

Media Reportage of Buhari's Anti-Corruption War in Nigeria by Sun and Chronicle Newspapers

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Abstract

Corruption in Nigeria has been an endemic problem with public officers unscrupulously using their official positions to enrich themselves at the expense of the country and its citizens. In May 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari, as part of his administration's ten-point agenda, vowed to fight against the "pervasive corruption" which had crippled human and infrastructure development for decades. Transparency International's 2016 Corruption Perception Index released in January 2017 placed Nigeria as 136th out of 176 countries, thereby seeing her outside the 10 most corrupt countries in the world for the first time in 16 years! This paper assessed the media reportage of the anti-corruption war in Nigeria, using two newspapers – the privately-owned *Sun*, and Cross River State Government-owned *Nigerian Chronicle*. The study was limited to the first six months of 2017. Content analysis was the research instrument used in generating data; while the composite week sampling technique was adopted in choosing the sampled newspaper copies. Content categories of corruption used were bribery, forgery/perjury, fraud, misappropriation and mismanagement, while the units of analysis were news, features/opinions/columns, editorials, photographs/cartoons, and letters to the editor. Attention score was on prominence, depth, frequency, and slant. The theory adopted for this study was Kotler and Zaltman's social marketing theory. Findings from the study included that Nigerian media adequately and prominently projected the issue of anti-corruption; and that mismanagement had the highest prevalence in relationship with the other categories of corruption namely fraud, misappropriation, forgery/perjury, and bribery. Recommendations made were, among others, that the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 2011 should be fully implemented; mass media should work more closely with civil society; media employers should ensure that journalists are well trained and remunerated; and government should see the media as allies in the fight against corruption.

Keywords: Anti-corruption, anti-corruption war, corrupt practices, mass media, reportage.

1. Introduction

Nigeria is a blessed country. With a current estimated population of 184,234,806 inhabitants (National Population Commission, 2018), Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa and the eleventh in the world. Many of her citizens, engaged in business and the professions, are amongst the best in the world. She has a vast mass of fertile land used for agriculture which, according to the Vision 2010 Report (1997, p. iv), "offers employment to over 65 percent of the working population, [and] accounts for over 70 percent of non-oil exports...." Natural calamities such as earthquakes, thunderstorms, floods, monsoons and heat waves, which are common occurrences in some nations of the world, are not experienced in the country. To crown it all, Nigeria is the sixth highest petroleum-producing country in the world with 37.45 billion barrels of proven crude oil reserves, 5.48 trillion cubic metres of proven natural gas reserves, 1.43 million barrels of crude oil production per day, 42.56 trillion cubic metres of marketed production of natural gas, 1.74 barrels of crude oil exports per day, and 25.15 billion cubic metres of natural gas exports (OPEC, 2017). Considering all these human and natural wealth of the country, one would be tempted to say of Nigeria as John Smith said of America in 1607, "Heaven and earth never agreed better to frame a place for man's habitation" (Cincotta: 1996, p.6).

Unfortunately, while such countries as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and even the recent additional African countries – Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, which are similarly endowed with oil and gas, have used these resources prudentially for the development of their people, infrastructure and economy, the story is not the same in Nigeria. Here, instead of being a blessing, her wealth has become a curse to the people. Instead of development, her citizens see deprivation, depression, dissatisfaction and disillusionment. The country's infrastructure in the educational, health, transportation, sports, agricultural, security and other sectors are in despicable state of disrepair and begging loudly for attention. Some of the citizens, especially the professionals, have abandoned their country in search of "greener pastures" in foreign lands, while some youths, who belong to the productive sector of the economy, have been forced into such unwholesome and dangerous pastimes as cultism, militancy, armed robbery, kidnapping and other forms of violent criminal activities, largely because of the prevalent high rate of unemployment. The economy has been in tatters, resulting in a deep recession, heavy national domestic and foreign debts, low GDP, high inflation, weak currency, unfavourable balance of payment index, and completely dislocated macro and micro-economic environment. The World Bank Group in 2017 has also included these on the list of her woes: insufficient infrastructure, weak and ineffective institutions, challenges of governance, public financial management systems and human development, high living conditions and poverty levels of the population, growing inequality of income and opportunities, widened North-South

divide, regional inequality, lack of job opportunities, and political unrest.

The nation got to this mess because of institutionalised corruption in the country. Commenting on this sometime in 1998, J. Brian Atwood, the then director of United States Agency for International Developments, had observed,

In Nigeria, the late General Sani Abacha and his cronies siphoned billions of dollars out of the oil industry, which is the country's primary source of wealth and accounts for 80 percent of government revenue. Diversion of funds from state coffers led to a marked deterioration in infrastructure and social services and a near-collapse of state-owned oil refineries....

All these have happened because in the country, majority of Nigerians do not want to participate in "baking of the national cake" as much as they want to share in its eating. Some privileged few see the country's wealth as a "great barbecue" to be eaten, while they act, whenever the opportunity exists, as hungry picnickers rushing for a piece of "the savoury roast." They are more concerned with the satisfaction of their personal interest, sometimes at all costs, to the detriment of the nation.

This scenario has been with us for a long time, but became institutionalised, as already noted by Atwood, during the many years of military rule in the country. Thus, the nation's leaders enthroned profligacy and corruption while their subordinates became active participants in the looting game.

Past administrations in the country had attempted to nip the menace of corruption in the bud but their efforts had yielded very little or no reprieve. So was the ugly situation that in May 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari, as part of his administration's ten-point agenda, vowed to fight against the "pervasive corruption" which had crippled human and infrastructure development in the country for decades.

For the war against corruption to be successfully fought and won, information is required, and this is provided by communication channels, especially the mass media. Nigeria has quite a large number of these – television stations, radio stations, newspaper and magazine titles as well as the various news blogs and online publications. Since the interplay of the issue demands investigative journalism, the newspaper medium has not only shown in its reportage the level of interest it attaches to the anti-corruption campaign, but the various newspapers seem to stand in support of the public interest, and are deeply involved in the campaign. To ascertain how cogent this assumption is, two newspapers were chosen for this study – the *Sun*, a privately owned daily whose chairman is Orji Uzor Kalu, a businessman-cum-politician, and *Nigerian Chronicle*, a news medium owned and published by the Cross River State Government.

2. Objectives of the study

The objectives of this paper were:

- (i) To determine the frequency of coverage and prominence given to the anti-corruption campaign and news stories by the two publications;
- (ii) To determine the constituents of the editorial consideration of these sampled newspapers in the coverage of the anti-corruption campaign; and
- (iii) To ascertain the factors that influence effective coverage of the campaign by these newspapers.

3. The war against corruption and the media

Corruption and the related lack of transparency damage economic development and reform, and hinder the growth of any nation where they are prevalent. Corruption, which is described in the equation, $C(\text{corruption}) = M(\text{monopoly}) + D(\text{discretion}) - A(\text{accountability})$, takes many forms and they include the following:

- (i) Procurement Fraud: Here, the contractor or supplier, in collusion with the clients, inflate contract sum so that the excess fund built in is used to pay off those who processed, awarded and/or supervised the contract. As illustrated by Donald Strombom, a former chief of procurement for the World Bank:

Bribery often occurs... in procurement [when]... a firm [is] included in a restricted list of bidders... or [is encouraged]... to write specifications in such a way that the winning bidder is a foregone conclusion. (1998, p.20)

Strombom also explains that corruption in procurement may be carried out entirely among competing firms, through collusion and bid rigging, without the client being involved or even aware it is happening. "Firms," he says, "may agree in advance [who] will submit competitive bids and at what prices, who will win, and how the profits will be shared."

Usually, this results in monumental waste. Over-invoicing for goods delivered or work done reduces the quality of materials used for construction or the amount of goods supplied. Sometimes, payment is made for goods not supplied or services not rendered.

- (ii) Gratification: This comes in many forms, from outright bribery in which physical cash is paid as kickback or deposited in a foreign account through electronic transfers; to sexual satisfaction given to the officer concerned by the person requiring favour.

Gratification is the commonest form of corruption in Nigeria. The Anti-Corruption Act, 2000 elaborately defines it as:

- (a) Money, donation, gift, loan, reward, valuable security, property of any description whether movable or immovable, or any other similar advantage given or promised to a public officer with intent to influence such officer in the performance of his duties;
 - (b) Any office, dignity, employment, contract of employment or services, and any agreement to give employment or render services in any capacity;
 - (c) Any payment, release, discharge or liquidation of any loan, obligation or other liability, whether in whole or in part;
 - (d) Any valuable consideration of any kind, any discount, commission, rebate, bonus, deductions or percentage;
 - (e) Any forbearance to demand any money or money's worth or valuable thing;
 - (f) Any other service or favour of any description, such as protection from any penalty or disability incurred or apprehended or from any action or proceedings of a disciplinary, civil or criminal nature, whether or not already instituted, and including the exercise or the forbearance from the exercise of any right or any official power or duty.
- (iii) Cronyism: This occurs when a public officer shows partiality in favour of his cronies. Usually, this is done through excessive patronage in the award of contracts to friends, in-laws and close relations. It is also evidenced in the appointment of political hangers-on to offices they are not qualified educationally or experientially to hold.
- (iv) Mismanagement: Another form of corruption is mismanagement. This includes misappropriation of funds where monies approved for one item of expenditure are diverted to another item without appropriate approval. This affects proper control of public funds. Mismanagement can also be in the forms of fraudulent acquisition and/or receipt of property and using one's office or position to unduly influence official decision.
- (v) Perjury: This, according to the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (2016), is "the voluntary violation of an oath or vow either by swearing to what is untrue or by omission to do what has been promised under oath." It is prevalent amongst public office holders who make false declarations about their academic qualifications, age, marital status, place of origin, etc. in order to enjoy some privileges that are bestowed on people with the qualifications they fraudulently ascribe to themselves. To enable some of these perjurers to cover their tracks, they go a step forward in their criminality by forging documents and records.

Other forms of corruption in Nigeria are advance fee fraud (commonly referred to as 419, named after a section of Nigerian Criminal Code which deals with fraud), election rigging, and influence peddling.

In a study by Bertucci and Armstrong (2000), efforts by many governments to curb corruption have not resulted in any significant changes. They advance many reasons for this development, which they group under political and administrative.

Politically, anti-corruption crusade, in their submission, fails because:

- The crusade was not a serious attempt at reform, with the government simply reacting to a scandal or, in the case of many developing countries, external pressure from donors;
- Government uses the excuse of an anti-corruption crusade to witch-hunt its opponents, thereby making people uneasy about whistle-blowing or exposing corruption since they do not know the real motives for such an exercise;
- Government may be serious about the crusade but fails to consult and get the "buy-in" of its social partners: businesses and civil society entities; and
- A genuine anti-corruption campaign may die with government which has lost power if the opposition was not brought on board of the crusade.

On the administrative front, Bertucci and Armstrong maintain that "even if serious political will is in place to combat corruption, often costly administrative mistakes, both in resources and time, can deter a long lasting effect of reforms." They enumerate three of such "mistakes" as:

- A situation where both donors and recipient governments take on "wholesale" solutions from other countries, without really taking the time to adapt them to specific conditions of their countries;
- When a government derails in the implementation of anti-corruption campaign contents because of the very long time and levels of resources required which are greater than initially anticipated; and
- An outcome whereby some micro-level anti-corruption prescriptions may have unintended consequences or simply not thought out properly.

In order to reverse this trend, they have proffered adequate prescriptions ranging from strengthening of legislations, extracting genuine commitment from leaders, applying the complementarities and synergy of both

preventive and enforcement approaches, adopting a culture of non-tolerance of corruption through clarification of values and standards, to installing a system of incentives that rewards good conduct and penalizes corrupt or unethical behaviours. However, Pezzullo (1999, p.30) puts it more succinctly by recommending that the media must be “more aggressive, the citizenry more vigilant, and officials more careful.”

Across the world, “the modernising media,” as maintained by Pezzullo, “have become the central civil society stakeholder demanding better performance from government.” Usually the first line in exposing corrupt activities, the mass media have always been called on to press for reform and lead the effort to prevent corruption. They have, indeed, not been found wanting in this regard. In many instances, they have, through incisive and investigative reporting, exposed many corrupt officials in a bid to assist government in the sanitisation of the system. Recent examples in Nigeria are the removal of Babachir Lawal, who had been a subject of media attacks bordering on alleged corrupt practices, from office as secretary to the government of the federation, in October 2017 by President Muhammadu Buhari; and the suspension of Mounir Gwarzo, director-general of the Securities and Exchange Commission for alleged extra-budgetary spending. These are clear testimonies of the power of the media to expose fraud and help sanitise the system.

Yet, the problems of the Nigerian media practitioners are myriad. Though they are very critical, well trained, innovative, and have, according to Oshadipe (1999), “helped to create empires for media barons and business moguls,” they have remained amongst the poorly paid Nigerian professionals. They are exposed to hazards without insurance cover. Their working condition is abject. Many of them work inside crowded newsroom, with inadequate and sometimes, unpaid allowances. They lack official means of transport to cover assignments. Many of them still do not have access to such common tools as personal computer and the internet.

It is, therefore, a kind of miracle when the Nigerian media perform their duties to the extent they have, given these enormous disadvantages. Some of the practitioners who cannot hold on for long are tempted to comprise by accepting bribe, known in Nigerian media circle as “brown envelopes.” This, according to Oshadipe, comes in many ways – cash, local and foreign trips, car, lucrative advertisement, supply contract, or appointment as press officer or adviser, etc. to the government.

The compromised journalists can wilfully suppress information that they may consider injurious to their clients’ reputation, or involve in what Galadima and Embu (2001) call “pack journalism,” which occurs when

... journalists adopt similar viewpoint toward the news simply because they hang around together, exchanging information and defining the day’s news. Often a story hounded by the pack does not offer enough substances to sustain pursuit and so it is abandoned as quickly as it was begun.

This attitude kills professionalism. It makes investigative journalism suffer while sycophantic, and even blackmail, journalism thrives.

At the corporate level, publishers and management of media houses are not left out. They engage in “media consultancy” where, still in the words of Galadima and Embu, “they launder the images of [their clients] by colouring the truth through manipulation of words;” as well as “demand and collect money to kill and damage stories sent in by their reporters.”

But there is hope. For among the crop of media people we have in Nigeria are still a cream of discerning, reputable, articulate and professionally moulded journalists who want the best for the country. These are the media people who will help in fighting and winning the war against corruption in Nigeria. For as Oshadipe insists, and which sounds quite convincing,

The truly investigative newspaper will hold the key of success in Nigeria of the next millennium, for the populace now expects the media to not only unearth corruption in government, but to press for conviction of the accused. A tall order? But the media in Nigeria will somehow find the key!

4. Research methodology

Content analysis was the research method used in carrying out this study. It is the research technique used in the assessment of the content of the *Sun* and *Nigerian Chronicle* newspapers. The period of the study spanned the first six months of 2017, that is, January to June. For the sample size, one issue of each publication was chosen per week, which brought the total number per newspaper to 26. This is in line with the position of Riffe, Aust and Lacy (1993), and cited by Wimmer and Dominick (2011, p.163), that “a composite week sampling technique was superior to both a random sample and a consecutive day sample when dealing with newspaper content.”

For the content analysis to be effected, five categories of content were created for the study. These were bribery, forgery/perjury, fraud, misappropriation and mismanagement. This meant that any relevant anti-corruption item in the sampled issues of *Sun* and *Nigerian Chronicle* should fit into these categories, otherwise referred to as variables.

In written content such as the content of these sampled newspapers, Wimmer and Dominick (2011, p.164) assert that the unit of analysis might be “a single word or symbol, a theme... or an entire article or story.” For this study, the units of analysis were news, features/columns, editorials, photographs, advertorials, and letters to the editor.

Attention score, on the other hand, was on prominence or placement (front page treatment had a score of 3, sectional and back pages – 2 each and any other page – 1); depth (which comprises of length: full page – 3, half page – 2, quarter page – 1; and use of photograph and illustration: full-page display – 3, across three columns – 2, across two columns – 1, full colour – 1, single column – 0); frequency (this is scored on percentage calculation); and slant (favourable – 3, unfavourable – 3, neutral – 1). Also, the considerations that influenced the newspapers in the reportage of anti-corruption were assessed. These influences were economic, political, religious and social, with each scored 1 where applicable and 0 were not applicable.

5. Theoretical framework

This paper is anchored on the Social Marketing Theory, propounded by Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman in 1971. The theory seeks to promote socially valuable information and acceptable behaviours. In the words of Baran and Davis (2012, p. 335), it “assumes the existence of a benign information provider seeking to bring about useful, beneficial social change.” It tries to integrate marketing ideas, principles, tools, techniques and socially acceptable concepts to promote communication and benefit society. Mishra (n.d.) notes that the social marketing theory is helpful in planning, designing, implementing and evaluating social campaigns with information sharing as its main objective. It uses creativity rather than depending on public service announcements, to give out information. It tries to understand social and psychological factors which bring resistance to change in society. The theory, with social intervention as its main objective, helps to increase acceptance, response and practice of any social idea directed at a particular target group.

Social marketing is divided into two major types – operational and strategic. Operational social marketing focuses on changing behaviour while strategic social marketing aims at forming new policies and development strategies. For this study, however, operational social marketing is more apt since the paper seeks to x-ray and possibly bring about a change in the attitude of Nigerians towards corruption.

Schiavo (2007), quoting Fishbein, Goldberg and Middlestadt (1997), observes that social marketing is designed to influence the behaviour of target audiences to improve their personal welfare and that of the society they belong. This theory proves to be amenable to this work because it properly fits the stance of President Muhammadu Buhari’s administration fight against the “pervasive corruption” which had crippled human and infrastructural development in Nigeria.

In conventional marketing mix, there are four elements namely, product, price, place and promotion (the 4 Ps). Belch and Belch (2009, p.10) explain that marketing facilitates the exchange process and the development of relationships by identifying societal needs and “developing a product or service that satisfies these needs, offering it at a certain price, making it available through a particular place or channel of distribution, and developing a programme of promotion or communication to create awareness and interest.” Social marketing engages these four components as well. Its main goal is to provide sustainable and beneficial products, which could be tangible or non-tangible, to the society. In the operational context of this study, the price is psychological, social and non-monetary cost such as the time and effort put into changing a habit from bad to good. The place is where social marketing is most productive and the desired behavioural changes in Nigerians take place. Promotion, on the other hand, has to do with the appropriate information the people are fed with and the channels of communication used in reaching them.

6. Data presentation

From the content analysis of the two sampled newspapers used for this study, lots of data were generated. These are presented below:

Table 1: Distribution of editorial items by categories of anti-corruption reports in the newspapers

Category of Anti-Corruption	The Sun		Nigerian Chronicle		\bar{X}
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	
Bribery	10	7.35	2	5.72	6.53
Forgery/Perjury	14	10.3	1	2.86	6.58
Fraud	55	40.44	6	17.14	28.79
Misappropriation	16	11.76	8	22.85	17.31
Mismanagement	41	30.15	18	51.43	40.79
Total	136	100	35	100	100

There are many forms of corruption but five have been identified and used in this study. The above table distributes the various anti-corruption stories published in the two sampled newspapers into these different categories. Of the 136 stories in *The Sun*, 10 or 7.35 were on bribery, 14 or 10.3% were on forgery/perjury, 16 or 11.76% were on misappropriation, 41 or 30.15% were on mismanagement while 55 or 40.44% were on fraud.

There was a shift in the pattern as regards *Nigerian Chronicle*’s distribution of anti-corruption stories. Its attention was mostly on mismanagement (18 stories or 51.43%), followed by misappropriation (eight or 22.85%),

fraud (six or 17.14%), bribery (two or 5.72%), and forgery/perjury (one or 2.86%).

However, a mean percentage score of 40.79% placed reports on mismanagement in the two newspapers on the lead. This was followed by fraud (28.79%), misappropriation (17.31%), forgery/perjury (6.58%), and bribery (6.53%).

Table 2: Distribution of editorial items by units of analysis of anti-corruption reports in the newspapers

Unit of Analysis of Anti-Corruption Reports	The Sun		Nigerian Chronicle		\bar{X}
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	
News stories	93	68.38	19	54.29	61.34
Editorials	1	0.73	0	0	0.36
Features/opinions/columns	22	16.18	6	17.14	16.66
Pictures/drawings/cartoons	9	6.62	7	20.0	13.31
Letters to the editor	7	5.15	3	8.57	6.86
Advertorials	4	2.94	0	0	1.47
Total	136	100	35	100	100

For the distribution of editorial items by unit of analysis, the above table shows that *The Sun* carried 93 news stories or 68.38%, features/opinions/columns – 22 (16.18%), pictures/drawings/cartoons – nine (6.62%), letters to the editor – seven (5.15%), advertorials – four (2.94%), and editorials – one (0.73%). For *Nigerian Chronicle*, a slightly different order was identified: news stories – 19 or 54.29%, pictures/drawings/cartoons – seven (20%), features/opinions/columns – six (17.14%), letters to the editor – three (8.57%), advertorials – zero (0.0%), and editorials – zero (0.0%).

The mean scores for the six units of analysis, as depicted in the coverage of anti-corruption stories by the two sampled newspapers were: 61.34% for news stories, 16.66% for features/opinions/columns, 13.31% for pictures/drawings/cartoons, 6.86% for letters to the editor, 1.47% for advertorials, and 0.36% for editorials.

Table 3: Prominence of editorial items as percentage of all anti-corruption stories in the newspapers

Prominence/ Placement of Editorial Items	The Sun				Nigerian Chronicle			
	Frequency	%	Attention Score	%	Frequency	%	Attention Score	%
Front page	18	13.24	54	24.22	1	2.86	3	6.0
Sectional/back page	51	37.5	102	45.74	13	37.14	26	52.0
Any other page	67	49.26	67	30.04	21	60.0	21	42.0
Total	136	100	223	100	35	100	50	100

Table 3 here presents the prominence given to anti-corruption stories by the two sampled newspapers. Front page attracts the highest attention score of three, sectional/back page is scored two, and any other page has a single score. Out of 136 anti-corruption stories published in *The Sun*, 18 (13.24%) with a score of 54 (24.22%) were given front page treatment; 51 (37.5%) with a score of 102 or 45.74% were for sectional/back pages; while 67 (49.26%) with 67 attention score or 30.04% were on any other page.

In *Nigerian Chronicle*, only one story (2.86%) with a score of three (6%) was on the front page; 13 (37.14%) with attention score of 26 (52%) were on sectional/back page; and 21 stories (60%) were placed on other pages. These had attention score of 21 or 42%.

Table 4: Distribution of length of anti-corruption stories in pages/columns per newspaper

Length of Anti-Corruption Stories	The Sun				Nigerian Chronicle			
	Frequency	%	Attention Score	%	Frequency	%	Attention Score	%
Every full page	30	22.06	90	56.25	2	5.72	6	14.29
Half page	22	16.18	44	27.5	11	31.42	22	52.38
Quarter page	26	19.11	26	16.25	14	40.0	14	33.33
2 columns and less	58	42.65	0	0	8	22.86	0	0
Total	136	100	160	100	35	100	42	100

The above table presents another assessment of prominence but in this case, it seeks to determine the distribution of the length of anti-corruption stories in the newspapers. Every full page attracts an attention score of three, half page attracts two points, quarter page attracts one point, and two columns or less receive no point.

In all, *The Sun* devoted 30 full pages or 22.06%, 22 half pages or 16.18%, 26 quarter pages or 19.11% and 58 on two columns or less (42.65%) to anti-corruption stories. The full, half and quarter pages, with a total attention score of 160 or 100%, were considered prominent while the 58 stories on two columns or less had an attention score of zero. This is very significant because a total of 57.35% of all anti-corruption stories in the newspaper occupied quantitatively prominent placement.

As for *Nigerian Chronicle*, two were full pages or 5.72% with attention score of six (14.24%), 11 were half pages (31.42%) with attention score of 22 or 52.38%, and 14 quarter pages (40%), with attention score of 14

(33.33%). There were eight stories on two columns or less (22.86%), which had a zero attention score.

Table 5: Distribution of photographs/drawings used with anti-corruption stories published in the newspapers

Use of Photograph/ Drawing	The Sun				Nigerian Chronicle			
	Frequency	%	Attention Score	%	Frequency	%	Attention Score	%
Full page display	5	5.32	15	15.31	0	0	0	0
Across half page	10	10.64	20	20.41	0	0	0	0
Across 3 columns	6	6.38	6	6.12	4	28.6	4	30.8
Across 2 columns	16	17.02	16	16.33	2	14.3	2	15.4
Single column	16	17.02	0	0	1	7.1	0	0
Full colour	41	43.62	41	41.83	7	50.0	7	53.8
Total	94	100	98	100	14	100	13	100

This table shows the distribution of photographs and drawings used with anti-corruption stories. Photographs are visual representations and they include drawings, paintings, and pictures. They are used to add depth and meaning to a story. Most of the illustrations used in the newspapers were pictures of the subjects in the stories and others were cartoons.

Every full-page display of photograph/drawing had an attention score of three, across half page had two, across two columns had one while across two columns and single column had zero score. When a picture was printed in full-colour, an additional score of one was given.

The Sun carried five full-page photographs with anti-corruption stories, representing 5.32%, with an attention score of 15 or 15.31%. There were 10 photographs placed across half page (10.64%), with an attention score of 20 or 20.41%. For across three columns, there were 16 photographs or 17.02% with an attention score of 16.33%. Photographs that occupied across two columns and single column made a total of 32 but these had zero attention score. Photographs printed on full-colour process were 41 or 43.62%, with an attention score of 41 or 41.83%.

On the other hand, *Nigerian Chronicle* had no photograph, drawing, illustration or cartoon published on full page or across half page. Only four photographs or 28.41%, with attention score of four (30.8%), as well as two photographs across two columns or 14.3%, with an attention score of two or 15.4% accompanied anti-corruption stories. One photograph was across a single column but this did not attract any attention. Seven photographs were published in full-colour, which represented 50% and garnered an attention score of seven or 53.8%.

Table 6: Slant or direction of anti-corruption editorial items published in the newspapers

Slant or Direction of Editorial Items	The Sun				Nigerian Chronicle			
	Frequency	%	Attention Score	%	Frequency	%	Attention Score	%
Favourable	74	54.41	222	67.48	27	77.14	81	87.1
Unfavourable	45	33.09	90	27.35	2	5.72	6	6.45
Neutral	17	12.5	17	5.17	6	17.14	6	6.45
Total	136	100	329	100	35	100	93	100

In Table 6, the slant or direction of anti-corruption stories in the two newspapers was determined. Out of 136 anti-corruption stories in *The Sun*, 74 or 54.41% were favourable. These had an attention score of 222 or 67.48%. The unfavourable stories 45 or 33.09%, with a score of 90 or 27.35% on the attention scale. For neutral, that is those without a strong positive or negative impression on the anti-corruption campaign, there were 17 stories or 12.5%, with the attention score of 17 or 5.17%.

For *Nigerian Chronicle*, 27 stories, representing 77.14%, and with an attention score of 81 or 87.1%, had favourable impact on the war against corruption. The unfavourable stories were two or 5.72% while the neutral were six or 17.14%. On the attention score scale, both unfavourable and neutral had six each or 6.45% respectively.

Table 7: Considerations that influence the newspapers' report of anti-corruption issues in Nigeria

Influences on Anti- Corruption Stories	The Sun		Nigerian Chronicle		\bar{X}
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	
Economic	45	33.09	12	34.29	33.69
Political	62	45.59	11	31.43	38.51
Religious	5	3.67	5	14.28	8.98
Social	21	15.44	7	20.0	17.72
Tribal	3	2.21	0	0	1.1
Total	136	100	35	100	100

The above table presents those considerations that influenced the publication of anti-corruption stories by

the newspapers. Political consideration constituted 45.59% from 62 stories in *The Sun*. This was followed by economic consideration – 33.09%, social – 15.44%, religious – 3.67% and tribal – 2.21%. As for *Nigerian Chronicle*, economic consideration was the first with 34.29%, political was second with 31.43%, social – third, with 17.72%, religious – fourth, with 8.98% while no story was seen to have any tribal coloration.

Finding the percentage mean for both newspapers, it can be inferred that the media's role in the fight against corruption was largely influenced by political (38.51%), economic (33.69%), social (17.72%), religious (8.98%) and tribal (1.1%) considerations, in this order.

7. Discussion of findings

In line with the first objective of this study, which was to determine the frequency of coverage and prominence given to the anti-corruption campaign and news stories by the two publications, it is glaring that the two newspapers gave adequate attention to anti-corruption by placing high prominence on the subject matter. *The Sun* and *Nigerian Chronicle* placed 69.96% and 58% respectively of anti-corruption stories on the front and sectional/back pages. Both had a combined 100% of the stories on full, half and quarter pages with none on two columns or less. For use of photographs and other illustrations, *The Sun* had a better outing than *Nigerian Chronicle*.

Besides, in Table 6, it is seen that the two newspapers in their slant or direction of news favourably highlighted their support for the anti-corruption efforts of government. This is important to note because without the mass media showing this level of interest, the campaign to eradicate corruption, which has already dwarfed the country's economic and development aspirations, would have come to naught.

From the above facts, the social marketing theory has been reinforced, especially in line with the position of Fishbein, Goldberg and Middlestadt (1997), cited by Schiavo (2007), that theory has the capacity to influence the behaviour of target audiences to improve their personal welfare and that of the society they belong.

For the second objective that sought to determine the constituents of the editorial consideration of the sampled newspapers in their coverage of the anti-corruption campaign, the editorial contents as they concerned the anti-corruption campaign were assessed and placed on five broad categories, namely bribery, forgery/perjury, fraud, misappropriation and mismanagement. The newspapers presented all the five categories in their reportage. Mismanagement, which includes official highhandedness, influence peddling, cronyism and other misdemeanours by public officers to encourage waste, received a mean score of 40.79%. Fraud, which involves deceit and perversion of truth with the intention to steal, came second with a mean score of 28.79%. Misappropriation, which is the misuse of public funds resulting in theft or embezzlement, was third with a mean score of 17.31%. Forgery and perjury was next with 6.58%, and bribery, which involves money or favour given or promised in order to influence the judgement or conduct of a person in a position of trust, came last with a score of 6.53%.

The low-level coverage given to bribery is understandable. A survey conducted by Transparency International in 2001 measured bribe taking and while countries such as Russia and Nigeria were on top of the list, Sweden, which runs a transparent government, recorded the least amount of exposure to this corrupt practice. This brings out the fact that a key tool in fighting corruption is information; and this is where the mass media, which have information as the raw material in their communication business, have a huge role to play in the war against corruption.

The third objective of this study was to ascertain the factors that influence coverage of the campaign by these newspapers. Five categories were selected as possible influences on the media. These were economic, political, social, religious, and tribal. In discussing economic influence on the media, one is faced with a complexity of issues that affect not only the survival of the media industry but also the society in which the industry exists. For an economic life of a nation to be vibrant, there must be a constant flow of information. Politically, the media can be influenced by the media laws, registration/licensing requirements, political parties and even self-censorship by the media practitioners themselves. Religion can also affect media output, especially in Nigeria where religious intolerance has recently reached an alarming proportion with unprecedented incidents of religion-induced violence and killings all over the country. Socially, the media exist within a society, where the cultural values and social norms of the people together stipulate what the media should or should not report. Lastly, the media are also influenced by tribal or ethnic affiliation. As observed by Oso (2003), many critics have argued that "what we have in the country is essentially a regional-ethnic media though with some limited national circulation."

From the findings of this study, the two newspapers were influenced, though in varying degrees, by all the above considerations. Their coverage of anti-corruption was affected politically (38.51%), economically (33.69%), socially (17.72%), religiously (8.98%), and tribally (1.1%).

8. Conclusion and recommendations

Any public campaign effort, such as the war against corruption, needs communication, and this is what the

media in Nigeria have distinctively done. They have reported, they have educated and they have interpreted so that the people may better be informed. Going beyond this may be inherently dangerous because they cannot take on responsibilities reserved for government and the wider society. They do not have the wherewithal to effectively step beyond their traditional roles of reporting and exposing corrupt activities; and are not sufficiently accountable to lead reform in the polity.

The government and the civil society, therefore, must play their parts effectively. There must be greater genuine commitment from leaders, the private sector must be encouraged to reform its operations, public awareness/education must be heightened, anti-corruption legislations must be strengthened, the judiciary must be up and doing, government's business must be more transparent, and the people themselves must be more committed so that the war against corruption can be won. The mass media have set the pace by placing the anti-corruption issue in the market place of public discourse. What remains is for the momentum to be sustained and, if possible, increased.

Based on the above conclusions, some crucial decisions need to be taken so that the issue of anti-corruption and its coverage by the mass media in Nigeria can be more vigorously and successfully handled. To ensure this is done, some recommendations are herein proffered.

First, since corruption normally takes place in secret, the mass media should be well prepared for a thorough investigative journalism so that innocent people are not unnecessarily destroyed through careless and incomplete reports. To also aid journalists to carry out their duty of informing the people adequately, they should be allowed unrestricted access to public records and information. To this end, the provisions of Nigeria's Freedom of Information Act, 2011 should be fully implemented.

Second, in educating the people against the menace of corruption, the mass media should work in close coalition with the civil society in the country. This will concretise their joint efforts into a distinct and more forceful voice against corruption. There already exist such bodies in Nigeria; and their collaboration with the media can create a stronger force against corruption.

Third, in order to strengthen journalists to report anti-corruption more frontally and fearlessly, without succumbing to the lure of the "brown envelope" syndrome, media employers should ensure that professionals working with them are well trained and better enumerated.

Fourth, any provision of the law that forbids the disclosure of information concerning public officers, such as in their declaration of assets and liabilities forms submitted to the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), should be expunged so that the media can more easily keep tract of the activities of public officers and expose their excesses when necessary. Any existing law or regulation that places limitations and provides for secrecy and other constraints on media practices should also be reviewed with the aim of reducing their negative barrier on anti-corruption reporting.

Fifth, the mass media should encourage their audiences to participate more actively in communication activities by allocating more newspaper/magazine space or radio/television time for them to express their views on such a topical issue as anti-corruption. This involvement of the public would ensure the generation of more ideas on how to succeed in the anti-corruption campaign.

Sixth, since the people need to be properly informed on the war against corruption as well as other topical issues, the media have a responsibility to provide them with the information to be good and incorruptible citizens. Therefore, mass media contents should always be accurate, fair, complete and untainted by the biases of media practitioners.

Seventh and last, government should see the mass media as partners in the war against corruption in Nigeria rather than as opponents and busybodies that need to be kept afar off from being unnecessarily nosy in things that do not concern them.

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