribune has a slightly more neutral tone, but positive framing is rare in both papers.

5. Headline Placement



Punch places a significant number of corruption headlines on the front page, while Tribune balances between front and middle pages. Both use the back page sparingly for such reports.

6. Framing of Stories



Diagnostic framing is dominant, especially in Punch, where problems are clearly identified. Prognostic and motivational frames are less common but still present.

#### 4.2 Frequency of Corruption Headlines

Newspaper	No. of Corruption Headlines	% of Total
Punch	120	55.8%
Tribune	95	44.2%
Total	215	100%

#### Interpretation:

Punch reported more corruption-related headlines than Tribune, indicating greater emphasis on corruption reportage.

#### 4.3 Analysis of Reports on Corruption as contained in the Media

##### Comparison Reports on Corruption across the three Newspapers

##### Comparison on Topic Category

A close and careful observation of table 4.6 reveals significant issue about the reportage of corruption by the four newspapers selected for the study. Punch and Tribune newspapers showed higher commitment and consistency in the reportage of corruption evident in the reports respectively. Also. Punch had 6 (12.5%) reports on corruption under news stories and Tribune had 5 (10.4%) reports under .the same column. This indicates their interest in following up events that unfolded about corruption during the period of study.

Punch, as shown on was not particularly keen on daily reports on corruption. They seemed to be more realistic in attacking the problem, evident in having the only reports under the editorial column. This suggests that Punch was more pragmatic in its own little way, in the crusade against corruption, as editorials, by nature are more elaborate, incisive and suggestive of solution to problems as well as educative to its readers.

#### 4.4 Discussion of Findings

The content analysis of 215 corruption-related headlines (120 from Punch and 95 from Tribune) revealed significant insights into how the Nigerian press frames and reports corruption cases.

The findings provide a clear picture of the thematic focus, tone, placement, and journalistic approach of each newspaper.

- **Frequency of Coverage**

Punch published more corruption-related headlines than Tribune, suggesting a more aggressive and investigative editorial policy. This higher frequency aligns with Punch's known watchdog role and its tendency to expose and sensationalize political and economic scandals. Tribune, although consistent, published fewer stories, reflecting a more conservative editorial strategy.

- **Types of Corruption Highlighted**

Political corruption was the most commonly reported across both newspapers, followed by economic and bureaucratic corruption. This emphasizes the perceived involvement of political elites in corrupt practices and the media's prioritization of high-profile figures in its narratives. The emphasis on political scandals may also reflect public interest and the potential impact on governance and accountability.

- **Actors Involved**

Politicians were the most frequently mentioned actors in both newspapers. This was followed by civil/public servants and private-sector businesspersons. This pattern supports the public perception that political office holders are often at the center of corruption in Nigeria. Punch particularly emphasized elite accountability, while Tribune occasionally highlighted systemic weaknesses in public service management.

- **Tone of Headlines**

The majority of headlines from both newspapers carried a negative tone. Punch employed a more emotionally charged, accusatory style, likely to provoke public outrage and attention. Tribune, while still critical, was more neutral in tone, with a formal and cautious language. Positive framing was minimal in both papers, indicating that corruption cases are seldom reported with any favorable or redemptive angle.

- **Placement of Headlines**

Corruption stories in Punch were prominently placed on the front page, which reinforces their perceived importance and increases public visibility. Tribune had a more balanced placement strategy, using front and inner pages. This placement decision affects how readers engage with the news and demonstrates each paper's editorial priorities.

- **Framing of Stories**

Diagnostic framing was the most common in both newspapers. Stories often focused on identifying the corruption problem, highlighting actors involved and the extent of the alleged offenses. Punch also utilized motivational framing, urging public demand for justice. Prognostic framing, which offers solutions or actions, was less frequent in both papers, showing a gap in solution-based journalism

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.0 Summary

Overall, Punch demonstrated a more proactive, bold, and populist approach to corruption reporting, while Tribune adopted a balanced, fact-driven, and institutionally respectful style. Both approaches have strengths: Punch may foster civic engagement and accountability, while Tribune promotes procedural fairness and contextual understanding.

The findings reflect broader issues in media practice in Nigeria, where freedom of the press allows for varied styles of engagement with corruption, but structural limitations, such as access to verified sources and editorial bias, still influence how stories are framed and reported.

## **5.1 Conclusion**

Corruption in Nigeria has been institutionalized over the years which require inclusive and intensive fight, for it to be wrestled. Therefore, the media role in curbing this menace is not an easy one. Perpetrators of corruption change with every measure suggested at tracking them. In this study, different stories on corruption which has become issues of public discourse are made bare by the media -the financial scandals, bribery scams and constitutional violations couldn't have been made public but for the vigilance of the media.

This study has reemphasized a common position that the media important resource in the development of the society and in curbing social vices in the society. One important fact about the Nigerian press was also established, that they were more inclined to informing than educating and reforming, as the problem at hand needed a pragmatic approach than ones adopted by the media.

It found that embezzlement and money laundering became the order of the day in the closing moments of this particular administration and that they automatically became the most talked about issues in the society at that moment, thus asserting an important (agenda-setting) function of the media.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The study recommends that:

Nigerian media should as a matter of importance declare a state of emergency in its report of corruption. It should rise above mere reporting of corruption. It should investigate corruption and make recommendations in its reports without fear of intimidation, until these steps are taken, else, its efforts at tackling corruption would remain a mirage.

The study also recommends that the fix Nigeria initiative should be strengthened to incorporate more media houses in its activities and widen its scope of operation.

## **5.3 Limitations of the Study**

Given the nature and purpose of this study, the researcher encountered a number of setbacks which affected the pace of the study, some of these problems include; Time, there was hardly enough time for this study, there was also the problem of accessibility of selected newspapers and most prominent was the economic limitations.

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