Research: Master Thesis Report

Master Degree Program in Public Administration – Public Policy & Governance

Submitted on: _____ Approved on: _____

Student: Rees Chikwendu

Student Number: s1575481

E-mail: r.c.chikwendu@gmail.com

Examiner: Mr. van der Kolk

Substitute: Mr. van der Kaap

Constructing Corruption as a Social Problem in Nigeria: A Content Analysis of Four Nigerian Newspapers

---

Summary

This study has investigated the prevalence of four frames in the coverage of corruption as a social problem in four Nigerian newspapers. The frames include conflict, morality, responsibility, and economic consequences, which were identified through previous studies on frames and based on their frequent use in defining social and policy issues. Social problem scholars agree that social problems do not exist as objective conditions, but are collectively defined through public discourse. Thus, to capture this very essence of collective definition of corruption, this study also developed five frame variables, which include: the nature, causes, actors, consequences, and possible treatment of the problem. Further, twenty-three (23) frame elements – around the main frames and their variables – were deductively and inductively defined through literatures and news articles. The frame elements serve as the lowest factors that inform the *present* or *not present* of the main frames in analytic texts. A sample size of 295 news articles were randomly selected and content-analyzed during the period of the 2015 general elections in Nigeria, that coincided with the period of this research. The results showed a uniform pattern across newspapers in how frames are used to construct the problem of corruption. Overall, responsibility, morality, and economic consequences frames, in this order, were dominantly used to frame corruption. To rephrase it, Nigerian newspapers described corruption more meaningfully as a social problem in terms of responsibility, morality, and economic consequences frames.

Keywords: corruption, framing, social problem, media, newspapers, and content analysis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

MAIN RESEARCH PROBLEM

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country (with over 180 million people), and according to 2014 statistical review and rebasing of its national GDP, it is also the continent's largest economy and the 26th largest economy in the world – with a GDP of over 621 billion dollars – a significant increase of 60.7% relative to previous statistics (World Bank, 2015). This recently reviewed statistics of Nigeria's GDP has heightened public discourse on social problems in the country, since this economic growth has not translated into poverty reduction. According to the World Bank (2014), poverty has remained stubbornly high at 46% of the population on adult equivalent level and 62% in strictly per capita terms. Despite being placed as one of the fastest growing economy in the world, statistically speaking, there is an increasing unemployment rate among younger Nigerians (World Bank, 2013/2014). Arguably, this seems to be at odds with the international pattern of economic growth and development and can be attributed to corruption (World Bank, 2014). Corruption is seen as the foremost social problem in Nigeria and the harbinger of many other problems challenging the country's public administration and economic progress (Ogundiya, 2009; Imhonpi & Ugochukwu, 2013; Casimir, Izueke, & Nzekwe, 2014; Ikelegbe, 2005).

Corruption[1] is a killer of economic growth and development, and according to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (2014), Nigeria scored 27 on scale from 0 (most corrupt) and 100 (least corrupt), and it ranked 136 out of the 175 countries assessed. The Global Corruption Barometer (2013b) shows corruption in Nigeria is not declining, and its assessment indicates that 72% of Nigerians believes that corruption is on the increase, and only 8% thinks it had declined. Moreover, through media discourse, many Nigerians perceive corruption as a problem due to years of failed responsibility. In other words, Nigerian leadership has failed in their responsibility to come up with a vision and policy design that will solve the problem of corruption (*The Nation*, 2015). The politicians and public officials at the regional and federal levels of government are either complicit to the problem or perpetuate it (*The Guardian*, 2015). Apart from the responsibility angle to corruption, issues of corruption and the economic impacts have been perceived and interpreted by Nigerians as a moral and conflict problem, too. According to *Vanguard* (2015), evasive commitment and impunity by public officials have undermined transparency and accountability thereby contributes

---

[1] Defined as the "misuse of public office for private benefits considering the costs (Lipset & Lenz, 2000; Anderson & Tverdova, 2003, p.92; Soest, 2013; Glaeser & Goldin, 2004; Seligson, 2002), and which can take place through the interactions of state and non-state actors (Rose-Ackerman, 1978).

to bad governance. Further, it asserts that disregard for rule of law and protection of human rights beget social injustices in the country. Nigerian politics is seen as an environment for self-interests rather than public interests, and politicians see it as an opportunity to enrich themselves and those who are of their ethnic and political groups (*Leadership*, 2015).

Such perceptions on corruption found within Nigerian public discourse hint on the inability of Nigeria to translate its economic growth into poverty reduction and, is at least, partly the result of the diversion of public funds to personal bank accounts (Okekeocha, 2013). Corrupt practices distort government decisions and undermine the legitimacy of state in providing public services (Seligson, 2002); weakens the institutions of the state that should enable social development; and fuels conflicts and instability (Transparency International, 2014). That is to say, there is a correlation between corruption and other social problems in a country. Corruption leads to imbalance in distribution of resources and wealth due to lack of accountability, and threatens good governance, democracy, and development (World Bank, 2011). The most recognizable forms of corruption include embezzlement, cronyism, bribery, extortion, fraud, money laundering, trading in influence, abuse of office, illicit enrichment, etc. (Ogbeidi, 2012), and could facilitate other serious social problems in the society.

Social problems do not exist as objective conditions in the fabric of any society. Rather, its existence depends primarily on how it is defined and conceived in a society, and how it is shaped by public discourse (Blumer, 1971). Social problems are alienating practices and response to the discrepancies between what is and what ought to be, which can result from the "adaptive failure of society to meet changing individual needs" (Horton, 1966, p. 704). Some of the things that are perceived as social problems today were once not so perceived as social problems, and some of the conditions that are ignored today may undoubtedly someday in the future come to be considered as social problems (Rubington & Weinberg, 2010). In other words, it can only be social problem if it becomes part of those set of issues that are both undesirable and avoidable as defined by the people it affects (Hewitt & Hall, 1973).

Social problem theorists have defined social problem to be "conditions that have become culturally defined as troublesome, widespread, changeable, and in need of change" (Rubington & Weinberg, 2010, p. 283). This means that social problems are not compatible with the values of a significant number of people – especially, those who think something is needed to be done to alter the situation (Hewitt & Hall, 1973). The study of social problems requires analyzing arenas of public discourse and action because that is where problematic situations are labeled (or alleged) and not through rigorous criteria of scientific rationality (Hilgartner, 1988). The media as one of such arenas of

public discourse can decide on how social problems are interpreted, unpacked, and presented, or conversely withheld, from public view, in turn, likely to affect societal understanding and reactions (Zamith, Pinto, & Villar, 2012, p.335). Similarly, the media can follow societal recognition and conception – that is, veering with the wind of public identification of social problems (Blumer, 1971; Schoenfeld, Meier, & Griffin, 1979).

This study aims to content-analyze news coverage on corruption and to describe how it has been constructed – that is, its manifest and/or latent nature, actors, causes, consequences, and treatment. This will be achieved by analyzing *what is said* and *how it is framed* in four Nigerian newspapers. The relevance of this study lies in understanding how corruption is defined and conceived by the Nigerian public through specific frames. In so doing, social problem is rightly given a face and a name, and without, it might not be addressed with the proper policy measures. How a society would deal with its social problems depend largely on how they are discussed, selected, excluded, and presented – in other words, framed to the public (Hilgartner, 1988). Frames help to identify the sources and implications of social problems (Blumer, 1971). Moreover, since there are no previous studies of this type on Nigerian social problems and the media, this research is an attempt to fill that gap in literatures. To achieve this objective, the following central research question is formulated:

In what ways are specific frames used in different Nigerian newspapers to describe corruption as social problem during the 2015 general elections?

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research is a descriptive study of specific media frames in the collective definition of social problems through newspapers discourses. The media is one of the cornerstone institutions in a democracy. Media define and present social problems through frames (de Vreese, 2005). According to Gitlin (1980) frames are "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse" (p.7). To put it another way, frames are used to select certain aspects of social reality and make them more salient in discursive text, to promote the way a particular problem is defined and presented (Entman, 1993). Frames can be used to *define problems*, *diagnose the cause(s),* and *suggest solutions* (Terkildsen, Schnell, & Ling, 1998; Entman, 1993). Another thing frames can do is to direct audiences to where they can "locate, perceive, identify, and label" information flow around particular social problem (Goffman, 1974, p.156).

How media frames social problems in a society is an important aspect of a political system because it signals priorities (or what ought to be priority) of policy-makers to members of the public as well as the priority of the public to policy-makers (Atkinson, Lovett, & Baumgartner, 2014) – a form of bidirectional communication – and therefore making it an important variable of political discourse. To rephrase, media can force attention to social problems that demands political attention and political issues that demands public attention, *vice versa* (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). So frames do shape public perceptions of political issues or institutions (Saris, 1997).

Four frames have been carefully selected in this study primarily due to their frequent occurrence in previous related studies on social and policy issues in public media domain (Patterson, 1993; Jamieson, 1992; Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Iyengar, 1991; Neuman, Just, & Crigler, 1992, Valkenburg, Semetko, & de Vreese, 1999; Zamith, Pinto, & Villar, 2012; Deprez & Raeymaeckers, 2010; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, etc.). These four frames include conflict, morality, responsibility, and economic consequences. In addition, to ascertain their relevance and fittingness within Nigeria's media and political landscape, preliminary analyses were conducted on some selected news stories on the topic of corruption in Nigeria. These four frames were found to be amongst the dominant frames used in Nigerian newspapers. The exclusion of other frames was mainly due to the fact that they were not significantly present in news stories on the coverage of this problem during the pre-analyses.

2.1 CONFLICT FRAME

Conflict frame is distinguished through emphasis on the disagreement between individuals, parties, groups, institutions, or countries (Valkenburg, Semetko, & de Vreese, 1999; Neuman, et al., 1992). It is also used to show between groups who is winning or losing the competition in a rivalry-ridden environment (Zamith, Pinto, & Villar, 2012). In the media, conflict frame occur through labeling and use of words that indicate blame, dispute, and debate on the causes and nature of the issue (Putnam & Shoemaker, 2007). There are no other better times in the political life of nation to turn political discussions on complex issues amongst elites into conflict, though, sometimes lacking substance, than during election campaigns and political debates (Patterson, 1993). This does not mean that this frame cannot be used in other periods of political discourse. This type of frame is often used in media coverage to strategically scorn opponents; take sides (either based on ideology); to show winners or losers (Jamieson, 1992); and to induce public cynicism due to the mistrust of political leaders (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Cappella & Jamieson, 1997). But importantly, conflict frames are used by actors to define or label the situation as problem, and are often done through inference to the *causes* and why the *nature* of the problem (Putnam & Shoemaker, 2007). Conflict frames are the discourse lenses through which dispute or conflict situations are viewed and interpreted (Pinkley, 1990; Prinkley & Northcraft, 1994).

From this perspective of frames, the cause of Nigeria's corruption through an x-ray of its political discourses can be found in the primordial conflict cardinally imbedded in the absence of genuine citizenship (Bryce, 1921; Ogundiya, 2009) or what Aluko (2003) and other scholars described as ethnic nationalism. This has often resulted in a struggle for dominance (hegemonic control) by *ethnic groups* and *political parties* that comprised the country (Irobi, 2005). It implies that an ethnic group would treat and react towards others in an ethnocentric manner, and perceive them, relatively, as inferior and as rivals (Anugwom, 2000). According to Hofstede (1994), this has to do with a strong inclination for an ethnic group to fight for recognition of its own identity based on the belief in defending it interest above that of others. Also, Lijiphart (1984) pointed out that such great extent of division along ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic lines are common in multi-ethnic society. Nigeria, today, profoundly experiences the problem of ethnic nationalism (in other words the lack of genuine citizenship) (Aluko, 2003); an experience found in all plural societies where ethnic groups have primordial common bond that shape their behavior in the wider community (Stavenhagen, 1994). This therefore has given impetus to the politics of ethnicity within Nigerian political landscape, and it elicit rivalries between individuals, parties, religions, and ethnic groups that compete to secure access to the centralized political power – which girds corruption (Ukiwo, 2003; Ikelegbe, 2005; Dudley,

1973; Osaghae, 1995). Above all, such existing structure of power and the endemic corruption patterns in Nigeria disproportionately benefit its elites (Smith, 2001).

Understanding of the cause of corruption within the conflict discourse in Nigeria directs attention to the very nature of the problem. Dike (2002) described the nature as an opportunistic behavior or the 'corruption of greed,' and he argued that it primarily takes place at the highest level of political authority as political corruption. Often times those with political authority formulate policies and legislations that are tailored to personal benefit through manipulation of political institutions. Most times such behaviors are substantially evident amongst the few privileged elites who have access to the purse of the state (Ogundiya, 2009), which consequently fosters rampant poverty and insecurity (Imhonopi & Ugochukwu, 2013). So the cause and nature bear complementary elements often used to frame corruption. To mitigate many of the conflict situations fueling corruption in Nigeria, according to Diamond (1987), would require constitutional reforms (and design), which will erase the concept of indigeneity, and that will not categorize Nigerians based on their ethnicity, as indigenes and non-indigenes (Ukiwo, 2003; Ikeegbe, 2005; Ogundiya, 2009). Another way (still a constitutional matter) is through an engineered power structure that would accommodate the diverse ethnic identities and devolves political power to the federating states or units of governance (Adamolekun & Kincaid, 1991). This form of political structure can create a healthy competitive political environment that will inhibit corruption (Montinola & Jackman, 2002). The selfish interest of a selected few (or groups) in the society – from a moral standpoint – works against the common good.

2.2 MORALITY FRAME

Apart from the conflict cause and nature of corruption in Nigeria, there are also the morality dimensions that significantly have to do with human nature and behaviors (Gebel, 2012; Ochulor, 2011). This too is used in political discourse to frame social problems. Morality frames make reference to the cultural and/or religious embedding of corruption and pinpoints certain social prescriptions and moral tenets (or beliefs) represented in the society that influence the practices of corruption (Valkenburg & Semetko, 2000; Olivier de Sardan, 1999). Distinguishably, moral frames are matters of right or wrong; and/or the respect for set boundaries (Zamith, Pinto, & Villar, 2012). Strictly speaking, this frame does not *per se* concern corruption, but identifies or labels the *behavioral nature* of those who connive with the state and/or its institutions to engage in corrupt practices (Olivier de Sardan, 1999). If according to Durkheim the human person is considered sacred and with a moral status and religious absolute (cited in Lukes, 1969), it is therefore appropriate to trace the moral issues of corruption on the individual (moral agent) behaviors, norms, and habits. According to Moore (2008),

corruption involves an individual moral disengagement and predisposition, which allows the individual to restructure their inhumane actions as less harmless, minimize their role, and reframe the effects of their actions. This can take place in the processes of initiation, facilitation, and perpetuation of corruption. In framing the moral aspects of corruption, news stories could point out expected moral prescriptions on how to behave but also points out when individuals or groups in the society have violated acceptable morals (Neuman et al., 1992).

Morality frame tells whether an action is good or bad – and gives the principles and reasons why it is morally good or bad (Ochulor, 2011). In the context of corruption, the conducts of government, companies, and individuals can be judged as good or bad based on the core values and set of acceptable standards in the society with regards to decisions and actions on public property and services (Gebel, 2012). On the nature of corruption, according to Brooks (1909) corruption can be described as an attack on morals, and it lowers the values or accepted standard of behavior. Over time, the state suffers from it as it spread as bad moral example. It is even worse when the bad values or norms are officially instituted by the authority, and could become a way of doing things (Olivier de Sardan, 1999). Otherwise, corruption becomes legitimized or culturally accepted due to general lack of commitment by the state or its institutions to tackle it (Shah, 2009). This means that corruption cannot be an exclusive choice of conscience of an individual or an actor, but collective expression and construction of the world and the level of awareness around it (Levine, 2005). In this situation, the conviction of corruption puts the actor in a moral universe – a scenario where the individual is said to have lost his/her moral standing – or described as morally bad (Levine, 2005).

The evil in the practice of corruption lies in the "deterioration of character and in the contagion of bad example (Brooks, 1909). When moral aspects of ethnical principles, integrity, justice, transparency, and accountability are lacking in the activities of those at the helm of affairs of the state institutions corruption flourishes (Ochulor, 2011; Transparency International, 2009). So corruption is manifest when these moral dimensions are lacking. The manifestation of the lack of morals can vary in the personalities of the corrupt individuals – which can range from using public wealth to live in luxury to maneuvering the proper procedures of doing things (Graaf et al., 2008). Moral ethics is based on norms (or core values) and set of standards governing decisions, choices, and actions of both the public and private actors (Gebel, 2012). This principles are the life wires of every society, since moral agents (individuals) in the society make decisions every day and engage in social interactions – which are influenced by desires, preferences, and tendencies (Ochulor, 2011). Moral dimension of integrity is an invested morality, which is an effort to do the right thing, and to fend off any possibility to do what is perceived as wrong (Levine, 2005). However, in a corrupt environment such will be conspicuously

lacking. To avert the moral cause of corruption, two important principles, that is, transparency and accountability – often are associated to integrity and ethics – must be enshrined in the procedures of doing things within a society (Gebel, 2012). This would include relying on the existence of competitive supply of contractors (Glaeser & Goldin, 2004). Whatever the decision, the available options to corruption are either to continue lowering the moral standard through bad moral example or hold the unfaithful accountable (Brooks, 1909).

2.3 RESPONSIBILITY FRAME

This is the frame that is often used to define social problems in terms of attributes to responsibility. It is used to present to the public who is responsible to the causes (that is, looking to the past) and the treatment and/or solution (that is, looking to the future) to the alleged problems (Iyengar, 1987; Valkenburg & Semetko, 2000). This frame is attributive, and identifies those (whether individuals, private organizations, or public institutions) responsible to the outcome – that is, the non-integrity keepers and those who make ethical failures (Levine, 2005). Most times, in some countries, the media can easily attribute responsibility of the social problems of the nation to some level of government (Valkenburg & Semetko, 1998; Valkenburg, Semetko, & de Vreese, 1999). Iyengar (1990) pointed out that the government and its public officials are seen as those empowered to control the outcome, and the people look up to them to take that responsibility to establish the prevention or reoccurrence of the outcome. So the people (influenced by the media) will often look to the questions of *control* and *treatment.* The media framing can whip up failed government policies, political climate, economic conditions, etc., when analyzing the issue of responsibility. But the fundamental cause of corruption in Nigeria is attributable to poor leadership (Imhonopi & Ugochukwu, 2013) and lack of institutional structures (Casimir, Izueke, & Nzekwe, 2014). According to Ekeh (1975), corruption exists primarily because there are politicians and public officials who embezzle public fund from public institutions and the solicitation and acceptance of bribes from the private sector seeking contracts and public services (cited in Ogundiya, 2009).

The nature of Nigeria's corruption is the kind that is encountered by Nigerian citizens at schools, hospitals, tax offices, police, and so forth (Dike, 2002). That is, the kind of corruption that can be conceptualized as the 'bane of Nigeria's public administration and governance' (Ogundiya, 2009). It has the potential to erode regime legitimacy (Seligson, 2002), especially when the government fails to address impunity as expected by the citizens and others that have influence in the society (Dix, Hussmann, & Walton, 2012). Legitimacy (support) granted by both individuals and organizations to the government implies the existence of some form of trade-off between efficiency and effectiveness,

on the one hand, and social justice and the political system, on the other hand (Diamond & Lipset, 1994; Lipset, 1983). The political system must demonstrate that it is running in the best interests of the people by eschewing corruption (Lipset, 1984). The actions of those who rule must conform to the pre-established norms and shared expectations of those who are ruled; and corruption does not demonstrate this neither does it show the effectiveness in the output of the political system; therefore can make the people to withdraw their support (Schmitter, 2001). In the absence of such relationship, corruption can undermine political legitimacy. The information flow coming from the media or political discourse can identify and describe the perceptions about legitimacy (Andreev, 2006).

Therefore, it can be said that bureaucratic corruption[2] is the most prevalent form of corruption in Nigeria – and is solicited by private individuals and companies in the procurement services and contracts from government public agencies (Dike, 2003). Authority is used to manipulate and distort the rules of procedures in public institutions thereby perpetuating corruption (Ochulor, 2011). Within Nigeria's political discourses this form of corruption has been described as responsibility attributes of both *public* and *private* actors (Casimir, Izueke, & Nzekwe, 2014). Popular measure to nip bureaucratic corruption in the bud is institutional reforms at all levels of governance. Particularly, civil service reforms that takes patronage out of the hands of politicians and replace them with test-based rules that will serve to limit the opportunity for corruption (Glaeser & Goldin, 2004).

2.4 ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES FRAME

This frame interprets and presents social problems or issues in terms of the consequences they have economically – and their financial impacts. Economic consequences frame weighs the actual and potential economic impacts of the current actions and/or social problems in order to make the issue relevant to their audience (Neuman et al., 1992; Gamson, 1992). Especially since some public attention to a problem can easily be drawn when clarity with regards to the consequences either present or future are defined (Valkenburg & Semetko, 2000). Therefore, economic impacts of corruption as a social problem can indeed carry news value (Graber, 1993). Additionally, in the media use of this frame, attention can be drawn to the economic impacts of the problem to investment; market benefit or risk; or its local, national, or global impacts (Zamith, Pinto, & Villar, 2012).

The corruption of a political or bureaucratic system causes economic collapse – including under-provision of public utilities and retard long-term growth (Glaeser & Goldin, 2004). Economic

---

[2] Which often exists as a delineation of public service through the exploitation and oppression of the citizens whom public officials are supposed to serve in their interests (Imhonopi & Ugochukwu, 2013).

approach to corruption starts with the costs and benefits by potential corrupt public officials, who engage in corruption when the perceived benefits are high and costs are low (Rose-Ackerman, 1975). The costs are the perceived penalties compared to the benefits of increasing private wealth. According to Seligson (2002), in an environment where the benefits of corruption are higher than the costs, corruption can have pernicious impacts. Pointing to Economists arguments, he surmised that corruption increases transaction costs, reduces investment incentives, and consequently, in general, results in negative economic growth. Ogundiya (2009) pointed out that corruption in Nigeria destroys the welfare of its citizens; and does not allow for economic progress. This can be evidenced in the poor standard of living and infrastructures in the country (Casimir, Izueke, & Nzekwe, 2014), which like a cancer has destroyed Nigeria's health, education, agriculture, and other economic sectors (Imhonopi & Ugochukwu, 2013). The media can easily rap up some of these economic impacts of corruption to frame public discourse in order to draw attention of the public (Neuman et al., 1992; Gamson, 1992).

2.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the theoretical discussions, we deductively, through literatures, developed a model of four frames (conflict, morality, responsibility, and economic consequences), five frame variables (nature, actors, cause, consequences, and treatment), and 21 frame elements. Two of the frame elements in the table (13 and 21) were inductively developed through news stories. The frame elements were used during coding as the lowest factors that best define and identify the main frames. Using this model in the rest of the research, we investigated: (1) the extent to which different Nigerian newspapers pay attention to the topic of corruption during the general elections; (2) the differences that exist in how Nigerian newspapers frame the nature of corruption; (3) the attribution of responsibility with regards to the actors of corruption; (4) the manifest and latent causes of corruption present or not present; (5) the consequences associated to the problem of corruption in different Nigerian newspapers; (6) the possible treatments or solutions identified in the news stories; and (7) the absolute and relative connections between the main frames and the frame elements.

Within the model table, it is necessary to make a distinction between economic consequences frame from the general consequences associated to corruption. The former investigate the costs and benefits of corruption in strictly financial and developmental terms, while the latter investigate other consequences emanating from corrupt practices. Some overlaps can be seen in the frame elements. Critically speaking, looking at the nature of the problem in each frame, it can be said that there is a moral thread that runs through all the frames. Also, there are overlaps of frame elements between the first three frames (conflict, morality, and responsibility) and the last frame (economic

consequences). The choice of these four frames is because they capture the basic known ways that Nigerian media describe social problems. In every society, media frames can be determined by the societal level of development and/or by the nature of its problems.

TABLE 1: CONCEPTUALIZATION

	Conflict frame	Morality frame	Responsibility frame	Economic consequences
What is the nature of the problem?	(1) Corruption is an opportunistic behavior (or corruption of greed)	(8) Corruption is an attack on acceptable morals	(14) Corruption is the bane of public administration and governance (or bureaucratic corruption)	(22) Corruption mitigates economic progress
What are the main actors?	(2) Ethnic groups (3) Political parties	(9) Individuals	(15) Private actors (16) Public actors	(9) Individuals (3) political parties (2) ethnic groups (15) private actors, or (16) public actors
Who or what is causing the problem?	(4) Lack of genuine citizenship (ethnic nationalism) (5) Power struggle	(10) Lack of morals	(17) Poor leadership (18) Lack of institutional structures	(10) Lack of morals (17) poor leadership (18) lack of institutional structures (4) lack of genuine citizenship, or (5) power struggle
What are the consequences of the problem?	(6) Hegemony (or dominance of groups)	(11) Social injustices	(19) Attack on legitimacy of governance	(23) Negative economic impacts
What are the suggested solutions?	(7) Constitutional reforms	(12) Transparency & accountability (13) Sensitization of citizens	(20) Institutional reforms at all levels of governance (21) Responsible governance	(7) Constitutional reforms (20) institutional reforms (21) responsible governance (13) sensitization of citizens (12), or transparency and accountability

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Content analysis allows us to understand society's definition of social problems. In social science research, there are two approaches that can be used to identify media frames in content analysis: inductive and deductive (Deprez & Raeymaeckers, 2010; Tankard, 2001; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). The first approach takes place without prior defined frames in mind, whilst the second approach goes with predefined and operationalized frames, and involves a systematic analysis that use list of frames. These two approaches were used in this study, and it took a leaf from previous studies of frames (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Zamith, Pinto, & Villar, 2012; Valkenburg, Semetko, & de Vreese, 1999; DCU School of Communications, 2009). Besides, the study used primarily quantitative approach to describe differences between newspapers in using frames to construct the problem of corruption. The quantitative analyses included how the nature, causes, responsible actors, consequences, and solutions were interpreted, packaged, and presented as frames in the coverage of corruption as social problem in Nigeria within a certain time frame.

3.1 SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

This study includes The *Vanguard*, *The Nation, Leadership*, and *The GUARDIAN* newspapers. These newspapers were included because they are ranked among the top ten national newspapers in Nigeria (Uko, 2014), and do have electronic archives (or search engine) with general access to published articles. First, the *Vanguard* has a wide circulation across Nigeria, with coverage on wide range of topics, including politics. Editorial language is English. Political leaning: right. Second, *The Nation* is circulated widely across the six geo-political zones in Nigeria (wide/national), and its editorial focus is wide. Editorial language is English. Political leaning: leftist. Third, *Leadership* is elitist in editorial content, and limited circulation to Nigeria's major cities (national). Editorial language is English. Political leaning: left. Lastly, *The GUARDIAN* is elitist in editorial content, and circulates across Nigeria's urban centers (therefore, wide/national). Editorial language is English. Political leaning: centrist. The different characteristics of these newspapers bring a mix of value into the sample and represent their national-level discourse – as part of the samples' representativeness.

The sample of this study was selected from January 1, 2015 to June 30, 2015. This time frame is justified with the assumption that 2015 is the year of elections and the inauguration of new government in Nigeria, which provides a heightened opportunity in the trend (before, during, and after) of many social problems in the country, particularly corruption, which is the topic of this study. As a year of a lot of political activities and expectations, it is a period of time when issues of divergent

interests, conflicts, intentions, and objectives are brought to the focal point of public discourse. Fortunately, this period happens to fall within the time frame of this research.

To collect articles for analysis from each newspaper, this study focused only on searching for those articles that at least (once) featured the topic of corruption in the newspaper title. And as a first step, the keyword corruption* was entered into each newspaper search engine and/or archive. This keyword search returned a total of ($N = 363$) articles in the following proportion: *Vanguard* = 101, *The Nation* = 87, *Leadership* = 99, and *The GUARDIAN* = 76. The generated articles of each newspaper were uniquely numbered starting from 00, 01, 02, and so on. Further, for practical reasons, a fraction of roughly 80% was randomly taken from the sample size of each newspaper. Therefore, this resulted into a total sample size of (N = 295) articles in these proportions: *Vanguard* ($n = 82$), *The Nation* ($n = 71$), *Leadership* ($n = 80$), and *The GUARDIAN* ($n = 62$).

TABLE 2: GRAPHICAL BREAKDOWN OF THE UNIT OF ANALYSIS ACROSS NEWSPAPERS

Newspapers	Sample size
Vanguard	82
The Nation	71
Leadership	80
The GUARDIAN	62
Total	295
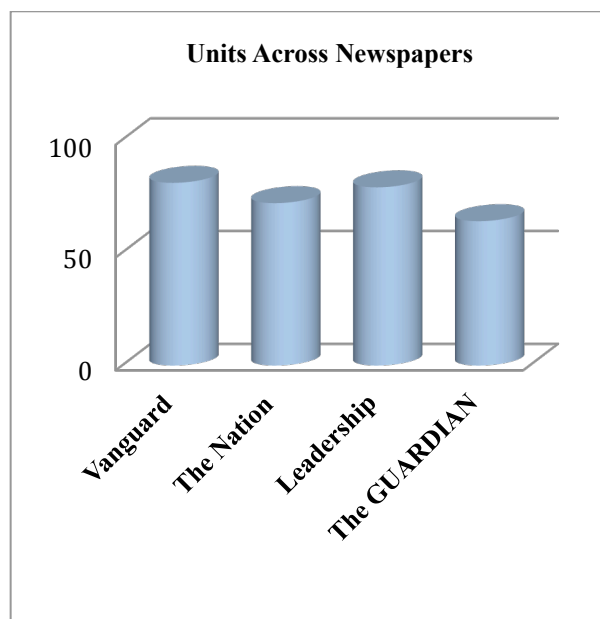
3.2 DATA ANALYSIS AND FRAME MEASURES

The units of analysis for this study are the individual articles reporting on the topic of corruption. The data analysis involved the construction of a codebook, in which thematic variables were developed to guide data analysis. Table 3 below shows some of the variables that were used. The framing measures adopted for this study followed the principle of scaling (*1 = present, 0 = not present*) for the frame elements. The coding of the frame elements involved a thorough reading of news stories before coding them in the spreadsheet. This means identifying the manifest mentions of the frame elements in the

articles and/or their latent mentions through association of some keywords and phrases related to them. Additionally, contextual interpretation – taking into consideration the audience of the message – was used to draw some conclusions where frame elements are not clearly visible. The use of latent cues only took precedent when the frame elements are not clearly visible in the news stories.

For example, some of the keywords and phrasal indicators associated to the conflict frame elements included greed, selfishness, lack of trust, betrayal, appetite for acquisition, allegation, disagreement, dispute, attack, debate, accused, etc. Morality frame elements were associated to keywords such as integrity, impunity, conscience (or conscionable), unprincipled, unethical, guilt (or guilty), ungodly, shame, indiscretion, right or wrong, etc. The elements of responsibility frame were associated with incompetence, mediocrity, clueless, complicity, incapacity, inept, etc. Lastly, the elements of economic consequences frame were associated with financial mentions (risks, loss, and gains), costs (unemployment, poverty, insecurity, infrastructures, etc.) and/or degree of expense to the problem. See some examples of selected quotes from news texts (Table A, Appendix). It is important to mention that the randomly selected example text may contain more than one frame element. It was also something taken into consideration during the analyses and coding.

To determine the connections between the frame elements and the main frames, three decision-rule algorithms were used:

I. *Simplistic (winner-takes-it-all) algorithm* based on simply the main frame with the highest counts of frame elements; that is, the absolute frequency. The limitation of this approach is that the main frames do not all have equal and exclusive frame elements.

II. *Weighted average (W) algorithm* based on average (counts) of frame elements. This too has its limitation, since it does not recognize frames with equal average counts. Therefore, to eliminate that problem, a third approach is necessary.

III. *Multiple (weighted) algorithms (WM)* based on a borderline count on the weighted average (W). The decision is to identify a particular borderline of interest, and frames that falls within the border count is recorded as *present = 1* on SPSS.

Table 3: Variables and operationalization

Variables	Operationalization
Newspaper title	The problem covered in the newspaper article, that is, corruption topics only
News stories date	Day, month, and year of each article analyzed (from January 1, 2015 to June 30, 2015).
Word count of articles	Auto count using Microsoft Word/Excel
Author/writer (if available)	First name and last name of who wrote the article.
Genre	Format and section of newspaper news stories appeared
Sources	Categories mentioned as sources (e.g. private citizens, public official, the president, civil society, private organizations, etc.)
Nature of problem	**(1)** Corruption as an opportunistic behavior **(8)** Corruption as an attack on acceptable morals **(14)** Corruption as the bane of public administration and governance, and **(22)** Corruption as mitigation of economic progress
Actors	**(2)** Ethnic groups **(3)** Political parties **(9)** Individuals **(15)** Private actors, and **(16)** Public actors
Cause	**(4)** Lack of genuine citizenship **(5)** Power struggle **(10)** Lack of morals **(17)** Poor leadership, and **(18)** Lack of institutional structures
Consequences	**(6)** Hegemony (dominance of groups) **(11)** Social injustice **(19)** Undermine legitimacy of governance, and **(23)** Negative economic impacts
Solutions	**(7)** Constitutional reforms **(12)** Transparency and accountability **(13)** Sensitization of citizens **(20)** Responsible governance, and **(21)** Institutional reforms
Conflict frame	Absolute and/or relative frequencies
Morality frame	Absolute and/or relative frequencies
Responsibility frame	Absolute and/or relative frequencies
Economic consequences frame	Absolute and/or relative frequencies

4. RESULTS

Figure 1 below shows a total sample of ($n = 295$) articles that were analyzed. This total sample is sum of the sample size of each newspaper, in decreasing order as follows: *Vanguard* ($n = 82$), *Leadership* ($n = 80$), *The Nation* ($n = 71$), and *The Guardian* ($n = 62$). The table also shows the mean word counts of the newspaper articles, in increasing order, these are: *Leadership* = 479, *Vanguard* = 704, *The Nation* = 827, and *The Guardian* = 895. What these indicate is that there are two main ways to investigate the amount of attention each newspaper gave to the coverage of corruption in Nigeria. The first is based on the sample size of newspapers, which in this case, ranked *Vanguard* and *Leadership* as the newspapers that gave highest coverage to corruption. It can be said that *The Nation* and *The Guardian* newspapers gave relatively less coverage to the topic. The second way is through the average word count of news articles. With this approach, it seems that *The Guardian* and *The Nation* gave more attention to the topic of corruption, since they are the two with the highest sample size. This would likely mean that *Leadership* newspaper gave less attention to the topic. Strictly taken, from the two approaches, it can be concluded that there are meaningful differences in the amount of attention that the topic of corruption received across the four newspapers. See more details of frequency distribution of average word counts across newspapers in Appendix, Chart A to D, Plot A and B.

However, since there are other characteristics of newspapers in terms of whether they are daily, weekly or monthly newspapers, it is necessary to use average word count that takes this into count to analyze the amount of attention in the coverage of the topic. For example, *Vanguard, Leadership*, and *The Guardian* are all dailies, whilst *The Nation* is a weekly newspaper. Weekly newspapers tend to have longer paper size than daily newspapers, and attempts are made to capture many news items of the week on the weekends. Which means that weekly newspapers may try to analyze and explore more news issues than the regular or daily newspapers. Taking these into consideration, *The Nation* and *Vanguard* newspapers can be seen in this regards as the newspapers that gave highest amount of attention to the topic of corruption within news articles. These two newspapers have total word counts of more than 58, 000 and 55, 000 respectively. The ranking puts them, respectively, in first and second positions.

FIGURE 1: AMOUNT OF ATTENTION TO CORRUPTION

Newspaper	*n*	*Ranking on freq.*	Mean (S.D.)	*Ranking on size article*	Total words	*Ranking on total words*
Vanguard	82	1	704 (571)	3	57728	2
Leadership	80	2	479 (360)	4	38320	4
The Nation	71	3	827 (735)	2	58717	1
The Guardian	62	4	895 (807)	1	55490	3
Total	295		713 (643)		210335	

Nature of corruption

This frame variable is one of the ways frames were used to describe the problem of corruption in this study, and was distinguished by four possible frame elements. The elements are: corruption as an opportunistic behavior, corruption as an attack on morals, corruption as the bane of public administration and governance, and corruption mitigating economic progress. These frame elements were deductively developed through literatures on corruption and related to conflict, morality, responsibility, and economic consequences. In some cases, these frame elements were not visibly present in the newspapers, and that is when the latent cues took precedent in the analysis. The result (see Figure 2 below) shows the total percentage differences, vertically, across frame elements. In decreasing order, corruption as an attack on morals = 69%, corruption mitigates economic progress = 66%, corruption as an opportunistic behavior = 63%, and corruption as the bane of public administration and governance = 49%. Based on these total values, there seem to be no meaningful differences in the use of these frame elements to describe the nature of corruption in Nigeria. A Chi-square test on each frame element, horizontally, across newspapers seems to indicate otherwise a significant difference only on corruption as an opportunistic behavior, with a *P-value* of 0.04 at Alpha (α = 5%). Looking at the percentage values of this particular frame element across the four newspapers, *The Nation* scored 76% higher than the other newspapers. Therefore, it is a significant difference in comparison to the percentage values of the rest of the newspapers described. It can be said based on the total percentage values of the nature dimension that corruption was meaningfully framed as moral, economic, conflict, and responsibility social problem.

Figure 2: Nature of corruption

Frame elements	Vanguard (*n* = 82) *n* (%)	The Nation (*n* = 71) *n* (%)	Leadership (*n* = 80) *n* (%)	The Guardian (*n* = 62) *n* (%)	Total (*n* = 295) *n* (%)	P-value
Attack on morals	56 (68%)	50 (70%)	52 (65%)	46 (74%)	204 (69%)	.690
Mitigates economic progress	52 (63%)	48 (68%)	57 (71%)	37 (60%)	194 (66%)	.494
Opportunistic behavior	53 (65%)	54 (76%)	46 (58%)	34 (55%)	187 (63%)	.044**
Bane of public administration and governance	45 (55%)	30 (42%)	37 (46%)	33 (53%)	145 (49%)	.375

Note: (α = 5%), **p < .05, two-tailed, significant.

Attribution of responsibility (Actors)

To understand the ways frames are used to attribute responsibility to the problem of corruption in Nigeria, we used five possible actors (or frame elements) to distinguish this variable. The actors were deductively defined using literatures on corruption related to conflict, morality, responsibility, and economic consequences frames. They include: public actors, individuals, political parties, private actors, and ethnic groups. The findings show the total percentage differences, vertically, across the various actors as responsible to corruption in decreasing order: public actors = 74%, individuals = 65%, political parties = 32%, private actors = 30%, and ethnic groups = 11%. See Figure 3 below. There seems to be meaningful differences in the total percentage values of the frame elements used to describe actors responsible for corruption in Nigeria. For example, public actors and individuals recorded the highest scores, while ethnic groups recorded the least score. However, to ascertain the differences of each frame element across newspapers, a Chi-square test was performed. The results indicate that only ethnic groups, as one of the actors of corruption, recorded a significant difference, with a P-value of 0.02, approximately, across the four newspapers. For example, on ethnic groups, *The Guardian* scored 19%, which is more significant than the values of the other newspapers. Based on the Chi-square test, the other frame elements did not show significant differences. Consequently, taking into account the total percentage values on the attributes of responsibility, it can be said that corruption as a social problem in Nigeria was fundamentally framed as a responsibility and moral perspectives.

Figure 3: Attributes of responsibility

	Vanguard (n = 82)	The Nation (n = 71)	Leadership (n = 80)	The Guardian (n = 62)	Total (n = 295)	
Frame elements	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	P-value
Public actors	64 (78%)	49 (69%)	59 (74%)	47 (76%)	219(74%)	.631
Individuals	54 (66%)	39 (55%)	54 (68%)	46 (74%)	193 (65%)	.126
Political parties	19 (23%)	27 (38%)	25 (31%)	22 (36%)	93 (32%)	.213
Private actors	26 (32%)	24 (34%)	22 (28%)	15 (24%)	87 (30%)	.611
Ethnic groups	7 (9%)	2 (3%)	11(14%)	12 (19%)	32 (11%)	.015**

Note: (α = 5%), **$p < .05$, two-tailed, significant.

Causes of corruption

The third way frames were used to describe corruption in this study is through the causes. We distinguished between five possible causes of corruption in Nigeria. These causes include lack of genuine citizenship, power struggle, lack of morals, lack of institutional structures, and poor leadership. Using Figure 4 below, the results indicate, in decreasing order on the column, the following total percentage values: poor leadership (72%), lack of institutional structures (68%), lack of morals (65%), lack of genuine citizenship (56%), and power struggle (38%). There seems to be meaningful differences between the first three elements and the last two elements. Besides, a Chi-square test of the five frame elements across newspapers, horizontally, indicates that significant differences exist only on the percentage values of lack of institutional structures and lack of genuine citizenship, with *P-values* (at Alpha = 5%) of .051 and .009 respectively. But the latter indicated a very high significant difference compared to the former. Overall, *Leadership, The Guardian,* and *The Nation* showed dominant percentage scores of 64%, 63%, and 59% respectively on lack of genuine citizenship as a frame element. *The Nation* and *Leadership* newspapers showed the highest significant differences on lack of institutional structures, with percentage values of 76% and 75% respectively. Generally, using total percentage values of the frame elements, it can be said that all the newspapers meaningfully used the four frames in the coverage of corruption as a social problem.

Figure 4: Causes of corruption

Frame elements	Vanguard (*n* = 82) *n* (%)	The Nation (*n* = 71) *n* (%)	Leadership (*n* = 80) *n* (%)	The Guardian (*n* = 62) *n* (%)	Total (*n* = 295) *n* (%)	*P-value*
Poor leadership	64 (78%)	49 (69%)	57 (71%)	42 (68%)	212 72%)	.499
Lack institutional structures	49 (60%)	54 (76%)	60 (75%)	38 (61%)	201 (68%)	.051**
Lack of morals	51 (62%)	47 (66%)	57 (71%)	38 (61%)	193 (65%)	.559
Lack of genuine citizenship	33 (40%)	42 (59%)	51 (64%)	39 (63%)	165 (56%)	.009***
Power struggle	29 (35%)	31 (44%)	31 (39%)	20 (32%)	111 (38%)	.555

Note: (α = 5%), ***p < .05, two-tailed, very significant.

Consequences of corruption

The consequences variable is the fourth way frames were used to describe the problem of corruption. This variable was distinguished by four possible consequences or frame elements, which include negative economic impacts, social injustice, undermine legitimacy of governance, and dominance of groups (hegemony). The results on Figure 5, on the column, show total percentage scores of these elements respectively in this decreasing order: 67%, 62%, 45%, and 24%. There seems to be meaningful differences in the percentage values across the frame elements. Across newspapers, on the rows, a Chi-square test was performed on each of the elements to ascertain differences. The findings show highly significant differences across newspapers on the element dominance of groups, and some significance on the element social injustice. These are evidenced by the *P-values* (Alpha = 5%) of .005 and .064 respectively. On dominance of groups (hegemony), *The Guardian* has highest percentage score of 39%, whilst *Leadership* has the highest percentage score of 71% on social injustices. Using the total percentage values of frame elements, the consequence therefore is that newspapers, overall, covered corruption as social problem with more of economic consequences and morality frames. Conflict frame seem to be the less used in the coverage of corruption as social problem in Nigeria.

Figure 5: Consequences of corruption

Frame elements	Vanguard (n = 82) n (%)	The Nation (n = 71) n (%)	Leadership (n = 80) n (%)	The Guardian (n = 62) n (%)	Total (n = 295) n (%)	P-value
Negative economic impacts	55 (67%)	46 (65%)	59 (74%)	38 (61%)	198 (67%)	.436
Social injustice	50 (61%)	36 (51%)	57 (71%)	41 (66%)	184 (62%)	.064*
Undermine legitimacy	31 (38%)	30 (42%)	39 (49%)	33 (53%)	133 (45%)	.253
Dominance of groups	17 (21%)	9 (13%)	21 (26%)	24 (39%)	71 (24%)	.005***

Note: (α = 5%), ***$p < .05$, two-tailed, very significant.

Treatment

Finally, the fifth way frames were used to describe the problem of corruption is by mentioning the possible solutions. This frame variable is distinguished by three frame elements, which were deductively defined through literatures and two that were inductively defined through news articles. The former elements are institutional reforms, constitutional reforms, and transparency and accountability. While the latter elements include responsible governance and sensitization of citizens. Across frame elements, on the column, the total percentage differences in decreasing order are: responsible governance (72%), institutional reforms (66%), transparency and accountability (65%), constitutional reforms (28%), and sensitization of citizens (21%). See Figure 6 below. To establish differences across newspapers, a Chi-square test, with 5% Alpha, was performed on each frame element. The findings show significant differences on two of the frame elements across newspapers. Constitutional reforms recorded a *P-value* of .016, whilst institutional reforms recorded a *P-value* of .023. On the first significant differences, *The Nation* and *The Guardian* newspapers, in comparison to the other newspapers, scored highest percentage values of 38% and 36% respectively. On the second significant differences, in comparison to the other newspapers, *The Nation* and *The Guardian* also scored highest percentage values of 76% and 71% respectively. Consequently, using total percentage values of frame elements, overall, it can be said that responsibility and morality frames were used more than conflict and economic consequences frames in the coverage of corruption.

Figure 6: Possible treatments

Frame elements	Vanguard (*n* = 82) *n* (%)	The Nation (*n* = 71) *n* (%)	Leadership (*n* = 80) *n* (%)	The Guardian (*n* = 62) *n* (%)	Total (*n* = 295) *n* (%)	*P-value*
Responsible governance	60 (73%)	55 (78%)	60 (75%)	38 (61%)	213 (72%)	.171
Institutional reforms	44 (54%)	54 (76%)	54 (68%)	44 (71%)	196 (66%)	.023**
Transparency/accountability	46 (56%)	49 (69%)	57 (71%)	40 (65%)	192 (65%)	.192
Constitutional reforms	15 (18%)	27 (38%)	18 (23%)	22 (36%)	82 (28%)	.016**
Sensitization of citizens	18 (22%)	14 (20%)	18 (19%)	11 (19%)	61 (21%)	.894

Note: (α = 5%), **p < .05, two-tailed, significant.

Salience of Frames

In the model framework, twenty-three (23) frame elements were associated to four main frames – that is, conflict, morality, responsibility, and economic consequences – in order to understand how corruption is collectively defined as a social problem (See Table 1, page 12). The frame elements are factors that can provide meaning to the salience of these main frames. But the challenge is on how to make agreeable connections between the frame elements and the main frames. This is because, looking at the frequency distributions of elements within news stories (See Appendix, Chart E to H), there is no mono-frame article. An article can have some or all of the elements of the main frames. Which means that an article can contain elements of conflict, morality, responsibility, and/or economic consequences frames. Put in another way, there is likely no perfect article that used only one type of frame for corruption.

Now, in the attempt to have an overview of how the four main frames – conflict, morality, responsibility, and economic consequences frames – are used in the articles, we will try to adopt three decision-rule algorithms. The decision-rules are not to establish which is right and wrong (or perfect), but to have an acceptable overview of the connections between the frame elements and the main frames. The decision-rules all have their limitations, however, some are more acceptable than the others. It is a matter of choice to gain insight and understanding on how the main frames are used to construct corruption as social problem in Nigeria. Moreover, the approaches adopted in this area create opportunity for some levels of deliberation and arguments.

The first decision-rule is a simplistic or winner-takes-it-all algorithm. It is simply based on the highest *absolute mean* count of frame elements of each main frame. This is unique considering that the main frames do not have equal distribution of frame elements, and some of the elements of economic consequences frame overlap with the elements of the other three frames. For example, conflict frame = 7 elements, morality frame = 6 elements, responsibility frame = 8 elements, and economic consequences frame = 17 elements, making an imperfect distribution. Which means that economic consequences frame is more advantaged than the rest frames, and has higher probability to emerge as the dominant frame in any news articles. Notwithstanding, using this decision-rule, the prevalence of frames in Table 4 below, shows total dominance of the main frames in this decreasing order: economic consequences frame = 9.0, responsibility frame = 4.7, morality frame = 3.5, and conflict frame = 2.5. Obviously, economic consequences frame with the highest frame elements in the model table therefore emerged as the dominant frame.

Newspapers		Conflict	Morality	Responsibility	Economic consequences
Vanguard	Mean (S.D.)	2.10 (1.53)	3.35 (1.37)	4.67 (2.12)	8.37 (3.01)
	N	82	82	82	82
The Nation	Mean (S.D.)	2.70 (1.50)	3.31 (1.33)	4.86 (1.75)	9.25 (2.78)
	N	71	71	71	71
Leadership	Mean (S.D.)	2.54 (1.15)	3.69 (1.20)	4.85 (1.22)	9.38 (1.84)
	N	80	80	80	80
The Guardian	Mean (S.D.)	2.79 (1.75)	3.58 (1.25)	4.68 (1.86)	8.85 (2.86)
	N	62	62	62	62
Total	Mean (S.D.)	2.51 (1.50)	3.48 (1.29)	4.77 (1.76)	8.96 (2.67)
	N	295	295	295	295

Table 4: Absolute frequency (simple algorithm)

To ameliorate the unfair distribution of frame elements, a second decision-rule is hereby introduced as *weighted average (W) algorithm* – and it is a more sophisticated approach than the former. Rather than the absolute frequency, it adopts relative frequency in the analysis of frames across articles of newspapers. It divides the total count of frame elements in an article by the initial number of elements as assigned in the model table. For example, if 5 frame elements were counted for the responsibility frame in an article, its relative mean frequency, therefore, is $5/8 = 0.6$, since responsibility frame in our model table has eight (8) frame elements. This same principle applies to all the other main frames, and therefore reduces the chances of any of the main frame being disadvantaged

by another. Using this decision-rule, Table 5 below shows total mean values different from what was obtained in table 4. The dominance of frames are now in this order from the highest to the lowest: responsibility frame = .596, morality frame = .580, economic consequences frame = .527, and conflict frame = .359. In table 4, economic consequences frame was ranked number 1 in dominance, but in the current table 5, it is ranked number 3. Therefore, this approach of analysis can be seen more as a balancer since it offsets some of the limitations of the previous approach.

Newspapers		Conflict	Morality	Responsibility	Economic consequences
Vanguard	Mean (S.D.)	.301(.218)	.559 (.229)	.584 (.265)	.492 (.177)
	N	82	82	82	82
The Nation	Mean (S.D.)	.386 (.214)	.552 (.221)	.607 (.219)	.544 (.164)
	N	71	71	71	71
Leadership	Mean (S.D.)	.363 (.165)	.615 (.110)	.606 (.153)	.552 (.109)
	N	80	80	80	80
The Guardian	Mean (S.D.)	.399 (.250)	.597 (.208)	.585 (.233)	.521 (.168)
	N	62	62	62	62
Total	Mean (S.D.)	.359 (.214)	.580 (.216)	.596 (.220)	.527 (.157)
	N	295	295	295	295

Table 5: Weighted average *(W)* algorithm

Besides, it is possible, within the weighted average count approach, to have an overview of how frames are used in the news articles by focusing only on the first three main frames that have more or less exclusive frame elements. This is because economic consequences frame has only two exclusive frame elements, and the rest of its elements overlap with conflict, morality, and responsibility frames. Thus by focusing on these three main frames, an overview on how frames are used in the newspaper articles can still be obtained. Based on this approach, Table 6 below indicates that responsibility frame and morality frame are the most dominant of the three frames, with total percentage values of 49% and 41% respectively. A Chi-square test, with a P-value of .187, at 5% Alpha, showed that there are no significant differences in the use of these frames across newspapers. Still, however, the weighted average approach has its own limitation since it does not count for any article with two equal counts of frame elements. On SPSS analysis, it assigns 0 (*not present*) for any article with equal weighted mean counts.

		Vanguard	The Nation	Leadership	The Guardian	Total
Fr_S3	Conflict	7	11	4	6	28
		9.0%	15.7%	5.3%	9.8%	9.8%
	Morality	31	21	38	27	117
		39.7%	30.0%	50.0%	44.3%	41.1%
	Responsibility	40	38	34	28	140
		51.3%	54.3%	44.7%	45.9%	49.1%
Total		78	70	76	61	285
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 6: Weighted average algorithm – 3 frames option (Chi-square, P-value = .187, Alpha = 5%)

Lastly, in order to address the problem identified in the weighted average algorithm, we introduced here a third decision-rule of *multiple algorithm*. A borderline of 0.5 count was created on the weighted average (W) counts. In other words, any article with up to 0.5 of weighted average count on frame elements is assigned a 1 under any of the main frames labels associated to it. The result (see Table 7 below) on the multiple algorithms of frames shows total percentage differences across the four main frames. In the order of dominance, responsibility frame (78%) is ranked first, morality frame (76%) is ranked second, economic consequences frame (59%) is ranked third, and conflict frame (26%) is ranked fourth. These values align with the result of the weighted average algorithm, where the main frames appear in this same order. There seems to be meaningful differences in these percentage values across frames. On the other hand, across newspapers, the frames that recorded significant differences are responsibility, economic consequences, and conflict frames. The Chi-square test (at 5% Alpha) indicates significant differences of each of these frames across newspapers as 0.04, 0.06, and 0.05 respectively. On responsibility frame, *Leadership* newspaper scored a significant percentage value of 89% than the other newspapers. On economic consequences frame, *Leadership* and *The Guardian* scored significant percentage values of 80% each. While it can be said that *The Nation* and *The Guardian* newspapers scored significant percentage values of 32% each.

Table 7: Multiple algorithms *(WM)*

Frames	*Vanguard* (*n* = 82) *n* (%)	*The Nation* (*n* = 71) *n* (%)	*Leadership* (*n* = 80) *n* (%)	*The Guardian* (*n* = 62) *n* (%)	*Total* (*n* = 295) *n* (%)	*P-value*
Responsibility	60 (73%)	55 (76%)	71 (89%)	44 (71%)	230 (78%)	.040**
Morality	58 (71%)	53 (75%)	64 (80%)	50 (80%)	225 (76%)	.430
Economic consequences	37(45%)	47(66%)	56 (70%)	34 (54%)	174 (59%)	.006***
Conflict	15 (18%)	25 (32%)	17 (21%)	20 (32%)	77 (26%)	.049**

Note: (α = 5%), ***p < .05, two-tailed, very significant.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to examine and describe differences in the use of frames in the coverage of corruption as social problem in Nigeria. Frame in this goal was used to define the nature of the problem, assess causes, actors, consequences and, in addition, the possible treatments. To achieve that objective, this study deductively (through literatures) and inductively (through news articles) developed 23 frame elements around four main frames frequently used in academic literatures to define social and political problems. The next step taken was to analyze the ways these frame elements were used (manifest or latent) in news articles. Overall, in the coverage of corruption as social problem, responsibility, morality, and economic consequences frames dominated the various newspaper articles analyzed. One thing this study has ascertained is that corruption in general can either be a conflict, morality, responsibility, or economic consequences social problem. Dominantly, this problem has been framed in this study more as a responsibility, morality and economic consequences social problem. The amount of attention the topic received across newspapers varied in two ways. On the basis of sample size, *Vanguard* and *Leadership* gave the highest amount of coverage to the topic, whilst *The Nation* gave the highest amount of attention within news articles on the basis of total word count. In summary, based on the findings, it can be said that the collective definition of corruption as a social problem is thus settled.

According to the theoretical framework, conflict frame emphasize discord between individuals, parties, groups, institutions, or countries (Valkenburg, Semetko, & de Vreese, 1999; Neuman et al., 1992). Some of these conflict situations were manifested in the debates, blames, disputes, and allegations found within Nigerian political discourse amongst various groups that comprised the country. The study shows that the most of this problem fueling corruption is embedded in the primordial structure, devoid of collective national spirit and ideological dispositions. And within this environment, opportunistic behaviors (or corruption of greed) among the various groups thrive. Generally, there is the sense of 'grab-it-when-you-can' among those that have access to the national purse. This form of corruption is fundamentally found within the political and public echelons. The absence of genuine citizenship among many Nigerians has contributed significantly to conflicts that gird corruption. The wealth of the nation is seen as a piece of pie – and anyone with the slightest opportunity should grab his or her own share. Clearly, Nigerians are divided along ethnic, religious, and political lines. Even though conflict frame was not dominantly used in framing corruption, evidently, Nigeria's political discourse during the 2015 general elections was ridden with discords and scorns of corruption. The general elections 2015 was a period of time when the elites and citizens from

various ethnic groups, political parties, and religions hurl attacks on one another, in order to consolidate their strategy to grab political power and to subdue other groups. The discourse on dominance and marginalization are evidence of the consequences (including violence) that that has resulted from Nigeria's conflict situations. Many have argued that to avert the underlying cause of conflict and corruption in Nigeria, there is the need for a constitutional reform that will do away with the current constitution that promote hegemony and protects public officials that perpetuate corruption.

Morality frame embodies human nature and behaviors, and it is mainly attributed to people (Gebel, 2012; Ochulor, 2011). Morality frame references cultural and/or religious embedding of the problem by prescribing certain social and moral beliefs in the society that influence the existence of the problem (Neuman et al., 1992). The nature of corruption in Nigeria significantly erodes acceptable morals due to deep-rooted culture of impunity. The practice of corruption leads to a deterioration of character and contagion of bad example (Brooks, 1909), which is found within individual behavior and lifestyle. It is manifest in the lack of integrity and ethics both on individual and political levels in the procedures of rendering public services. Evidently, public looting, political rigging, and vote buying are some of the ways that corruption has persisted within Nigerian society. Consequently, this forms of corruption has led to poverty and wanton abuse of human rights in the country. The study has shown that morality is one of the dominant frames used to construct corruption as a debilitating social problem. Public discourse on the solution to change this moral behavior, argues for the urgent need to hold individuals especially those holding public offices accountable for the crimes of corruption. This would go a long way in reducing the culture of impunity in the country. Additionally, the day-to-day activities of bureaucratic and political institutions have to be conducted in transparent and ethical manners to restore the people's confidence in public institutions. Competitive procedures of awarding contracts must be enshrined as a standard rule that cannot be lowered for anyone.

Responsibility frame is mainly used to locate responsibility to the root causes and treatment of the problem (Iyengar, 1987). Most times, the media use this frame to blame the government and/or its officials as either complicit to the problem or incompetent to the solutions. The prevalence of this frame in this study shows that the problem of corruption can be found mainly within the political and bureaucratic corridors. It also shows that Nigerian government has the ability to alleviate the problem of corruption. Within this frame, the nature of corruption in Nigeria is framed as a distortion and poison to public administration and governance. Horizontally, government institutions in Nigeria, such as the executive, legislature, and judiciary, have been poisoned to the extent that they are complicit to corruption and incompetent to proffering solutions. Vertically, federal, state, and local government bureaucracies designed to serve the people and fight corruption are moribund. These too

cannot live up to their public tasks. Evidences abound of the misappropriation and misallocation of resources by public officials, and the perpetrators often go unpunished. This has undermined the perceptions of citizens towards government institutions and public officials. The support (legitimacy) that citizens give to a political regime is often based on the trade-off between efficiency and effectiveness (Lipset, 1983). This is what is often called output legitimacy (Diamond & Lipset, 1994), and corruption leads to under-provision (output) of those things the citizens expect from the government. Whereby this is conspicuously lacking, it seriously undermine that support that the political system receive from the citizens. Such can be seen in the citizen perceptions within media discourse. However, to tackle the problem of corruption, there must be institutional reforms at all levels of governance, and it requires commitment and setting or rules that will serve to limit opportunity for corruption (Glaeser & Goldin, 2004). There is also the need for Nigerian leadership to be more responsible to the menaces of corruption in the society.

Economic consequences frame as another dominant frame of the four frames used in this study described some of the negative economic impacts of corruption in Nigeria. This frame has been used in this study focusing on the financial consequences, transaction costs, investment risks, and growth and development retards (Seligson, 2002). In general, some of these negative economic impacts include unemployment, lack infrastructural developments, Nigeria's debts to IMF and World Bank, etc. In addition, Nigeria's media discourse used this frame to describe how corruption has hampered the development of key economic sectors such as health, education, and agricultural sectors. It was a framed used to describe how the wealth of the nation is redistributed to those who do not deserve it, and how funds allocated to projects are often turned into private wealth and diverted into private bank accounts. Embezzlements and money laundering featured prominently in media discourse as fundamental forms of economic corruption. The news value of this frame often lies in whipping up various negative economic impacts and developmental issues as tangible ways of making people see the effects of corruption. That is to say, this frame helps to draw the attention of the audience to the financial costs, market risks, or degree of expense of the problem of corruption to the society. The frequent use of this frame by Nigeria media might be an effective strategy in less-literate society, since such audience can easily be overwhelmed by the huge figures and the economic impacts that the people can easily see around them. Economic consequences frame therefore made it easier to understand why Nigeria's economic growth has not translated into poverty reduction. It provides reasons to why unemployment rate has remained stubbornly high in Nigeria despite the country being one of the fastest growing economies in the world and the largest in Africa.

As limitations, this study did not have enough time to compare the findings of this research to other period of elections in Nigeria. Though this can be used as basis for comparing how media discourse in future elections will be framed around certain social problems in the country. It was also not part of the ambition of this study to venture into the direction of audience frames, therefore cannot verify the effects these frames have on the various newspapers' audience. This might be a fascinating research in the future within Nigerian media and political ecology. How this frames fit into the ideological positions of the newspapers was not part of the goal of this research, but an aspect that can be investigated in the future. As a worthwhile goal, future studies on frames may investigate how these frames are used in Television news stories on the problem of corruption and other social problems, to ascertain if similar patterns can be obtained.

While it might be difficult to conclude that similar pattern of frames from the findings can be extrapolated, there is a strong confidence that the method applied in this study is replicable. A single coder was used in this research, which therefore makes inter-coder reliability difficult to ascertain. However, the coding followed a high standard of proficiency by keeping errors and biases at the lowest margin. The coder – fluent in English – double-checked and did a thorough reading of articles. Moreover, the validity aspect of this study can also be found within the constructs. This study made sure that the abstract nature of the constructs of frames and their elements correlated, and that they can be found within the body of constructs of other studies and theories.

In this study, the construction of corruption as a social problem showed similar (almost uniform) pattern across the four newspapers analyzed. This can be due to the fact that most newspapers took their news stories from similar sources, and in most cases, news outlets copied one another. One thing is noteworthy: Nigerian media is not yet as advanced as Western media in their choice and use of frames to promote societal agenda and in directing attention to public issues. Of interest is the dominant use of three of the four frames: responsibility, morality, and economic consequences. The study showed that corruption is foremost a responsibility and morality problem which can be attributed to the actions of public officials and individuals; and do have monumental economic consequences to the nation. This reinforces the theoretical notion of the likelihood for media to heap social issues on the doorstep of the government, especially during elections. Morality frame is used to describe the cultural and religious embedding of the problem. While economic consequences frame is weaved around other frames to make the problem more concrete or easy to grasp by the audience. It is that frame often used to provide the audience with evidence of the effects, transaction costs or the degree of expense of the problem to the society. This study also supports the argument that corruption kills growth and development, and promotes unemployment, poverty, and insecurity. This

was evidenced in how some of these problems shaped the economic discourse of the print media. It affirms that there is a correlation between corruption and many other social problems. In general, it therefore can be said that corruption in Nigeria is collectively defined as widespread, troublesome, and changeable social problem. And to urgently change this problem, there must be concerted efforts in generally from the government and the people.

REFERENCES

Adamolekun, L. & Kincaid, J. (1991). The Federal Solution: Assessment and Prognosis for Nigeria and Africa. *Publius*, Vol. 21, No. 4, pp. 173—188.

Aluko, M. A. (2003). Ethnic Nationalism and the Nigerian Democratic Experience in the Fourth Republic. *Anthropologist, 5(4):* 253-259.

Anderson, C. J. & Tverdova, Y. V. (2003). Corruption, political allegiances, and attitudes toward government in contemporary democracies. *American Journal of Political Science* 47 (1): 91—109.

Andreev, S. A. (2006). Corruption, Legitimacy and the Quality of Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America. *ECPR Joint Sessions*, Nicosia 2006.

Anugwom, E. (2000). Ethnic Conflict and Democracy in Nigeria: The Marginalization Question. *Journal of Social Development in Africa, 15(1):* 61-78.

Atkinson, M. L., Lovett, J., & Baumgartner, F. R. (2014). Measuring the Media Agenda. *Political Communication*, **31**: 355—380.

Baumgartner, F. R. & Jones, B. D. (1993). *Agendas and Instability in the American Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Blumer, H. (1971). Social Problems as Collective Behavior. Social Problems, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 298—306

Brooks, R.C. (1909). The Nature of Political Corruption. *Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 24(1),* pp. 1 – 22.

Cappella, J. N., & Jamieson, K. H. (1997). *Spiral of Cynicism. The press and the public good*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Casimir, K. C., Izueke, E. M., & Nzekwe, I. F. (2014). Public Sector Corruption in Nigeria: An Ethical and Institutional Framework of Analysis. *Journal of Philosophy,* Vol. 4: 216—224.

De Vreese, C. H. (2005). News Framing: Theory and typology. Information Design Journal 13(1), 51—62.

Olivier de Sardan, J. P. (1999). A moral economy of corruption in Africa. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1, pp. 25—52.

DCU School of Communication (2009). *Reading the Developing World*. A Content Analysis of Irish Print Media Coverage. *Final Report*

Depreze, A. & Raeymaeckers, K. (2010). Framing the First and Second Intifada; A Longitudinal Quantitative Research Design Applied to the Flemish Press. *European Journal of Communication*, Vol. 25(1), 3—23.

Diamond, L. (1987). Issues in the Constitutional Design of a Third Nigerian Republic. *African Affairs, 86(343):* 209-226.

Diamond, L. & Lipset, S.M. (1994). "Legitimacy," entry in the *Encyclopaedia of Democracy*, 1994, pp. 747 – 751.

Dike, V. E. (2003). Managing the Challenges of Corruption in Nigeria. *Center for Social Justice and human Development* (CSJHD).

Dike, V. (2002). Corruption in Nigeria: A new paradigm for effective control.

Dix, S., Hussmann, K., & Walton, G. (2012). Risks of corruption to state legitimacy and stability in fragile situations. *U4 Issue* (May 2012) No 3.

Dudley, B. J. (1973). *Instability and Political Order: Politics and Crisis in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

Ekeh, P. P. (1975). Colonialism and the Two Publics: A Theoretical Statement. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 91—112.

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, **43**(4), 51-58. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x.

European Union Election Observation Mission (2015). Final Report Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Fawole, O. P. & Olajide, B. R. (2012). Reporting of Climate Change News in Three Nigerian Newspapers. *Journal of Agricultural Extension*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 31—41

Gamson, W. (1992). Talking politics. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gebel, A. C. (2012). Human Nature and Morality in the Anti-Corruption Discourse of Transparency International. *Public Administration and Development*, Vol. 32, pp. 109—128.

Gitlin, T. (1980). *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*. Berkley: University of California Press. (p.7)

Glaeser, E.L. & Goldin, C. (2004). Corruption and Reform: An Introduction. NBER Working Paper.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. New York: Harper & Row. (p.156)

Graaf et al (2008). Portraying the Nature of Corruption Using Explorative Case Study Design. *Public Administration Review, Vol. 68(4),* pp. 640 – 653.

Graber, D. (1993). *Mass media and American Politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Hilgartner, S. (1988). The Rise and Fall of Social Problems: A Public Arenas Model. *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 94, No. 1, pp. 53—78.

Hofstede, G. (1984). Cultural Dimension In Management And Planning. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management, 1(2)*: 81-99

Horton, J. (1966). Order and Conflict Theories of Social Problems as Competing Ideologies. *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 71, No. 9, pp. 701—713

Imhonopi, D. & Ugochukwu, M. (2013). Leadership Crisis and Corruption in the Nigerian Public Sector: An Albatross of National Development. *Journal of African Educational Research Network*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 78—87.

Ikelegbe, A. (2005). The Economy of Conflict in the Oil Rich Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 208—234.

Irobi, E. M. (2005). Ethnic Conflict Management in Africa: A Comparative Case Study of Nigeria and South Africa. Published on (http://www.beyondintractability.org).

Iyengar, S. (1987). Television news and citizens' explanations of national affairs. *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 81, pp. 815—831.

Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is anyone responsible? How television frames political issues*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Iyengar, S. (1990). Framing Responsibility for Political Issues: The Case of Poverty. *Political Behavior*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 19—40.

Jamieson, K. (1992). *Dirty Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Leadership (2015). The Corruption of Politics. Published on May 22, 2015. Retrieved on October 7, 2015, from http://leadership.ng/blogposts/435205/the-corruption-of-politics

Levine, D. P. (2005). The Corrupt Organization. *Human Relations*, Vol. 58, No. 6, 723—740.

Loseke, D. R. (1992). *The Battered Women and Shelters: The Social Construction of Wife Abuse.* New York: State University of New York Press.

Lijiphart, A. (1984). *Democracies*. Yale University Press, New Hawen.

Lipset, S.M. & Lenz, G.S. (2000). "Corruption, Culture, and Markets," in Culture Matters, Harrison, L. E. & Huntington, S. P., (eds.), New York: Basic Books, p.112.

Lipset, S.M. (1984). "Social Conflict, Legitimacy, and Democracy," reprinted in Conolly, W. (ed.) *Legitimacy and the State* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), originally published in Lipset, S.M. (ed.) *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).

Lipset, S.M. (1983). *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. Aldershot: Gover, 1983.

Lukes, S. (1969). Durkheim's 'Individualism and the Intellectuals.' *Political Studies, Vol.17 (1),* pp. 14 – 30. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9248.1969.tb00622.x

Marc, A., Verjee, N., & Mogaka, S. (2015). The Challenge of Stability and Security in West Africa. *Africa Development Forum* (2015).

McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of the mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, **36**, 176—187. doi:10.1086/267990.

Montinola, G. R. & Jackman, R. W. (2002). Sources of Corruption: A Cross-Country Study. *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 147—170.

Moore, C. (2008). Moral Disengagement in the Processes of Organizational Corruption. *Journal of Business Ethics* (2008) 80: 129 – 139.

Neuman *et al.* (2014). The Dynamics of Public Attention: Agenda-Setting Theory Meets Big Data. *Journal of Communication* **64**, 193—214.

Neuman, W.R., Just, M. R., & Crigler, A. N. (1992). *Common knowledge.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Patterson, T. (1993). *Out of order*. New York: Knopf.

Rubington, E. & Weinberg, M. (2010). *T he study of Social Problems: Seven Perspectives*. New York, Oxford University Press.

Ochulor, C. L. (2011). Ethical and Moral Implications of Corruption. *Canadian Social Science,* Vol. 7. No. 5, pp. 223—228.

Ogbeidi, M. (2012). Political Leadership and Corruption in Nigeria Since 1960: A Socio-economic Analysis. *Journal of Nigerian Studies*, Vol. 1(2), 1—25.

Ogundiya, I. S. (2009). Political Corruption in Nigeria: Theoretical Perspectives and Some Explanations. *Anthropologist*, Vol. 11, No. 4, pp. 281—292.

Okekeocha, C., 2013. A Case Study of Corruption and Public Accountability in Nigeria. Retrieved on November 20, 2015, from http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1568&contex t=e td

Osaghae, E. E. (1995). Structural Adjustment and Ethnicity in Nigeria. *Research Report No. 98 Nordiska Afrikainstituet.*

Pinkley, R. L. & Northcraft, G. B. (1994). Conflict Frames of Reference: Implications for Dispute Process and Outcomes. *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 1, pp. 193—205.

Porter, R. & Zovighian, D. (2014). Targeting women in a community driven development project: Uncovering gender roles in the FADAMA agricultural project in Nigeria. *Perspectives of Social Development.*

Paul, S. O., Alih, M., & Eri, K. (2015). Nigerian Unity and the 2015 General Elections: An Overview. *International Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies* Vol. 2. No. 2 (October 2014).

Rose-Ackerman, S. (1978). *Corruption: A study in political economy*. New York: Academic Press.

Rose-Ackerman, S. (1975). "The Economics of Corruption," *Journal of Public Economics* (February): 187 – 203.

Saiya, N. & Scime, A. (2015). Explaining religious terrorism: A data-mined analysis. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 32(5) 487—512.

Saris, W. E. (1997). The public opinion about the EU can easily be swayed in different directions. *Acta Politica: International Journal of Political Science*, 32, 406—435.

Saunders, M. Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Students*. Essex, Great Britain: Pearson Education.

Schoenfeld, A. C., & Meier, R. F., & Griffin, R. J. (1979). Constructing a Social Problem: The Press and the Environment. Social Problems, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 38—61

Semetkho, H. A. & Valkenburg, P. M. (2000). 'Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News'. *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 50, No. 2, pp. 93—109

Shah, A. (2009). Morality, Corruption and the State: Insights from Jharkhand, Eastern Indian. *The Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 3, 295—313.

Shoemaker, M. & Putnam, L. (2007). Changes in Conflict Framing in the News Coverage of an Environmental Conflict. *Journal of Dispute Resolution*, Vol. 2007 (1).

Smith, D. J. (2001). Kinship and Corruption in Contemporary Nigeria. Ethnos, 66 (3), pp. 320-343

Smith, D. J. (2007). A culture of corruption: Everyday deception and popular discontent.

Stavenhagen, R. (1994). 'Ethnicity based conflicts.' Paper delivered at UNRISDA – UNDP Seminar on *Ethnic is No Longer Defendable in the Present Day Society*.

Tankard, J. W. (2001). 'The Empirical Approach to the Study of Media Framing', in S.D. Reese, O. Gandy and A. Grant (eds) *Framing Public Life*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Terkildsen, N. Schnell, F., & Ling, C. (1998). Interest Groups, the Media, and Policy Debate Formation: An Analysis of Message Structure, Rhetoric, and Source Cues. *Political Communication Journal*, 15: 45—61.

The Nation (2015). Insecurity, corruption, unemployment, others as evils Buhari must overcome. Published May 29, 2015. Retrieved on November 12, 2015, from http://thenationonlineng.net/insecurity-corruption-unemployment-others-as-evils-buhari-must-overcome/

The Guardian (2015). Akinola: Nigeria's history of corruption. Published on January 14, 2015. Retrieved on December 6, 2015, from http://www.ngrguardian1.com/2015/01/akinola-nigeria-s-history-of-corruption/

Transparency International (2013b). Global Corruption Barometer. Retrieved on November 20, 2015, from www.transparency.org/gcb

Transparency International (2014). Nigeria: Corruption and Insecurity. Retrieved on April 20, 2015, from https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/nigeria_corruption_and_insecurity

Transparency International, 2014. Corruption Perceptions Index. Retrieved on November 20, 2015, from www.transparency.org

Transparency International (2014). Gender, Equality and Corruption: What are the linkages? *Policy Brief*, 01/2014.

Transparency International (2009). The Anti-Corruption Plain Language Guide.

Transparency International (2000). *Confronting Corruption: The Elements of a National Integrity System (TI Source Book)*: Berlin

Ukiwo, U. (2003). Politics, ethno-religious conflicts and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 1, pp. 115—138.

Uko, U. (2014). Top 10 Nigerian daily newspapers. *News & Politics.*

World Bank (2013). Nigerian Economic Report.

World Bank (2010), *World Bank Development Report (2011): Conflict, Security and Development* (Washington DC: World Bank).

Wood, D. & Vedlitz, A. (2007). Issue Definition, Information Processing, and the Politics of Global Warming. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 51, No. 3, pp. 552—568.

Valkenburg, P. M., Semetko, H. A., & de Vreese, C.H. (1999). The Effects of News Frames On Readers' Thoughts and Recall. *Communication Research*, Vol. 26, No. 5, pp. 550—569.

Vanguard (2015). SERAP asks presidential candidates to endorse anti-corruption programme. Published on January 19, 2015. Retrieved on December 20, 2015, from http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/01/serap-asks-presidential-candidates-endorse-anti-corruption-programme/

von Soest, C. (2013). Persistent systemic corruption: why democratization and economic liberation have failed to undo an old evil. *Z Vgl Polit Wiss*, **7**, 57—87.

APPENDIX

Table A: Some selected examples of news texts on some frame elements

Frame elements	Example from News Texts
(1) Opportunistic behavior:	"The *greed* amongst our leaders to acquire wealth despite the plight faced by our people is appalling. Politics has become big business; whatever is spent to attain a political post is seen as an investment to be recovered once the politician gets into power." (*The Nation*, February 3, 2015).
	"There is *a perverseness in all of us which tends to make each one think only of himself and consign all other people to hell*, all other members of his group to damnation, all other clients to Hades, and all other citizens to Halifax!" (*The Nation*, January 18, 2015).
	"This betrayal is mainly attributed to the *greed,* and *gluttonous appetite* for primitive acquisition of wealth by few people with access to power." (*Vanguard*, January 4, 2015).
(4) Lack of genuine citizenship:	"The reason for this docility is our geographical divide, our history, ethnic and tribal differences and the corruption." (*Vanguard*, April 19, 2015).
	"An important feature of this awful picture is the nationality factor. Every Nigerian president tends to surround himself with appointees from his own nationality. And, cocooned in that inner circle, he and they can do any evil without any fear of consequences. For them to steal enormous amounts of public wealth is, to them, a fair share for their nationality. To some nationalities, in fact, public corruption is justified by the teachings of religion." (*The Nation*, March 5, 2015).
(17) Poor leadership:	"The Nigerian project and by extension the African agenda has been a still birth, a gridlock and a cliffhanger running in concentric circles because of the intravenous incapability of Nigeria to create a leadership focus." (*Vanguard*, February 20, 2015).

"Mediocrity has been fingered as responsible for Nigeria's inability to tackle corruption that has eaten deep into its socio-economic and political life." (*The Guardian,* January 20, 2015).

"Jonathan failed to prosecute oil subsidy thieves and their official collaborators, to clean up the corrupt Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), to reduce his large army of unproductive advisers and assistants and also to reshuffle and reduce his incompetent cabinet." (*The Nation*, May 29, 2015).

(18) Lack of institutional structures: "A lack of institutions, systems and processes to block and prevent corruption, alongside the problem of impunity in Nigeria, is basically the reason that corruption has been so hydra-headed in the country and needs to be cracked and tackled, the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister for the Economy, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, has said." (*The Guardian,* February 18, 2015).

"Nigeria is corrupt because its judicial system is weak and arbitrary. Its civil service is byzantine and obtuse. Its institutions of law enforcement are predatory and introverted; and its entire social fabric has been weakened by poverty and alienation." (*Vanguard*, March 8, 2015).

"Speaking at the occasion, the All Progressive Congress (APC) Vice Presidential Candidate, Professor Yemi Osinbajo said that the nation's judiciary system should be held responsible for the high rate of corruption in the country. The administration of justice in the country needs to be reformed…" (*The Nation*, March 17, 2015).

(19) Attacks legitimacy: "Large-scale official corruption is so harmful and antithetical to the idea of law-based society. It erodes public trust in the government and permeates critical institutions of governance." (*The Guardian*, March 16, 2015).

"Given that many Nigerians have lost faith in the ability of successive governments to combat high-level official corruption and money laundering…" (*Leadership*, March 16, 2015).

(10) Lack of morals:

"Instead, it has left us with the conventional wisdom that people cannot succeed in life unless they are ruthless and unprincipled. The party has become characterized by corruption and impunity in the way and manner candidates for elective positions are being selected." (*Vanguard*, March 15, 2015).

"The participants drawn from trade unions, market men and women, taxi drivers association, Community Development Associations (CDAs), and artisans, agreed in unison that corruption has assumed the toga of impunity in the country because corrupt people are not punished." (The *Guardian*, March 24, 2015).

"Looking at Nigeria, I would say your vulnerability is corruption and that is not new to you, particularly around the oil sector. People in this country seem to be able to do things with impunity and beyond the reach of the rule of law or proper accountability and the judicial system." (*Leadership*, May 21, 2015).

"President of IHEMA, Mr. Bashir Braimah, who said individuals should eschew corruption in their personal lives to have positive effect on the society and the nation advised: 'Muslims owe the duty to each other and Allah to be upright. The corruption in Nigeria today is too endemic. If we start as Muslims to comply with our oath of office, especially those who are in public offices who swore oath with the Qur'an, things will change for the better.'" (*The Nation*, June 15, 2015).

(11) Social injustice:

"We need no econometric synopsis and catechism to know that corrupt disposition of Nigerian leadership at all levels from 1960 till date has left the Nigerian masses anaesthetized, indurated, castrated and asphyxiated by the scorching pangs of poverty." (*Vanguard,* February 20, 2015).

"It is clear that corruption is the biggest obstacle to alleviating poverty and enjoying human rights in the country." (*Leadership*, February 12, 2015).

"The question we ask is does our government bother about the welfare of our citizens? …There is no value for human beings in Africa. It doesn't matter in this country." (*Leadership*, May 8, 2015).

(23) Negative economic impacts:
"Nigeria will continue to steeple chase in the crevices of backwardness and arrested development unless the monster of corruption is given a gruesomely lethal blow…" (*Vanguard*, February 20, 2015).

"The only reason why Nigeria is underdeveloped and indebted to the IMF is the corruption of the trustees of the national purse." (*The Guardian*, January 14, 2015).

"The biggest obstacle to reconstruction and development in Nigeria is corruption. For many years, systemic corruption has distorted incentives, undermined critical institutions of governance, slowed economic progress and redistributed wealth and to the undeserving. No wonder the percentage of Nigerians living in poverty has continued to rise." (*Vanguard*, April 9, 2015).

"The report also reported that money that should go to alleviate poverty still gets diverted, stressing that by some estimates, more than US$157 billion in the past decade has left the country illicitly. Corruption is everywhere, even the health and medical services, considered the least corrupt government institution, are considered very corrupt by 41 per cent of Nigerians." (*Leadership*, March 27, 2015).

(7) Constitutional reforms:
"Anybody who thinks that, under Nigeria's 1999 Constitution, any government, party or president can eradicate corruption is like a man who expects a worm to give birth to a lion, or who wants to go to heaven but doesn't want to die. If Nigerians are at all serious in their endless noisemaking against corruption, they must, as a first step, get rid of their 1999 Constitution." (*The Guardian*, January 28, 2015).

"The former Federal Commissioner for Information, Chief Edwin Clark, has said that for corruption to be drastically reduced in the country, the power currently concentrated at the center will have to give way for true federalism." (*Leadership*, March 9, 2015).

(20) Institutional reforms:

"Former president of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Mr. Olisa Agbakoba (SAN), yesterday urged the nation's president-elect, General Muhammadu Buhari, to immediately set up new anti-corruption institutions, if he wants to succeed in the war against corruption rocking the country in many sectors." (*Leadership*, April 23, 2015).

"The focus of the new administration should be on how we can prevent corruption and what ways to achieve this. We need to strengthen our public finance management laws and institutions." (*The Nation*, May 31, 2015).

"The institutions dedicated to fighting corruption will be given independence and prosecutorial authority without political interference." (*The Nation*, February 27, 2015).
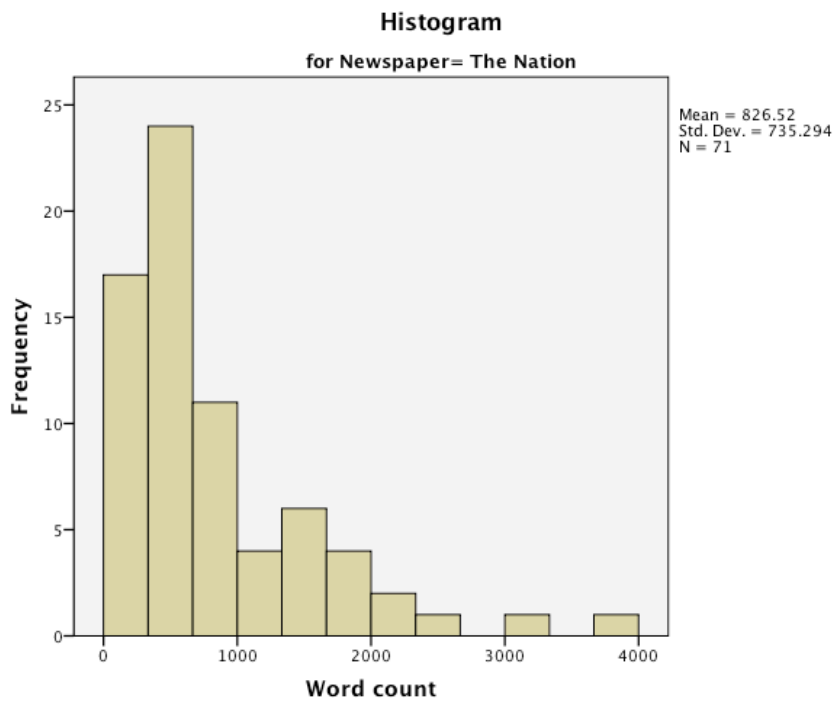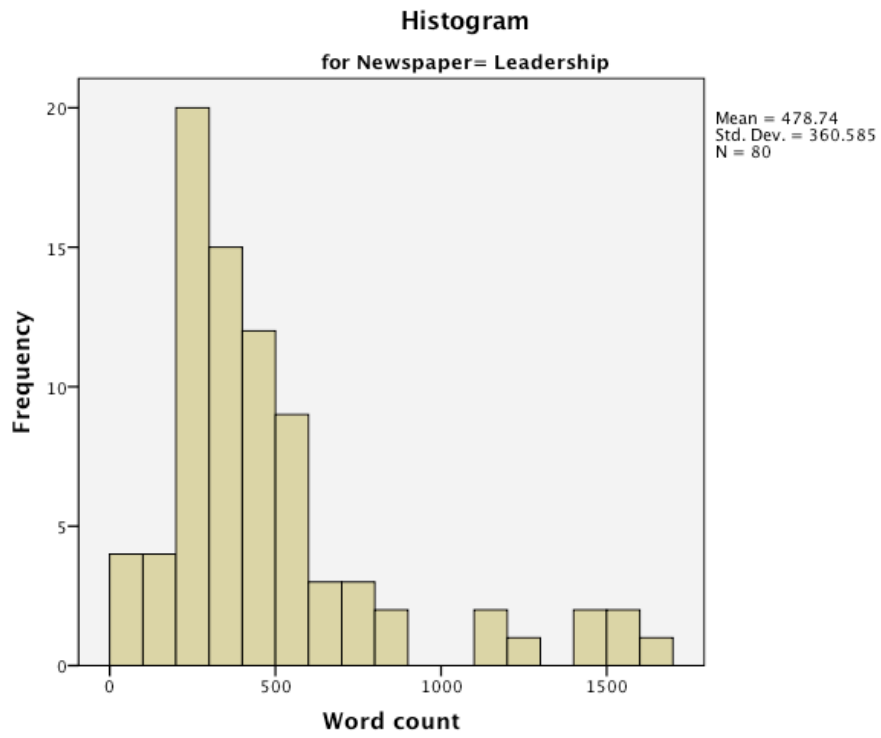
CHART A

Histogram
for Newspaper= Vanguard

Mean = 704.45
Std. Dev. = 571.565
N = 82

CHART B

Histogram
for Newspaper= The Nation

Mean = 826.52
Std. Dev. = 735.294
N = 71

CHART C

Histogram
for Newspaper= Leadership

Mean = 478.74
Std. Dev. = 360.585
N = 80

CHART D

Histogram
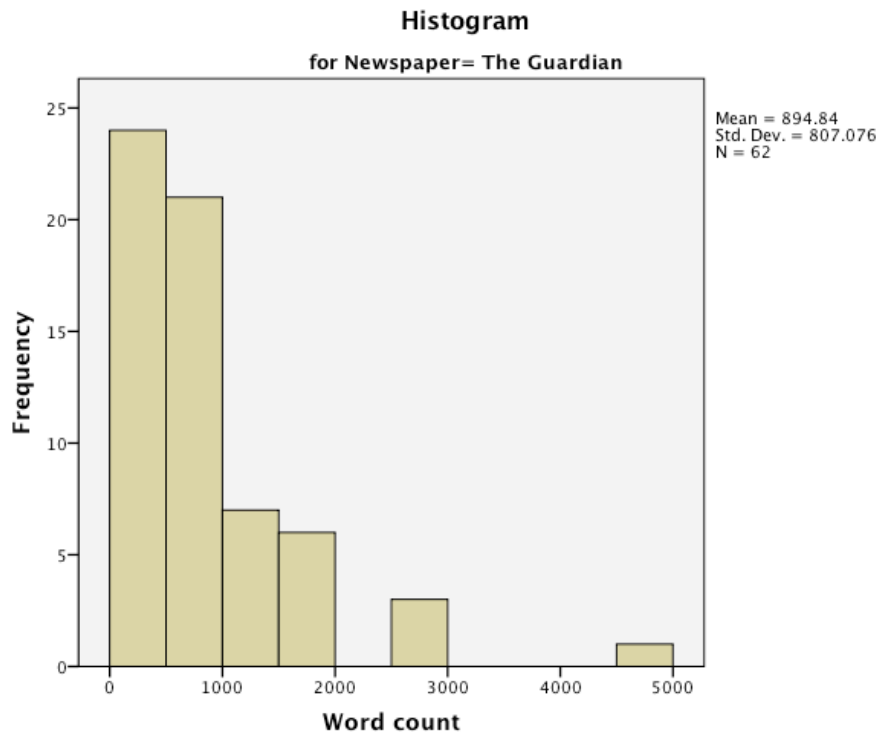for Newspaper= The Guardian

Mean = 894.84
Std. Dev. = 807.076
N = 62
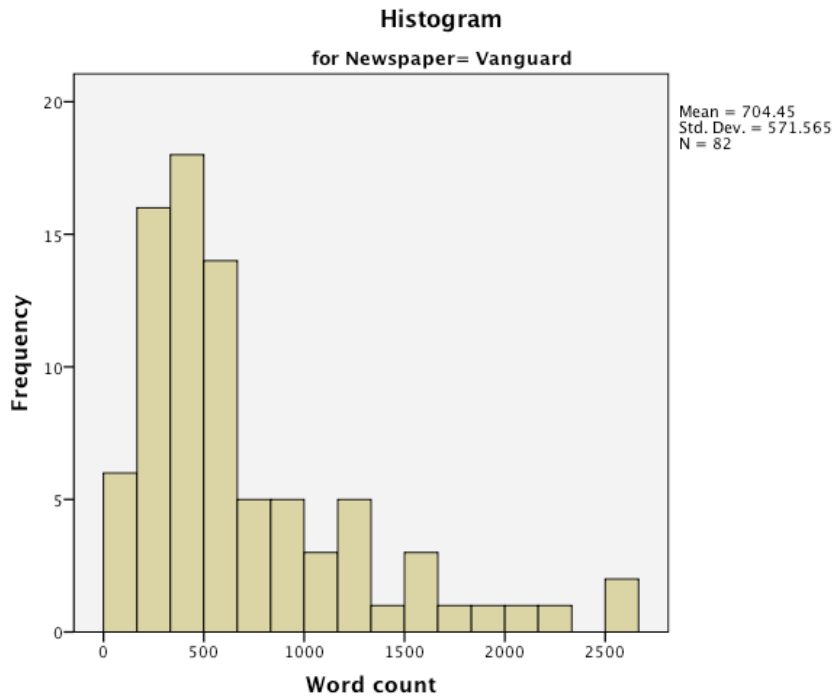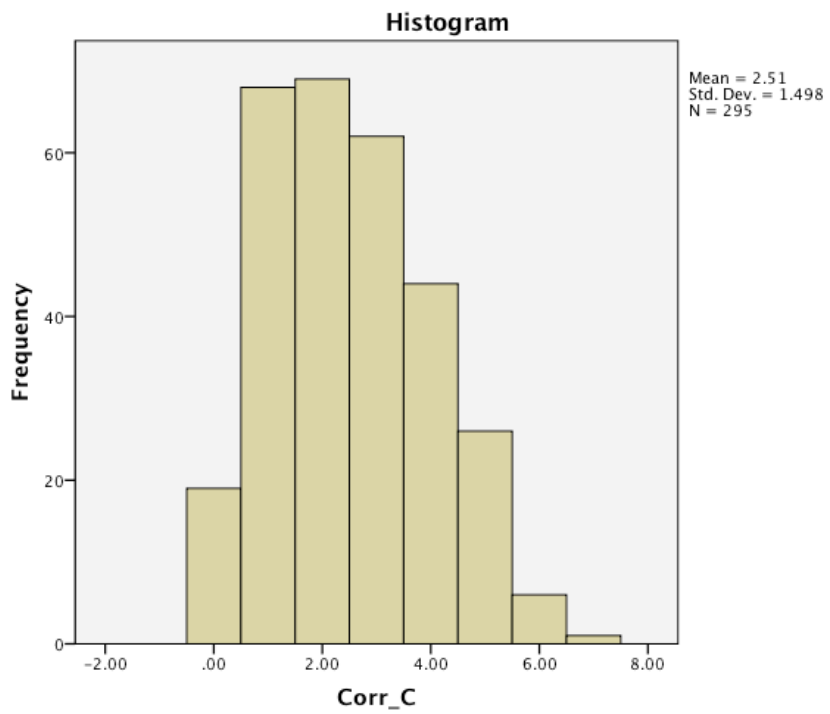
PLOT A
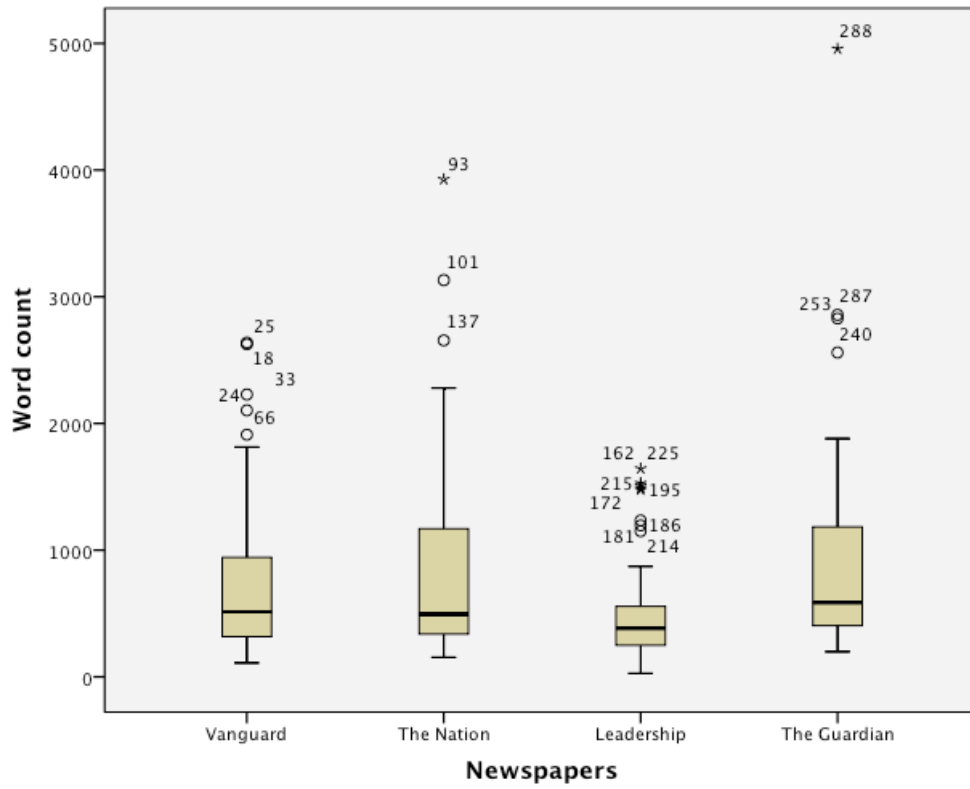
PLOT B
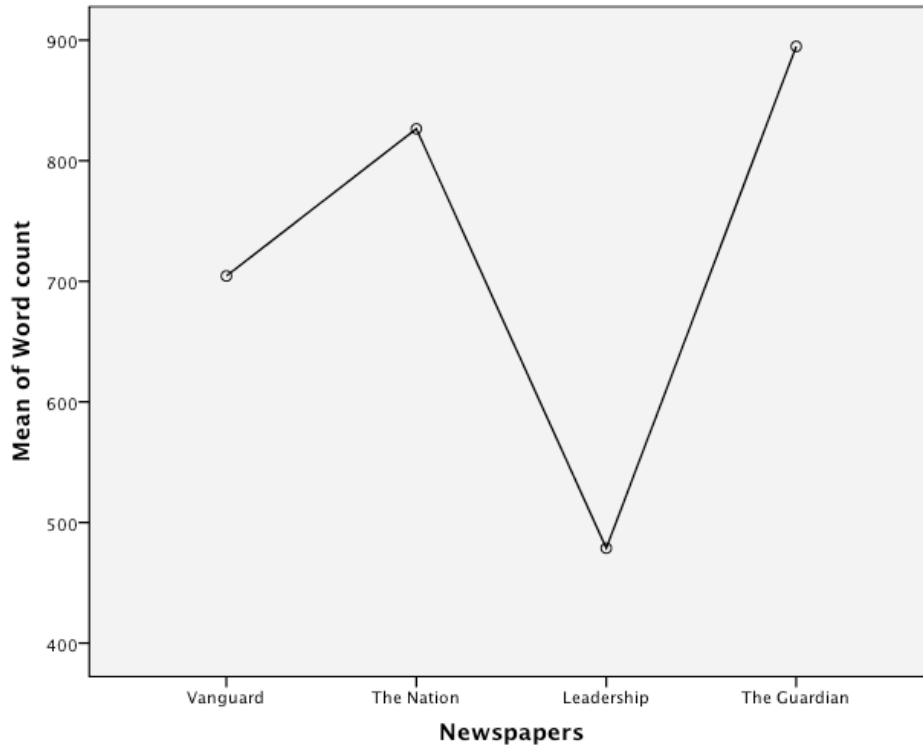
CHART E: MAIN FRAME/FRAME ELEMENTS
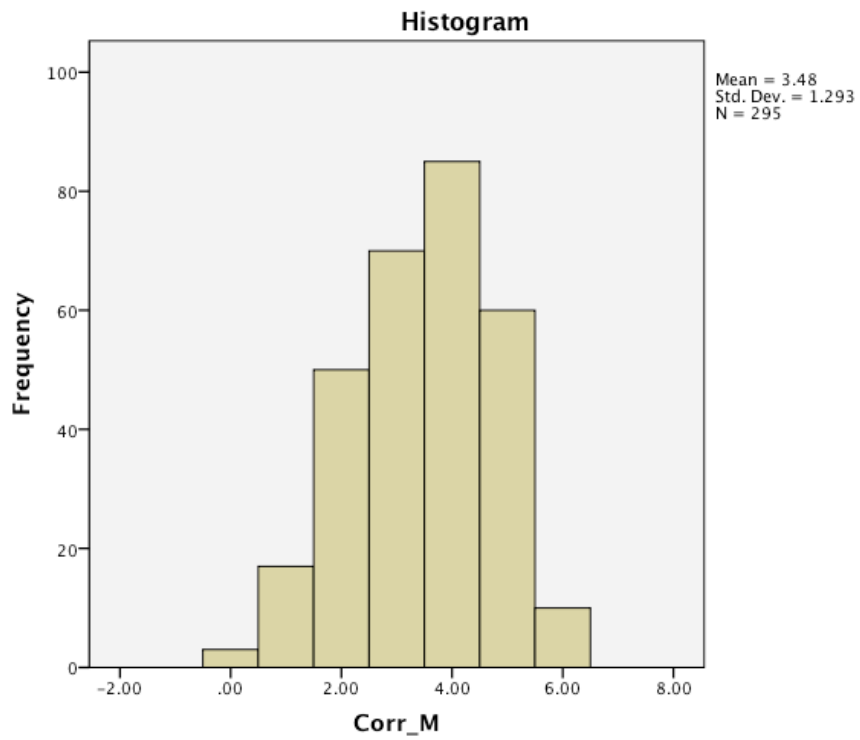

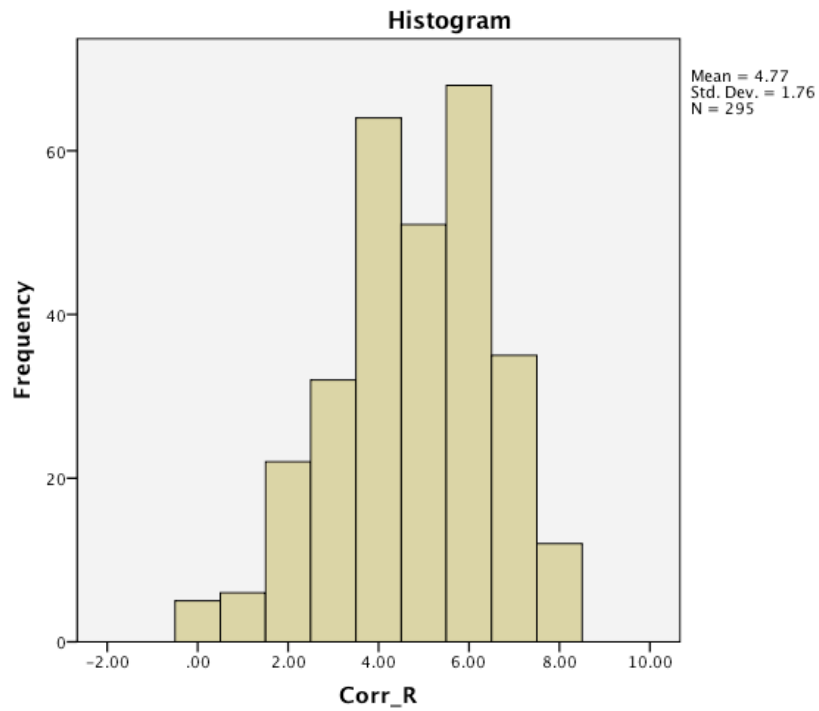**CHART F: MAIN FRAME/FRAME ELEMENTS**

CHART G: MAIN FRAME/FRAME ELEMENTS

CHART H: MAIN FRAME/FRAME ELEMENTS