Comparative Analysis of Public Officers' Corruption Framing in Newspapers

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted to examine and compare the prevalence of public officials' corruption frames in the online version among three popular Nigerian newspapers. Individual news article on public officials' corruption was the unit of analysis while the reliability coefficients calculated using Holsti's formula resulted to 90.0%. This study discovered that in the framing of 2016 public official corruption issues, the newspapers varied significantly with p=0.002 and p=0.000 respectively on corruption frames. However, the study, anchored on framing theory, identified the economic consequence frames, the responsibility attributes, and the treatment frames in the corruption issues. Further results revealed that the economic consequence frame identified the financial losses with the total percentage of 63.8%. The Nigerian government was framed as having highest responsibility for corruption eradication with the total percentage of 79.6%. Therefore, the responsible government was recommended for treatment of corruption in Nigeria with the total percentage of 82.2%. While this study is focusing on the aspect of media frames, future research can attempt to explore the area of audience frames which is not covered in this study.

Keywords: News Framing, Public Officers, Corruption, Newspaper Frames, Accountability.

1. INTRODUCTION

Corruption is one of the main problem faced by the Nigerian development leader. It affects all the sectors in Nigeria and as such necessitates the inability of Nigeria to translate its economic growth into poverty reduction (Okekeocha, 2013). However, the role that media play or refuse to play has been identified as the key in changing citizens' social and psychological perspective about corruption. Therefore, the inability of Nigerian government to control the pervasiveness of corruption among public officials in the country has given rise to rapid concern and at the same time stirred new interest in corruption-related research (Adaja, 2016; Adeyemi, 2013; Nageri, Gunu and Abdul, 2013; Moyosore, 2015; Rek, 2015). One of the critical gaps, which this study has responded to, is what (Amadi, 2015; Chen and Zhang, 2016; Delfin and Garcia, 2016; Wickberg, 2016) referred to as an inadequate research focus that provide pragmatic attention to how government anti-corruption agencies such as EFCC, ICPC, and NGOs could help in the way forward and fight the corruptions in Nigeria.

This research gap is vital in order to situate the involvement of newspapers in the framing of corruption to actualize its economic consequence frames, responsibility attributes and the treatment recommended in combatting the corruption in Nigeria. This research gap is worth exploring because corrupt practices distort government decisions and undermine the legitimacy of the state in providing public services (Seligson, 2002), and weaken the institutions of the state that should enable social development (Transparency International, 2014). This suggests

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that there exists a link amid corruption and other common problems in Nigeria. This is because corruption accentuates imbalances in the circulation of resources and wealth due to lack of accountability, and thereby threaten good governance, democracy, and development (World Bank, 2014). The most recognizable form of corruption, according to Adaja (2016), include but not limited to looting, abuse of office, bribery, extortion, fraud, money laundering, trading in influence, unlawful enrichment, and others that could enable other social problems in the society.

Similarly, the problem of corruption within the Nigerian government has been rather pervasive as "public officials have been the main perpetrators of corruption in Nigeria" (Adeyemi, 2013). As explained by He (2000), "the authority and legitimacy of public officials depends on using their power properly for the public good" (p. 260). This connotes that the legitimacy and authority of public officials indeed will be negatively affected if they (the public officials) misuse their authority for undue advantages especially at the detriment of the public good. However, if corruption was to spread into all departments and levels of the government, the Nigeria image would be tarnished, leading to a loss of public support for authority.

The sensitivity of this topic on corruption to the Nigerian government has to be understood in the context of its enormous discoveries of looted resources by the Nigerian EFCC, ICPC and the Nigerian Code of Conduct Bureau. Civic crime and denunciation of prevalent corruption within government establishments and administrations led to a prolific campaign for involvement in the government anti-corruption system (Chen & Zhang, 2016).

1. 2 Framing and Mass Media in Perspective

Frames as an area of research spans several scholarly disciplines (Hansen, 2011; Nisbet and Newman, 2015; Nisbet 2009a; Nisbet and Scheufele 2009; Nisbet and Huge, 2007), they are interpretive storylines that set a specific sequence of thought in motion, communicate why an issue or decision matters, who or what might be the cause, and which political actors should be responsible (Nisbet 2009a; Nisbet and Scheufele 2009). Thus, framing an issue is an important exercise in power (Hansen, 2011), and by function, can influence the amount of attention an issue receives, the arguments or considerations that are considered legitimate or out of bounds in an issue, and the views or perspectives expressed in a communication context (Nisbet and Huge, 2007).

Hence, there is no such thing as unframed information in the media (Nisbet and Newman, 2015), this is because many media users or other interactions (whether intentionally or intuitively) are already effective at framing their opinions and positions (Nisbet and Newman, 2015). Indeed, some communicators do purposefully distort evidence and facts. Rather, in an attempt to remain true to what is conventionally known as sensitive corruption issue, as a communication necessity, framing can be used to pare down the information and give greater weight to certain considerations and elements over others (Nisbet, 2009b).

Gitlin refers frames as "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual" (Gitlin, 1980 cited in Park, 2012, p.1). In a communication context, frames serve as the organizing idea of a message to structure the receivers' perception (Tankard, 2001).

In another submission, Reese (2001) opined that frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world. According to Reese, culture relies on frames to function the way it does. According to Goffman (1981) cited in Janssen (2010), people are sensitive to different frames depending on their cultural background. However, people can be sensitive to frames, depending on the

persistence of the frame. Entman (2010) refers to this phenomenon as "cultural stock of frames" (Janssen, 2010).

Similarly, Goffman (1981) stated that frames are significant because they help classify, allowing users to locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its limits, thereby swaying people's understanding, sentiments and outlook towards an issues and events in societies (Goffman, 1974; Reese, 2001; Kostadinova and Dimitrova 2012; Adisa, 2016). Attesting to this, Reese (2001) disclosed that news frame has the capacity to influence how people understand, remember, evaluate and act upon a problem.

Pickle, Quinn and Brown (2002) contend that the content of news stories includes latent implied questions for which frames provide answers. Frames provide answers to the implied questions by performing four functions: defining and diagnosing a problem; identifying a source or cause; providing a judgment; and justifying a solution for the problem (Entman, 1993). Through this process, the mass media actively define the frames of reference through which audiences engage in public issues (Tuchman, 1978 cited in Park, 2012).

News frame is of great importance in news reports, choosing what to be included and what to be excluded in coverage, where it can make a great influence on audiences to understand public events. Many scholars have discovered that the concept of "frame" is more helpful for examining media coverage (Druckman, 2000). It is because the media frame can be perceived from the sender's cognition, text constructed by the sender and cognition of the receiver, and the culture in communication (Entman, 1993).

1.3 Corruption Situation in Nigeria

There is a common agreement among scholars that corruption is a global phenomenon (Adaja, 2016; Adeyemi, 2013; Fadairo, Fadairo and Aminu, 2014; Lawal, 2007; Moyosore, 2015; Nageri, Gunu and Abdul, 2013; Samson and John, 2012; Starke, Naab and Scherer, 2016). According to Samson and John (2012), corruption, ethical and moral problem vary from place to place, time to time, culture to culture, and with the level of economic development that exists throughout this world; it affects developed, developing and underdeveloped nations across the world.

Today, the complex nature of corruption is increasingly making it difficult for scholars to agree on a single definition (Park, 2012). The definition of corruption varies depending on differences in culture, attitude and environment. Corruption can be referred to as an illegitimate exchange of resources involving the abuse of public responsibility for private ends (Jain, 2001; Anderson and Tverdova, 2003; Bohara, Mitchell, and Mittendorf, 2004; Golden and Picci, 2005; Wu, 2005; Chang, 2005; Luo, 2004 cited in Park, 2012).

Fadairo, Fadairo and Aminu (2014) stated that the word corruption simply means the deviation from what is right, ideal or correct. Ngouo (2000) cited in Nageri, Gunu and Abdul (2013, p. 48) stated that corruption is the exploitation of public positions for private benefits. In recent years, there have been significant increases in the attention paid to corruption due to the series of high level of corruption cases in industrialized countries, and due to the political and economic changes undergone by many countries in which Nigeria is included (Adeyemi, 2013). Thus, it is evidence that there is hardly any society without one form of corruption or the other.

Nigeria particularly has a widespread reputation for corruption. In the year 2000 and 2015, it appeared at the top of Transparency International's list as the most corrupted countries, and it continues to be regarded as a bastion of fraud, graft, and deceit (Smith, 2010; Transparency International, 2015). Nigeria has been acknowledging that corruption and its practices are both endemic and systemic in both public and private sectors of the Nigerian economy (Omenka, 2013). The debilitating effects of corruption on the country are enormous. It affects the routine

processes of governance both in public and private sectors, and it pollutes the business environment generally. It also undermines the integrity of government and public institutions.

Meanwhile, contemporary research on corruption has broken important ground for the development of policies and anti-corruption efforts across the globe. The increased attention to corruption and anti-corruption has led to a "corruption boom" (Torsello, 2013, p. 313). Overall, the literature on corruption highlights the various ways in which the abuse of power is performed: for instance, the government official accepting a bribe or a kickback for his services (Rodriguez, Uhlenbruck and Eden, 2005), or less overt exchanges such as favours, promises, gifts symbolically sealed by furtive handshakes, and often embedded in, or consolidating social networks (Granovetter, 2007). Stretching the notion of power abuse even further, corruption may also involve practices such as violence, intimidation, harassment and bullying (Hearn and Parkin, 2001).

Nigeria's external image took a serious bashing, as our beloved country began the fixture on every corruption index (Omenka, 2013). This shows the commonality of corruption in Nigeria has invaded all sectors of the economy and all aspects of society. For instance, beyond the mere enjoyment of public funds, the amassing of wealth by illegal means does not seem to trouble Nigerians. Today, Nigerians applaud and tolerate ill-gotten wealth which in reality is money stolen from public coffers. This is why (Moyosore, 2015) regards it as a universal phenomenon which presents itself in different colourations and dimensions, and widespread in terms of coverage.

The literature on corruption has broken such important ground where not only theoretical understandings on the effects of corruption and why it occurs and who it involves, but also for the development of anti-corruption policies and efforts across the globe. In this perspective, however, it is observed that what tends to be much neglected in an investigation is the understanding of the fight against corruption in Nigeria. This suggests that many studies still need to be done in the area of quantitative studies on newspaper frames (of social problems i.e. corruption) in enriching Nigerian media literatures.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research employed quantitative content analysis to examine and compare the prevalence of public officials' corruption frames in the online version of three popular Nigerian newspapers. The content analysis is essential to understand the nature of corruption frames in the selected newspapers. Indeed, Macnamara (2005) noted that quantitative content analysis collects data about media content such as topics or issues like corruption determined by keywords in context (KWIC), circulation of the media (audience reach) and the extent of reportage.

2.1 Research Design

The data used in this study comprise of the data of the prevalence of public officials' corruption frames in the online version of three Nigerian newspapers for six months period (from January to June 2016). The economic consequence of corruption, responsibility attributes, and treatment to corruption situation in Nigeria are most salient on the corruption issues in Nigerian newspapers, and differences in the framing of corruption issues among the newspapers.

The rationale of the data selection from January 2016 to June 2016 was that, shortly after the 2015 general elections and the immediate transition in government, President Muhammad Buhari strictly announced his enthusiasm to tackle corruption in Nigeria. This period was particularly known as the heightened time where media were given an enormous edge to report

governmental cases of corruption in Nigeria, thereby provoking active discussion of corruption by public officials and civil servants. This development prompted this research to determine and compare the framing of corruption in Nigerian newspapers.

2.2 Population and Sampling

The Nigerian dailies published in the three newspapers, namely *Daily Trust, the Guardian and the Punch* from January 1st to June 30th, 2016 (six months), constituting the population of the content analysis in this study. The selection of the papers were based on the submission of scholars like Adaja (2016), Adisa (2016), Aliagan (2016), Nwabueze, Ugochukwu and Egbra, (2014) who proved the circulation strength of the newspapers, their availability, and their wide range of coverage of political, ethnic, religious and corruption issues. Another reason for the selection of these newspapers is due to the fact that the newspapers have electronic archives (or search engine) with general access to published news articles. Based on this, the editions that were coded in this study were retrieved from the newspapers' online archives: https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/ (*Daily Trust* newspaper), http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/ (the *Guardian* newspaper), and http:// www.punchng.com/ (The *Punch* newspapers) from January 1, 2016 to 30 June, 2016. The researcher equally selected each newspaper that is capable of representing each geo-political zone in Nigeria. The *punch* newspaper is from the South west geo-political region of Nigeria, the *Guardian* is from the South-south and *Daily Trust* is from the North (Aliagan, 2016). Surprisingly, this selection significantly revealed differences in their ideological bearings towards corruption frames.

Thus, systematic sampling used 152 corruption articles in the total editions of 90 among the three newspapers. A random procedure was drawn to obtain the samples for the study in each month, the research picked *4th* number through random selection, and with regards to the principle of nth subject, the *4th*, *10th*, *16th*, *22nd* and *28th* editions of each newspaper formed the sample of the study for each month during the six months study period (*see* Wimmer and Dominick, 2011, p. 97).

2.3 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this study was every "news articles" on corruption-related issues from January through June 2016. Adisa (2015), Hackett and Schroder, (2008), and Zheng, (2006) had found useful news articles as a unit in achieving holistic analysis.

2.4 Coding Categories

Coding categories were constructed to meet up with the specific requirements of the research. The categories were designed to measure frames that mention economic consequence, responsibility attribute and treatment recommendations. Consequently, it measures differences in the frame elements by the selected newspapers. The content of the categories for the study are represented in Table 1.

Table 1 Table of Content Categories of corruption frames (adopted for the study)

The Coding Categories	Indicators of Coding
1. Economic consequence frames	Frames that mention financial risk, loss or gains indicated by unemployment, poverty, insecurity, infrastructures and others
2. Attribution of responsibility frames	Frames that identify the person responsible causing the corruption and which person has the potential of controlling it
3. Treatment	Frames that suggest solutions to the problem of corruption

	recommendation frames	
4.	Differences in frames elements	Differences in frame elements used in the corruption reportage among the selected newspapers

2.5 Inter-coder Reliability Test

Mass communication graduates and researchers (after a period of training and pre-tests) independently coded 20 randomly selected corruption stories in order to test inter-coder reliability. Riffe (2005) cited in Adisa (2015) suggested random selection for the inter-coder reliability test. Apparently, the random selection of 20 corruption stories in agreement with Wimmer and Dominick (2006) recommendation that a sample of between 10% and 25% of the total samples should be tested for inter-coder reliability. Therefore, the inter-coder reliability was established by randomly selecting 20 news articles out of 152 representing 13% of all news articles. Hence, the study reliability coefficients were calculated, using Holsti's formula as shown in Equation (1).

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2(A)}{N1+N2} = \frac{2(18)}{20+20} \quad R = \frac{36}{40} \quad R = 0.90 \ (90\%) \tag{1}$$

The test result shown in Table 1 revealed a coefficient reliability of 0.90, equivalents to 90%. This indicates that the coding of data was correct and reliable. Wimmer and Dominick (2011, p.175) advised that "as a rule of thumb, most published content analyses typically report a minimum reliability coefficient of about 90% or above using Holsti's formula". Since the test result showed a coefficient reliability of about 90%, it means that the inter-coder reliability between the two coders is very high and the implication of this is that the result is reliable.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

In collecting news articles for analysis from each online newspaper, this study focused only on searching for the news that featured the topic of corruption in the newspaper online archives. At first, the keyword (corruption) was entered into each newspaper search engine. This keyword search, (with the help of principle of systematic random sampling within the period of study) returned a total of (n = 152) corruption news articles (within the period of study) in the following proportion: *Punch* (n= 63), *Guardian* (n= 53), and *Daily Trust* (n= 36). The sampled stories of each newspaper were uniquely numbered starting from 01, 02, and so on in the coding sheet analysis as to allow smooth coding.

3.1 Economic Consequence Frames

The frames that were used in the newspaper under study in terms of economic consequence of corruption were coded. The frames were distinguished by three possible consequences or frame elements, which include frames that mention financial risk, financial losses, and financial gains.

Table 2 Economic consequence of corruption

Frame elements	Daily Trust (n=36) n (%)	Guardian (n=53) n (%)	Punch (n=63) n (%)	Total (n=152) n (%)
The story mention financial risks	16 (44.4%)	21 (39.6%)	18(28.6%)	55(36.2%)
The story mention financial losses	20 (55.6%)	32(60.4%)	45(71.4%)	97(63.8%)
The story mention financial gains	0	0	0	0

The results on the last column show the total percentage scores for the three frame elements in this decreasing order where story mention financial losses (63.8%), story mention financial risks (36.2%), and no record (0%) of story mentioning financial gains as a consequence of corruption. Meanwhile, *Daily Trust* identified 44.4% of financial risks in corruption issues, and 55.6% of financial losses in Nigerian corruption situation. *The Guardian* identified 39.6% of financial risk in corruption, and 60.4% of financial losses while Punch recorded 28.6% of financial risk in corruption and 71.4% of financial losses in corruption. Using the total percentage values of frame elements, the implication is that newspapers, generally, identified financial losses in the coverage of corruption as an economic consequence frames. Financial gains frame are rarely used in the coverage of corruption in Nigeria. This indicates that Nigeria suffers more on financial losses than risks from the fact that Nigerian newspapers labelled financial losses as the economic consequence of corruption in Nigeria. The implication of this is seen in the present economic recession in Nigeria. Hence, the economic consequence of corruption frames is illustrated in Figure 1.
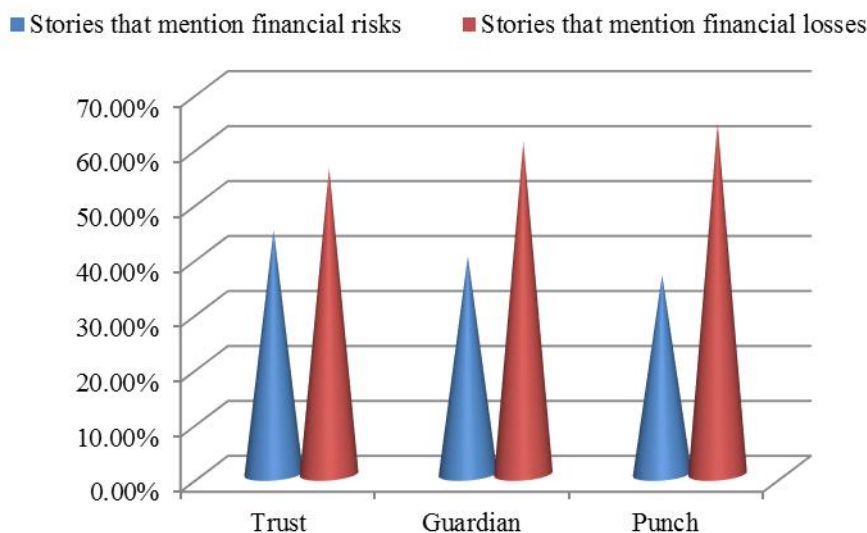
Figure 1. The indication of stories that mention financial risk and losses.

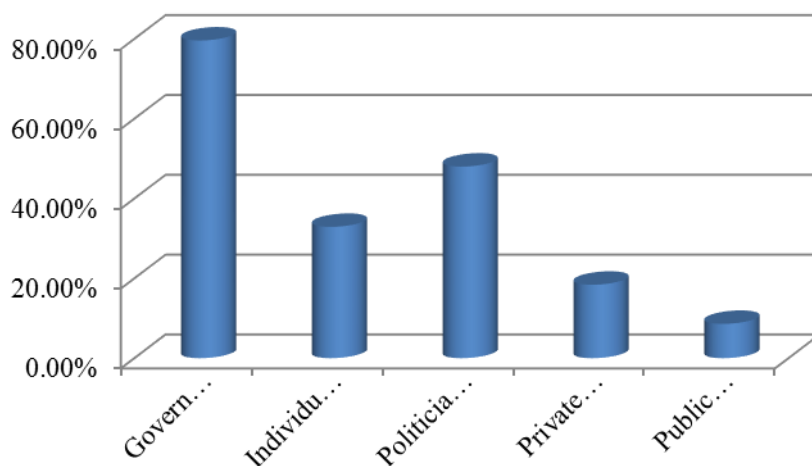### 3.2 Responsibility for Corruption Frames

To identify the responsibility attribute to the corruption issue in Nigeria, this research developed five possible frame elements as indicated in Table 3. The frame elements includes government, individuals, politicians, private actors/big businessmen, and public institutions.

Table 3 Responsibilities for corruption eradication

Frame elements	Daily Trust (n=36) n (%)	Guardian (n=53) n (%)	Punch (n=63) n (%)	Total (n=152) n (%)
Government is responsible	28 (77.8%)	38 (71.7%)	55 (87.3%)	121 (79.6%)
Individuals are responsible	10 (27.8%)	21 (39.6%)	19 (30.2%)	50 (32.9%)
Politicians are responsible	13 (36.1%)	22 (41.5%)	38 (60.3%)	73 (48%)
Private actors/ big business men are responsible	5 (13.9%)	12 (22.6%)	11 (17.5%)	28 (18.4%)
Public institutions are responsible	4 (11.1%)	6 (11.3%)	3 (4.8%)	13 (8.6%)

The findings show the total percentage differences across the various elements responsible to corruption eradication in decreasing order where Government (79.6%), individuals (32.9%), politicians (48%), private actors/big businessmen (18.4%), and public institutions (8.6%). There seemed to be meaningful differences in the total percentage values of the frame elements used to describe players responsible for corruption eradication in Nigeria. For example, the government recorded the highest scores with 79.6%, while public institutions recorded the least score with 8.6%. However, to ascertain the responsibility attributes for corruption eradication among the three newspapers, *Daily Trust* submitted 77.8%, *Guardian* recorded 71.7%, and *Punch* identified 87.3% frames for the government having responsibility for corruption eradication in Nigeria. In the aspect of individual frames, *Daily Trust* framed 27.8% individuals, *Guardian* labelled 39.6%, and *Punch* stated about 30.2% of individuals responsible for corruption eradication. The third frame element which is politicians is recorded with 36.1% by *Daily Trust* and 41.5% by *Guardian* while *Punch* submitted 60.3%. Private actors/big business men were framed with 13.9% by *Daily Trust,* 22.6% by *Guardian,* and 17.5% by *Punch.* The last frame element which is public institution was given little attention among other frame elements, for example, *Daily Trust* framed 11.1%, *Guardian* framed 11.3% and *Punch* framed 8.6% of public institutions as having responsibility for corruption eradication in Nigeria. Thus, the implication of this is that Nigeria newspapers showed differences in the way they frame corruption stories and it could be inferred in the literature that ownership play a large role in this. With regards to the responsibility attribute frames however, (from the total percentage of the newspapers) the three newspapers converged that Nigeria government is responsible for corruption eradication. Figure 2 showed the graphical explanation of responsibility attributes to corruption.

Figure 2. Graphical explanation of responsibility attributes to corruption.

3.3 Treatment Frames to Corruption

Another way frames was used to describe the problem of corruption is by mentioning the possible treatments. This frame treatment is distinguished by five frame elements which are constitutional reforms, transparency and accountability of government and institutional reforms, responsible governance and sensitization of citizens.

Table 4 Possible treatment frames

Frame elements	Daily Trust (n=36) n (%)	Guardian (n=53) n (%)	Punch (n=63) n (%)	Total (n=152) n (%)
Constitutional Reforms	12 (33.3%)	26 (49.1%)	49 (77.8%)	87 (57.2%)
Responsible Governance	31 (86.1%)	38 (71.7%)	56 (88.9%)	125 (82.2%)
Sensitization of Citizens	12 (33.3%)	22 (41.5%)	21 (33.3%)	55 (36.2%)
Transparency and accountability of government	20 (55.6%)	23 (43.4%)	24(38.1%)	67(44.1%)
Institutional Reforms	23 (63.9%)	41 (77.4%)	31 (49.2%)	95 (62.5%)

Across the frame elements, the last column in Table 6 showed the total percentage differences in decreasing order where responsible governance (82.2%), institutional reforms (62.5%), constitutional reforms (57.2%), transparency and accountability of government (44.1%), and sensitization of citizens (36.2%). In order to establish the treatment recommendation identified in the newspapers, *Daily trust* newspaper labelled responsible governance with (86.1%) as the possible solution to the problem of corruption in Nigeria, the Guardian newspapers pinpoints institutional reforms with (77.4%) as the possible solution to the problem, while the punch newspaper equally identified responsible governance with (88.9%) as the required solution. Consequently, using total percentage values of frame elements, it could be inferred that all the three newspapers labelled responsible governance as the possible treatment to the problem of corruption in Nigeria. The implication of this is that the Nigerian government above others has

to invest more effort in eradicating the corruption in Nigeria. Thus, an illustration of the possible treatment recommendations for the corruption problem is shown in Figure 3.
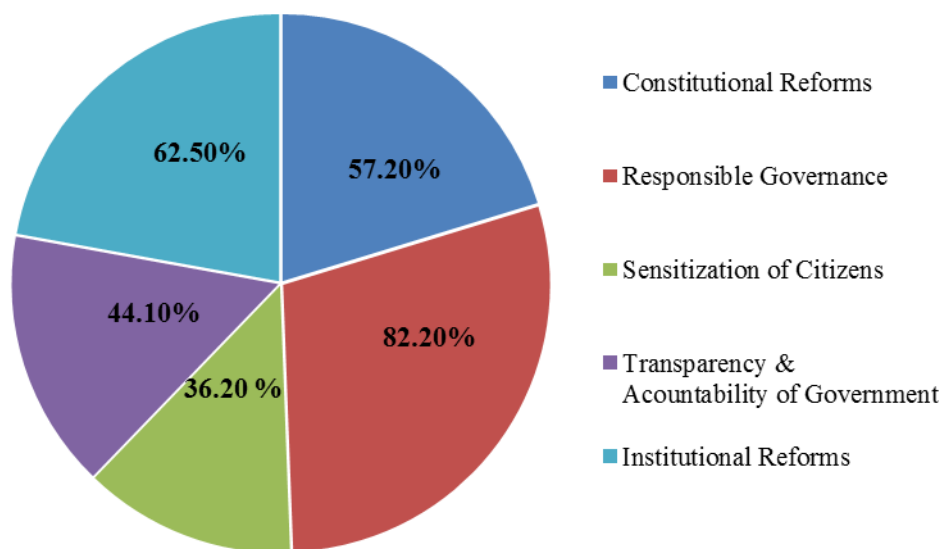

Figure 3. Possible treatment recommendations for the problem of corruption.

3.4 Corruption Framing Comparison

Table 5 showed a comparison of total corruption framing in the *Punch,* the *Guardian,* and the *Trust* newspapers in Nigeria. The study employed paired-samples t-test to determine the significant differences between the *Punch*, the *Guardian,* and the *Daily trust* newspapers level of corruption framing.

Table 5 Comparison of total corruption framing in the punch, guardian and trust newspapers (significance differences)

		Paired Differences					**t**	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
Frame elements					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Total Punch Corruption Framing-Total Guardian Corruption Framing	-.25881	.57234	.07862	-.41656	-.10105	-3.292	52	.002**
Pair 2	Total Guardian Corruption Framing-Total Trust Corruption Framing	-.14537	.44316	.07386	-.29531	.00457	-1.968	35	.057

|										
Pair 3	Total Punch Corruption Framing- Total Trust Corruption Framing	-.42361	.59580	.09930	-.62520	-.22202	-4.266	35	.000**

Note ** indicate statistical significance level at = p≤0.05

Comparison one: The punch and the Guardian newspapers corruption framing: A paired-samples test was conducted to compare corruption framing in *the Punch* and *the Guardian* newspapers. The result as presented in Table 5 showed that there is a difference in the scores for *the Punch* corruption frames (M=6.1, SD= .50) and *the Guardian* corruption frames (M=6.3, SD= .29), however, the significance difference between the two newspapers were revealed in Table5 (t (52) = -3.292, p = 0.002). The implication of these results revealed that the calculated p value is p≤0.05 at significance level, therefore, there was significance difference between *the Punch* and *the Guardian* newspapers in terms of corruption framing. Specifically, *the punch* newspaper frames more corruption issues than *the Guardian* newspapers.

Comparison two: The Guardian and Trust newspapers corruption framing: The paired-samples test conducted to compare corruption framing in *the Guardian* and *Trust* newspapers showed, as presented in table 5, (t (35)= -1.968, p= 0.057), indicating that there is no significance difference in the two newspapers with regards to corruption framing even though, there were variations in the scores of frames count in *the Guardian* corruption frames (M= 6.3, SD= .28), and *Trust* corruption frames (M= 6.4, SD= .30). These results showed that corruption framing in both newspapers received the same level of proportion.

Comparison three: The punch and the Trust newspapers corruption framing: In the comparison of paired-samples test conducted to determine differences in the total corruption framing in *the Punch* and *Trust* newspapers, contrarily, it was discovered that there was a significant different in the two newspapers. Scores for *the Punch* corruption frames was (M= 6.00, SD= .55), and *the Trust* corruption frames (M= 6.43, SD= .30). The significant difference between the two newspapers were identified in Table 5(t (35) = -4.266, p=0.000). Therefore, the result from this comparison implied that *the Punch* newspaper displayed high proportion for corruption frames than the *Trust* newspaper. Consequently, this suggests that the prevalence of *Punch* corruption frames revealed high tendency to reduce corruption in Nigeria.

Generally, the study discovered that there is significant difference in the framing of corruption among Nigerian newspapers as represented in Figure 4.
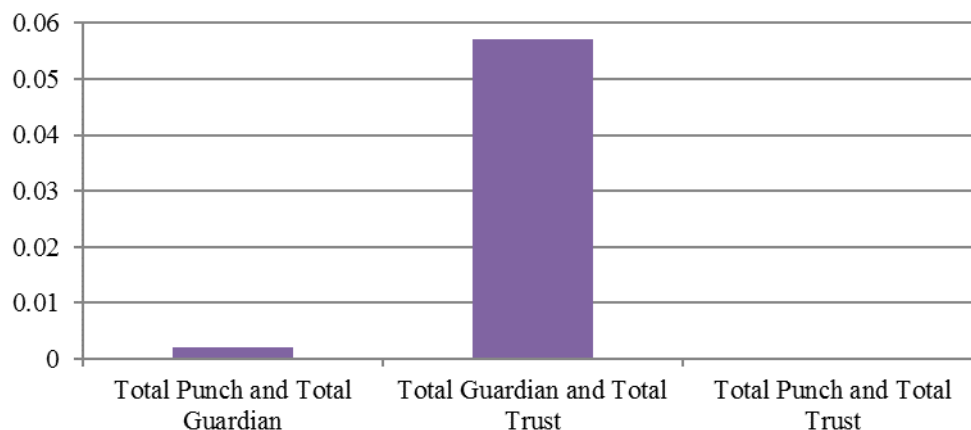
Figure 4. Difference in the framing of corruption among Nigerian newspapers.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on the data distribution and the analysis of the data showed in Table 2, findings revealed that in all newspapers, the economic consequence of corruption was financial losses with 63.8%. This shows that Nigeria suffers more on financial losses indicated by the 2016 corruption reports by the media and this goes to show that financial losses play a significant role in the build-up to lack of infrastructure, unemployment, insecurity, and poverty among members of the Nigerian society. This finding is similar to the submission of Ribadu (2006b) who opined that the perpetual collapse of infrastructures and institutions, the endemic poverty in Nigeria, the underdevelopment, and cyclical failure of democracy to take root in the country are traceable to embezzlement of public funds. No wonder that Moyosore (2015) candidly validated this by submitting that the manifestations of corruption in the political, social, administrative, and economic life of the Nigeria state is the decaying infrastructure, inadequate medical services, falling standard of education, neglection of the basic/fundamental needs of the people, and loss of resources (human and material). However, Ribadu's position suggests that there is a correlation between the consequences of economic corruption and other social problems feasible in Nigeria.

Furthermore, all the three newspapers that constituted the samples of the study unequivocally attributed responsibility to Nigeria government in corruption eradication with the total percentage of 79.6%. This finding suggested that irrespective of individuals, politicians, private actors/big businessmen, and public institutions that constituted members of the Nigerian society, the Nigerian government have a heavy responsibility in tackling corruption. Therefore, the pervasiveness of responsibility frame in this study confirmed that the problem of corruption can be traced within those that hold the power-that-be, and of those who pilot the affairs of governance. This is because, within this attribution, the Nigerian government was mostly featured to have the aptitude to relieve the problem. In this finding, however, the environment of corruption in Nigeria is framed as an alteration and toxic to civic management and good governance. Evidence abounds in the mismanaged and looted state covers in Nigeria. This evidence is discernible because Nigerian newspapers were able to use the responsibility frame to fault the government and its administrators as either complicating the problem or useless to the resolves. No wonder that government responsibility in showing political will is a cornerstone to corruption alleviation (Adeyemi, 2013; Moyosore, 2015), and where political will to tackle corruption is not discernible in government plans, it would be that of years of failed responsibilities (Ciboh, 2014).

Similarly, the further result on possible treatment of corruption corroborated that responsible government would serve as a useful solution to the problem of corruption in Nigeria. This is accompanied with 82.2% of the total percentage of the newspapers sampled (see Table 4). This indicated that the responsible government will lead a good governance, enabling environment that ensures equitable wages and incentive system, and make improvements on other conditions of work. Hence, the level of poverty will be reduced and improved the quality of life. Thereby, plummeting peoples' predisposition to corruption. Moyosore (2015) strongly contend that Nigeria needs responsible leadership coupled with active judicial system, and an organized and vocal civil society. He noted that collaborations between and amongst these state structures will drive the frame on the fight against corruption. Predominantly as regards politicians' corruption tendencies, literatures revealed that responsible government would go beyond mere pronouncement of anti-corruption policies (Adeyemi, 2013; Ciboh, 2014), to restructuring the judiciary system through (strengthened and tightened prosecuting techniques) that will do away with the current constitution that promote dominance and shields public bureaucrats that perpetuate corruption (Moyosore, 2015), to one that serves real democracy via trial and conviction of erring individuals.

More so, there exists a significance difference among Nigerian newspapers, particularly in corruption frames. A paired samples t-test conducted at ($p \leq 0.05$) significance level to test differences in the total corruption frames showed that Nigerian newspapers varied significantly in corruption frames. The result from Table 5 indicates that *the punch* newspaper frames more corruption issues than *the Guardian* newspapers with a calculated paired samples t-test of ($t(52) = -3.292$, $p = 0.002$). Similarly, there was a difference in the calculated paired samples t-test of the *Guardian* and the *Trust* newspapers at ($t(35) = -1.968$, $p = 0.057$), but the difference is insignificant because both newspapers received the same level of proportion resulting from the level of measurement ($p \leq 0.05$). Equally significant was a comparison of paired-samples test conducted to determine differences in the total corruption frames in the *Punch* and the *Trust* newspapers, the result in Table 5 showed high degree of significant difference with a calculated paired samples t-test showing ($t(35) = -4.266$, $p = 0.000$) of the same level of measurement at ($p \leq 0.05$). Consequently, it can be said that Nigerian newspapers displayed high differences in the distribution of corruption frames across the newspapers. It could, therefore, be inferred from differences in the result that ethnic considerations, political leaning, ownership concentration, and the drive for economic motive could be tagged with their differences. Apparently, this inference validated the submissions of Adaja (2016), Adisa (2016), and Aliagan (2016) that ideological postures, ethnic bias, and ownership motive could affect the reportage of sensitive topic like corruption in Nigerian newspapers.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the followings are recommended:

  i. There should be increasing attention on the political, economic, and legal cost of corruption and corrupt practices on individuals/politicians and administrators. Crusades of decency, morality and responsibility must be strengthened, fortified and upheld. It is hope, through this, that financial losses identified as an economic consequence of corruption will be reduced if not totally eradicated, thereby accelerating needed development.
  ii. There is the need for the Nigerian government to establish and strengthen anti-corruption court that will take charge of all criminal cases against corrupt politicians and administrators. Anti-corruption laws, legislations and regulations should be made accessible to the populace. When this is put into the action, it is hoped that they will be doing their part responsibly.

   iii.   Ownership of newspapers should allow professionalism to work well in the reportage of corruption issues. They must be made by the government to know and remember at all times that the media ownership is a public trust and that the work of journalism is that of service to the nation. Violation should be accompanied by punishment or fine. This will, to some extent, help remove the political, ownership and ethnic influence on corruption reportage which shows discrepancies in their scores of corruption stories.

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