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Newspaper framing of the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria: A study of editorials of selected newspapers

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Abstract--Since the corona virus disease broke out in Wuhan, Hubei Province in China in 2019, the world has known no peace in terms of global health. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a new lifestyle of wearing facemask called the 'new normal'. The media particularly newspapers have been fighting this global pandemic through different reports such as straight news, features, opinions and cartoons among others. However, newspapers seem not to be doing enough in this war in their editorials. The above dictated this study which examined how Nigerian newspapers framed the second wave of COVID-19 in their editorials. Using qualitative research method, the study analysed contents of the published editorials of selected newspapers on the second wave of COVID-19 in Nigeria. Data analysed were presented in simple statistics while hypotheses raised were tested using Chi-square Statistical Technique. The study found that Vanguard and Punch newspapers (the selected newspapers) published very few editorials (poor frequency) on the second phase of the pandemic in Nigeria despite the deadly effects of the disease. The study also revealed 13 types of frames (content categories of frame) in the editorials published on the second upsurge of the pandemic in Nigeria by the selected newspapers. The study thereafter recommended among others that Nigerian newspapers should publish more editorials on COVID-19 because doing so would mean that they (Nigerian newspapers) consider corona virus real threat. Also, doing so will provide adequate information about managing and defeating the pandemic.

Keywords---COVID-19, Editorial, Framing, Newspaper Editorial, Second Wave of COVID-19.

Introduction

The global landscape has witnessed tremendous changes in recent time following the outbreak of the corona virus disease (also known as COVID-19). Notably, the first reported case of the disease was in Wuhan, China in December 2019. The disease became a global pandemic which brought about new lifestyles such as the wearing of facemasks, regular washing and sanitizing of hands amongst others. This new lifestyle was thereafter christened “the new normal” by media/reporters and researchers alike. On their part, media all over the world have been reporting issues of the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus of most media globally centres on reports on new cases, discharged cases and deaths attributed to the pandemic. Specifically, the print media (especially newspapers), all around the world have joined in reporting issues of the pandemic in different sections of their publications. Newspapers have been reporting COVID-19 as straight news, opinions/letters to the editor, features, cartoons and editorials. They have as well reported the pandemic in and through different frames. One of the frames used by newspapers in reporting the pandemic is the politicization of the pandemic by United States (US) and European governments (Abbas, 2020). Other frames used by newspapers in the reportage of COVID-19 are economic, political, as well as health and quality of life frames (Msughter and Phillips, 2020).

Mass media are important partners in developing society. That is why Umukoro, Irori, Ivwighren & Ugbome, (2018) posit that mass media are necessary tools for information dissemination in societal transformation. Newspapers which form part of the mass media no doubt, are critical stakeholders in societal transformation. They deliver entertainment and education as well as information which help audience make decisions about their lives. The media globally have been and are still reporting issues of the COVID-19 pandemic since its outbreak in 2019. These issues range from new cases, discharged cases, fatalities and other information. Audience through newspapers receive information on the pandemic which guide them in responding to the pandemic. Nigeria as a nation, has also had its share of COVID-19 when its first case was announced in February 27, 2020 (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, 2020). The index case was an Italian who arrived Lagos, Nigeria from Milan, Italy, one of the countries to have been worse hit by the pandemic in Europe. The Italian who came to Nigeria through the Lagos International Airport two days earlier travelled unchecked from Lagos, Lagos State to Ewekoro, Ogun State. It was at his destination, Lafarge Medical Centre that his case was flagged when he became sick and got tested. The result confirmed him to have COVID-19 (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, 2020). From then till date, Nigerian media including newspapers have been combating the corona virus disease through the dissemination of up-to-date information that will guide the masses against the dreaded corona virus. From February 27, 2020 to December 16, 2020, Nigeria experienced the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. In December 17, 2020, the Presidential Task Force (PTF) on the COVID-19 pandemic officially declared the second wave of the pandemic in Nigeria (News Agency of Nigeria, 2020). In July 24, 2021, the Chairman of the

Presidential Steering Committee (PSC) on COVID-19 and Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha, officially announced the third wave of COVID-19 in Nigeria following the emergence of the Delta variant of the corona virus (Alabi & Adebowale, 2021). This puts the period of the second wave of COVID-19 in Nigeria between December 17, 2020 and July 23, 2021.

Nigerian newspapers have been in the forefront in the war against the COVID-19 pandemic since its outbreak in December, 2019. Through daily publication of stories on the pandemic, Nigerian newspapers provide latest and relevant information on the pandemic. Daily publications of straight news, features, cartoons, letters to editor, and editorials are being used to combat COVID-19. Among the various sections of newspaper, the editorial is a special section and content. Azeez (n.d.) calls the newspaper editorial the leader. Azeez (n.d.) further opines that editorial is the heart of a newspaper which provides sphere for public discourse. It is the article of a news organisation that expresses the opinion of the editor or the editorial board or the publisher (Azeez, n.d.). Editorial provokes debates and offers enlightened judgements to readers (Azeez, n.d.). This implies that newspaper editorial not only addresses the reading public but also the social and political elites in keeping with its function of influencing social policy through recommendations made in the editorial (Dijk, 1991; Franklin, 1999; Jeffs, 1999; Spitzer, 1993, all cited in Galindo, 2004). This as well indicates that editorial is an important section of a newspaper publication that unveils the heart or view of the editor, the editorial board, or the publisher on an issue. Editorial content of a newspaper tells how the newspaper feels about public issue and interest. Editors, editorial board members and publishers are regarded as intelligent opinion leaders. They influence society through their thoughts given on issue of public concern. They are the voices of intellectuals and opinion leaders (editor, editorial board, or publisher) on issues of public good. Therefore newspaper editorial is the voice of informed and enlightened individuals on public issue. Newspaper editorial is the heart of those who have influence to transform society on any given public concern.

Statement of the Problem

Newspapers' reportage and coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic have attracted the attention of researchers globally. Abbas (2020) conducted a study on how selected newspapers politicized the reportage of the COVID-19 pandemic; Colarossi (2020) did a research on how global media (newspapers) framed corona virus news; Priorier, Ouellet, Ramcourt, Bechard and Dufreuse (2020) carried out their research on how Canadian media (newspapers) framed the COVID-19 pandemic; Nwakpu, Ezema, and Ogbodo (2020) conducted a research on how Nigerian media (newspapers) framed the COVID-19 pandemic; and Ogbodo, et.al (2020) also did a study on how global media (newspapers) framed the COVID-19 pandemic. All the above studies and other available studies focused their framing on all segments and items published by newspapers on the COVID-19 pandemic. These segments and items include news stories, opinions/letters to editor, features, editorials, cartoons, e.t.c. Also, the above studies did not focus on any particular wave (phase) of the COVID-19 pandemic to see how the pandemic was framed during the particular wave of the pandemic. The need to bridge the identified knowledge gaps necessitated this current study which examines how

newspapers framed the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria through their editorials. The study seeks to find out the frequency of publication of newspapers' editorials on the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria by the selected newspapers. Also, the study intends to examine the number of frames identified in the published editorials on the second phase of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria by the selected newspapers. Lastly, the study aims to ascertain the dominant frames and least frames in the published editorials of the second upsurge of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria by the selected newspapers.

Research Objectives

Specifically, the study will achieve the following:

- 1) To find out the frequency of publication of editorials on the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria by the selected newspapers.
- 2) To examine the types of frame identified in the published editorials on the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria by the selected newspapers.
- 3) To ascertain the dominant frames and least frames in the editorials published on the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria by the selected newspapers.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the present study, the following questions emerge:

- 1) What is the frequency of publication of editorials on the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria by the selected newspapers?
- 2) What are the types of frame identified in the published editorials on the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria by the selected newspapers?
- 3) What are the dominant frames and the least frames in the editorials published on the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria by the selected newspapers?

Research Hypotheses:

From the Objectives and Questions above arose the following Hypotheses:

RH_{oi}: There is a significant difference in the frequency of publication of editorials on the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria between Vanguard newspaper and Punch newspaper.

RH_{oii}: The number of identified frames in the published editorials on the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria varies significantly between Vanguard newspaper and Punch newspaper.

Literature Review

Newspaper Editorials and Social Transformation

Newspapers editorials are powerful contributors to societal transformation. They have the capacity to influence public opinions and develop society. Emery (1962) argues that newspapers through their editorials have the obligation to their

communities by pushing for truthful and complete publication, bold expressions of opinions to support societal transformation and human freedom. To Anim and Sunday (2011), editorial is a serious component in placing a newspaper as an intermediary between the people and the many contending forces as well as the contemporary society. Anim and Sunday (2011) further argue that that is why newspapers set aside special section called the editorial page for their opinion or voice and editorial function. For Azeez (n.d.) who tagged it a 'leader', editorial is the corporate voice of a media organisation on any issue of public interest. Duvile (2005) is of the view that editorial is the comment or argument of a newspaper written for the understanding of readers, leading them to take actions on the issue being discussed. Newspaper editorials no doubt are powerful tools for the mobilization of readers and the masses to take informed and guided decisions and actions that will transform their society. Newspaper editorials provide understanding of an issue to the people, give more enlightenment to the people, and mobilize that same people for a particular course. This indicates that if effectively utilised, newspaper editorials are able to galvanise actions locally and nationally for societal development. This is why Azeez (n.d.) posits that editorials are contemporary public spheres that provide fora for public discourse.

Editorials are the voices and hearts of a newspaper or magazine. These voices expressed by the editors, editorial board members, or the publishers, are informed and intelligent opinions on local, regional and national issues. Editorials on any issue bring the attention of the government and the governed to matters of public interest. Hence, Galindo (2004) opines that opinions expressed in editorials are not only addressed to the reading public but also to the social and political elites in keeping with the editorial function of influencing social policy through recommendations made in the editorials (Dijk, 1991; Franklin, 1999; Jeffs, 1999; Spitzer, 1993). Editorials are therefore tools and forces to draw the attention of the people and the government for social transformation.

The Novel but Deadly COVID-19

Since the coronavirus disease otherwise called COVID-19 broke out in 2019, the entire world has lost its peace in global health. What started in Wuhan, Hubei Province in China like an epidemic soon snowballed into a global pandemic. The outbreak of the disease concurred with the largest human movement in the world yearly, which is, the Spring Festival travel season and this led to the quick national and global spread of the virus (Lin *et al*, 2020). The panic caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is similar to that of the 1918 influenza pandemic in London, the United Kingdom. The 1918 influenza pandemic according to Lin *et al* (2020) was pneumonia followed by influenza infection which gave rise to large scale deaths in London. Experts are of the view that the number of deaths associated with COVID-19 greatly exceeded the other two coronavirus (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus, SARS – COV, and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-COV) (Bogoch *et al.*, 2020; Lin *et al*, 2020; Wu *et al.*, 2020). COVID-19 is now posing a huge threat to global public health and economies (Bogoch *et al.*, 2020; Wu *et al.*, 2020).

COVID-19 pandemic according to the Bio-informatic analysis carried out by World Health Organization (WHO) Team in Wuhan, China is a novel corona virus

family which belongs to the Betacoronavirus 2B lineage (WHO, 2020). Further analyses indicated that there is an alignment of the full-length genome sequence of the COVID-19 virus and other available genomes of Betcoronavirus which showed close relationship with bat SARS-like coronavirus strain, BatCov RaTG13. Similarly, Adhikari *et al.* (2020) argue that COVID-19 belongs to a family of viruses that may cause symptoms like pneumonia, fever, breathing difficulty and lung infection. The viruses are commonly found in animals but few cases have been known to affect humans. The World Health Organization (WHO) used the term 2019 novel coronavirus to refer to a coronavirus that affected the lower respiratory tract of patients with pneumonia in Wuhan, China on 29th December, 2019. Also, the current reference name for the virus is severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). It was reported that a cluster of patients with pneumonia of unknown cause was linked to a local Huanan, South China Seafood market in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in December, 2019. Due to its scourge, COVID-19 was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the WHO (Adhikari *et al.*, 2020). The dreaded coronavirus has mutated into various variants of concern (VOC) such as the Delta variant and the more deadly Omicron variant that is currently ravaging the entire world (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021). As of May 25, 2022 there are over 522 million confirmed cases of the COVID-19 with over six million deaths globally (World Health Organisation, 2022). As of May 26, 2022, there are 256,004 confirmed cases of the COVID-19 with 3,143 deaths and 250, 024 discharged cases in Nigeria (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, 2022).

Review of Empirical Studies

A study by Nwakpu, Ezema and Ogbodo (2020) on Nigerian media framing of the coronavirus pandemic and audience response found that the coverage of the pandemic by Nigerian print media was dominated by straight news which accounted for 71.3% of all items analysed. This was followed by opinions which accounted for 15.8%, features which accounted for 11.2% and editorials which accounted for 1.7%. Their study also revealed that Punch newspaper reported the COVID-19 outbreak more frequently (28.9%) than Sun newspaper (24.9%), The Guardian (24.1%) and Vanguard (22.1%) newspapers respectively. The study as well indicated that the framing pattern adopted by the selected newspapers helped Nigerians to take precautionary measures. The study then concluded that continuous reportage of COVID-19 by Nigerian newspapers has proven effective in creating awareness about safety and preventive measures which have helped to “flatten the curve” and contain the spread of the virus. Nwakpu, Ezema and Ogbodo’s (2020) study also cautioned that Nigerian newspapers should avoid creating fear/panic in their reportage of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a related work by Onwe et al (2020) on analysing online newspaper framing patterns of COVID-19 in Nigeria, it was discovered that fear and death, government and political influence, as well as palliative frames were the dominant frames across the three online newspapers studied_ Sahara Reporters, Premium Times and Daily Post. This implies that the online newspapers reported the COVID-19 in frames that caused panic among citizens before the pandemic actually broke out. The study then suggested that online newspapers should harp

more on palliative frame than fear and death frames in reporting any health emergency in the future.

Aderogba (2021) who conducted an investigation into how Nigeria's media framed the COVID-19 pandemic through content analysis of selected newspapers found that majority of the articles published by the selected newspapers on COVID-19 pandemic were on economic frame (22.9%). This was followed by precautionary/preventive frame (11.8%), donations of funds and medical equipment frame (8.4%) respectively. Drug/vaccine frame was the least published articles (1.1%), followed by treatment/discharge (3.3%) and testing with (3.7%) respectively. The study concluded the Nigerian press was more interested in the effect of COVID-19 on the economy and less concerned about issues such as the development of vaccine/drug, testing/isolation/treatment as well as the state of health facility in Nigeria.

Still, Odoemelum (2021) whose study focused on approaches used by print media in framing and covering the COVID-19 health crises in Nigeria indicated that the six selected newspapers amplified coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic using frames such as economic; public health crisis; health workers strikes; and corruption with dissimilar fierceness and salience. The study also indicated that the dominant news frames of economic issues, corruption as well as public health crisis received adverse tone coverage across all the sampled newspapers at fluctuating degrees. Odoemelum's (2021) study concluded that the tone used by the selected newspapers in framing the pandemic were possibly rooted in newspapers' editorial policies and political philosophies.

Additionally, a research by Apuke and Omar (2021) on how television covered COVID-19 in Nigeria discovered that the Nigerian television stations paid adequate attention to issues of the pandemic. The study however showed that private television stations allocated more time to the coverage of COVID-19 than public television stations. The study further indicated that public television stations cited more of government officials in their coverage and updates on COVID-19 while private television stations cited more of Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in their coverage and update on Covid-19. Further findings from Apuke and Omar's (2021) study suggested that issues of media ownership and politics contributed largely to the coverage of the pandemic in Nigeria. The study thereafter concluded that this interplay of media ownership and politics on the coverage of COVID-19 affected the attitude of the masses as many people see the pandemic as an unserious health issue. They rather felt that coronavirus is a political virus intended to highpoint the shortcomings of the incumbent political party.

Furthermore, Mu'azu and Moses (2021) in their study on framing the Covid-19 pandemic during the Government's imposed lockdown in Nigeria revealed that a total of 2,007 newspaper items on COVID-19 were identified from 50 editions of the two selected national newspapers that were content analyzed in the study. The study also showed that Punch newspaper had 1,009 COVID-19 stories, while Daily Trust newspaper had 998 Covid-19 stories. The study further discovered that news had the highest number of stories whereas preventive-orientated frames dominated the type of frames identified. This was followed by palliative-

oriented frame. The study equally suggested that an overwhelming majority of media reports concerning the COVID-19 pandemic were positive and aimed at creating awareness on the dreaded virus. The study concluded that during the first lockdown occasioned by COVID-19 in Nigeria, the print media dedicated more space to the reportage of the pandemic's preventive measures and issues of palliatives arising from the disease.

In the United States (US), Abbas (2020) who investigated a schematic analysis of how the COVID-19 pandemic was politicised in two selected newspapers found that the New York Times of the United States (US) and Global Times of China politicized the pandemic to serve the interest of the countries they represent. The study also revealed that both newspapers invested or utilised the three schematic analysis discourse structures namely: micro structure, macro-structure and super-structure ideologies in their reportage. The study further showed that both newspapers published negative stories relating to the COVID-19 response of "enemy country", with New York Times placing emphasis on the publicity of the Communist Party in China, its inability to control the spread of the pandemic, its weakness in controlling the virus, among other negativities. Global Times on its part, emphasized negative stories on the pandemic in the US such as Trump's weakness and slowness in responding to the virus, the US CDC's unprofessional response to the pandemic, US' lack of enough testing kits and medical supplies, the people's anger and anxiety due to government's slow response, America's expensive healthcare system and weakness, among others. The study therefore recommended that the entire world should work together for safety, peace as well as security as the pandemic knows no borders such as China and the United States (US).

Also in the United States (US), Colarossi (2020) whose research focused on comparing how media (newspapers) around the world framed coronavirus news, found that in the first quarter of year 2020, global media's attention was largely focused on the spread of COVID-19 in China. The study also found that initially, news frames of the coronavirus in China, South Korea, the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) were about scientific research, frontline healthcare workers, as well as the domestic and global outbreak. But soon, the focus in all four countries shifted to local and transnational economic consequences and financial effect – a topic that largely remained a focus in most countries analysed. The study further revealed that in the second quarter of 2020, the focus shifted from global economic consequences to national economic consequences in the US as well as how to take personal protective steps such as social distance and adhering to stay-at-home orders. In the same period, South Korean media focused on using masks. The Chinese media focused on how government actions have helped to control the spread of the disease. The study thus revealed the correlation between best practices for news organisations and journalism practice of bringing adequate awareness to future public health crises. It as well showed how framing stories around government advisories, economic consequences, or the extent of the global pandemic increase public consciousness of the disease. Colarossi's (2020) study concluded by arguing that the new media can impact public perception and behaviour, as previous research has found a relationship between new media and health-related consequences.

Ogbodo, et al (2020) in their work on how global media (newspapers) framed the COVID-19 health crisis, found that human interest and fear/scare mongering are the two dominant frames of the COVID-19 pandemic among global media. The study also indicated that there are huge differences concerning how the global media constructed fear and hope. In their attempt to churn out breaking news, global media ended up doing more harm than good to public perception of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study yet indicated that the use of economic consequences frame underpins the importance of this element in weighing the economic impacts of the pandemic. The study established that there is a new identical framing pattern of the pandemic among global media outlets (newspapers) analysed in the study. This identical framing pattern is 'fear'. All the global media outlets studied used words that emphasize fear among the people. There is therefore the need for media globally to prevent information fatigue and positively influence the perception of the audience on the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Canada, Piorier, Ouellet, Ramcourt Bechard and Dufreuse (2020) whose work was on how Canadian media (newspapers) framed the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that Canadian media covered the COVID-19 pandemic extensively with the health crisis frame being the most frequently used. The study which analysed front pages of 12 well-known news media outlets using a machine learning method, known as LDA also identified same frames for both the Anglophone and Francophone Canadian media. The study further showed that there was visible difference in the use of the health crisis, social impacts and Chinese disease outbreak frames between Anglophone and Francophone Canadian media. The study concluded by suggesting that topic modelling can be a useful approach to frame analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic because its inductive components allow for more objective interpretation of the meaning of texts than the traditional manual text analysis with pre-specified frames.

In Pakistan, Siddiqua, Shabir, Ashraf and Khaliq (2020) whose research focused on how elite newspapers of Pakistan framed the COVID-19 pandemic showed that the Pakistani elite newspapers covered the pandemic in three frames of Scientific Development relating to the pandemic, Scale of the pandemic; as well as the Social and Economic Impact of the pandemic. The study also revealed that news stories which were the main focus of the enquiry educated readers on the pandemic. The study further indicated that news stories warned readers and policy makers about the growing scale of the COVID-19 pandemic. Siddiqua, Shabir, Ashraf, and Khaliq's (2020) study thereafter recommended the economy and social activities in Pakistan which were stopped due to the corona virus disease should be revitalized.

In the kingdom of Eswatini in Southern Africa, Evans (2021) who investigated how newspapers covered the COVID-19 pandemic in Eswatini, former Swaziland in Southern Africa region found that political indexing dominated media coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic in that country. This was seen as newspapers in Eswatini only replicated the opinions of those in power on the pandemic, especially lockdown regulations which were seen as sensible and appropriate. The government though its security officials tagged the coronavirus as an invading army that could only be conquered by war. The news media in that country simply repeated the war language of the government, thus, justifying lockdown

and security surveillance occasioned by the pandemic. Evan's (2021) study concluded that health journalists in Eswatini paid little emphasis on health scares which were seen to be happening in other parts of the world. However, once the problem happens in Eswatini and becomes homegrown, the news value of nearness enables journalists to provide broad coverage. Additionally, the study concluded that the reportage of the disease began with increased coverage and panic, followed by repeated attention and after sometime, the stories left front pages arising from journalism fatigue.

Lastly in Singapore, Ng, Chow and Yang (2021) did a study which focused on news media narratives of the COVID-19 pandemic across 20 countries. The study revealed four phases of online news media narratives of the COVID-19 pandemic. These were Pre-Pandemic, Early Pandemic, Peak Pandemic and Recovery from the Pandemic phases. The study also revealed that Pre-Pandemic narratives were divergent across regions of the world with Africa focusing on Monkey pox, Asia focusing on Dengue fever and North America focusing on Lyme disease and AIDS. Early Pandemic and Peak Pandemic phases experienced a global convergence across regions of the world reflecting the omnipresence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ng, Chow and Yang's (2021) study concluded by presenting a media barometer which provided a framework to analyze the COVID-19's effect on society's perceptions, thus providing significant groundwork for policy makers to evaluate policy communication and design risk communication strategies.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this research is Framing Theory.

Framing Theory

Framing theory is credited to Gregory Bateson who in 1972 first mentioned the concept (Msughter & Phillips, 2020). Msughter and Phillips (2020) posit that framing theory provides platform for media to place viewpoints of an event that is newsworthy. Sometimes, framing theory is also known as second-level Agenda Setting theory due to its closeness with Agenda Setting theory. Framing is the organisation and presentation to the public of certain issues, events and giving them certain perspective to sway interpretation, thus necessitating selective stimulus over how the public view reality (Msughter & Phillips, 2020). Umukoro (2020), while expanding McQuail's (2005) view of framing argues that framing theory is based on the philosophical postulation of the way news stories and other media contents are shaped and contextualized by journalists and other media practitioners. Umukoro (2020) furthermore contends that in framing, media practitioners particularly journalists deliberately create, select and shape news stories and other media contents in certain frames to reflect the reality they want to create in the minds of their audience. Jibrin (2019) while citing Golfman (2003) also states that frames are cognitive patterns that guide the depiction of events. Jibrin (2019) additionally in his work gave various categories of frames that news and other media contents can take or be shaped into (Msughter and Phillips, 2020). Jibrin (2019) called these content categories of frames as 'schemes of frames' and this study will utilise Jibrin's content categories of frames (schemes of frames).

The theory is appropriate for this present research because newspapers editorials framed the second wave of the corona virus disease in Nigeria. The study will look at the different types of frames (schemes of frames) in the editorials published on the second wave of the pandemic in Nigeria by selected newspapers.

Research Method

This study adopted qualitative research method specifically content analysis. This research method is a methodical, unbiased and quantifiable technique of studying and analysing communication contents with the aim of measuring variables (Kerlinger, 2000, cited in Wimmer and Dominick, 2006). Ogwezi, Umukoro and Emetenjor (2022) contend that content analysis is an effective research method for measuring diverse trends such as political, social and others. Such measurement according to Ogwezi, Umukoro and Emetenjor (2022) is to probe the level of presence of a given communication content in order to determine the effect of such content on the audience. The variables to be measured in this present study are the frequency of publication of editorials on the second upsurge of the corona virus disease in Nigeria and the schemes of frames used in the published editorials on the second scourge of the pandemic in Nigeria. The selected newspapers' editorials are those of Vanguard and Punch newspapers in Nigeria. Both newspapers were selected because they are national newspapers whose circulation cuts across all parts of Nigeria.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1 presents the frequency of publication of editorials on the second upsurge of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria by the selected newspapers. The period of the second phase of COVID-19 in Nigeria lasted from December 17, 2020 to July 23, 2021 which is a total of 213 days period. And each of the selected newspaper publishes daily at least one editorial piece. Of these 217 days, the selected newspapers published editorials on the second phase of the pandemic for only 21 days (9.68%) despite the COVID-19 pandemic's scourging and deadly effects in Nigeria and in the entire world. This poor editorial publication on the second stage of the dreaded corona virus disease by the selected newspapers agrees with the findings of Nwaku, Ezema and Ogbodo (2020) as well as Mu'azu and Moses (2021) whose studies equally revealed that the coverage of the pandemic was least dominated by editorials but most dominated by straight news among all items published by newspapers.

Table 1: Frequency of Publication of Editorials on the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria by the Selected Newspapers

No of Days During the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria (December 17, 2020-July 23, 2021)	Total No of Days that Both Newspapers published Editorials on the Second Wave of COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria	Total Percentage of Total No of Days Both Newspapers published Editorials o Second Wave of COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria	Breakdown of the Selected Newspapers' No of Days and Percentage of Published Editorials on the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria			
			No of Days Vanguard Newspaper Published Editorials on Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria	Percentage Representative of the No of Days Vanguard Newspaper Published Editorials on the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria	No of Days Punch Newspaper Published Editorials on Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria	Percentage Representative of the No of the Published Editorials on the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria
217	21	9.68%	12	5.53%	9	4.15%

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2022

A breakdown of the frequency of editorial publications further revealed that Vanguard newspaper published editorials on the second upsurge of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria for 12 days (5.53%), while Punch newspaper published editorials on the second surge of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria for 9 days (4.15%). This indicates that Vanguard newspaper published more editorials on the second phase of COVID-19 in Nigeria than Punch newspaper. This finding however disagrees with the findings of Mu'azu and Moses (2021) as well as Nwakpu, Ezema and Ogbodo (2020) whose works discovered that Punch newspaper published more general news items on the pandemic than The Sun, The Guardian and Vanguard newspapers respectively.

Table 2: Number of Identified Frames in the Published Editorials on the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria by the Selected Newspapers

Newspaper	Number of Frames Identified (Content Category of Frame)	Percentage (%)
Vanguard	47	54.7
Punch	39	45.3
Total	86	100.0

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2022

The Table above indicated the number of frames identified (content category of frame) in the published editorials of the selected newspapers within the period of the second upsurge of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. During the second phase of the pandemic in Nigeria, a total of 86 frames were identified (content category of frame) in the published editorials of the selected newspapers with a breakdown that showed that 47 (54.7%) frames were identified from Vanguard newspaper, while 39 (45.3%) frames were identified from Punch newspaper during the second scourge of the COVID-19 pandemic. The data above revealed that Vanguard newspaper framed issues of the second phase of the COVID-19 pandemic through editorials more than Punch newspaper.

Table 3: Types of Frames Identified (Content Categories of Frame) in the Editorials Published on the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Nigeria

S/N	Content Category and Frames Identified	Definition of the Frame Identified	Freq.	Percentage (%)
1	Policy Prescription and Evaluation frame	Particular policies proposed for addressing an identified problem and figuring out if certain policies will work or if existing policies are effective.	16	18.60
2	Health and Safety frame	Healthcare access and effectiveness, illness, disease, sanitation, obesity, mental health effects, prevention of or perpetuation of gun violence, infrastructure and building safety.	14	16.28
3	Economic frame	The cost, or monetary or financial implications of the issue (to an individual, family, community, or to the economy as a whole)	11	12.79
4	Political frame	Any political considerations surrounding an issue. Issue actions or efforts or stances that are political, such as partisan filibusters, lobbyist involvement, bi-partisan efforts, deal-making and vote trading, appealing to one's base, mentions of political maneuvering. Explicit statements that a policy issue is good or bad for a particular political party.	9	10.47
5	External	The external relations of one state with another or	8	9.30

	Regulation and Reputation frame	relations between groups. This includes trade agreements and outcomes, comparisons of policy outcomes or desired policy outcomes.		
6	Capacity and Resources frame	The lack of or availability of physical, geographical, spatial, human and financial resources or, the capacity of existing systems and resources to implement or carry out policy goals.	7	8.14
7	Quality of Life frame	The effects of a policy on individuals' wealth, mobility, access to resources, happiness, social structures, ease of day-to-day routines, quality of community life, etc.	4	4.65
8	Fairness and Equality frame	Equality or inequality with which laws, punishment, rewards and resources are applied or distributed among individuals or groups. Also, the balance between the right or interests of one individual or group compared to another individual or group.	4	4.65
9	Other frames	Any other frame that does not fit into all the mentioned categories.	4	4.65
10	Morality frame	Any perspective or policy objective or action (including proposed action) that is compelled by religious doctrine or interpretation, duty, honour, righteousness or any other sense of ethics or social responsibility	3	3.49
11	Law and Order, Crime and Evaluation frame	Specific policies in practice and their enforcement, incentives, and implications. Includes stories about enforcement and interpretation of laws by individuals and law enforcement, breaking laws, loopholes, fines, sentencing and punishment. Increases or reduction in crime.	3	3.49
12	Security and Defence frame	Security, threats to security and protection of one's person, family, in-group, nation, etc. generally, an action or a call to action that can be taken to protect the welfare of a person, group, nation sometimes from a not yet manifested threat.	2	2.33
13	Cultural Identity frame	The social norms, trends, values and customs constituting culture(s), as they relate to a specific policy issue.	1	1.16
	Total		86	100.00

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2022

Table 3 revealed the type of frame (content categories of frame) identified in the published editorials on the second phase of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria by the selected newspapers. 13 types of frames (content category of frame) were identified in the published editorials on the second upsurge of COVID-19 in Nigeria by the selected newspapers. The dominant types of frame identified in the published editorials on the second scourge of the pandemic in Nigeria by the selected newspapers are Policy Prescription and Evaluation Frame with 16 appearances (18.60%), Health and Safety Frame with 14 appearances (16.28%), and Economic Frame with 11 appearance (12.79%) respectively among other

frames. These outcomes corroborate the works of Aderogba (2021) and Odoemelam (2021) who also found that Economic frame was among the dominant frames in their studies. However, this finding contrast the findings of Dufreuse (2020) and Evans (2021) whose works revealed that Health Crisis frame and Security frame were the dominant frames of their studies. Furthermore, Table 3 revealed that the least type of frames (content category of frame) identified in the published editorials on the second phase of COVID-19 in Nigeria by the selected newspapers are Cultural Identity Frame with just one (1) appearance (1.16%), Security and Defence Frame with two (2) appearances (2.33%), and Law and Order, Crime and Evaluation Frame with three (3) appearances (3.49%) respectively among other frames. This finding contrast the outcome of Aderogba (2021) who discovered that Drug and Vaccine; Treatment/Discharge; and Testing were the least framed issues in his study.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study were discussed in line with the research questions raised.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What is the frequency of publication of editorials on the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria by the selected newspapers?

Answer to RQ1 is found in Table 1 above. Data from the Table indicated that of the total 217 days of the second upsurge of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, only 21 editorials were published on issues of the dreaded COVID-19 despite its severe and devastating effects on the entire world. This 21 editorial publications represent a dismal 9.68% publication of issues concerning the deadly disease. A breakdown of this data further revealed that of the 21 editorials published on the second scourge of the pandemic in Nigeria, Vanguard newspaper published only 12 editorials, while Punch newspaper published just 9 editorials on the second wave of COVID-19 in Nigeria. This implies that the selected newspapers did not consider the COVID-19 pandemic that serious and severe to be given more and frequent publications in their editorials.

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What are the types of frames identified in the published editorials on the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria by the selected newspapers?

Answer to RQ2 is seen in Table 3 above. Data from the Table showed that 13 types of frames were identified in the editorials published on the second scourge of COVID-19 in Nigeria by the selected newspapers. The identified frames are as follows: Capacity and Resources frame, Cultural Identity frame, Economic frame, External Regulation and Reputation frame, Fairness and Equality frame, Health and Safety frame, as well as Law and Order, Crime and evaluation frame. Others are Morality frame, Policy Prescription and Evaluation frame, Political frame, Quality of Life frame, Security and Defence frame, and Other frames. The Other frames refer to frames which were not categorised into the above frames such commending the Nigerian health workers for their efforts to manage COVID-19 patients in Nigeria as well as applauding the Nigerian federal government for its

achievement of mitigating the impacts of the pandemic in Nigeria. The definition and interpretations of the identified frames are as seen in the Table 3 above.

Research Question 3 (RQ3): What are the dominant frames and least frames in the editorials published on the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria by the selected newspapers?

Answer to RQ3 is again seen in Table 3 above. Data from the Table revealed that the dominant frames in the editorials published on the second upsurge of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria were Policy Prescription and Evaluation frame with 16 appearances (18.60%); Health and Safety frame with 14 appearances (16.28%); and Economic frame with 11 appearances (12.79%) respectively. This means that the editorials published on the second phase of the COVID-19 pandemic by the selected newspapers dwelt most on prescribing policies on how to tame the disease in Nigeria as well as evaluating government's policies and implementation on issues of COVID-19 in Nigeria. Furthermore, data revealed that frames that dwelt on the health and safety of Nigerians as well as the economy of the nation were also emphasised in the editorials published on the second phase of the pandemic in Nigeria by the selected newspapers.

On the other hand, the least types of frame in the editorials published on the second phase of COVID-19 in Nigeria were Cultural Identity frame with just 1 appearance (1.16%); Security and Defense frame with 2 appearances (2.33%); Law and Order, Crime and Evaluation frame as well as Morality frame with 3 appearance each (3.49%). This again means that the editorials published on the second level of the COVID-19 pandemic by the selected newspapers dwelt least on identifying the COVID-19 pandemic with our cultural identity. Additionally, frames that focus on security and defense, law and order, crime and evaluation, as well as morality frames were least dwelt on and emphasised in the editorials published on the second upsurge of COVID-19 in Nigeria by the selected newspapers.

Results of Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses raised in the study were tested using Chi-square Statistical Technique.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the frequency of publication of editorials on the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria between Vanguard newspaper and Punch newspaper.

Table 4: Table on the Frequency of Publication of Editorials on the Second Phase of COVID-19 in Nigeria between Vanguard newspaper and Punch newspaper

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Vanguard	12	10.5	1.5
Punch	9	10.5	-1.5
Total	21		

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Table 5: Chi-Square Test on the Frequency of Publication of Editorials on the Second Phase of COVID-19 in Nigeria between Vanguard newspaper and Punch newspaper

	Frequency of Publication of Editorials
Chi-Square	.429 ^a
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.513

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 10.5.

From Table 4 and 5, the chi-square result presented was on the significant difference in the frequency of publication of editorials on the second upsurge of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria between Vanguard newspaper and Punch newspaper. The results shows ($X^2 \{1\} = 0.429$; $p > 0.05$) the frequency of publication editorials on the second scourge of the pandemic in Nigeria is not significantly different between Vanguard and Punch. Hence, the stated null hypothesis is accepted as it is, while rejecting the alternative hypothesis.

Hypothesis Two

The number of identified frames in the published editorials on the second phase of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria do not vary significantly between Vanguard newspaper and Punch newspaper.

Table 6: Table on the Number of Identified Frames in the Published Editorials on the Second Upsurge of COVID-19 in Nigeria varies significantly between Vanguard newspaper and Punch newspaper

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Vanguard	47	43.0	4.0
Punch	39	43.0	-4.0
Total	86		

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Table 7: Chi-Square Test on the Number of Identified Frames in the Published Editorials on the Second Phase of COVID-19 in Nigeria varies significantly between Vanguard newspaper and Punch newspaper

	Number of Identified Frames
Chi-Square	.744 ^a
df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.388

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 43.0.

Table 6 and 7 show the chi-square test on the number of identified frames in the published editorials on the second scourge of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria

do not vary significantly between Vanguard newspaper and Punch newspaper. The result ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 0.744$; $p > 0.05$) shows that there is no variation between Vanguard and Punch on the number of identified frames in the published editorials on the second phase of the pandemic in Nigeria. Hence, the stated null hypothesis is accepted as it is, while rejecting the alternative hypothesis.

Conclusion

This study examined the framing of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria through editorials by selected newspapers. The study showed that the selected newspapers made poor frequency and very few editorial publications (dismal 9.68% publication) on the second upsurge of COVID-19 in Nigeria despite its deadly and rampaging effects in Nigeria and the entire world. The pandemic has been ravaging humanity since December, 2019 when it first broke out in Wuhan, China. Corona virus has caused over six million deaths globally as of May 25, 2022 and 3,143 deaths in Nigeria as of May 26, 2022. Experts have also predicted that COVID-19 will not leave humanity any time soon. Such pandemic deserves the highest media attention especially through newspaper editorial which is the voice of the newspaper on public issue.

The study also revealed 13 types of frames (content category of frame) in the editorials published on the second upsurge of COVID-19 in Nigeria by the selected newspapers. Lastly, the study indicated that Policy Prescription and Evaluation frame, Health and Safety frame, as well as Economic frame respectively were the dominant frames, while Cultural Identity frame, Security and Defence frame, as well as Law and Order, Crime and Evaluation frame and Morality frame were the least frames in the editorials published on the second phase of the pandemic in Nigeria by the selected newspapers. Therefore, the editorials published by the selected newspapers emphasised most on suggesting to relevant authorities in Nigeria ways to overcome the pandemic in Nigeria, while at the same time de-emphasised linking the people's culture to the COVID-19 scourge in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is therefore recommended thus:

- 1) Since COVID-19 is a deadly disease that is still devastating humanity, Nigerian newspapers should publish more editorials on the pandemic. Publishing more editorials on COVID-19 will mean that the newspapers themselves consider the pandemic serious and deadly that it truly is.
- 2) Nigerian newspapers through their editorials should continue to frame issues of COVID-19 because doing so will enlighten the audience on the pandemic in Nigeria which will guide the masses to overcome this dreaded and deadly disease.

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