

## Analysis of Nigerian Newspapers Framing of President Mohammadu Buhari's Medical Leave to United Kingdom

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### Abstract

*This study investigates Nigerian newspapers framing of President Mohammadu Buhari medical leave to United Kingdom, with specific emphasis on genre of the story, prominence, pattern of framing, dominant frame and frequency of the reports. Three newspapers; The Guardian, Vanguard and Daily Trust were selected for the study which covers a period of 8 months. Content analysis was adopted for the study. Results showed, among others, the newspapers did not give background information on President Muhamadu Buhari's medical leave. The newspapers used the straight news format most in the reportage of the issue. Findings further showed that the newspapers gave minimal prominence to the coverage. The result also showed that the newspapers used varieties of frames in the coverage such as: political frame, respond frame, human interest frame and death-rumour frame. The dominant frame was political frame which accounted for 27 percent. It recommended that Nigeria newspapers and journalists should refrain from brief report of issues, especially a matter of national concern and adopt an in-depth investigation and reportage. Further studies are also recommended to include audience perception of the coverage by the media.*

**Keywords:** Newspapers, Framing, Muhammadu Buhari, Medical leave, Media.

### Introduction

Good health is vital for any living creature. Health is wealth. This underscores the prepotency of sound health in one's life. Anybody could fall ill, the public may not care to know, but not when a public figure particularly a president of a nation is involved.

The public needs to be kept abreast by the media. The mass media is an integral part of governance in matters concerning health. The mass media have a role to play in raising awareness about issues and calling attention to whatever threatens our well-being. The media in Nigeria have become part of the social institutions that influence events in the country, through coverage, volume of coverage, or non-coverage of events. The newspaper, as a medium, provides the needed back-ground relevant to the news stories, details in events-oriented phenomenon and analysis of important situation (Okories and Oyedepo, 2010)

Newspapers cover issues and information on a broad spectrum of societal challenges which include; news, politics, education, science and technology, religion, commerce, maritime, crime and health etc. The average daily newspapers contain more news than available in radio, television or any other medium (Alozie, 2009). The (newspapers) can play a crucial role in defusing tension during crisis by creating awareness among the people about the nature of the problems, its origin and ways of resolving it or it may decide to mismanage and manipulate the situation (Bird and Dardenne, 2009).

However, in the political annals of Nigeria, President Mohammadu Buhari is first President to be away four times due to medical challenges. According to Okakwu (2017), the subject of the President Buhari's health started dominating the national discuss, when during his third trip, on January 19, 2017, he extended his medical vacation, after an initial announcement that his trip would last ten work days. Although, a day before the expiration of the vacation on February 5, 2017, he wrote to National Assembly requested for extension of the medical leave. Even when he returned on March 10, 2017, according to Okakwu (2017), the President was not able to adequately discharge his duties. On May 7, 2017, Buhari embarked on another journey for his medical check-up, without any specific date for his return. He later returned on August 19, 2017 to a hero's welcome by some Nigerians, government officials and party loyalists. Although, his long absence attracted a lot of criticisms from Nigerians and some groups like "ourmumudondo" group led by Charles Oputa.

The media in Nigeria have become part of the social institutions. They are also set agenda. McCombs and Reynolds (2002) notes that the pattern of framing of report and prominence given to an issue go a long way in determining public knowledge and perception of the issue. Such reportage also sets the agenda for public opinion and discussion. It is thus expected how the media framed the President Buhari's medical leave in Nigeria went a long way in shaping the way Nigerians and indeed, the world perceived the reportage. Entman (1993, cited in Ezegwu, Udoyo and Chime-Nganya, 2017) notes that framing makes a piece of information more meaningful or memorable to the audience. The way a news story is written or placed in terms of prominence and frequency can affect the value or importance the readers place on it. It was in line with

this viewpoint that this study analysed how three Nigerian national dailies (The Guardian, Vanguard and Daily Trust) framed stories that emanated from the medical leave of President Buhari.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The frequent medical leave of President Muhhammadu Buhari is one issue that have generated different shades of opinions in the media and social circles. President Buhari medical challenge took him out of the country four times since assumption of office and spent five months in both second and third trip in 2017. These trips almost led to chaotic political crisis due to his long stay in United Kingdom. Different interest groups reacted to the president medical trips while some were in support, others were against it. About 90 days after Mr. Buhari's departure, a group of Nigerians led by popular entertainer, Charles Oputa, (Charley boy) began a protest to demand Mr. Buhari's compulsory return or resignation with a hash tag # Resume or Resign. Five days after the protesters began their call for Mr. Buhari's compulsory return, a pro-Buhari group, led by Goodluck Obi, began a counter protest urging the president to rather focus on getting better before returning; a development which resulted in a clash between the two groups. The media, particularly the print played a role in reporting the matter to the publics.

Frames in media are key component in the study of selection and interpretation of news. The fact that certain issues are covered by the media gives credibility and credence to such issues, and further moves such issues from media agenda to public agenda (Nwabueze and Edegoh, 2010). Framing affects how a story is told and influences public perception. One reason for this is that, the public's lacked of awareness, along with their reliance on media for information and decision-making make them more likely to be influenced by framing. According to Papacharissi and Oliveria (2008) when the media place stories in specific frames, they lend a different meaning to the news. Therefore, media increase or decrease the prominence of issues, which permits the public to remember and make judgments on such issues. It is assumed that Nigerian media would be interested in reporting news on Buhari medical leave to their various readers.

Thus, very few studies have been conducted to ascertain the role played by the media in president illness (Olorede, Oyewole and Azeez, 2013, Odoemelam, Ncube and Okorom, 2014 and Ngwu and Ekwe, 2015) and it was on newspaper reportage of late former President Umaru Yar'adua and Nelson Mandela. None, to the best of our knowledge has been conducted specifically on framing of President Mohammadu Buhari medical leave to United Kingdom by Nigerian newspapers. This, study sought to fill that literature gap examining the issue.

### **Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Identify the genre of stories on Buhari medical leave.

2. Examine the prominence given to the news stories on Buhari medical leave.
3. Ascertain the kind of frames Nigerian newspapers used in the coverage of the medical leave.
4. Find out the dominant frame used by Nigerian newspapers in their coverage of the medical leave.
5. Find out the total number of coverage on Buhari medical leave in Nigerian newspapers.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the genre of stories on President Buhari medical leave in selected newspapers?
2. What is the prominence given to the news stories on Buhari medical leave in selected newspapers?
3. What kind of frames did selected Nigerian newspapers use in their coverage of Buhari medical leave?
4. What is the dominant frame used by the selected Nigerian newspapers in their coverage of Buhari medical leave?
5. What was the total number of coverage given to Buhari medical leave by the selected newspapers within the study period?

### **The Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is Nigeria newspapers published between January 1, 2017 and August 31, 2017. This period was considered ideal because it signified the height of Buhari's medical trip to United Kingdom hospital. The selected newspapers were; The Guardian, Vanguard and Daily trust newspapers.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Conceptualization: Media Framing**

Framing refers to the methods by which the mass media organise and present issues and events (Dimitrova and Stromback, 2005). News framing, as a strategy of communicating images to members of the public, is a dominant feature in media coverage of issues. News framing simplifies complex issues for public understanding. Ofori-Birikorang (2010) contends that through news framing the media provide knowledge to their audiences, and such knowledge, in turn, exerts crucial influence in deciding the direction of citizens' understanding and possible actions they take. Schmitz, Filipone, and Edelman (2003, p.385) assert that "framing is a process through which a communication source defines and constructs a public issue or controversy and can have significant consequences for how people view and understand an issue". The way a social issue is cast can have significant effect on how one responds to it.

Entman (1993, cited in Amenaghawon, 2016) refers to framing as a “Fractured Paradigm”. He notes that to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommended for items described. Framing refers to the placement of emphasis on particular aspects of the object of interest. Merilainen and Vos (2011, p.4) agree that “framing is directed at the zero-sum game rule, like agenda setting in which the raising of one issue leads to the demise of another. The selective interests of people influence how many issues can be salient at any one time”.

### **Review of Related Empirical Studies**

Ngwu and Ekwe (2015) examined Nigerian newspapers coverage of the 78 days presidential power vacuum crisis under President Umaru Yar’adua: managing or manipulating the outcome. The study was to find out the frequency of the coverage, the prominence given to the coverage and to find out whether the issue was manipulated. Content analytical method was used. Findings revealed that Nigerian newspapers gave the presidential power vacuum crisis prominence. The results also showed that the issue was adequately covered and took a positive direction. However, it was, also, discovered that Nigerian newspapers frequently covered the power lacuna in their reports which were influenced by regional and ownership factors. Based on these, it was recommended that ownership and regional affiliations should not impact on media reports. And that the media should provide leadership in times of national conflict by setting and consolidating agenda.

Olorede, Oyewole and Azeez (2013) studied press reportage of President Yar’Adua’s ill-health, a study of Nigerian newspapers. The study aimed to find out the level of prominence given to the President Yar’Adua’s ill-health by Nigerian press and to examine the dominance of President Yar’Adua’s image in the newspapers. The content analytical method was employed by the researchers. The researchers found that minimal prominence given to the coverage of President Yar’Adua’s ill-health by Nigerian newspapers. It was also found that the press used emotional image frame to draw public attention and generate concern for the president’s ill-health through the use of haggard-looking pictures. The researchers recommended that Nigerian Press should de-emphasize unnecessary concentration on crisis stories.

Brown and Udomisor (2015) carried out a study titled “evaluation of political news reportage in Nigeria’s Vanguard and The Guardian”. This study was conducted to assess how political issues were treated in Nigeria’s newspapers, by assessing: the ratio of political news to the other subject matters, the readers’ interest given to political stories and the level of prominence attached to these stories by the way of placement and importance. The methods used to obtain data for analysis in the study were documentary survey and content analysis. Findings showed that political issues were not given

adequate attention in the two newspapers, and were mostly tailored towards government's interests. The recommendations among others were that the Nigerian newspapers, in general, should render vivid and unbiased reportage of political issues, as well as scale-up political content in publications as a way of consolidating political consciousness in Nigeria.

Odoemelam, Ncube and Okorom (2014) studied frames in news discourse on Nelson Mandela's illness and hospitalization; a study of Nigerian and Zimbabwean newspapers. The aim was to find out if there was major differences in frame choice that emerged in the coverage between the countries. Qualitative content analysis methods was used in analyzing the coverage. The study found that the coverage in Nigerian newspaper was framed in terms of politics. Virtues of democracy, good leadership and self-sacrifice as epitomized by mandela's struggle against the racist apartheid system in South Africa, for which he went to prison for 27 years. It was also found that, prior to the elections, after Mandela was admitted to hospital, the Zimbabwean media was fixated with presenting the Zanu-PF presidential candidate former president Robert Mugabe. The study affirmed that, during the within which Nelson Mandela was hospitalized, Zimbabwean and Nigerian newspapers framed the event in different ways. The authors suggested that there is a need to carry out a cross national research on the frames adopted by the broadcast media in the coverage of the illness and hospitalization of Nelson Mandela.

Ikenna (2008), in a study of print media coverage of crisis, employing content analytical method. The researcher found that coverage of crisis by the Nigerian print media is nothing but biased orchestrated by sentiments and selfishness. The study also revealed that print the print media often reports crises in such a manner that it triggers the conflicts. The study recommended caution by the print media in their reportage of crisis. This view was supported by Hassan, (2009) when he revealed in his study that the print media in Nigeria often relegate objective and fair reportage to the background whenever they are reporting crisis/conflicts. The study, unveiled that the print media report crisis in line with the interests of their owners and ethnic affiliations.

Njoku (2010) also revealed in his study of print media coverage of crisis in Nigerian that the print media have not fared well in their reportage of crisis in Nigeria. The study found that the print media usually take sides in the crisis by subjectively covering the conflicts. The researcher also observes that the direction of coverage of coverage of these crises obviously points to the fact that the print media have not been objective in their coverage of crises in Nigeria.

The reviews has showed that media have a significant role to play in informing the masses on political events and issues in the society. Although none of the reviewed works employed framing to ascertain how newspapers frames this issues. Thus, this study on President Muhammadu Buhari is an attempt to fill that lacuna.

## Theoretical Framework

### Framing Theory

Framing happens when the manner, events are reported in the media has an impact on how they are understood by the audience. Mass media content producers decide where and what to place emphasis on in a story by the choice of phrases, images, positioning as well as content type to be used. Framing assumes that how an issue is characterised in news reports can have an influence over how it is comprehended by audiences (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007). This theory suggests that the way an information is presented (framed) determines the way people understand such message. Baran and Dennis (2009, p.35) further explained that this theory examines the idea about how people use expectations to make sense of every life. The basis for framing theory is that the media focus attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning and interpretation to the masses.

This theory is relevant to this study because it explains how media reportage of an event contributes in shaping the perception of the people. Framing theory helps us to understand that the way Nigerians perceive the issue of President Muhammadu Buhari medical leave, to a large extent, is as a result of how the media has “framed” their report in respect to their activities (Ezegwu, Udoyo and Chime-Nganya, 2017).

### Method

This study adopted the content analysis method. This method helps in analysis of existing manifest contents of communications to discover the extent patterns. The Universe of the study was Nigerian newspapers published in between January 1st, 2017 and August 31st, 2017. Three newspapers were purposively selected, they were: The Guardian, Vanguard and Daily Trust. These newspapers were selected because of the following reasons:

These newspapers are listed among the major newspapers in Nigeria, with online versions. These papers have maintained visibility in print and online for a considerable period of time and are still active (Amobi, 2010; BBC, 2011; World Press, 2012; Nigeria Master Web, 2012; Nigeria 24; Onlinenewspapers.com, 2012).

They have sustained publication during the period of the study.

2. The three are national newspapers, registered in Nigeria and also owned and run by Nigerians.
3. They are available in the market nation-wide and are also available to the researchers for the purpose of this study.
4. They newspaper have online version, thus can be accessed in any part of the world.
5. The researchers' discretion (to know how the two southern and one northern based newspapers covered the stories).

The universe of study covered all issues of newspapers published in Nigeria from January 1, to August 31, 2017 (The period were the time President Buhari made frequent travel to United Kingdom). This was a period of eight months. The population is 729. This was arrived through

January-31

February- 28

March- 31

April - 30

May – 31

June – 30

July – 31

August – 31 =243

Therefore  $243 \times 3 = 729$

### Sample Size and Sampling Technique

In order to determine the sample size for this study, the Taro Yarmane's formula was adopted.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n= Sample size

N = Population

I = Constant

e = Margin of error

$$n = \frac{729}{1 + 729 \times (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{729}{1 + 729(0.0025)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{729}{1 + 1.8225}$$

$$n = \frac{729}{2.8225} \quad n = 258$$

The systematic sampling was used in selecting the days studied. Rather than studying all the days of the week, the researchers chose three days as one week. The days were systematically selected as Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The reason is the researchers' observation that the week days were the "heat" days of reportage. These

days were also selected to ensure that a number of editions were selected in search of manifest contents on President Buhari medical leave to United Kingdom.

### Units of Analysis

The units of analysis were: news, features, editorials, photographs and letters to the editor.

### Content Categories

- Content categorized were:
- Genre of stories (news, features, opinion articles, editorials and photographs etc),
- Prominence (using Front page, Back Page and Inside Page),

Kinds of frames, here the following frames were identified:

i. **Political Frame:** This implies words or news story that points at conflict of interest for power or aimed at gaining political prominence.

ii. **Response Frame:** This refers to government or its appointee response to the medical trip.

iii. **Human Interest Frame:** This frame indicates or show human angle or emotional angle on president's medical leave.

iv. **Powerlessness Frame:** This shows phrases/words indicating that there is no one in charge of Nigeria or the government during that period.

v. **Religious Frame:** This are frames or words that has religious undertone in relation to Buhari's medical leave or trip.

vi. **Economic frame:** This talks about the economic implications of the president's medical leave generally.

vii. **Death-Rumour frame:** This type of frame has misinformation or rumour concerning Buhari's death.

- Total number of coverage: This means the total number of the stories reported by the newspapers within the period).

### Inter-coder Reliability

The inter-coder reliability for the study was calculated using Holstics formulae (in Wimmer and Dominick, 2003, p.137).

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

Where M = number of coding decision the coders agree on.

N1 +N2 = Total number of coding decision by the first and second's coder respectively.

$$\text{Therefore; } \frac{28}{36} = \frac{56}{72} = 0.78$$

For the study, each of the coders identified and categorized 36 themes, but they agreed on only 28 of them. The reliability coefficient is 0.78.

### Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings.

**Table 1: Genre of stories on President Muhammadu Buhari medical Leave**

Genre of the Story	<i>Vanguard</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>DailyTrust</i>	Total	%
News Story	41	44	36	121	49
Feature	9	11	6	26	10
Column	12	14	9	35	14
Editorial	1	1	Nil	2	0.8
Pictures	18	20	16	54	22
Cartoon	2	1	Nil	3	1.2
Letters to the Editor	4	2	1	7	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>100</b>

The table 1 above reveals that there is preponderance of news stories used to report issues on Buhari's medical leave.

**Table 2: Prominence of the stories**

Prominence	<i>Vanguard</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>DailyTrust</i>	Total	%
Front Page	18	20	13	51	20
Inside Page	59	61	46	166	67
Back Page	10	12	9	31	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 indicates that stories on President Muhammadu Buhari's medical leave appeared more in the inside pages. There were few on the front and back pages.

**Table: 3 Kinds of frame used by the newspapers**

Pattern of Frames	<i>Vanguard</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>DailyTrust</i>	Total	Percentage %
<b>Political Frame</b>	23	25	18	66	27
<b>Response Frame</b>	20	23	16	59	24
<b>Human Interest Frame</b>	12	13	11	36	15
<b>Powerlessness Frame</b>	11	10	8	29	11
<b>Religious Frame</b>	10	9	6	25	10
<b>Economic Frame</b>	5	6	5	16	12
<b>Death-Rumour Frame</b>	6	7	4	17	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>100</b>

As shown on Table 3 above, there was a total of 248 frames used by the selected newspapers in the coverage of President Buhari's medical leave to United Kingdom. *The Guardian* newspaper had the highest number (93) of the frame, followed by *Vanguard* newspaper.

**Table: 4, The dominant frame used in the coverage of Buhari's medical leave**

Pattern of Frames	<i>Vanguard</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>DailyTrust</i>	Total	Percentage %
<b>Political Frame</b>	23	25	18	66	27
<b>Response Frame</b>	20	23	16	59	24
<b>Human Interest Frame</b>	12	13	11	36	15
<b>Powerlessness Frame</b>	11	10	8	29	11
<b>Religious Frame</b>	10	9	6	25	10
<b>Economic Frame</b>	5	6	5	16	6
<b>Death-Rumour Frame</b>	6	7	4	17	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 above shows the dominant frame used in the coverage, out of this frames, political frame and response frame had the highest frequency , 66 (27%) and 59 (24%) respectively.

**Table: 5 Total number of the Coverage**

Newspapers	Frequency	Percentage
Vanguard	87	35
The Guardian	93	38
DailyTrust	68	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>100</b>

The table 5 above shows the total number of reports on President Muhammadu Buhari medical leave from *Vanguard*, *The Guardian* and *DailyTrust*, with *The Guardian* leading with 93 (38%) issues.

### Discussion of Findings

The findings that emanated from the results in the data analysed are discussed as they provide answers to the research questions formulated to guide the study.

#### Research Question One: What is the genre of stories on President Buhari medical leave in the selected newspapers?

Out of 248 stories, 121 (49%) were news stories, features stories had 26 (10%), Column had 35 (14%) issues., Editorial 2 (0.8%), pictures 54 (22%), cartoon 3 (1.3%) and letters to editor had 7 (3%) issues. Reporting President Buhari's medical leave in news stories made Nigerian newspapers not to give in-depth analysis to stories. The inference that can be drawn here is that the selected newspapers within the selected period did not give details or background information on the President medical leave, because news does not give adequate space for details, as is possible in editorials and features. Ohaja (2005, cited in Ezegwu, Enem and Ndife, 2017) states that a feature is an in-depth and factual write up on a topical issue which seek to give comprehensive information in a more captivating and relaxed style than straight news.

#### Research Question Two: What is the prominence given to the news stories on Buhari medical leave in the selected Nigerian newspapers?

In discussing prominence in this study, the emphasis is on the placement of Buhari's medical leave stories in the selected newspapers within the selected period. On the placement, Inside Page ranked highest with 166 (67%) of the entire 248 story placements of the President's medical leave stories. This was followed by Front Page stories which recorded 51 (20%) from the total. While Back page had 31 (13%) stories. This means that President Muhammadu Buhari medical issues were given minimal prominence by the newspapers since most of the stories appeared in the inside pages of these dailies, few were placed on the front and back pages. Data presented in the table also suggest that *The Guardian* and *Vanguard* newspapers gave more prominence to the coverage of Buhari's medical leave than *Daily Trust* newspaper. This finding is in accordance with Olorede, Oyewole and Azeez (2013) study on "press reportage of

President Yar'Adua's Ill-health". The researchers found that though the majority of news stories were hidden in the inside pages, a sizeable amount appeared on the front pages and a few on the back pages. Also, Abimbola (2017), in a study of comparative analysis of the prominence Nigerian newspapers accorded selected political crisis situations found that late President Yar'Adua's illness and absence in office was more prominently reported, with 18.6% of the coverage placed on the front page of the newspapers, 81% of the newspaper items was on the inside pages and only 4% of the coverage was on the back page.

**Research Question Three: What kind of frames did the selected Nigerian newspapers use in their coverage of Buhari medical leave?**

Analysis of research question three indicated that the newspapers employed varieties of frame in their coverage of stories. These frame includes: political frame, respond frame, human interest frame, powerlessness frame, religious frame, economic frame and death-rumour frame. The used of these frame by the newspapers is aligned with the submission of De Vreese, Peter, and Semetko, (2001), that newspapers used news frames to select, organise and emphasis certain aspects of the reality to the exclusion of others. Also, framing theory assumes that the mass media give specific interpretations in news representation, using certain words or phrases, choosing certain films or pictures, making certain contextual references, referring to certain sources, giving examples as typical, and so on such that audience do not just read about an issue but view it from a particular perspective.

**Research Question Four: What is the dominant frame used by the selected Nigerian newspapers in their coverage of Buhari medical leave?**

The data in table four shows that out of the 248 items analysed, the dominant frame among the three newspapers was political frame with 66 (27%) issues. Examples of these frames are: "Buhari has kept a grip on power despite his medical leave" (*Vanguard*, August 16, 2017), "Fayose flays APC leaders over President's health" (*The Guardian* February 20, 2017), "breaking: 7 governors leave for London to see Buhari" (*Daily Trust*, July 25, 2017). "How Buhari's sick leave is affecting Nigerian politics" (*Daily Trust*, February 11, 2017) etc. The second dominant frame was respond frame with 59 (24%) items. Instances of these frame include: "We will tell Buhari to speak with Nigerians –Presidency" (*Vanguard* February 20, 2017 p.5), "Buhari back anytime from now- Presidency" (*The Guardian*, February 10, 2017, p.1), "Buhari to Nigerians: Don't expect me back yet; no cause for alarm" (*Vanguard*, February 22, 2017, p.1), "we told Buhari not to be in a haste to come back-Ortom" (*Vanguard*, August 4, 2017), "Buhari to return next week-Presidency" (*Daily Trust*, July 26, 2017).

Human interest frame took the third slot in the order of dominance with 36 (15%) issues. Example of some of these frames were: "I have never been this sick, says Buhari" (*The Guardian*, March 11, 2017), "medical tests show I need more time to rest, says Buhari" (*The Guardian*, February 22, 2017), "breaking: Buhari travels for medical

treatment again” (*Daily Trust*, May 7, 2017). The least dominant was the economic frame issues with 16 (6%) items. The implications here is that the newspapers made efforts to inform Nigerians about the President medical leave from different angles, which could be seen their use of three dominant frames. This is also in consonance with Paulsen (2006, cited in Ubabukoh, 2013) assertion that the media will always frame important issues the way they wish to.

**Research Question Five: What is the total coverage given to Buhari medical leave by the selected newspapers within the study period?**

From the results, we found that *The Guardian* had more coverage to Buhari's medical leave with 93 (38%) items than *Vanguard* and *Daily Trust* newspapers which recorded 87 (35%) and 68 (27%) issues respectively. This showed that *The Guardian* newspaper were in the fore front in bringing the news and updates of President Muhammadu Buhari's medical leave to Nigerian and the world at large.

**Conclusion**

The study concludes, based on the findings of this study that, the selected newspapers in the selected period did not give details or background information on President Muhamadu Buhari's medical leave. The selected newspapers in the selected period used the straight news format most in the reportage of the issue. Straight news within the selected period came in piecemeal and does not allow for a comprehensive report. Feature and editorial is more appropriate for thorough treatment of any issue. This means that President Muhammadu Buhari medical issues were given minimal prominence by selected newspapers in the selected period since most of the stories appeared in the inside pages, few appeared on the back and front pages. The study affirmed that selected newspapers in the selected period used varieties of frame in the coverage such as: political frame, respond frame, human interest frame, powerlessness frame, religious frame economic and death-rumour frame in their coverage of Buhari's medical leave. Of these frames, the political frame was mostly used by the selected newspapers in the selected period.

**Recommendations**

The researchers recommends amongst the following

- i. The selected Nigeria newspapers should at all times endeavour provide some level of in-depth investigation and reportage instead of the brief approach of issues, especially a matter of national concern.
- ii. There is a need for selected Nigerian newspapers at all times endeavour give prominence, especially the cover page to the issues concerning the president's health.
- iii. The selected Nigeria newspapers should all times use frame that will not result to political tension on matters of national concern

iv. Further research on audience perception of media coverage of President Muhammadu Buhari medical leave should be carried out to find out the audience views or opinion on the matter.

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