

Newspaper Framing of Monkey Pox Outbreak and its Influence on Media Audience Perception in South East Region of Nigeria

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Abstract

Monkey-pox is a rare and infectious disease caused by monkey virus, transmitted from animals to human, with symptoms similar to those of smallpox. This study examined newspaper framing of monkey- pox outbreak in Nigeria and its influence on south east media audience. The study aims at ascertaining the genre of the story, prominence, kind of frames, dominant frame and influence of the frame on south east media audience. Three newspapers; The Guardian, The Punch and Vanguard were selected for the study which covered a period of four months. Mixed methods were used in the study (Content analysis and survey research method). Results showed that the newspapers used the straight news format most in the reportage of the monkey-pox outbreak in Nigeria. The outbreak was not given prominence in the studied newspapers, especially in terms of placement. Transmission/causes frame was the most dominant frame used by the newspapers which accounted for 47(34%) issues, transmission/causes frame used by the newspapers raised fear on media audience. The study recommends detailed reports that will educate the public more should be employed by the media and solution/control frame should be used when covering health related matters or outbreak of diseases in order to douse tension among the media audience.

Keywords: Framing, Monkey pox, Nigeria, Newspapers, South East

Introduction

On September 22, 2017, the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), received a report of a suspected Monkey-pox virus disease outbreak from the Niger Delta University Teaching Hospital, NDUTH, Okolobiri, Bayelsa State. In less than a month, the Monkey-pox disease had affected 43 people in Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Ekiti, Lagos, Enugu, Nasarawa, Rivers, and FCT. For 24 days, the disease carried the tag of “suspected” until the Federal Government obtained laboratory evidence from the World Health Organisation (WHO), Regional Laboratory in Dakar, Senegal, to confirm three of the cases in Bayelsa State. (*Vanguard*, 2017). According to the WHO the 2017 outbreak was the third in Nigeria’s history, with previous episodes in 1971 and 1978. Monkey pox is a rare disease caused by infection with the Monkey pox virus which belongs to the same family of viruses that cause small pox. African rodent species are believed to be the natural reservoirs and play a role in transmission (Ogundipe, 2017).

The virus can cause an illness with symptoms of a generalised vesicular skin rash, fever and painful jaw swelling. In previous outbreaks, it led to death in at least one in 10 people. With no available protective vaccine, no specific treatment and no cure, there was the need to raise awareness about the risk factors of monkey pox and employ public education about the measures that must be taken to reduce exposure to the virus. Transmission is in two modes – animal to human and human to human. Prevention of contact with natural hosts of the virus – monkeys, rodents, rats, squirrels and others, helps break transmission from animal to human. Avoidance of contact with the body fluids and personal items of infected persons prevents human-human transmission.

The media in Nigeria especially the print was awash with reports on the outbreak of monkey pox virus in the months of September and October 2017. For instance, *The Punch* newspaper, October 4, had this caption in their front page: ‘monkey pox hits Bayelsa, medical Doctor 10 others quarantined’, ‘FG denies injecting monkey pox virus through free medical treatment’ (*Vanguard*, October 9, p.1 2017). ‘Monkey pox spreads in Lagos, six others States, cases rise to 31’ (*The Guardian*, October 10, 2017). ‘Monkey pox: panic in Enugu, Anambra, Delta, others over rumoured deadly vaccine, fresh outbreaks’ (*The Guardian*, October 12, 2017). Senate urges FG to be proactive on monkey pox (*Vanguard*, October 11, p.7 2017). Monkey pox vaccine hoax in Southeast: we started running without knowing why- parents, pupils, teachers (*Vanguard*, October 27, 2017). Bayelsa monkey pox patient commits suicide, FG clears Lagos, others (*The Punch* October 17, 2017).

The outbreak of monkey pox virus generated mixed reactions and fear from different classes of people in Nigeria, particularly the south east residents. The south east geo-political zone was thrown into confusion at that time after claims on social media went viral that some soldiers entered some primary and secondary schools and forcefully injecting pupils and students with poisonous substances allegedly causing monkey pox. As soon as the information circulated, parents and guardians started rushing to schools to pressurize the authorities to allow them take away their children. Although, the Nigeria Army alleged that the medical exercise was part of the corporate

social responsibility initiatives imbued into the overall exercise of “Egwu Eke II” package, to the people of the south eastern region.

According to Duhe and Cho (2009), mass media are unique tools that move people to action especially when health is concerned. They also noted that the news media is the primary source of health information and is the primary channel through which society gains awareness about health issues. For instance, Dolan, Iredale, Williams and Ameen, (2004) found that a significant number of patients indicated that they rely on news media more than other sources for general health information. The media play a vital role in information dissemination to the public; they generate a significant number discourse around an issue, thereby, attempting to shape public knowledge and perception of the issue (Brown, 2013; Odoemenam and Okoro, 2013). This is in concurrence with the submission of Ezegwu, Udoyo and Chime-Nganya (2017) that one way through which media shape events or issue is through Framing. The media also provides linkages and enables readers/audiences to make connections among issues.

In view of the above, it is expected that analyzing the way in which Nigerian newspapers framed the monkey pox outbreak and its influence on media audience in south-east will help push the frontiers of our understanding in the area and possible ways to tackle such occurrence in the nearest future.

Statement of the Problem

When the dreaded monkey pox virus paid Nigeria a visit, anxiety, fears and panic spread across the country. Some people were confirmed dead, while scores were isolated or quarantined in hospitals for contracting monkey pox. There was media hype on the outbreak, sending tension across the nation, especially in the south east region where rumour spread that Nigeria Army was using its annual medical outreach exercise to inject poison into the people to depopulate the south east. Incidentally, this was the first time most Nigerians were hearing of monkey pox. It becomes significance to examine how newspapers frame the outbreak and how south east audience perceive it.

Studies have also been conducted on the media framing of other outbreaks such HIV/AIDS (Bleich, 2007; Wu,2006); Asthma (Johnson, Henderson, Pedersen and Stonecipher, 2011); SARS (Tian and Stewart, 2005); and Flu (Nerlich and Halliday, 2007), coverage of health issues (Uwom and Oloyede, 2014), HIV/AIDS and Diabetics (Johson, Layefa and Taiwo, 2016), newspapers coverage of Ebola virus (Asaolu, Ifijeh, Iwu-James and Odaro 2016,). Monkey pox poses a different type of challenge altogether because of its relative novelty in this part of the world and lack of sufficient knowledge about it (for instance the above headlines from some of the studied newspapers indicated there were fear and tension across the country. Monkey pox vaccine hoax in Southeast: we started running without knowing why- parents, pupils, teachers (*Vanguard*, October 27, 2017), South east residents insist that Army’s free medical outreach was a play to depopulate the region (*The punch*, October 28, 2017), a search for literature on media framing of monkey pox outbreak in Nigeria revealed a seeming paucity of intellectual

academic conversations on the issue in respect of framing by Nigerian newspapers and its influence on mass media audience in the south east region of Nigeria. An attempt to fill this academic and knowledge lacuna prompted this study.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Identify the genre of stories on monkey-pox disease outbreak in Nigeria.
2. Examine the prominence given to the news stories on monkey-pox outbreak in Nigeria.
3. Ascertain the kind of frames newspapers used in their coverage of the monkey pox outbreak in Nigeria.
4. Find out the dominant frame used by Nigerian newspapers in their coverage of the monkey-pox outbreak.
5. Find out the influence of such frames on the perception of media audience in south east region of Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the genre of stories on monkey-pox disease outbreak in Nigerian newspapers?
2. What is the prominence given to the news stories on monkey-pox outbreak in Nigeria?
3. What kind of frames did Nigerian newspapers use in their coverage of the monkey pox outbreak in Nigeria?
4. What is the dominant frame used by Nigerian newspapers in their coverage of the monkey-pox outbreak?
5. What is the influence of such frames on the perception of media audience in south east region of Nigeria?

Literature Review

Framing and news media

Framing refers to the way events and issues are organised and made sense of, especially by the media, media professional and their audiences (Reese, 2001). Tiung (2009) views framing as part of a skill used in producing effects or understanding a certain issue. 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”. 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. Framing takes into account the capacity of a media presentation to define a situation and the issues, and to set the terms of a debate, and reflects the richness of media discourse (Vladisavljevic, 2015). Goffman (1974, cited in Vladisavljevic, 2015)

sees framing as cognitive structures that guide the perception and representation of events.

The Role of Media in Health Information

Uwom and Oloyede (2014) note that the media have the ability to effectively communicate health information and effective health information can affect individuals 'awareness, attitudes and behavior change. Diedong (2013) observe that the print media (newspapers) play a central role in promoting the knowledge of people on issues of health as well as shaping our understanding of medicine and science in general. Empirical studies have shown that 'print media's dissemination of health information is important in shaping public beliefs and possibly behaviors' (Moyer, 1995 cited in Asaolu, Ifijeh and Iwu-James and Odaro, 2016). The role of newspapers in health education lie in their capacity and capability to teach, manipulate, sensitize and mobilize people through information dissemination (Nwabueze, 2005). Newspaper reports and messages are seen as integral source of public policy depending on selection and presentation of issues (Diedong, 2013).

Uwom (2012) cited by Agbana and Usman (2014, p.131) says "the role of the mass media in health reportage would go a long way in putting health issues in the minds and lips of everyone...The media are significant source of health-related information and can shape the way we think about and discuss health issues." Media coverage may influence individual health decision and also help to prevent bad health and lead to changes in public policy and public perception (Stryker, Moriarty and Jenson, 2008). Uwom and Oloyede (2014, p.83) affirm that to be in good health, people need adequate information and knowledge on health matters. "They need information on healthy lifestyle practices, preventive health measures, health conditions and diseases, and government health care programmes. The mass media are to help in creating awareness, accelerating information flow and mobilizing the populace towards attainment of national goals and aspirations to ensure a total transformation of the society".

One of the basic tenets of the social responsibility theory is that the press should serve public interest. Thus it presupposes that newspapers must have social conscience, be devoted to public welfare and public service; they should be responsive to problems in the society. Furthermore, the press must be accountable to "to their audiences, to whom they owe correct news reportage, analysis and editorializing" (Owens-Ibie, 1994 cited in Johnson, Henderson, Pedersen and Stonecipher, 2016).

Review of Related Empirical Studies

Empirical studies have shown the media have the power to prevent the spread of diseases and encourage good health practices among different people in the society. Ochonogor and Konye (2014) pointed out that communication plays a major role in the enlightenment and education of the populace to accept or reject any new government initiative. The mass media are important socializing agents in most communities

because they have great reach and impact which can penetrate larger parts of communities (Uzoma, Chima and Kalu, 2014). One major way of promoting healthcare by the mass media is through awareness campaign which is believed, will reach the target audience. For instance, Keating, Meckers and Adewuyi (2006) cited in Agudosi (2007) conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of media campaign in enhancing awareness and prevention of HIV/AIDS with a particular focus on reproductive health. The finding showed that media campaigns reached a large portion of the target population and exposure to mass media messages increased awareness of HIV/AIDS resulting in change in behaviour.

In a study of newspaper coverage of poliomyelitis in Nigeria, a content analytic study of *The Nation* and *The Sun* newspapers". The objectives of the study were to ascertain the prominence given to coverage of polio issues and to find out the pattern of the stories on polio issues. Agbana and Usman (2014) found out that the newspapers did not give prominence to polio issues in Nigeria in 2012. "It was also discovered that majority of the stories published on the health issue were in news form which means the newspapers did not give in-depth analysis on polio". They assert that "presenting polio issues in prominent positions and with maximum coverage will expand the knowledge of the public on the issue of polio...the media indeed, has enormous power to influence the public and to determine what they think is more important based on the placement, space and size of page given to polio issues".

Uwom and Oloyede (2014) in a content analysis study of newspaper coverage of health issues in Nigeria between January 2010 and December 2011. The objectives of the study were to find out the prominence given to health issues in Nigeria and to ascertain format of the coverage. The researchers found that newspapers did not give prominence to the selected health issues; health-related stories were not given front prominence, while spaces allotted to health news stories were small and inconspicuous; and majority of the stories were in news format. Okpolo and Azienge (2014) in another study on press coverage of maternal mortality in Northern Nigeria. The objective was to find out how press covered maternal mortality in northern Nigeria. They found that "the issue of maternal mortality in northern Nigeria was not given adequate coverage by the print media used and the press was supposed to be balanced, fair, unbiased and accurate in its reportage of issues, but it had not been so when it came to women health issues".

From the foregoing, the reviews have revealed the potent tool of the mass media and communication in general towards the improvement of public health and to combat diseases such as HIV/AIDS, polio, maternal health and host of other deadly disease, international organizations like World Health Organizations, United Nations and other relevant agencies have employed the mass media extensively in providing public enlightenment and advocacy role in stemming the tide of these deadly diseases. Finding the relationship between the variables will lay a solid foundation for establishing how the public perceive and respond to the way media present (framed) news stories on health issues most especially monkey pox outbreak. The way issues are presented in the

news guides how people perceive the message and how they conceptualized possible solutions to the problems presented or take to suggestions made.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the framing theory. Framing involves giving an angle to an event with a view that audience or readers would perceive the story from the perspective of the media reporting same (Oduah, 2014). This theory suggests that the way an information is presented (framed) determines the way people understand such message. Baran and Dennis (2009) further explained that this theory examines the idea about how people use expectations to make sense of every life. Social constructivists have argued that at the heart of framing, is framing analysis (Ngwu, Ekwe and Chiaha, 2015). Here, a researcher is expected to construct and categorize frames identified in the course of the coding. 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.

The Framing theory explains this study from the point of how media reportage of an event contributes in shaping the perception of the people. Framing theory helps us to understand that the way mass media audience perceive the issue of newspaper framing of monkey-pox outbreak in Nigeria and its influence on media audience in the south east region, 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).

Research Methodology

The research technique employed for the study was content analysis and survey research method (mixed methods). Content analysis was used because of its appropriateness in dealing with press coverage of various issues. The use of content analysis to measure social and political trends has proven to be most effective. Wimmer and Dominick (2003), describe content analysis as an effective method for the study of social and political trends. An analysis of relevant media contents is necessary in order to determine the importance of some topics. Subsequently, audience research looks at the correspondence between the media agenda and the audience’s agenda.

While survey was used to elicit opinions of members of the publics, especially residents of south east region of Nigeria on the matter.

Universe/ Population of the Study

The universe of study is all Nigerian newspapers (according to Nigeria Press Council Statistics, the total number of registered newspapers in Nigeria was 300 as 2016). From which three were purposively selected. The scope of the study is all editions from September 1st, 2017 and December 31st, 2017. The three Nigerian newspapers: *The Guardian*, *The Punch* and *Vanguard* were selected for the study 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).

1. They had sustained publication during the period of the study.
2. They were selected for what seemed like alarming headlines which ordinarily could create fear in the minds of audience.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study period was 2017. However, editions of newspapers published September 1, to December 31, 2017 were purposively selected because (the period coincides with the outbreak and subsequent control of the Monkey Pox disease in Nigeria). This was a period of four months. The total number of editions was 366. This was arrived through

September-30

October- 31

November-30

December-31

Therefore $122 \times 3 = 366$

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

$$n = \frac{366}{1 + 366(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{366}{1 + 366(0.0025)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{366}{1 + 1.0.915}$$

$$n = \frac{366}{1.915} \quad n = 191$$

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 newspaper framing of monkey pox outbreak in Nigeria.

The second population has to do with the residents of South East region of Nigeria. The population figure of the people in south east region of Nigeria, according to the 2006 population census, is 16, 395, 555. This was accessed from the National Population Commission (NPC). The zone has five States of Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Imo and Ebonyi. The Australian Calculator as provided by the National Statistical Service (NSS) was employed (NSS, 2012) to determine the sample size. At confidence level of 95 percent, precision level of 0.05 (5%) and an estimate of variance (proportion) of 5% (0.5), the sample size is 385.

Multi-stage sampling technique was applied to select the sample for this study. According to Osuala (2005), multi stage sampling is a design where more than one stage of selection is used. Clusters are often geographical areas such as local government wards or institutions, such as schools, hospitals and employers. Multi-stage sampling is a sampling technique that involves two or more stages of selection.

A three-stage sampling approach was used in the study. The stages are:

Stage One: There are five States in the south east region of Nigeria- Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo States. In this study, three states were purposively selected due to their large population sizes (Abia, Anambra and Enugu States).

Stage Two: The capital cities (Umuahia, Awka and Enugu) were purposively selected. There seems to be greater percent of literate population that have interest in print media are found in urban areas.

Stage Three: Convenience sampling, which is also known accidental sampling was used to distribute questionnaires in the capitals, streets and households of any adult males and females, who are from 18 years and above who were available and accessible during the period of study.

Instrument of Data Collection

This study used code sheet and coding guide as the instrument for data collection for the content analysis. While questionnaire was used for the survey.

Units of Analysis

This indicates the researcher defining the content unit he/she is interested in. This unit of analysis could be a single word or symbol or an entire article or story (Wimmer and Dominick, 2003). For this study, the units of analysis were the newspapers articles in the forms of news story, features, opinion article, editorials, photographs, cartoon and letters to editor that indicated the kind of frames used by the three national dailies in the framing of monkey pox disease outbreak in Nigeria within the period under study.

Content Categories

In this study, the content categories were the study frames used in the Framing of monkey pox outbreak in Nigeria. Social constructivists have argued that at the heart

of framing, is framing analysis (Ngwu, Ekwe and Chiaha, 2015). Here, a researcher is expected to construct and categorize frames identified in the course of the coding. The frames that were identified in the coverage of monkey pox outbreak in Nigeria are: Causes/transmission frame, treatment/control/solution frame, fear and death frame, political/government frame, rumour/misinformation frame and economic frame.

- i. **Causes and transmission frame:** These are news items that talks about origin, signs and symptoms and mode of transmission.
- ii. **Solution/treatment/control frame:** News stories that explain or discuss how the virus could be contained or prevented from spreading or efforts made to curtail it spread.
- iii. **Fear and Death frame:** This includes news stories that generated tension, panic due to number of infected cases and increase in number of death.
- iv. **Political /Government frame:** These are news stories that discusses about government policies, actions towards the outbreak of the virus disease.
- v. **Rumour/misinformation frame:** These are news stories that expose lies, rumours, misinformation and myth about the spread of, effect of monkey pox either from mischievous individuals or social media.
- vi. **Economic Frame:** This talks about the economic implications of the disease on the people or the economy generally.

Inter-Coder Reliability

Reliability of the entire method employed in this research work was calculated using Holsti's formula (as cited in Wimmer and Dominick, 2003, p. 157).

Reliability =

$2m$

$N1-N2$

Where M is the number of coding decision on which two coders agree, and N1 and N2 are total numbers of coding decision by the first and second coder, respectively. Two coders were engaged. Twenty two coding decisions were taken by the two coders on twenty two manifest items randomly selected from September 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017 editions of the three selected newspapers studied. The coders agreed on seventeen decisions, the data were used to calculate the inter coder reliability thus:

$$\frac{2(17)}{22+22} = \frac{34}{44} = 0.77$$

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data collected for this study were analysed using percentages and frequency tables. 385 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents, 379 copies were filled correctly and returned, the remaining 6 copies were not returned. Thus, the analyses of data for this study were based on the 379 copies of the returned questionnaire, representing 98% response rate. The study had 379 as its total respondents, 227 (58%) were male and 152 (42%) were female. Respondents within the

age of 17-21 were 122 (33%), 22-26 were is 136 (37%), and those within 26 and above were 108 (30%). Occupational distribution of the respondents indicates that 163 (44%) were civil servants, 104 (27%) were traders, 73 (19%) were farmers and 39 (10%) were students.

Research Question 1: What is the genre of stories on monkey-pox disease outbreak in Nigerian newspapers?

Table1: Genre in which monkey pox disease was presented in the newspapers

Forms of the Story	<i>The Punch</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	Total	%
News Story	24	16	31	71	51.4
Feature	3	4	5	12	9
Opinion article	6	5	7	18	13
Editorial	1	1	1	3	2
Photograph	13	8	10	31	22.4
Cartoon	1	Nil	1	2	1.4
Letters to the Editor	Nil	Nil	1	1	0.7
Total	48	34	30	138	100

The table reveals that most of the reports on monkey pox disease were reported mainly by news story format, which accounted 51.4% and the least report was the letters to the editor with 0.7%.

Research Question 2: What is the prominence given to the news stories on monkey pox disease outbreak in Nigerian newspapers?

Table 2: Level of prominence

Position	<i>The Punch</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	Total	%
Front page Lead	11	8	13	32	23
Front Page	7	5	10	22	16
Inside Page	25	17	30	72	52
Back Page	5	4	3	12	9
Total	48	34	56	138	100

The import of the table above show that majority of the stories on monkey pox were tucked in the inside pages of the newspapers and *Vanguard* newspaper led in this reports.

Research Question 3: What kind of frames did Nigerian newspapers use in their coverage of the monkey pox outbreak in Nigeria?

Table 3: Patterns of news frames used by the selected newspapers in reporting monkey pox disease

Pattern of Frames	<i>The Punch</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	Total	%
Causes &Transmission Frame	14	11	22	47	34
Solution/Treatment/Control Frame	11	8	13	32	23
Fear and Death Frame	8	4	7	19	14
Political/Government Frame	6	5	6	17	12
Rumour/Misinformation Frame	5	3	4	12	9
Economic Frame	4	3	4	11	8
Total	48	34	56	152	100

Table three above reveals the patterns of news frame used in reporting monkey pox disease in the selected newspapers. The frames were: Causes &Transmission frame, Solution/Treatment/Control frame, Fear and death frame, Political/Government frame, Rumour/Misinformation frame and Economic frame.

Research Question 4: What is the dominant frame used by Nigerian newspapers in their coverage of the monkey pox outbreak?

Table 4: Dominant frames used by the selected newspapers in reporting monkey pox disease in Nigeria.

Dominant Frames used	<i>The Punch</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>Vanguard</i>	Total	%
Causes &Transmission Frame	14	11	22	47	34
Solution/Treatment/Control Frame	11	8	13	32	23
Fear and Death Frame	8	4	7	19	14
Political/Government Frame	6	5	6	17	12
Rumour/Misinformation Frame	5	3	4	12	9
Economic Frame	4	3	4	11	8
Total	48	34	56	152	100

The table four above reveals that out of the six frames used by the three national dailies studied, causes and transmission frames were dominant, accounting for 34% of the total report, while economic frame was less dominant (8%).

Research Question 5: What is the influence of such frames on the perception of media audience in south east region of Nigeria?

Table 5: For this research question, responses gotten from field survey were used.

Perception of monkey pox outbreak in Nigeria based on media reports.	Frequency	Percentage
Believed it was a serious problem	112	29
Believed it was manipulated to serve ethnic interest	78	21
It was frightening/scaring	151	40
It was informative and enlightening	38	10
Total	379	100

The imports of the above table is that out of the 379 respondents, 151 (40%) affirmed that they perceived the framing of monkey pox disease outbreak as frightening.

Discussion of Findings

On comparative basis, *vanguard* newspaper gave more attention to the monkey pox disease with 56 reports, this was followed by *The Punch* with 48 issues. *The Guardian* had lead report with 34 issues. Above all, the findings indicates that the newspapers adopted a varieties of print media genres in the reportage of monkey pox disease outbreak in Nigeria. The newspapers used the straight news format mainly in the reportage of monkey pox disease. It thus means that the newspapers were more concerned with delivering the news of monkey pox first hand to the public. Straight news comes in piecemeal and does not allow for a comprehensive report. Feature is more appropriate for thorough treatment of any issue.

However, photographs accounted second in the reports with 31 (22.4%) issues. We observed that *The Punch* made use of photograph (13) a little more than *The Guardian* did (8) and *Vanguard* (10). This is good, as photograph give greater credibility and meaning to news coverage. Photograph/picture helps the readers to visualize the issue being reported on and could at times tell the entire story for readers to understand.

Also, results revealed that the newspapers did not give prominence to monkey-pox disease as an important health issues because majority of monkey pox reports in all the studied newspapers were placed on the inside pages (n=72 or 52%) of the newspapers, instead of placing them at positions where the readers can access the report easily. A previous study showed that when events are placed on either the front or back page, they reflect the importance of the issue (Ohaja, 2003, Okories and Oyedepo, 2013). This findings is similar to that of Uwom (2012) whose findings are also revealed that most of the breast cancer stories appeared on the inside pages, 9 (64%) of the issues in two newspapers he studied. Thus, the media failed to leave up to their agenda setting functions to the society.

On the pattern of framing, we found that the studied newspapers used the following frames: Causes/transmission frame, treatment/control/solution frame, fear and death frame, political/government frame, rumour/misinformation frame and

economic frame. The findings revealed the typical framing structure described by Entman (1993, cited in Rodney, 2010) of defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgements, and suggesting remedies to several health issues in Nigeria. There were 138 frames used in the reportage of monkey-pox disease, *The Punch* had 48, *The Guardian* 34 and *Vanguard* accounted most with 56 frames.

Further findings showed that the dominant frame used by the newspapers are causes/transmission frame which accounted for 47(34%) issues, followed by treatment/control/solution frame with 32 (23%). The dominant use of transmission/causes frame were observed in the studied newspapers. For instance; *Vanguard* newspaper of October 5, 2017 had this report: 10 infected, 49 under surveillance as monkey pox hits Bayelsa, monkey pox spreads in Lagos, six others states, cases rise to 31, *The Guardian* newspaper, October 10, 2017. Monkey pox: Ekiti confirms two suspected cases, *Vanguard* newspaper, October 11, 2017. On the treatment/control frame, *The Guardian* newspaper, October 8, 2017 had these reports: Monkey pox: Cross River strengthens surveillance, Senate urges FG to be proactive on monkey pox, *Vanguard* October 11, 2017. The least frame was economic frame with 11 (8%) issues.

We also found that majority of the audience in south east region said the framing pattern of monkey pox outbreak in Nigeria newspaper was frightening, 151 (40%) respondents said so. This finding is in consonance with a major assumption of framing theory. The theory states that the way in which newspapers present the news creates a frame for that information and significantly influences readers' perception, interpretation and understanding of the phenomenon. Kostadinova (2012) observes that frames influence people's understanding, opinions and attitudes toward issues, institutions and events.

Conclusion

The study has provided evidence into the newspaper framing of the monkey pox disease outbreak as well as its influence on media audience perception in south east region of Nigeria. The study affirmed that the reportage of monkey pox outbreak was not in-depth. This is because majority of the stories were in news form which means they did not give in-depth analysis on monkey pox virus. Monkey pox disease was not given prominence in terms of placement. Most of the stories were tucked in the inside pages, few on the front and back pages.

Therefore, presenting monkey pox issues in prominent positions and with maximum coverage will expand the knowledge of the public on the issue of monkey pox. The media no doubt, has enormous power to influence the public and determine what they think is more important based on the placement, front lead, front page, back page and space given to monkey pox issues. It was also discovered that transmission/causes frame was the most dominant frame pattern in the coverage and this frame made mass media audience in the South East to be frightened about the disease.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the researchers recommends among the followings:

1. Reports on monkey pox should be placed in strategic positions in the newspapers selected. They should be place on front pages/back pages. Story placement is a strong index of prominence and framing.
2. The selected newspapers should employ more of the treatment/control frame especially in the outbreak of disease. This will help to reduce fear amongst the masses.
3. Further research should investigate framing of monkey pox in magazine and in-depth interview could be combined to know how the audience feel about it.

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