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IMPACT OF PRESS FREEDOM ON REPORTAGE OF CORRUPTION IN THE NIGERIAN OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY: A COMPARATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF FOUR NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS

AYODEJI-FALADE MONISOLA BOLAJOKO

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OF FOUR NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS

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OCTOBER 2021

DECLARATION

I, **Ayodeji-Falade Monisola Bolajoko** (201602728), hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work and that it has not been submitted, and will not be presented at any other University for a similar or any other degree award.

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I, **Ayodeji-Falade Monisola Bolajoko** (201602728), hereby declare that I am fully aware of the University of Fort Hare's policy on plagiarism and I have taken every precaution to comply with the regulations. Where information from other scholars is used, appropriate references have been made to acknowledge the sources.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to God Almighty, the giver of every good and perfect gift, who gave me the wisdom needed to execute this research and in loving memory of my beloved mother, Late Mrs Comfort Adunola Omotayo, who encouraged me to embark on a doctoral study, may her gentle soul rest in peace.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIT: African Independent Television

CAQDAS: Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software

CAT: Coding Analysis Toolkit

CEPEJ: Centre for Peace and Environmental Justice

CISLAC: Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre

CNL: Chevron Nigeria Limited

CPI: Corruption Perception Index

EFCC: Economic and Financial Crime Commission

ENBS: Eastern Nigerian Broadcasting Service

FATF: Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering

FOIA: Freedom of Information Act

FOIB: Freedom of Information Bill

FRCN: Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

ICPC: Independent Corrupt Practices Commission

LCDA: Local Council Development Area

MNOC: Multinational Oil Companies

NBC: National Broadcasting Commission

NEITI: Nigeria Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative

NLNG: Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas

NNBC: Northern Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation

NNPC: Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation

NOA: National Orientation Agency

NOSDRA: National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency

NPF: Nigeria Police Force

NTA: Nigerian Television Authority

OSRC: Ondo State Radiovision Corporation

RWB:Reporters Without Borders

SAN: Senior Advocate of Nigeria

TI: Transparency International

TSBS: Taraba State Broadcasting Services

WNTV: Western Nigerian Television Service

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CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled *"Impact of press freedom on reportage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry: a comparative content analysis of four Nigerian newspapers"* meets the regulation governing the award of degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Fort Hare and is approved for its contribution to knowledge in the field of journalism and media studies.

…………………………………   …………………………

Professor O. O. Osunkunle   Date

Supervisor and Head of Department

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ABSTRACT

A free press is pivotal to eradication of corruption in the society as the press remains the most powerful channel of communication that cut across all publics. Thus, this study seeks to evaluate the impact of press freedom on reportage of corruption in the oil and gas industry through a content analysis of four Nigerian newspers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*). The study adopted a mixed research method involving both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data were collected and analysed through content analysis of the selected newspapers while the qualitative data collected through interview of the respective newspaper correspondents were analysed using thematic analysis. The study revealed that 534 stories were published on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas sector by all the newspapers within the study period (July 2018-June 2019), with the Punch having the highest magnitude of stories (n = 196, 36.70%) while Nigerian Tribune had the highest number of stories reported on its front and back pages (n = 143, 92.25%). However, Guardian had the highest number of full-paged stories (n = 15, 20%) whereas the Punch and Nigerian Tribune adopted the widest range of publication formats with news being the most dominant format employed by all the dailies (n = 462, 86.52%). Although, all the newspapers employed more episodic frame (n = 432, 80.89%) than thematic frame (n = 93, 17.41%), framing analysis revealed oil theft, vandalism, alleged-fraud, environmental consequences and economic consequences as the major frames used in the coverage of stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. Thematic analysis showed that the newspaper correspondents did not have access to adequate information on corruption in the sector while journalists in the country are still being subjected to intimidation, arrest and imprisonment. These findings suggest that the selected

newspapers gave prominence to reportage of corruption in the oil and gas sector in country, which implies that the newspapers are fulfilling their agenda-setting roles and social responsibility in the society. Nevertheless, the level of press freedom in Nigeria has partly affected the reportage of corruption in the oil and gas sector of the country as this has restricted the use of investigative reporting occasioned by the lack of access to classified information on corruption and envisaged harm by potential sources and journalists. Nevertheless, this study proposes an anticorruption-media model, which focuses on the significance of the media as an anticorruption agent in a developing country.

Keywords: Agenda setting, anticorruption agencies; content analysis, corruption, press freedom, reportage, oil and gas industry

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

The press is the fourth estate of any democratic government and it is difficult or nearly impossible to operate a modern society without the function of a free press (Nwanne, 2014). Press freedom, according to Sambe and Ikoni (2004:11), is the *"unrestrained liberty to write or publish information for the consumption of the public"*. Also, Onagoruwa (1985) defined press freedom as the right of the press to publish without being subjected to any form of intimidation, molestation or blackmail.'Press freedom' as used in this study refers to 'media freedom', which describes the ability of the media to carry out its professional obligations without restriction or any form of coercion. It is, therefore, noteworthy that 'press' and 'media' are used interchangeably in this study.

Oberiri (2017) opines that press freedom in Nigeria is not beingpractised accurately as it only existed in the constitution and not in practice. This is affected by several factors ranging from direct censorship, legal pressure, secrecy and force. Olawoyin (2017) gave a succinct report on the global press freedom index, which ranked Nigeria 122[nd]out of the total of 180 countries studied. He stated further that in Nigeria, journalists encountered difficulties or even impossible to write on politics, financial embezzlement and terrorism as they are denied access to information and are faced with threat, violence and death.

Press freedom in Nigeria constitution is mostly based on conditions with the frequent use of the word "provided", which basically gives the government and those in authority right to use the press freedom to their advantage (Nwanne, 2014) and this might affect the role ofmedia as the watchdog of government. It is, therefore,

evident that inadequate press freedom is a major challenge as this might influence the media in relaying accurate information on issues of public interest as corruption, a long-aged term and practice, which has eaten deep into various sectors of Nigerian economy, especially the oil and gas sector (Nwankwo, 2014). What then is corruption?

Ijewereme (2015:1) defined corruption as "the misuse of entrusted power or a dishonest use of one's office or position for personal gain". Manifestation of corruption in Nigeria is in diverse forms such as "misappropriation of funds; over-invoicing; bribery; embezzlement; money laundering; and outright looting of the treasury" (Ijewereme, 2015:1). Nigeria has the largest population in Africa with an estimate of over 200 million people. The country solely depends on crude oil as the main thrust of its economy. However,overdependence on oil has encouraged and sustained corruption in the sector (Ijewereme, 2015). According to the Executive Secretary of the Nigeria Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (NEITI), Waziri Adio, corruption in the oil and gas sector accounted for 90% of corrupt practices in Nigeria (Onwuemenyi, 2016). The impact of this on the country's economy cannot be overemphasized as about 20% of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is lost to corruption (Transparency International, 2005). Consequently, eradication of corruption in the oil and gas industry of Nigeria is a long-lasting political goal which seems not to have yielded meaningful results over the years.

One of the major goals of the current administration under the leadership of Muhammadu Buhari is to tackle corruption in Nigeria as this is evident in its anti-corruption campaign, the platform on which he was elected. Since the advent of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, several efforts have been made by government to eradicate corruption. The most notable is the establishment of the Economic and

Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) by the former President, Olusegun Obasanjo. Besides, there are plethora of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) fighting corruption in Nigeria. It is, however, worrisome that despite the presence of these anticorruption institutions in Nigeria, corruption still persists.

The media is not left out in the fight against corruption as it has an obligation to expose corruption in the society through adequate coverage of corrupt practices in the society and as such fulfilling its watchdog role. It is also obligatory for the media to investigate corruption allegations against individuals and political office holders while beating hard the drum against corruption. Nevertheless, the poor level of press freedom in Nigeria as manifested in denied access to information, molestation and threat to lives of journalists (Olawoyin, 2017) may hamper the effective discharge of the duties of the media in the country. Hence, the significance of investigating the impact of press freedom in Nigeria on the coverage of corruption by the press in this study.

Even though, the Nigerian media environment is diverse and comprises various forms of media: print, radio, television, digital platform and social media (Kolawole, 2018), the researcher focused on the print media (newspapers) because the audience is not limited by internet availability and electricity supply as required by the new media and other traditional media (television and radio), respectively. More so, newspapers are archived and as such, long-aged data (e.g.1-5 years) as applicable in this study are easily retrievable for reference and research purposes, as well, the print media seems to be the most appropriate for investigative reporting.

Moreover, the press remains the most powerful channel of communication in the country that cut across all publics; its impact is made through the columns of

newspapers (Gupta, 2006). There are several independent newspapers in Nigeria with track record of professionalism in the coverage of issues of public interest including politics, corruption and terrorism. However, the researcher purposively selected *the Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune* for this study based on their wide circulation and readership in the country as they are listed among the newspapers with the widest circulation in Nigeria. Moreover, they are all daily newspapers.

In the last few years, I have been following the coverage of corruption by the print media in Nigeria and observed that most studies focused on general corruption with dearth of information on how press freedom may affect the coverage of corruption in the major sectors of the Nation's economy. Fadairo et al. (2014) documented the coverage of corruption news by major Nigerian newspapers in the following sectors: politics/governance, agriculture, transport, energy, service oriented, education, oil/gas and entertainment/sport. Odionye and Yare (2018) reported the coverage of corruption cases by selected newspapers and magazines in Nigeria. They also studied the perception of the newspapers' editors on the anticorruption fight in the country.

Some studies have also examined the coverage of anti-corruption efforts of the Buhari-led administration by the print media (Ekanem and Sobowale, 2017; Edmond and Wilson, 2018; Okon, 2018).However, there has not been any study that investigated the influence of press freedom on the coverage of corruption in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria. This study, therefore, seeks to contribute to knowledge in the field of media studies and journalism by covering this gap.

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1.2. Problem Statement

The fall in Nigeria's ranking on international press freedom index as released by Reporters Without Borders (RWB) which was reported by Olawoyin (2017) of Premium Times is of great concern to stakeholders in the press as the country was ranked 122 out of 180 countries in 2017. Although, the latest press freedom index has ranked Nigeria 120th (RWB, 2019), the country is still placed on the red zone for press freedom across the globe indicating a difficult situation for the country (Figure 1.1).

In fact, Nigeria is now tagged one of the most dangerous and difficult countries for journalists in West Africa.According to RWB, "covering stories involving politics, terrorism or financial embezzlement in Nigeria is very problematic" as journalists are often endangered and are sometimes denied access to information by officials of government, military personnel and even the public.

No doubt, inadequate level of press freedom in Nigeria is a problem as this is capable of influencing the activity of the press in the coverage of issues of national and public interest such as corruption in the oil and gas industry, which is a major thrust of the country's economy.Against the continuing shrinking press freedom space in Nigeria (Olawoyin, 2017), in the context of the view that media must be the watchdog of those in power (Wilnat and Weaver, 2014), and in view of the fact that oil and gas are critical for the future of Nigeria, this research explores the following. *First*, it explores the extent to which journalists' perception of press freedom in Nigeria affect their reportage of corruption in the oil and gas sector in the country. *Second*, it compares the extent to which each of the selected newspapers reported corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.*Third*, it explores how the selected newspapers *frame* the stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.
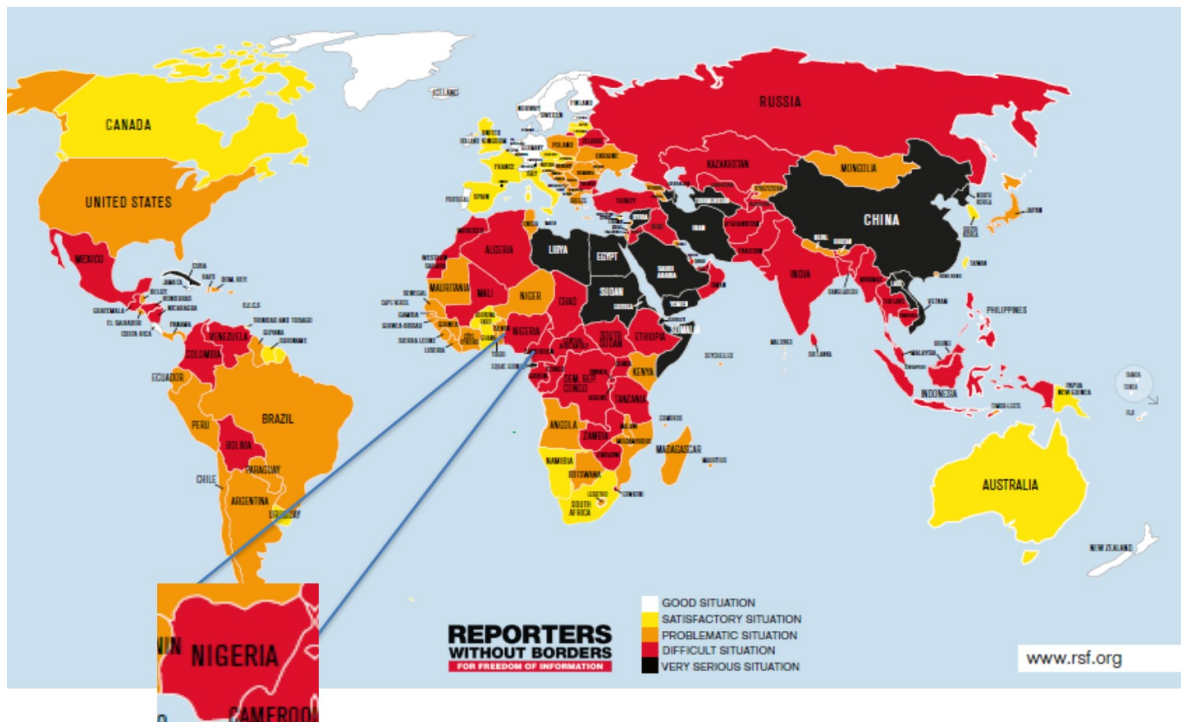
Figure 1.1. 2019 World press freedom index. Source: Reporter Without Borders (2019).

1.3. Aim of the Study

This study aims at investigating the impact of press freedom on reportage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry through a content analysis of four newspapers.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are:

i. To assess how journalists' perception of press freedom in Nigeria affects their reportage of corruption in the oil and gas sector in the country.

ii.   To evaluate the extent of reportage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the selected newspapers.

iii. To determine how the stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry were framed by the selected newspapers.

1.5.   The Research Questions

1.5.1. Main Research Question

- How do Nigerian newspapers' perception of press freedom impact on their reportage of corruption in the oil and gas industry in the country?

1.5.2. Sub-Questions

i.   How do journalists' perception of press freedom in Nigeria affect their reportage of corruption in the oil and gas sector in the country?

ii.   To what extent has the selected newspapers reported corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry?

iii. How do the selected newspapers frame the stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry?

1.6.   Significance of the Study

This study enlightens researchers on the state of press freedom in Nigeria and how this has affected the social responsibility of the press as regards the coverage of corruption in the Nigeria oil and gas industry. Although, there are several studies on corruption and anti-corruption in Nigeria since inauguration of the Buhari-led administration, this study is unique because it focused on the coverage of corruption in the most important sector of the Nigeria economy under a government with zero-

tolerance for corruption and at a period when Nigeria is on the red zone for press freedom globally.

More so, the study unveiled the impact of press freedom level in Nigeria on the reportage of corruption in the oil and gas industry of the country. Therefore, the researcher interviewed the correspondents of four prominent Nigerian newspapers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*) to get first-hand information on the level of freedom they enjoy while on the field and how this has affected reportage of corruption. In addition, quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed to analyse the content of the selected Nigerian newspapers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*) to determine the effectiveness of the newspapers in the coverage of corruption in the oil and gas industry. Hence, the study contributes to the body of knowledge in the field of media studies and journalism by proposing an anticorruption-media model, which focuses on the role of the media in the fight against corruption in a developing society.

1.7. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on three major theories including agenda setting; framing and social responsibility theories. These theories are considered appropriate because the social responsibility theory emphasizes press freedom, which is an important aspect of this study. It as well places responsibility on media practitioners to abide by particular social ethics. As such, the researcher analysed the extent of press freedom in Nigeria and its effect on reportage of corruption in the oil and gas industry in the country. On the other hand, the agenda setting theory forms the basis for evaluating the prominence accorded the coverage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the selected newspapers in this study, whereas framing

theoryfocuses on media presentation, treatment and production of stories, events and issues (Fourie, 2007: 245). Therefore, framing theory is used in this study to determine how corruption stories in the Nigerian oil and gas industry were framed by the selected newspapers, which is one of the objectives of this study. Moreover, with these theories, the researcher would be able to determine if the selected newspapers are fulfilling their social responsibilities by setting the agenda for the public on issue of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas sector. Detailed discussion on the set of theoretical frameworks that underpin this study is given in Chapter 5.

1.8. Overview of Research Methodology

This study adopted a mixed method of research involving both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Since the study focused on the impact of press freedom on the reportage of corruption in the Nigeria oil and gas industry, firstly, the researcher interviewed the correspondents of the four purposively selected newspapers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*) to assess how journalists' perception of press freedom in Nigeria affects their reportage of corruption in the oil and gas sector in the country.

However, quantitative method was used to evaluate the extent of coverage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the selected newspapers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*). This allowed the researcher to determine the frequency of the stories in the newspapers and quantify the prominence given to the stories by the newspapers through front/back page presence, story size/length and the story formats (news, features, opinions, editorials, cartoons, advertorials etc.) employed by the newspapers.

Furthermore, qualitative research approach was used to analyse how the selected newspapers framedthe stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. Qualitative data collected from the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis and findings presented in themes while quantitative data from the content analysis of the four selected newspapers were presented using charts, graphs and tables (Punch, 2004).

Since the researcher employed both quantitative and qualitative content analysis, stories on corruption in the Nigeria oil and gas industry were purposively selected from the four newspapers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*) within a period of 12 months (1st July, 2018 to 30th June, 2019). Prior the commencement of the study, the researcher obtained an ethical clearance from the University of Fort Hare Research Ethics Committee (See Appendix C for the ethical clearance certificate). Furthermore, the researcher ensured thata representative sample was drawn for the content analysis and all the interviewees were selected purposively. It was also ensured that the interviewees were properly informed of the research procedures before participation (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Detailed research methodology is provided in chapter 6 of this thesis.

1.9. Structure of Thesis

The thesis comprises nine chapters, which are presented as follows:

Chapter 1: **Introduction and Background to the Study**

This provides the introduction and background to this study. It also gives a general overview of the study in terms of the problem statement, aim and objectives, research questions, overview of research methodology, significance of the study as well as the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Corruption in Nigerian Context

This chapter discusses the concept of corruption as relates to Nigeria and its effect on the Nation's economy. It conceptualizes corruption and highlights its manifestations generally and in the Nigerian oil and gas sector in particular, with emphasis on the different types of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

This chapter gives an overview on the role of media in exposing corruption in Nigeria. It also reviews related literature to determine how corruption, in general, has been written about in Nigeria and how the issues of corruption have been framed by the Nigerian press. Related literature on coverage of corruption in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria are also reviewed. Some of the key literature reviewed include the works ofIwokwagh and Batta (2011), Fadairo et al. (2014), Adisa et al. (2018), Komolafe et al. (2019), Oberiri and Ndonima (2020) and Idehen and Eribo (2021).

Chapter 4: Nigerian Media Environment

This chapter presents the background on Nigerian media environment with focus on media ownership in the country and the influence on media content. It gives an overview of the press and press freedom in Nigeria as well as political structure and press freedom. It also discusses the historical background of print media in Nigeria, with emphasis on the selected newspapers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*) for this study.

Chapter 5: Theoretical Framework

This chapter also conceptualizes the watchdog role of the media. More so, this chapter highlights some of the limitations to the watchdog role of the media while it gives a brief discussion on press freedom and corruption. Furthermore, the

theoretical framework that underpin this study, which include the agenda setting, framing and social responsibility theories, are discussed. In the overall, this chapter gives a conceptual framework for this study.

Chapter 6: Research Methodology

This chapter gives an outline of the research paradigm, research design, research method, study population, sampling technique, data collection and analysis.

Chapter 7: Data Analysis and Presentation of Findings

This chapter presents the findings from the research. It deals with data analysis and presentation of findings.

Chapter 8: Discussion of Findings

This chapter discusses major findings from the study.

Chapter 9: Conclusions

This is the final chapter and it gives a summary of the key research findings. It also presents the conclusions and recommendations.

1.10. Chapter Summary

This chapter looked at the introduction and background to this study and the problem statement. It also clearly outlined the aim and the objectives of the research as well as the research questions that are meant to be answered by the study. More so, the methodology to be adopted for data collection, analysis and presentation was highlighted. In addition, the chapter discussed the significance of the study and gave a brief summary on the structure of the thesis. The next chapter will focus on corruption in Nigerian context.

CHAPTER 2

CORRUPTION IN NIGERIAN CONTEXT

2.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the concept of corruption as relates to Nigeria and its effect on the Nation's economy. It conceptualizes corruption and highlights its manifestations generally and in the Nigerian oil and gas sector in particular, with emphasis on the different types of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

2.2. Corruption in Nigeria

Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa with more than 200 million people. However, the nation is characterized by inadequate infrastructural development, poor economic growth and incompetent service delivery, which are attributed mainly to corruption and ineffectual governance (Blanchard and Husted, 2016). The name "Nigeria" to most people is synonymous to corruption, as that is the first thought that comes to mind when Nigeria is mentioned (Okonjo-iweala, 2014: 81). This is because the system has internalized and institutionalized corruption. It has therefore, permeated the value system and become a norm, which now reflects in people's mannerism. Likewise, Aluko (2002: 396-397) notes that:

> "Corruption now appears to have become a permanent feature of the Nigerian polity. It had become completely institutionalized, entered into the realm of culture and the value-system; it is now a norm and no longer an aberration. The young ones are born into it, grew up in it, lived with it, andpossibly die in it. The aged are not left out as they are re-socialised and begin to conform to it. Succeeding generations now see it as part and parcel of the social order and the normative system. Cultural transmission takes place and as such behavioural traits, which conforms with corruption begins to emerge".

Corruption reveals itself in Nigeria society in form of 'collection of illegal tolls', 'low level of transparency', 'abuse of position and privileges', 'inflation of contracts', 'lack of accountability', 'collection of bribes', false declaration', and 'misappropriation or diversion of funds'. Moreover, the following terminologies are used to describe corruption in Nigeria: "bribery, extortion, 419, embezzlement, financial malpractices, egunje, dash, gratifications, brown envelopes, tips, greasing of palm, softening the ground, inducements, sub-payments, side payments, irregular payments, payment under the table, undocumented extra payments, facilitation payments, mobilization fees, budget padding, over(under)-invoicing, cash commissions, kickbacks, payoffs, covert exchanges, shady deals, cover-ups, collusion, 10% rule (bribe surcharge)and let's keep our secrete secret" (Obayelu, 2007: 6).

I believe that corruption has eaten deep into all strata of works in Nigeria and has in turn deprived the country of enjoying in-flow of investors from all over the world, consequently, retarding economic growth. In fact, some scholars have argued that administration and discovery of petroleum and natural gas in post-colonial Nigeria are two pivotal factors that metamorphosed to litany of ignoble corruptpractices and bad governance in Nigeria (Adesole and Abimbola, 2012; Campbell, 2013; Hope, 2017). Apart from that, Nigeria suffered from bureaucratic venality. As a result, about £220 billion or $380 billion was looted and wasted by the supposed leaders (Ribadu, 2007). During the reign of General Ibrahim Babangida as Nigeria Head of State (1985-1993), an estimated sum of $12,200 million was reported to have gone into off budget account (Lewis, 1996). Also, the notable General Sanni Abacha, Nigeria Head of State between 1993 and1998, was rated among the top ten president, who were accused of embezzlement (Transparency International, 2004).

Aluko (2002) argues that what is known as "settlement syndrome" (which can also be referred to as bribe) in the military regime nationalized corruption, making it an enduring phenomenon in the Nigeria polity. This view is corroborated by Agbiboa (2012:330), who notes that "the lengthy military rule between 1966-1979 and 1983-1999 has mostly contributed to the culture of corruption in Nigeria". These military personnel had stolen state properties, taken state fund into their own companies and that of their colleagues and friends (Campbell, 2013:34). Contemporary Nigeria exemplifies an unethical and immoral society, where people holding public offices amass wealth by diverting public resources for private use, disregarding the existence of moral and ethical codes of behaviour. Where anticorruption reform is applicable, the process is always thwarted by ethnic, kinship, friendship and religious sentiments (Babalola, 1995).

The EFCCreport of September 2006 showed that corruption in Nigeria states has stretched catastrophically. Some governors stole and raided state funds to establish private business for families and friends. An instance was when Orji Kalu, the former governor of Abia state was alleged by the EFCC to have stolen about ₦35 billion government funds and created empire for his family members (The Nigerian Guardian, 2006; Vanguard, 2006; THISDAY, 2006).

The researcher concurs with the famous Nobel laureate, Wole Soyinka, who notes as follows:

> "There is corruption everywhere: in the church, police, judiciary, national and state parliaments, in the local authorities, even to be part of the country's national football team, the super eagles, one can bribe a coach to get a shirt" (Soyinka, 2012).

It is so bad that hardly would one achieve or accomplish a thing without bribing his/her way through. Consequently, corruption has become a norm as most people cannot cope without practising it. It is such rampant that getting a job entails that

anapplicant gives a bribe to sail through the rigorous interview stages, thereby denyingthe brilliant and qualified applicants.

The road safety commission that is supposed to enforce traffic laws is being bribed by traffic offenders. The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is another institution that has been enmeshed in corruption. NPF has conveniently won itself the accolade of the most corrupt institution in the country (Alemika, 2013; Transparency International, 2013 and NOIPolls, 2015). This is corroborated by Pring (2015) who conducted an afro barometer survey and the result showed that 72% Nigerians are of the opinion that the police force is the most corrupt establishment in Nigeria. Hope (2016) asserts that the primary preoccupation of Nigeria police is to enrich themselves from every activity they are involved in, rather than protecting the populace, they invest in self-preservation. Likewise, Akinlabi (2016) believes that the police engage in extortion and double-dealing (a situation whereby a bribe is demanded from victims to start a case at the same time demanding a bribe from the suspect to drop the case). For some police officers, the police uniform is 'a means to an end', as a number of them use it to intimidate and oppress citizens to maximize wealth in the long run (Agbiboa, 2015:113). The researcher agrees with the view of Kaplan (2013:101–102) on Nigeria police corruption which is summarized thus:

> "Taxi drivers, market tradersand shopkeepers routinely encounter armed police officers demanding bribes. Victims who report a crime to the police discover that the police refuse to investigate unless the victim pays for the privilege. Meanwhile, criminals with thick wallets bribe the police to avoid arrest or prosecution, to influence the outcome of a criminal investigation or even to turn the investigation against the victim. Senior police officers take a cut from the money extorted by junior officers. Although, police corruption is a form of police misconduct, this institutional corruption is different from other forms of police misconduct because of its principal motivation: achievement of personal/private or organizational goal".

Obuah (2010) does not exempt the judicial system of the Nigerian government from this menace. Bribery lingers in the judiciary, thereby preventing effective delivery of judgment. It is also believed that juries are effortlessly induced or settled. For instance, in 2005, the court Chief Registrar of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja was charged ₦37 million for fraud and money laundry (EFCC, 2005). Moreover, there are several allegations that the legislators both at the national and state levels receive bribes from the executive arms to enable quicker passage of bills advantageous to them (Obuah, ibid).

Corruption has eaten deep into Nigeria system that people now find it difficult to transact business with a fellow Nigerian not to talk of a foreigner. No wonder, Oluwaniyi (2011: 67) argues that "corruption has become a widespread phenomenon in Nigeria, deeply permeating into its social fabric to the extent that it has now become a way of life for the majority of people in both public and private spheres". Corruption has killed the right sense of thinking of some Nigerians to see it as a normal lifestyle. Consequently, it has impeded moral standards, therefore, making Nigerians to resort to corruption as a normal way of survival (Smith, 2007).

Little wonder, Rupert (1998) notes that this social menace has irresistibly become part ofgovernment and management entity.Corruption has grown outside the borders of politicians and public servants, beyond the rich greed in spite of their abundant possessions to involve the vast populace, who have stabbed ethics to embracing unethical behaviour ranging from adulterating food stuffs, medicines, vehicle tires and food supplements. Corruption has, therefore, tarnished the country's image and dented the social integrity of Nigerians globally.

In a bid to finding a lasting solution to corruption in Nigeria, different anti-corruption agencies were established. Some of these agencies include Code of

Conduct Bureau, ICPC,EFCCandFinancial Action Task Force on money Laundering (FATF). Despite the availability of these institutions in the country, corrupt practices and unethical behaviour are still on the increase (Casimir et al., 2014). For instance, several misappropriation and fraudulent acts of some past state governors have been dismissed by Nigerian court. An example is the case of Adamu Abdullahi, the former governor of Nasarawa State, who was arraigned on 149 court charges in 2010. The suspect was accused of stealing ₦15 billion; however, he was granted bail by the Federal High Court, Lafia, Nasarawa (Waziri, 2014).

Corruption has continued to thrive in Nigeria. Most people believe "nothing goes for nothing" in Nigeria. This means you cannot get anything without exchanging it for something. This is, indeed, an impediment to quality service delivery, as some public officers demand bribe before carrying out their official duties. However, the current administration under the leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari is working tirelessly to tackle corruption head-on. This is obvious in its anti-corruption efforts since inauguration in 2015.

2.2.1. Effect of corruption on Nigerian economy

A chief hindrance to the political development and growth of a nation's economy has been identify as corruption. According to World Bank, corruption is an impediment to development. It posits further that it is a rebellious appearance that can collapse the most rooted governments, it upsurges currencies, markets and investments. Egunjobi (2013) sees corruption as a principal challenge faced by this modern world as it stunts growth, weakens good administration, elevates poverty, twists public policy and injures the private sector. That is why Sachs (2007) describes corruption as an 'enemy within', an endemic that had undersized progress in many sectors, it is the primary reasons behind country complications in expansion.

The consequences of corruption on Nigeria's economy have further generated an issue of universal anxiety and have been studied extensively. Ogbonnaya (2018) notes that corruption is characterized by stern adverse economic effect and is, indeed, toxic to any nation. He notes further that corrupt tendency may linger except our leaders take necessary measures to checkmate it. More so, Odi (2014) opines that corrupt practices in Nigeria have substantial adverse effects on the nation's economy. Egunjobi (2013) reported that corruption per worker had an undesirable effect on productivity per worker directly and indirectly on foreign private asset, spending in education and capital spending per worker.

Furthermore, corruption has a very vast control on the economic growth of Nigeria in spite of enormous economic incomes in the country (Ogbonnaya, 2018:124). Political leadership and corruption in Nigeria sinceindependence (in 1960) have also been evaluated by different scholars. Gathering from the studies, Ogbeidi (2012) blames political class and leaders for the level of corruption in the country and as such leaving the nation in the state of underdevelopment perpetually. Likewise, Egunjobi (2013) confirms that corruption is basically responsible for the poor economic growth in Nigeria, as well as the mass poverty rate that ravaged the country. He stated further that, there are "poor quality public infrastructure", and "poor service delivery by bureaucrats".

It is important to state that the consequences of corruption are inexhaustible. Corrupt practices are bases of negative image of a government and country at large (Casimir et al., 2014). Furthermore, citizens of such country are stigmatized, especially those in the diaspora. This is corroborated by Okolo and Raymond (2014) who assertthat Nigeria institution is viewed globally as a system whereby corrupt practices are universal and rampant in both private and public sectors. Without an

iota of doubt, it is apparent that corruption weakens the integrity and security of Nigeria.

In Nigeria, the citizenry is hopeless and frustrated by the venality of public officials as they contribute to the escalated corruption, violence and anti-government unrest in the nation. An instance was the riot that broke-out on 1st of January, 2012 on fuel subsidy removal. The incidence portrayed people's lack of trust in government and in turn, dented the country's image (Alaenetonwa, 2012).

Social inequality is another principal effect of corruption as it widens the gap between the rich and the poor. People no longer have trust in their leaders and as a result contaminate the social sphere leading to deterrence of citizens working towards a common goal. Corruption lowers productivity; decreases the efficiency of industrial strategies; and encourages companies to operate illegally in violation of tax and other regulatory acts. The high rate of poverty and dearth of basic necessities like food, water, electricity, good roads and drugs have metamorphosed to anger, hatred and insecurity (Transparency Ethiopia, 2013).

Okolo and Raymond (2014) analyse the repercussions of corruption on Nigeria as follows:

> "Itposes serious developmental challenge being responsible for the poverty of the populace. Public resources meant for the development of all ends up in few hands, the nation pays the price. This has resulted to absence of social amenities such as portable water, electricity and good roads. The populace becomes demoralized and become willing tools to be used as sabotages to the state. It has led to the extinction of institutions of national significance and pride such as Nigerian Airways, National Shipping Lines, Steel Rolling Mills, Nigerian Telecommunication Limited, car assembly plants".

Floriteanu (2010) highlights the consequences of corruption as follows; inadequate quality service, embezzlement of public resource, high level of poverty and suffering, increased social cost, insufficient allowance, abuse spreading,

property impairment, improper management system, poor reward system and greed. This menace has also occasioned various kidnapping, ritual killings, robbery, ambushing and child trafficking in Nigeria. Corruption has negatively influenced people's life turning them to rogues, who do not believe in hard work but unethical behaviour. Dike (2008) observed that Nigeria's reward structure is the poorest in the world, as national priorities are neglected, the culture where diligence is not compensated, nevertheless, rascals and criminals are frequently honoured.

Other consequences of corruption in Nigeria are poor infrastructural development, poor educational standard and increased insurgence (Casimir et al., 2014). In line with this view, the high ways are unimaginably poor, claiming the lives of innocent citizens daily; the electricity is epileptic as there might not be traces of light for days up to months; as well, education is meaningless when teachers and lectures at higher institutions are meagerly remunerated. The Boko haram killings and bomb blasting have given way to military men to take over some part of the country.

Furthermore, corruption in Nigeria can be attributed to low level of income and retarded growth, which discourage capital inflow and external investment in the country. Ibrahim (2003:5) notes that "the alarming rate of corruption in Nigeria system has undermine the effort designed to alleviate poverty, it is also evident in the unequal distribution of income, which has led to government loss of legitimacy in the eye of the people". According to Akindele (1990:7), countries with high level of corruption such as Nigeria are likely to "under-invest in human capital", which reflects in their annual budget on education, while they "tend to over-invest in public infrastructure relative to private investment" (Akindele, 1990:7).

2.3. Concept of Corruption

Scholars have defined corruption in various ways, from all the scholarly descriptions, violation of ethical norms or standard and breach of existing law have been deduced to be the main tenet of corruption. World bank gave the definition of corruption as misapplication of public office for private benefits. Public office is abused for personal gain when a public office holder accepts gift or bribe, public policies are evaded to favour an individual, through the diversion of government resources, nepotism and patronage. In line with the World bank view on corruption, Transparency International (2013) defines corruption as "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain".

According to Nye (1967:417) "corruption is a behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role becauseof private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) pecuniary or status gains; orviolates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence. Thisincludes such behaviour as bribery, nepotism and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private-regarding uses)". Dwivedi (1967) also defines corruption as nepotism, favouritism, graft, bribery and all other unjustified and partial avenue implemented by civil servants and public at large to secure some socially and legally illicit position.

To Osunyinkanmi (2009), corruption involves 'fraud', 'bribery' and 'settlement'. Explaining 'settlement' in accordance with corruption can be synonymous to collecting bribe. Simply put, 'settlement' means generously distributing substance for bribery motives. Otusanya (2011) gave his own lists of corrupt practices in Nigeria as including fraud, extortion, bribery, money laundering and embezzlement. Ogbonnaya (2018: 123) notes that "corruption is a systematic vice in an individual, society or a nation which reflects favoritism, nepotism tribalism, sectionalism, undue enrichment,

amassing of wealth, abuse of office, power, position and derivation of undue gains and benefits".

The misuse of power entrusted to an office holder for personal gain or private purposes constitute what is known as corruption. In other words, nepotism, favouritism, embezzlement and partiality are corrupt practices. On the other hand, the researcher concurs with the opinion of Bayley (1966), who notes that corruption should not only be tied to the act of bribery as it also involves the misappropriation of authority as a result of consideration of individual gain, which may not necessarily be financial. Corruption is a lingering phenomenon that has been part of mankind since ages past. It has taken different forms and shape in various societies (Epele, 2006). It can transpire in both private and public sectors, it can also be political, executive, legislative, judiciary, financial and institutional. Lessig (2013) notes that institutional corruption happens when there is general and well-planned influence that challenges the institution's efficiency by diverting it from its vision or weakening its ability to accomplish its purpose as well as fading its public's trustworthiness.

Although, corruption is very difficult to define, it still permeates every aspect of the society (Agbese, 2008). It is obtainable in the military as well as among the civilian. In my opinion, corruption also manifests subtly as harmless gift. This view agrees with that of Okolo and Raymond (2014), who note that corruption involves any form of seasonal gifts, free air tickets, lunch or dinner, even "kola" that is given with the intention of influencing future courses of action thus, corrupting protocol or breaching some rules and regulations in the society. Corruption is the exploitation of public good, basically reserved for one's private use (Brownsberger, 1983).

Meanwhile, Bandfield (1996) gave an elaborate clarification of the term corruption as the procedure whereby an official obtains material or financial

enhancement or opportunity either for himself or someone else using his public position or influence in a way that is not openly conceded through rules and regulations of the establishment. Furthermore, Bello (2013) sees corruption as "a conduct or behaviour that deviates from moral or ethical standards" while according to Hellman (2013), corruption is the disease-state of an institution or individual.

Corruption is not only an abuse of power but also a violation of the "principle of political equality" (Dawood, 2014). Blundo and Oliver de Sardan (2006) view corruption in two opposing ways, they believe that someone can frown at corruption at the same time legitimize it. For instance, a situation where a civil servant turns down bribe, however, he accepts to sign an illicit document for his superior to enable him keep his position.

Moreover, Punch (1985) asserts that corruption occurs: "when an official receives or is promised significant advantage or reward (personal, group or organization) for doing something that he is obligated to do anyway; that he is under a duty not to do; for exercising a legitimate discretion for improper reasons; and for employing illegal means to achieve approved goals". Salisu (2000) gave a simple and succinct definition of corruption as the "misapplication of public resources to private ends". In the view of Tanci (1998), corruption is not difficult to identify, as it usually transpires between two or more diverse parties to exchange or promise to exchange cash. This exchange can also include gifts or other material things. It is believed that corruption is practiced by bureaucrat, politician and high-level officials.

Corruption entails much more than abuse of power to syphoning public fund, stealing billions of funds that are meant for public service and use. Such misapplication can involve an official getting bribe to stimulate him before carrying out his official duties. On the other hand, other officials might inflate the fee of a

phenomenon in their possession to enrich themselves. This happens most especially in the immigration offices in Nigeria, where applicants get to pay more money than required before being issued a new passport. Anyone who can pay the price can easily have his way through the immigration to import contra-banned goods. This occurrence is accurately captured in the view of Mumullan (1961:183-184) that a public official is said to be corrupt when he agrees to take money of its worth for rendering services that he is under obligation to render.

According to political school of thought, corruption means "an optimal means of bypassing the queues and bureaucratic inertia, hence unconducive to economic growth". The economist school of thought is that corruption is "an external manifestation of rent seeking behaviour on the part of individuals". A scholar has identified two types of corruption as vertical and horizontal(Konie, 2003).Vertical corruption is perpetrated by the managers and executives of an organization while horizontal corruption involves the entire bureaucrats, those informed and those who are not. Vertical corruption occurs most especially in the under developed countries. However, if any substantial progress will be made in a country's economic and political system, these two types of corruption mentioned above must be extensively eradicated (Konie, 2003).

Corruption is any behaviour that deviate from the recognized guidelines governing persons that occupy position of authority. In Malam Adamu Ciroma's words as quoted by Okolo and Raymond (2014), corruption is "the deliberate binding of the system to favour friends or hurt foes; any misbehaviour or perversion of the system; or misleading Nigerians or giving them wrong or distorted information about things they ought to know". Hence, any individual or group of persons that intentionally or unintentionally, through omission or commission, influence the

decision of others is liable of corruption and in essence contributed negatively to the society.

2.4. Corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry

According to a report from the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) in 2014, the amount of proceeds realized from the oil and gas sector in Nigeria is about 70 to 90 percent of the total foreign earning. Therefore, the oil and gas industry constitute the major pillar of Nigeria economy thus, shaping the tone and dictating the political and economy future of the nation (Donwa et al., 2015). Although, crude oil was discovered at Oloibiri in 1970's, it was first sighted in 1956 and oil exportation began in 1958 (Obioma, 2012). Since crude oil discovery in Nigeria, oil has become a key influence on the country's economy (Obioma, 2012).

Consequently, agriculture was neglected and this obviously led to the extinction of some agricultural produce such as groundnut, cotton, cocoa, palm oil, timber, hides and skin among others, which were the major sources of foreign earnings in Nigeria. Agricultural export during the pre-independent era created additional prospects for employment and government revenue. Now, oil is responsible for about 90 percent of entire exports and almost four-fifths of entire government incomes (Douglass et al., 2003; Budina and Wijnbergen, 2008). With the emphasis on oil, level of devotion and conflicts generated in the oil and gas sector in Nigeria, predominantly, in the Niger Delta region have increased. In fact, some Nigerians believe that "oil is more valuable than blood" (Usman, 2011:294).

Nigeria, the "Giant of Africa" as generally called, is categorized as the highest crude oil manufacturer in Africa and the 7th largest exporter of same in the world. Nigeria is also the 10th major holder of process gas reserve globally (Punch Newspaper, 2008:24). Nevertheless, Nigeria is categorized as one of the chief

indebted countries in the world (Omotola, 2008). Despite the country's enormous profit from oil, approximately 70% of its projected 200 million people still languish in abject poverty, with an individual living on less than US $2 per day. With all the proceeds from oil, Nigeria still remains poor in terms of "socio-economic welfare of the citizens". In my opinion, Nigeria situation can be likened to being "hungry amidst surplus". This scenario is, perhaps, consequent upon the high level of corruption that exists in the nation generally and in the oil and gas sector particularly. The country has constantly been ranked high in corruption perception index reports (Adomako, 2008).

In fact, there exists a synergistic relationship between oil and corruption as majority of the oil earnings are diverted into the purse of the few wealthy Nigerian leaders (Adomako, 2008). The under or over-invoicing of the import and export materials by the NNPC was cited by the 1993 US Senate Kerry Report (Obuah, 2010). The synergy between oil and corruption in Nigeria has become so intense that it has been passed down from hand to hand in the bureaucracy. For instance, there was a report of around £212bn from oil cash that was robbed from the country's funds by previous leaders (Independent Newspaper, 2006). The high rate of corruption in the oil and gas sector is detrimental to the overall well-being of the country because of the direct impact on the nation's economy (Usman, 2011).

Majority of the oil theft in the oil and gas sector of Nigeria are related to structural economic or financial leakages within the oil multinationals and bureaucrats in oil and gas sector. Devlin and Ranaweera (2008) observe that, with the significant proportions and momentary nature of Africa's oil dividend, it is expedient for government to harness these incomes to enhance growth and reduce poverty. Regrettably, the influx of oil proceeds has fetched low per capita income for

the citizens, yet, amass affluence and high standards of living for the fortunate few residents of Nigeria.

Furthermore,studies showed that oil exporters like Chevron, Shell, Agip among numerous others, factually have benefited from terms-of-trade increases, then these benefits usually have not been applied to set nations on a workable growth trail, rather, high inflation, huge exchange rate and destruction of the attractiveness in non-oil sectors with conflicts and rent seeking behaviour are the order of the day (Collier and Gunning, 1996; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004; Sklar and Whitaker,1964; Obioma, 2012). It isworrisome that despite the substantial oil boom in Nigerian economy, the physical expansion of the country has not been visible, rather, things have deteriorated owing to the level of corruption and oil policy operation in the country.

In fact, the corruption caused by the multinational companies (Shell, Chevron, Agip, Mobile etc) in the Niger Delta region cannot be overemphasized. Apart from oil exploitation itself, there are corrupt practices that are connected to oil spillage (on water and land), gas flaring (polluting the air) and deforestation among others. These, in essence, have resulted in ecology, environment and human obliteration. Moreover, the host communities of these multinational companies neither receive compensation from them nor fair treatment from the government. They failed to fulfill their social responsibilities to the oil region in Nigeria whereas the same companies operate in USA and are always responsive to environmental issues such as cleaning up oil spillage. However, they ignore such sites in Nigeria community. Even when the inhabitants protest this, they confront them with armed soldiers (Amenaghawon, 2016).

2.4.1. Types of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry

Nwakanma (2003) detected some peculiar corrupt practices in the oil and gas industry which includes the following "overpricing, inventory recycling, syndicated bidding, connivance, espionage, collusion and fraud".A critical investigation of the characteristics of oil and gas sector in Nigeria has disclosed what makes it so vulnerable to corruption. Some of the factors that make the oil and gas industry vulnerable to corruption are "volume of transaction; concentration of revenue flows; complexity of the industry; natural monopolies; strategic significance and spillover effects" (McPherson and MacSearraigh, 2007). More so, these problems may continue to linger because there are no independent metering facilities to measure the quantity of oil that is extracted, consequently, it will be impossible to estimate how much oil has been lost (Turkson, 2017).

Obioma (2012:102) classifies the following as the types of corruption in the oil and gas industry.

Policy corruption -This arises from corrupt impact on how sector policies are formulated, as well as the promulgation of sector laws and taxes with the intention to promote political or individual gains at the expense of the public. Examples are the "foreign policies, tax breaks, price controls, awards of exclusive rights (such as oil blocks to companies and individuals); special account procedures; and the myriad of special industry of regional incentives in the petroleum industry such as the oil subsidy to petroleum marketers in Nigeria" (Obioma, 2012:102).

Administrative corruption -This involves the misuse of executive position to attract illegal profits in exchange for approval of projects or contracts; for covering up of corrupt behaviour or for an advantageous interpretation of fiscal regulations. "It may also involve direct action by administrative agencies on their own interest, when, for

example, such agencies become involved in trading government oil or in regulating access to infrastructure. The more heavily regulated the system, the higher the degree of government control, and greater the scope for administrative corruption" (Obioma, 2012:102).

Commercial corruption – This includes a wide range of procurement manipulations such as "tender rigging", "kickbacks" and "cost inflation" (Obioma, 2012:102).

Grand corruption – This involves stealing of huge sums of money via diversion of products or incomes.

2.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter gave a succinct discussion on the concept of corruption as relates to Nigeria and its effect on the Nation's economy. It conceptualized corruption and highlighted its manifestations generally and, in the oil, and gas sector in particular, with emphasis on the different types of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. The next chapter focuses on review of relevant literature.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Introduction

This chapter gives an overview on the role of media in exposing corruption in Nigeria. It also reviews related literature to determine how corruption, in general, has been written about in Nigeria and how the issues of corruption have been framed by the Nigerian press. Related literature on coverage of corruption in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria are also reviewed.

3.2. Role of the Press in Exposing Corruption in Nigeria

In line with its social responsibility, the press is expected to expose corruption in the society through adequate coverage of corrupt practices in every sector of the Nation's economy and as such fulfilling its watchdog role. It is also possible to use qualitative independent media reporting to emphasize and pressurize the stakeholders to act appropriately (Edmond and Wilson, 2018). Onabajo (2007) highlights the heterogenous nature of the mass media to supply useful information to their audience scattered all over. This can either bethrough broadcast or newspaper constantly to inform, educate, and entertain or to correct certain wrongs in the society. Press also enlighten people through campaigns, programming, news, editorial contents among others, to elucidate the benefits of moral astuteness as important to national development.

The key role played by the media in combating corruption cannot be over emphasized especially in investigating claims of corruption that has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigeria, with the most endemic found in the robe of public officers and some stakeholders in governance. Furthermore, there is need for the media to drum

hard the beat against corruption. The question now is "how free is the press from the whim of the so-called stakeholders"? (Coronel, 2009). This is one of the questions this research answered.

It is speculated that "corruption can never be prevented and can never be fought without institutions as rulers, administrators and bureaucrats come and go but institutions and systems remain" (Akanle and Adesina, 2015: 433-434). This is also corroborated by the former President of Nigeria, President Olusegun Obasanjo during his inaugural speech in 1999 who said

> "Instead of progress and development, which we are entitled to expect from those who govern us, we experience persistent deterioration in the quality of our governance, leading to instability and the weakening of all public institutions. No society can achieve anything near its full potential if it allows corruption to become the full-blown cancer it has become in Nigeria".

The press is a strong institution that needs to be strengthened so as to fight corruption in Nigeria. A former American President, Barrack Obama advised the African countries on the need to build solid institutions rather than building strong men. Failure to ensure this, will result in corrupt environment that the failed institution will not be able to rescue. This is indeed the exact situation in Nigeria currently.

As the watchdog of government, the press is responsible for relaying cogent information about government activities and divulging its excesses. This openness and publicity on the part of the press has been a way of reducing excesses of government activities. Edmond and Wilson (2018:6) affirm that "the idea of the press as the fourth estate: an institution that exists primarily as a check on those in public office, was based on the premise that powerful states had to be prevented from overstepping their bounds. The press working independent of government, even as its freedoms were guaranteed by the state, was supposed to ensure this". It is devastating and unfortunate when the press who are supposed to surveil the

activities of the bureaucrat themselves are corrupt. This was clearly highlighted by Mwangi (2010) who believed Nigerian press have made several efforts to foster our democracy, unfortunately, they participated in the menace that saturates the land.

In addition, the press often fails to dig deep through investigative journalism the corruption stories they report. However, this may be because of several factors such as gratification, ownership, censorship or other control. In the actual sense, the media who are entrusted with the role of checking the excesses of government are not immunedagainst corruption (Edmond and Wilson, 2018). In some cases, members of the press have made gratification and brown envelope (bribe) their priority in giving media content the required prominence and access.

More so, some people believe that journalists often use the media for building good image for themselves and their organizations. The concept of 'PR-news' has increasingly become popular in the Nigerian media landscape. Journalists prefer to attend press briefings with juicy packages, which influences the tune of reporting. The media, therefore, tends to become prejudiced and publish editorialized reports. What becomes of its gullible audiences who consume such contents written to favour government rather than check their overall performance?" (Edmond and Wilson, 2018:2).

On the other hand, journalists are advised to avoid corrupt practices and always dig out the truth that the public needs to know (Edmond and Wilson, 2018). It is also important to note that journalists should be neutral in order to war against corruption. Yusha'u (2009) notes that press coverage of political corruption by most newspapers in Nigeria is bias as a result gratification. Stapenhurst (2000:19-23) opines as follows:

> "How well media can perform its watchdog function against corruption, fundamentally, depends on a number of factors

defined by the political, economic and legal environment in which the media operate: however, media freedom, freedom of expression, access to information, ownership, competition, credibility and outreach have been identified as the major factors that determine the quality and effectiveness of media performance on corruption".

In the view of Stapenhurst (2000:19-23), the press reporting on corruption can either have tangible or intangible impact. It is tangible when media reporting on corruption has a positive result on the listeners. Media role in fighting corruption can be intangible when media reporting lacks openness and fairness that will result in the required positive change andgrowth in the society. Eigen (2001) adds that the media is very central to ensuring accountability by monitoring and investigating those entrusted with the position of authority, especially those who may try to abuse their office for personal gain.

Therefore, emphasizing the role of the media in fighting corruption over the years has successfully been used to change people's opinion/ belief regarding issues like corruption. The role of the press in moulding perception, norms and behaviour is essential to its significance in war against corruption. However, Rajak (2014) asserts that the press may not be the rudimentary tool in fighting corruption, but it is crucial in accomplishing the cultural transformation that must follow legislative change to make laws and institutional changes workable.

According to Rajak (ibid), press can intensify the consequence of anti-corruption regulation by 'reaching and mobilizing a broader audience'; 'motivating political leaders to act'; 'facilitating a cultural change that will improve the sustainability of change'. Moreover, the media promotes generally accepted behaviour and condemn corrupt and unacceptable ones (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). Therefore, the press can actually be instrumental to curbing corruption and generate public pressure against corruption.

The press can be instrument of democratization and empowerment for the citizenry by allowing them air and debate issues and participate in decision making (Chiumbu et al., 2009). In doing this, journalists should ensure that the core values of their profession are upheld. Dower (2003) highlighted the following as some of the acceptable values: objectivity, truth, impartiality, balance and integrity. For journalistic work to be credible, it has to be first, reliable and accurate. Chari (2009:49) opines that "news contents should not only be accurate and truthful but should also be of quality, uncontaminated information, which has the potential to democratically change the culture of a nation". I believe that objectivity is the key to truth as acknowledged by Streckfuss (1990) who posits that "…writing a balance story without the reporters' hyperbole may be equated to neutralism". In my opinion, objectivity means finding and reporting the truth through ethical procedures.

In contemporary time, the focus of exposing and fight against corruption has shifted from the philosophers and pulpits to being the primary obligation of the press. This is confirmed by WSCIJ (2013), who identified the press and civil society groups as the two very significant weapons to fight corruption globally while the press is regarded as the strongest force in determining public views on issues. This view is supported by Anderson (2002) who argues that press focus on coverage of corruption especially in the economic sector illustrates that the pervasiveness of the malaise can be curbed from spreading.

For instance, there are plethora of TV shows, radio programs, detailed investigative stories on the pages of newspapers targeted at exposing political office holders and government officials who engaged in stealing and embezzlement of public funds. Such efforts by the media are capable of checkmating corrupt leaders in the society. This is affirmed by a former reporter of "Kampala's monitor

newspaper" as cited in Layefa and Johnson (2016), who notes that "so much corruption can be stopped just by knowing someone is looking over your shoulder to make known your activities" This was the situation when corruption scandals involving high-ranking politicians were exposed through extensive media coverage in Italy and Germany (Giglioli, 1996; Heidenheimer et al., 1989; Lashmar, 2001).

The media efforts destabilized the political system and led to the conviction of several political leaders on bribery charges. Transparency International, which is mostly seen as the "world anti-corruption watchdog" attests that an unrestricted and autonomous press is among the indispensable channel to inform the public about corrupt practices (AFRICAW, 2012). It further posits that

> "By investigating and reporting on corruption, the press provides an important counterpoint to the abuse of entrusted power for private gain, shedding light on the wrongdoings of public office holders and corporate executives alike. The media can channel its whistle-blowing function and ability to influence policies and government action and in turn bring about the much-needed development and good governance".

I believe that through accountable news-gathering and dissemination process, credible media channels can set agenda for free press that is proficient to fight corruption in its environment. Therefore, the researcher through this study has evaluated the coverage of corruption in the most significant sector of Nigeria economy: oil and gas industry by selected Nigerian newspapers so as to ascertain if the press is indeed fulfilling its social responsibility by uncovering corruption in the country.

3.3. Reportage of Corruption in Nigeria

Corruption has, in no doubt, eaten deep into the fabrics of many developing and underdeveloped nations. The destructive impact of corruption on national economy and growth has motivated scholars' interest.The effect of corruption on the economic

growth of developing nations cannot be overemphasized(Ogbonnaya, 2018). It is such that no sector of the economy is free from the grip of corruption. In fact, policy makers including all the arms of government (legislative, executive and judiciary), who are supposed to be at the fore-front in the fight against corruption in Nigeria are also caught in its web.

However, the media, as the fourth estate of government is saddled with the responsibility to ensure that government and political office holders are accountable to the people in a democratic society. This obligation is backed up by the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which states that "the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people". Nevertheless, some scholars have asserted that the media is not living up to its responsibility (Komolafe et al., 2019:9), which include objective coverage of corruption issues. It is, therefore, necessary to take a critical look at how the press is faring in the reportage of corruption in Nigeria. Consequently, this section reviews some scholarly works on how corruption in Nigeria has been reported by the media. The reviewed studies include the works of Iwokwagh and Batta (2011), Fadairo et al. (2014), Oberiri and Ndonima (2020) and Idehen and Eribo (2021), which were selected based on their relevance to this thesis and the similarity in methodology.

The study conducted by Iwokwagh and Batta (2011) on "newspaper coverage of corruption issues in Nigeria" analysed the content of four selected newspapers (the Guardian, Vanguard, Punch and ThisDay) over an eight-month period spanning May to December 2010 by assessing the frequency and prominence accorded corruption issues by the Nigerian press. The studied newspapers were selected

based on "percentage of national readership and circulation" as the papers were among the top ten newspapers in the country. The authors adopted agenda setting theory and social responsibility theory. Findings from the study revealed that Nigerian newspapers did not give 'significant prominence' to reportage of corruption as a result of limited corruption news placed on the front page. However, the authors did not consider how corruption issues were framed by the studied newspapers.

Another study that deals with coverage of corruption in Nigeria is the work of Fadairo and colleagues in 2014, where they adopted content analysis to assess the reportage of corruption news in the main sectors of the country's economy including agriculture, oil and gas, industry, service-oriented, transport, energy, politics/governance, education and entertainment/sport for a period of five years (2006-2010). The study content analysed three Nigerian newspapers: The Nation, Tribune and Guardian, which were selected using simple random sampling from a total of 43 newspapers in Nigeria during that period. The study examined the frequency of coverage, prominence and depth of treatment of corruption news by the selected newspapers. Their findings suggested that corruption in politics/governance had the highest frequency of reportage while the energy sector had the lowest occurrence of corruption reportage by the newspapers (Fadairo et al., 2014). Likewise, political corruption was given the highest level of prominence (Fadairo et al. Ibid). The authorstherefore, submitted that politics/governance, service oriented (i.e. telecommunications and banks) and sports sectors seemed to be the more corrupt sectors in Nigeria. However, the study lacked theoretical framework as no appropriate theory was adopted by the authors.

Furthermore, Oberiri and Ndonima (2020) assessed the coverage of corruption in Nigeria by Daily Trust and The Sun within a period of 12 months

(August 2018-August 2019). The study was based on the social responsibility and agenda setting theories. The authors reported that the selected newspapers gave much attention to reportage of corruption in Nigeria but the stories were not in-depth.This is corroborated by Komolafe et al. (2019) who assert that Nigerian news media still handle some corruption cases with a largely 'voyeuristic' approach, typical of 'tabloid journalism', in which stories are reported with captivating headlines, but fade away due to lackin depth and investigative reporting.

Most recently, Idehen and Eribo (2021) examined the print media and the reportage of corruption cases in Nigeria using four Nigerian newspapers(This Day, The Guardian, The Vanguard and The Punch) for a period of one month (October 1st to 31st, 2017). The study adopted the social marketing theory and reported selected corruption cases involving some high profiled individuals such as the wife of the former president, Patience Jonathan, a former petroleum minister, Diezani Alison-Madueke, Rtd Col. Sambo Dasuki and Mr. Abdulrasheed Maina (former chairman of the defunct pension task team). The paper revealed that the four newspapers based their coverage on misappropriation of funds and money laundry alone, neglecting other forms of corruption prominent in Nigeria.

It was observed that the reviewed studies used the following newspapers: Guardian, Vanguard, Punch, ThisDay, The Nation, Tribune, Daily Trust and The Sun, which are among the topmost Nigerian newspapers in terms of readership and circulation. This further justifies the selection of the newspapers (the Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune)used in this thesis. More so, the reviewed papers focused on coverage of corruption generally using different variables such as frequency, prominence and depth of treatment, which are in line with one of the objectives of this thesis. However, this thesis focuses on the coverage of corruption

in the oil and gas sector alone given its significance to the nation's economy. In terms of theoretical framework, most of the reviewed studies adopted agenda setting and social responsibility theories, which are among the theories that underlie the current study. However, none of the reviewed study used framing theory because framing analysis was not part of the study design. In this thesis, the researcher has taken a step further by looking at how the stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry were framed by the selected newspapers. Therefore, in addition to agenda setting and social responsibility theories, this thesis also considered framing theory.

3.4. Media Framing of Corruption in Nigeria

Three news-framing paradigms including "cognitive, constructionist and critical" paradigms have been identified by D'Angelo (2002). While the research conducted using cognitive paradigm tries to comprehend how frames modify people's opinions, it is assumed that there is a relationship between the frame and a person's previous "knowledge" (Brasted, 2005: 4). Scholars have argued that previous knowledge on a particular issue is assumed to facilitate the influence of frames in making a decision (McLeod and Detenber, 1998; Brasted, 2005). On the other hand, constructionist paradigm sees the media as "information processors, who create interpretative packages of the positions of politically invested sponsors in order to both reflect and add to the issue culture of the topic" (McLeod and Detenber, 1998: 877). More so, constructionists assume that media "limit the range of information about a topic because journalists judge that there are few credible sources about the topic" (Brasted, 2005:4). However, in critical paradigm, source selection is viewed as a process of media control (Brasted, 2005). It is assumed that frames are the effect of news-gathering procedures.

However, there have been different arguments on the roles media play in shaping public opinion (Whipple, 2005; Schudson, 2008). While the arguments are reasonable, it is clear that the media play a key role in moulding what the public think and talk about. In line with the view of Entman (1993), there is a very strong connection between the media broadcast and public perception of corruption and other news broadcast. Patterson (1997) also pointed out the media strength, which hinge on its power to frame situations. The specific frames of diverse news stories produce a 'symbolic filter' that assumes a particular discourse (Zamora and Albaladejo, 2010; Kalogeropoulos et al., 2015; Kostadinova and Dimitrova, 2012).

As deduced from scholars and other existing literature, there are two different types of corruption frames; generic and issue-specific frame. Generic frames are those that can be generalized i.e. it can be applied to various topic of corruption and at different times (De Vreese et al., 2001). While issue-specific frame "allows the framing of particular events to be investigated with great specificity and detail. It may capture specific aspects of selection, organization and elaboration that are present in news coverage and pertain specifically to a well-defined issue" (De Vreese et al., 2001: 109).

Giventhe significance of framing in the agenda-setting responsibility of the media and its relevance to this thesis, there is a need to consider how corruption in Nigeria has been framed by the media in the past. In this section, therefore, the researcher reviews some previous studies on framing of corruption in Nigeria. This literature review is limited to the works of Komolafe et al. (2019) and Adisa et al. (2018) because there is dearth of information on framing of corruption in Nigeria.

A study by Komolafe et al. (2019) through a content analysis of selected online (Premium Times and Sahara Reporters) and print (Punch, ThisDay, Daily

Trust and Vanguard) newspapers reported the following as corruption specific frames adopted by the studied newspapers: misappropriation, bribery, theft, fraud, election tampering, money laundering, forgery and embezzlement. A similar study by Adisa et al. (2018) investigated the prevalence of public officials' corruption frames using quantitative content analysis of three prominent Nigerian newspapers (online version): Daily Trust, the Guardian and the Punch for 6 months (January-June 2016). The authors adopted framing theory and identified the following corruption frames in the selected newspapers: economic consequences attribution of responsibilityand treatment frames. From the study, economic consequences frame indicated financial risk, loss or gain, having unemployment, poverty, insecurity as some of the key indicators. Attribution of responsibility frame identified individual guilty of corruption and who has the potential of curbing corruption while treatment frame proffered solution to the challenge of corruption in the country.

The reviewed studies gave a general idea on how some prominent Nigerian newspapers framed corruption. However, there has not been any study on how the media framecorruption in the oil and gas sector in Nigeria. Hence, this thesis hopes to bridge this gap.

3.5. Coverage of Corruption in the Oil and Gas Industry in Nigeria

As the focal point of this thesis, corruptionin the Nigerian oil and gas industry has been discussed extensively in the previous chapter. The aim of this section is to bring to the fore the coverage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by reviewing relevant scholarly works on the subject. The only work that reported the coverage of oil-related scandals by the Nigerian media is that of Komolafe et al. (2019). Although, the study focused on 'corruption reporting in the media in the 2015 Nigerian elections', it also examined some specific prevalent oil-related stories that

were reported by thefollowing media organisations: Daily Trust, Premium Times, Punch, Sahara Reporters, ThisDay and Vanguard between August 2014 and May 2015.

One of such cases was the case of Diezani Alison-Madueke oil scandal intertwined with the unease raised by the former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) over the illegal non-remittance of $20 billion in oil revenue by theNNPC. This story was later politicized, taking from the screaming headline of Premium Times (2014a) on the 27th of December, which state that "Nigerian government suppressing audit report on missing $20 billion oil money –APC". Findings from the study indicated that all the newspapers reported extensively on the Diezani Alison-Madueke oil scandal with the highest coverage given by Punchfollowed by Premium Times while the lowest coverage of the scandal was observed in Daily Trust and Sahara Reporters.

Another reported caseby the selected newspapers was the "Malabu oil field scandal", which involved multinational oil companies like Shell and Eni on the award of OPL 245, one of the richest oil fields in Nigeria by the former military Head of State, late Sani Abacha in 1998. The Malabu oil scandal, has started decades ago and it concerns the multinational companies, top government officials as well as some politicians and their allies. Most dailies in Nigeria reported this case to keep the public abreast of the happenings as it is unfolding. The major player in the scandal is Dan Etete, who was a former oil minister during Sani Abacha regime (Premium Times, 2014b). The Malabu oil scandal is still prevalent till today as international prosecutor are on the matter looking for charges against the political players in Nigeria. However, the findings of Akomolafe et al. (2019) showed that the "Malabu oil field scandal" was poorly covered by the selected newspapers as

Premium Times had only nine stories on the scandal within one year, Punch had two stories while Sahara Reporters had only one report on the scandal. Disappointedly,nothing was published on the scandal by the other three newspapers (Daily Trust, ThisDay and Vanguard) throughout the study period.

Given how these high-profile oil related cases were covered by the newspapers, one would be curious to know how the media report corruption in the oil and gas sector in the country. More so, the reviewed study only focused on corruption involving high-profile individuals and just two cases of corruption in the oil sector. Therefore, it is expedient to further investigate the coverage of various corrupt practices in the Nigerian oil and gas sector. It is worthy of note that Komolafe et al. (2019) and other scholars who had previously worked on coverage of corruption generally and oil-related corruption did not consider the impact of the continuing shrinking press freedom space in Nigeria on the reportage of corruption in the oil and gas sector in the country. Hence, the significance of this study as it hopes to cover this gap.

3.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the role of media in exposing corruption in Nigeria. It also reviewed related literature on reportage of corruption, in general and media framing of corruption issues in Nigeria. Related literature on coverage of corruption in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria were also reviewed. The next chapter gives a background on Nigerian media environment.

CHAPTER 4

NIGERIAN MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the background on Nigerian media environment with focus on media ownership in Nigeria and the influence on media content. It gives an overview of the press and press freedom in Nigeria as well as political structure and press freedom. It also discusses the historical background ofprint media in Nigeria, with emphasis on the selected newspapers(*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*) for this study.

4.2. Media Environment in Nigeria

Media environment in Nigeria is broad and it was previously controlled by these trio (print, radio and television). Now, comprisesthe print, television, radio, digital and social media. The first three (traditional media) had since inception led the public opinion and domain. The print, basically focused on the educated audience i.e. literates, politicians, high social class, among others while the radio audience are mostly the illiterates, who are targeted in their own convenient languages in various communities. Television, on the other hand, combined its viewership from both ends. However, because of its dependence on electricity, which has always been one of the principal problems in Nigeria, its regular viewing depends on social status or the ability to self-generate power (Kolawole, 2018).

Therefore, print, radio and television had their own audiences shared in Nigerian environment before the advent of internet in 1996, when the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) issued internet license to 38 internet service providers to sell internet in Nigeria. That was the evolution of new media in Nigeria,

which had great impact on journalism as well as other sectors. Specifically, it was around 2007 that internet usage rose to 7%. In this new era, social media is used for gathering, presenting and disseminating news and other occurrences. The practice of journalism has been altered and media control has been interrupted, newsprint is no longer significant in presentation of news in this internet world. Consequently, most newspaper companies have redirected their efforts to producing electronic version of their news pages. For instance, the online edition of the Punch newspaper is available at www.punchng.com while Vanguard operates on www.vanguardngr.com. Other online editions of newspapers include but not limited to www.tribuneonlineng.com (Nigerian tribune); www.guardian.ng (Guardian); www.thenationonlineng.net (The Nation). This idea was also embraced by most radio and television stations too, as they now have online streaming to meet their heterogeneous audience (Kolawole, ibid). Some examples include live streaming- TVC News Nigeria on www.tvcnews.tv and Channels TV live on www.channelstv.com. However, access to the online editions of newspapers and live streaming by the audience is based on internet availability, which many people may not be able to afford.

The oldest online news agency in Nigeria that still exist till today is Sahara Reporter, owned by Omoyele Sowore, a notable student activist and candidate in the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria. The agency started an online newspaper in 2006 that focused on reporting corrupt activities and abuse of human rights going on in the Nigeria system, while reflecting the pure activism of its founder. Another leading online newspaper medium is called Premium Times, which was established by a group of journalists and known for its pure investigative reporting online. This medium frequently breaks news that shape domestic discourse. It has reported

series of alleged corrupt practices of several officials. The most respected of all is the Cable online newspaper, which commenced operation in April 2014, is known for "speed and simplicity" in its news delivery. Cable online newspaper aimed at promoting knowledge-motivated journalism while pursuing the nation's progress. From the activities of the above, the media environment had changed drastically from the traditional ways to online, 24hours medium and available via smart phones, tablets, laptops among other gargets.

Nigeria media is faced with many challenges and limitations, the prominent of all is ownership influence on editorial style, that often affects journalists in the discharge of duty. Media sponsorship is a major problem of the news media. This is because the privately owned media rely mainly on advertisement for sustenance, while government owned rely solely on government and advertisement which can in-turn affect their reports (Akpe, 2016). This, leading to another worrying issue of economic environment i.e. the economic influence, whereby owners' funding the media now give them a stalk in the decision-making process, hence, affecting the kind of news journalist source for and report. With the rate of ownership increase and media businesses growing, news critics have argued that the quest to make news profitable, will amount to subjective and poor coverage of news while leaving several voices unheard (Bagdikian, 1987; Gans, 1979; Parenti, 1986).

However, Whitten-Woodring (2009) argues that ownership or funding of a particular media, does not automatically lead to control of such media. For instance, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) funded by government yet, completely independent of that government in their editorial style (Freedom House, 2007b). Likewise, private ownership does not assure media objectivity in news reporting. Only few can afford to pay their staff monthly salaries without default. Another

problem is overlapping of journalism and politics, which has always affected objectivity.

Although, Nigerian media is customarily supposed to be disjointed from the environment where they operate, which are the two centres of production: "The Southern press axis of Lagos/Ibadan and the Northern axis, Abuja", media in these axes have automatically fallen into separate ethnic and religious lines, which can affect media slant and reportage (Umejei, 2018). In addition, ownership is a contributory factor to this problem, as some proprietors are politicians, who use their medium to promote their interests.

Another challenge is mis-and dis-information. Recently, some media outlets have been circulating a lot of fake news in the public domain, particularly about the health status of President Muhammadu Buhari. Another report by a traditional media stated that a popular Nigerian bishop was denied visa by the American Embassy turned out to be fake news (Kolawole, 2018). The advent of online media has affected advertisement and media ethics in Nigeria. The former occupation of the traditional media as the custodians of news stories is no longer the case as this fame is now shared with online bloggers and some social media influencers. Even though, most media now have online presence, they are unable to successfully provide paid-for-content, the only Nigerian daily that tried it withdrew because of copyright issues in Nigeria.

Intellectual and investigative reports by the traditional media are stolen and copied by bloggers and social media influencers without penalties. Hence, it becomes challenging for the traditional media to profit from their contents. The most challenging is the intimidation, harassment, imprisonment and even killing of resilient journalists, who strive in the face of the highlighted challenges, to dig deep and get

fact on the issue of corruption in the socio-economy and political realm of Nigeria. The media is the fourth estate of every democratic government. Therefore, both media and government cannot exist independently of each other as this can lead to chaos. Hence, the media takes the form of government under which it operatesas democratic government hunted to intrude and influence media content to their benefit.

As noted by some scholars "In the days of military rule, the Nigerian media was a victim of over-legislation in the form of ruthless decrees promulgated to pave the way for the harassment of journalists, closure of newspapers, and stifling of press freedom (Duyile, 2004; Layefe and Johnson, 2016: 26). These days, under-legislation is the bane of the media" (Umejei, ibid). However, I believe that the media under both governments (military and democratic) are under stringent laws and decrees, which are more in the military regime but milder in the democratic government as they still give journalist access to non-classified information in their administration. Yet, this government (democratic) infringes on media right and gag the press through their non-adherent or non-yielding to change emphasized by journalists' investigative report.

Despite the wider audience that characterize the new media, particularly, the social media, the genuineness of their reports and sources are questionable as most of the bloggers and social media influencers are non-professionals, hence, not regulated. Therefore, traditional media seem to be more reliable as their operations are regulated and guided by professional ethics. The researcher, however, focused on print media because the audience is not limited by internet availability and electricity supply as required by the new media and other traditional media (television and radio), respectively. Furthermore, print media can be used for

reference purpose because of its permanent nature and as well most appropriate for investigative reporting.

4.3. Media Ownership in Nigeria

Media ownership, to a large extent, determines the behaviour, performance and operation of media outlets. According to Omenugha et al. (2013), ownership explains the controlling right a person, assembly or organization has on a media station. This right includes the power to govern the editorial view and content of the media outlet. Okunna (2003) claims that the proprietor of a media house has the ultimate will to set the pace for his media house. In fact, it is essential for reporters and editors to understand what the ideology of the proprietor is, to ensure that reports and documentaries are aligned with the owner's philosophy. The media owner is the ultimate gatekeeper in a media organization. At this point, it is necessary to mention the various kinds of ownership that exist in Nigeria which include government and private ownership.

Government ownership of the press started in 1914, with the instituting of the *Nigerian Pioneer*, later the establishment of *Nigerian Daily Times* in 1926 and the formation of the *Morning Post* in 1961 (Omu, 1978: 245–246; Duyile, 2004: 106). In the electronic media, examples of government-owned media are: 'Nigerian Television Authority' (NTA), 'Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria' (FRCN) and other state-owned radio and Television such as Taraba State Broadcasting Services (TSBS) and Ondo State Radiovision Corporation (OSRC). Government-owned media are majorly possessed by the government and principally controlled and financed by them. These media function as the mouthpiece of the government as well as the elites who use these channels to promote their views (Oberiri, 2017). This view is supported by Adesoji and Hahn (2011) who note that, although, the

government newspapers are always misconstrued to be serving the populace, they oblige to the concern of the government elite who repeatedly use them to scheme and shield their personal interest in government notwithstanding the unpopularity of the agenda.

For instance, during the tenure of President Goodluck Jonathan, no government media accused him during the fuel subsidy saga. The press onlycirculated that "the subsidy will be used to improve the country" (Adesoji and Hahn, 2011). More so, the media is said to be under the armpit of government, inclining to do as the government desires to secure its license and sponsorship. For example, the National Television Authority (NTA), which is officially owned by the Nigerian government, aired customarily the Presidents, Governors and Ministers, respectively. In other words, the station favours more the incumbent government. This practice attests to the Marxist theory, which believes that mass media is controlled by ruling class.

The Nigerian print media is mostly dominated by private ownership. Around ninety percent of the dailies are either possessed solely by business moguls who are now politicians or jointly owned by journalists and indigenous entrepreneurs (Ojo, 2018). Unlike electronic media, the history of print media ownership is a mixture of both the private and government. However, the owners of the foremost newspapers were foreigners. Indigenous private newspapers started in 1914, after the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates. 'Nigerian Pioneer' was the first indigenous newspaper founded by a lawyer named Kitoye Ajasa, thereafter, 'African Messenger' by Ernest Ikoli in 1921, Herbert Macauley started his 'Lagos Daily News' in 1925, then the Daily Times came on board in 1926 (Duyile, 2004). Moreover, Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe's newspaper titled "West African Pilot" that was

established in 1937 was remarkable as it served as a vehicle that drives home Zik's ideology which is *"show the light and the people will find the way".*

Nigerian press took another dimension after independence in 1960, with the introduction of government-owned newspapers (Mordi and Ogbu, 2017). Daily Express and Sunday Express were established for the interest of the 'Yorubas' in the Western region while Tafawa Balewa started Morning Post in 1961, specifically, to publicize the activities of his government. New Nigerian newspaper was established in 1966 by the Northern region. As at 1974, there were almost 19 newspapers serving the 19 states of the federation. Now there are 36 states in Nigeria and there are almost 150 newspapers and magazines in circulation (Mordi and Ogbu, ibid).

Electronic media in Nigeria started with radio broadcasting, which was first commissioned on December 1st, 1935, in Lagos, Nigeria and since then became the exclusive reserve of government. The first radio broadcasting station in Nigeria is called 'Nigerian Broadcasting Service' and began operation in 1952. It was solely owned by the Federal government. In 1956, its name was changed to 'Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation'. Subsequently, in 1959, the first television station was established with the name 'Western Nigerian Television Service' (WNTV), thereafter, 'Eastern Nigerian Broadcasting Service' (ENBS) in 1960 and 'Northern Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation' (NNBC) in 1962. All of these stations were regional focused broadcast stations, designed to serve the interest of the regional government.

Moreover, creation of states from the previously existing regions resulted in an increase in the number of media stations (Owuamalam, 2006:9). The 1979 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria entrusted the ownership of broadcast stations solely on governments. Subsequently, there are more than 40 state-owned

radio and television stations in Nigeria. There is also a national radio, formerly known as Radio Nigeria but now, the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), which runs a network of more than 30 radio stations situated in numerous states of Nigeria. The outside broadcasting requirement of the country is fulfilled through the Voice of Nigeria, which has international influence and appeal (Owuamalam, 2006:9).

For over 50 years, government reserves the sole right of broadcasting in Nigeria. However, the proclamation of No 38 of 1992 established the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), which put an end to the long era of government ownership of stations in Nigeria. The 1999 constitution bestowed the ownership on individual, who applies to the president, to be given a license to operate a station, cable or satellite distribution stations in Nigeria.Prominent among the privately-owned broadcasting stations in Nigeria are Minaj Broadcasting International (MBI), Silverbird Television, Channels Television, African Independent Television (AIT), Galaxy Television, TVC News etc.

4.4. Influence of Ownership on Media Content

The press, during the early periods, based their contents on news assessment of truth, fairness, accuracy and objectivity. However, these are no longer their focus as attention has shifted to unethical routines such as press biases, sensational news, sponsored news, advertisements and press economics among others (Mukherjee, 2015). Different scholars have shown that media ownership has an indispensable influence on media contents (Donohue et al., 1985; Zhu et al., 1997; Weaver et al.,2007).

More so, Shoemaker and Reese (1991) in their media ownership theory, linked the impact of media ownership and its effect on media contents. Stating that media owners, patrons and central power holders possess ability to suppress

matters, influence issues and convey only the contents that serve their personal interest that is owner's interest. Furthermore, it was noted by Shoemaker (1987) that only the media houses owned and maintained primarily on "interest" ground are susceptible to partiality and can also dance to the tune of their owners rather than being impartial and objective. Disappointingly, objectivity is gradually fading away in the dictionary of the press as it is now being used as an instrument of propaganda to serve the interest of wealthy individuals, corporate elites as well as government (Chomsky, 2004).

The researcher agrees with the perception of Djankov et al.(2001) that government-owned press have less freedom and are controlled both politically and economically. This is corroborated by Uche (1989) who notes that "the influence of government is seen in the unflinching support government media organizations give the government of the day" (Ayodeji-Falade and Osunkunle, 2019:110). It is as if Government is unwilling to release the press from her whims and caprice of control as they still enact "wicked" laws with the ultimate aim of gagging the press (Ukonu, 2005). This assertion is supported by Okwuchuwu (2014) who opines that government permit deficiency in these laws to restrict freedom of the press.

On the other hand, Parenti (1997:1-3)notes that private media outlets adopted the following tools to "divert" contents in favour of their organization's interests: "suppression by omission; attacking and destroying the target; labeling; face-value transmission; false balancing; and framing". Moreover, Golding and Murdock (2000:74) believe that media proprietors, to some extent, determine the custom and editorial view of print media organizations. This was attributed to increase in media moguls in the 20th century, which resulted in proliferation of privately-owned newspaper organizations in America and England to promote their political ambitions

and also used to challenge their political foes (Golding and Murdock, 2000). This view is further supported by Baker (2007), who opines that

> "Concentrated media ownership creates the possibility of an individual decision maker exercising enormous, unequal and hence undemocratic, largely unchecked, potentially irresponsible power".

This is reflected in the example cited by Graham and Davies (1997: 32) as follows:

> "Silvio Berlusconi owned three television stations, which he used in support of his political party in the 1994 elections in Italy as these television stations had 40% of the Italian audience as their target audience".

Conclusively, the press must ensure that it fulfilsits watchdog role and for this to happen, it needs to be accurate, timely and neutral in its reporting. Consequently, the researcher, in this study, assessed the objectivity of the four selected newspapers on the coverage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry byevaluating how the stories were framed by the different newspapers.

4.5. Overview of the Press and Press Freedom in Nigeria

Nigeria press never maintained a single form as it kept changing direction from nationalism to democratic and was used as instrument of propaganda for local, national and religion intolerance (Oyeleye, 2004). However, in a democratic setting like Nigeria, the press is known as the fourth estate ofgovernment while the executive, legislature and judiciary are the first, second and third, respectively. The press is saddled with the role of surveillanceand watchdog by holding the other estates accountable. To achieve these, I opine that the press should to be free from the loins, whim or influence of the politics in the society. More so, democracy solely leans on effective communication structure controlled through the press, which promotes democratic philosophies and helps citizens to form their opinions in a

logical way (Jacob, 2002). In my own view, however, the press is seen to be protecting the elite and government interest at the detriment of the larger society.

Norris (2006) identifies the following as the ideal roles of the press in a democratic society under a fair government: 'watchdog over the powerful', 'civil forum for political debate' and 'agenda setting'. It has, however, been observed that the 'watchdog' role of the press is the most difficult to practice in Nigeria as a result of several political manipulations, conglomerates and repressive laws on journalist (Sani, 2014) whereas Nwanolue (2006:225) notes that:

> "In a country where dependable democracy is being practiced, there would be respect for fundamental human right and the rule of law, there will also be freedom of the press to gather, process and broadcast accurate information without any fear or hindrance".

Press freedom is the ability of the press to enlighten the society by providing accurate information from the market place of idea without doctoring or modifying it and without the interference of the government either by pressure or censorship through a plethora of laws: libel, defamation and obscenity (Ndolo, 2005). Nonetheless, the researcher believes that governments, directly or indirectly, still use license and censorship to control the power of mass media, curtail its contribution and limit its fundamental human rights even in a democratic society. Furthermore, Okorie (2010:160) notes that

> "Nigeria is a typical example of an African country in terms of government control of the pressactivities and operation in the society. Nevertheless, the press struggles with the government tooperate as the watchdog of the populace in making the government accountable to the citizens ofthe nation".

Oloyede (2008) argues that freedom of expression/press freedom is the most significant, most prevalent and most celebrated of all the essential human rights. However, it is silenced and denied, because of the limited understanding of citizens

on these rights, believing that it only involves the right to think and talk, not knowing that it comprises 'freedom of conscience', 'freedom of thought', 'freedom of speech', 'freedom of movement', 'freedom of assembly', 'freedom of association', 'freedom of religious' and 'freedom of protest'.

The researcher wants to note that in a society with press freedom, the media performsits statutory duties without fear of intimidation by government agencies. In other words, press freedom is the ability of the press to function without interference of the government. 'Interference' refers to intimidation, arrest, censorship, detention, external influence and prosecution among others. Moreover, Layefa and Johnson (2015:24) view press freedom as "liberty to inform and publish one's thoughts without any form of coercion or restraint be it from government or any group of people" whereas Ogbuoshi (2005:18) sees press freedom as "…the right to communicate ideas, opinions, experiences, cultures, etc. through the printed word or electronic media".

Press freedom is also viewed as freedom from government control, a press with the right to access information and responsibility to protect the confidentiality of sources (Ona, 2012). Secrecy is one attribute a professional journalist must possess, ability to keep the identity of ones' source of information while the news is released to the public. Asemah (2011) asserts that freedom of the press means that a journalist is free from any form of control either internal or external, government or owners' influence and the latitude of journalist to gather as well as publicize information on any topic without interference in form of "pre- censorship/ post censorship".

The sustainability of democracy hinges on a complete press freedom. Democracy is not just about civil liberties, it also involves participation, contestation

and interest representation (Aiyede, 2000). Universally, democracy has unlocked rooms for nourishment of press organizations but this is not the case in Nigeria as there has been evidence of press repression. The few lines of privileges given to them in the nation's constitution have not been fully enjoyed by the press. Although, there is pluralism of the press and diversity of expression, it has been observed that they only operate in the complexity of the political system rather than performing their societal watchdog role on the government.

Despite the heterogeneity of the press, the constitutional supplies of press freedom have not been fully imposed. The Military regimes as well as democratic administrations have always violated the constitutional provisions of press freedom in Nigeria. Agbaje (1992) attributed the lack of complete press freedom in the country to censorship, multiple power centers and volatile political institution. It is worthy of note that some countries practising democracy lack complete press freedom because some journalists are possibly being victimized as they struggle against forces that overwhelm press freedom.

Nigeria among others like China and Cuba is characterized by high prevalence of journalist maltreatment, arrest and imprisonment (Bush, 2008). For instance, Ndika Irabor of the "Guardian newspaper", Femi Akande of "Fame Magazine", Nosa Igeibor, Kola Ilori, Onome Osifo-Wiskey and Ayodele Akinkouotu of "Tell Magazine" were all at one time or the other imprisoned in Nigeria for delivering their journalistic obligations. Consequently, I agree with the assertion that it is steadily becoming impossible for journalists to gather news on corruption and terrorism in Nigeria (Sahara Reporter, 2018).

In addition, journalists are increasingly being vulnerable and relegated to various kinds of violence as well as denied access to useful information. They are

rarely given public data that are important for public consumption. Several arrests of journalists during democratic dispensations in Nigeria have been reported (The Punch,2008). Sani (2014) opines that suppressive rules are being employed by government to pester and threaten the media. During the "so-called" democracy in the fourth republic, media personnel were accused of treason for disseminating a story that suggested that presidential aircrafts were not newly purchased but revamped (Sani, 2014). More so, under the democratic era, media outlets have been closed for publishing anti-government stories. A typical example is the shutting of Channels Television and Insider Magazine some years ago. Considering the aforementioned, I can assert that little or no difference exists between the so-called democratic governments and military dispensations in terms of press freedom.

Ukonu (2005) believes it is unfair for the Nigerian government to establish National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) for the purpose of issuing license to broadcast stations and at the same time, empower the commission to revoke the license at will if they operate in a manner that is against the code and public interest without specifying means by which the station could seek redress. One may therefore, think that NBC is being used to witch-hunt the media. This is evident in the indiscriminate close up of a Nigerian famous privately-owned television station (African Independent Television) for over 24 hours by NBC representatives in October 2005 (Ukonu, 2005). It was claimed that the television station unethically exposed grisly visual motions from the crash location of the Bellview plane (Ukonu, 2005). Considering the foregoing, it is suffced to state that press freedom in Nigeria is questionable. Consequently, the researcher assessed the impact of press freedom on reportage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

4.6. Political Structure and Press Freedom

Every press enjoys some level or measure of freedom, but this depends solely on the kind of system obtainable in the nation. For instance, the kind of freedom enjoyed by a communist press can be repressive in nature (Ndolo, 2005). There is need to elucidate the influence of political structure on the performance of the press in every society. Nwachukwu and Okiyi (2014) vividly explained the connection between the press and political structure of a nation using the "normative theories of the press". The normative theories were articulated during the intense period of the cold war in the United States. They argue that the press in a particular society takes its political and social structure and that this structure reflects the ideology of the government and country (Nwachuku and Okiyi, 2014). These theories are based on the nature of press control and ownership in a particular country. They are distinct from other theories because they did not in any way make scientific descriptions or deductions and were developed by various people, academics, practitioners and critics (Saqib, 2017).

The eminent normative theories which include authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility and social communist theories clarify the connection between the government and the press. Authoritarian theory is the first and oldest theory of the press, this theory states that the monarchs, dictators and administrators control the press and all forms of information in the country. The press under the authoritarian system serves the government and not the citizens (Severin and Tankard, 2001:309).

The authoritarian theory, further states that all manners of communication must be controlled by central authority or powerful administrator, monarch or dictator. The proponents of this theory believe that the governing authority should be in charge so

as to direct the press to protect the people from any form of threat that may be as a result of unguarded communication (Siebert et al., 1976:2). This theory is a top-down approach, as it believes that the authoritarian uses the press as a mechanism to improve its power but not as a threat on the citizens. The authoritarian theory is referred to as the original or perfect example and the most prevalent of all the other theories (Siebert et al., 1956). The researcher opines that, regardless of the model subscribed to by the government, the authoritarian model continues to influence the press activities directly or indirectly. The authoritarian press symbolizes only the ideology, opinion and culture of the government. In line with this view, Layefe and Johnson (2016:25) argue that

> "The ruler at that time exercise absolute authority over their subject and had regarded the press as part and parcel of the government. Its role is to disseminate to the people the stand of the authoritarian government on any issue. Under this situation, the press was seen as part of the government and should not criticise its policies".

The government solely dictates what the public read, watch or hear because the press ownership is that of the government or powerful individuals. They are responsible for issuing license to press owners as well as revoking it when they deem necessary. They also put in place some kinds of censorship (Saqib, 2017; Firdaus, 2012). For instance, the government can restrict the press from publishing any delicate information in order to maintain order and safety in the country. In other words, the journalists do not have the liberty to comment, judge or criticize the government freely, however, the authoritarian can allow few thoughts that can promote their ideology to be released to the public.

The libertarian theory is the direct opposite of authoritarian theory as this theory allows the press to have control over what they write and publish. The government no longer dictates for the press, rather the press adopted libertarian

standards that enabled the people to gather as well as disseminate information freely in the society. Unlike the authoritarian theory that controls the activities of the press, this model stipulates that the press is an instrument used by the people to put the government to check. The libertarian theory is considered as the perfect model as it allows the press to project and improve the interest of the people (Siebert et al., 1956:40; Ayodeji-Falade, 2018).

In this system, the major concern of the press is to surveil the activities of government (Wright, 1986). Also, in a capitalist society, where individuals maintain the existence of the press through sponsorship like the advertisers and big companies, they tend to influence the content of the press as in the authoritarian system (Firdaus, 2012). Libertarianism in a simple form means that "information is knowledge and knowledge is power". In other words, the press is free to publish anything both positive and negative contents in as much as it is meaningful and can impart knowledge (Saqib, 2017). The researcher agrees with the libertarian theorists, as the press should be an independent body owned by the citizens and serving their interest.

Siebert et al. (1956) highlighted the following as the basis of libertarian theory:

❖ The citizens always want to hear the truth in other to guide their thoughts or decision-making process.

❖ To achieve number one above, ideas and information must be free and open for discussion.

❖ Therefore, citizens having different ideas, thought or opinion should be allowed to advance it individually.

❖ The logical and accurate ideas are then accepted.

Furthermore, this theory is based on concept of a "free market place of ideas" which means that ideas, opinions and information are free to flow in from any one through any channel and that truth will always win in the market place of ideas (Severin and Tankard, 2001). The most crucial aspect of libertarian system is that the press functions as a vigilant watchdog on every activity of government. There is also freedom of expression, which enables the press to carry out its obligation without fear of censorship by government (Firdaus, 2012).

Social responsibility theory was developed in the United States of America in the 20th century. Evolving from media practitioners, media codes and the work of the commission on freedom of the press (Hutchins' Commission), hold that while the media inform, entertain and sell, they must also raise conflict to the plain of discussion (Severin and Tankard, 2001). This theory posits that the press has the right to criticize government or any institution, and that everyone who has something to say in form of community opinion, consumer action and professional ethics can use the press to achieve that, but at the same time, the press must also be responsible to maintain stability in the society (Daramola, 2003: 72).

Social responsibility was developed because of some faults discovered in libertarian theory, like allowing the publication of uninvestigated news contents and the growth of the elite class (Firdaus, 2012). Although, social responsibility model encompasses variety and multiplicity in the press, it ensures that the press sticks to its obligation of informing, educating, entertaining and mobilizing the people than focusing on freedom of expression (Rubenstein, 2012). Consequently, press contents are products of well-investigated process and objective reporting, which do not contain any contaminated object that is detrimental to the society. Firdaus (2012) explains that the social responsibility model ensures that the press maintains high

ethical responsibility to maintain social peace and stability as well as build an educated populace. This obligation would be met through self-regulation of the media through media council's codes of ethics, public opinion and consumer reactions.

Nevertheless, social responsibility theory still allows the government to monitor press activities to be assured that they are actually serving the interest of the people, otherwise, they will be held responsible for their actions (Firdaus, 2012). The social responsibility theory of the press is connected to the western countries (Britain and Sweden). The theory underlines the ethical and social responsibilities of individuals and organizations that function as the press. The press is, therefore, obligated to "provide the masses with information and discussion on important issues of public interest" and "avoid activities that are harmful to public welfare and security of the state" (Nwachukwu and Okiyi, 2014).

The soviet-communist theory of the press is what Schramm conceptualized as the Soviet Union logical application of the authoritarian theory with a slight demarcation stating that, it is to cater for the welfare of the citizens and not to serve the ruler alone. The communist system focused on the press being used as an instrument of impacting, implementing and spreading the state's policy, ideology, doctrines and propaganda (Firdaus, 2012). This model also views the press as a mechanism of contributing to the success and continuation of the soviet system (Severin and Tankard, 2012).

More so, the soviet communist theory is based on the idea of the government controlling all activities and communication of the press for the purpose of serving the interest of the working class. According to Saqib (2017) as cited in Ayodeji-Falade (2018:18), soviet-communist theory "is seen as an extreme application of

authoritarian ideas, in that media are totally subordinated to the interests and functions of the state". The theory states that, the essence of the press is to educate, inform, entertain, mobilize and motivate the working class in the society.

Libertarian and social responsibility theories appear to be the most practiced, recognized and accepted in modern societies. Despite the acceptance of these theories, there remains a perceptible feature of authoritarian theory of the press in some African countries, most especially, Nigeria. It is very important to state that several laws in Nigeria were enacted to limit the press and protect the government. For instance, 'the 1903 newspaper law enacted by the colonial government' as highlighted by Layefe and Johnson (2016: 26-27) stated thus

(i)   "newspaper proprietors were required to deposit a sworn affidavit with the registrar of the supreme court, giving details of the correct title or name of the newspaper, the address of the place of production and the names and addresses of the printer, publisher or proprietor".

(ii)   "it also required a proprietor to post a bond in the amount of two hundred and fifty pounds sterling to be executed and registered with the supreme court Registrar by one or more sureties as may be required and approved by the Attorney-General".

Other repressive laws in Nigeria include but not limited to "the 1909 colonial sedition offence ordinance; amendment to the newspaper ordinance of 1917; amendment to the newspaper ordinance of 1948; and newspaper act of 1958 (Uche, 1989; Layefe and Johnson, 2016: 26). The repressive laws became more intense after Nigeria independence as the autonomous governments passed obnoxious laws and decrees adding to the existing colonial repressive laws to protect the interest of

the dominant class. Some of such laws include: "the newspapers amendment act of 1964" which stipulates as follows (Layefe and Johnson, 2016: 27):

(a) "Any person who authorizes for publication, publishes, reproduces or circulates for sale in a newspaper any statement, rumour or report knowing or having reason to believe that such statement, rumour or report is false or shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine of two hundred pounds or to imprisonment for a term of one year".

(b) "There shall be no defence to charge under this section that he did not know or did not have reason to believe that the statement, rumour or report was false unless he proves that prior to publication, he took reasonable measures to verify the accuracy of such statement, rumour or report".

(c) "The proprietor and every publisher of a newspaper that is printed or published outside the Federal territory of Lagos shall establish a liaison office in the Federal territory for his newspaper if its circulation covers the Federal territory of Lagos. The proprietor is expected to notify the Minister of Information in writing when he implements this requirement".

(d) "The penalty for not carrying out the above provision of the act would be a fine not less than ten pounds or not more than twenty-five pounds, or an imprisonment for a three-month term".

(e) "The proprietor of a newspaper published in the Federal territory is required to appoint an editor whose job shall include the supervision and control of all matters intended and suitable for publication in the newspaper. The appointed editor shall swear an affidavit that discloses his name and residential address and register it in the office of the Minister of Information".

(f) "The editor shall sign and deliver a copy of every edition of the newspaper to the Ministry of Information as well as any supplement of the newspaper under his supervision and control".

Furthermore, the following laws and decrees also have sections that impair the freedom of the press in Nigeria: "Defamation act No. 66 of 1961; defamation amendment act. No. 1 of 1963; defamatory and offensive publications decree No. 44 of 1966; circulation of newspapers decree No. 2 of 1966; newspapers prohibition of circulation decree No. 17 of 1967; public officers protection against false accusation decree No. 11 of 1976; decree No. 4 (DN4) of 1984; decree 6 of 1987; the Nigerian press council decree No. 56 of 1988 on newspapers proscription; the treason and treasonable offences decree No. 29 of 1993; decree No. 35 of 1993; decree No. 43 of 1993; the newspaper proscription and publication decree No. 48 of 1993; and the Nigeria press council act" (Duyile, 2004; Layefe and Johnson, 2016: 26).

The amended 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is not an exception as there is no clear provision for press freedom and the protection of the rights of journalists. However, what the constitution only provided is freedom of speech and ownership of communication channels. This view is supported by Layefe and Johnson (2016) as they reveal some of the insensitive dealing melted on Nigerian journalists which include: "harassment, torture, public beating, incarceration, assassination, high tariff on newsprint, gagging of the press through obnoxious laws, shutting down of media houses and seizure of copies of newspapers and magazines.

In addition, it took the period of eleven months for the Freedom of Information Bill (FOIB) to be passed into law by the legislative arm of government after a long-awaited period of debate at the floor of the Nigeria National Assembly, the FOIB was

passed into law in 2011. The freedom of information act (FOIA) permits the press access to "public records and information", "provide for public access to public records and information", "protect public records and information to the extent consistent with the public interest and the protection of personal privacy", "protect serving public officers from adverse consequences for disclosing certain kinds of official information without authorization" and "establish procedures for the achievement of those purposes".

According to the Director General of National Orientation Agency (NOA), the motivation behind (FOIA) is to "ensure that there is public participation in governance; the business of governance is open to public scrutiny; laid down procedures in the conduct of public affairs are adhered to; transparency and accountability in governance are institutionalized; corruption is stemmed; and scarce resources are judiciously deployed for the well-being of citizens" (Layefe and Johnson, ibid).

4.7. Historical Background of Nigerian Print Media

Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria were former domain of the British political colonies and as such they are categorized as some of the countries that have long history of developed press in Africa (Eribo and Jong-Ebot, 1997). The evolution of the press in Nigeria is dated back to 1846, making about 174 years of existence. Printing press was first established in Calabar by Rev. Hope Waddell of the Presbyterian church, who began the first newspaper "Calabar Observer" in the Eastern part of Nigeria for the purpose of enhancing people's knowledge on religious matters and for general increase in the level of citizen's literacy (Umechukwu, 2001:4).

In 1859, Reverend Henry Townsend, an Anglican missionary started a newspaper in the indigenous Yoruba language called "Iwe Iroyin fun awon Egba ati

Yoruba" also to enlighten the people on religious activities and as well, expand their scope (Abati, 1998; Sani, 2014). In 1862, another missionary newspaper sprang out called "Anglo African" founded by Robert Campbell (Omotayo, 2011). Though, this newspaper was written in English and enjoyed more readership, unlike it counterparts that was produced in indigenous language, it also contained more journalistic contents as it projected more criticism stories and views.The contribution of the missionary has, in no small measure, contributed to the development of print media in Nigeria as it formed the foundation for the indigenous publishers. A list of some of the early newspapers in Nigeria is presented in Table 4.3.

The colonialist religious newspapers were instrumental to the nationalists' journalism as those Nigerians who were educated joined force to establish what was known as the "Era of Nationalist Press". However, several laws and decrees were promulgated during this period to reduce the effectiveness of the nationalist press. One of such vicious laws is the sedition offence ordinance of 1909, which got one of the nationalists, Herbert Macaulay annoyed and remarked in the "Standard newspaper" as follows:

> "…it would be the darkest page of an administration which already contained many dark pages in regard to the treatment of the native race in this part of West Africa under British rule during the past five years".

The target was basically to restrict the public, the media and the nation; to subdue all legitimate congresses; to depress and gag alllawful activisms against detested and repressive actions of government officials (Uche, 1989). The researcher, therefore agrees with the perception of Golding and Elliot (1997:21) that "Nigerian journalism was born out of anti-colonial protest, baptized in the flood of nationalist propaganda and matured in party politics".

In spite of the repressive government, the doggedness, relentless and concerted effort of the nationalist press led to the independence of Nigeria from Britain, her colonial master in 1960. Azikiwe (1964:17) opines that:

> "The early history of Nigerian press is instrumental to the intellectual and material development of the country. With the growth of education, we have been able to produce more people who can read and write…, with the extension of our civilization and the expansion of our economy, we have been able to develop a better press and higher caliber of journalists and printers, so that growth has been the ascent in the recent history of Nigerian press".

Some of the current newspapers in Nigeria include 'Nigerian Tribune', 'Guardian', 'the Punch', 'Champion', 'Daily Trust', 'the Sun', 'This Day', 'Vanguard', 'Daily Independent', 'Leadership', 'Mirror', 'Observer', 'Pilot', 'New Nigeria', 'The Nation', and 'Nigerian Compass' (Amenaghawon, 2016:98). There are also hundreds of regional, business and community newspapers in the country, which include Edo News, Osun Defender, People's Daily, Niger Delta Herald, Pilot Newspaper, Next, and Pointeramong hundreds of newspapers (Amenaghawon, 2016:98).

Table 4.1. Some of the early newspapers in Nigeria

S/N	Name of Newspaper	Publishers/Editors	Year
1.	**Calabar Observer**	Revd. Hope Waddell	1846
2.	**Iwe Iroyin fun awon ara Egba ati Yoruba**	Revd. Henry Townsend	1859
3.	**Anglo African**	Robert Campbell	1862
4.	**Lagos Times and Gold Coast Advertiser**	Richard Beale Olamilege	1880
5.	**Lagos Observer**	J Bega Benjamin	1882
6.	**The Eagle and Lagos Critics**	Owen E. Macauley	1883
7.	**The Mirror**	John Payne Jackson	1887
8.	**Lagos Weekly Record**	Thomas Horatio Jackson	1890

9.	**Nigeria Chronicle**	Christopher Kumolu Johnson	1908
10.	**Lagos Standard**	G.A Williams	1908
11.	**Nigeria Pioneer**	Sir Kitoye Ajasa	1914
12.	**The African Messenger**	Ernest Ikoli	1921
13.	**The Spectator and Nigerian Advocate**	Mr. S.H Braithwaite	1923
14.	**The weekly Spectator**	Dr. Richard Akinwande Savage	1923
15.	**Lagos Daily News**	Herbert Macauley	1925
16.	**Daily Times**	Adeyemo Alakija	1926
17.	**Nigerian Daily Telegraph**	Antus Williams	1927
18.	**The Comet**	Duse Mohammed Ali	1933
19.	**Daily Service**	Ernest Ikoli (Editor)	1933
20.	**The West African Advertiser**	NA	1935
21.	**Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo**	Mallam Abubakar Imam (Editor)	1937
22.	**West African Pilot**	Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe	1937
23.	**Nigerian Tribune**	Chief Obafemi Awolowo	1949
24.	**Daily Sketch and Sunday Sketch**	Sir Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola	1964

*NA: Not available. Compiled by the Author.

4.8. Selected Newspapers

Even though, there are plethora of independent newspapers in Nigeria, the researcher purposively selected *The Punch*, *Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune* based on their wide circulation and readership in the country as they are listed among the newspapers with the widest circulation in Nigeria. Moreover, they are all daily newspapers. This section, therefore, discusses the four Nigerian newspapers used for this study.

4.8.1. The Punch

The Punch Nigeria Limited was registered on the 8 of August, 1970 under the Companies Act of 1968 to participate in the business of publishing 'newspapers', 'magazines' and 'periodicals'. It was started by two friends namely; James Aboderin (an accountant) and Sam Amuka, (a columnist and editor at the *Daily Times ofNigeria)*. Sam Amuka later double as the foremost editor of the *Sunday Punch*. The paper was envisioned to achieve the multilateral roles of mass media which include among others; informing, educating and entertaining.

In 1971, the company made its entrance with 'HAPPY HOME', a glossy family-focused magazine having Bunmi Sofola as it maiden editor. Thereafter, on Sunday, 18th March, 1973, the company produced its first weekly newspaper named 'Sunday Punch' with Ajibade Fashina-Thomas as the editor. Few years later, specifically, November 1, 1976, The Punch daily tabloid edition was sighted on the street, edited by Dayo Wright. Both editions were designed to service a sociable and political news journalism, uniting material of social events with regular political news. The paper endures by investigating broad topics that interest a plethora of people (Agbaje, 1990). Aboderin and Amuka later parted ways due to a situation partially related to politics.

The Punch newspaper was not immuned against the violation of press freedom as the company was closed down in April 1990 by the authoritarian government in power for one month while the "Deputy Editor, Chris Mammah" was incarcerated for a month and 24 days. About three years later, the company's buildings were locked down by the military government and all its newspapers were disqualified from circulation with "decree No 48 of 1993". The shutdown shadowed a political emergency instigated by termination of June 12, 1993, presidential election. In

November 1993, the prohibition edict was cancelled with "decree No 115 of 1993". During this period, another editorial staff was constricted in his office for 3 days. With all these upheavals that confronted the paper, The Punch newspaper still exist till today and one of the widely circulated newspapers in Nigeria.The Punch covers politics, metro (city, crime and courts), business & economy, money, energy, maritime and sports genres in its reporting, with corruption news inclusive, which was a factor for its selection for this study. A detailed analysis and discussion of how the newspaper writes on corruption in the oil and gas industry is explored in chapters 7 and 8.

4.8.2. Vanguard

The Vanguard newspaper was founded by a renowned and seasoned journalist named Mr. Sam Amuka-Pemu with three other friends in 1983 (Amenaghawon, 2016). The first edition of Vanguard newspaper hit the street of Lagos on Sunday, June 15, 1984. It was initially published as a weekly newspaper with the motto; *"towards a better life for the people"*. Vanguard newspaper was established with the aim to "serve the people through unflinching commitment to free enterprise, rule of law and good governance". Having the vision "to be best media group with the widest reach through innovation backed by excellent service delivery, highly motivated human capital and latest technology".

The daily edition of Vanguard newspaper was first published on 15th of July, 1984. Other numerous publications of vanguard between 1988 to 1995 include "Mr and Mrs Magazine", "Lagos Mirror", "Vanguard Yellow Page", "Lagos Law Directory and Sports". Vanguard's mission: "to impact positively on our readers or clients and society by providing high quality, reliable and affordable media products for promoting knowledge, political stability and economic prosperity" has successfully

helped to achieve its popularity as it is one of the most widely read newspapers in the country and it circulates about 130,000 copies daily in Nigeria. The newspaper has on-line editions and is seen as one of the newspapers that has no or limited political influence.

Furthermore, Vanguard writes on politics, business, economy, energy, homes & property, health, Niger Delta, motoring and sports, as well as corruption, which served as a basis for its selection for this study. Details about how the newspaper reports on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry are discussedin chapters 7 and 8.

4.8.3. Guardian

Guardian newspaper began publication on 22 February, 1983 as a weekly paper, which was only accessible on Sundays (Amenaghawon, 2016). The daily edition of Guardian newspaper started on 4th of July same year. The newspaper is owned by Chief Alex Ibru, a billionaire who hailed from the Southern part of Nigeria. Guardian newspaper has its headquarters in Lagos, Nigeria, serving the elites, academia and the influential because of its writing style.

In addition,the paper has national scope, based on its coverage as well as its content. The Guardian newspapers has a policy that distinguished it from others, the paper does not publish advertised obituaries during the initial printing in 1989, the policy has been altered and elite advertisement are now published in the newspaper. Another policy is that, it will be independent from ethnic, political or religious influences. Guardian newspaper is a widely circulated paper, as it could be accessed in all parts of the country (Amenaghawon, 2016). Moreover, it covers a wide category of news such as panorama, the metro, politics & policy, editorial, opinion, business, transport & tourism, communications, special report, sport and corruption,

which informed its selection for this study. A comprehensive analysis and discussion of how the newspaper reports on corruption in the oil and gas sector are given in the data analysis and discussion chapters.

4.8.4. Nigerian Tribune

The Nigerian Tribune is from the firm of African newspapers; it began operation in 1949. It has been in existence for about 70 years, making it one of the oldest newspapers in Nigeria print media (Omotayo, 2011). The newspaper was a four-page tabloid, with black masthead, using the hot metal printing methods for its production. It is issued as a daily newspaper, having Saturday and Sunday editions, all available in English language. The paper, at its inception, has the agenda of entrenching self-governance and the political viewpoint of the founder (Amenaghawon, 2016). Nigerian Tribune was founded by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the former Premier of the then Western Region of Nigeria.

The paper started with the aim to 'champion the fight against colonialism'; 'encourage the basis of nationalists'; 'champion independent Nigeria'; 'aid the Awolowo's populist welfare programs' and also protect the interests of Yoruba people. Aliagan (2008:17) said Nigerian Tribune voice helped in accelerating the independence process of Nigeria by heartening mass political involvement, spreading of nationalist ideas, uniting and educating the community. The newspaper is accordingly viewed as one of the most widely read newspapers in Nigeria. Though, Nigerian Tribune is occasionally regarded as a regional newspaper, because of the ownership, setting and stories that people see as more loyal to people from the south west of Nigeria (Amenaghawon, 2016).

However, the newspaper is known for covering diverse genres in its reporting such as politics & policy, business, editorial, brands & marketing, metro (crime,

security and court), features, sports, with corruption news inclusive, which was a basis for its selection. A detailed analysis and discussion on the coverage of corruption by the newspaper are provided in chapters 7 and 8 of this thesis.

4.9. Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the Nigerian media environment, with focus on media ownership in Nigeria and the influence on media content. It gave an overview of the press and press freedom in Nigeria as well as political structure and press freedom. It also discussed the historical background of print media in Nigeria, with emphasis on the selected newspapers for this study. The next chapter will focus on the theoretical framework that supports this study.

CHAPTER 5

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

5.1. Introduction

This chapterconceptualizes the watchdog role of the media. It also highlights some of the limitations to the watchdog role of the media while giving a brief discussion on press freedom and corruption. Furthermore, the theoretical framework that underpin this study, which include the agenda setting, framing and social responsibility theories, are discussed. In the overall, this chapter gives a conceptual framework for this study.

5.2. Watchdog Role of the Media

Watchdog role of the media is better explained rather than defined as the function of the media, particularly, the press can take different forms in efficiency, depending on social and economic factors in the society which the press operates. Norris (2012:2) considers the watchdog model "as the reflection of the long-established liberal conception of the news media as the fourth estate".He said, whenjournalists undertake a serious position toward the government, they are standing as the representatives of the general public, taking up dialogue that is different from politician and parties' discourse. One major validation of press (media) freedom is that a free media will be able to act as watchdog over all government activities.

Watchdog role of the media involves intermittent thorough journalistic questioning of the government officials, which the ordinary public cannot do. The concept of watchdog journalism was tagged investigative journalism first in 1960, during the "Vietnam War", "civil right movement" and "political corruption scandal"

(Feldstein, 2006:234). Watchdog role has been identified as a popular function of the media globally, with the principal role of investigation and surveillance, serving the public interest (Waisbord, 2000).

A study carried out by Wilnat and Weaver (2014) observed that 78% of journalists recognised their watchdog function as being important to their journalism practice. Scholars have also argued that watchdog journalists are more confrontational in nature and their news coverage have become increasingly critical of government officials and their activities (Patterson, 1998). Watchdog role includes a critical journalism, which is aimed at defending effective political rivalry through monitoring government claims on record and political aspirant qualification, which are open to public scrutiny and evaluation (Norris, 2000:29).

Watchdog is conceptualised from the watchful and critical position the media take in investigating the wrongs happening among government officials and private individuals. Akani (2017:40) opines that "through their watchdog oversight, they bring to the public space shady deals of government, which in most cases violate the basic freedoms of the people. It is through these checks that the principles of good governance are respected". The "whistle blowing" position occupied by the media has brought some degree of stability into administration (Osakue, 2010). Public officials are aware that the media have an eye on whatever they are doing, that in itself is a check on their activities.

An important element of the watchdog role of the media is to expose corruption by the political office holders. A typical example was Dr. Okadigbo's scandal, which was based on the allegation of corruption, mismanagement of public fund and contract fraud. Late Dr Okadigbo, a former Nigerian Senate President was impeached from office on 8th of August, 2000 after a vote of 81 to 11 in the house

(Olutokun and Seteolu, 2003). The media's hands were all on deck in monitoring the incident from July 24, 2000, when the clerk of the house, Alhaji Ibrahim Salim opened up to a panel set up to check the activities of members of the National Assembly. It was discovered that Dr Okadigbo had embezzled about ₦67million meant for the procurement of official cars and furniture. The media were critical in their reportage as they published several stories with screaming headlines like "Pressure Mounts on Okadigbo to Quit" (Comet, August 1, 2000) and "PDP Abandons Okadigbo" (Tribune, August 7, 2000) among others. Another notable occurrence was the third term bid of former Nigerian President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, who having completed his statutory two terms (of eight years) in office wanted to introduce another term of four years that is not constitutionally acceptable. This could have succeeded, if not for the watchful and vibrant effort of the media, who constantly, drummed the unconstitutional act to the public hearing. Thus, leading to the abortion of such bid to remain in office perpetually (Ugulah and Erebi, 2008).

Given the high level of corruption in Nigeria, political office holders, if not checked would run down the country. Therefore, the media needs to fulfil its watchdog role in the interest of the public and make the leaders accountable. Failure of the media to efficiently discharge its watchdog role in a democratic society, then, becomes a problem. It is, therefore, important to highlight some of the factors that limit the watchdog role of the media.

5.2.1. Limitations to watchdog function of the media

Against all the aforementioned benefits of watchdog journalism, some factors are still fighting alongside the fulfilment of this function. The fact that journalists and other media practitioners believe they are doing justice to the watchdog function

does not denote that the role flourishes uninterruptedly. The lack of effectiveness in the watchdog role of the media has earned the media new descriptions by different scholars. Bennett (2009) came up with the idea of a "sleeping watchdog", which describes a media that has defaulted in its responsibility. For instance, the inability on the part of journalists to barkduring the financial crisis in 2008, when journalists were not critical in investigating the Wall Street Bankers and mortgage lenders in the United States. More so, there are different arguments around the media being a bark-less watchdog (Starkman, 2011). Pinto (2008:751) argues that

> "Watchdog journalism in Argentina has, however, portrayed the current state of this genre in a less optimistic light, observing (based on content analysis) that, after two decades of being part of the mainstream, watchdog press had lost its bite by 2005, as a result of the economic crisis as well as the changing organisational culture of the news media, favouring corporate interests".

Berry (2009) identified social, economic and political influence as some of the factors militating against the effectiveness of the watchdog role. It could be recalled that most of the 19th century newspapers are attached to one political party or the other (Hamilton, 2004), this seems to be the case in most parts of the globe, where media are diligently allied to opposing political parties. Hence, they are transparently partisan (McQuail et al, 2008). Such media may have little or no impact on party/government reverence for people's rights as the media role are restricted or constrained to a "lapdog" role (Whitten-Woodring, 2009)rather than a watchdog role. In this kind of environment, government defilement of people's rights would either not be covered by the media or when covered, it is framed to serve the interest of government. In some cases, we can say the media is free from direct censorship of the government but what do we say when the media still rely on official sources for classified and non -classified information, thereby becoming a "megaphone" of government officials (Whitten-Woodring, ibid). The media, either willingly or unwilling

are still dancing to the beat of political environment. This is because most news reports give prominence to official voices as journalists often report issues surrounding them as a result of its weighty impact in the public terrain. Consequently, they shape the agenda of news.

Scholars have debated that freedom of speech and aptitude to write freely against the ruling government are more pertinent to democracy than democratic society with autocratic statute (Mueller, 1992). Media ethics and professionalism should be paramount and must always be attached to professional value of "objectivity", "fairness", "independence" and "sense of responsibility to serve the public" (Gurevitch and Blumler, 1990). The legal, political and economic environment in which the media function, are the major threats to the watchdog role in the society as noted in the press freedom index of Freedom House (2007b). However, the following measures have been suggested for proper functioning of the media : "constitutional provisions to protect press freedom and freedom of information", "enforcement of these provisions", "an absence of laws restricting reporting", "freedom of media outlets to determine content", "free access to official and unofficial sources", "a lack of official censorship and journalist self-censorship", "freedom of media outlets from intimidation and violence", "freedom from economic control on the part of both government and private media ownership", "freedom from economic manipulations through allocation of advertisements or subsidies and bribery of journalists" and "a transparency of ownership, which allows consumers to judge the impartiality of the news'' (Whitten-Woodring, 2009:598).

I believe that lack of language flexibility is also limiting the efficiency of the media in its watchdog role in Nigeria. This position concurs with the view of Oso (2013), who opines that despite the number of media and ownership range, there is

still no versatility in language multiplicities as English language remains the major language for broadcasting in Nigeria. In a country of over 200 million residents, who are randomly dispersed within over 250 ethnic/tribal sets, communicating in over 500 diverse native languages (Akpe, 2016), the use of English language alone would hamper effective media communication, hence, limiting the watchdog role of the media.

Furthermore, the researcher believes that the restriction of the media houses to the urban centres alone is tantamount to restricting the role of the media to the elites. This view is corroborated by Oso (2013: 17), who opines that

> "Most media houses are located in urban areas and focus on urban related issues (particularly politics), thus serving mainly "the interests of the elite. However, most people watch Nigeria Television Authority, (NTA) and listen to Federal Radio Corporation Nigeria (FRCN) because it still monopolizes the airwaves due to the national reach of its license and its presence beyond urban areas".

5.3. Press Freedom and Corruption

It is a popular belief that no singular country enjoys 100 percent press freedom, however, the level of press freedom enjoyed differs from country to country (Oji, 2007). Thus, this section gives an overview of freedom of the press globally and how it relates to corruption. A brief look at the 2020 global press freedom index as evaluated by Reporters without Borders (RWB) will provide a good foundation for this discussion. The latest report of the RWB categorized 180 countries into five groups (good, satisfactory, problematic, difficult and very difficult situations) based on their press freedom index. It is noteworthy that only fourteen countries are in good standing in terms of freedom of the press globally (RWB, 2020). It is also remarkable that about 70% of the countries in good standing are from Europe with Norway ranking first (1st) globally (Table 5.1).

However, majority of the African countries, Nigeria inclusive, are currently in difficult press freedom situation while only Namibia, South Africa, Burkina Faso and Ghana attain the satisfactory level of press freedom as determined by RWB (2020). However, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Somalia, Equitorial Guinea, Eritrea and Burundi are in very serious situation as far as freedom of the press is concerned in the world as they are ranked among the last 22 countries globally (Table 5.2). Likewise, Eritrea, Equitorial Guinea, Somalia and Libya are listed among the nations designated as "Not Free" by Freedom House (2020), however, majority of the African countries are designated partly free (Freedom House, 2020).

Table 5.1. Top ranking countries in global press freedom and corruption perception index

Global Press Freedom Index 2020			Corruption Perception Index 2019		
Rank	Countries in Good Standing	Global Score	Rank	Very Clean Countries	CPI score
1	Norway	7.84	1	New Zealand	87
2	Finland	7.93	1	Denmark	87
3	Denmark	8.13	3	Finland	86
4	Sweden	9.25	4	Switzerland	85
5	Netherlands	9.96	4	Singapore	85
6	Jamaica	10.51	4	Sweden	85
7	Costa Rica	10.53	7	Norway	84
8	Switzerland	10.62	8	Netherlands	82
9	New Zealand	10.69	9	Luxembourg	80
10	Portugal	11.83	9	Germany	80
11	Germany	12.16	11	Iceland	78
12	Belgium	12.57	12	Canada	77
13	Ireland	12.60	12	United Kingdom	77
14	Estonia	12.61	12	Australia	77

Source: RWB (2020); Transparency International (2019). CPI: Corruption Perception Index. Note: low score indicates high level of press freedom while high CPI indicates low level of corruption.

A geography of corruption in the world was studied by Warf (2015) using the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) data of 2013 and observed that "only a handful of countries (mostly European, but also including Canada, Singapore, Australia, and New Zealand) have relatively uncorrupt governments, with CPI numbers of 80 or higher" (Warf, 2015:5). More so, majority of the countries of the world including "China, Russia, India, most of Southeast Asia, Africa, and a large swath of Latin America" are categorized as "very corrupt" (Warf, 2015:7). The trend is the same with the latest CPI. It is noteworthy, that Nigeria dropped by 2 positions in the 2019 CPI ranking as it is now ranked 146th as against 144th in 2018 with CPI of 26 and 27, respectively, classifying it as very corrupt (Transparency International, 2019). This is least expected under a government that claimed to have zero-tolerance for corruption.

Scholars have argued that a free press is pivotal to a holistic development of the society, which has consistently been hampered by corruption. In other words, there exists a link between press freedom and corruption. This is evident from comparing the latest global press freedom index by WRB with CPI (Transparency International, 2019). For instance, the following countries: Norway, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands, Switzerland and New Zealand, which ranked among the top 10 in global press freedom are also in the top 10 very clean countries in terms of corruption (Table 5.1). Similarly, some of the African countries in a very serious press freedom situation (Equitorial Guinea, Sudan and Somalia) have been consistently rated highly corrupt (Table 5.2) and are among the top 10 most corrupt countries in the world (Transparency International, 2019). This assertion is consistent with the view of Hamada et al. (2019:14) that "countries with higher levels of press freedom tend to have lower levels of corruption". Hamada et al. (Ibid), also,

observe that the "interaction of press freedom and democracy, as well as press freedom and rule of law, simultaneously reduces corruption levels".

Furthermore, there are experimental evidences that reveal a strong relationship between the extent of press freedom and the level of corruption in a country (Brunetti and Weder, 2003, Camaj, 2012; Hamada et al., 2019). Brunetti and Weder (2003:1801, 1820) note that "a free press is bad news for corruption" because according to them, "an independent press may represent an important check against corruption". Casanova (2007:16) also notes that "freedom of the press has been found to be a potentially good mechanism as external control on corruption, particularly because it seems to be effective against both extortive and collusive corruption". The researcher concurs with Brunetti and Weder (1999)that

> "A free press is very likely to be the most appropriate institution to check for collusive corruption because independent journalists have the incentive to investigate any misdeeds in an active way. Other external bodies commissioned to the same function, such as the judiciary body or anti-corruption commissions, may reveal themselves to be more ineffective against this kind of corruption, unless their internal structures and incentives are closely lined up with the objectives of uncovering and prosecuting corruption".

Moreover,Hamada et al. (2019:4) notes that a "lack of press freedom" results in "higher levels of corruption". Considering the foregoing, the research finds it expedient to get firsthand information on the level of press freedom inNigeria through the interview of some journalists and the implication it has on the coverage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

Table 5.2. Lowest ranking countries in global press freedom and corruption perception index

Global Press Freedom Index 2020			Corruption Perception Index 2019		
Rank	Countries with Worst Press Freedom	Global Score	Rank	Most Corrupt Countries	CPI score
158	Singapore	55.23	161	Nicaragua	22
159	Sudan	55.33	162	Cambodia	20
160	Burundi	55.33	162	Chad	20
161	Tajikistan	55.34	162	Iraq	20
162	Iraq	55.37	165	Burundi	19
163	Somalia	55.45	165	Congo	19
164	Libya	55.77	165	Turkmenistan	19
165	Equatorial Guinea	56.38	168	Haiti	18
166	Egypt	56.82	168	Congo	18
167	Yemen	58.25	168	Libya	18
168	Azerbaijan	58.48	168	Guinea Bissau	18
169	Bahrain	60.13	172	Korea, North	17
170	Saudi Arabia	62.14	173	Venezuela	16
171	Cuba	63.81	173	Equatorial Guinea	16
172	Laos	64.28	173	Sudan	16
173	Iran	64.81	173	Afghanistan	16
174	Syria	72.57	177	Yemen	15
175	Vietnam	74.71	178	Syria	13
176	Djibouti	76.73	179	South Sudan	12
177	China	78.48	180	Somalia	9
178	Eritrea	83.50			
179	Turkmenistan	85.44			
180	North Korea	85.82			

Source: RWB (2020); Transparency International (2019). CPI: Corruption Perception Index. Note: low score indicates high level of press freedom while high CPI indicates low level of corruption.

5.4. Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the agenda setting; framing and social responsibility theories. The researcher considered these three theories suitable because the social responsibility theory accentuates press freedom, which is significant to this study and places obligation on journalists to abide by specific social ethics. This informed the analysis of the extent of press freedom enjoyed by the print media in Nigeria and its implication on the coverage of corruption in the oil and gas sector in this study. Meanwhile, theories help us to predict, explain and understand an occurrence (Ayodeji-Falade, 2018) and as such the agenda setting theory forms the basis for determining the level of prominence given to the coverage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the selected newspapers in this study. Moreover, these theories will help the researcher to predict if the print media in Nigeria are fulfilling their social obligations by setting the agenda for the public on issue of corruption in the country's oil and gas sector while reporting accurately and objectively too.

5.4.1. Agenda setting theory

The name "agenda setting" came to limelight in the study of McComb and Shaw (1972). They conducted their study on the 1968 United States presidential election, where they found out that the press had a major control of voters' judgment on what the major issues were. They also found out that there was a strong connection between emphasis given by the press on issues and the importance attached to such issues by voters. The proponents of this theory believe that the press either consciously or unconsciously creates a certain image of reality to the public.

The press brings to our notice events and occurrences on a daily basis ranging from news, sport, crime, documentary and drama among others. They overemphasizesome stories while neglecting the others, this makes some media users to perceive such stories as more important (Fourie, 2007). Take for instances, the period when stories about crime, corruption and AIDS filled the columns of many South African newspapers, many believe that the nation is already decrepit. The attention devoted to a particular news story influences the public perception of the importance of such issue (McQuail, 2000:426).

Another instance of agenda setting of the press happened in the United States between 1986 to 1989, when the people perceived drugs as the nation's most important problem and the federal government also declared war against drugs, at this time the country was saturated with several stories of illegal use of drug on the newspaper, and the only explanation to this public's increased awareness was the concept of the agenda setting function of the press (Severin and Tankard, 2001:219). This means that through constant and recurring news coverage, the press reinforces the relevance of a news story in the audience cognizance.Agenda setting is simple; it is the emphasis the media places on a particular story, which makes such story to be perceived as more important than others. Therefore, the researcher evaluated the extent of coverage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by four newspapers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*).

Moreover, Miller (2001) states that agenda setting definition contains three agendas, which are: media agenda (this involves matters that are spoken by the media personnel), public agenda (matters that the public trust are important) and policy agenda (matters that are legislators and executives' priorities). Nevertheless,

this trio can be reliant on variables in a connecting situation. McCombs and Valenzuela (2007:46) in their work, 'The Agenda Setting Theory' said "the repetition of messages about public issues in the news day after day, along with the pervasiveness of the mass media in our daily lives, constitute a major source of journalism's influence on the audience.

The incidental nature of this learning, in turn, helps issues tomove rather quickly from the media agenda to the public agenda. Although, the benchmark for the appearance of agenda-setting effects is one to two months, there are, of course, variations among individuals and across issues. Under conditions of high personal involvement, the timeframe for measurable effects may be very short". In essence, these scholars believe that media contents can be prominent after several repetition as a result of its universal nature. This, thus, formed the basis for the analysis of the level of prominence accorded the issue of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the four selected newspapers in this study.

Daramola (2003) states that, there is a relationship between frequency of news coverage and the public perception of such news as important. As a result, the press is the prime mover in setting the territorial agenda; it has a great part in determining what the public think the facts are and what the people discuss. More so, Martin (1992) argues that the media use agenda setting to provide consensus on public disputes and permit a negotiation between individual with conflicting views.

Furthermore, McCombs and Valenzuela (2007) note that agenda setting function of the press converges with various models in communication such as 'framing',' priming', 'gatekeeping', 'cultivation' and 'spiral of silence'. However, Baran and Davis (2003) describe agenda building, a step up of agenda setting theory, as a

collective process in which media, government and the citizenry influence one another in areas of public policy formation. Hence, agenda-setting theory will continue to increase our knowledge of the links between the world outside and the images kept in the heads. Folarin (1998: 6) views the following as the crucial elements that lead to discussion or opinion in the agenda setting theory:

- ❖ Frequency of a story.

- ❖ Level of prominence given to the story.

- ❖ Degree of conflict generated by the story.

- ❖ Cumulative press/media effect on the story.

The press is, therefore, significantly more important than a transmitter of information because they often time succeed in affecting audiences' choices on issues built on saliency of such reports. In relation to this study, the researcher appraised the agenda setting role of the press in the reportage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by determining the level of prominence given to the issue of corruption by the selected newspapers through analysis of story frequency; front/back page placement; story size/length; and the use of different editorial formats. More so, the researcher checked if the press is free to unearth and dig out facts from every occurrence of corruption in the oil and gas sector of Nigeria as it is imperative that the press raise its voice in this sector because it holds the key to the nation's economy.

Nevertheless, agenda setting theory has been criticized for not focusing on the consequences of media content on audience or the acceptance of media contents (Amenaghawon, 2016). The critic believes that audience can be fixed or stereotyped. For instance, the ripple effect of corruption stories can vary from one personality to another. There is therefore, the need to establish that the media is not supreme and

do not at all times set the agenda. However, when they do, their effect cannot be reciprocated as audience are open to varied media contents. This theory must gauge the credibility of media content as it would go a long way in ensuring that people stay positive (Hollihan, 2009).

5.4.2.Framingtheory

This study is also anchored on the framing theory, which was first put forth by Goffman (1974).The theory suggeststhathow a piece of information is presented to an audience (called "the frame") influences the choices they make on how the information is processed (Fairhurst and Sarr, 1996). Menashe and Siegel(1998: 307)described a frame as "a way of packaging and positioning an issue so that it conveys a certain meaning". The concept of framing is related to the agenda setting theory. While the agenda setting theory focuses on press selection of stories, events and issues (what), framing theory focuses on press representation, treatment and production of stories, events and issues (Fourie, 2007: 245). Therefore, framing theory does not only tell the audience what to think about as in the agenda setting theory, but also tells the audience how to think about that issue, which is regarded as a second level agenda setting.

Framing theory is most applicable to news and media stories. It suggests how journalists report an occurrence i.e. the contextualization of news reports within a specific ideological framework (Fourie, 2007). Entman (1993: 55) described the core of framing theory thus:

> "Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspectsof perceived reality and make them more salient in the communicating text, insuch a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation,moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. Frames, then, define problems: determine what a causal agent is doing and costs and benefits usually measured in terms of cultural values,

diagnose causes: identify the forces creating the problem, make moral judgments: evaluate causal agents and their effects, and suggest remedies: offer and justify treatments for the problem and predict their likely effects"(Entman, 1993: 55).

In relation to this study, we examined how the selected newspapers framed the stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

5.4.3. Social responsibility theory

Social responsibility theory started as a result of the domineering nature of libertarian theory, which include among others the publication of fake news contents and the growth of the elite class. In essence, the flaws of the libertarian theory of the press gave birth to the press that are socially responsible for their contents. However, Uzuegbunam, (2013:2) notes as follows:

"The press was observed to have abused this freedom; it had become irresponsible and the victim of a number of negative practices which culminated into a negative media operation christened *yellow journalism*. This was epitomized by sensationalist practices, irresponsibility and character assassination by the media practitioners".

In 1940, the Hutchins commission was established, consisting of scholars like Henry Luce of Times Magazine, Robert Hutchins, the then president of University of Chicago among others. In 1947, the commission came out with a five-guideline result, which gave birth to social responsibility theory titled "The Free and Responsible Press" (Uzuegbunam, 2013). Social responsibility theory provides solutions to the difficulty of reconciling freedom with social responsibility of the press by enabling regulatory bodies that are independent of government and the establishment of professional bodies, which should advance and support balanced

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news (Fourie, 2007:194). The theorists believe that journalist should put the interest of the public first (Middleton, 2009).

Social responsibility theory argues that the press should not be controlled by the government, however, there is need to serve the public with fairness (Baran, 2002). The theory hangs on the premises of the press trustworthiness to the people, by conforming to their professional ethics. In addition, Firdaus (2012) argues that social responsibility theory ensures that the press uphold high moral duty to safeguard social harmony and stability, and to produce an informed citizenry. This obligation could be achieved by self-regulation of the mass media using media congresses and codes of ethics, public opinion and consumer reactions. The upsurge of the social responsibility theory gave birth to journalism professional associations such as "The American Society of Newspaper Editors", "The Society of Professional Journalists", and "The Nigeria Union of Journalists" (NUJ). The social responsibility theory, therefore, formed the basis for investigating the level of press freedom in Nigeriaand how this has affected the social and professional obligations of journalists in accurately informing the public on the issue of corruption in the country.

The theory covers a plethora of press obligations, it ensures that the press sticks to its obligation of informing, educating, entertaining and mobilizing the people than focusing on freedom of expression (Rubenstein, 2012). Consequently, press contents are investigated thoroughly, processed diligently before reporting to ensure they do not contain any tainted article that is harmful to the public. This theory posits that the "press has the right to objectively air the government, institutions and anyone who has something to say. This could be in form of opinion, vox pop (voice

of the people), consumer action and so on, but at the same time, the press must also be responsible to maintain stability in the society" (Daramola, 2003:72).

The researcher agrees with the exponent of social responsibility theory, who opines that anyone can express himself through the media but control should be exercised by means of opinions, views, actions and professional ethics. I, therefore, believe there is need for the press to be objective in their reporting rather than being subjective. This is corroborated by Sambe (2005:264) who stated that in a democratic society, where social responsibility theory is applicable, there is need for the press to provide adequate and accurate information to the people to assist them make an informed decision. In other words, the press should be like a chameleon always reflecting different views to enable the public make an informed decision. The press is obligated to criticize any institution and government in view of public interest while avoiding libel in its reportage.

5.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter gave the conceptual and theoretical framework for this study by discussing the watchdog role of the media. It highlighted some of the limitations to the watchdog role of the media while it also gave a brief discussion on press freedom and corruption. Furthermore, this chapter gave an extensive discussion on the agenda-setting, framing and social responsibility theories. It as well explained how this study is situated in the three theories. The next chapter discusses the researchmethodology for this study.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design, methodology, population, sampling technique, data collection and analysis procedures adopted for this study. It discusses the qualitative and quantitative methods for the study. Also, this chapter gives a detailed discussion on the data collection methods the researcher adopted for the study, namely interview, content analysis and frame analysis. Furthermore, it discusses the sample/sampling techniques, the validity/reliability of the research instrumentsand the ethical considerations. This study aimed at investigating the impact of press freedom on the reportage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry through a comparative content analysis of four Nigerian newspapers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*).

In achieving the purpose of the study, the under listed questions were asked:

i. How do journalists' perception of press freedom in Nigeria affect their reportage of corruption in the oil and gas sector in the country?

ii. To what extent has the selected newspapers reported corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry?

iii. How do the selected newspapers frame the stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry?

6.2. Research Paradigm

Research paradigm is the set of rules that guide a study. It is described as the combination of theoretical and methodological regulationsadopted by researchers at each stage of development, being used as models or standards for research, explanation, assessment and premises for comprehending and solving objectives (Bagdonas, 2007; Žukauskas et al., 2018). Research paradigm is an extensive and an encompassing philosophy, observation, practice and also the cognitive of varied theories utilised in carrying out social science research(Cohen et al., 2007). Gliner and Morgan (2000), simply view research paradigm as the method or rational behind the research, the realisation procedure and the technique of execution. This is different from methodology; however, it is the philosophy behind research process.

It is good to note here that quantitative and qualitative approaches are rooted in positivism and post positivism paradigms (Druckman, 2005:5-8; Neuman, 2006:81). However, post-positivism has two sub-paradigms known as interpretivism and critical theory (Blumberg et al., 2011:18; Six and Bellamy, 2012:60). In other words, the major paradigms in social science research include positivism, interpretivism, critical theory and postmodernism (Žukauskas et al., 2018). For this study, the researcher adopted positivism and interpretivism research paradigms. This was influenced by the characteristic of the research problem and the research environment (Trauth, 2009: 3172).

Positivist paradigm became established by a European called Auguste Comte (1798- 1857). Positivist believes that truth occurs autonomously without individuals' effort. This reality is not helped by our intellect, but directed by irreversible rules. The ontological base of positivism theorist is practicality. Positivist believes in natural occurrence of a phenomenon, that is, cause-effect relationship (Rehman and

Alharthi, 2016:53). For instance, because of the reality nature of positivists, they believe that different researchers conducting their studies at different time, in different location, will arrive at the same conclusion if they are working on the same phenomenon.

The epistemological base of positivist is objectivism. Positivists believe that researcher should conduct a study objectively without individual bias or distortion of data. They should use "language" and "symbols" to explain data in the way they exist without any form of interference (Rehman and Alharthi, ibid). Positivist researcher uses quantification to characterize and evaluate data from nature. Numeric data gathered through experiments, surveys among others are analysed through statistical means.

Furthermore, positivist focuses mainly on information grounded on knowledge while disregarding assumption. A positivist believes that researcher can adopt a detached, unbiased and impartial position while conducting a study (Morris, 2006:3). This role enables researcher to conduct objective, analytical and deductive interpretation from data collected through observation, questionnaire, survey or pre-existing data. In this study, the researcher adopted quantitative approach, which is hanged on positivism research paradigm as the researcher collected quantitative data through pre-existing information on the pages of the four selected Nigerian newspapers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*). Subsequently, the data were analysed quantitatively and deductive interpretations were made from the analysed data in accordance with the study objectives.

Interpretative paradigm, on the other hand, came as a result of criticism that rose against positivist theory (Grix, 2004:82). Interpretative theorists believe that a phenomenon under study must be understood "through the eyes of the participants

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rather than the researcher" (Cohen et al., 2007:21). The main tenet is to collect qualitative data through case study or ethnography over a long period of time and analyse inductively. This is done by categorizing data into patterns and themes for a better understanding of a phenomenon under study and thereby develop theories (Grix, 2004:108). Interpretative researchers gather mostly verbal, audio/video data through "open ended interview", "observation", "field notes", "personal notes", "documents" among others (Rehman and Alharthi, 2016). For in depth understanding into the impact of press freedom on reportage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry, this study also employed interpretative paradigm as the researcher gathered qualitative data using open-ended interview conducted with four correspondents of the respective newspapers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*).

6.3. Research Design

Research design is a broadoutline for data collection in experimental research. This research "blueprint" is aimed at providing answers to definite research questions or testing particularassumptions, and must stipulate the following procedures: data collection; instrument development and sampling (Bhattacherjee, 2012).Research design is the "Glue" that hold the various features in a research work firmly as one (Akhtar, 2016:68). It is "a master plan specifying the methods and procedure for collecting and analysing the needed information" (Zikmund, 1988:41).

Research design embodies the whole research methodology, which includes the research method, study population, sample/ sampling technique and data analysis. Du Plooy (2001:62) states that research design is the step-by-step procedure for data gathering and data analysis of a study. Leed (1997:195) added that research design is the plan employed to study and provide the overall structure

of the data collection. More so, Leedy and Ormrod (2001) view research design as a systematic, methodological technique of realizing the study. Thus, this study adheres to the fundamentals of quantitative and qualitative research designs. Data were collected both quantitatively and qualitatively. The research methods for data collection are purposive selection of articles on corruption in the oil and gas industry from four Nigerian newspapers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*) and structured interviews of the correspondents of the respective newspapers.

More so, "research design covers the use of research instruments required for data collection" (Mathe, 2018: 67). Hence, this study employed a structured interview guide designed to collect and analyse journalists' perspectives on the extent of press freedomin Nigeria.

The researcher also used four selected newspapers based in Nigeria for comparative content analysis and frame analysis. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:166) say "research design is the plan for selecting subjects, research sites and data collection procedures to answer the research question(s)".

The aim of a comprehensive research design is to provide findings that are adjudged reliable. In other words, research design is basically the arm on which the whole research procedure hangs on and the central, most significant phase in any research work. Mouton and Marais (1990:33) note that it is the blueprint as well as the configuration of a research work, which increases the credibility of the results. Babbie and Mouton (2001:55) reiterate that it is the blueprint that guide a researcher on the conduct of his research. It involves "the research domain, the research paradigm, methodology and techniques of the study" (Blanche et al., 2012:37). In this regard, this study followed the research design presented in figure 6.1.
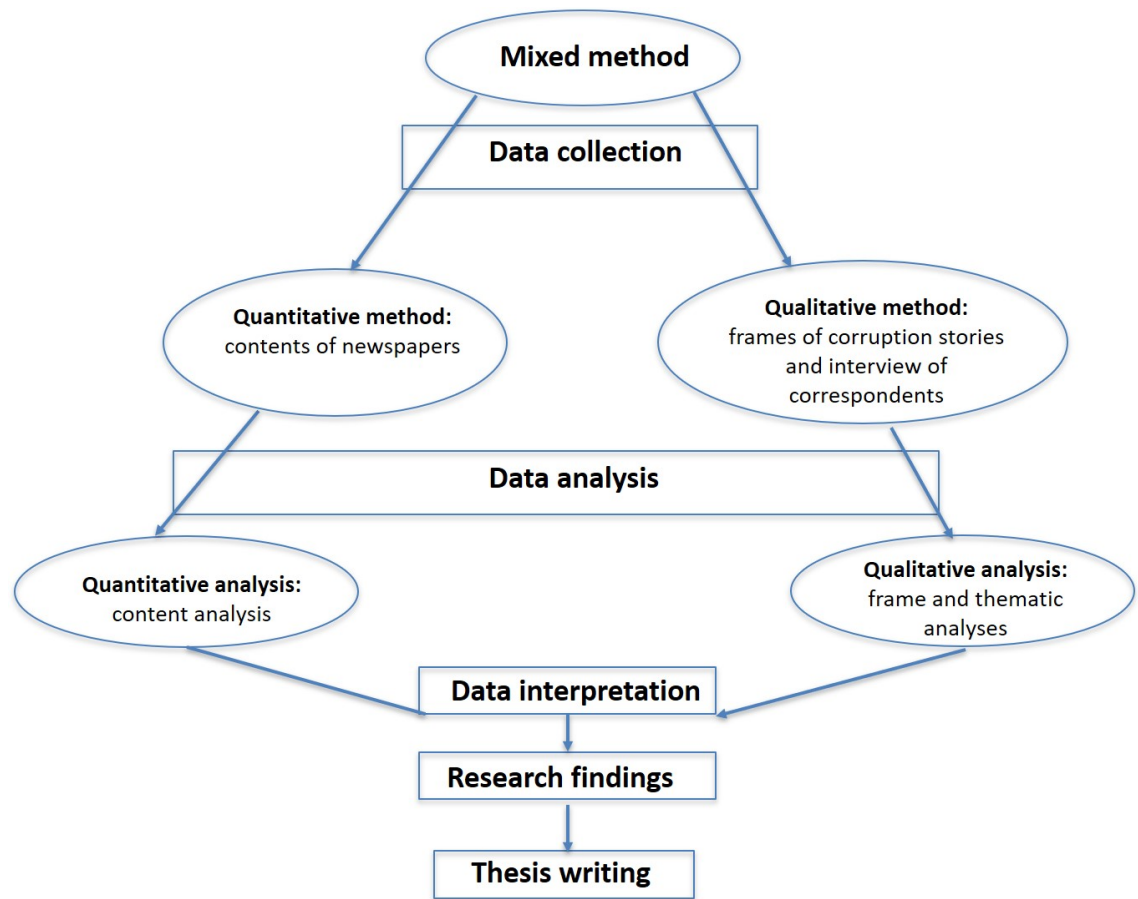
Figure 6.1. Research design. Source: Author.

6.4. Research Method

Research method is a technique involved in collecting data, arrangement and analysis (Bryman, 2001). Methodology is explained by O'Leary (2014:85) as "the framework which is associated with a particular set of paradigmatic assumption that we will use to conduct research". Allan and Randy (2005) maintain that research method must fulfill two criteria, one is to answer research questions appropriately and two, the methodology should be replicable to another research of the same nature. Research method is an integral part of a research design.

This study used a mixed method of research including both quantitative and qualitative methods. Creswell and Clark (2011:4) explained mixed method "as the process of collecting, analysing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of both quantitative and qualitative approachesprovides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone". Wyse (2011) explained quantitative research method as the method used in quantifying problem by producing numerical information that can be reformed into functional statistics. It is used to measure 'categories', 'attitudes', 'opinions', 'behaviour', and other specific variables.

Quantitative research employs measurable data to express facts and find patterns in research. Content analysis refers to a "family of procedures for the systematic, replicable analysis of text. In essence, it involves the classification of parts of a text through the application of a structured, systematic coding scheme from which conclusions can be drawn about the message content" (Rose, 2015:1). This method is applicable to different kind of text, both latent and manifest. Latent content means the hidden fact behind a particular content while manifest content means the visible element in a content. This study made use of quantitative content analysis as quantitative data were collected from the pages of the four purposively chosen newspapers to assess the magnitude of reportage of corruption in the oil and gas sector of Nigeria by the newspapers. This study also employed frame analysis to analyse the media content and compare the types of frames used in the presentation of news stories by the different newspapers.

Meanwhile, the researcher utilized a structured interview as a qualitative research method. Qualitative data were collected by conducting a structured

interview(Appendix B) with the respective correspondents of the chosen Nigerian dailies to assess their perceptions on press freedomin Nigeria.

The principle of qualitative method is that it has the ability to generalize results from a larger sample population. It aimed at figuring new occurrence and it can open up information that ordinarily cannot be noticed by already determined method providing in-depth details on it (Sinaga, 2014). The researcher considered the use of mixed approach to enhance dependability and validity of observations, analyses and results as well as improving the credibility of the research outcomes.

6.5. Study Population

Study population can be people or group, institution, papers, articles among other things, which a researcher needs to retrieve samples from. According to Babbie and Mouton (2004), study population is the entire element a study is examining from where samples are selected. It is where the researcher retrieves his sample and where the findings of a study can also be referred (Latif and Maunganidse, 2004).

This study has two categories of population: human and non-human. The non-human population of this study are the four purposively selected Nigerian newspapers, which include *The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*. All the editions of the four newspapers from July 2018 to June 2019 numbering 1460 editions constituted the study population for this research. The newspaper editions were sourced from the library of the Federal University of Technology, Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria. In addition, the human population include the respective correspondents of the four newspapers mentioned above. The newspapers were purposively selected based on their wide circulation and readership in the country. In

fact, they are listed among the newspapers with the widest circulation in Nigeria. Besides, they are all daily newspapers.

6.6. Sample and Sampling Technique

Sample is a subgroup of the entire population. This component is the most essential unit where data are eventually collected. According to Nworgu (1991:69), "population may be small enough to warrant the inclusion of all of them in the study, but a study may entail a large population which cannot all be studied. That portion of the population that is studied is called a sample of the population". From the above, it can be concluded that sample is the representation of the entire population from which generalization is drawn.

Sampling technique is the process of selecting the part of the population to represent the whole population. It involves the collection of units of study from the population (Cooper and Schindler, 2008).This study adopted a non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher selected articles on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry from the study population, which is the focus of the research. Purposive or judgmental sampling was adopted for this study as the researcher needed to select only newspaper articles/data that are related to the research focus, which is corruption stories in the oil and gas sector in Nigeria within the period of the research. More so, purposive sampling is used to access targeted and specific samples (Patton, 2002). In agreement with the opinion of Wimmer and Dominick (2003), samples were selected based on the aim of the study, other articles from the population that were not on corruption in the oil and gas sector were therefore, jettisoned. Hence, the researcher thoroughly searched all the editions of the four newspapers for 12 months (July 2018 to June 2019) and

ensured that only the editions that contained stories on corruption in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria were selected.

The four interviewees were also purposively selected because they were the correspondents of the respective newspapers being studied. In addition, they are stakeholders in the print media and as such would be able to providesufficient information on the extent of press freedom in Nigeria, which is oneof the objectives of this study.

6.7. Sample Size

Sample size is the exact number of data that the researcher selects to work on and generate her findings from. Sample is the number of components collected from the study population (Du Plooy, 2001). This study focused on corruption stories in the oil and gas sector in Nigeria as reported by four daily newspapers. The researcher purposively selected 534 articles on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry from the 1460 editions of the newspapers. Four correspondents of the respective newspapers were also purposively selected for interview because they are press stakeholders and are significant in ascertaining the level of press freedom in the country.

6.8. Data Collection

Data collection methods are tools employed for gathering necessary data. In this study, quantitative data were collected from the contents of the four purposively selected newspapers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*)sourced from the library of the Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria, to assess the magnitude of reportage of corruption in the oil and gas sector of Nigeria. However, qualitative data were collected through frame analysis of

corruption stories in the selected newspapers. Other instrumentof qualitative data collection adopted in this study is interview. The researcher conducted an interview with the respective correspondents of the selected newspapers to assess the extent of press freedom in Nigeria and the impact on reportage of corruption in the country.

6.8.1. Interview

Interview is an in-depth discussion with people who are versed in the area under consideration. Interviews are mostly conducted in a face-to-face style so that the interviewer could be able to jid dipper, get a clearer perspective and unearth new grounds. Sileyew (2019:6) believes that interview permits researcher "to know the in-depth of the present working environment influential factors and consequences. It has provided opportunities for refining data collection efforts and examining specialized systems or processes". It is applicable when a researcher is limited by written records or published documents or wishes to triangulate the data collected from other sources. Interview is advantageous as it allows the interviewees to bring up matters that may not have been expected by the interviewer, yet significant to the study. There are three different types of interviews including structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviews.

In this study, the researcher adopted a structured interview method because this form of interview can easily be replicated as a set of closed questions were used. It is, therefore, easy to quantify and check reliability. Structured interview also permits the researcher to gather large number of samples, which in essence gives a representative finding that can be generalized on a large population (McLeod, 2014). The researcher had different interview sessions with the four newspaper correspondents (*The Punch, Vanguard, the Guardian* and *Nigerian Tribune*) using the same interview schedule (See Appendix B for the interview questions). The

interview was conducted to assess the extent of press freedom in Nigeria and the impact on reportage of corruption in the country.

6.8.2. Content analysis

Content analysis is a universal word for some approaches employed in analysing textual data (Power and Knapp, 2006). This process involves systematic coding and classifying method used for analysing vast amount of textual data tastefully so as to determine trends, pattern, frequency, relationships, structure and discourses of communication (Mayring, 2000; Pope et al., 2006; Gbrich, 2007). Content analysis is used to analyse various contents like newspaper content, magazine, online discussion among others. There are qualitative and quantitative content analysis.

For this study, both quantitative and qualitative content analyses were adopted. Content analysis uses descriptive approach to code information and interpret numerical amounts of codes (Morgan, 1993). Content analysis uses graph, chart, simple frequency table and percentages to measure the amount of a particular problem (Du Plooy, 2001). Content analysis is used to make interpretations that are replicable and valid from written data (Krippendorff, 2004; Weber, 1990).

More so, content analysis involves sorting large number of words into fewer groups by classifying similar words or group of words together. There is need for researchers to ensure that such sorting is reliable and consistent so as to make a valid inference from the text. In this study, and as noted earlier on, four Nigerian newspapers were purposively selected based on their wide circulation and readership in the country. Through the use of content analysis,the researcher grouped all the articles based on their positions in the newspapers: front page, middle page and back page meanwhile the articles were also grouped according to

the story size/length. The contents of the newspapers were also analysed to determine the types of frames with which they were presented.

6.8.3. Frame analysis

Entman (1993: 51) explained framing as a "fractured paradigm, 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 recommended for items described". Framing is used to produce effects or it is used to create vivid understanding of an issue. Take for instance, creating an impression through certain frame enables a distinct meaning (Tiung, 2009). Therefore, framing means the ability of the media to stress a certain aspect of an event in order to make such occurrence more important. However, this stress can shape public perception.

Gorp (2007:60) views frame as "a persuasive invitation, a stimulus to read a news story in a particular way so that a specific definition of an event, the causal and treatment responsibility for a societal topic and a moral judgment of a person come more easily across the receiver's mind". It is noted further that "framing, on one hand, refers to the typical manner in which journalists shape news content within a familiar frame of reference, and according to some latent structure of meaning, on the other hand, to the audience, who adopt these frames and see the world in a similar way as the journalists do" (Gorp, 2007:61). Framing is a slant that is given to an occurrence by the writer. These can involve adding writer's view or perception, emphasizing certain views over the others among others.

More so, frame analysis seeks to comprehend framing patterns in a text. Frames can be determined by identifying the 'frequency' or the 'co-occurrence' of words in a text (Murphy, 2001; Mathe, 2018).Usually, a frame is recognized through

"framing devices such as exemplars; visual images, metaphors, depictions and catchphrases that put across a framework from which an issue can be viewed" (Gamson and Lasch, 1983:399; Mathe, 2018: 69). In this study, the researcher employed qualitative method of the frame analysis and identified frames within the corruption news stories by pinpointing and comparing the cognitive devices; 'figure of speech' and the mode of presentation of the stories by the four newspapers.

6.9. Data Analysis

Data analysis can be qualitative or quantitative. Whichever one, it is carried out after all data have been collected. It is the qualitative or quantitative explanation of data through graphs, tables and themes (Babbie, 2008). In this study, both qualitative and quantitative analysis were adopted to enhance the consistency of the study. Quantitative data from the four newspapers contents were analysed and the results presented using charts, graphs and tables while qualitative data from structured interview of the respective newspapers correspondents were analysed through thematic analysis. Quantitative data collected were also analysed using simple frequency counts and percentages, to measure the level of prominence and extent of reportage on corruption stories in the oil and gas industry. In addition, thematic analysis was used in analysing qualitative data elicited from the interview responses, which further guided the researcher to determine the level of press freedom in the country at large.

6.9.1. Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is used majorly in qualitative research and its chief focus is to identify themes in data (Kellehear, 1997). Thematic analysis requires more than numbering words, sentence or phrase in a data. It is the identification of clear and

comprehensible concepts in a data. Researchers use thematic analysis to unearth detailed meaning of a data (Greg, 2012).This method of analysis is an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analysing qualitative data. According to Braun and Clark (2006: 79), "thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data".

For this study, the researcher used thematic analysis to identify, analyse and report patterns within the qualitative data collected from the four newspaper correspondents interviewed. The patterns across the interview datawere identified through the following process.

Familiarization with the data: - In order to be more familiar and comprehend the data better, the researcher conducted the interview herself, thereafter, transcribed the interview responses and read through the data thoroughly for proper understanding.

Coding data: - Coding can either be done by hand or through the assistance of computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), QDA Miner Lite or Coding Analysis Toolkit (CAT). For the purpose of this study, the researcher coded the data by hand. It was endeavoured that coding captured the main ideas of the data. The coding was done using phrases from the participants' responses.

Searching for themes: - The researcher identified themes and sub themes from the codes. Patterns/ themes are developed from frequent usage of phrases within the transcribed texts or as a result of its significance to the research questions.

Reviewing themes: - The researcher validated the themes to ensure that all the data formed a logical pattern. At this stage, a mind map was used to visualize the relationship between the themes.

Defining and naming theme: - At this point, the researcher defined each theme according to the meaning or representation in the data set (participants' responses). The theme's titles are concise, punchy and immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme is all about.

Final report: - The final report gives the summary of the data. Themes were discussed with perceptible examples from the data set (participants' responses).

6.10. Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are so crucial in contemporary study because they help improve the accuracy of research and appraisal of a study. These tools are essential to validate the quality and truthfulness of measuring instrument (Kimberlin and Winterstein, 2008). When reliability and validity assessment is not carried out on a study, it becomes difficult to explain the effect of measurement errors on academic relationship that are evaluated (Forza, 2002). Validity and reliability increase transparency and reduces researcher's bias in qualitative research (Singh, 2014).

In this study, the researcher used both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data. Content analysis was used to collect data from the studied newspapers while interview was conducted on human samples. The use of the various types of data collection procedures to obtain information in this study enhanced the validity and reliability of the collected data. Saunders et al. (2009) note that all secondary data require detailed assessment of reliability and validity of the method of data collection. Conclusively, reliability mean constancy of findings while validity is genuineness of the findings.

6.10.1. Reliability of the study

Reliability is ascertained when a method can be used by several researchers under a stable condition to arrive at the same findings. In other words, reliability of a study means consistency and replicability of the test over time. According to Neuman (2003), reliability may also mean a study free of measurement errors. Mohajan (2017) notes that this measurement error does not only distort the finding but, tamper with result to produce accurate study. It measures stability, accuracy, replicability and dependability of a research (Chakrabartty, 2013). Mohajan (2017:1) views reliability as "a very important factor in assessment and is presented as an aspect contributing to validity and not opposed to validity. Reliability concerns the faith that one can have in the data obtained from the use of an instrument, that is, the degree to which any measuring tool controls for random error".

The methods used for data collection in this study ensured reliability of the research findings as the researcher ensured that the data collected are relevant to the study. For the content analysis, the researcher selected only articles with stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry, which is the focus of the study, from the selected newspapers. According to Krippendorff (2004: 211), reliable data remain "constant throughout the variations in the measuring process". In this study, the interviewees were drawn from Nigeria media population (print media), who are acquainted with the phenomenon of the study. To further guarantee the reliability of this study, the same interview guide was used for all the interviewees. In a situation where the data is not reliable, the entire findings from the research would be null and void.

With respect to content analysis, reliability largely depends on the procedures employed for data coding (Krippendorff, 2004). The articles on corruption in the

Nigerian oil and gas industry acted as sources of quantitative and qualitative data (media frames) needed for the study. The corruption stories were collected purposively for content analysis that focused on prominence and analysis of media frames. Krippendorff (2004:211) cautions that content analysts must ensure that data is collected without biases. More so, irregularities in coding system create unreliability of the research findings (Weber, 1990). Thus, to guarantee reliability in coding and grouping of data, an "inductive category development" method was adopted (Mathe, 2018). Also, the researcher employed manual coding throughout this study and established thematic classifications that indicated the media frames employed by the different newspapers in the reportage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

6.10.2. Validity of the study

Validity can be explained as the degree to which an instrument can quantify what is supposed to be measured (Kimberlin and Winterstein, 2008). Validity does not focus on the instrument principally, however, it is based on the findings and what that result is intended to solve. "Validity of a test or instrument, is not a property of the test itself. Instead, it is the extent to which the interpretations of the results of a test are defensible, which depend on the test's intended use that is measurement of the underlying construct" (Kimberlin and Winterstein, 2008:2278). Validity of a study instrument, verifies the degree to which the instrument measures the object it is intended to measure (Robson, 2011). Validity also means the degree to which the findings are truthful. In that case, it entails research instrument (interview) to appropriately measure the ideas under study (Pallant, 2011).

Validity in quantitative research means the degree of accuracy of the measuring instrument to accomplish what it was set to measure (Thatcher, 2010).

Whereas, in qualitative research, it involves certain processes to check for correctness of the findings (Creswell, 2014). Validity in qualitative research focused on the fact that result must be truthful, useful and sound (Zohrabi, 2013). Validity test focused on the significance of the study instruments. For instance, this study assesses the impact of press freedom on the reportage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry through a comparative content analysis of selected newspapers. To check the significance of the study instruments, the research is concerned with whether the measurement instrument such as interview is able to gather enough data or does the content and the number of articles gathered from the newspapers able to give any pointer or relevant information? These are validity questions. Although, the questions may not be satisfactorily answered, the researcher needs to provide data that are beyond reasonable doubt by providing enough evidences for the validity of those measures (Bollen, 1989).

In this study, the researcher ensured the certainty of the instruments used in both data gathering and analysis. There is suitability and clarity of words in explaining the findings. The researcher also certify that the interview questions were not leading or bias. For quantitative data, only the articles related to corruption in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria were selected for evaluation.

6.11. Ethical Considerations

This study focused on the impact of press freedom on the reportage of corruption in the Nigeria oil and gas industry through a content analysis of four purposively selected Nigerian newspapers (*The PUNCH, Vanguard, the Guardian* and *Nigerian Tribune*). In compliance with research ethics, an ethical clearance certificate was obtained from the University of Fort Hare Research Ethics Committee (UREC) prior the commencement of the study (See Appendix C for the ethical

clearance certificate). Furthermore, the researcher ensured thata representative sample was drawn for the content analysis while allinterviewees were selected purposively. Also, the participants' consents were sought by clearly explaining the aim of the study and the researcher assured them of information confidentiality and anonymity.

6.11.1. Anonymity

Anonymity requires that the researcher collect data without obtaining any personal identifying information of the participants. Anonymity guarantees that the personalities of participants are hidden and not revealed against to their permission (De Vos, 1998). In line with research ethics, the researcher ensured that the identities of the interviewees in this study were concealed. It was also ensured that the identities of the participants were not in any way linked to their responses.

6.11.2. Confidentiality

Confidentiality requires that the identities of respondents/participants and their information are kept private (Adler and Clark, 2007). Prior the commencement of each interview session, the researcher assured the interviewees that their privacy would be protected and their information kept confidential.

6.11.3. Informed consent

Informed consent is an ethical requirement for any research that involves human participation. This study involves interview of journalists (newspaper correspondents) and in compliance with ethical requirements, the researcher sought the consents of all the interviewees while they were properly informed of the research topic and the objectives of the study.

6.12. Chapter Summary

This chapter summarized the researchmethodology adopted for the study. It gave a succinct discussion on mixed research methods including quantitative and qualitative methods with emphasis on interview, content analysis and frame analysis. The researcher justified the choice of the research methods employed for the study. The chapter further discussed in details the study population, sample/sampling techniques, sample size and data collection. More so, the methods used in data analysis such as thematic analysis were discussed. The reliability and validity of the research instruments used in the study as well as the ethical considerations were also discussed in this chapter. The next chapter focuses on data analysis and presentation of findings.

CHAPTER 7

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

7.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis in line with the study objectives, starting withsection A: thematic analysis of journalists' responses to get their perception on press freedom in Nigeria and how this has affected their professional duties, which answers research sub-question 1. This is followed by section B: quantitative content analysis of stories on corruption in the oil and gas industry as covered by four different newspapers in Nigeria: *The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*, which answers sub-question 2. The researcher purposively selected a total of 534 corruption stories from the newspapers within a period of one year (12 months) ranging from July 2018 to June 2019. Lastly, section C of the chapter (qualitative content analysis), which answers research sub-question 3, shows the framing of stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by identifying and underlining catchy-phrases, words, adjectives, adverbs and headlines that indicate corruption news frame by the selected newspapers.

SECTION A

This section presents findings that answer the first research sub-question: how do journalists' perception of press freedom in Nigeria affect their reportage of corruption in the oil and gas sector in the country?

7.2. THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF JOURNALISTS' RESPONSES

The purpose of thematic analysis is to search for themes or pattern across the data. Themes are patterns across data sets that are important to the description of

phenomena associated to various research questions. The patterns across the interview data gathered from the four journalists, who are correspondents of the selected newspapers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*), were identified using the following processes as earlier on described in chapter 6: familiarization with the data; coding data; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; and final reports.

7.2.1. Level of press freedom

In response to the interview question on the level of press freedom in Nigeria, the Punch correspondent opined that

> "The level of press freedom in Nigeria can be rated below average. This is because, to some extent journalists are still allowed to gather and report certain news. In fact, journalist can freely walk into government offices, to get certain information. The bitter aspect is that, journalists can only get non-classified information easily, while the so-called classified ones are withheld. The freedom actually is not total but fair compared to the military regime. During that time, journalists cannot just wake up and criticize the government. if any journalist tries that, he will not sleep in his room that night".

Vanguard correspondent in his response rated press freedom in Nigeria as "below average".

> "Take for instance, the scenario at the last budget defense where journalists were driven out of the National Assembly. This means a whole lot, i.e. that they were hiding things that they did not want the journalists to expose. Budget defense concerns the populace; therefore, the people need to know. However, this happened during the present administration of President Muhammadu Buhari. where journalists were denied access to cover the Nation's budget defense. This yet, shows the level of press freedom enjoyed by the journalists. All this administration want is for the journalists to be timid so as not to be able to perform their roles as the watch dog of government".

Likewise, the Guardian correspondence, rated the press freedom in the country as

"Literally fair, because the laws are there, and are actively fair. The laws do not deprive journalists from performing their functions and professional duties. However, these laws are not followed to the letter. For instance, the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act is available to protect journalists, but it is not being adhered to, which is the major challenge with the established laws. At least journalists still benefit from freedom of speech as enshrined in the constitution in this era compared to the military. However, there are some things journalists will write and still get arrested for in the so-called democratic regime of President Buhari. It is more disheartening that government and even the public do not take necessary and expected steps on the critical writings or investigative report of journalists who have toiled to dig out facts. That is as good as not been allowed to talk, when what you say as journalist does not have any effect. This I could term 'the frustration of the so-called freedom of the press'".

According to the news correspondent of Nigerian Tribune,

"Press freedom in our country is still very low. As a result of some in-house policies of various media outlets, some media houses are pro-government while others are anti-government. So, this can affect journalist reportage. Another limitation is the fear of intimidation, harassment or getting killed. This has prevented some journalists from carrying out their obligations or duties as expected".

7.2.2. Inadequate access to information on corruption

In response to the interview question on access to adequate and relevant information on corruption, all the newspaper correspondents interviewed stated that they do not have adequate access to information on corruption. According to the Punch Correspondent:

"The people involved in corrupt practices are always covering it up. They want to make it hidden from the public. That is why it takes extra effort for journalists covering corruption beat to get news. The people involved in this menace always try to hide incriminating documents from journalists. It takes a persistent journalist to dig out information on corrupt practices in the oil and gas sector".

Likewise, Vanguard Correspondent was of the opinion that *"corruption stories are always covered".* He stated further as follows:

"It becomes difficult for Journalists to get access to stories on corruption in the oil and gas sector. It takes Journalists an extra

mile to access information on corruption. Journalists have to dig deep in order to extract that information. This is because stakeholders, who are mostly involved in this menace never leave their tracks opened, therefore, it becomes extremely difficult to find out the facts. However, some people in the company who are not happy about the situation, often call the attention of Journalists to this issue. The onus is therefore on the Journalist to make judicious use of such information".

Furthermore, the correspondent of Guardian newspaper stated that "Nigeria journalism is lagging behind" in the area of access to adequate information. It was noted in his response that

"Even though, there is freedom of information act in the Nigeria constitution, many do not adhere to it. Government parastatals do not give information freely; they want to keep the public in the dark while they perpetrate their evils. However, Journalists are still trying their best to forcefully and relentlessly get necessary information".

It was also noted from the response of the Correspondent of Nigerian Tribune that

"Journalists do not have access to enough information on corruption in the oil and gas industry as those involved are always withholding information that can help Journalists in their investigative journalism. Sources are scared of being implicated and those involved are afraid of getting arrested and jailed".

7.2.3. Intimidation, arrest and imprisonment of journalists

The level of intimidation, arrest and imprisonment of Journalists in a society is one of the factors that determine the level of freedom enjoyed by the press in such environment and as such, the researcher in an interview with the respective newspaper correspondents noted that Journalists are still being threatened in Nigeria in the course of carrying out their professional duties. This is evident in the response of the Punch correspondent, who stated that

"We are used to threat and arrest. It is a common phenomenon. If you write any anti-government or anti-party story, such Journalist should not sleep with his two eyes closed again, because he can be

arrested any time". He attested further as follows "as a news correspondent, I have been attacked in the course of news gathering severally. Those who feel aggrieved by the situation or the news you are gathering can attack you. Apart from physical attack, some people can call your phone number and threaten you to drop certain news from being published. Journalists are exposed to these risks daily. In fact, many journalists are kidnapped and dealt with secretly".

The Vanguard correspondent, noted that in his twenty-seven years of service,

he had *"lost count of abuse and intimidation of Journalists on duty"*.According to him*,*

"Intimidation comes mostly when a journalist is writing a story on corruption or an anti-government story. For instance, a vanguard photo journalist was recently assaulted in the Aso Rock Presidential Villa. His camera was seized and he was dragged out of the premises. This kind of harassment is common under the current regime".

He elaborated further by stating that

"It is in Nigeria that you write public relation stories and no one threatens you. However, when Journalists report corruption stories and other ills in the country, those benefitting in these areas will not want to allow such news. Take for instance, a journalist gets a piece of information that some government Directors want to embezzle public fund, immediately the Journalist starts investigation on it, the Directors will not allow such neither would they grant any interview. So, people benefitting from shady deals will want to harass the Journalist so as to halt the investigation in process".

This is corroborated by the Guardian correspondent who stated that

"Journalists are often exposed to intimidation while discharging their professional duties. In fact, hardly would you see a journalist who has never been intimidated in the course of duty in the country". It was noted further from his response that "Nigeria is a society that celebrate wrongful doings including corruption". While making reference to late Dele Giwa, a journalist who was murdered some decades ago, it was noted that "there were some people then who did not appreciate the work he was trying to do, even though he was defending the interest of the common people". Moreover, "most Journalists who write on corruption end up being threatened by stakeholders". According to him, "intimidation of Journalists has become a norm in Nigeria. Those who the corruption stories are targeting happened to be 'big horns' in the society, hence, they have power to crush anyone. Consequently, Journalists are always scared while writing stories on corruption".

He stated further that

"There was an incident of journalist arrest in the Northern part of the country recently but the most common form of abuse against journalists in is verbal abuse and intimidation".

Furthermore, Nigerian Tribune correspondent noted that

"Journalists are arrested, intimidated and imprisoned". Some journalists most of the time prefer to write public relations stories about people in power to exposing their shady deals. This is also linked to low press freedom. The non-protection of journalist gives those in power unlimited ability to treat journalist like dogs".

7.2.4. Restriction of Journalists

In response to the interview question on if there is any law in the country that that restricts them from performing their duties effectively, the newspaper correspondents gave their views as follows:

According to Vanguard correspondent,

"Hate speech is out for debate at the floor of the National Assembly to gag journalists in what they write and say in the public domain. Once the hate speech bill is passed into law there will be absolute limit to press freedom in Nigeria. Hate speech is another way to hinder press performance and gag the press from functioning properly. The current administration is not comfortable with the press nosing for news, especially news on corruption".

Guardian correspondent reiterated the issue of the hate speech saying,

"At the moment, there is no law that restrict the press from performing their duties in the constitution except the currently proposed hate speech bill under consideration by the lawmakers. However, some laws are mis-interpreted to gag the press from discharging their duties. The major problem we have in Nigeria is implementation of our laws".

Nigerian Tribune correspondent said

"The present government is making moves to gag the press with the proposed hate speech bill that is currently being considered by the National Assembly. If the bill is eventually passed into law, journalists will be gagged and oppressed permanently".

SECTION B

This section presents findings that answer the second research sub-question: to what extent has the selected newspapers reported corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry?

7.3. QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

This section analyses quantitative data from four Nigerian newspapers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*). It presents findings onthe extent of reportage and the degree of objectivity in the coverage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the selected newspapers. It also presents findings on the type of frame used in the reportage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas sector.

7.3.1. Frequency of stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the selected newspapers

Figure 7.1 shows the frequency of stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the selected newspapers. A total of 534 stories were reported on corruption in the oil and gas sector of Nigeria by the four newspapers in one-year (1st July, 2018 and 30th June, 2019) with the Punch having the highest frequency of 196 stories (36.70%) followed by the Nigerian tribune with 155 stories (29.03%) whereas Vanguard and Guardian reported 108 (20.22%) and 75 (14.04%) stories, respectively.

The high frequency of reported stories by the Punch shows that the newspaper may have more access to information or more sources than the other newspapers. It also suggests that the Punch gave most prominence to the issue of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas sector, which is in tandem with the agenda setting theory of the press and supports the perspective of Ayodeji-Falade and Osunkunle (2019) that frequency of a story can lead to discussion among the public.
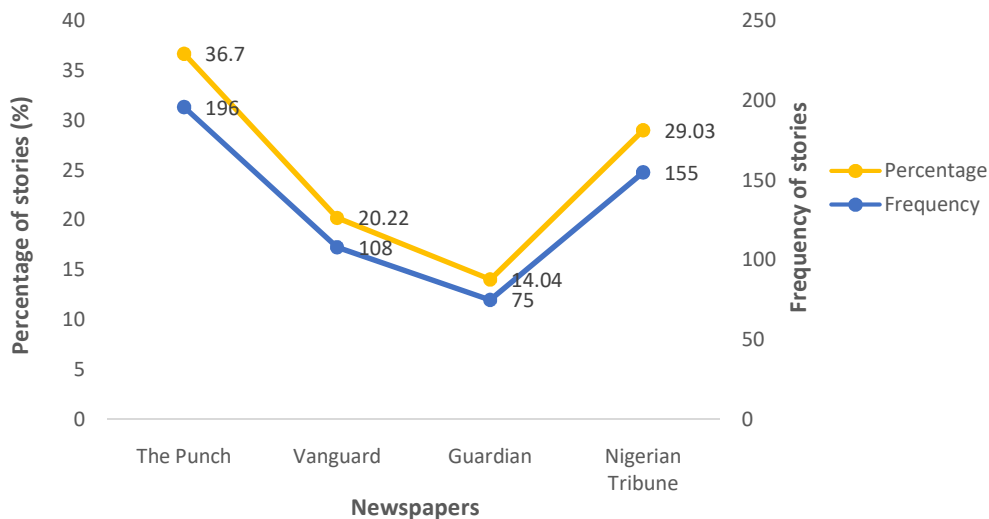
Figure 7.1. Frequency of stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the selected newspapers.

7.3.2. Publication formats of stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the selected newspapers

Table 7.1 shows the different publication formats used in the reportage of corruption in the oil and gas sector of Nigeria by the selected newspapers. Out of the 534 stories reported by all the newspapers, 462 (86.52%) were news reports, 22 (4.12%) were features, 15 (2.81%) were editorials while 10 stories (1.87%) were opinions whereas interviews, cartoons, vox pop and letter to the editor were 10

(1.87%), 7 (1.31%), 5 (0.94%) and 3 (0.56%), respectively. It is noteworthy that the Punch and Nigerian Tribune employed the widest range of the publication formats as both newspapers adopted eight different formats (news, letter to the editors, features, cartoons, editorials, opinion, vox pop and interview) in the presentation of stories on corruption in the oil and gas sector.

Nevertheless, a comparative analysis of the publication formats employed by the selected newspapers shows that all the publications had similar magnitude of news reports. The high magnitude of news stories in this study indicates that the newspapers may not have provided enough details on corruption in the oil and gas sector because in line with the view of Amenaghawon (2016), news does not give enough room for adequate information as obtainable in features, editorials, opinions and interviews.

Table 7.1. Publication formats of stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the selected newspapers

Editorial format	The Punch Count & %	Vanguard Count & %	Guardian Count & %	Nigerian Tribune Count & %	Total Count & %
News	173 (88.26)	96 (88.88)	58 (77.33)	135 (87.09)	462 (86.52)
Letter to the Editor	1 (0.51)	-	-	2 (1.29)	3 (0.56)
Features	3 (1.53)	7 (6.48)	11 (14.67)	1 (0.65)	22 (4.12)
Cartoons	2 (1.02)	-	-	5 (3.23)	7 (1.31)
Editorials	10 (5.10)	-	1 (1.33)	4 (2.58)	15 (2.81)
Opinion	3 (1.54)	1 (0.93)	1 (1.33)	5 (3.23)	10 (1.87)
Vox pop	1 (0.51)	1 (0.93)	2 (2.67)	1 (0.65)	5 (0.94)
Interview	3 (1.53)	3 (2.78)	2 (2.67)	2 (1.29)	10 (1.87)
Total	196 (100)	108 (100)	75 (100)	155 (100)	534 (100)

7.3.3. Positioning of stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry in the selected newspapers

Figure 7.2. presents findings on the positioning of stories on corruption in the oil and gas industry in the selected newspapers. The findings show that Guardian had the highest percentage of stories, 68 percent (51) on the front page followed by Vanguard with about 57 percent (62) while Nigerian tribune and the Punch presented approximately 55 percent (86) and 26 percent (52) of their stories on the front pages, respectively. Meanwhile, the Punch had the highest magnitude of stories on the back page (96), which amounts to 48.97 percent followed by Nigerian tribune with 36.77 percent stories (57) on the back page while Vanguard and Guardian positioned 21.30 percent (23) and 10.66 percent (8) stories on their respective back pages.

Likewise, the Punch placed the highest quantity of stories in the inside pages (48), amounting to 24.50 percent while the Nigerian tribune positioned the lowest number (12) of stories (7.74%) in the inside pages. On the other hand, Vanguard and Guardian had 21.30 percent (23) and 21.33 percent (16) stories in their inside pages, respectively. Generally, out of the 534 stories reported on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by all the selected newspapers, 251 (47%) were placed on the front pages, 184 (34.46%) on the back pages while 99 (18.54%) were positioned in the inside pages. The high magnitude of stories on both the front and back pages of all the newspapers indicates the level of prominence attributed to the issue (Okon, 2018), with Nigerian tribune having 92.25 percent of its stories on the front and back pages while Vanguard had 78.70 percent on the front and back pages.

However, Guardian and the Punch had 78.66 and 75.30 percent stories on the front and back pages, respectively. The findings indicate that all the newspapers

gave prominence to the stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry with the highest level of prominence observed in the Nigerian tribune. With the level of prominence observed based on front and back page placement in this study, it is sufficed to state that the newspapers are setting the agenda of what people think or talk about in the society, therefore, fulfilling their social responsibilities and the agenda setting role.
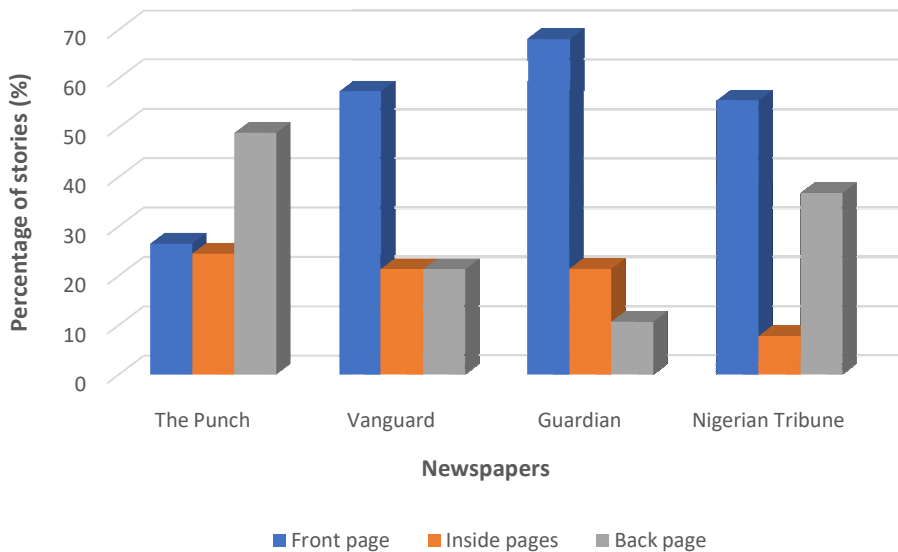
Figure 7.2. Position of stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry in the selected newspapers.

7.3.4. Story size/length used in the reportage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the selected newspapers

Figure 7.3. shows the findings on the size/length of stories on corruption in the oil and gas industry as presented by the four studied newspapers. The results show that Guardian had the highest percentage of full paged stories (20%) followed by Nigerian Tribune with 14.19 percent (22) while Vanguard and the Punch reported

9.26 percent (10) and 8.67 percent (17), respectively. Meanwhile, the highest percentage of half-paged stories was reported by the Punch with 66 stories (37.67%) followed by the Nigerian Tribune with 28 stories (18.06%) while Guardian and Vanguard reported 11 (14.67%) and 13 (12.04%) half-paged stories, respectively.

Nevertheless, the highest percentage (65.74%) of quarter-paged stories was recorded by Vanguard with 71 stories followed by Guardian with 53.33 percent (40) while 45.16 percent (70) and 36.22 percent (71) of corruption stories reported by Nigerian Tribune and the Punch occupied quarter page, respectively. In other cases, the newspapers dedicated a small portion of a page to corruption stories. For the small portion stories, Nigerian Tribune had the highest percentage (22.58%) with 35 stories followed by Punch with 21.43 percent (42). Meanwhile, Vanguard reported 12.96 percent (14) of their stories on small portion page whereas Guardian had the lowest percentage of stories (12%) occupying small portion of a page. In the overall, out of the 534 stories reported on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas sector by all the selected newspapers, 252 stories (47.19%) appeared on a quarter page while 118 stories (22.09%) were reported using a half page.

However, only 64 stories (11.99%) occupied a full page as 100 stories, which account for about 19 percent, were reported on a small portion page. It is clear from the findings that stories on corruption in the oil and gas industry were accorded adequate space with all the newspapers having majority of their stories occupying full, half and quarter pages of the selected newspapers. Just like the view of Fadairo et al. (2014), the space allotted to corruption stories in the oil and gas industry by the newspapers also reflects the level of prominence accorded the issue.
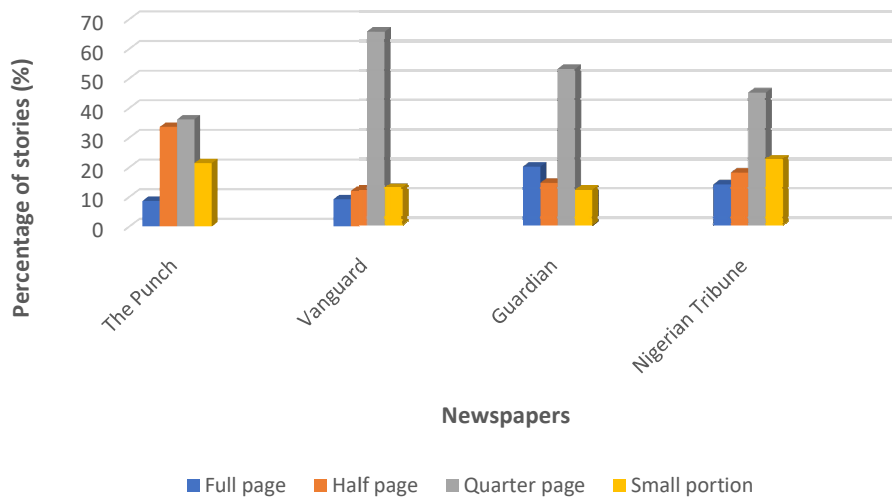
Figure 7.3. Story size/length used in the reportage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the selected newspapers.

7.3.5. Type of frame used in the reportage of stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the selected newspapers

In this study, episodic frames focused on news articles that is, stories that are immediate, urgent or fresh, while thematic frames are selected based on stories that have background, detailed and investigative information like features. Table 5.2 shows that the four selected newspapers used more episodic frame than thematic frames to report corruption stories in the oil and gas industry. For the entire period that the study covered, it can be summarized that the Punch had a total of 151 episodic frames against 42 thematic frames, similarly, Vanguard had 93 episodic as against 15 thematic frames, Guardian as well had 63 episodic to 9 thematic frames while Nigerian Tribune had 125 episodic against 27 thematic frames in their reports. It was observed that the trend did not change at any time as all the newspapers preferred to write more news stories rather than engaging in in-depth or investigative reporting which can provide better understanding into corrupt practices in the oil and

gas industry. The implication of this is that, readers are mainly provided with "straight jacket news" which, in the opinion of Amenaghawon (2016), only serve the audience with few details rather than background and investigative findings into corrupt practices in the oil and gas industry.

It is my opinion that the selected newspapers should have devoted more effort to using thematic frames as much as it does to episodic frames as readers will have better insight into corrupt practices in the country.

Table 7.2. Type of frame used in the reportage of stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the selected newspapers

Newspaper	Frame	July 2018	Aug 2018	Sept 2018	Oct 2018	Nov 2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019	Feb 2019	March 2019	April 2019	May 2019	June 2019	Total
The Punch	Episodic	5	7	3	6	13	13	18	9	13	24	25	15	151
	Thematic	1	2	2	4	1	4	7	4	4	6	2	5	42
Vanguard	Episodic	6	15	1	6	7	12	4	6	4	8	12	12	93
	Thematic	6	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	15
Guardian	Episodic	6	2	2	7	5	4	14	4	3	7	4	5	63
	Thematic	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	2	9
Nigerian Tribune	Episodic	16	9	6	7	10	8	8	9	9	17	15	11	125
	Thematic	3	0	3	0	3	4	2	2	2	4	4	0	27

SECTION C

This section presents findings that answer the third research sub-question: how do the selected newspapers frame the stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry?

7.4. QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

This section analyses the frames of corruption stories using qualitative data from the four selected Nigerian newspapers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*). It presents the media frame categorization of the stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry as evidenced in these newspapers.

7.4.1. Analysis of corruption news frames from selected newspapers

Frames of stories that reflect various elements of corruption such as theft, pipeline vandalism, fraud, oil bunkering among others, were analysed qualitatively by identifying catchy-phrases, adjectives and adverbs that portray corruption as well as the method employed in describing the occurrence. The framing analysis revealed the following as the prominent frames adopted in the coverage of news on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry: oil theft frame; vandalism frame, alleged-fraud frame; environmental consequences frame; and economic consequences frame.

7.4.1.1. Oil theft frame

This segment presents some stories with oil theft frame, which suggest theft as a major element of corruption in the oil and gas industry of Nigeria. A news article by the Punch reported that "the Federal High Court convicted and jailed 10 men for 12 years for <u>dealing</u> in <u>200 metric tonnes of petroleum productswithout lawful authority</u>" (The Punch, 07/08/2018). The story as framed is a reflection of oil theft. In another article, the Punch reported the arrest of "seven <u>suspected oil thieves</u> with <u>over 200</u>

drums of adulterated crude oilworth over N10 m by the Cross River State command of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps" (The Punch, 25/10/2018). The emphasis on the number of drums and the worth of the stolen crude reflects the enormity of oil theft in the country. The Punch also wrote on the value of stolen crude oil in the country as provided by Femi Falana: "…$12.7bn worth of crude oil was stolen from the country between 2011 and 2014". Another article portrayed the magnitude of the activity of oil smugglers in the country, who are "stealing about 10 million litres of petrol and selling it to neighbouring countries" (The Punch, 19/06/2019).

Oil theft frame is also reflected in the Vanguard article which reported that "activities of oil thieves in the country cost it N11.08 billion" (Vanguard, 13/02/2019). The emphasis on the cost implication of oil theft by Vanguard further suggest the severity of the menace in the country. The way Vanguard sounded in this article "the Nigerian army has smashed one of the biggest camps operated by oil thieves in Delta state, destroying about 60 Cotonu boat,150 storage tanks, 700 drumsused by the oil thieves for their illicit trade" (Vanguard, 17/04/2019) showed that the Nigerian Army is working very hard to tackle the menace of oil theft in the state. Also, the number of boats, storage tanks and drums reveal the enormity of oil theft in the area. Vanguard viewed oil theft as a substitute to the activities of militants and they claimed that "millions of barrels of crude oil had been lost to theft between 2014 1nd 2019 with as high as 100,000 barrels stolen daily..." (Vanguard, 07/06/2019).

More so, Guardian also employed oil theft frame in the presentation of corruption stories. In one of such articles, they said "The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Port Harcourt's zonal office has commenced investigations into the activities of 29 suspected oil thieves involved in illegal oil

bunkering" (Guardian, 09/06/2019). It was perceived from another Guardian story that "…daily consumption of Premium Motor-Spirit (PMS), otherwise called petrol is unknown due to <u>growing smuggling</u> of the product into other West African countries" (Guardian, 05/07/2018).

Furthermore, a number of Nigerian Tribune articles also reflected oil theft in the way they were framed. For instance, "The Nigerian Navy in Lagos on Wednesday said it intercepted a wooden boat with outboard engines and <u>1400 jerry cans of petroleum Motor Spirit (PMS) </u>all <u>valued at N20 million</u>" (Nigerian Tribune, 12/02/2019). "Report by Transparency International in collaboration with Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) has it that Nigeria has <u>lost about 200,000 barrels of oil per day</u>" (14/06/2019).

Another Nigerian Tribune article brought to the fore the "re-arrest of a vessel, NV SKYE, <u>laden with petroleum products</u> and nine crew members by the Operatives of the Nigerian Navy Ship (NNS) Delta. The vessel was intercepted with a <u>505 metric tonnes of petroleum product</u> on the board at Escravos bar in Niger Delta" (Nigerian Tribune, 11/09/2018). The Nigerian Tribune in a different article reported the activity of the EFCC as they "arraigned two oil marketers, Yusuf Kwande and Osahon Asemota in an Ikeja Special Offences Court <u>for allegedly stealing 6.4 million metric tonnes of Automated Gas Oil</u> (AGO) <u>worth $8.4 million</u>"(Nigerian Tribune, 04/12/2018).

7.4.1.2. Vandalism frame

Vandalism framed stories involved articles that focused on vandalisation of oil pipelines and other oil facilities as a form of corruption in Nigeria. This was portrayed by one of the headlines of the Punch newspaper, which reads *"We recorded 1,858 pipeline vandalism cases in one year-NNPC"* (The Punch, 05/11/2018). The story

recorded that, "188 pipeline points were vandalized as against 165 that was recorded in the preceding month, with Ibadan-Mosimi accounting for 124 points or 66 per cent of the vandalised pipeline". Another Punch article where vandalism frame is conspicuous reads "some hoodlums, who were said to be in army uniform, on Thursday, reportedly vandalised a petrol pipeline in Lagos, siphoned the product into four trucks and escaped before dawn" (The Punch, 31/05/2019). It is clear from how the story was framed that the hoodlums vandalized the pipelines with the aim of stealing petrol. Pipeline vandalism was also emphasized in this headline "Pipeline Vandalism: Nigeria loses N163.17bn in six years" (The Punch, 23/05/2019). The newspaper stressed the cost implication in order to show the magnitude of pipeline vandalism in the oil-producing region. More so, in a different article, the Punch said "A Niger Delta militant group, known as the Koluama Seven Brothers, has blown up a crude oil pipeline owned by Conoil in Bayelsa State" (The Punch, 07/01/2019). With the way the story was framed, the use of 'blown up' indicates vandalism.

Vanguard, also, presented some stories on corruption in the oil and gas industry using vandalism frame. An example of such stories is the article with the headline *"NNPC raises alarm over increasing pipeline vandalism"* (Vanguard, 16/01/2019). It was perceived from the article that NNPC was not happy with the growing rate of pipeline vandalism in Nigeria. Vanguard said "… the incidence of pipeline vandalism in October 2018 rose to 42.9 percent, compared to the previous month during the year" (Vanguard, 16/01/2019).

The rising incidents of pipeline vandalism in the country is worrisome as this further attest to the level of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas sector. Vandalism frame is also reflected in this headline "suspected vandal found dead inside NNPC pipeline in Ogun" (Vanguard, 13/11/2018). Vanguard said "the man was suspected

to be an oil thief" (Vanguard, 13/11/2018). In a different article, Vanguard reported that "Nigeria recorded the highest crude oil loss in the last 18 years with an average of 245 million barrels of oil going down the drain in 2016" (Vanguard, 27/12/2018). The huge crude oil loss was partly attributed to pipeline vandalism as portrayed by Vanguard as follows: "…statistics from the latest audit report of the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, NEITI, revealed that the huge loss was occasioned by several factors, including pipeline vandalism and reduced funding for various Joint Ventured, JV, cash call obligation" (Vanguard, 27/12/2018).

Moreover, Guardian portrayed pipeline vandalism a critical element of corruption in the oil and gas sector as they presented some of their articles using vandalism frame. The frame is evident in the story with the headline, *"NNPC laud vandalism campaign as Navy arrests alleged notorious vandal"* (Guardian, 23/01/2019). An excerpt from the article reads "The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has said that the campaign against oil pipeline vandalism is becoming successful as the Nigerian Navy yesterday arrested an alleged notorious pipeline vandal identified as Mr Shuaibu Ogunmola" (Guardian, 23/01/2019).

Guardian emphasized the number of pipeline vandalism cases recorded within eight months as indicated "The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) last year recorded a trade surplus of N80.57 billion. However, a deficit of N5.46 billion was posted for January and August. All of these came as cases of pipeline vandalismrose to 2,048 nationwide during the period" (Guardian, 18/03/2019). According to the document, 216 pipeline points were burst in January; 148 in February; March witnessed 224; April had 115; 82 got affected in May while June registered 174"(Guardian, 18/03/2019).

Furthermore, Guardian reported Shell's call "for stakeholders' support to curb the <u>incessant vandalism of crude oil pipelines</u>" (Guardian, 14/06/2019). The article reads further "…90 per cent of <u>pipelines leaks</u> are attributable to <u>illegal activities</u>, noting that <u>sabotage spill rate</u> has risen steeply and crude oil theft from SPDC JV'S <u>pipeline network averaged 11,000 barrels per day</u> in 2018" (Guardian, 14/06/2019). Another Guardian article gave an assessment of the amount of oil lost to pipeline vandalism saying "Nigeria's oil sector is estimated to have lost over 754,000 barrels per day (pbd) in February, to production shut-in occasioned by <u>pipeline vandalism</u>…" (Guardian, 10/07/2018).

The Nigerian Tribune also employed vandalism frame in some of their corruption articles. One of the articles reads "a member of a three- man gang that specialised in <u>vandalising pipelines</u> belonging to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has been arrested by the police in Lagos State" (Nigerian Tribune, 01/04/2019). In another article, the Nigerian Tribune stated that "two men, Tunde Ramoni (45) and Yinka Olufowobi (33), suspected to be <u>pipeline vandals</u>, have been arrested by policemen from Ogun State Police Command. More so, "the two suspects confessed that they were coming from Oloparun Village, via Ogijo, where they used to get the product from <u>vandalised pipeline</u> in the area…" (Nigerian Tribune, 14/06/2019).

Likewise, "suspected <u>vandals</u> numbering five, have been arrested by policemen from the Ogun State Police Command at Magboro area of Ibafo" (Nigerian Tribune, 19/06/2019). It was further stated in the article that "…the men (vandals) were sighted beside a company in a Passat car with registration number Lagos KSF 710 BM loaded with 12, 50-litre kegs of petroleum product, <u>suspected to have been siphoned</u> from a <u>vandalised pipeline</u> in the area" (Nigerian Tribune, 19/06/2019).

7.4.1.3. Alleged-fraud frame

Part of the media frames observed in this study is alleged-fraud frame, which relates to fraudulent activities in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria in form of fund embezzlement; bribery, misappropriation of funds. The following articles by the Punch were framed as alleged-fraud. For instance, the fraudulent act of the former minister of petroleum, Alison Diezani was framed by the Punch in the following article: *"EFCC intensifies efforts to extradite Diezani"* (The Punch, 12/11/2018). The stories said "in 2017, a Federal High Court in Lagos ordered the final forfeiture of <u>N7.6bnallegedly loot</u> recovered from the minister" (The Punch, 12/11/2018).

In another story, the Punch reported that "the office of the Attorney General of the Federation has charged an oil marketer, Chima Anyasa, before the Federal High Court in Lagos for <u>allegedly obtaining a N2bn credit </u>facility from Guaranty Trust Bank <u>using forged documents</u>" (Punch, 16/01/2019). More so, the Punch, in a different article said "Royal Dutch Shell Plc and Eni face additional <u>corruption allegations over a Nigeria oil deal</u>, after the Federal Government said in a London lawsuit that it believed a handful of executives, including Chief Executive Officers, were tied to more than <u>$1bn in bribery payments</u>" (The Punch, 08/05/2019).

Similarly, Vanguard, presented some of their corruption stories using alleged fraud frame, which is reflected in an article that reads "A High Court of the Federal Capital Territory sitting at Jabi, has issued a bench warrant for the arrest of the immediate past Attorney General of the Federation, Mohammed Adoke, SAN, former Minister of Petroleum, Dan Etete, and four other persons that were <u>fingered</u> in the <u>$1.2 billion Malabu Oil bloc fraud</u>" (Vanguard, 18/04/2019).

Vanguard, in another article, brought to the fore fuel subsidy related fraud. Vanguard said "A former employee of Sterling Bank, Chumwuemeka Ekwunife,

yesterday revealed how a businesswoman and <u>oil marketer</u>, Mrs Ngozi Ekeoma, used him to <u>steal N168.5 million</u> from the Federal Government through <u>fuel subsidy scheme</u>. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, (EFCC), had arraigned Ekwunife and Structured Energy Limited <u>for stealing N168.5 million</u> from several companies" (Vanguard, 20/06/2019) whereas a different Vanguard article reported that "The Financial and Economic and Crimes Commission, EFCC, yesterday, charged Senator Albert Bassey representing Uyo Senatorial district and an <u>oil</u> tycoon, Olajide Jones Omokore before an Ikeja High Court <u>for alleged N224 million fraud" (21/08/2018)</u>.

Guardian newspaper also employed the alleged-fraud frame in few of their corruption articles. One of such stories indicated that "the Senate yesterday said it again uncovered <u>illegal multiple withdrawals of $1.151 billion</u> from the <u>dividends account of the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG)</u> by the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). This is apart from the <u>$1.05 billion</u> NNPC Group Managing Director Maikanti Baru earlier admitted to" (Guardian, 15/11/2018). Furthermore, Guardian said "an Italian judge, Glusy Barbara yesterday said oil groups Eni and Royal Dutch Shell were fully aware that their purchase of a Nigerian oilfield in 2011, would result in <u>corrupt payments</u> to politicians and officials. Italy's Eni and Shell bought the OPL 245 offshore field for about $1.3 billion in a deal that spawned one of the industry's largest <u>corruption scandals</u>. It was <u>alleged</u> that about <u>$1.1 billion</u> of the total <u>was siphoned</u> to agents and middlemen" (Guardian, 18/12/2018).

The Nigerian Tribune also covered some stories that reflect the use of alleged-fraud frame. They reported the action of the EFCC against a former Minister of Justice and his Petroleum counterpart on alleged fraud. Nigerian Tribune said **"the**

EFCC charged a former Minister of Justice, Mr Mohammed Adoke and his Petroleum counterpart, Mr Dan Etete for their alleged involvement in the mismanagement of 1,1 billion dollars revenue that <u>accrued from the sale of oil bloc</u> to Malabu Oil and Gas Limited in 2011…" (Nigerian Tribune, 14/05/ 2019).

In another Nigerian Tribune article with alleged-fraud frame, they reported that "the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Ilorin Zonal Office, has arrested a 31-year-old Islamic scholar/herbalist, Jamiu Isiaka, for <u>defrauding</u> a South Korean of <u>N30 million</u>. He allegedly committed the crime while <u>impersonating the Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation</u> (NNPC), Dr Maikanti Baru and the Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity, Mr Femi Adeshina, among other prominent Nigerians. The suspect, with others who are still at large, allegedly used the names of the senior government officials to defraud the South Korean national, Keun Sig Kim, under the pretext of getting him a <u>licence from the NNPC</u>" (Nigerian Tribune, 18/05/2019).

On the other hand, a different Nigerian Tribune article reported the failure of the EFCC to arraign Diezani/Omokore. They said "for the second time the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), on Monday, failed to arraign a former Minister of Petroleum Resources, Mrs Diezani Alison-Madueke, before a High Court of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) for an <u>alleged gratification</u>. The anti-graft agency, had, last year, filed a five-count charge bordering on conspiracy and <u>illegal act of accepting and giving gratifications</u> against Alison-Madueke and one of her associates, Olajide Omokore, a former chairman of the Atlantic Energy Drilling Company" (Nigerian Tribune, 26/02/2019).

7.4.1.4. Environmental consequences frame

Environmental consequences frame suggests that the stories made reference to consequences of corrupt practices in the oil and gas industry on the environment. It also indicates a mention of a disaster caused by corruption or sabotage in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. The four selected newspapers for this study reported extensively using this frame. The Punch newspaper employed environmental consequences frame in presenting their article which stated that "the fuel spillage, which flooded the Akwu-Iwu Street in the Ijegun area, was caused by the operations of people involved in illegal bunkering" (The Punch, 01/03/2019).

"The activities of those rupturing the NNPC pipeline in our area have been going on for a while, in fact, they came to scoop fuel in the night last week. Today (Wednesday), as I speak to you, I can see fuel spillage all over the road and why this happened is because the spot where they vandalised the pipeline during their last operation has ruptured and the fuel gushing out of it has spread across the area. In fact, a lot of people have been thrown into panic; while some are running away from the area for safety, others have taken advantage of the situation to scoop fuel. We are afraid of speaking up because we don't have proof. But, with this spillage causing panic, I believe it is enough evidence to get the attention of those in authority to come to our aid to curb the activities of these vandals" (The Punch, 01/03/2019).

Another article by the Punch newspaper presented the advice of President Mohammadu Buhari on pipeline vandalism using the environmental consequences frame as follows: "vandalism was not only an economic setback but also contributed in some way to environmental challenges in the region" (The Punch, 28/05/2019). Buhari said, "you need to educate the people that the destruction of installations is

hurting the majority of <u>the people</u>. If <u>pipelines are blown</u> and the <u>waters are polluted</u>, it <u>affects</u> both the <u>fishermen and farmers</u>. Even the <u>fishes</u> in the sea are <u>affected</u>" (The Punch, 28/05/2019).

Likewise, the Punch, in a different article framed the comments of the Bayelsa State Governor on the multinational oil firms using environmental consequences frame. The Punch said "the Governor of Bayelsa state, Seriake Dickson, has again attacked multinational oil firm for <u>allegedly destroying the Niger Delta environment</u> with their <u>non-adherence to international best practices in their oil exploration activities</u>. The governor said <u>this was responsible for high infant mortality rate and avoidable deaths</u> in Bayelsa in particular and the Niger Delta in general" (The Punch, 03/04/2019).

Environmental consequences frame is also evident in some corruption news reported by Vanguard newspaper. One of such news is the article with the headline *"no fewer than 100 <u>houses</u>, 100 <u>shops</u>, and 50 <u>carswent up in flames</u> in the early hours of yesterday in Abule-Egba and Agege areas of Lagos, rendering several families homeless"* (Vanguard, 20/12/2018). "The <u>pipeline vandals</u>, as gathered, stormed the area at midnight with three trucks. Residents said they dug a hole at a connecting point at 4, Segun Akinola Street, opposite Tipper Garage, off Awori Road. Thereafter, they <u>broke the pipe</u> and <u>connected their hose</u>, from where <u>they siphoned</u> the combustive product until 2 a.m., when the <u>fire started</u>" (Vanguard, 20/12/2018). In another story, Vanguard said "the Niger Delta <u>environment is inturmoil</u> and the <u>livelihood of the people in peril</u> because of the insensitive <u>degradation of the environment</u> by international oil firms <u>who are driven solely by a quest to make money</u>" (Vanguard, 02/04/2019).

Gas flaring is one of the major causes of environmental degradation in Nigeria. Despite several laws prohibiting gas flaring, the menace still remains. This is reflected in a Vanguard article headline: *"oil firm continue to flare commercial gas"* (Vanguard, 04/09/2018). It further explained that "the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, NEITI, in its audit report on Nigerian Oil and Gas Audit, disclosed that in 2008, the Federal Government had set <u>a penalty of $3.5 per 1,000 SCF of gas flared by the oil companies</u>, adding, that the companies <u>did not comply with the directive</u>. Gas flaring <u>affects the environment and human health</u>, produces economic loss, deprives the government of tax revenues and trade opportunities, and <u>deprives consumers of a clean and cheap energy source</u>" (Vanguard, 04/09/2018).

The environmental consequences frame was also adopted by the Guardian newspaper in presenting a few corruption stories. This is reflected in the article, where Guardian said "<u>five oil wells</u>, operated by Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) at Ajegunle Ikorigho community in Ilaje Local Council of Ondo State, <u>have engulfed in combustible fire</u> few weeks after <u>militants threatened to resume hostility</u> in the oil-rich Niger Delta" (Guardian, 24/04/2019). The frame was also seen in another Guardian article which reads "the April 18, 2019 <u>oil well fire</u> on Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL)'s Ojumole Well 1 in Polobubo (Tsekelewu) community in Warri North Council, Delta State, <u>is yet to be put out</u>; it was rather <u>expanding and threatening the residents</u>. The community yesterday raised the alarm that the well head fire, which had been burning for close to two months, <u>escalated</u>, <u>emitting hazardous fumes</u> that <u>threaten the community's health</u>" (Guardian, 06/06/2019).

Furthermore, Nigerian Tribune, presented some of their stories on corruption in the oil sector using environmental consequences frame. For instance, they said

"residents of gloryland community at Isheri-Olofin, Egbe Idimu Local Council Development Area (LCDA) in Lagos State, on Wednesday, called on the state government and management of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to save their <u>lives and property from pipeline vandals</u> in the area, who <u>through their unwholesome activities</u>, have <u>caused two fire outbreaks</u> in the area within the last five days" (Nigerian Tribune, 20/06/2019). It was learnt that "the area was on <u>fire following fresh explosion</u> at about 7:30a.m., on Wednesday, <u>due to activities of the said vandals</u>, who the residents said had been terrorising the place unabated for more than two years now" (Nigerian Tribune, 20/06/2019).

Also, Nigerian Tribune reported that a group named Centre for Peace and Environmental Justice (CEPEJ) has called on NOSDRA to visit Niger Delta creek ravaged by oil spill. They said "CEPEJ boss also drew the attention of NOSDRA to the <u>preventable incident</u> where <u>11 persons died from pipeline explosion</u> in 2016 <u>at an oilfield</u> in Southern Ijaw Local Government of Bayelsa State, noting that it was necessary to call on National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) to plan for a familiarisation visit to <u>oil spills affected sites</u> particularly in the creek" (Nigerian Tribune, 23/04/2019).

7.4.1.5. Economic consequences frame

The oil and gas industry contributes immensely to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the nation. Therefore, any corrupt practice in the sector will adversely affect the nation's economy. The economic consequences frame suggests that the writer mentioned financial losses due to corrupt practices in the oil and gas sector; the cost implication of a corrupt practice in the oil sector or the consequences of corruption in the oil and gas industry on the nation's economy. The Punch newspaper wrote an article on how *"oil theft<u>hurts</u> Nigerian <u>economy"</u>* (The Punch, 17/08/2018).

In the article, the Punch said "persistent large-scale <u>oil theft</u> is <u>posing</u> a clear and palpable <u>threat</u> to <u>Nigeria's oil and gas-dependent economy</u>". They stated further that "if the luxury of <u>flourishing oil theft</u> was condoned in the past, it is appalling that it was allowed to persist at a time when the country was neck-deep in recession" (The Punch, 17/08/2018). In another article, the Punch wrote on the amount the country lost to oil theft in 2016. They said "in 2016, reports by both the government and oil companies indicated that a combined total of <u>N3.8tn</u> was recorded as the <u>amount lost to crude oil theft</u>" (The Punch, 01/08/2018).

An article by the Punch also suggests that "Nigeria could <u>lose $6 bn</u> to <u>Malabu scam</u>"(The Punch, 27/11/2018).Punch said "a court in Milan is considering charges of <u>corruption against Eni and Shell</u> over the purchase in 2011 of Nigeria's Oil Prospecting License 245 that led to <u>Nigeria losing an estimated $6bn</u>. A global anti-corruption and accountability watchdog group, Global Witness, has calculated that the OPL 245 deal <u>deprived Nigeria</u> of <u>double its annual education and healthcare budget</u>, the British Broadcasting Corporation reports on Monday" (The Punch, 27/11/2018).

Vanguard newspaper also employed the economic consequences frame as they wrote that "United Nations has said that <u>Nigeria lost an estimated $2.8 billion in revenues</u> in 2018, mainly due to maritime and <u>oil related crimes</u>" (Vanguard, 09/01/2019). In another article, Vanguard mentioned how much Nigeria lost to oil theft within two years. They said "Nigeria <u>losesN2.6trn to crude oil theft</u> in 2 years" (Vanguard, 01/08/2018). Furthermore, "Nigerian <u>lost N1.6 trillion in 2016</u> and <u>N995 billion in 2017to crude oil theft</u>, translating to <u>a loss of about $8.9 million daily</u> and <u>a combined loss of N2.6trillion</u> over the two-year period" (Vanguard, 01/08/2018).

Likewise, Guardian newspaper wrote on the estimated revenue loss due to pipeline vandalism in Nigeria. The article reads "Nigeria's oil sector is estimated to have lost over 754,000 barrels per day (pbd) in February, to production shut-in occasioned by pipeline vandalism, according to the latest monthly financial report of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). This translates to revenue loss of about $49.010 million (N17.643billion) at an average price of $75 per barrel if the quantities were sold" (Guardian, 10/07/2018). In a different article, Guardian said "The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) last year recorded a trade surplus of N80.57 billion. However, a deficit of N5.46 billion was posted for January and August. All of these came as cases of pipeline vandalism rose to 2,048 nationwide during the period" (Guardian, 18/03/2019).

Nigerian Tribune compared the amount lost to oil theft in Nigeria in 2016 to 2018 education and health budget. The newspaper wrote that "in 2016 Nigeria lost an estimated N1.6 trillion through the various methods by which oil is stolen from the Niger Delta, a value higher than the current combined allocations for health and education captured in the 2018 budget" (Nigerian Tribune, 01/08/2018). They further said "the N1.6 trillion was 42 per cent of a total N3.8 trillion which reports by both government and oil companies indicated were recorded as losses from crude oil theft, sabotage and pipeline vandalism, principally as a result of the force majeure declared at the Forcados terminal combined with wider pipeline infractions and theft" (Nigerian Tribune, 01/08/2018).

In the same vein, another Nigerian Tribune article reported the magnitude of crude oil theft in the country by emphasizing the financial loss due to the act of corruption. They said "report by Transparency International in collaboration with Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) has it that Nigeria has lost about

200,000barrels of oil per day. The report also has it that between 2016 and 2017 the

country lost a whopping US$105 billion or N3.8 trillion nearly half of the country's

2019 budget of N8.9 million" (Nigerian Tribune, 14/06/2019).

7.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on data analysis for this study, beginning with thematic analysis of the responses of the four respective journalists on the level of press freedom in Nigeria and how it has affected their professional duties. It revealed the extent of coverage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas sector. It further showed the framing of stories on corruption in the sector by identifying and underlining catchy-phrases, words, adjectives, adverbs and headlines that indicate corruption news frame by the selected newspapers. The next chapter discusses in details the findings in line with the objectives of the study.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

8.1. Introduction

In this section, findings from this study are discussed in line with the specific objectives of the study, which include journalists' perception of press freedom in Nigeria and the effect on reportage of corruption in the oil and gas sector in the country; extent of reportage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the selected newspapers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*); and framing of stories on corruption in the oil and gas sector by the selected newspapers.

8.2. Journalists' Perception of Press Freedom in Nigeria and the Impact on Reportage of Corruption in the Oil and Gas Sector in the Country

Press freedom is the ability of the press to enlighten the society by providing accurate information from the market place of idea without doctoring or modifying it and without the interference of the government either by pressure or censorship through a plethora of laws: libel, defamation and obscenity (Ndolo, 2005). Press freedom is key to 'transparency', 'accountability', 'excellent governance' and 'rule of law'. This cannot be repressed without serious penalties on the populace. when it is trampled upon for whatever reason, there are consequences. These were the opinions of the former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Anan on World Press Freedom Day, 2000.

Given the significance of free press in the discharge of their social responsibilities, this study examines the level of freedom enjoyed by the print media in Nigeria and the impact this has on their professional duties. To achieve this, the researcher conducted different interview sessions with the respective newspaper

correspondents (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*) as they are relevant stakeholders in the print media and are also at the front line of journalism in the country.

Findings from this study identified the following themes from the analysis of their responses: inadequate access to information on corruption; intimidation, arrest and imprisonment of Journalists; restriction of Journalists; and level of press freedom.

It was observed from this study that the print media in Nigeria do not have adequate access to relevant information on corruption. This was attributed to the fact that people involved in corruption are not willing to be exposed and as such they "hide incriminating documents from journalists" (the Punch correspondent). In the opinion of Vanguard correspondent, perpetrators of corruption "never leave their tracks opened, therefore, it becomes extremely difficult to find out the facts". This is corroborated by the Guardian correspondent, who said "Government parastatals do not give information freely as they want to keep the public in the dark while they perpetrate their evils".

More so, it was noted from the correspondent of the Nigerian Tribune that "sources are scared of being implicated and those involved in corrupt practices are afraid of being arrested and jailed", hence, they withhold information that can help Journalists. This finding agrees with the view of Treisman (2000) who argues that government personnel are balancing likely consequences of a corrupt practice against the anticipated benefits. Also, Färdigh et al (2011: 5) add that "the most obvious cost is the risk of getting caught and punished". To avoid the consequences, perpetrators prevent Journalists from getting required information about their corrupt practices, thus covering up corruption while the society is kept in the dark.

Meanwhile, the risk of being exposed and caught is probably connected to the level of press freedom in the country. In other words, the likelihood of a perpetrator of corruption being exposed will be higher in a society with a freer press (Färdigh et al., 2011).

Despite the poor access to information on corruption, Journalists always do the best they can, to vehemently and relentlessly report on corrupt practices in the Nigerian oil and gas sector.

Another theme from the interviews is "intimidation, arrest and imprisonment of Journalists". Intimidation, arrest and imprisonment of journalists are some of the determinants of press freedom in a society. Findings from this study indicate that Journalists in Nigeria are still being frightened in the course of discharging their professional obligations, hence repressing the media. Not only that, some are being arrested and detained. This is obvious from the interviews as some the newspaper correspondents gave personal testimonies of intimidation.

The Punch correspondent confirmed as follows "*as a news correspondent, I have been attacked in the course of news gathering severally*". Also, Vanguard correspondent noted that "*when Journalists report corruption stories and other ills in the country, those benefitting in these areas will not want to allow such news*". Consequently,the Journalist is threatened. Likewise, Guardian correspondent confirmed that *"Journalists are often exposed to intimidation while discharging their professional duties".*He further emphasized that hardly would you see a Journalist in Nigeria who has never been intimidated in the course of duty. According to him, "*there was an incident of journalist arrest in the Northern part of the country recently but the most common form of abuse against journalists in is verbal abuse and intimidation*".

The correspondent of the Nigerian Tribune buttressed the views of others by affirming that "*journalists are arrested, intimidated and imprisoned*".

This finding is in agreement with the recent report of the Amnesty International (2019), where consistent attacks on freedom of information/expression and press freedom were reported. It was noted from the report that "since 2015, attacks on journalists and media activists have continued unabated, specifically, between January and September, 2019, at least 19 Journalists and media practitioners have suffered attacks" (Amnesty International, 2019:5). In agreement with view of the Punch correspondent, these attacks may be in form of verbal attack and physical assaults. For instance, Mr Jones Abiri, the publisher of Weekly Source in Bayelsa State, Nigeria was intimidated, arrested and detained by personnel of the Department for Security Service (DSS) for publishing about oil blocks in the Niger Delta. Unfortunately, he was detained for more than two years without being charged (Amnesty International, 2019). The level of intimidation on Mr Abiri was captured in the following excerpts:

> "I was tortured, beaten and much pain was inflicted on me. At that point, they said that if I would agree to whatever crime they pinned on me, based on their findings, I would be set free and that without that, I would be made to undergo all forms of ill treatments" (Amnesty International Report, 2019:8).

Other journalists who have suffered intimidation, arrest and imprisonment in Nigeria in recent times include but not limited to Kofi Bartels of *Nigerian Info* 92.3 FM, Port-Harcourt; Mary Ekere of *The Post Newspaper*, Uyo; Ahmed Salkida, an investigative journalist; and Samuel Ogundipe, Premium Times Reporter (Amnesty International, 2019). Likewise, Ndinojuo and Udoudo (2018) reported that about thirty-eight (38) media professionals suffered diverse attacks (arrested; brutalized; beaten and charged) from government security officials in the first 2 years of

President Muhammadu Buhari's administration (29th May 2015 and 29th May, 2017) in Nigeria. The victims were from different media outlets across the country including television (AIT, Channels TV, Silverbird TV); radio (Radio Nigeria, my radio, 101.1 FM) and print media (Premium Times, The Nation, Vanguard, Prime Magazine, Leadership, The Punch etc).

This high level of intimidation and arrest in the country is worrisome and if not quickly addressed may be a threat to the media profession. Nigerian lawyers have also expressed concern over the harassment and intimidation of journalists by government agents in the country (Vanguard, 17/10/2019). This act challenges the hope of our democracy and freedom. Moreover, Solomon Akuma, SAN views harassment and intimidation of media practitioners as an unfortunate occurrence capable of gagging the press and freedom of expression (Vanguard, 17/10/2019). The act also suggests intolerance of political leaders to opposing views.

Findings from this study attributed intimidation, arrest and imprisonment of journalists largely to writing corruption, anti-government and anti-party stories. This is corroborated by the Amnesty International (2019) who attributed arrest of journalists to "filming brutality by state agents", "exposing corruption", "election coverage", "participation in a protest", "refusal to disclose source", "offensive publication", "writing a report against a governor", "social media post" etc.

Restriction of journalists is another determinant of press freedom observed in this study. Findings from this study revealed there is no law at the moment that restrict journalists in the discharge of their lawful duties. However, some of the existing laws may be misinterpreted to gag the press. More so, the newspaper correspondents viewed the proposed "hate speech bill" under consideration by the National Assembly as an attempt to gag the press. The implication of passing the bill

into law is clearly expressed by Vanguard correspondent who said "*once the hate speech bill is passed into law there will be absolute limit to press freedom in Nigeria*". Likewise, the correspondent of the Nigerian Tribune stated that "*if the bill is eventually passed into law, journalists will be gagged and oppressed permanently*".

The "hate speech bill", sponsored by the Deputy Chief Whip, Aliyu Abdullahi, was tagged "The National Commission for the Prohibition of Hate Speech Bill" (Premium Times, 19/11/2019). The bill seeks among other things to establish "a National Commission for the Prohibition of Hate Speech to help investigate and prosecute offenders" (Premium Times, 19/11/2019). Furthermore, the bill forbids "ethnic discrimination", "hate speech", "harassment on the basis of ethnicity", "ethnic or racial contempt" and "discrimination by way of victimization by individuals or corporate bodies" (Eke, 2019: 1). Section 4 of hate speech bill "prohibits the use, production, publishing, distribution, presentation, or direction of the performance of any visual or written material which is threatening, abusive or insulting or involves the use of such words in order to stir up ethnic hatred or from which ethnic hatred is likely to be stirred up against such person from an ethnic group in Nigeria. It prescribes a punishment of life imprisonment for any person found liable of committing this offence and a penalty of death by hanging where such act causes any loss of life" (Eke, 2019:2).

The bill, had since proposed, generated controversies in the public domain. While some people see it as an attempt to restrict people from expressing themselves, consequently, denying them their "fundamental human rights", others perceive it as one of the pranks of some politicians to promote their personal objectives (Eke, 2019).These views are in agreement with that of Nwanne (2014:13) who noted that "government often do not want a powerful press that could be a

counterpoise to their exalted position. They would rather that the press be sycophantic so that their shortcomings are not brought to the public glare.

This age long menace against the press started during the colonial era". Momoh (2002) recounted that the most notorious law to gag the press that ever existed was the 1917 Act that brought all the colonial laws together. These laws were organized to curtail the seemly extremes of the then media and totally restrict journalists from constant attack on the colonial administration in Nigeria. In the democratic dispensation, one would have expected a paradigm shift from the colonial era and the military regime in terms of restriction of journalists but the proposition of the hate speech bill obviously confirms the determination of the political leaders to persistently gag the press. One could therefore say 'as it was in the beginning, so it is now, in the so-called democratic government.

The degree of press freedom in Nigeria as adjudged by the different newspaper correspondents is below average as "journalists are still allowed to report certain news" (The Punch correspondent) majorly public relation stories. More so, no existing laws deprive journalists from performing their functions and professional duties. However, these laws are not strictly adhered to.As clearly stated by Guardian correspondent,"the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act is available to protect journalists, but it is not being adhered to, which is the major challenge with the established laws". As observed in this current study, the low level of press freedom in Nigeria can be attributed to inadequate access to information, especially, the so-called "classified information", intimidation, arrest and imprisonment of journalists as well as restriction of media practitioners by proposing bills and enacting laws that gag them, which are all established indicators of press freedom (Freille et al., 2007).

This finding is in accordance with the report of the Reporters without Borders (2019), where freedom of the press was assessed globally and Nigeria was ranked 120th out of 180 countries. Nigeria is flagged red in the global ranking, indicating that the country is in a difficult situation in terms of press freedom. The press freedom situation of Nigeria will in no doubt have negative implications on the "process of democratization" and "accountability of government" (Dutta and Roy,2016) as a freer press is essential for the development of informed public discourse. More so, it increases transparency, reduces information asymmetry and generates greater monitoring power, hence, promotes accountability. It is clear from this study that the Nigerian media are being incapacitated in their roles as development agents because of the lack of total freedom. This is contrary to the principle of development media theory that "Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities as well as freedom in their information gathering and dissemination tasks" (McQuail, 1987:12).

8.3. Extent of Reportage of Corruption in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry by the Selected Newspapers

The number of occurrences of a story is one of the major elements that can lead to discussion amidst the public, hence, setting the agenda of what people think or talk about in the society (Folarin 1998; Ayodeji-Falade and Osunkunle, 2019). Other fundamentals include the degree of prominence attributed to an issue, level of conflict generated by the issue and the collective media influence of the story (Folarin 1998: 6).

To assess the extent of reportage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the four selected newspapers: The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune, the researcher analysed the prominence of the story by

determining the number of occurrence of stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas sector by the selected newspapers; frequency of different publication formats (news, letter to the editors, features, cartoons, editorials opinion, vox pop and interview), positioning (front page, middle page and back page) and story size/length covered (full page, half page, quarter page and small portion of a page).The findings from this study suggest that the Punch newspaper reported the highest number of stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry (196) followed by the Nigerian Tribune (155) while the lowest coverage was recorded by Guardian (75) (Figure 7.1).

The high frequency observed in the Punch and Nigerian Tribune indicate that they may have more access to information or more sources than the other two newspapers (Vanguard and Guardian). More so, the Punch had increased awareness on corruption in the oil and gas sector compared to other newspapers and increased public awareness on an issue has been ascribed to the concept of the agenda setting of the press (Severin and Tankard, 2001: 219). This is in agreement with the work of Shoemaker (1989) who reported that "high frequency of stories of illegal use of drug on the newspapers in the United States between 1986 and 1989 increased public's awareness on the issue of drugs which the people perceived as the nation's most important problem at that time" (Ayodeji-Falade and Osunkunle, 2019: 113).This is also corroborated by Daramola (2003) who stated there is a link between frequency of news coverage and the importance attached to such news by the public. Furthermore, Sampei and Aoyagi-Usui (2009)reported that significant increase in newspaper coverage of global warming is connected with increased public concern for the matter.

It is therefore sufficed to state that based on the high frequency of stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the Punch, the newspaper is more dedicated to increasing public's awareness on corruption in the sector, hence fulfilling its agenda setting function more than the other selected newspapers.

The use of different publication formats was also employed to assess the level of coverage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas sector by the selected newspapers. Findings from this study (Table 7.1) showed that The Punch and Nigerian Tribune adopted eight different publication formats: news, letter to the editors, features, cartoons, editorials, opinion, vox pop and interview while Guardian and Vanguard employed six (news, features, editorials, opinion, vox pop and interview) and five (news, features, opinion, vox pop and interview) publication formats, respectively.

However, news had the highest frequency of usage by all the newspapers. This suggests that the newspapers did not provide sufficient details on the issue of corruption in the oil and gas sector in Nigeria as news stories do not allow adequate information unlike some other publication formats such as features, editorials, opinions and interviews (Amenaghawon, 2016). This finding agrees with the work of Ayodeji-Falade and Osunkunle (2019), where majority of the stories on FeesMustFall reported by Daily Dispatch were news, however, the newspaper employed only two publication formats: news and opinion as opposed to what was observed in this study, where the selected newspapers employed between five and eight publication formats. This finding is also corroborated by Okon (2018), who reported that majority of the anti-corruption stories covered by The News/TELL and Sun/Nigerian Chronicle during Obasanjo and Buhari administrations were news stories.

Nevertheless, the newspapers (The News/TELL and Sun/Nigerian Chronicle) did not adopt vox pop and interview, which are part of the formats employed by all the newspapers used in this study. The low usage of other publication formats (features, editorials, and interview) aside from news in this study is noteworthy and suggests that the newspapers did not do in-depth report on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. It is expected that the newspapers would do more of investigative reporting on issues of corruption in the country than what was observed in this study as this type of reporting is "perhaps watchdog journalism's most celebrated form" (Coronel, 2009:3). The low usage of investigative style of reporting by the newspapers may probably be attributed to poor of access to adequate information on corruption in the oil and gas sector and also logistics such as additional funds required for research, transportation and accommodation in the process of getting reports. Furthermore, readers are not very familiar with other publication formats such as features, editorials etc as they do with news (Amenaghawon, 2016).

Another element used for measuring prominence in this study is the position of stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry in the selected newspapers (front page, inside page and back page). Findings from this study showed that all the selected newspapers gave prominence to the stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry as over 80 percent of the total reported stories by the newspapers were placed on the front and back pages while less than 20 percent were on the inside page (Figure 7.2). Nevertheless, Nigerian Tribune exhibited the highest level of prominence as regards the coverage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas sector as it positioned the highest percentage of stories on its front and back pages.

This finding concurs with previous related studies where prominence was determined using front and back page placement or either. Ayodeji-Falade and Osunkunle (2019) reported that FeesMustFall stories were given prominence by Daily Dispatch because majority of the stories, approximately 93 percent, were positioned on the front page of the newspaper. Meanwhile, Okon (2018) attributed high prominence given to stories on anti-corruption by The News/TELL and Sun/Nigerian Chronicle to the presence of such stories on the front/cover and back/sectional pages of the respective newspapers. However, Ugwuanyi (2018) adduced the low prominence accorded rape cases in Nigeria by Daily Sun and Vanguard to the placement of most stories on rape on the inside page (56.7%) of the newspapers whereas only about 13 percent of the stories were reported on the front page. This is corroborated by Ekwueme (2017), who reported that the coverage of economic recession was not given due prominence by Guardian and Vanguard as majority of the articles were present on the inside page of the newspapers with 83 and 86 percent, respectively while the front-page presence of the stories was very low.

More so,Fadairo et al. (2014) observed that majority of the corruption articles presented by the selected newspapers (The Nation, Tribune and Guardian) appeared on the inside page. The high prominence accorded corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the four newspapers in this study (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*) indicates the level of importance attached to the issue of corruption by the newspapers, thus, fulfilling the agenda setting theory, which is characterized by the degree of prominence attributed to an issue.

Furthermore, the story size/length used in the reportage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry was determined using the space allotted to the stories by the different newspapers (full page, half page, quarter page and small portion of a page). The space allocated to a story is fundamental in assessing the level of coverage of an issue by the print media. Findings from this study showed that majority of the total reported stories by all the newspapers (47.19%) occupied quarter page (Figure 7.3) while stories allotted full page were the lowest (11.99%). The same trend was observed by Amenaghawon (2016), who reported that most of the Niger Delta conflict articles (45.3%) were placed on quarter page in the selected newspapers (Guardian, Nigerian Tribune, Vanguard and Daily Champion). This is further corroborated by the work of Fadairo et al. (2014), where the highest percentage of total corruption articles (56.8%) covered by the selected newspapers (The Nation, Tribune and Guardian) were allotted quarter page. However, this study showed that Guardian had the highest percentage of full-paged stories (20%) and the lowest percentage of stories occupying a small portion page compared to other newspapers.

Relatively, Guardian allotted more space to stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas sector. This indicates that Guardian gave more prominence to the issue of corruption in the oil and gas sector than the others as it had the highest percentage of total stories on full, half and quarter pages. However, other newspapers (The Punch, Vanguard and Nigerian Tribune) accorded the stories due prominence as a significant percentage were allotted full, half and quarter pages compared to the stories on a small portion of a page. This is corroborated by Okon and Ekpe (2018) who considered anti-corruption articles on full, half and quarter pages as being prominent.

In the overall, it is sufficed to suggest that the Nigerian print media gave prominence to the reportage of corruption in the oil and gas sector of the country. This is actually expected as the industry has a major stake in the gross domestic product of Nigeria. Moreover, "the oil and gas industry remain the economic nerve centre of Nigeria, which is evident in the mono-product economy that the country runs" (Amenaghawon, 2016:152). Nevertheless, the low degree of allotment of full page observed in this study further confirms the brevity of news stories, which is more in this study. More so, it may be an indication that the newspapers did not invest enough in investigative coverage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

8.4. Framing of Stories on Corruption in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry by the Selected Newspapers

Framing basically includes selection and salience. This concept suggests that some aspects of "perceived reality" are selected and made more prominent in a text such that it stimulates "a particular problem definition, causal interpretation,moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman 1993: 55). More so, framing is adopted to group, shape and process information professionally. The idea of framing is related to the agenda setting. While the agenda setting stresses press selection of stories, events and issues (what), framing focuses on press representation, treatment and production of stories, events and issues (Fourie, 2007: 245).

In this study, findings on the type of frame used in the reportage of stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry showed that majority of the corruption stories reported by all the newspapers were presented using episodic frame (Table 7.2). This finding concurs with Amenaghawon (2016) whose findings showed that the

Nigerian newspapers used in the study (Guardian, Tribune, Champion and Vanguard) adopted more of episodic than thematic frames in the coverage of the Niger Delta conflict between 1998 and 2009. Finding from this present study suggests that the selected newspapers may focus more on individuals or demonstrate the issue of corruption in the sector specifically and accurately (Matthes, 2009:83).

However, thematic frame permits broader spectrum of reportage on an issue. It further indicates that the newspapers did not give an in-depth and interpretative analysis of the issue such as giving background information on corruption in the oil and gas industry and discussing the issue in social, economic and political terms as "episodic frames are used when newspapers report stories based on immediacy such as news, which normally does not contain adequate background" (Amenaghawon, 2016:133).

The implication of devoting more stories to episodic frame as observed in this study is that the readers were mainly fed with event-specific choices, which were devoid of comprehensive contextual information on corruption (Amenaghawon, 2016:132). In the coverage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry, one would expect that the newspapers would adopt more of thematic frames as this would give the readers a stronger and more balanced opinion on the issue. This finding is attributable to the fact that episodic frames focus on immediate events without detailed background which characterized news stories and news is short, sharp and more acceptable to readers. This also justifies the high magnitude of news stories observed in this study (Table 7.1). The preference given to episodic frames by the newspapers can be attributed further to influence of ownership; readers'

characteristics and preference for the immediacy of news (Amenaghawon, 2016:134).

Furthermore, findings from qualitative content analysis revealed five prominent media frames, which were derived from specific words, catchy-phrases, adjectives, adverbs and employed by the selected newspapers in the coverage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas sector. The prominent media frames include oil theft frame; vandalism frame; alleged-fraud frame; environmental consequences frame; and economic consequences frame.

Oil theft frame suggested oil theft as a major corruption element in the oil and gas sector as presented by all the newspapers. The newspapers used phrases like "suspected oil thieves"; "crude oil was stolen"; "stealing about 10 million litres of petrol"; "oil thieves"; "crude oil lost to theft"; "smuggling"; "allegedly stealing automated gas oil"; "illegal oil bunkering" etc. This finding showed that the print media observed corruption in the oil and gas sector from the lens of oil theft. It is therefore, evident that the activities of oil thieves in Nigeria are not hidden from the public as it was properly presented by the media, thereby fulfilling the second level agenda setting theory of the press.

Furthermore, the newspapers brought to the fore the efforts of the security operatives and anti-corruption agencies including the Nigerian Army, Nigerian Navy, Nigerian Police Force and EFCC in curbing oil theft in the country and in bringing the culprits to book. This is clearly reflected in the following headlines of the different newspapers.

"the Nigerian army has smashed one of the biggest camps operated by oil thieves in Delta state, destroying about 60 Cotonu boat,150 storage tanks, 700 drumsused by the oil thieves for their illicit trade" (Vanguard, 17/04/2019)

"The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Port Harcourt's zonal office has commenced investigations into the activities of 29 suspected oil thieves involved in illegal oil bunkering" (Guardian, 09/06/2019).

"Three in police net for allegedly hijacking petroleum tankers on highway" (Nigerian Tribune, 13/09/2018).

Likewise, the use of vandalism frame by the newspapers portrayed damage of oil facilities in Nigeria as one of the major corrupt practices in the oil and gas sector of the country. The following words or phrases were identified in stories and headlines with vandalism frame: "pipeline vandalism"; "vandalized"; "vandalized pipelines"; "blown up a crude oil pipeline"; "suspected vandal"; "pipeline vandal"; "notorious vandal"; "pipeline points were burst"; "vandalism of crude oil pipelines"; "pipelines leaks"; "vandalising pipelines" etc.

The way vandalism framed stories were presented by the newspapers, it showed that pipelines were usually vandalized in order to siphon oil products. Invariably, pipeline vandalism facilitates oil theft but both activities are regular occurrences in the oil sector. It is, however, observed that vandalism of oil facilities could also arise from sabotage. This is reflected in the way the Punch framed the following story: "A Niger Delta militant group, known as the Koluama Seven Brothers, has blown up a crude oil pipeline owned by Conoil in Bayelsa State" (The Punch, 07/01/2019). It is clear from the story that the militant group did not vandalize the oil pipeline in order to steal the product rather, it may be to get back at the owner of the oil facility: Conoil. This claim is corroborated by a Guardian article as follows:

"…90 per cent of pipelines leaks is attributable to illegal activities, noting that sabotage spill rate has risen steeply and crude oil theft from SPDC JV'S pipeline network averaged 11,000 barrels per day in 2018" (Guardian, 14/06/2019).

Furthermore, vandalism framed stories by the Nigerian Tribune emphasized the arrest of suspected vandals by the Nigerian Police Force. Nigerian Tribune reported that "a member of a three- man gang that specialised in vandalising pipelines belonging to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has been arrested by the police in Lagos State" (Nigerian Tribune, 01/04/2019). This and other stories framed by the Nigerian Tribune using vandalism frame showed that pipeline vandals do not go scot-free as the Nigerian Police usually get them arrested and prosecuted. Regular coverage of arrest of vandals by the print media will caution other vandals, and in a way, curb their activities in the society.

This study also identified the alleged-fraud frame, which focused on individuals and corporate organizations alleged of fraudulent activities such as embezzlement of funds, misappropriate of funds and bribery as relate to the oil and gas sector. The following phrases or words were identified in the stories with alleged-fraud frame: "N7.6bn allegedly loot"; "allegedly obtaining a N2bn credit using forged documents"; "$1bn in bribery payments"; "$1.2 billion Malabu Oil bloc fraud"; "steal N168.5 million"; "alleged N224 million fraud"; "illegal multiple withdrawals of $1.151 billion"; "corrupt payments"; "$1.1 billion of the totalwas siphoned"; "mismanagement of 1,1 billion dollars revenue"; "defrauding"; "alleged gratification" etc. It is clear from all the newspapers that alleged-fraud frame is centred on cash while oil theft and vandalism frames focused on the oil products and oil facilities, respectively.

In a report by the Punch newspaper, a handful of executives of oil companies were allegedly involved in bribery (The Punch, 08/05/2019). It is obvious from this study that perpetrators of corruption in the oil and gas sectors faced the wrath of the law. For instance, a former Minister of Petroleum forfeited N7.6bn to the Federal

Government (The Punch, 12/11/2018). Also, a Federal High Court ordered the arrest of some big guns involved in the Malabu Oil bloc fraud (Vanguard, 08/04/2019).

Alleged-fraud framed stories also revealed some of the efforts of stakeholders to uncover corruption in the oil and gas sector. Senate, during its oversight function, "uncovered illegal multiple withdrawals of $1.151 billion from the dividends account of the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) by the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC)" (Guardian, 15/11/2018). Furthermore, the EFCC "filed a five-count charge bordering on conspiracy and illegal act of accepting and giving gratifications against Alison-Madueke, a former Minister of Petroleum and one of her associates, Olajide Omokore, a former chairman of the Atlantic Energy Drilling Company" (Nigerian Tribune, 26/02/2019). This further justifies the view of Adomako (2008) who noted that most of the proceeds from the oil are diverted into the purse of the few wealthy leaders.

It is evident from stories with alleged-fraud frame that fund embezzlement, misappropriation/mismanagement of funds, gratifications and bribery are some of the major forms of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. This is in agreement with the view of Osunyinkanmi (2009), who notes that corruption involves fraud, bribery and 'settlement' or gratification. This view is also corroborated by Otusanya (2011) who identified fraud, extortion, bribery and embezzlement as corrupt practices in Nigeria.

Environmental consequences frame emphasized the impact of corrupt practices in the oil and gas sector on the environmental matrices. In this study, environmental consequences frame was characterized by the following phrases or words: "fuel spillage"; "fuel spillage all over the road"; "spillage causing panic"; "environmental challenges"; "hurting the majority of the people"; "affects both the

fishermen and farmers"; "destroying the Niger Delta environment"; "oil spills affected sites"; "caused two fire outbreaks"; "emitting hazardous fumes"; "threaten the community's health"; "11 persons died from pipeline explosion"; "100 houses, 100 shops, and 50 cars went up in flames"; "high infant mortality rate"; "avoidable deaths" etc. This study showed that fuel spillage was majorly caused by the activities of pipeline vandals and those involved in oil bunkering.

The effects of these corrupt practices on the people and the environment are devastating. The impacts range from psychological, emotional or physical. Some of the environmental consequences as highlighted by the newspapers include panic, soil pollution, water pollution and subsequent effect on the fishes in the polluted seas and the consumers (The Punch, 28/05/2019). Another major environmental consequence of corrupt practice in the oil sector is fire outbreaks, which have rendered several families homeless (Vanguard, 20/12/2018). Several lives have been lost to oil explosion and fire outbreaks from the activities of pipeline vandals (Nigerian Tribune, 23/04/2019). More so, exposure to hazardous fumes from combustible oil well fire is detrimental to the health of the host community (Guardian, 06/06/2019).

Furthermore, stories with economic consequences frame emphasized financial losses from corruption in the oil and gas sector; the cost implication of a corrupt practice or the effects of corruption in the sector on the nation's economy. The following phrases or words were visible in the economic consequences frame: "amount lost to crude oil theft"; "lose $6 bn to Malabu scam"; "Nigeria lost an estimated $2.8 billion in revenues"; "losesN2.6trn to crude oil theft"; "lost N1.6 trillion in 2016"; "a loss of about $8.9 million daily"; "revenue loss of about $49.010 million

(N17.643billion)"; "a deficit of N5.46 billion"; "lost a whopping US$105 billion or N3.8 trillion" etc.

The negative effect of corruption in the Nigerian oil sector on the nation's economy is well captured the headline "oil theft hurts Nigerian economy" (Punch, 17/08/2018). It is clear from this study that oil theft is a major practice in the sector, hence, it poses a threat to Nigerian economy, which is largely oil and gas-dependent. The economic implication of oil theft was expressed by Vanguard in its headline "Nigeria loses N2.6trn to crude oil theft in 2 years" (Vanguard, 01/08/2018). This is also corroborated by the Nigerian Tribune's report, where "in 2016, Nigeria lost an estimated N1.6 trillion" through oil theft from the Niger Delta" (Nigerian Tribune, 01/08/2018). This value was reportedly higher than the total amount allocated to health and education in the 2018 budget (Nigerian Tribune, 01/08/2018).

More so, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) estimated that the oil sector lost "over 754,000 barrels per day (pbd)" to pipeline vandalism in February 2018, which amounted to "about $49.010 million (N17.643 billion)" revenue loss (Guardian, 10/07/2018). The impact of the various corrupt practices in the Nigerian oil and gas sector on the country's economy cannot be overemphasized as the high rate of corruption in the sector is detrimental to the overall well-being of the country because of the direct impact on the nation's economy (Usman, 2011). This is corroborated by Odi (2014) who noted that the level of corruption in Nigeria over the years has substantial negative influence on the economic growth. In line with the view of Ogbonnaya (2018), corruption in the oil sector has a huge control on the economic growth of Nigeria.

The adoption of different media frames by all the newspapers in this study confirm the wide coverage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry as the

newspapers emphasized the major types of corruption in the sector including oil theft, oil bunkering, smuggling, pipeline vandalism, bribery, fund embezzlement, misappropriate of funds and gratification. Besides, emphasis was laid on the efforts of the different stakeholders such as the National Assembly, EFCC, Nigerian Police Force, Nigerian Army and the Navy in uncovering corruption in the oil sector. Furthermore, the newspapers paid adequate attention to the environmental and economic implications of the various corrupt practices in the sector. With the way the newspapers framed the corruption stories in this study, it is sufficient to state that the selected newspapers are fulfilling their responsibilities as development agents in line with the development media theory, which sees the media as the agents of development communication in developing nations (McQuail, 2010). More so, it attests to the fact that the media play significant roles in stemming the tide of corruption in the Nigerian oil sector, thereby, enhancing economic development, which is being hampered by the high level of corruption in the country.

8.5. Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed in details findings presented in the previous chapter, in line with the objectives of the study. The next chapter gives a summary of the key findings; draws conclusions from the study and enumerates some recommendations.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS

9.1. Introduction

This study focused on the impact of press freedom on reportage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry through a content analysis of four newspapers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*). The researcher conducted different interview sessions with the respective newspaper correspondents to assess the level of press freedom enjoyed by the print media in the country and the impact on the reportage of corruption. The study also adopted quantitative content analysis to determine the prominence of the corruption stories while qualitative content analysis was used to determine how the news stories were framed by the selected newspapers.

The first objective of this study was to assess how journalists' perception of press freedom in Nigeria affects their reportage of corruption in the oil and gas sector in the country. The researcher addressed this objective by highlighting the following themes from the newspaper correspondents' responses: inadequate access to information on corruption; intimidation, arrest and imprisonment of Journalists; and restriction of Journalists. The highlighted themes emphasize the level of press freedom enjoyed by the print media in Nigeria.

Secondly, this study was to evaluate the extent of reportage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by the selected newspapers. This study was able to find out that the selected newspapers gave prominence to the reportage of corruption in the oil and gas sector of the country as evident in the frequency of stories; usage of different publication formats; front/page placement; and the space allotted to corruption stories.

Lastly, this study was to determine how the stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry were framed by the selected newspapers. Therefore, this study found out that the newspapers adopted more of episodic than thematic frames in the presentation of corruption stories. Moreover, the common media frames that emerge in this study are oil theft; vandalism; alleged-fraud; environmental consequences; and economic consequences. These frames were employed by the print media to emphasize and give salience to issues of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. Therefore, the preceding chapter discussed the findings while this chapter gives a summary of the key findings, draws conclusion and makes recommendation. Furthermore, it discusses the limitations for the study and highlights specific suggestions for future studies.

9.2. Summary of Key Findings

This section discusses the key findings of this study which reveals the impact of press freedom on the reportage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. The researcher commences by discussing the relationship between the level of press freedom in the Nigeria print media and investigative reporting of corruption. It further discusses the implication of the proposed hate speech bill on press freedom in Nigeria and highlights the "frustration of the press". Finally, it discusses the major corrupt practices in the Nigerian oil and gas industry as reflected by the different media frames in this study.

9.2.1. Press freedom and investigative reporting of corruption

Findings from this study, in agreement with the most recent press freedom index by RWB (2020), revealed that Nigeria is in a dangerous situation regarding freedom of the press. This is demonstrated by inadequate access to information on

issues of corruption; intimidation, arrest and imprisonment of journalists; as well as sponsoring bills capable of gagging the press. This is climaxed by the claim of RWB (2020) that "two journalists were shot dead while covering Islamic Movement in Nigeria protests-one in July 2019 and the other in January 2020-without any proper investigation with the aim of identifying those responsible" (RWB, 2020).

Nevertheless, it is evident from this current study that the coverage given to corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas sector by all the selected newspapers is significantly high given the magnitude of corruption stories reported by the newspapers. It was, however, discovered from this study that the level of press freedom in Nigeria negatively affected the reportage of corruption in the oil and gas sector because the newspapers failed to engage in investigative reporting, due to lack of access to "classified" information on corrupt practices that can facilitate in-depth coverage of corruption. This study also revealed that fear of molestation, intimidation, arrest and detention in the hands of perpetrators is another factor militating against an in-depth coverage of corruption in Nigeria. This view is supported by Yusha'u (2010) who identified physical harm as one of the impediments of investigative journalism.

Furthermore, there are evidences of significant relationship between corruption and the level of press freedom in a country (Treisman, 2000; Brunetti and Weder, 2003; Freille et al., 2007; Hamada et al., 2019). It is, therefore, expedient that government allows free and fair press, since a free press is, perhaps, one of the most efficient organizations to uncover wrong doings of some government officials or political leaders (Brunetti and Weder, 2003). Also, an independent journalist is well equipped with necessary incentive to do investigative reporting on issues of public interest such as corruption. Consequently, the extent of press freedom in a country

has an inverse relationship with the rate of corruption in such environment. In other words, the higher the level of press freedom, the lower the rate of corruption. No wonder, Brunetti and Weder (2003:1801) view "a free press as bad news for corruption".

9.2.2. Frustration of the freedom of the press

The researcher, in this study, discovered the phrase "frustration of the freedom of the press" which suggests that even though, the press is partially free to discharge their civic duties of news gathering and reporting corruption, the reports are not always generating the required media effect on the public and government, hence frustrating the effort of the press. Specifically, this study revealed that government and the public do not take appropriate actions on some critical writings or investigative report by journalists who worked tirelessly to dig out facts amidst all odds. This type of lackadaisical attitude is capable of discouraging media personnel from putting their best when it comes to sourcing information. Thus, hampering the social obligation of the press to the society.

Another perspective of the frustration expressed by journalists as discovered in this study is the non-adherence to the "Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)" as the press are still denied access to relevant information to uncover corrupt practices in the country. The enactment of FOIA is traceable to development of press freedom in Nigeria (Dawodu, 2016). In fact, freedom of information is a "*sine qua non*" to freedom of the press. According to Dawodu (2016), public authorities do not acquire information for the benefits of government officials and political leaders alone but for the general public. If that is the case, the press should have unrestricted access to information that will unveil corruption in public offices and government parastatals

however, findings from this study show that our government and leaders only pay lip service to the FOIA.

9.2.3. Proposed hate speech bill: a political instrument to gag the press

This study suggests that the "hate speech" bill proposed by the Nigerian National Assembly in November 2019 could be a political instrument to permanently gag the Nigerian press. This is corroborated by Eke (2019) who notes that the bill may be an attempt by the government to restrict the freedom of expression of citizens, one of the "fundamental human rights" in the Nigerian constitution or one of the shenanigans of some political leaders to uphold their personal intentions. Furthermore, Uwakwe (2020:139) opines that the bill"could be a ploy to gag the opposition of the ruling party in Nigeria democracy".

The bill "prohibits the use, production, publishing, distribution, presentation, or direction of the performance of any visual or written material which is threatening, abusive or insulting or involves the use of such words in order to stir up ethnic hatred or from which ethnic hatred is likely to be stirred up against such person from an ethnic group in Nigeria" (Eke, 2019:2). The bill has been perceived by the press as too harsh and also capable of restricting media performance or perpetually make them a puppet to the government as it prescribes life imprisonment for any offender and a death penalty where such act leads to loss of life(Eke, 2019:2). More so, Uwakwe (2020:138) notes that the proposed "bill on hate speech is a denial to freedom of speech", hence, contravenes a fundamental human right as entrenched in section 39 (1) of the Nigeria constitution. The freedom of expression is, in no doubt, an integral part of freedom of the press. Consequently, the passage of the bill

into law, will further restrict the press from discharging their social responsibilities effectively in the country and as such the bill is a threat to press freedom in Nigeria.

This finding agrees with Conroy-Krutz (2020:100) who argues that similar new or proposed media laws in many nations are the "gravest threats" to press freedom in Africa as "the new laws are being used to restrict free speech". For instance, the "Statistics Act" enacted by the Tanzanian government in 2015 forbids the publication of "false statistics" and any "statistical information" that is not approved for issue by theNational Bureau of Statistics (Conroy-Krutz, 2020). Furthermore, propagation of "false, deceptive, misleading, or inaccurate information" and "insulting or inflammatory speech" was prohibited in the same country by the Cybercrimes Act of 2015 (Conroy-Krutz, 2020). Similarly, Ethiopian Executive Council recently approved a draft law that would interdict "hate speech" and "fake news" in the country (Conroy-Krutz, 2020:101).

9.2.4. Major corrupt practices in the Nigerian oil and gas industry and their consequences

This study reveals that five major media frames were used to report stories on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry by all the four newspapers (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*). The conspicuous frames are oil theft frame; vandalism frame; alleged-fraud frame; environmental consequences frame; and economic consequences frame. The media frames in this study categorize the reportage of corruption in the sector into two, covering the major corrupt practices in the Nigerian oil and gas sector and the consequences of such practices on the environment and the nation's economy.

It is clear from the frames employed by the media, that oil theft; vandalism and alleged-fraud are the major corrupt activities going on in the Nigerian oil and gas

industry. The study also observes a relationship between oil theft and vandalism as oil pipelines and other facilities are mostly damaged with the aim of siphoning oil by oil thieves. Nevertheless, pipeline vandalism may also be an attempt to sabotage the multinational oil companies by militants in the oil-producing region of Nigeria. (Oyeranmi, 2020:278) notes that sabotage of oil facilities by militants is a "reaction to the brazen rape of their land and resource by both Nigerian Governments and the Multinational Oil Companies (MNOC)".

While oil theft and vandalism are centred on petroleum products, the alleged-fraud accentuates individuals with allegations of siphoning oil proceeds in form of embezzlement, misappropriation of funds, gratifications and bribery. Most of the people implicated in the aforementioned fraudulent activities in the oil and gas industry are eminent personalities such as Ministers and Chief Executives of MNOC. This observation agrees with the view of Adomako (2008) who notes that most of the oil proceeds are diverted into the purse of the few wealthy leaders. More so, (Oyeranmi, 2020:278) notes that majority of the income generated from oil sales is siphoned off by government officials, subsequently, hampering development. This is corroborated by Akinbajo (2012) who notes that about $400 has been embezzled by corrupt government officials since independence.

This study identifies panic, soil pollution and water pollution as some of the major environmental consequences of oil theft and pipeline vandalism. These challenges are occasioned by the incidences of oil spillage and explosions that resulted from oil theft and activities of vandals. Furthermore, the consequences of the identified corrupt practices in this study are more significant on the nation's economy. This is reflected in the estimated amount lost to the different act of corruption in the sector (oil theft, pipeline vandalism and alleged fraud). No doubt,

the effect of high level of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry is indeed detrimental to the nation's economy (Odi, 2014) as petroleum is the country's major source of foreign earnings.

9.3. Main Conclusion

Based on the findings from this study, it can be concluded that the coverage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry was accorded prominence by all the newspapers selected for this study (*The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune*). The Punch having the highest magnitude of stories on corruption in the sector and Nigerian Tribune had the highest number of stories reported on its front and back pages. While Guardian had the highest number of full-paged stories, the Punch and Nigerian Tribune adopted the widest range of publication formats with news being the most dominant format employed by all the dailies. It is worthy of note that publication formats that could facilitate in-depth reportage of corruption in the sector such as features, editorials, opinions and interviews were poorly adopted by the newspapers. Despite this shortcoming, the level of prominence given to corruption in this study implies that the newspapers are fulfilling their agenda-setting role and social responsibility of informing the public.

The selected newspapers, in covering corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry, adopted more of episodic than thematic frames. This implies that the newspapers did not prioritize investigative reporting, hence, readers did not have sufficient background information on corruption in the sector rather, readers are restricted to reports on immediate events largely presented in form of news. This also accounted for the high magnitude of news stories observed in this study. More so, the researcher identified oil theft; vandalism; alleged-fraud; environmental consequences and economic consequences as the key frames used by the selected

newspapers in the reportage of corruption in the oil and gas sector. This implies that the newspapers gave a wide coverage to corruption in the sector by engaging various media frames which emphasized prominent corrupt practices in the sector (oil theft, oil bunkering, smuggling, pipeline vandalism, bribery, fund embezzlement, misappropriate of funds and gratification) and the consequences of the practices on the environment and the economy, thereby fulfilling the framing theory.

The newspapers, through their respective correspondents, confirmed that they did not have access to adequate information on corruption in the sector as sources are always afraid of being harmed, which partly contributed to the poor level of investigative reporting on the issue. In addition, journalists are still being subjected to intimidation, arrest and imprisonment while discharging their lawful obligations. Even though, there are no laws that restricts journalists from performing their professional duties at the moment, the proposed controversial "hate speech bill" is seen an attempt by the political class to gag Nigerian press. This implies that the Nigerian press are not totally free from harm, intimidation, arrest and imprisonment. Consequently, the correspondents interviewed rated press freedom in Nigeria as below average, which is consistent with the latest global press freedom index ranking.

Also, the researcher, through this study, has been able to make the following contributions to knowledge in the field of media studies and journalism:
This study has bridged the research gap between press freedom and coverage of corruption in Nigeria as the researcher discovered that the level of press freedom in Nigeria partly affected the coverage of corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas industry as it limited the use of investigative reporting occasioned by the lack of access to classified information on corruption and envisaged harm by potential sources and

journalists. More so, this is, perhaps, the first study that report on "frustration of the freedom of the press", which portrays the lackadaisical attitude of government and the public towards reportage of corruption in Nigeria.

Moreover, the researcher discovered that the proposed hate speech bill in Nigeria during a democratic dispensation is a political instrument to permanently gag the Nigerian press. Thus, Nigerian media and the public should ensure that the bill is not passed into law. Furthermore, the researcher has been able to identify for the first time the media frames of corruption with reference to the oil and gas industry in Nigeria, which has helped in the classification of the corrupt practices that are peculiar to the Nigerian oil and gas industry (oil theft; pipeline vandalism and fraud).

In light of the above discussions and main conclusions, this study would like to propose the anticorruption-media-model (Figure 9.1.), which focuses on the significance of the media as an anticorruption agent. The model proposes that the media play a key role in the fight against corruption. It also suggests that the media must be incorruptible to function effectively as an anticorruption agent in a corrupt society like Nigeria.
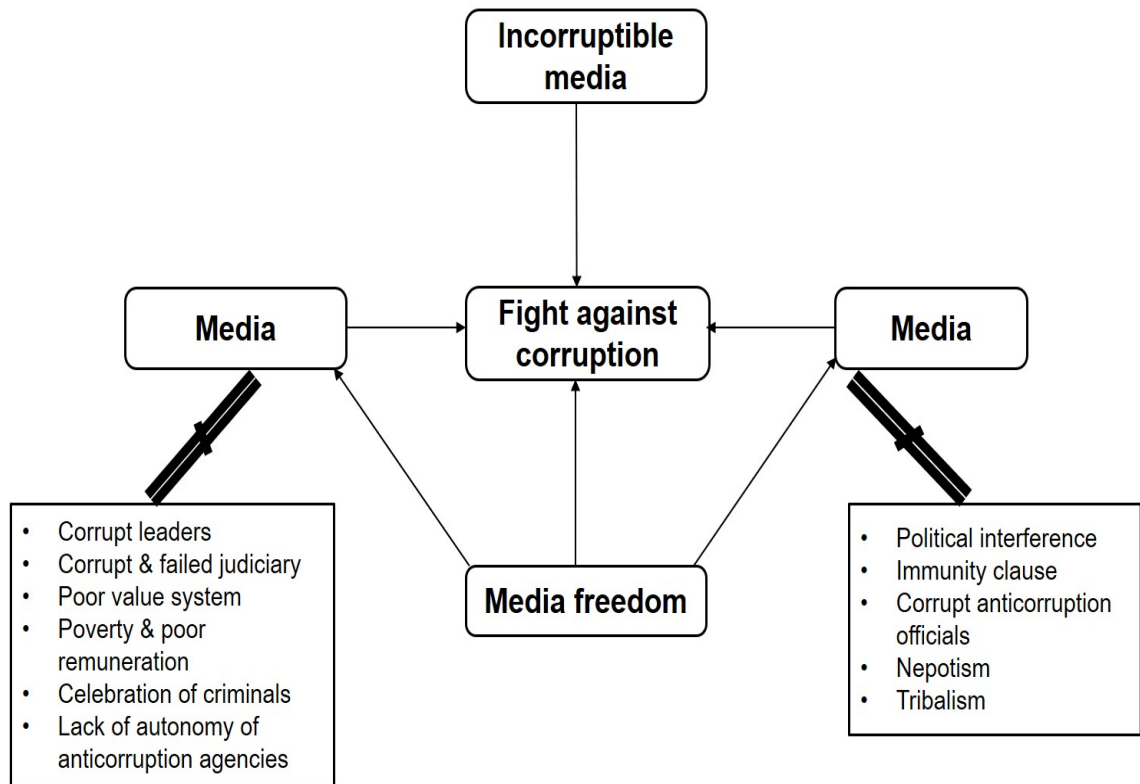
Figure 9.1. Anticorruption-media-model. Source: Author.

In a society, where there is systemic corruption, media professionals/ journalists are prone to bribery to cover up corruption in high places. It is indeed, difficult for corrupt media to expose corruption or be effective as an anticorruption agent. This model therefore, suggests that the media should be devoid of internal corruption, if it would play an active role in the fight against corruption in Nigeria. Consequently, there should be an internal mechanism to control media corruption.

More so, the media must be completely free to report and expose corruption in a developing society. While the media should have unrestricted access to information on corrupt dealings in the society, journalists should be able to report on corruption without being intimidated, arrested or imprisoned. It is also important that

the media operate independently of government and avoid interference. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the media as an anticorruption agent largely, depends on some external socio-economic-political factors that contribute to persistent corruption in the society. Even though, the media strive to report cases of corruption in the face of so many challenges in Nigeria, the media anticorruption effect has not been evident because of corrupt leadership; corrupt and failed judiciary; political interference; immunity clause; corrupt anticorruption officials; poor value system; poverty; poor remuneration etc. Hence, the highlighted challenges (external factors) need to be overcome before the media anticorruption effect could be seen.

9.4. Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

➢ The success of the anticorruption war of the current administration under the leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari is largely dependent on how free the press is, in exposing corruption in every sector of the country's economy as press freedom represents an important check on corruption (Brunetti and Weder, 2002). Government should therefore create an environment that engender freedom of the press, which is highly significant in the fight against corruption.

➢ Journalists are indispensable to any democratic government. Consequently, Nigerian government should treat journalists as partners in progress not as oppositions by protecting their rights and freedom so as to fulfil their social responsibilities effectively.

- Government should make sure that the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act is strictly adhered to at all levels as compliance will enhance access to adequate information by journalists thereby contributing to a much freer press in the country.

- The executive arm of Nigerian government should discourage the legislators from sponsoring bills capable of gagging the press such as the recent controversial "hate speech bill". Instead, they should enact laws that prohibit intimidation, arrest and detention of journalists by security officials without fair hearing and court trial.

- Although, the present level of press freedom in Nigeria among other challenges does not support investigative journalism, the press should push beyond boundaries to engage in investigative reporting on issues of public interest such as corruption in the oil and gas sector.

- The Nigerian print media should prioritize reportage of important issues by increasing the number of full pages dedicated to issues of public interest as against reserving full pages of newspapers for advertorials.

9.5. Limitations for the Study

- **Inadequate funding:** The research did not enjoy any financial support in form scholarships from funding agencies as it was solely self-sponsored.

- **Sample collection:** The researcher encountered difficulty in accessing the online versions of all the dailies. Consequently, the researcher relied solely on the hardcopies (1460 editions) for sample collection. This was, indeed, cumbersome and time-consuming as the researcher had to go through each edition one after the other.

9.6. Suggestions for Future Studies

➢ Given the current level of press freedom in Nigeria, it is important to continue to evaluate how press freedom affects the practice of journalism in the country. Therefore, I would like to suggest future research into the impact of press freedom on investigative journalism in the country.

➢ Towards the end of 2019, the legislative arm of the Nigerian government proposed a bill that prohibits hate speech in the country: "hate speech bill". Since its proposition, the bill had generated debates in the public domain. Considering the controversial nature of the bill and the effect it may have on the press freedom if eventually passed into law, it is important to investigate the perception of journalists and the public on the proposed hate speech bill.

➢ As observed from the current study and the 2019 report of amnesty international, attacks on journalists and media activists have been persistent in the last five years. In 2019 alone, nineteen media professionals suffered diverse attacks ranging from intimidation, arrest and imprisonment. In view of this observation, there is need to investigate the effects of these attacks on journalists and their social responsibilities.

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APPENDIX A: NEWSPAPER HEADLINES FOR FRAMING ANALYSIS

The Punch

"*Oil theft: 10 bag 12 years, forfeit ship to FG*" (The Punch, 07/08/2018, Pp 9)

"*NSCDC recovers 200 drums of crude oil, navy seizes truck loads of diesel*" (The Punch, 25/10/2018, Pp 5)

"*$12.7bn crude stolen from Nigeria in three years-Falana*" (The Punch, 19/10/2018, Pp 25)

"*We recorded 1,858 pipeline vandalism cases in one year-NNPC*" (The Punch, 05/11/2018, Pp 32)

"*Hoodlums in army uniform vandalise fuel pipelines in Lagos*" (The Punch, 31/05/2019, Pp 5)

"*Pipeline vandalism: Nigeria loses N163.17bn in six years*" (The Punch, 23/05/2019, Pp 32)

"*Militants blow up Conoil facilities in Bayelsa*" (The Punch, 07/01/2019, Pp 26)

"*EFCC intensifies efforts to extradite Diezani*" (The Punch, 12/11/2018, Pp 61)

"*AGF charges oil markets with N2bn fraud*" (The Punch, 16/01/2019, Pp 55)

"*FG names Shell, Eni executives in $1bn bribery case*" (The Punch, 08/05/2019, Pp 27)

"*Fuel spillage from vandalised NNPC Pipeline causes panic in Lagos*" (The Punch, 01/03/2019, Pp 4)

"*Pipeline vandals hurt people more than government – Buhari*" (The Punch, 28/05/2019, Pp 41)

"*Oil firms behind high infant mortality rate in Bayelsa*" (The Punch, 03/04/2019, Pp 4).

"*Oil theft hurts Nigerian economy*" (The Punch, 17/08/2018, Pp 18)

"*N3.8tn lost to oil theft in 2016-NNRC*" (The Punch, 01/08/2018, Pp 23)

"*Nigeria could lose $6 bn to Malabu scam-Global witness*" (The Punch, 27/11/2018, Pp 26)

.

Vanguard

"*N11.08bn lost to crude oil theft in 2018*" (February 13, 2019: Pp 35)

"*Army smashes biggest camp operated by oil thieves in Delta*" (April 17, 2019: Pp 33)

"*Oil thieves replace militants, steal 100,000 barrels daily*" (June 7, 2019: Pp 12)

"*NNPC raises alarm over increasing pipeline vandalism*" (January 16, 2019: Pp 8)

"*Suspected vandal found dead inside NNPC pipeline in Ogun*" (November 13, 2018: Pp 7)

"*Vandalism, poor funding, cause of Nigeria's worst crude oil loss in 18 yrs*" (December 27. 2018: Pp 41)

"*$1.2bn Malabu oil scam: Court orders arrest of Adoke, Etete, 4 others*" (April 18, 2019: Pp 14)

"*Businesswoman used me to facilitate N168.5m fuel subsidy fraud, ex-banker tells court*" (June 20, 2019: Pp 7)

"*EFCC charges Senator Bassey, oil tycoon for N224m fraud*" (August 21, 2018: pg10)

"*Vandalised NNPC pipeline fire destroys 100 houses, 100 shops, 50 cars in Lagos*" (December 20, 2018: Pp 6)

"*Despoliation by oil companies: we dwell in river but have no portable water, Bayelsa community cries*" (April 2, 2019: Pp 29)

"*Oil firm continue to flare commercial gas*" (September 4, 2018: Pp 31)

"*Nigeria lost $2.8bn revenue to oil, maritime crime in 2018-UN*" (January 9, 2019: Pp 19)

"*Nigeria loses N2.6trn to crude oil theft in 2 years – NNRC*" (August 1, 2018: Pp 11).

Guardian

"*EFCC quizzes 29 suspects over alleged illegal oil bunkering. Secures conviction of 17 illegal petroleum dealers*" (June 9, 2019: Pp 6)

"*Smuggling keeps fuel consumption level unknown, says NNPC*" (July 5, 2018: Pp 4)

"*NNPC laud vandalism campaign as Navy arrests alleged notorious vandal*" (January 23, 2019: Pp 5)

"*NNPC records N81b trade surplus, vandals hit 2048 pipeline*" (March 18, 2019: Pp 3)

"*Oil pipeline vandalism affecting investment, say Shell. Seeks support as crude theft hits 11,000bopd*" (June 14, 2019: Pp 20)

"*Oil sector loses 754,000 bpd to pipeline disruption*" (July 10, 2018: Pp 9)

"*Senate uncovers fresh $ 1.15b illegal withdrawals from NLNG. Reps summon oil firms Over N9trn deal probe extrajudicial killings*" (November15, 2018: Pp 4)

"*Eni, Shell aware of $ 1.3b Malabu oil deal, says Italian judge*" (December 18, 2018: Pp 50)

"*Fire guts oil wells in Ondo as multinational alleges sabotage*" (April 24, 2019: Pp 3)

"*Delta community, Chevron tackle escalating oil well fire*" (June 6, 2019: Pp 9)

"*Oil sector loses 754,000 bpd to pipeline disruption*" (July 10, 2018: Pp 9)

"*NNPC records N81b trade surplus, vandals hit 2048 pipeline*" (March 18, 2019: Pp 3).

Nigerian Tribune

"*Navy intercepts boat with 1,400 jerry cans of stolen petrol*" (February 12, 2019: Pp 25)

"*Nigeria loses 200,000b/pd of crude oil theft, $105bn in two years*" (June 14, 2019: Pp 9)

"*Oil theft: Navy re arrests vessel with nine crew members in Delta*" (September 11, 2018: Pp 31)

"*Alleged $8.4m theft: EFCC arraigns 2 oil marketers, international oil company*" (December 4, 2018: Pp 9)

"*Police arrest suspected pipeline vandals, recover stolen petrol*" (April 1, 2019: pg6)

"*Two suspected pipeline vandals nabbed in Ogun*" (June 14, 2019: Pp 9)

"*Five pipeline vandals arrested in Ogun*" (June 19, 2019: Pp 21)

"*Malabu oil deal: Court strikes out application to stay arrest of Adoke, Etete, seven others*" (May 14, 2019: Pp 12)

"*Korean gives herbalist N30m for NNPC licence*" (May 18, 2019: Pp 32)

"*Again EFCC fails to arraign Diezani/ Omokore*" (February 26, 2019: Pp 35)

"*Isheri- Olofin explosion: residents send SOS to LASG, NNPC over pipeline vandals*" (June 20, 2019: Pp 31)

"*Visit Niger Delta creek ravaged by oil spill, group urges NOSDRA*" (April 23, 2019: Pp 8)

"*N1.6trn 2016 oil loss higher than 2018 education, health budget*" (August 1, 2018: Pp 11)

"*Nigeria loses 200,000b/pd of crude oil theft, $105bn in two years*" (June 14, 2019: Pp 9).

INTERVIEW GUIDE

University of Fort Hare
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Title: **Impact of Press Freedom on Reportage of Corruption in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry: A Comparative Content Analysis of Four Nigerian Newspapers**

1. How many stories do you report on the oil and gas industry in a week?
2. How often do you report on corruption in the oil and gas industry in a week?
3. How do you usually get your stories on corruption in the oil and gas industry?
4. What reaction does stories on corruption usually generate?
5. What is your editorial/reporting style on corruption stories?
6. How neutral are you when reporting or writing corruption stories?
7. Will you say you have access to adequate and relevant information on corruption in the country?
8. How often are journalists and news correspondents been threatened in the course of their duties?
9. Have you ever been intimidated in the course of gathering news?
10. In recent time, has there been any record of journalist arrest or imprisonment?
11. Is there any law in the country that restricts journalists from performing their duties effectively?
12. How will you rate the level of press freedom in the country?
13. How has the level of press freedom in the country influenced your professional duty and social responsibility as a journalist?

APPENDIX C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE
REC-270710-028-RA Level 01

Certificate Reference Number: OSU441SAYO01

Project title: **Impact of press freedom on reportage pf corruption In the Nigerian oil and gas industry: A comparative content analysis of four Nigerian newspapers.**

Nature of Project: PhD in Communication

Principal Researcher: Monisola Bolajoko Ayodeji-Falade

Supervisor: Prof O.O Osunkunle

Co- supervisor: N/A

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby give ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). Should any other instruments be used, these require separate authorization. The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this certificate, using the reference number indicated above.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document;
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research.

The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

Special conditions: *Research that includes children as per the official regulations of the act must take the following into account:*
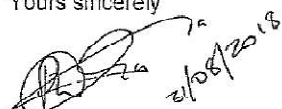*Note: The UREC is aware of the provisions of s71 of the National Health Act 61 of 2003 and that matters pertaining to obtaining the Minister's consent are under discussion and remain unresolved. Nonetheless, as was decided at a meeting between the National Health Research Ethics Committee and stakeholders on 6 June 2013, university ethics committees may continue to grant ethical clearance for research involving children without the Minister's consent, provided that the prescripts of the previous rules have been met. This certificate is granted in terms of this agreement.*

The UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance Certificate if
  - Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected;
  - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented;
  - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require;
  - The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to.

- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.

- In addition to the need to comply with the highest level of ethical conduct principle investigators must report back annually as an evaluation and monitoring mechanism on the progress being made by the research. Such a report must be sent to the Dean of Research's office.

The Ethics Committee wished you well in your research.

Yours sincerely

Professor Pumla Dineo Gqola
Dean of Research

28 August 2018

APPENDIX D: PUBLISHED ARTICLE FROM THE THESIS

Coverage of Corruption in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry: A Comparative Content Analysis of Four National Dailies

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Abstract

This paper investigated the coverage of corruption in the oil and gas industry through a content analysis of four Nigerian newspapers (The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian and Nigerian Tribune). The paper adopted quantitative approach, in which quantitative data were collected and analyzed through content analysis of the selected newspapers. This paper revealed that 534 stories were published on corruption in the Nigerian oil and gas sector by all the newspapers within the study period (July 2018-June 2019), with the Punch having the highest magnitude of stories (n = 196, 36.70%) while Nigerian Tribune had the highest number of stories reported on its front and back pages (n − 143, 92.25%). However, Guardian had the highest number of full-paged stories (n = 15, 20%) whereas the Punch and Nigerian Tribune adopted the widest range of publication formats with news being the most dominant format employed by all the dailies (n = 462, 86.52%). In terms of tone of stories, Nigerian Tribune was the most neutral (n = 56, 39.44%). These suggest that the newspapers gave prominence to reportage of corruption, which implies that the selected newspapers are fulfilling their agenda-setting role and social responsibility to the public. It is anticipated that our findings will play a significant role in enhancing the function of Nigerian newspapers as agent of change.

Keywords: Change agent, Content analysis, Corruption, Nigerian newspapers, Press, Print media.

Nijerya Petrol ve Gaz Endüstrisinde Yolsuzluğun Kapsamı: Dört Ulusal Günlük Filmin Karşılaştırmalı Bir İçerik Analizi

Özet

Bu makale, dört Nijeryalı gazetenin (The Punch, Vanguard, Guardian ve Nigerian Tribune) içerik analizi yoluyla, petrol ve gaz endüstrisindeki yolsuzluk haberini incelemiştir. Makale, nicel verilerin toplandığı ve seçilen gazetelerin içerik analizi yoluyla analiz edildiği nicel yaklaşımı benimsemiştir. Bu makale, çalışma döneminde (Temmuz 2018-Haziran 2019) Nijerya petrol ve gaz sektöründeki yolsuzlukla ilgili 534 haberin yayınlandığını ve Punch'ın en yüksek haber sayısına (n = 196,% 36.70) sahip olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Nigerian Tribune