

Newspaper Framing and the Prediction of Nigeria's 2016 Economic Crisis

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Abstract

This study investigates newspaper framing and the prediction of Nigeria's 2016 economic crisis. The press through its editorial contents, has an obligation to alert the public and the authorities on ill economic policies. But studies have blamed media partly for some economic crises in Europe and America for not predicting it coming. Thus, Nigeria economic crisis escalated to recession in second quarter of 2016. This study thus, investigated the role media play in framing the crisis using the types of frames used in explaining media framing of crisis-episodic and thematic frames, conflict, responsibility, morality, economic consequences and human interest frames, predictive frame paired with informative frame. Quantitatively, this study content analyzed 244 editions of The Punch and Daily Trust newspapers in respect of economic crisis stories from January 1st to August 31st 2016 using systematic sampling techniques. A textual analysis of the same economic crisis stories were purposely selected and used for the qualitative study. The study found out that the newspapers used more episodic frames than thematic frames. Responsibility frames was dominant (36.7%), though with slim margin compared to economic consequences frame (36.6%). Also, episodic frame (72%) dominates thematic frame (28%). Predictive frame (49%) used less than informative frame (51%). These findings show that newspapers provided solutions to the economic crisis, but also considered the use of economic consequences in a huge number. The newspapers were able to predict the recession coming, but focused more in informing the public on the woes happening to the economy. The study recommended that press should see it as a responsibility to draw the attention of policy makers when issues that are congruent to economic development are brewing.

Keywords: Economic crisis, framing, newspaper, recession, prediction.

1. Introduction

Early warning or prediction has been a promising mechanism to avert or mitigate the effect of crisis (Gerner & Schrodt, 1998), disaster (Faith, 2014) and economic downturn (Starkman, 2014) around the globe. Through early warning, such as predicting financial imbalances of a country (Bezemer, 2009), the government and public attention are being drawn to issues that can result to catastrophe. Such as when Nigeria media predicted financial imbalances in 1985 and alerted the citizens and government/policy makers to the dangers inherent in a policy being pursued by government. According to Daramola (2005, p. 188) "one can recall vividly here the advice of the media of communication in Nigeria especially the print media to the danger inherent in obtaining loan from the International Monitoring Fund (IMF) in 1985 under the General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida military regime. Against this advice, the then government obtained the loan. The possible effects of the loan were published in various forms including hard news, features and editorial to warn the government of the consequence action. Today we are all living witnesses to the devaluation of Nigeria's currency, inflation, and some other negative effects." However, the issue of economic crisis is still a major challenge in which early warning mechanism through calling the attention of those responsible in managing the economy is paramount, especially in developing country like Nigeria.

Nigeria, the country with the largest population on the Africa continent; and home to the largest black race in the world is blessed with both human and natural resources (Oladipo, 1996). The country is home to world bonny crude oil, which is the major source of revenue for the government and a rich versed land mass for agriculture, which is also the major source of livelihood of its over 190 million population (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016), faced economic crisis in August 31st 2016. Before the 1970s, agriculture is the main stay of the country's economy. Nigeria accrued foreign exchange from cash crops like cotton, groundnut, cocoa and palm oil. But, the discovery of crude oil in commercial quantity at that period made government of that time to abandon agriculture for the new oil dollars (Ekpo, Chime & Enor, 2016) and thus, the genesis of economic challenges. This development result the country to depends on mono-economy. Since then, the managers of Nigeria economy have been trying to get it right in terms of building a robust and progressive economy as being experienced in the developed society of the world (Ekpo, *et al.*, 2016).

On August 31st 2016, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) states "that Nigeria's economy has slid into recession after negative growth in the first two quarters of the year". The sale from crude oil is no more enough to fund the Federal, State and Local governments' expenditure. Government now result to accruing loans to 'pay

workers salary, in fact both domestic and foreign debts have amount to over 10 trillion naira in which the cost of servicing it is at the verge of overtaking the cost of capital expenditure, which is below 2.5 trillion naira at the 2016 budget (Ekpor, *et al.*, 2016). One pertinent question to ask is, was there no early prediction mechanism to draw the attention of government, financial regulators, corporate world and the general public on the pending economic dangers before it arrived? The NBS 2016 report indicates that “in the second quarter of 2016, the nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declined by -2.06 percent (year-on-year) in real terms”. It “was lower by 1.70 percentage points from the growth rate of 0.36 percent recorded in the preceding quarter, and also lower by 4.41 percentage points from the growth rate of 2.35 percent recorded in the corresponding quarter of 2015,”. The total value of capital imported into Nigeria in the second quarter of 2016 was estimated to be \$647.1 million, which represents a fall of 8.98% relative to the first quarter, and a fall of 75.73% relative to the second quarter of 2015 (NBS, 2016). The price of oil has fallen from highs of about \$112 a barrel in 2014 to below \$50 to the end of 2016.

Outside the oil industry, the figures show the fall in the Nigerian currency, the depreciation of the naira has also hurt the Nigerian economy. The country is so reliant on oil (70% foreign exchange) as its leaders have failed to diversify the economy (Ogbu, 2006). This declining in oil volume and devaluation of naira has put immense pressure on the country’s revenue profile which makes the Federal, State and Local government not to meet up with its expenditure. As Nigeria struggles with falling oil price, economic forecasts on the country are very gloomy; interest rates skyrocketed; oil investments are expected to fall, companies folding up, while the public are lamenting on hike of commodity prices.

This economic crisis has degenerated to recession because of poor management of the economy and pundits are blaming the governments of not doing what is supposed to do to avert the problem (Aremu, 2016). Is it that the government or those responsible in managing the country’s economy attention where not drawn to the pending crisis? The 2008 world economic crisis was partly blamed on lack of drawing the attention of the authority (Gupta, Sharma & Rao, 2011). Researchers have stress that economic development is a socially significant topic, as the economic system affects the lives of all citizens, whether directly or indirectly (Dreijere, 2013). This resonate with the views of research on framing, agenda-setting and economic news reporting by the media can be said to have potentially very far-reaching effects on the public agenda (Dreijere, 2013; Radu & Stefanita, 2013).

The media normative role in covering economy news is to engage on surveillance, which is the watchdog function by drawing the attention of the economy regulators on looming crisis before it emerge. Manning (2013) indicts economic reporters’ failure to alert the public on economic crisis of 2008 before it broke out. The 2008 global economic crisis has been blamed partly on the media negligent of its responsibility (Angela, 2009; Picard, 2015; Rose & Spiegel, 2009). Scholars have blamed the media for not performing the watchdog role. The press working from the angle of professionalism is expected to be the watchdog of the society (Manning, 2013); by framing of important issues to the extent of influencing the public. Here the press is expected to give prominence through framing and agenda setting on society’s looming dangers so that the government or the economic regulators will be warned to take right decision. The press through its editorial contents, has an obligation to protect the public from ills of wrong economic policies initiated by government, financial regulators and corporate individuals that are meant to exploit the public or lead the economic to bankrupt (McQuail, 2005). Here, the press is expected to provide detail information on the best way the economy is to be managed for optimum result.

As such, earlier researches have provided sufficient evidence that mass media have the power to select and pack events, issues, individuals and, thus, to influence the way the public perceive the surrounding reality. The theory of agenda setting and framing are among the most prominent media effects theories, which are largely used to analyze how the mass media filters the information and, thus, influences the public’s reactions to a whole range of external stimuli (Radu & Stefanita, 2013).

1.1 Objectives of the Study

This study aims at investigating newspapers framing and the prediction of 2016 Nigeria economic crisis. To achieve this, the following objectives have been designed:

1. Examine the patterns of newspapers coverage of 2016 Nigeria economic crisis.
2. Determine the dominants frames employed by newspapers in covering the 2016 Nigeria economic crisis.
3. Identify the frames that are more widespread in reporting the 2016 Nigeria economic crisis.
4. Examine the extent prediction and information frames were employed in newspapers coverage of 2016 Nigeria economic crisis.

2. The Nigerian economy

Nigeria, though an emerging economy, during 1960s, agriculture was the main stay of the economy. The economic growth of Nigeria was dependent on the production and consumption of agricultural products

and not petroleum product that is known for today. Until the early 70's, Nigeria was famed for her proficiency in the production of groundnuts hence the Kano groundnut pyramids, oil palm in the east/south and the faster part of cocoa in the western part of the country. The discovery of oil in the country in commercial quantities brought about radical changes in the economy of the nation which brought about mono-economy (Ocheni 2015). The other sectors seemed to have gone into oblivion and indeed were abandoned thereby making the country to be totally dependent on oil for her foreign exchange earnings. And Akindele, Nwasomba and Feridun (2005) emphasized the Nigerian economy will remain underdeveloped and stymied until the nature and character of the Nigerian state is reconfigured.

All effort made since then to diversify the economy of the country have come to naught or seem futile. Expectedly the narrowing of the economy to a monolithic export commodity has its attendant drawback as oil by virtue of its importance to the economics of nations has inevitably become a subject of political manipulation (Ocheni, 2015). But the greater danger for Nigeria is that as a sole commodity of the nation and the inherent total dependency on oil has made the country's economy revolve around it. Virtually all essential service rendered in the country revolves it. Almost all other sectors of the economy depend on oil. Any contemplation therefore of a possible scarcity or unavailability of the product will no doubt spell doom for the economy of the country (Sikkam, 2009).

However, the government of Muhammadu Buhari came on board in 2015 and promised to diversify the economy just like what his predecessor have always reinstated without any tangible result on ground. Thus, the president comment in May 2016:

The government is determined to diversify the economy in the shortest possible time. I am convinced that with greater diligence, hard work and patriotic determination to achieve self-sufficiency, Nigeria can produce most of the items currently on its import list. We made a terrible mistake by becoming a mono-product economy hinged on oil and we are now in a volatile situation, due to the crash in oil prices. We are now fully committed to economic diversification. Most of the things on our import bills can be produced here. And we are determined to achieve that self-dependency (Daily Trust Newspaper, May 2016 P.1)

Currently, the Nigerian economy is in bad shape as the country entered full blown recession in second quarter of 2016. The issue of corruption, fall in oil price, oil theft, poor foreign exchange and inconsistency in government policies are seen to be some of the reasons for the recession.

2.1 Causes of Nigeria Economic Crisis

Though, Nigeria is a middle income, mixed economy and country with emerging market, with expanding financial, service, communications, technology and entertainment sectors is now battling with woes of economic crisis which culminated to recession. Below are some of the enumerated causes of the crisis:

- i. **Corruption:** Excessive corruption and mismanagement by both government and private individuals which discourages foreign direct investment. Nigeria as a country is popular for monumental corruption 'manifestations' that plagues its government and institutions. The country, in the past decades has been 'decorated' with top ten position among the league of corrupt nations by Transparency International and other international watchdog organizations. Manifestation of corruption has remained the most notorious social menace threatening the general growth and development of Nigeria as it is seen in almost all facet of the society. Thus, Ekpo, Chime and Enor (2016) have echoed that the "exhibition of corrupt tendencies by public officials have bastardized the pace of growth and development in all facets. Nigeria has lost an estimated fifty percent (50%) of what it has generated since independence to public office looters".
- ii. **Low Foreign Reserve:** The drop in foreign reserves, which have fallen below \$28 billion have compelled the Central Bank of Nigeria to adopt stringent forex measures which include the ban of certain items from accessing forex through the official window of the market and the rationing of forex for eligible items. This have bomberang in other sector as marketers couldn't access forex. Companies are folding up and this has serious implication to the nations economy.
- iii. **Low Oil Price:** In 2016, the price of crude oil in international market has fallen to as low as \$38 per barrel. This makes government to think of borrowing to fund 2016 budget. Nigeria struggles with falling oil price, economic forecasts on the country are gloomy; interest rates have been skyrocketed; oil investments are expected to fall, while international and indigenous oil companies are anticipated to have more challenges. It was also projected that workers will be laid off and unemployment will skyrocket as other sectors are been affected, while some states may find it difficult to pay workers their salaries.
- iv. **Oil Theft:** The Nigerian economy is in dire straits engendered by the low crude oil price in the international market and the significant decline in the country's oil production as a result of soaring oil theft by militants. Analysts describe the situation as a double jeopardy, as the twin problem of low oil price and declining volume worsened the country's dwindling revenue profile. In 2016, Nigeria's oil

production had been hovering around 1.9 million barrels per day, mbpd, against a projected figure of about 2.3mbpd. This declining volume has put immense pressure on the country's revenue profile. The Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Ibe Kachikwu, hints on the hike in petrol price that the decline translated to a loss of about 800,000 barrels of crude oil daily. Considering the decline in oil production in the Niger Delta by 800,000 barrel daily viz a vis the benchmark production for 2016 budget of 2.2 million, owing to the vandalization of oil pipelines, in addition to the inability of non-oil revenue collecting agencies to meet our revenue targets owing to the economic crunch.

- v. **Poor Economic Planning:** Poor economic planning and no concrete implementation of her economic planning is the major cause of Nigeria current recession. Yes the government has proclaimed the usual generalities that every government indulges itself in about: Diversifying the economy, improving manufacturing/mining sector, raising agricultural output, encouraging foreign investment, among others, yet no concrete evidence strategic plan for growth.

2.2 The Effect of the Crisis

The effect of economic crisis in Nigeria is enormous as both the rich and the poor, the low, middle and upper class are complaining bitterly as the economy bites. However, Nigeria is passing through a hard time at the moment of this economic crisis. The economy is declining and the market is getting frustrated. Poverty and unemployment rate is on the high side and skies rocketing as private sector retrenching staff. The hike in fuel price as a result of subsidy removal is biting hard and the dollar is continuously putting pressure on the naira, while the sale from crude oil is no more enough to fund the federal and state governments. The result is now heavy depth burden as government is planning to collect \$29 billion loans, the highest ever in the history of the country.

Also, the drop in foreign reserves, which have fallen to below \$28 billion have compelled the Central Bank of Nigeria to adopt stringent forex measures which include the ban of certain items from accessing forex through the official window of the market and the rationing of forex for eligible items. The economic has collapsed. Low oil prices are battering Nigeria's export-dependent economy, but it's the government's market-distorting response have pushed the country into economic recession (Adebumiti, 2016).

For instance, the federal, states and local governments, for the month of January shared N370.4 billion at the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) meeting, compared to N387.8 billion it shared the previous month. Relative to the N629 billion shared in January 2015 and N503.6 billion in December 2014, it showed that FAAC allocations in one year have almost been halved due to lower earnings from crude exports (Adebumiti, 2016). These trends continue into 2016. As of September 2016, 27 states couldn't pay their workers' salaries. Government has decided to go for heavy loan from both international and domestic partners.

Commenting on the effect of the economic crisis, Aremu (2016) posts that the instruction by the Central Bank of Nigeria to make commercial banks stop customers from using their debit and credit cards overseas has serious repercussions to the economy. The cutting of \$10,000 to \$5,000 cash or negotiable instruments across the nation's borders for travelers with genuine business going abroad also has serious repercussions to the economy. These policies have put lots of people out of job and crippled the economy the more.

Ewubare (2016) writing in the *Financial Times magazine* of the UK, describes some of the steps taken by the government on the economy as foolishness in the sense that the intention of the Nigeria government to copy Venezuela's exchange rate policy and China's failed equity market strategy. These measures by the two communist nations failed them and Nigeria can't afford to go such a way in reviving the economy in order to avoid a recession.

2.3 Early warning system

Early warning system or model has to do with mechanism put in place to monitor, analyse or diagnose a working institutional system to see threats and how they can be managed before they escalate to the detriment of the system. Early warning system is applied in the economic, financial, defense, political, conflicts, environmental situations. Longman dictionary of contemporary english defined early warning system as "a system which tells you that something bad, especially an enemy attack is going to happen". Early warning has to do with drawing the attention of the public to pending danger, be it in the economic, politics, social, financial or environmental natural disaster. The essence of early warning is to take proactive measures to avert the pending danger from occurring or having it way into the society.

According to Li (2000) Economic / financial early-warning system is a system that performs the two important functions of economic / financial supervision and diagnosing operating conditions of financial institutions and the authorizes work are regulators. This is based on various operational management principles in the financial sector by critically diagnosing it functions in consonant with best practices. Thus, Li (2000); Rose and Spiegel (2009) notes that early warning system has the potential to avert major financial or economic crisis.

However, Li (2000: 10) emphasized six importance of early warning to financial or economic regulators.

- i. It is able to provide the financial and economic supervisory authorities with information as to the priority order, scope and frequency of on-site examination, in order to effectively match the available personnel.
- ii. Through its functioning, the early-warning system is to more objectively and quickly discover problem financial and economic institutions, and urge the financial supervisory authorities to strengthen their supervision and management of such institutions as a precautionary measure.
- iii. It is able early on to predict the likely deteriorating trend of problem in financial institutions.
- iv. It is able to gather on a regular basis the financial information that is reported by the financial and economic institutions, and to tidy up, compile and analyze such data to obtain an accurate picture of these institutions' operating conditions.
- v. The rating results derived from this early-warning system can serve as important reference material for handling problem financial and economic institutions and as a basis for improving the operating conditions of financial institutions.
- vi. If the deposit insurance system incorporates different risk premium is based on different levels of risk, the financial or economic early-warning system can provide different risk evaluation rankings, which will serve as a basis for determining the risk-based deposit insurance premium.

The media is a potent tool to use as early warning instrument to avert any form of crisis from happening. Gerner and Schrod (1998) notes that media has predictive power as they provide information regarding issues that can serve as early warning to stop the aggravation of crisis. Media serve as early warning when it performs the surveillance function to the society. The press, through its surveillance role provide timely information about issues that are of utmost important to the society. The press in this regard, act as public surrogate before the authority, also exposing wrong doings and abuse of public trust (Merritt & McCombs, 2004). This role is what is refers to as watchdog.

Merritt and McCombs (2004) argue for an extended watchdog role of the press that is consonant with the public interest aspiration:

News media need to be creative watchdogs and agenda setters scanning the horizon for the gaps in current public life. Part of this larger watchdog role is functioning as social radar, not just a chronicler of what government and other institutions are doing right now, whether good or bad. This means discovering the concerns of citizens and defining what the public needs to know in very expansive terms (P.23).

But for this expanded watchdog role to resonate with the public interest, the press must educate, inform, persuade and enlighten the public regarding issues that are meant to benefit the general neighborhood. The news media are the public's surrogate looking over the shoulder of public officials, institutions and businesses. This tradition of investigative reporting is a steeple of excellence in the profession of journalism

The public cannot know the true state of public affairs if the press has compromised their watchdog stance. However, the watchdog function of the press is very important for democratic consolidation and economic development of the society.

2.4 Theoretical Review

To best examine the subject under study, the researchers used Framing theory.

2.4.1 Framing Theory

Framing as a theory in media studies has been defined as "the way events and issues are organized and made sense of, especially by media, media professionals, and their audiences" (de Vreese, 2001). Therefore, 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 recommendation" (Entman, 1993). Framing as analytical tool mainly originated from Goffman's (1974), a sociologist who study schemata of interpretation', - to him, enables individual to locate, identify and label experiences and events in ways that shape interpretation and response (Keranen & Sanprie, 2008). Since framing relates with press narratives and its effect on public opinion, framing theory has been a very fertile ground for researches. Scheufele and Iyengar (2011), note that communication researchers have become infatuated with the framing concept as thousands of media studies have been on media frames and framing effects.

Since this study is interested on newspaper framing, the understanding of news framing given by Norris, Kern & Just (2003) is important. Kern and Just posit that 'news frames' refer to interpretive structures that journalists use to set particular events within their broader context. For instance, newspaper report can decide to frame crisis from the angel of who is responsible. The essence of framing is selection to prioritize some facts, images, or developments over others, thereby unconsciously promoting one particular interpretation of events.

Therefore, as press emphasizes some elements of a topic above others, a frame provides a way to understand an event or issue. In this vein, the framing and presentation of events and news in the mass media can thus systematically affect how recipients of news come to understand these events (Price, Tewksbury & Power,

1995). Norris, Kern & Just (2003) point out that the conventional news frame in any society is expected to play a central role in shaping public reactions, especially where there is a broad consensus creating a shared 'one-sided' interpretation among most leaders and who share a common national culture and identity. Framing theory has a good explanatory power as to how media narratives of issues will influence people's understanding and opinion on those issues.

Plethora of studies tries to identify frames by providing an interpretative account of media texts (Downs, 2002). Rooted in both quantitative and qualitative paradigm, framing studies are based on studying media effect on the society. Although most studies on media effects have focused on the agenda-setting role of the media, in recent years the concept of media framing has become more prominent (De Vreese, 2007). Framing effects refer to the way in which information is presented or framed in public discourse (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2010). Wettstein (2012) analyzes how public attitudes and behaviors are shaped as a result of framing a subject. There are two factors that facilitate the adoption of frames (Wettstein, 2012, p. 320): "the accessibility of an issue, and the correlation between a subject and the audience's pre-existing opinions." In other words, framing effects are not independent. Shuck and de Vreese (2006) have established that attitudes and knowledge that exist before media exposure play an important role in determining the framing effects. Kinder and Sanders (1990) have found correlations between low levels of political information, on one hand, and the predisposition to adopt frames, on the other hand. Maherswaran and Meyers-Levy (1990) and Shah *et. al.* (2004) have shown that, in general, the public is more affected by negative frames than by the positive ones.

Kahneman and Tversky's experiments (1984) have shown that the type of framing directs the audience's attention to specific aspects of reality, which means that, simultaneously, the frames adopted by mass-media can distract the public from other aspects. Many frames can be defined also by omission (Entman, 1993). According to de Vreese, (2005), "the consequences of framing "can be analyzed at individual and societal level. An individual level consequence may be altered attitudes about an issue based on exposure to certain frames. On the societal level, frames may contribute to shaping social level processes, such as political socialization, decision-making, and collective actions"(p. 52). Identifying the frames used in the media coverage of various issues is a very useful approach, which has a major stake in formulating relevant hypotheses on how public opinion forms and evolves in relation to sensitive issues, such as referendums or elections.

De Vreese (2002) differentiates between issue-specific frames and generic frames. The issue-specific frames pertain to a specific topic and can be identified only in some contexts, having also a direct connection with the analyzed events. Generic news frames are applicable to a wide range of topics, and even in different cultural environments.

As already discussed, mass-media have a very important role in understanding economic realities of the society. The evidence provided by the two interlinked theories – agenda-setting and framing – suggest that the media's effects are potentially affecting our perceptions, thus determining our behaviors and attitudes. Exploring how the newspapers frames the 2016 economic crisis could prove to be a very useful endeavor, helping the clarification of several aspects. First, the study wants to see how the economic crisis is framed. Does the episodic frame dominate the thematic frame of the crisis? Does the conflict frame prevail? Or is it the morality frame that is more spread? etc. Blow is an exploration of the different types of frames as postulated by scholars in operationalization to economic crisis report.

2.4.2 Framing of Economic Crisis

Scholars have stated two major types of frames - Issue specific and generic frame (Vreese, 2005; Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). The issue-specific frames are specific to a topic or event while generic frame are applicable to various topics and events. Studies have identifies various issue-specific frames and generic frames (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000: Iyengar, 1991; Cappella and Jamieson, 1997). The generic frames are the ones by Semetko & Valkenburg (2000) and Iyengar (1991) have become one of the most analyzed frames in communication research (Vreese, 2005). These same frames where initial categories into episodic and thematic frames by Shanto Iyengar in 1991.

Literature has identified a handful of frames that occur commonly in the news. Neuman, Just, & Crigler (1992) discussed comprehensively several different types of frames dominantly used in U.S. news coverage: conflict, economic consequences, human impact, and morality. Based on these frames, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) analyzed five national newspapers and television news stories in the period surrounding the Amsterdam meeting of European heads of state in 1997 and identified five news frames in order of predominance: attribution of responsibility, conflict, economic, human interest, and morality.

Studies identify different ways of framing a crisis, as it is presumed that the main preferences of public officials are stability and denial of fault and any non-incremental change. Yet others have developed a crisis-reform thesis in democracy, politics, crime conflict and economic (de Vries, 2004).

Other researchers identify four approaches to crisis framing- the nature and severity of the crisis; its causes; responsibility for its origins and escalation; and its political implications (Hart & Tindall, 2009).

Economic crisis can be refers to the role of the media in aggravating the situation. There are different

approaches to understand economic crisis frame analysis in media studies (Dreijere, 2013; Hart & Tindall, 2009). This study uses the episodic and thematic frames by Iyengar and adapts the five frames approaches (responsibility, human interest, morality, economic and conflict) of the researchers Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) to the research of generic frames and add, the prediction frames by Radu and Stefanita (2013), while the researcher is going to test the informative frame as a variation to predictive frame.

Iyengar (1991) identified two distinct news frames dealing with issues: the episodic news frame (focusing on certain individuals or specific events) and the thematic news frame (placing issues and events in general context at the societal or governmental level). At the same time, media can present problems and their solutions as either an individual's or society's responsibility. Thus, this study separated responsibility frame and solution frame because attributing responsibility to economic crisis does not mean providing solution to it.

Thus, this study aims to identify how level of responsibility is covered by the news media across economic crisis by applying Iyengar's individual and organizational (societal/governmental in Iyengar's terms) levels of responsibility and at same time measuring the stories if they provide solution to the crisis in their reports. Additionally, the study will examined how the previous five news frames are used in conjunction with the levels of prediction.

The episodically framed material identified by Iyengar (1991) denotes a reflection of events, whereas thematic reporting demands an in-depth, interpretive analysis that is more difficult to anticipate.

In their turn, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) studied five news frames that have been identified in earlier research: attribution of responsibility, human interest, conflict, morality and economic consequences.

Responsibility frame presents an issue or a problem by attributing responsibility to someone for its causes or resolution. This frame is defined as "a way of attributing responsibility for a cause or solution to either the government or to an individual or group" Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 96). Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) found that the attribution of responsibility frame was most commonly used in serious newspapers.

Human interest frame involves individual stories or an emotional angle in presenting an event, issue or problem, which is a way of personalizing and dramatizing news and rendering them more emotional. This frame "brings a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem" (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 95). In economic crisis situations, the frame stimulates the psychological pulse of people, which ultimately leads them to a more negative attitude toward the crisis (Dreijere, 2013). Also, Cho and Gower (2006) showed that the human interest frame influenced participants' emotional response, and that it was a significant predictor of blame and responsibility in a transgression crisis

The conflict frame is used in such a way as to reflect conflict and disagreement among individuals, groups, or institutions. Neuman *et al.* (1992) found that conflict was commonly used by U.S. news media. In the Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) study, the conflict frame was the second most common frame, and the more serious the newspaper, the more the conflict frame was in evidence.

The morality frame puts the event, problem, or issue in the context of morals, social prescriptions, and religious tenets. Neuman *et al.* (1992) found that the morality frame was commonly used by journalists indirectly through quotations or inference, rather than directly because of the journalistic norm of objectivity. Morality frame places an event such as economic crisis in a context of religious principles or moral injunctions.

The economic consequence frame presents an event, a problem or an issue by underlining the actual or potential economic consequences it will have for an individual, a group, an institution, a region or a state. This frame reports an event, problem, or issue in terms of the consequences it will have economically on an individual, groups, organizations, or countries. Neuman *et al.* (1992) identified it as a common frame in the news. The wide impact of an event is an important news value, and economic consequences are often considerable (Graber, 1993).

For each frame, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) defined a series of questions of which the coder had to respond with a yes or a no to test whether articles fit into them. Many researchers have acted similarly: both using Semetko and Valkenburg's approach as the basis and, depending on the context of the study, adding further frame, such as a prediction and information frames is possible (Dimitrova, Lee Kaid, Williams & Trammell, 2005; Dreijere, 2013).

Predictive frame is when the report was able to predict pending economic crisis such as recession. The information frame is when the report only states the economic crisis to the knowledge of the public without necessarily stating consequences.

3. Methodology

The researchers adopted the quantitative (Content analysis) and qualitative (textual analysis) approach. Content analysis has been described as a technique for the systematic, quantitative and objective description of media texts, that is useful for certain purposes of clarifying output, looking for effects and making comparisons between media and overtime, or content and reality (McQuail (2005). As a scientific method of inquiry, content analysis studies communication contents with 'reference to the meanings, contexts and intention contained in the

message' (Ozuhu-Sulaiman, 2013). This work analyzed two Nigerian national dailies (Daily Trust and The Punch). The editions of *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers within the period under study, of January 1st 2016 to August 31st 2016. This was the period when the economic crisis aggravated before it resulted to full recession in August 2016. Their contents were analyzed for the purpose of this study. These newspapers were selected because they are national dailies newspapers with wide circulation across the country.

For the textual analysis, economic crisis stories that really capture the frames the study tends to analyze qualitatively studied. The sampling technique used is systematic sampling technique because the technique allows the population be given equal chance of being selected from which sampling can be done within the editions and also gives the researcher leverage to select stories that directly relates to the traits needed to validate the study. This way, each day, week and month were represented.

The table 3.1 shows the sample size of the two newspapers from the periods of study.

Variable of Study	Period of Study	Total Edition	Sampling rate	Sampling size
Economic crisis	January 1, 2016	244 x 2 (488)	2.0	122x2 (244)

Table 3.1 above shows that 244 editions constituted the study population for each of the two newspapers (*Daily Trust* and *The Punch*) whose reports were selected for investigation during the economic crisis before it culminates to full blown recession spanning the period between January 1, 2016 and August 31, 2016 bringing the total number of editions for the two newspapers to 488. The researcher employed systematic random sampling technique to pick 122 editions of each newspaper at an interval rate of 2.0 making a total of 244 editions as the sample for the period of the economic crisis being investigated.

For content categories, the study adopted deductive coding which involves 'pre-determining certain frame as content analytic variables to verify the extent to which the categories occur in the news' as provided in the studies of Dreijere (2013); Iyanger (1991); Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Therefore the contents categories are developed after extensive interrogation of literatures. The categories are developed as follows:

Table 3.2 shows the research questions and corresponding content category and unit of analysis.

Research questions	Variables	Categories	Unit of analysis
RQ1	Pattern of Coverage	Prominence	Article
RQ2	Dominant Frame	Episodic frame Thematic frame	Article
RQ3	Most spread frame	i. Conflict frame ii. Responsibility Frame iii. Morality Frame iv. Economic Consequence frame v. Human Interest Frame	Paragraph in article
RQ4	Extend of Prediction or Information frame	Predictive and Informative frame	Article

Research findings

STUDY I

4. Presentation of Quantitative Data

From the selected two newspapers, quantitative and qualitative data collected were collated and presented in the simplest form to make the key features of the study easily grasped and interpreted.

Table 4.1: Number of Economic Crisis Stories by Selected Newspapers from January to August 2016

Newspapers	Frequency	Percentage
The Punch	110	49 %
Daily Trust	114	51%
Total	224	100%

Table 4.1 present the frequency of economic crisis issue stories reported by the selected newspapers. Within the space of January to August 2016, 224 stories were published on the economic crisis in the period study in the selected area. Of the 224 stories, *Daily Trust* published 114 economic crisis representing 51%, while *The Punch* published 110 economic crisis representing 49%. This explains that Nigerian newspapers are conscious of the economic challenges the country is facing and they are dedicating spaces for such stories in almost equal proportion.

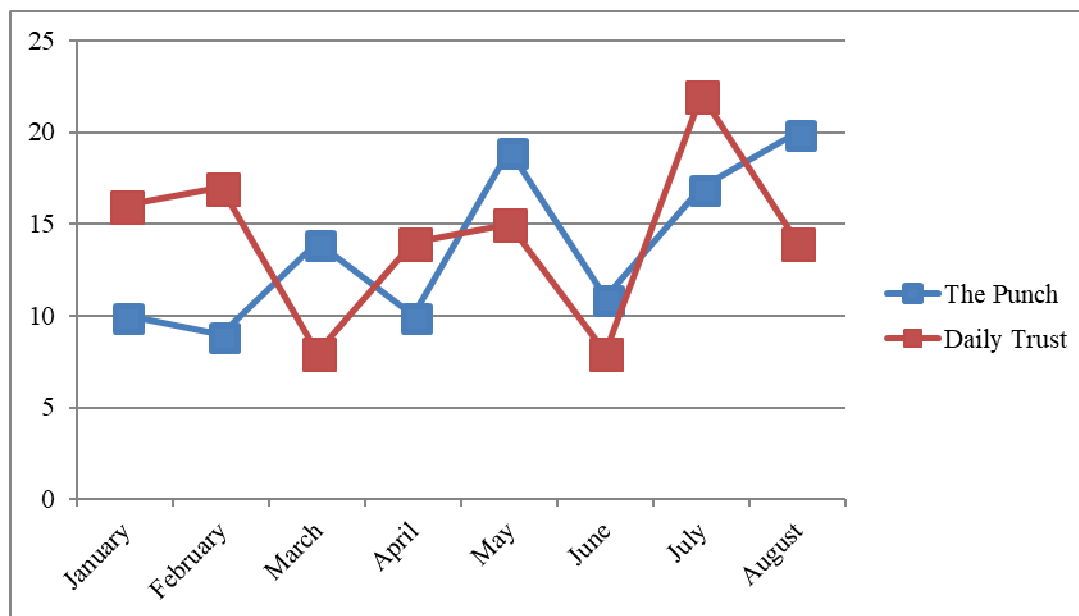


Figure 4. 1: Frequency of Economic crisis stories distribution by Months

Figure 4.1 result shows the distribution of economic crisis stories in the selected newspapers 8 months before Nigeria was officially declared by National Bureau of Statistic (NBS) to be in recession in August, 2016. The result shows that *Daily Trust* reported economic crisis issues the most (22 stories) in July and *The Punch* report the crisis most (20 stories) in August. The Newspapers have started reporting stories on economic challenges as early as January with *Daily Trust* reporting 16 stories in January and 17 in February, while *The Punch* started to give more attention to economic crisis stories in March. In general, the more the country faced stiffer economic challenges, the more the newspapers responded in highlighting the issues in their publications.

Table 4.2 Newspapers Genres used in Reporting Economic Crisis

Articles	Frequencies	Percentage
Feature	12	5.4
Columns	23	10.3
News	156	69.4
Interview	8	3.6
Editorial	15	6.7
Others	10	4.5
Total	224	100%

Table 4.2 shows the different genres of journalistic piece were used to report economic crisis stories in the selected newspapers. Amongst these are: News, columns, features, interviews, and editorials. 156 news stories represented with 69.4% reported on economic crisis, 23 columns stories represented with 10.3% reported on economic crisis, 15 editorials represented with 6.7% reported on economic crisis, 12 features represented with 5.4% reported economic crisis and 8 interviews represented with 3.6% reported economic crisis. The data means that, the newspapers focus on breaking the news on any development regarding the economic crisis the country is facing. These economic crises are usually related to the fall of naira to the dollar, lack of forex and the downward price of world oil which cumulated into high inflation.

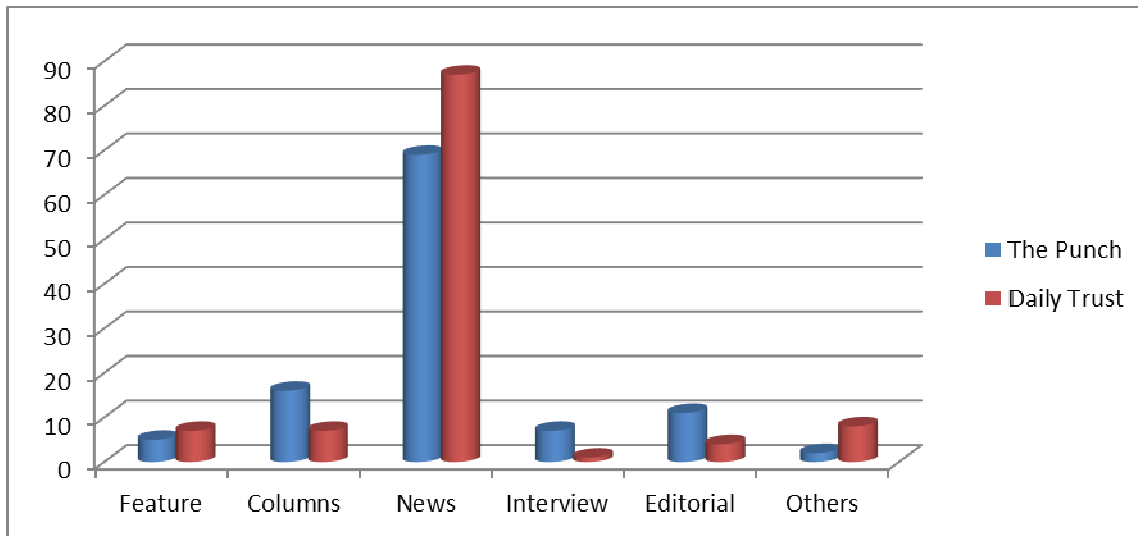


Figure 4.2: Frequency of types of Economic Crisis Articles according to Selected Newspapers.

Figure 4.2 revealed that both *Daily Trust* and *The Punch* dedicated a bulk of their economic crisis stories in their news section. *The Punch* has a sizable economic crisis that is featured in opinion articles, while *Daily Trust* has a sizable economic crisis articles treated in their editorials. By implication, it means that most of economic stories in the newspapers are meanly based on straight news.

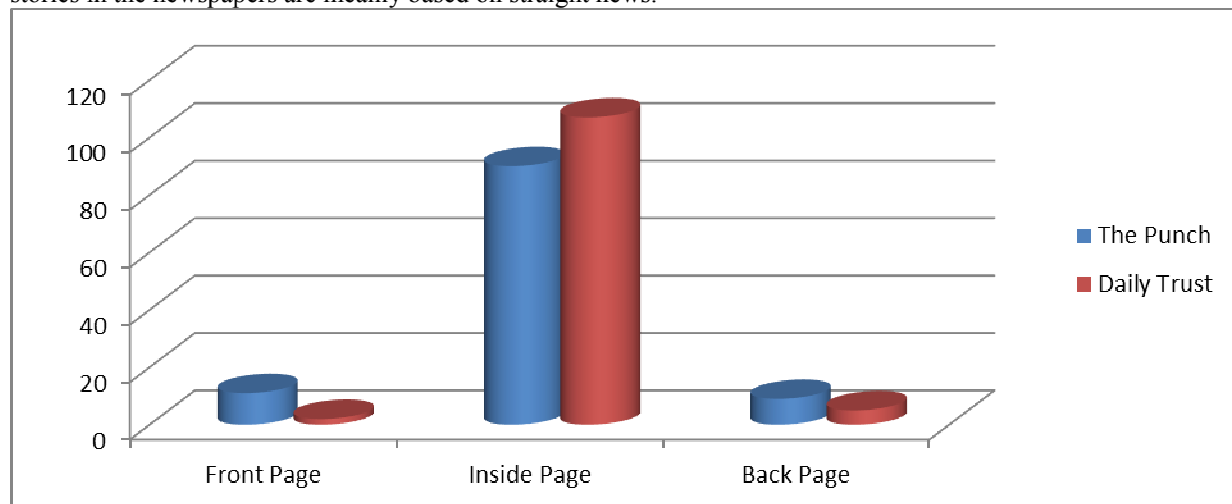


Figure 4.3 Frequency Distribution of Economic crisis stories Placement among The Punch and Daily Trust Newspapers.

Figure 4.3 revealed that both *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* newspapers gave bulk of their economic crisis stories inside pages of their publication. Although, *The Punch* gave a sizable number to front page, *Daily Trust* gave very little of their economic crisis stories front page reportage. The implication here is that both newspapers do not give much prominence to their coverage of 2016 economic crisis.

Table 4.3: Frequency of the Dominant Spread Frame Coverage of 2016 Economic Crisis by the Selected Newspapers

Spread Frame	The Punch		Daily Trust		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Conflict Frame	14	12.7	16	14.0	30	13.4
Responsibility/Solution Frame	42	38.2	41	35.9	83	37.0
Morality Frame	10	9.1	7	6.1	17	7.6
Economic Consequences Frame	37	33.6	45	39.5	82	36.6
Human Interest Frame	7	6.4	5	4.4	12	5.4
Total	110	100	114	100	224	100

Overall, table 4.3 shows that responsibility frame dominate (83) the selected newspapers coverage of economic crisis between January to August 2016 with 36.6%, but with a slim margin as economic consequences (82) representing 37.0%. This was followed by conflict frame 30 represented with 13.4%, morality frame 18 represented with 7.6% and human interest frame 12 which is the least represented with 5.4%. Specifically, *Daily*

Trust and *The Punch* frame more than one-quarter (39.5%) and (33.6%) respectively to Economic consequences frame. Also, *The Punch* frame over one-quarter (38.2%) of its economic crisis article with solution frame. Human interest frame was the least (5.5%) in *The Punch* as it was the least frame in *Daily Trust* also. It therefore implies that, the selected newspapers were able to provide solution to the myriad of economic challenges Nigeria faced in January 2016 to August before it officially entered into recession.

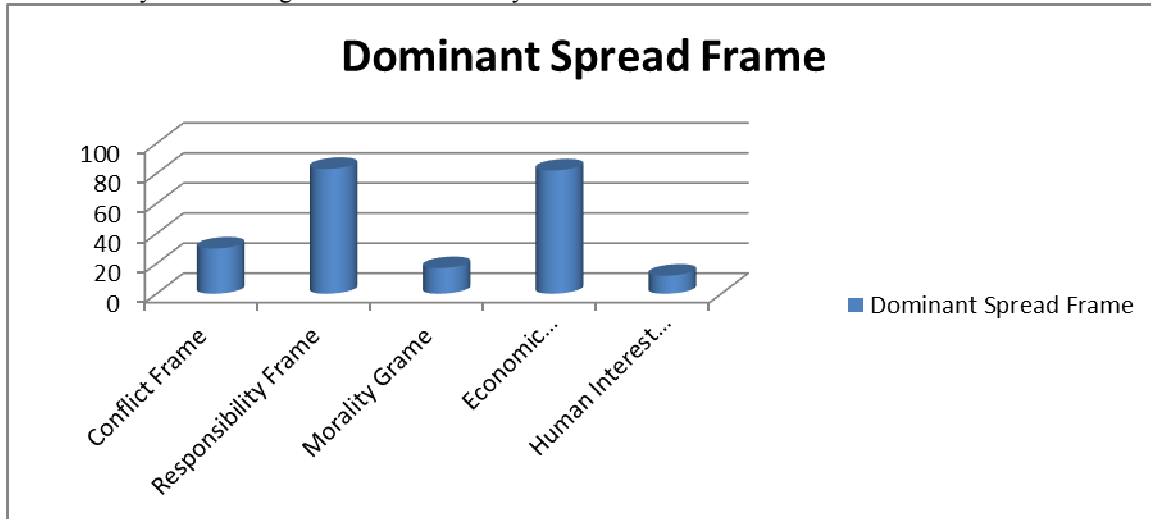


Figure 4.4 Dominant Spread Frames of Economic Crisis Coverage by the Selected Newspapers

The figure 4.4 reveals that economic consequences was given a dominant position spread frame of selected newspaper framing of 2016 economic crisis Nigeria found itself. Though, Responsibility/ solution frame was given huge consideration as it is above economic consequences with a slim margin in the newspaper try to use their publication in providing solution the economic challenges. Why economic consequences is high may be connected to the facts, the stories gave much spaces explaining the wrong policies government initiated and the failure of government officials in providing poor leadership regarding the country's economy.

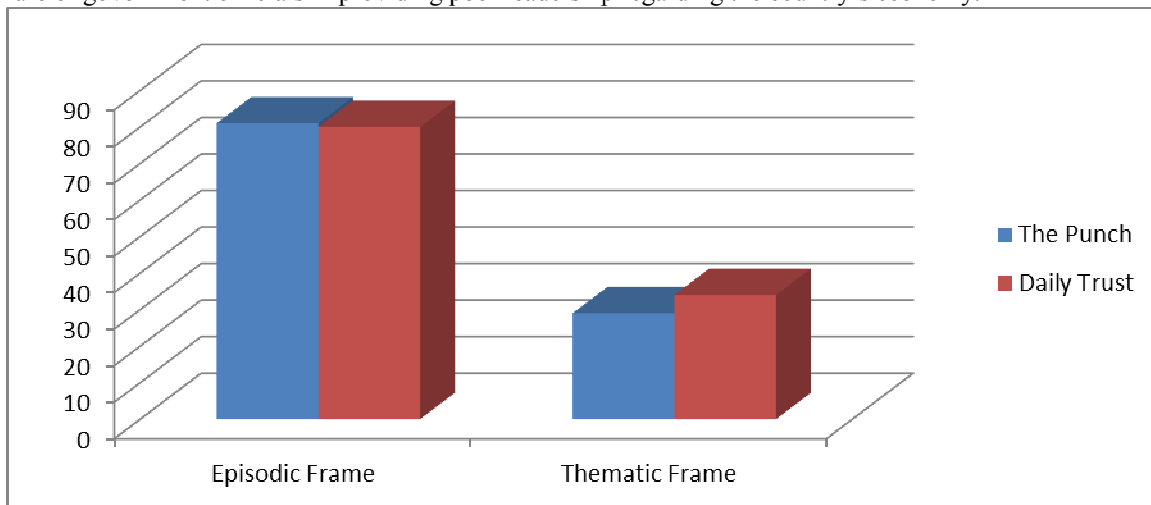


Figure 4.5 Dominant Frame used by the Selected Newspapers Coverage of 2016 Economic Crisis

Figure 4.5 revealed that both *Daily Trust* (70.2%) and *The Punch* (73.6%) newspapers used episodic frame the most in framing the 2016 economic crisis. Thematic frame was used the least with *Daily Trust* (29.8%) and *The Punch* (26.4%). By implication, it means that economic crisis stories were not given much indepth as the reports focused on more of issue specific. That is, as the country experience lost in stock exchange, down fall of global oil price, lack of Forex and high inflation, the newspapers quickly rushed to the press and published the events as they unfold. The little thematic frames are usually treated in their opinion columns, editorials and features.

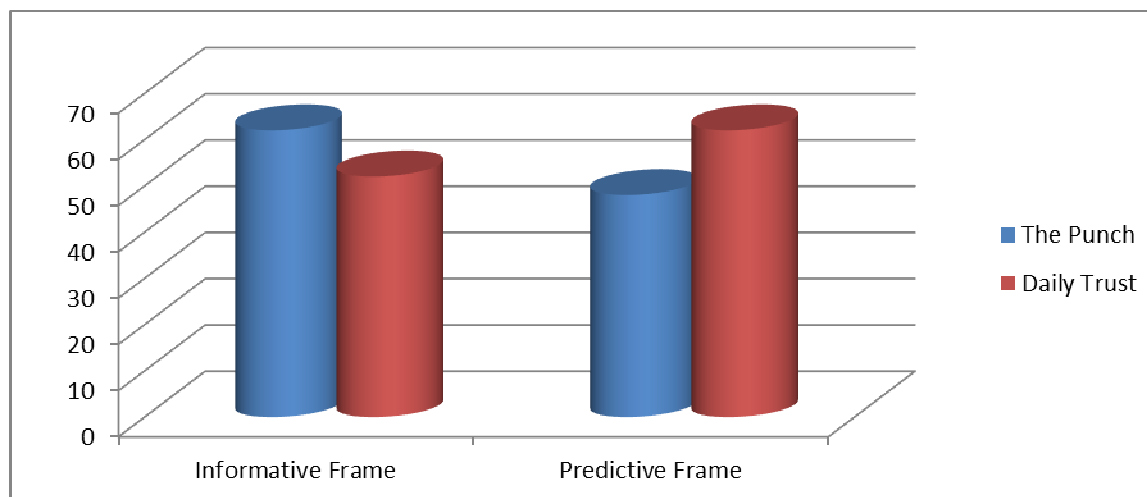


Figure 4.7: Direction Frame used by the Selected Newspapers Coverage of 2016 Economic Crisis

Figure 4.7 shows that the selected newspapers give a large portion of their framing of the economic crisis by predicting how severe it will become if adequate measures are not taken. Though, *The Punch* direct it economic crisis frame by providing information about the issue the most (62) represented with 56.4%, *Daily Trust* direct it economic crisis framing predicting it severity the most (62) represented with 54.4%. The newspapers were able to foresee the recession coming in their framing of 2016 economic crisis. They also used the pages of their newspapers to provide information on myriad of economic challenges the country faced at that time.

To further explore the used of frames by selected newspapers framing of 2016 economic crisis, a pair sample T-test was conducted. Table 4.4 presents the result.

Table 4.4 Paired-sample T-Test between Newspapers Framing of 2016 Economic Crisis

	The Punch			Daily Trust			T	Df	P
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD			
Spread Frame	110	4.14	1.68	110	3.84	1.69	1.372	109	.173
Dominant Frame	110	1.26	.44	110	1.29	.44	-467	109	.642
Direction Frame	110	1.44	.50	110	1.55	.50	-1.559	109	.122

A pair sample t-test was conducted to find out whether there is significant difference in *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* used of frames in their coverage of 2016 economic crisis. The results as shown in table 4.4 reveal that there is no significant difference between *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* in terms of used of spread frames in their framing of economic crises ($t = 1.372, df=109, p=.173$). Also, no significance difference between *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* used of dominant frames in their coverage of 2016 economic crisis ($t=-467, df=109, p=.642$). Furthermore, the two newspapers have not significant difference in their used of direction frame in their framing of 2016 economic crisis ($t=-1.559, df=110, p=.122$). These results perhaps, explain Nigerian newspapers usually have the same sources of their news and information. The study noticed that the selected newspapers have no difference in their framing of the economic crises in Nigeria.

STUDY II

4.2 Presentation of Qualitative Data

This section devised the use of textual analysis for the study to generate relevant data. The textual analysis of the economic crisis stories *The Punch* and *Daily Trust* are highlighted for analysis according to the headlines and the correspondent frame.

4.2.1 The Punch Newspaper

Economic Consequences, Thematic and Predictive Frames

Hard times ahead, CBN Warns Nigeria- Says Low oil revenue to Linger

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has released a secular warning Nigerians on hard times ahead because of the current economic challenges. The Apex bank stated that the persistence low in oil revenue has really affected the country's foreign reserve. (The Punch, January, 2016 P.1)

The newspaper published this story in its front page to show how importance the issue is to the country. The paper was able to tell Nigerians the economic consequences of global fall of oil price to the country. The paper framed the story as economic consequences frame. The report was also successful in using predictive frame to inform Nigerians that more economic crisis should be expected.

Economic Consequences, Thematic and Informative Frames

Oil Slump Exposes Weakness in Africa Economies

Report by the World Bank states that the global slump of oil price affects Africa economic as it is already weak and vulnerable. The report specifically identify Nigeria whose economy largely depend on oil revenue. (The Punch, March 17 2016 P.18).

The newspaper was able to inform it readers of economic consequences of oil price slump. The paper uses thematic frame and information frame to inform it readers on the realities of Africa weak economy which is badly affected by oil crash.

Consequences, Thematic and Predictive Frames

Budget Delay Negatively Affecting Economy

The delay in the passage of 2016 Budget by both the executive and the legislature is having a negative effect on the nations' fragile economy. Experts have said that the lack of passage of the budget is effecting critical projects funding and as such, slowing the economy. (The Punch, April, 6, 2016 p.8).

The newspaper has done its part in drawing the attention of leaders in-charge of policy implementation of their actions and inactions hurting the country's economy. This is economic consequences frame, thematic frame and predictive frame.

In a similar report in April 6, The Punch newspaper wrote an editorial to warn the government on the hitch up 2016 budget is facing and its effect on the economy tagged "2016 Budget Gridlock Harmful to Economy". The newspaper used economic consequences frame in their editorial.(The Punch, April 20, 2016 p.18). A similar report was published in the newspaper a month later "Budget Delay, Oil Slump will Affect Economic Growth". The paper was consistence in using thematic and predictive frame to drive home their opinion regarding the economic crisis. (The Punch, May 14, 2016 p .23). The paper also editorialized that "2016 Budget is an Untidy Mess, Responsive government are cutting cost". (The Punch, February 8, 2016 p.43)

In it editorial of February, 8 2016, the newspaper draws the attention of government to cut cost as a responsive representative looking at the prevailing economic challenges

Economic Consequences, Episodic and Information Frames

Stocks: Investors Lose 1 trillion in First Quarter of 2016

Investors in the country's capital market (liquidity category) lost over 1.05 trillion naira in the first quarter of 2016. Within three months (January-March), the equities market depreciated by 10-79% according to available data covering dealings on the floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange. (The Punch, June 1, 2016 P.23)

The newspapers used information frame to inform it readers on the economic consequences crashing stock exchange with an episodic frame. (The Punch, April 24, 2016 P.23). A similar, report was published in June 1, 2016 "Stocks: Investors Lose 426 Billion in One Session".

Responsibility, Thematic and Information Frames

Buhari on Naira Devaluation Debate

President Muhammadu Buhari has consistently resist IMF and World Bank advice that Nigeria should devalue the Naira because of Forex scarcity and low revenue as a result of crash in oil price. The President has consistently said that what the country need is diversification and giving prioritizing local content. True diversification of the Nigerian economy will ensure that the country rely less on oil revenue, as such, any shuck from global market will not affect it. The country need to build it critical infrastructure to drive the economy. (The Punch, May 2, 2016 P.43).

The newspaper used it editorial to advise the government on the way out of the economic challenges using solution frame and thematic to prove detailed information on a possible way out.

Economic Consequences, Thematic and Information Frames

Nigeria Record first Trade Deficit in Seven Years

The Nigerian Bureau of Statistic said that the country is recording trade deficit in alarming rate and the country's revenue is dwindling. Experts have blamed the deficit on falling oil price, lack of forex, corruption, lack of diversification etc. (The Punch, June 1, 2016 p.5)

Using economic consequences frame, the newspaper inform the readers on the reasons the country is experiencing trade deficit. The report used thematic frame to give detailed information how the country record all time trade deficit in seven years.

Economic Consequences and Information Frames

External Reserves Drop to 26.42 Billion Dollars

Nigeria's external reserve fall by 2.65 percent to 26.42 billion dollars in May 2 the Central Bank of Nigeria statistic showed on Tuesday. The reserve dropped as a result of low revenue from oil and at the same time the country is servicing it foreign debt. (The Punch, June 1, 2016 P.3)

Using economic consequences frame, the paper used episodic frame to provide the readers with information from the CBN on the present state of the nation's foreign reserve.

Economic Consequences, Information Frames

For Consumers, the Fear of Inflation Looms Large

Consumers around the country are groaning bitterly because high cost of goods in the market. The soaring of

good price is coast as a result of high inflation the country is experiencing like never before. The prices of foodstuff in some instance have skyrocket. (The Punch, July 9, 2016 P. 23)

The newspaper uses used it medium to inform the readers on the state of mind of Nigerians in respect to the economic crisis. Economic consequences were used to highlight the hardship Nigerians are likely to face in respect to high inflation, applying predictive frame and thematic frame as the dominant frame. (The Punch, June 17, 2016 P.5). A similar report was published on July, 9, 2016 tagged “Food Prices Soar as Inflation Hits 11-year High”. In this report, the paper was specific in the use of episodic frame to state the extent of inflation in recent times. **Economic Consequences, Thematic and Information Frames**

Forex Crisis Threatens Federal Government 2 Trillion road Project

Forex scarcity is threatening Federal Government two trillion naira road projects across the country as government is finding it difficult to pay foreign contractors. Federal Government debts are soaring to the extent that contractors have abandoned project just as naira devaluation may delay delivery of 226 projects a recent report indicate. This development has made MDGs to beg presidency to pay the debts. (The Punch, July 9, 2016 P.1).

The newspaper was able to relate the current economic crisis Forex scarcity is causing to the issue of developing critical infrastructure seeing impossibility. Using it front page, the paper was able to highlight the economic consequences of Forex scarcity, using thematic frame to inform it readers on the current challenges Nigeria economy is faced with.

The report of July 21, “Naira Sinks to 375 naira against Dollar” Economics seeks for policy change”. “We can tap the Nigeria diaspora to Forex to save the situation at home”, provided solution to the economic crisis even as the paper used episodic frame state the current position of naira to the dollar. (The Punch, July 21, 2016). Part of the solution was the paper to publish that “Federal Government must Adopt Cost-Cutting Strategies”. (The Punch, July 5, 2016 P.23)

Responsibility, Thematic and Predictive Frames

Nigerian Debt rises in 12 Months, Unhealthy for economy - Experts

The Nigerian debt rises by 1. 3 trillion naira in twelve months. Experts say debt is unhealthy for the economy. The report also says that NNPC recorded 256 billion naira loss in 2015. (The Punch, February 4, 2016 P.1)

The economic crisis continue to worse even as the paper continue to provide information and predicting the consequences in their reports “Economic Crisis may Worsen as Naira Hits 390/Dollars” (The Punch, August 4, 2016 p.23), “Banking Sector may Face more Challenges Banking”(The Punch, July 25, 2016 P.24). Also, “Nigeria Loses 11 Billion Naira Daily” Oil exports suffer, (The Punch, August 26, 2016 p.1). And the Apex bank have seems to be perplexed. The paper reports that “CBN Raises Interest Rate to 14%, warns Banks”, but “Economist Decision will not reduce inflation” in the same report. (The Punch, July 27, 2016 P.1)

The economic crisis also pushed CBN to introduce new monetary policy to easy Forex scarcity and the newspaper reported that “CBN must protect new Forex Policy. The paper hear, used solution frame and predictive frame to highlight measures on how make sure that government policy succeed (The Punch, July 21, 2016)

In the quest of the newspaper effort in proffering solution to government on the economic crisis, a report “Experts urge more Spending as Federal Government says Economy in Recession” used solution frame and thematic frame predicting that if government do not cut cost, the economic challenges will linger. (The Punch, July 22, 2016 P.24)

Economic Consequences, Episodic and Predictive Frames

Economic Recession Affects Workers’ Productivity

A professor of Economic has said that Nigerian workers are facing the adverse effect of recession as such it is affecting their productivity. (The Punch, May 4, 2016 p.43)

The newspaper have used recession to describe the economic crisis the country is facing even as the country have not been officially declared bankrupt to such effect. This is predictive frame.

Economic Consequences and Predictive Frames

Recession Imminent

The economic challenges the country is currently facing cannot be far from recession from the numbers coming out all round. It is no more news that the country is facing adverse effect of oil price slump, scarcity of Forex, high inflation and high indebtedness. (The Punch, May 25, 2016)

The newspaper as early as May, have started predicting recession coming.

The Newspaper used the pages of it publication to predict recession as the country faced adverse effect of economic downturn. Some of the captions are: “Recession Hits Firms with Foreign Debt Hard” (The Punch, July 31, 2016), “Mr President and an Economy in Recession” (The Punch, July 25, 2016 p.23), “Recession: Between Nigeria and Greece” (The Punch, June 3, 2016 P.25), “Recession offers Opportunity to Fix Economy” (The Punch, August 30, 2016 P.26), “Economic Recession Self-inflicted” Pundits said, “ recover stolen funds, prosecute looters” (The Punch, August 4, 2016 P.1),

4.2.2 Daily Trust Newspaper

Morality and Episodic Frames

Am Aware of Your Suffering

President Muhammadu Buhari in a New Year message has acknowledged the fact that the current economic hardship Nigerians are facing is has adverse effect on them. The President agreed that the dwindling economy brought about by low price of crude oil in the global market, which has affected the government revenue. (Daily Trust, January 1, 2016)

The paper report used morality and episodic frame in reporting the president description of Nigeria economy.

Economic Consequences, Episodic and Information Frames

Stock Market ends 2015 with 1.63 Trillion Naira Loss

The Nigeria Stock Exchange released a statement showing that the liquidity market has lost over 1.63 trillion naira at the close of market in 2015 physical year. Trading in the stock market has been recording negative for the time being. (Daily Trust, February 4, 2016 p.18)

The newspapers used it paper to report to it readers of the loss affecting the stock market their by showing the economic consequences of the negative trend. The paper also applied episodic and information frame to the story (Daily Trust, January 1, 2016 p.1). Again, in February, the newspaper used economic consequences frame to provide information another loss in the stock market “Stock Market Loses 78 Billion Naira”, as the report applied episodic frame.

Economic Consequences, Thematic and Information Frames

Forex Scarcity Pushes Nigeria toward Trade Deficit

The Nigerian Bureau of Statistic said that the country is recording trade deficit in alarming rate and the country’s revenue is dwindling. Experts have blamed the deficit on falling oil price, lack of Forex, corruption, lack of diversification etc. (Daily Trust, April 12, 2016 p.15).

Using economic consequences frame, the newspaper inform the readers on the reasons the country is experiencing trade deficit. The report used thematic frame to give detailed information how the country record all time trade deficit in seven years.

A similar story to the one above, is a thematic frame article titled “Foreign Investment down by 2.2 Trillion in 2015” (Daily Trust, February 4, 2016 p.3) to show the woes of the economic crisis using economic consequences frame.

Economic Consequences, Responsibility, and Predictive Frames

Banks Drop 4 Billion Naira Profit in First Quarter

The Central Bank of Nigeria has released report which indicates that the banks have recorded about 4 billion naira in their profit margin in the first quarter of 2016. The report shows that the dwindling economic situation is having a great effect to the nation’s commercial banks. (Daily Trust, January 11, 2016).

The paper report was relevant hear to bring to it readers the problems affecting their banks. As such, use of economic consequences frame and thematic frame were in effect (Daily Trust, May 2, 2016). A similar report was earlier reported in January “Banking Stocks Suffered 853.8 Billion Naira Loss in 2015”.

In May, the newspaper provided a solution frame in stating “Why CBN must Avert Forex Crisis” (Daily Trust, May 24, 2016 p.18). The report goes “ MPC must take far reaching decisions on the Forex market quickly to avert server economic crisis” No doubt, this is a predictive frame.

Economic Consequences and Thematic Frames

Is Naira Devaluation around the Corner?

The Vice President, Yemi Osibanjo recently called on the CBN to undertake s “substantial” review of its foreign exchange policies to overcome dollar shortage. This advice is contrary to President Muhammadu Buhari’s view on devaluation of the local currency. (Daily Trust, January 5, 2016 p.3)

The newspaper provides news analysis on the economic policy and how it can have adverse effect on the economic crisis. As such, economic consequences frame and thematic frame were in effect.(Daily Trust, May 16, 2016 p.15). The paper also used economic consequences and predictive frame to warn the Apex bank by stating “Experts Caution on Devaluation, Subsidy”

Economic Consequences, Thematic and Informative Frames

Oil Price Fall: How the Mighty are Crawling

Nigeria is not the only country feeling the heat. Many oil producing countries are under great pressure because crude oil is their major revenue source. (Daily Trust, January 13, 2016 p.5).

The newspaper used economic consequences frame to describe the challenges global fall of oil price post to Nigeria economy. The paper uses thematic frame to provide the analysis in an informative way.

Economic Consequences, Thematic and Predictive Frames

More Troubles for Nigeria as OPEC Oil Freeze deal Fails

The consequences of the failed deal played out in the price of oil the next day as crude price went down to 40 dollars per barrel, having earlier touched around 41 dollars. Analysts expect prices to begin another downward

spiral until June when OPEC member countries meet again to decide the next line of action. Oil producers like Iraq, Nigeria and Venezuela are suffering severe economic pains. (Daily Trust, April 24, 2016 p.5).

The newspaper used economic consequences to describe the failure of OPEC nation to solve to reach an agreement in solving the oil downfall. Therefore, conflict frame was used in the story as the paper also gave it episodic and predictive frame.

Economic Consequences, Thematic and Predictive Frames

Economy: Consumers Grown for high Price of Commodity

Consumers around the country are groaning bitterly because high cost of goods in the market. The soaring of good price is coast as a result of high inflation the country is experiencing like never before. The prices of foodstuff in some instance have skyrocket. (Daily Trust, February 28, 2016).

The newspaper uses used it medium to inform the readers on the state of mind of Nigerians in respect to the economic crisis. Economic consequences were used to highlight the hardship Nigerians are likely to face in respect to high inflation, applying predictive frame and thematic frame as the dominant frame.

Responsibility and Episodic Frames

“How Nigerian Economy can be Revamped”

The current efforts at revamping Nigeria’s economy will not achieve fruitful results if Small and Medium Scale Enterprises are not given necessary support. (Daily Trust, February 10, 2016 p.15).

The newspaper used it publication to provide solution to the economic crisis the country is facing and the report was presented using episodic frame.

Economic Consequences, Episodic and Thematic Frames

Naira Falls 9.5% to Hit Record Low of 337 to Dollar

The naira has continued to depreciate against the dollar in both parallel market and the Bureau de change as it is trading 337/1 dollars. The scarcity of Forex and the low in oil price is making the naira to coming weaker against foreign currencies. (Daily Trust, February 12, 2016 p. 3).

The newspaper provides straight news to its readers on the economic consequences of a poor naira. The story is presented in episodic perspective and using informative frame (Daily Trust, July 23, 2016 p.7). The naira has been depreciating since early of the year as this paper has reported in February that “Naira Slides to 327 a Dollar as Forex Scarcity Persists”.

Economic Consequences and Thematic Frames

Inflation Rate Hits 11-Year High to 16.5% in June

The economic crisis the country is battling with has brought about very high level of inflation that has not been seen in the last 11 years. As at June, inflation has reach 16.5% making the prices of commodity to be high and the downfall of naira. (Daily Trust, July 19, 2016 p.3).

The story provide economic consequences frame to the reality of high inflation.

Economic Consequences and Predictive Frames

Buhari: Economy in Volatile Situation

Nigeria’s’ economy is currently in a volatile situation due to low price of oil, President Muhammadu Buhari has said. (Daily Trust, May 26, 2016 p.1).

The newspaper report capture the president comment as he try to describe the economic consequences falling oil price have brought to Nigeria economy.

Conflict and Informative Frames

Why Buhari’s Economic Policies Hurt Nigerians

Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) has assessed the economic policies of President Muhammadu Buhari’s administration in the last one year, saying the inherent challenges therein prevented Nigerians from benefitting from them. The Economic policy space remains unclear. Inflation record is worsening, fiscal deficit having consequences on business and economy as a whole. (Daily Trust, May 28, 2016 p.53).

The paper presented a conflict frame in reporting the economic crisis story and informative frame to criticize the present administration maladministration regarding the economy.

The Economy still helpless

The Minister of Finance, Mrs Kemi Adeosun have describe the poor state of the nation’s economy makes the government to take fiscal monetary policy to fund the 2016 budget. Who declared that the country is on its way to economic recovery. Presently, the country economy is not showing any sign of recovery, rather government isn’t reducing it overhead cost. (Daily Trust, May 30, 2016 p.17)

The report of this economic crisis in the story adopts the conflict frame and episodic

Responsibility and Predictive Frames

States Bankruptcy: Time to Embrace the “R” Word?

The bankruptcy of the nations’ economy as result of depletion of foreign reserve, low revenue from oil and lack of funds to implement the 2016 budget has made pundits to declare that the country in in recession. (Daily Trust,

July 7, 2016 p.45)

This report was able to use predictive frame in using the word 'recession' to describe the dwindling economy even before the country was officially declared to be in recession at the end of second quarter.

Economic Consequences Frame

Its Like Starting all over on Economy

President Muhammadu Buhari has expressed regret that the country took things for granted when it had so much money and was now like starting all over again on the economy. Nigeria is in a hurry to see projects take off in the agricultural sector in order to enhance food security and create jobs for teeming unemployed youths.

This report was a conflict frame (Daily Trust, July 15, 2016 p.3).

Responsibility and Episodic Frames

We will Revive Nation's Economy

The Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, has reassured of the Federal Government's plan to revive the nations' economy. There were 34 priority actions to be implemented in the 2016 budget, some of which he listed as increasing low interest, lending to the real sector, implementing measures to achieve self-sufficiency and becoming a net exporter of certain agricultural products. (Daily Trust, July 15, 2016 p.3).

This is a solution frame in which the paper presented the story to its readers by giving an episode on the economic challenges.

Economic Consequences and Predictive Frames

Economy: Senate Worries, Summons Minister

It would be recalled that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has further degraded the growth projection of Nigeria's economy to negative in its latest world economic outlook. The outlook projected that Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would now grow at -1.8 percent from the 2.7 percent projected in April, 2016. The Fund said that the negative growth projection was necessary as the economy adjusted to foreign currency shortages as a result of lower oil receipts, low power generation and weak investor confidence. (Daily Trust, July 21, 2016 p.13)

No doubt this is economic consequences frame, but the paper was able to inform its readers about the coming recession, that is predictive frame.

Responsibility and Predictive Frames

Recession, Rising Inflation, Forex Define Meeting

The rising inflation, economic recession and the implementation of the flexible exchange rate policy may likely dominate discussion of CBN monetary policy committee. Experts have advocated improved spending by government to stimulate commercial activities and rejuvenate the economy. But with falling revenue and Federal government's cautious release of funds, the economy isn't yet inflated as earlier anticipated. With inflation at 16.8 percent and the naira at N330/dollar following the implementation of the flexible Forex regime the meeting is tasked with serious issues to sort. (Daily Trust, July 25, 2016 p.15)

Responsibility frame was the spread frame in the story and the paper use episodic frame speculate on the CBN meeting regarding the economic crisis.

Economic Consequences and Predictive Frames

Ah, Recession Again

The country's economy is totally in bad shape. You don't any a seer to conclude that recording trade deficit in two quarters within a year is not equivalent to recession. The country has been recording economic loss in oil price, forex market, the stock exchange and inflation is all-time high in 11 years. (Daily Trust, July 29, 2016 p.14)

Through a columnist contributor, the paper was able to draw the attention of its readers on the current economic crisis which is taking the direction of recession.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

Here, the findings of the study in relation to the research questions raised were discussed.

Research Question one: What are the patterns of newspapers coverage of 2016 Nigeria economic crisis?

The result revealed in table 4.1, 4.2, Figure 4.1, Figure 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 provide detailed information on the pattern selected Nigeria newspapers covers the 2016 economic crisis. The data shows that the newspapers provided space for stories on the crisis, just to show that they are conscious of the economic challenges the country is facing and they are dedicating spaces for such stories in almost equal proportion. This study corroborate the findings of Falasca (2014), Hart and Tindall (2009) and Picard 2015, that economics reporters have key interest on economic stories when there is negative development in the sector such as trade deficit, loss in the stock market, inflation or recession. For the 8 months period covered by this study, the more the country faced stiffer economic challenges, the more the newspapers responded in highlighting the issues in their publications.

The study found out that the selected newspapers focused on breaking the news on any development

regarding the economic crisis the country is facing as 69.4% reported stories on economic crisis were straight news articles. These economic crises are usually related to the fall of naira to the dollar, lack of forex and the downward price of world oil which cumulated into high inflation.

Also, out of a possible 224 economic crisis stories published by the selected newspapers, 197 stories represented with 87.9% were published on the inside pages of the newspapers. This implies that most of the crisis stories were featured in inside pages.

Research Question two: What are the dominant frames employed by newspapers in covering the 2016 Nigeria economic crisis?

The second research question provides result on the dominant generic or issue specific frame employed by the Nigerian newspapers in framing 2016 economic crisis. Figure 4.6 revealed that both Daily Trust (70.2%) and The Punch (73.6%) newspapers used episodic frame the most in framing the 2016 economic crisis. Thematic frame was used the least with Daily Trust (29.8% and The Punch (26.4%). As such, economic crisis stories were not given much in-depth as the reports focused on more of issue specific. That is, as the country experience lost in stock exchange, down fall of global oil price, lack of Forex and high inflation, the newspapers quickly rushed to the press and published the events as they unfold. The little thematic frames are usually treated in their opinion columns, editorials and features.

Studies on press framing of conflicts shows that episodic frame are more considered than thematic frame (Huynh, 2015). This makes Angela (2009) Manning (2013) Rose and Spiegel (2009) to partly blamed the press as not raising alarm for the 2008 economic crisis. Thematic frame are more used to provide solution because stories are given detailed, background and elaborative treatment unlike episodic that just depend on breaking the news as it happens. This is why this study found that episodic framing is the dominant frame used in media framing of Nigeria 2016 economic crisis.

Research Question three: What are the frames that are more widespread in reporting the 2016 Nigeria economic crisis?

The third research question was set to provide the dominant spread frame the selected newspapers used in framing the 2016 economic crisis. Thus, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) five types of frames used to explain media framing of conflict were adopted. The report found that Responsibility frame was the most represented (83) representing 36.7%, then economic consequences (82) in the newspapers coverage of economic crisis between January to August 2016 with 36.6%. This was followed by conflict frame 30 represented with 13.4%, responsibility frame 18 represented by 8.0%, morality frame 18 represented with 7.6% and human interest frame 12 which is the least represented with 5.4%. That is, the newspapers uses economic consequences frame the most in reporting to the readers the severity of the economy challenges the country is facing.

The dominant economic consequences frame headlines as revealed by the textual analysis are: “Hard times ahead, CBN Warns Nigeria- Says Low oil revenue to Linger”, “Oil Slump Exposes Weakness in Africa Economies”, “Budget Delay Negatively Affecting Economy”, “Stocks: Investors Lose 1 trillion in First Quarter of 2016”, “Stock Market ends 2015 with 1.63 Trillion Naira Loss”, “Forex Scarcity Pushes Nigeria toward Trade Deficit”, “Banks Drop 4 Billion Naira Profit in First Quarter”, “Naira Falls 9.5% to Hit Record Low of 337 to Dollar”, “Why Buhari’s Economic Policies Hurt Nigerians” and “Recession, Rising Inflation, Forex Define Meeting”.

These frames gave a negative tone to the economic stories because they all focused on bad shape of the economy. Thus, Rose and Spiegel (2009) and Radu and Stefanita (2013) have equally documented that economic reporters are usually motivated to report economic crisis negatively as it is a negative trend affecting the public.

Though, the media are not left out in providing solution frame to economic crisis stories when they are performing their watch-dog role and being socially responsible (sanders, 2000). Based on this line, Nigerian newspapers used 29.0%, of its economic crisis stories to proffer solution. Solution frame was also given huge consideration as the newspaper try to use their publication in providing solution the economic challenges. Why economic consequences is high may be connected to the facts, the stories gave much spaces explaining the wrong policies government initiated and the failure of government officials in providing poor leadership regarding the country’s economy.

Research Question 4: What are the extent 2016 Nigeria economic crisis stories in newspapers employed prediction and information frames?

Figure 4.7 provide result on the extent the newspaper employed predictive of informative framing in their framing of the crisis. Though the press used more of informative frame, they were able to foresee the recession coming in their framing of 2016 economic crisis. They also used the pages of their newspapers to provide information on myriad of economic challenges the country faced at that time. The Punch direct it economic crisis frame by providing information about the issue the most (62) represented with 56.4%, Daily Trust direct it economic crisis framing predicting it severity the most (62) represented with 54.4%.

This means that to some extent, the Nigerian press performs it watch-dog role in providing early warning to it readers on the economic challenges the country is faced with even before it cumulated to full recession. This

corroborates the findings of Gerner and Schrodtr (1991) that press prominent role in predicting crisis through early warning. Also, Kleinnijenhuis et al (2015) found that framing increases as early sign of crisis beam.

5. Conclusion

Based on the above findings, the researchers conclude that the selected newspapers have so far performed better in drawing the attention of their readers with mind bogging stories about the economic crisis the country faced within the period of this study. Some of the catch phrases are: “Hard times ahead, CBN Warns Nigeria- Says Low oil revenue to Linger”, “Budget Delay Negatively Affecting Economy”, “Stocks: Investors Lose 1 trillion in First Quarter of 2016”, “Recession, Rising Inflation, Forex Define Meeting”.

The crisis Nigerian economy faced in 2016 have provided an ample opportunity for the researchers to test the social responsibility role and the watchdog function of the press in predicting crisis and proffering possible solution before it escalate or degenerate. Therefore, the selected newspapers have demonstrated these functions in their daily routine of updating the public on the recent development in the scarcity in forex market, loos in stock exchange, trading deficit, fall in oil price, 2016 budget passage delay, high inflation, soaring commodity price etc.

As Sheafer (2007) has noted the agenda function of the press during economic crisis is for the press to provide solution, by setting agenda to government on ways of solving the crisis. The Nigerian press have played their part in their own right in providing solution to myriad of economic challenges the country faced. Through, editorials, features, opinion column the newspapers draw the attention of their readers to salient issues regarding the economy.

The study equally noticed that the selected newspapers used economic consequences, solution frame and responsibility frames to help give perspectives to the economic issues. Neuman *et al.* (1992) have earlier identified economic consequences as the most common frame in the news. The wide impact of an event is an important news value, and economic consequences are often considerable (Graber, 1993). As such, economic crisis usually have impact on both the leaders and the led and at such, attract media attention.

The newspapers used predictive frame is when their report was able to predict pending economic crisis such as recession. And the information frame is when the report only states the economic crisis to the knowledge of the public without necessarily stating consequences in the nearest future. As such, the study found that the word ‘recession’ keeps reappearing in the newspapers prediction of the possible consequences of the economic challenges.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and conclusion arrived at, the following recommendations were made; First, the study noticed that economic crisis stories were mostly featured in the inside pages of the newspapers studied. To ensure that maximum prominence is given to such stories because of the issue impact on the public, such kind of stories should be placed in front pages as they occur, so as to catch the attention of the readers strongly.

Similarly, the study noticed that episodic frame were the dominant frames used by the newspaper in covering the economic crisis. Episodic treatment to economic crisis may not provide viable explanation on the issues to the readers and possibly proffer solution in same regard like stories that are given thematic treatment. Therefore, thematic frame ought to be used the most in giving detailed treatment to economic issues. Thematic treatment will bring different perspective on the reasons of the happenings and stating the possible way out.

Also, the study found that economic consequences frames wasn’t in short supply in the newspapers framing of 2016 economic crisis, but solution frame was not giving enough credence, as such the stories perhaps create public or moral panic instead of providing solution which is the most important thing during economic crisis.

The use of information frame at the expense of prediction frame is another challenge the newspapers faced in serving the early warning system to the authorities. It is therefore recommended that press should see it as their responsibility to draw the attention of policy makers when they see wrong policy or any development that can be a shock to the economy.

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