

Nigerian Newspaper Coverage of Covid-19 Vaccination Exercise in 2021

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Abstract

This study examined how Nigerian newspapers reported the COVID-19 vaccination exercise in 2021. The research focused on the prominence and direction of the reports on the COVID-19 vaccination exercise. The agenda setting and framing theories were adopted in situating the research. Content analysis was used to generate data. Content analytical method was used to ascertain the emphasis placed on the reportage of COVID-19 vaccination exercise. A sample of twelve editions of Daily Trust, The Guardian and This Day newspapers were studied each, for a period of six months. Findings shows among others, that the selected newspapers paid a lot of attention to the reportage of news on the vaccination exercise. The work therefore, recommended among others, for more editorials on important national health calamities such as this, considering its importance in issues analysis.

Introduction

The first known vaccination occurred in 1796 in Berkeley, England, when a rural doctor named Edward Jenner used pus from a cowpox lesion to inoculate an eight-year-old kid (Lombard, Pastoret & Moulin, 2007). The boy was not infected when Jenner variolated him with smallpox a few weeks later. On multiple occasions, this was carried out. The hypothesis that "the cow pox protects the human constitution from the infection of small pox" was put out by Edward Jenner following many exposures (Lombard, Pastoret & Moulin, 2007).

Although vaccine development is known to take several years before being authorised for use, the World Health Organisation authorised the Pfizer/BioNtech Comirnaty vaccine (EUL) in December 2020 as a means to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Reason being, rapid vaccine approval was necessary due to the fact that COVID-19 constituted a worldwide epidemic impacting every facet of human existence. Vaccines developed by various institutions have also been found to be safe for use; these include the AstraZeneca vaccines created by Oxford University, the Jansen vaccine made by Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceuticals in the United States, the Sinopharm vaccine made in China, the Moderna vaccine (an mRNA base vaccine) against COVID-19, and the Sputnik vaccine made in Russia. (World Health Organisation, 2020).

The World Health Organisation reports that approximately three million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered worldwide since the first immunisation exercise on December 8, 2020, when 91-year-old Margaret Keenan was administered the first shot. The inaugural vaccine in Nigeria was administered to Dr. Cyprian Ngong on March 5, 2021. Ngong is a medical doctor at the National Hospital in Abuja.

An international traveler from a high-burden state reported the first index case of the disease in Nigeria on February 27, 2020, in the state of Lagos. There were 252,428 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Nigeria as of

January 25, 2022, with 227,004 patients being discharged and 3,126 fatalities reported across all states and the FCT (NCDC, 2022).

Governments in Nigeria must immediately acquire and disperse vaccines due to the increasing number of reported infections. As of June 29, 2021, 3.4 million doses of vaccines have been administered in Nigeria (NCDC, 2020). So far, 2,265,805 individuals have received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccination, and 1,175,341 have received the second dose (NCDC, 2020). Herd immunity is the desired outcome of vaccination programs, which aim for widespread vaccination.

According to Randolph and Barreiro (2020), herd immunity is a form of indirect protection against illness that occurs when the majority of a population gets vaccinated against a virus. According to the World Health Organisation (2021), achieving herd immunity requires sufficient vaccination of large populations. Vaccination is a powerful tool for achieving herd immunity, and the media is supposed to promote it. The public's view of the epidemic will likely be influenced by the media.

Media outlets actively sought out public opinion on pandemic-related topics since they received extensive coverage of the crisis (Komiti & Asemah, 2021). In order to convince the public to get vaccinated, the media employ language and symbolic language selectively. Public health advocacy includes newspaper coverage of vaccines. So, it is possible to study how different media outlets cover vaccines and vaccination drives to identify the frames they use (Ajayi, Fatukasi & Asemah, 2021; Acheme, Amah, Ezeji & Asemah, 2021).

Using framing, the media can build, unite, or destroy an entity, which is particularly true in a complex nation like Nigeria with its numerous languages and cultures (Tejumaiye, 2005). Ohaja (2005) tackled the issue head-on, providing an explanation for their claim that the dissemination of media messages determines the audience's interpretation of such messages. Media professionals utilise news frames as tools to tell a story in a limited number of spaces while also placing an event in a broader context (Hallahan, 1999).

Auerbach and Bloch-Elkon (2005) observe that,

The news takes on a fresh interpretation when media outlets present stories through predetermined framing. The media have a significant impact on how people recall and evaluate issues by making certain topics more or less prominent. Subtle alterations to the wording of a scenario's description may influence the audience's perception of the situation, according to framing.

Reports about the immunisation practice have persisted in the media ever since the Corona virus outbreak, which has been heartbreaking. But there's no denying that the audience receives these news through a variety of journalistic hues and frames, which might have a major influence on them.

Statement of the Problem

The COVID-19 immunisation exercise may have been reported by the mass media, particularly the print media, using various frames. There is no question that various frame usage may impact audiences; this is particularly true given the well-documented correlation between media frames and how viewers understand certain topics.

As governments throughout the globe strive to achieve a COVID-free environment via the distribution of vaccines, the virus poses huge repercussions. This is made possible by the media's function of informing and educating the public. The media's ability to frame and purposefully structure news pieces in response to health

crises may aid the public in handling such situations (Tham & Zauddin, 2015; Adekunle & Adnan, 2016; Sell et al, 2018; Mutua & Ong'ong'a, 2020).

Media framing of fear-inducing deadly viruses has been the subject of numerous studies, including those by Okoro and Odoemelam (2013), Ngwu, Ekwe, and Chiaha (2015), Adebumiti (2016), Adedokun (2017), Nwakpu et al (2020), Soyemi et al (2021), and others. Other studies have examined media framing of the abduction of Chibok schoolgirls, terrorism in Nigeria, the dwindling economy, framing of the Ebola outbreak in Nigerian newspapers, and media framing of the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine in Nigerian newspapers. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to examine the impact on readers of certain Nigerian media' framing of the COVID-19 vaccination drive in the country.

The Objectives of the paper are,

1. To ascertain the frequency and volume of coverage on COVID-19 vaccination exercise by Nigerian newspapers.
2. To find out the dominant frames used by the newspapers in the coverage of COVID-19 vaccination exercise
3. To examine the prominence given to the coverage of COVID-19 vaccination exercise by the newspapers.
4. To identify the direction of coverage given to the coverage by the newspapers

Literature Review

Cheyney (1992) characterises a newspaper as a publication that provides the most recent information on local, state, national, and international matters; the latest analysis and criticism of executive and legislative actions; updates on music, theatre, television, and the fine arts, as well as entertaining and humorous content to elicit amusement. Newspapers are among the most accessible forms of literature for the vast majority of the population, including the educated, uneducated, youth, elderly, students, workforce, elite, and labourers in any society.

The Academic American Encyclopaedia (1989: 171) defines a newspaper as "an unbound publication released at regular intervals that aims to inform, analyse, influence, and entertain." Nine criteria for the classification of papers were established by Hynds (1975). Factors include publication timing, frequency, geographic focus, goal, production method, target audience, and circulation.

The newspaper is a crucial factor in moulding public opinion and impacting national and worldwide initiatives towards profitable expansion and universal awareness (Bitner, 1989). Babalola (2002) asserts that newspapers are the most accessible written records for a significant portion of the population across many demographics, including the young and elderly, students and workers, the elite and the labouring class, as well as the learnt and the uneducated. He similarly showcased several methods through which they have been employed to promote education further. The manner in which individuals frequently engage in discussions on newspaper content unavoidably promotes critical analysis, fact preservation, essential ideas, and scrutiny of information sources.

Mills (1981) asserts that newspapers are often the primary source of information regarding the social, economic, and political developments of a nation, region, or community, making them an essential resource for researchers in the social sciences and humanities.

Vaccination

Vaccination denotes the administration of a vaccine into the human body to confer immunity against a particular disease (CDC, 2022). This indicates that vaccines are exogenous to the body and must be administered primarily by a healthcare professional aimed at a specific disease. The WHO (2022) health advisory asserts that COVID-19 vaccine offers dependable protection against severe disease, hospitalisation, and mortality resulting from COVID-19 infection. In the event that vaccines are to be delivered, it is understood that the individual must voluntarily consent to the vaccine. Consequently, individuals are inclined to accept or decline immunisations based on their perceptions of COVID-19 vaccines.

Media Framing

Ngoa (2012) defines framing as "a mechanism by which an issue is ascribed a specific meaning." He further elucidates that framing entails the selection of certain elements of presumed authenticity and amplifying their significance within a message, thereby supporting a specific problem explanation, causal interpretation, ethical evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the subject depicted.

Zillman et al. (2004) posited that frames provide meaning to events and issues, and when utilised appropriately, they stimulate readers' attention and interest. By emphasising specific sections and neglecting others, readers' focus on information is restricted and maintained. Tankard, 2001.

Research by Eti (2012), Shah et al. (2002), Papacharissi and Oliveira (2008), and Odoemelam et al. (2012) consistently demonstrates how mass communication instruments direct public attention to particular issues that warrant reflection or consideration. These studies contend that the methods of information acquisition and the attributes employed in this process are determined by media practitioners (Eti, 2012). The way mass communication entities and gatekeepers organise and present events and issues, as well as how audiences interpret messages, are the ultimate outcomes of media framing. Framing, as a media effects theory, is extensively utilised to analyse how communication channels filter information and consequently influence public responses to a wide range of external stimuli (De Vreese, 2007). Azlan (2012) investigated the formation of audience attitudes influenced by media framing of an issue. He also notes that two aspects facilitate frame selection: the openness of an issue and the relationship between a subject and the audience's pre-existing beliefs (Azlan, 2012, p. 320).

Moreover, pre-existing attitudes and information significantly influence framing effects (Schuck & de Vreese, 2006). Auerbach and Bloch-Elkon (2005) similarly identified correlations between low political information and the propensity to adopt frames. Interestingly, it has been demonstrated that negative frames exert a greater influence on the public than positive frames. Adair (2007) and Shah et al. (2004).

Media Framing of Health Issues

Framing studies (Benefo, 2004; Bloch-Elkon, 2007; Bratić, 2006; Catalán–Matamoros, 2011) have established that mass media affect public views and decisions. The magnitude of this influence may be associated with the manner in which media organises news narratives related to health matters. It suggests that the manner in which media frames news items influences the impact of those stories and the probability of their associated impacts.

Park (2003) asserts that "the window does not depict the world as it exists." Individuals perceive the world just through the confines of the window's frame. The functions of mass media in conveying health-related issues are expected to embody social obligations, positioning media as custodians of information for societal advancement

(Li, 2016). The management of health information by mass media frequently mirrors public health knowledge and sensitivity to health concerns and requirements.

As an entity tasked with the dissemination of information, mass media exerts significant effect on the formation of public opinion and decision-making processes. Schram thinks that "news resides in the minds of individuals." It is not an event; rather, it is a perception formed post-event... it is an endeavour to recreate the fundamental framework of the event, designed to render the event significant to the reader. This corresponds with the claim that "when a message is conveyed, both the content and the manner of delivery, as well as the unarticulated implications, hold significance." The manner of conveying information about the virus is crucial for intensifying or alleviating the tension generated by the epidemic.

Newspapers report on COVID-19 Vaccination Exercise

The media are distinguished for their comprehensive analysis of issues. This is undertaken to facilitate the audience's comprehension of fundamental concepts related to specific news occurrences. The media's framing of a news item can be affected by various elements, including the emphasis on news angles that captivate readers, the economic incentives of the reporter, and competitive pressures within the media landscape (Adelakun and Hamed, 2017; Odoemenam and Okoro, 2013; Suleiman and Ojomo, 2019). Nsude, Onu, Nwamini, and Nwofe (2016) define media frames as the subtleties, biases, opinions, and interpretations that journalists incorporate into narratives to simplify complex realities for readers and viewers.

According to Oso (2017), framing refers to the media's power structure that constructs news stories with predetermined and limited contextualisation to facilitate comprehension or employ cognitive shortcuts to connect narratives to a broader context. This indicates that the media can shape news content by selecting a certain framing technique that minimises the perceived adverse impact of the story on the audience. The media can exacerbate the perceived subtle effects through their choice of framing, leading to more severe implications for the general public. Similarly, Anyadike (2015) posits that the extent of media coverage on a topic elucidates public knowledge, comprehension, and perception of the subject.

In China, Gui (2020) attributed the public's responses to COVID-19 to information from the government, medical professionals, virologists, and the media. Gui (2020) finds that, since the media was their primary source of information, the media's framing of COVID-19 may have shaped individuals' perceptions of certain illnesses and their societal roles or identities in combating those illnesses. According to Feezell, Glazier, and Boydston (2019), framing an issue can generate diverse perspectives with various value consequences. This indicates that framing enables individuals to recognise that identical occurrences might be seen differently based on the applied frame (Shah, 2019).

Dunwoody and Peters (1992) assert that a quality journalistic article should accurately reflect and provide several perspectives on a news event or outbreak, while also providing the audience with precise facts to facilitate their own assessments of risks or scientific messages. They, however, critique the media for omitting crucial material and presenting conclusions "out of context" when examining scientific concerns. The media's conscious or unconscious inclusion or removal of certain phrases in its COVID-19 pandemic coverage is subject to scrutiny and frequent misinterpretation. Research by Garner Huff (1997) and Mebane, Temin, Parvanta (2001) acknowledges that even when the media delivers a faultless narrative, the reporting of public health crises frequently incites accusations of over-reporting, insufficient, or misleading coverage.

The media engages the public by narrating the situation through framing. Framing refers to the media's capacity to delineate a situation and initiate discourse on a socially significant issue. Regarding the communication of the health crisis induced by COVID-19, framing assists in discerning the media's approach to pandemic reportage and the predominant frames that would subsequently influence the efficacy of the coverage.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the media has been instrumental in raising awareness about the virus's actuality through various framing techniques.

Samuel (2020) observed that mass media plays an undeniable and essential role in increasing the adoption of COVID-19 vaccinations. This occurs against the backdrop of the initial disbelief in the existence and actuality of the virus when the epidemic emerged in 2019 and continued until early 2020. A number of individuals believed that the virus was only a governmental fabrication for financial profit, or a consequence of the ongoing economic rivalry and power struggle between the People's Republic of China and the United States of America.

In reporting on pandemics such as COVID-19, sensationalism frequently dominates. News coverage often emphasises worst-case scenarios, employing emotionally charged language that enhances the story's effect. This tone can profoundly affect listener perceptions and attitudes. Studies indicate that negative, attention-capturing frames can elicit intense emotions such as dread and rage, enhancing the memorability of news content.

Multiple factors lead to vaccine hesitation, including the underestimation of disease severity, apprehension regarding side effects, misinformation, and a preference for alternative health practices. Akinyemi, Fajobi, Owoadel, Elugbaju, and Wuraola (2021) observed that the creation of COVID-19 vaccines has elicited many reactions, ranging from negative to favourable, influenced by differing media messages and frames.

Empirical Review

Numerous studies have sought to understand how news organisations present stories of public interest. The goal was to find out if the press has been doing a good job of their jobs. In their study titled "COVID-19 Vaccine: Newspaper Coverage of the side effects of the vaccine in Nigeria," Soyemi et al. (2021) used quantitative content analysis to enquire about the following: whether or not newspapers reported on the vaccine's side effects, the type of stories that were published about the topic, and the sources cited in those stories. Given the widespread apprehension and uncertainty around vaccines, the study concluded that current information on vaccination administration and side effects is insufficient. According to the findings, media should have shifted their focus from other sources to those who received the vaccine. Even though regulatory agencies gave information on who to contact in the event that someone experienced negative effects from the vaccine, it was found that publications did not record these incidents.

In his article "Reflecting on the Nigerian Media Coverage of the Dwindling Economy in Q1, 2016," Adebumiti (2016) aimed to examine how the Nigerian media reported on the country's economy in the first three months of 2016 in order to determine which aspects of the economy received the most attention. He examined 510 stories from the Nation and the Punch that appeared in the front, inner, and back pages of the newspaper during the first three months of 2016 using a content analysis method. Both of the newspapers used in the research are prominent in Nigeria. He went a step further by looking at the 273 corruption-related stories published in the reviewed publications to see how often they appeared and what big concerns they covered about the economy. Corruption, the naira and foreign exchange, oil and gas, and the budget were among the 510 economic-related front-page stories covered by the two publications. Among them, 273 stories (or 54% of the total) dealt with

corruption, 68 with the currency and the Nigerian naira, 103 with the oil and gas business, and 58 with the 2016 budget, making up 11% of the total. The media focused more on corruption, according to his research, than on other economic concerns.

Relatedly, Okoro and Odoemelam (2013) set out to determine the frames utilised by Nigerian dailies in their coverage of the Boko Haram insurgency. The study analysed the content of the Guardian, Daily Sun, Vanguard, and Thisday newspapers. Using a content analysis approach, the researchers found that The Guardian, This Day, and Vanguard mostly covered the insurgency from a policy response lens. Results showed that racial and religious frameworks were prominent in The Daily Sun. Additionally, there were good reports regarding the government's engagement in the rebellion.

In their 2015 study, Ngwu, Ekwe, and Chiaha examine the coverage of the kidnapping of the Chibok schoolgirls in Nigerian publications. The study looked at the Guardian, Daily Sun, The Trust, and Leadership newspapers. Content analysis and surveys were the two main research tools employed. Researchers employed content analysis to examine newspaper frames, and surveys to determine the impact of these frames on readers. The results showed that the public thought the media's portrayal of the kidnapping made them doubt any government rescue attempt, and that the hopelessness frame was the most often employed.

According to research by Nwakpu et al. (2020) and coworkers, there is a strong correlation between the way news outlets structure stories and how viewers understand those stories. Because of this, they act in ways that help contain and prevent the terrifying infection.

Their results are in line with those of Adelakun (2017), who studied how several Nigerian newspapers covered the 2014 Ebola outbreak and discovered a correlation between the containment frame and how readers rated it.

Theoretical Framework

Scientific observation is the basis for claims that attempt to explain a phenomenon; these statements are known as theories. Kerlinger (1973) offered a definition of theory as a collection of interconnected constructs and propositions that provide a systematic understanding of phenomena. Theories explain and produce phenomena by specifying relations among diverse. Theories of mass communication, according to Baran (2002), aim to explain and anticipate social phenomena by relating mass communication to different parts of our cultural lives or social systems. Therefore, Agenda Setting theory serves as the foundation for this study.

Agenda Setting Theory

Walter Lippman's 1922 proposal that the media were accountable for the images in our heads is associated with the idea of agenda setting. According to Lopez-Escobar, Llamas, McCombs, and Rey (1998), Cohen stated in 1963 that although the media may not always succeed in influencing the public's opinions, they are remarkably successful when it comes to influencing the audience's thoughts.

According to Wimmer and Domnick (2000), the public agenda—the topics that people discuss, think about, and worry about—is effectively shaped and coordinated by the advertising that appears in the media. This suggests that the subject of a country's budget padding will take centre stage on the audience agenda if the news media chooses to devote her time and space to reporting on it. Unemployment will be ranked as the second most important issue by the audience if it receives the second most coverage in the media. When it comes to the relative relevance of news subjects, agenda setting study looks at how media priorities and audience priorities relate.

What Asemah and Yaroson mean by "agenda setting" is that the media have a hand in deciding which topics a society values most at any particular moment (2008: 92). Although agenda setting theory does not give the media the authority to dictate our true opinions, it does grant them the ability to influence the topics we are considering. Agendas for public conversations are set by them. As an example, the component in agenda setting consists of,

- (a) The quality of reporting.
- (b) The prominence given to the report through headlines display, picture and layout in newspapers, magazines, film graphics or timing on radio and television.
- (c) The degree of conflict generated in the reports.
- (d) Cumulative media-specific effects overtime.

The matter of agenda setting, as it pertains to the subject of investigation, concerns how newspapers have influenced the agenda regarding the recession by allocating time and space to the coverage of the COVID-19 vaccination initiative, thereby rendering it the foremost concern for the audience.

Framing Theory

This research is based on Erving Goffman's framing theory introduced in 1974. This idea posits that the presentation (framing) of information influences individuals' comprehension of the message. In 1922, Walter Lippmann elucidates that "public opinion" is contingent upon the mental images individuals possess, which are derived from the media's constructed representation of global events. Framing theory has been studied since the 1940s as a framework for analysing communication and associated behaviours across various fields, including psychology, speech communication, organisational decision-making, economics, health communication, media studies, and political communication (Hallahan, 1999, p.205).

Kim (2003) posits that framing occurs when media practitioners select a segment of perceived certainty and prioritise it as the principal topic in their reporting, hence promoting a specific narrative or interpretation above other aspects. Furthermore, Boettcher (2004) extensively describes the process by which individuals or groups accurately assess their external environment. This study employs Scheufele's (2000) framework to distinguish framing from analogous assumptions, defining framing as subtle alterations in the articulation of a condition that may influence audience interpretation of the scenario. He states, "framing affects audience perceptions of issues, not by enhancing issue prominence, but by activating interpretive frameworks that shape the understanding of new information" (Scheufele, 2000, p. 1530). Researchers differ in their definitions of framing as they seek to develop the idea. While these modifications of a precise description may induce discrepancies, it is commonly understood that the result remains unchanged. The manner of framing influences public perception.

The media's use of framing, as articulated by Reese, Gandy, and Grant (1991), affects the public's comprehension of information, the examination of topics, and the formulation of political evaluations by the public. Developing a precise framework can alter perspectives on an issue and influence public opinion (Callaghan & Schnell, 2001).

Framing the topic pertains to how newspapers select and narrate matters related to the vaccination initiative to shape the audience's perception. This indicates that the presentation of vaccination reports in newspapers will reflect the audience's level of understanding. In this context, experts contend that mass communication techniques can promote peace if they so choose, but they can also incite violence if they opt for that path.

Research Design

A quantitative Content analysis was employed for gathering data for this research. A quantitative content analysis will enable the researcher to assign numbers to the coded data. It will also allow for the analysis of manifest texts from the newspapers being examined. This study is consequently confined to the content of the Daily Trust, The Guardian, and This Day newspapers from March 5, 2021, to September 5, 2021. The study's population comprises 255 issues from the three newspapers. Utilising Stempel's methodology, the sample size for this study was 12 issues from each of the chosen newspapers, totalling 36 issues. Consequently, the systematic sampling technique is employed to select at intervals within the newspapers, utilising an interval of 8.

Data Presentation and Analysis

A total of 36 editions of newspapers were examined for report on COVID-19 Vaccination Exercise. The result of the content are presented and analysed below,

Table 1: Media Coverage of COVID-19 vaccination exercise

Media	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Daily Trust</i>	28	50.9
<i>The Guardian</i>	16	29.1
<i>This Day</i>	11	20
Total	55	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The three newspapers under investigation have provided comprehensive coverage of the COVID-19 vaccination exercise, as illustrated in Table 1. A total of 55 stories were identified within the sample period. Daily Trust has the highest number, followed by The Guardian and This Day newspapers.

Table 2: Story Genres used by selected newspapers

Variables	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>This Day</i>	Total
News	19(50%)	11(28.9%)	8(21.1%)	38(69.1%)
Editorials	1(100%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(1.8%)
Features	3(60)	1(20%)	1(20%)	5(9.1%)
Opinion/Letters to the Editor	4(50%)	3(37.5%)	1(12.5%)	8(14.5%)
Cartoons	1(33.3%)	2(66.6%)	0(0%)	3(5.5%)
Interviews	0	0	0	0

Total	28(50.9%)	16(29.1%)	10(20%)	55(100%)
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Source: Field Survey, 2022.

The data in table 2 above shows that out of the 55 reports, the highest statistics are for news stories, followed by Opinion and then Features. It therefore shows that on the spot news report was given priority. The data on the table indicate that *Daily Trust* published the highest frequency on the vaccination exercise.

Table 3: Page Placement of COVID-19 vaccination exercise content

Variables	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>This Day</i>	Total
Front page	2(66.7%)	1(33.3%)	0(0%)	3(5.5%)
Inside page	25(50%)	14(28%)	11(22%)	50(90.9%)
Back page	1(50%)	1(50%)	0(0%)	2(3.6%)
Total	28(50.9%)	16(29.1%)	11(20%)	55(100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 3 shows that majority of the reports were published inside the pages of the newspapers. This indicates that prominence was not accorded to the COVID-19 vaccination exercise within the period under review.

Table 4: Direction of COVID-19 vaccination exercise content

Variables	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>This Day</i>	Total
Favourable	22(44.9%)	16(32.7%)	11(22.4%)	49(89.1%)
Unfavourable	4(100%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(7.3%)
Neutral	2(100%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	2(3.6%)
Total	28(50.9%)	16(29.1%)	11(20%)	55(100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

The table above shows that majority of the newspapers reports are favourable. By favourable reports, the researcher considers those reports that seek to encourage Nigerians on the need to get vaccinated and efforts being put in place by government and other stakeholders to ensure the exercise goes well without hitches

Table 5: Size of COVID-19 vaccination exercise content

Variables	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>This Day</i>	Total
Full page	2(40%)	2(40%)	1(20%)	5(9.1%)
Half page	3(37.5%)	3(%)	2(25%)	8(14.5%)
Quarter page	11(57.9%)	5(26.3%)	3(15.8%)	19(34.5%)
Less than quarter page	8(61.5%)	3(23.1%)	2(15.4%)	13(23.6%)
Multiple pages	5(50%)	3(30%)	2(20%)	10(18.3%)

Total	29(52.7%)	16(29.1%)	10(18.2%)	55(100%)
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Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 5 above, indicates that the newspapers reported the vaccination exercise mostly on quarter pages.

Table 6: Frames used in reporting COVID-19 vaccination exercise

Variables	Daily Trust	The Guardian	This Day	Total
Political	5(55.6%)	2(22.2%)	2(22.2%)	9(16.4%)
Economic	4(50%)	3(37.5%)	1(12.5%)	8(14.5%)
Rescue efforts	8(38.1%)	8(38.1%)	5(23.8%)	21(38.2%)
Hopelessness	5(55.6%)	3(33.3%)	1(11.1%)	9(16.4%)
Conspiracy	3(100%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	3(5.5%)
Religious	4(80%)	1(20%)	0(0%)	5(9.1%)
Ethnicity	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Total	29(52.7%)	17(30.9%)	9(16.4%)	55(100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 6 above shows that the Rescue Efforts was the highest frame by the newspapers with a statistics.

Discussion of Findings

The results from this study revealed that the selected newspapers provided sufficient attention and emphasis on the problem. The aggregate number of editions from the three chosen newspapers examined during a six-month period comprises 36 editions, following the sampling methodology proposed by Stempel (1952) as cited in Wang (2006). Among the 36 issues of all the newspapers, a total of 55 reports on the COVID-19 immunisation initiative were located, with the Daily Trust daily accounting for more than half of these items. The researcher deems this sufficient, particularly on a national issue of widespread significance that necessitates the attention of all nations, including their media. This finding parallels the research conducted by Jimoh et al. (2014), which examined the press coverage of the 2012 fuel subsidy removal crisis in Nigeria.

News serves as a crucial indicator for assessing the significance of an issue in the media (Boukes et al., 2020; Buchanan, 2009). The study's results indicate that the News genre constituted 69.1%, which supports the previously stated conclusion.

The findings indicate that the newspapers during the study period assigned low significance to the problem in terms of placement. The researchers classified the placement of editorial content as front, inside, and back pages to assess their prominence (Boukes et al., 2020; Vandendaele, 2018). The placement of news serves as an indicator of the prominence attributed to media coverage of a topic (Buchanan, 2009). Findings indicate that 90.9% of the reports are located within the interior pages of the publications, while the remainder is situated on the front and back pages. This therefore indicates that the newspapers did not accord adequate prominence to the issue, as articles featured on the front page are regarded as the most significant topics of the edition compared to those located within the interior pages (Alemayehu, 2020).

The research findings indicate that 9.1% of the reports are full-page, 14.5% are half-page, 34.5% are quarter-page, while reports shorter than a quarter-page and those spanning several pages constitute 23.6% and 18.3%, respectively. This obviously indicates that the majority of the reports were presented on a quarter page. The extent of coverage allocated to the COVID-19 Vaccination Initiative by the chosen

Moreover, the findings of this study indicate that the majority of the chosen publications portrayed the vaccination initiative in a positive light. The analysis indicates that 89.1% of the publications aimed to motivate Nigerians regarding the necessity of vaccination and the collective efforts to facilitate the process effectively. Adeyanju (2017) asserts that mass media function as essential conduits via which citizens acquire and interpret information to inform their stances on political and policy matters.

Framing involves omitting certain aspects of seen reality and constructing a narrative that emphasises their interconnections to promote a specific view (Entman, 1993). Research data suggests that the most frequently utilised frame by newspapers was the rescue effort frame, comprising 38.2%. This indicates that publications from the chosen newspaper mostly suggest that the government and pertinent authorities were striving to eradicate COVID-19 from the country. This outcome aligns with Alemayehu's (2020) study, "Communicating Health: Media Framing of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Sub-Saharan African Countries," which indicated that over one-third (34.9%) of the total articles analysed from selected newspapers during the study period focused on the initiatives undertaken by the populace and health professionals, as well as the precautions necessary for managing the pandemic.

Conclusion

The data indicate that the Daily Trust newspaper provided the most extensive coverage of the topic compared to the other publications, however the coverage by the other two newspapers is also sufficiently competent. This indicates that Nigerian newspapers are profoundly attentive to national and global matters, particularly those of a sensitive nature.

The study has presented evidence of the analogous patterns in the coverage and framing of the COVID-19 immunisation initiative, as well as the predominant frames employed by the newspaper in its reporting. This study further reinforces the role of the media in comprehending issues, representing a major contribution not identified in prior research. Nigerian newspapers have excelled in their social responsibilities by prominently and favourably covering the COVID-19 vaccination initiative over the research period. The COVID-19 immunisation initiative has been thoroughly reported by Nigerian newspapers, demonstrating a lack of sensationalism in their coverage, which signifies an enhancement in the standards of journalism in Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. Newspapers in Nigeria should always remember that they have a responsibility to act responsibly towards society. Regarding this, their reporting should remain objective and uncontroversial. When issues of national health are at stake, the press must always be perceived as responsibly reporting on them.
2. It would be beneficial for Nigerian media to highlight the importance of publishing national-impacting items on both the front and back pages of their publications. This would help the people understand the gravity of the issue.
3. Given the vital role of editorials in problems analysis, it is recommended that Nigerian media make an effort to produce editorials on significant topics, particularly those related to national and global health.

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