

# **AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED ONLINE NEWSPAPER FRAMING OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF PUNCH AND GUARDIAN**

## **Author's Biography**

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## **Abstract**

This study is a content analytical work of Online newspaper framing of Private Universities in Nigeria. The general objective is to ascertain the print media framing of private owned universities in Nigeria. The work is anchored on framing theory. The investigation focused on Punch and Vanguard Newspapers owing to their constant reportage of Private universities and wide coverage. The constant frames used by these media outlets were analysed to find the dominant frames and interpretation such frames could have on the general public. A major concentration of the inquiry focused on the frames used in the reportage within a specific constructive week between January to December, 2021. A code sheet was designed in line with the code guide. A total of 146 Newspapers were sampled. 73 editions were used in a constructed week from the selected dailies. The data gathered were thereafter presented and interpreted descriptively in tables. The results showed that Private Universities issues were framed in bias manners by the Newspapers to negatively influence public perception and opinions. Hence, the inquiry recommends objective observance as the most critical ethical consideration editors and reporters should bear in mind while executing their journalistic tasks. Importantly, the impact of private universities in Nigeria in absorbing the annual teeming admission seekers in the face of perennial Academic Staff Union of Universities and Non-Academic Staff of Universities (ASUU and NASU) strikes should be applauded. The impact and decongesting and engaging teeming JAMBITES should be referenced in the history of a successful education harmony. The study advocates for intentionality balance and fairness of journalists as opinion shaping agents of societies. Thorough research should be the outstanding character every journalist and in-depth investigative reportage that shuns all forms of subjective approach should be encouraged.

*Keywords: Private Universities, Framing, Online Newspapers, Image, Positioning, Coverage.*

## INTRODUCTIN

The reportage of private universities in Nigerian newspapers has increased as a result of the recent upsurge in the number of private universities accreditations constantly granted by the National Universities commission in Nigeria. Interestingly, the private universities have dominated the higher educational sector of Nigeria. The establishment of private institutions into Nigerian higher education is traced to 1979 during the civilian government era of General Olusegun Obasanjo when education was classified in the concurrent legislative list between the federal and state government; meaning that both governments have the power to establish, fund and manage universities. However, Imo Technical University was established by Ukaegbu, this move was questioned in court by the government in power, but the ruling by the Supreme Court led to the emergence of twenty-six private universities in six months. Nevertheless, the results achieved after the establishments of these private universities have actually called for concern considering the future implications of incessant springing of more Universities. The issues related to the survival of private universities in Nigeria include competition, ensuring quality control in curriculum, huge focus on profitability, low workplace motivation, technological discrepancies, etc. the challenges include funding, accreditation of school/departments, location, government policy and trained personnel (Oginni, 2012). Since the inception of private universities in Nigeria, there have been a lot of misconceptions about the running and implementations of standardized quality control. The recent news about private universities have depicted certain negative images about private universities in both punch and guardian newspapers.

Numerous stereotyping of private universities is of great concern to stakeholders especially the manner in which the media constantly frame news of Private Universities activities. Other stories have come up on private universities; this has resulted in a poor representation of private universities in Nigeria. This has also contributed immensely to the portrayal of private universities in the mind of the public as the media plays a great role of shaping public perception of national issues.

Ironically, the media is a true reflection of the ideologies and entirety of the society in which it functions. Ethically, the press has a social responsibility mandate that requires it to report on society while promoting positive social conduct, criticizing negative behavior, and making sure the appropriate authorities are informed in order to hold offenders accountable.

Below is a quote extracted from the punch newspaper published on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2021 on private university news;

***“Unfortunately, we have so many institutions now being licensed to operate. Many of them have no business to be in education. All they want is money”.***

***-Prof. Is-haq Oloyede, Registrar of the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board.***

This are some of the very many ways private universities are being portrayed in national dailies. From the above statement, it can be deduced that private universities are only perceived as “money making ventures” with zero attention to impact and value towards the educational agenda and goals in academics. Several reports have tagged them as too expensive for the average and poor members of the society and also as too strict and this prevents the growth of mental and social capacity of the students. Private universities have been a topic of discussion in the media and especially the online newspapers who publish articles, editorials and opinions on trending issues in private universities. In comparison to public universities, private universities

have been rated as not fitting for the development of education in Nigeria according to a report in guardian newspaper published on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2021, private universities were portrayed as incapacitated; “It is apparent that the private universities prefer to offer courses requiring less infrastructural and manpower investments. With limited infrastructure and spaces though. While the innovation in teaching and learning in private universities has been lauded by many, some critics said the institutions lack the wherewithal to attract the best hands in the education sector as many of them reportedly rely on part-time lecturers to fill the void in their academic staff roles”.

In defense of private universities, Afe Babalola, the founder of Afe Babalola university Ekiti State, Nigeria, published in vanguard newspaper on the 27<sup>st</sup> of January 2021;

**“The foregoing is the background against which I have joined a majority of well-informed Nigerians and stakeholders to rebut the false claims of Professor Suleiman Bogoro that private institutions are money-making ventures when, in fact, their enabling law had expressly provided that they must be registered “as a charitable company limited by guarantee and the proprietors or operators, owners, trustees or directors are disentitled from drawing profits from the university.”**

Private institutions, over the world, are known for quality education and in fact, the first universities in the world were private, not public. The Ivy League schools, also known as the Ancient Eight, as an American collegiate of eight private research universities and are some of the oldest in the world. (Afe, 2021).

### **Statement of the problem**

Numerous academics have conducted studies on higher education in African nations like Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, concentrating on their development, internal administration, and other policies. (Olaleye et al, 2020)

In a 2016 study, Oluwaseun Oluwasanmi examined "Determinants of Students' Choice of Private Universities in Nigeria: A Corporate Branding Perspective." From the standpoint of corporate branding, the study looked into the factors that influence students' selection of private institutions in Nigeria. The cross-sectional qualitative study utilised focus groups discussions (FGD), found that variables including how the universities are branded as projected through the media influence public perception of private universities image.

However, the mass media role is pivotal in reinforcing public perception. It is important to ensure the media play active role in opinion shaping to help shun stereotypical message designs which in turns builds negative image about private universities in public minds. This study analysed the reports and frames presented by the media about private universities in “The Punch and The Guardian newspapers”. The reason for the choice of national dailies spans from wide readership and reach. The resulting implications of frames as seen in the selected dailies clearly reflect bias which is a misrepresentation of private universities as portrayed by “The Punch and The Guardian newspapers”. The reportage of private university in the media compared to the public universities appear subjective seeing the impact of private universities in Nigerian education system,(S.Yusuf, et’al 2017). It is assumed that the stereotypical frames of the media play huge role in demeaning the reputation of most private universities doing great work in the educational sector of Nigeria. Sadly, the newspaper opinions are biased and misleading to the audience. The higher institution of learning is a vital aspect of the education sector and the private universities have contributed immensely to the Country’s educational quality especially with the degradation and incessant strike actions trilling the public Universities for unpaid salaries and with the huge churn out of secondary school population seeking admissions that is

not absorb by the public Universities. Unfortunately, the Private university issues have been a pivotal matter of discourse in the media in recent years especially since the recent upsurge in 2015 till date.

Hence, this investigation targets at finding how private universities are portrayed in selected e-Newspapers in digital space and how such narrative is shaping the choice of student's admission preferences in other to find how best to mitigate against the digital controversies and its impact in the sustainability and rise in the rate of private Universities growth in Nigeria.

The work measured; the direction of coverage given to private Universities in e-newspapers to ascertain the frequency of e-newspapers framing of private universities; examining the level of prominence given to private universities in the selected e-newspapers; identifying the placement of private universities issues in the selected e-newspapers.

### **The concept of framing:**

Gregory Bateson proposed the idea of framing for the first time in 1972. Psychological frames, which function as a type of metacommunication, are described by him as a "spatial and temporary limiting of collection of interacting signals" (Bateson, 1972, p. 197) (Hallahan, 2008). Thinking on news items and story material in the context of well-known events is referred to as framing. The practice of framing is similar to that of defining an agenda, but it broadens the scope of the research by concentrating on the core concerns at hand rather than on a single subject. According to Mass Communication Theory (Online), 2017's definition of framing theory, the media first draws attention to specific occurrences before contextualizing them.

The journalists choose the news articles based on a variety of criteria, including news values, editorial guidelines, and interactions with the society's upper class. These elements create the framework. Framing has a significant impact in how the public is introduced to the specific issue and how they see it as a result of the interplay between the media and public preconceptions. The underlying premise is that Nigerian media simply reflect the social environment in which they function. According to the press's social responsibility mandate, it must promote good social behavior while also denouncing bad behavior when covering society.

The ability to obtain information is essential for the newspaper framing of public interest problems in Nigeria, which is in turn influenced by the extent of coverage provided to such concerns. Due to the way issues are reported, there is a risk that the Nigerian press won't be able to fulfil its responsibility to hold public officials accountable to the public and to expose concerns to the public from all angles as they emerge. Due to the values media place on the educational sector, both conventional and how the new media in Nigeria are serving as potent tools for shaping public perception and growth of education.

According to Njoku, (2012) the media in playing its watchdog role in the society, they relay information that shapes the opinion of the masses. The pattern of media framing of issues in Nigeria tends to inform the aggregate thought and opinion held by observers who depend on the media for up-to-date information; hence, there is the belief that news framing has misleading undertones.

Information is recognized as a component of empowerment and participation in development. The traditional role of the media to facilitate the exchange of information, educate and enlighten the citizens has long been identified as very crucial. The media also function to keep the citizens abreast of developments, expose them to new ideas, and serve as a veritable platform for them to contribute to the quality of government's policy, and to the good governance of the nation. According to Suleiman, (2018).

It was emphasized that access to information is essential for newspaper conceptualization of public interest problems in Nigeria, which is in turn influenced by the extent of coverage given to such concerns. The nature of the issue creates a situation where in the Nigerian press's ability to keep the government accountable to the people while also presenting issues in viewpoints to the public as they emerge in society will be harmed by limited access to reliable information.

The portrayal of private universities in the media will determine the opinion of the masses. This study is set to find out the manner in which private universities are portrayed by punch and guardian newspapers.

This study will most importantly reveal the framing of private universities in Online-newspapers in Nigeria within the selected time frame. The study will be useful to different segment of the society, it will give reporters, journalists, editors and media house owners a better view of private universities for their news reports by making adjustment in the way they report stories about private universities in turn it will give the general public a positive image of private universities. The study will also be relevant to private universities because most news disseminated about them may have been related to activities in those schools. The current nature of the phenomenon under investigation gives credence to the significance of the study to the media industry, professionals in journalism as well as the academia.

This study will among other things, provide new knowledge in areas of media framing especially on sensitive issues that are of public interest. Researchers and professionals in the field of Journalism will find this study useful in checking trends in media framing, emerging issues in probing cases in Nigeria.

It also provides the relationship between agenda setting and media framing of issues of public interest as it relates to the coverage of issues relating to private universities. This will enable the media practitioners appreciate their role in news framing and how it affects the way people perceive issues in the country and the media role in building societal values.

Also, new areas for further research are opened from the findings of this study as researchers would find the need to explore other national issues.

The study will focus on the portrayal of private universities in Nigeria. The population for the study will comprise all news, feature, letters to the editors, columns, opinions and editorial comments related to private universities in the selected national newspapers between January 2021 and December 2021 on their online newspaper platforms. The punch and guardian newspapers were selected for this study. The choice of these papers is because they have wider circulation, enjoy good patronage and are available (onyebuchi et al., 2019) also as a result of their coverage on issues relating to private universities.

### **Operational definition of terms**

For the purpose of this study, the following concepts are operationalized to give perspective to the study: **private universities, Online-newspapers, framing, coverage.**

- **Private universities:** universities not owned or financed by the government. Private University refers to any type of university which is outside the public university education system (non-public, non-government, quasi-public, e.t.c).
- **Framing:** framing means the process of organizing idea or story line in such a way as to provide meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. It is emphasizing salience of different aspects of an issue.

- **Coverage:** the treatment of an issue by the media. The definition of coverage is the extent to which something is addressed, reported on or included.
- **Online-Newspapers:** An online newspaper is the online version of a newspaper, either as a stand-alone publication or as the online version of a printed periodical. Online versions of punch and guardian newspapers.

According to the National Policy on Education, anyone (including organizations, people, and volunteer organizations) who wants to start a Private University in Nigeria should be able to do so as long as they abide by the rules laid down by the National University Commission (NUC) as promulgated by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The procedures outlined must be strictly followed before the Universities are granted an operational license. In Nigeria, university education officially began in 1948. (Suleiman, Hanafi, & Taslikhan, 2017).

The minister of education provided a historical overview of the growth of Private Universities in Nigeria, recalling the process got underway in 1983 when the Supreme Court gave the owner of Imo State Technical University legal support. He claimed that the Supreme Court's decision led to the creation of 26 Private Universities across the nation.

However, a profit-making agenda can be used to explain why Private Universities were founded. Private University establishment was prohibited by Decree No. 19 of 1984, which also retroactively closed down any existing ones. It also outlined penalties for anyone who violated the decree's provisions, including corporate entities.

According to Adamu Adamu (2021), the government later realized that the demand for higher education had grown to the point that it was their social responsibility, as well as the responsibility of well-intentioned private organizations, to meet the demand and make higher education accessible to the growing number of applicants seeking opportunities for self - improvement.

According to Adamu (2021), the government took bold action to permit businesses/organizations incorporated in Nigeria or individuals to own universities after underscoring the potential of the private sector in the development of tertiary institutions. The amendment to the Education (National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions Act) was a welcomed development considering the calibre and scope of development-oriented university education that must be made available to the nation according to Decree No. 9 of 1993 as promulgated, repealing Decree No. 19 of 1984 and establishing new rules on the establishment of Private Universities. It also stated that the need for the nation to support constructive efforts by private sector organizations to provide quality and standardised pedagogical learning outcomes as university education was rekindled to meet the worldclass stipulations.

#### Relevance of media to Private Universities

As published in scholarly journals, Media relations can serve as a platform for publishing a university's accomplishments and results in the context of higher education. Scientific papers can be published and made popular in the media to create awareness and enlighten the general public. Publicizing the accomplishments and results of Private Universities is the goal of the media relations through the Universities. The public becomes more aware of their activities as more results are produced. The sustainability of these institutions might benefit from this. The goal of managing media relations in other universities is to improve Private Universities' reputations.

A university's reputation and image in society can be greatly influenced by its public relations efforts, say Alvin, P.W., and Riris, L. (2021). When coupled with effective media relations, this activity could benefit a university in the long run. Positive news produced by media relations may inform the public of an institution's accomplishments, enhancing its reputation and image in society.

De Vreese (2014) claims that the intersection of framing and mediatisation research articulates a media and journalism perspective. Unlike the frames favoured by (political) elites, journalistic news frames are evolving. They start with the objectivity and editorial judgment of journalists, focus on what news media outlets and journalists actively do with the issues they select, and highlight how elite frames are modified and adapted. The frame emphasizes the active role that journalists play in creating news stories, a process that is at the heart of mediatisation, and pushes other aspects of the case to the background. According to (Kahlström & Norin, 2012), the influence of the media goes beyond the creation of information. It may also have an impact on how situations are perceived and how we understand our daily lives. Furthermore, the information provided by the media is frequently used to form public opinion. As a result, the media is a powerful tool for influencing our social beliefs, views, and ideas. The authority to choose which parties in society should receive information first creates opportunities for some people. This is what is known as framing.

In a study Newspaper Framing and University of Uyo Students' Perception of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria conducted by Oyokunyi Jon Ita, Abasifreke Idiong, Ekemini Ita 2014, looked at how the Boko Haram insurgency was framed in the media and how University of Uyo students perceived it. The goal of the study was to identify the various frames used in the reporting of the Boko Haram insurgency and the impact those frames had on University of Uyo students' perceptions of the Nigerian sect. The research design for the study combined content analysis and survey research in three ways. As a result, two populations were chosen for the study: the first was made up of University of Uyo undergraduates, totalling 17,669; the second was made up of 825 issues of three national dailies: Vanguard, This Day, and Punch, all of which were published between April 1 and December 31, 2014. Additionally, it was discovered that the use of these frames in the reporting on the Boko Haram insurgency made the stories straightforward, self-explanatory, easier to understand, and helped readers rely on such information. It also helped readers imagine potential solutions to the issue at hand.

The study suggested that Newspapers use more dominant positive frames for stories rather than concentrating on the tired cause-and-effect approach to the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria because frames have a way of influencing readers' minds. Newspaper framing of climate change in Nigeria and Ghana by Chinenye Nwabueze and Stella Egbra in 2016, examined the coverage and framing of climate change issues over the course of seven months in two Newspapers from Nigeria and Ghana. The main goal of this study was to determine how climate change stories are presented in the national dailies of Ghana and Nigeria. It was discovered, among other things, that the environment and action frame, which concentrated on the anticipated impact of climate change on the landscape and relief in Nigeria and Ghana as well as on a number of other regions, was the overall dominant frame. It was also discovered that the media in Nigeria and Ghana primarily gets their information from international fora. It is advised that the Nigerian and Ghanaian press should write their reports with more emphasis on the information and awareness frame.

Comparative Analysis of Public Officers' Corruption Framing in Newspapers by Adisa Rasaq, Ahmad Fahmi Mahamood, Ahmed-Arikewuyo Kamaldeen & Shuhairimi Bin Abdullah in January 2018, looked at the frequency of public official corruption stories in three widely read Nigerian

Newspapers' online versions. The study, which was founded on the framing theory, nevertheless identified the treatment frames, the responsibility attributes, and the economic consequence frames in the corruption issues. Additional findings showed that a total percentage of 63.8% was identified by the economic consequence frame as financial losses. With a total percentage of 79.6%, the Nigerian government was held to have the greatest responsibility for eradicating corruption. Therefore, with a total percentage of 82.2%, the responsible government was advised for the treatment of corruption in Nigeria. Future research can try to look into the area of audience frames, which is not covered in this study, even though it is the focus of this study, which is on the aspect of media frames. In order to compare and contrast the prevalence of public official corruption frames in the online versions of three well-known Nigerian Newspapers, the research used quantitative content analysis. These studies on how news stories are framed by the media show how news frames dominate people's perceptions and how they shape and influence public opinion. This study examined how Private Universities in Nigeria are framed in online Newspapers. The 92 registered newspaper outfits in Nigeria that published daily editions made up the population of the study, which includes all of the editions of the two chosen national dailies (The Punch and The Vanguard) (Obayi et al., 2016). The selection of these papers is based on their greater circulation, strong readership, and accessibility (Onyebuchi, Obayi & Nwagu, 2019). 365 Newspapers are required to equal the full number of days in the study months. Since the study period ran from January 1 to December 31, 2021, each newspaper had a total of 365 editions (days). Therefore, the population for the two national newspaper was 730 (i.e., 365 x 2). The two selected Newspapers from January 2021 to December 2021 were selected because it focused on frames around private universities. During this time, it was reported that the Nigerian University Commission was moving to accredit more Private Universities across the nation. To determine the actual editions (days) from the study period that made up the 73 editions for each of the Newspapers under studied, a systematic research approach was utilised. The 146-sample size was equally split between the two major national newspapers, with 73 editions of each examined. The sample size with the editions to be studied for each newspaper was divided (i.e.  $146/73 = 2$ ) to arrive at the methodical selection of days in each month to be studied. The edition selection was increased to the intervals of five (5) starting from January 5, 2021 because the intervals of two (2) from the above calculation were insufficient to provide the sample size from the study period. From January to December 2021, each newspaper had 73 days (editions). A sample size of 146 was used, which represented 73 editions for each newspaper investigated. Since the population of the study was not so large, 20% was used to determine the sample size. Based on Nwana's (1981) formula, if a population is in many hundreds, one needs a sample size of 20%, but if a population is a few thousand, one needs a sample size of 10%, and for a population of several thousands, one needs a sample of 5% or less. Hence for the purpose of this study 20% of the population was used (i.e. 20% of 730 = 146). The design that was used in this study was quantitative research design. The research instrument for the study was the Code Sheet for content analysis. It contains the unit of analysis and its content attributes as stated earlier in this study. The basis for the selection of these units of analysis is linked to the objective set out in this study.

#### **SUMMARY OF CODE BOOK FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS**

S/I.D	UNIT OF ANALYSIS	CONTENT CATEGORIES	CODE
A	MEDIA	The Punch	01



		The Vanguard	02
B	JOURNALISTIC WRITINGS	News	06
		Editorial	05
		Features	04
		Opinion / Letters	03
		Interviews	02
		Others	01
C	ANGLE OF PROMINENCE	Personalities	03
		Issues	02
		Both	01
E	COVERAGE FREQUENCY	Days	01
		Months	02
		Year	03
F	PRESENTATION	Objective	03
		Subjective	02
		Neutral	01
G	INTERPRETATION	Favourable	03
		Unfavourable	02
		Neutral	01

### **Explanation of Terms in Code Book**

#### (A) MEDIA:

Here, the researcher considers the two Newspapers under study: *The Punch* (01), *The Vanguard* (02). Hence, any coverage from each of the Newspapers will be assigned the code for the newspaper. The coder is to use the codes (i.e. numbers) against each newspaper to represent the newspaper while coding.

#### (B) JOURNALISTIC WRITINGS:

Each of the manifest communication content will be considered based on Cover pages (07), News (06), Editorial (05), Features (04), Opinion / Letters to the Editor (03) and Interviews (02). Others (01) here refer to any representation in column / pages of the newspaper (like cartoons, etc) about Private Universities mentioned above. This will be used to measure presentation of issues. The coder is to represent each journalistic writings with the code assigned to it.

#### (C) ANGLE

The researcher considers each story on the Private Universities based on the angle of coverage: that is, coverage that focused on Personalities (03) or Issues (02) or both (01). This is to check the preponderance of the framing which the Newspapers gave the reports on Private Universities in terms of angle. Hence, the coder is to represent each angle by the code assigned to it.

#### (D) COVERAGE FREQUENCY:

The researcher will use this to determine the number of times stories on the Private Universities appeared in each newspaper. This was determined in days, months and year. This was also used to measure how consistent the Newspapers were in their coverage.

#### (E) PRESENTATION

The issues arising from the newspaper coverage of Private Universities was measured in terms of its Objectivity (03), Subjectivity (02) or Neutral (01). This bores in mind the relationship between the concept of framing and the pattern of presentation of Private Universities issues.

**(F) INTERPRETATION**

Here, the researcher will measure the various interpretations given to Private Universities based on Favourable Interpretation (03), Unfavourable Interpretation (02) or Neutral Interpretation (01). This will be used to complement the pattern of presentation as stated earlier. By favourable interpretation the researcher will consider those interpretations that condemn Private Universities also unfavourable means that the reports support Private Universities while neutral interpretation means that the reports did not take sides. The instrument was validated by the project supervisor and other experts in the department. The SPSS was used to test the intent consistency of the code-sheet as the instrument for the data collection. A statistician tested the pilot study to ensure the reliability of the software. Tables and charts containing frequencies, means, and standard deviations was used to present the data. This was based on the study's established research questions. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used the analyse the collected data.

**Data Presentation and Interpretation**

The results is presented in tables of frequency and percentages, mean and standard deviation showing the decisions made on each item as it relates to the issue or phenomenon under investigation.

This study investigates Newspaper media coverage of the Punch and vanguard within a period of 1 year, January – December, 2021. The study aimed at understanding and highlighting the online newspaper framing of Private Universities in Nigeria.

**Frequency Distribution of Media Coverage by the Punch and Vanguard Newspapers from January to December, 2021.**

**Media Coverage from January-December 2021**

<b>NEWSPAPERS</b>	<b>Media Coverage from Jan.- December, 2021</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
The Punch	22	63%
Vanguard	13	37%
<b>Total</b>	35	<b>100%</b>

Source; Researcher’s field work, 2021

The above table shows the different amount of media coverage by Newspapers, the punch and vanguard between January and June, 2021. The punch newspaper reports 22 news related to Private Universities which represent 63%, while the Vanguard covers 13 news related to Private

Universities which represent 37%. Therefore, the Punch newspaper covers more Private University related news compared to Vanguard newspaper. Below is the figure representing this data:

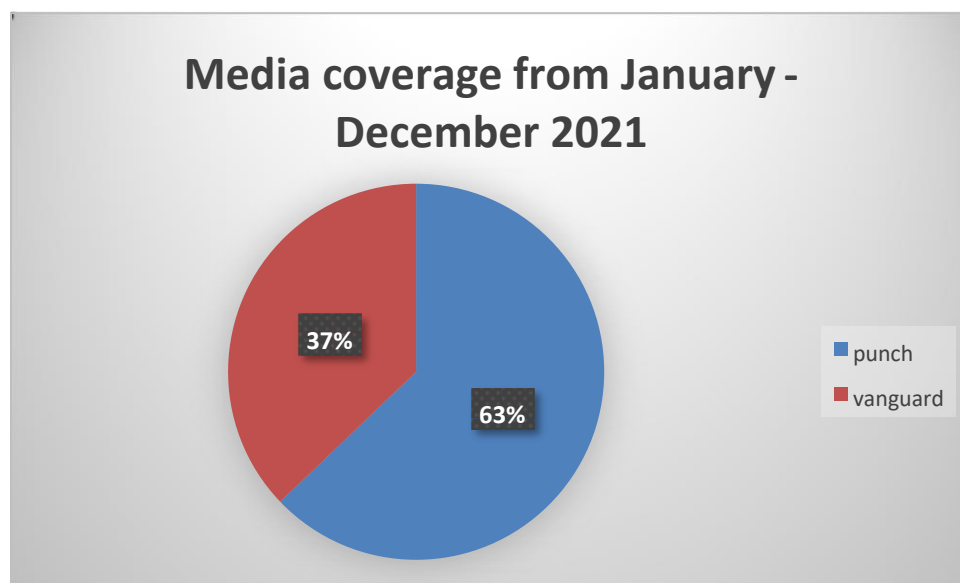


Fig 1.1 Sources:

Researchers' field work 2022

The distribution of news from January to December 2021 are displayed in the table below

Month	Punch	Vanguard
January	2 (9.1%)	0
February	1 (4.5%)	0
March	5 (22.7%)	0
April	4 (18.2%)	0
May	0	0
June	1 (4.5%)	0

July	1 (4.5%)	0
August	0	0
September	2 (9.1%)	4 (30.8%)
October	2 (9.1%)	2 (15.4%)
November	4 (18.2%)	4 (30.8%)
December	0	3 (23.1%)
Total	22 (100%)	13 (100%)

*Source: Researcher's field work, 2022*

From the above table, Vanguard hasn't published news relating or concerning Private Universities from January to August, but reported or published 4 Private University related articles in the month of September, 2 related news coverage in the month of October, 4 in the month of November and 3 in the month of December. While Punch published or reported 2 news concerning Private Universities in January, 1 related news in February, 5 related news in March, 4 related news in April, 0 news was reported in May, August and December, 1 related news in July and also in June, 2 related news was also recorded by Punch in the months of September and August respectively and 4 related news in November.

The Angle of Reports That Received Prominence in The Newspaper

Newspapers	Personalities	Issues	Both	Total
<b>Punch</b>	5 (22.7%)	9 (40.9%)	8 (36.4%)	22 (100%)

<b>Vanguard</b>	7(53.8%)	3 (23.1%)	3 (23.1%)	13 (100%)
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*Source: Researcher's field work, 2022*

The table below shows the angle of reports that received prominence in the online Newspaper news reports concerning Private Universities. The angle of reports covered were personalities and issues. From the data above, punch and vanguard had 22.7% and 53.8% of news that concerns personalities respectively. On the angle of issues, punch had 40.9% while vanguard had 23.1%. Also, on news covering or relating to both angles, Punch had 36.4% while Vanguard had 23.1%.

From the interpretation above, it can be deduced that on the angle of reports related to issues, Punch gave more prominence, while vanguard on the other hand gave more prominence to angle of reports concerning personalities. fig. 2 shows prominence.

sources: field work 2022

Frequency distribution on News Presentation

<b>News Presentation</b>	<b>Punch</b>	<b>Vanguard</b>
<b>Neutral</b>	1 (4.5%)	3 (23.1%)
<b>Objective</b>	13 (59.1%)	5 (38.5)
<b>Subjective</b>	8 (36.4%)	5 (38.5)

The above table shows the news presentation of Private Universities n Newspapers. News reported is neutral, objective or subjective. It is shown that punch reported 1representing 4.5 neutral news story while vanguard reported 3 representing 23.1%, for objective reports punch has 13 representing 59.1% and Vanguard 5 representing 38.5% and for subjective punch had 8 reports representing 36.4% and vanguard had 5 reports representing 38.5%. it can be deduced from this that majority of issues presented in newspaper are objective in presentation.

#### 4.1.4 Frequency distribution on News Presentation

<b>NEWSPAPER</b>	<b>Punch</b>	<b>Vanguard</b>
<b>Editorial</b>	0	1 (7.7%)
<b>Features</b>	0	2 (15.4%)
<b>News</b>	12 (54.5%)	8 (61.5%)
<b>Others</b>	0	2 (15.4%)
<b>Interview</b>	4 (18.2%)	0
<b>Opinion</b>	6 (27.3%)	0

The above table shows the different forms, nature and categories of contents that covers and reports Private University, ranging editorials, features, news, interviews, opinions and other forms of journalistic writing. From the above table, the Punch and Vanguard Newspapers covers Private University related news majorly through standard news reporting with 54.5% and 61.5% respectively. However, it further shows that the Punch news covers more through news reporting than the Vanguard Newspapers. Furthermore, the vanguard newspaper covers Private University through editorials, features and others with 7.7%, 15.4% and 15.4% respectively. While Punch covers Private University through interviews and opinion with 18.2% and 27.3% respectively.

#### Frequency distribution on news Interpretation

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Punch</b>	<b>Vanguard</b>
<b>Unfavourable</b>	12 (54.4%)	8 (61.5%)
<b>Favourable</b>	4 (18.2%)	1 (7.7%)
<b>Neutral</b>	6 (27.3%)	4 (30.8%)

The above table show the distribution for the news interpretation for both Vanguard and Punch.

From the data above, 54.4% of the news covered by punch on Private Universities were deemed Unfavourable, 18.2% of the news was unfavourable and 27.3% was neutral. Also 61.5% of the news covered by Vanguard was unfavourable, 7.7% of the news favorable and 30.8% was neutral.

#### Data Analysis

#### **4.2.1 Descriptive statistics of the distribution of journalistic writing of news coverage of Private University by Vanguard and Punch, January-December 2021.**

<i>Row1(The Punch Newspaper)</i>		<i>Row2(Vanguard Newspaper)</i>	
Mean	2.09	Mean	2.85
Standard Error	.146	Standard Error	.222
Standard Deviation	.684	Standard Deviation	.801
Sample Variance	.468	Sample Variance	.641
Kurtosis	-.649	Kurtosis	1.506
Skewness	.491	Skewness	.616
Range	2	Range	3
Minimum	1	Minimum	1
Maximum	3	Maximum	4

Sum	46	Sum	37
Count	6	Count	6

The above table shows the descriptive statistics between the two Newspapers regarding the journalistic writing form of coverage. It should be recalled that table 4.1.4 highlights the reportage and coverage of Private Universities to be disseminated through one of these six (6) counts such as Editorial, Features, News, Others, Interview, Opinion. From the table thus, it reveals however that the Vanguard newspaper 2.85 averagely covers more Private University related news than the Punch newspaper 2.09. In the kurtosis of the research, the Punch is below 1 (-.649) and the Vanguard is 1 (1.506). Simply put, a high Kurtosis is bad, while a low is good. This simply means that punch newspaper covers more Private University news than the vanguard newspaper. However, both the punch and Vanguard Newspapers are rightly (positively) skewed given that they are above positive.

From the data provided, newspaper media covers Private University as the punch records a value of .486 in relation to the Vanguard's .641. However, given the total number of newspaper publication in the last 1 years of study, arguably, newspaper coverage on Private University is relatively low.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### **Research Question 1: What is the frequency of newspaper reports on Private Universities?**

The frequency of newspaper paper report on Private Universities shows: punch reported 22 relevant stories representing 63% concerning Private Universities, while vanguard reported 13 representing 37% of the total issues covered relevant stories concerning Private Universities. Also, the newspaper firm with the highest constant monthly article publishing relating to Private Universities is punch as it reported news on Private universities every month from January to December of 2021. However, the frequency of newspaper report for vanguard is significantly low, reporting score of 3 months out of 12 months in a year. From this it can be deduced that Newspapers have a low coverage of Private University issues which portrays a form of side-lining of their activities from their reports.

As a result, by consistently highlighting that specific topic as significant, Newspapers give readers something to consider through their reports. This likewise explains why agenda-setting places a strong emphasis on the significance given to problems as they are brought about by social activities. No matter who is engaged, the media portrays the probe's contents as significant, which is why it receives greater attention.

Empirical research that emphasizes the importance of media frames that emphasized personalization and conflict orientation support the aforementioned conclusion. (Rhee, 1997; Claes De Vreese, Boomgarden, & Semetko, 2005; De Vreese & Semetko, 2002; Cappella & Jamieson, 1996). This research discovered that while people and conflict are the traditional frames for topics, media prioritize these two elements in their background reporting.

### **Research Question 2: What angles of Private Universities received prominence in the Newspapers covered?**

Vanguard newspaper gave prominence to the angle of personalities while punch gave prominence to the angle of issues by covering news that revealed the issues facing Private Universities in Nigeria. From all indications, some Newspapers gave prominence to institutions



rather than personalities that make the stories while others gave prominence to personalities as well as issues rather than institutions which these personalities represent.

Depending on each newspaper's peculiarity or involvement in the topic under examination, Newspapers alluded importance to schools depending on their assessment or the school's performance which is a key determinant of prominence for many newspapers and their editors. Readers have a propensity to link a given individual to other relevant concerns the more that person is referenced on one particular issue. If a person is involved in one form of crime that is published in the media, for instance, every other type of crime reported will cause people to reflect on that person and the organization to which he or she belongs.

The way topics are framed in Newspapers by giving them prominence has everything to do with editorial strategy and journalistic quirk. De Vreese (2005, p. 295) observed that "there is minimal strategic frames on news coverage on European affairs in Denmark and blamed it on the nation's political system" in his study on newspaper framing of political issues in a Denmark. As a result, the type of news frames used in a country's newspaper to cover national topics depends on that country's political ideology and orientation.

According to scholars, newspaper stories on people, organizations, or institutions often have a tone that piques the disapproval of the general public. Furthermore, giving one frame more prominence than another is likely to leave a certain impression, which will affect public perception of the institution(s).

### **Research Question 3: How were the issues of Private Universities framed?**

The issue framing of Private Universities was not adequately provided due to gap in news consistence of private Universities. Numerous reported issues were: issues of funding, issues of security, issues relating to the licensing of more private varsities and issues relating to lack of TETFUND support in financing Private University projects. According to Afe Babalola 2021, the dominant frames were bias and subjective.

*"Sadly, Private Universities are attributed to offering courses requiring less infrastructural and manpower base. Limited infrastructure and substandard learning contributions, Interestingly, the innovation in teaching and learning in Private Universities have been applauded by many, Critics alleged Private Institutions to lack the capacity to attract the best hands in the higher institution sector as huge defense came on staff strength of the Private Universities."*

Thus, findings on the extent to which media frames of Private Universities indicates that the two Newspapers reviewed reported stories with similar frames. However, with minimal difference in number. This shows that the two Newspapers evaluated chose similar frames to report their stories in other to draw the attention of the government and public to it.

The findings agree with that of Ita & Ita (2014), which states that, "Since frames have a way of shaping the reader's mind, the study recommended that Newspapers incorporate more dominant positive frames for stories, rather than focus on the trite cause-problem approach."

### **Research Question 4: What are the interpretations given to news of Private Universities?**

The interpretation given to news relating to Private Universities was favourable, unfavourable and neutral. Majority of the news were reported by Vanguard and Punch was news that was supporting Private Universities. Examples of such news were news relating to the licensing of more Private Universities. A few numbers of news articles reported by Vanguard and Punch were seen not to be in support of Private Universities. Examples of such news, is a particular new of ASUU, condemning Private Universities for truncating the work force of federal university. Due to the reason that a significant number of federal university lectures have been flocking over

to Private Universities to lecture there. Another interpretation given is the neutral news; they were a few of that news published by both Vanguard and Punch. This type of were neither condemning nor supporting. The findings on the interpretations show that for the objective presentations, the usual 5Ws & H format for news elements revealed a common feature in all the objective reports on the phenomenon under study.

This affirms the position of (Nisbet and Newman, 2015), The way the news is framed on many issues sets up habits of thought and expectation that, over time, are so powerful that they serve to configure new information to conform to this frame. Hence, there is no such thing as unframed information in the media (Nisbet and Newman, 2015). The level of coverage is invariably low, 146 editions were studied and issues about private universities were reported 35 times.

Personalities were mostly presented more in the reportage of private universities. Issues about private universities were found to be objective. A higher percentage of issues were reported in an unfavourable manner.

Based on the results, the functionalities of newspaper such as surveillance, social responsibility, dissemination of information, communication of issues, and serving as watchdog to the society has been achieved. However, media coverage between the two Newspapers varies, as one covers much more Private University issues than the other. The importance of the newspaper report is seen from the perspective to which it is reported. These reports however, are the product of the efforts put in by the reporter. It is pertinent to stress the role news captioning affects readership and interpretations of the audience. The way frames are understood influences readers perspective and analysis which is fundamentally critical in news presentations.

After analysing a large amount of news published from January 2021 – December 2021, 35 articles were used for analysis. From the analysis of this study, it became evident that the newspaper companies communicate information to the masses through editorials, features, news, opinions and other forms of publication which influences public perception about Private Universities.

In conclusion, the study found that the level of coverage of Private Universities is low, especially in the reportage of relevant news as seen in Vanguard with only 13 reports of Private Universities. As prominence and news angle play critical role on issues presentations, hence, vital issues like; funding, security, licensing protocols and lack of TETFUND support in financing Private University projects are huge determinants of quality control in the University system. The prominence given to Private University news reporting generally in Nigeria is low and this adversely affects public perception of the impact this sector is making in absorbing the teeming admission seekers rendered handicapped by the incessant strike actions of the Federal Universities failure to resolve their issues. This can be seen in the total summation of news reported from January to December where only 35 news items were curated from both punch and vanguard. News majorly reported by Vanguard and Punch were news that were favourable to Private Universities. The presentation of issues arising from the probe was largely objective with a few subjective views and neutral view perspectives from the media understudied. The interpretations given to news relating to Private Universities were favourable, unfavourable and neutral. Majority of the news were reported by Vanguard and Punch were news that were supporting Private Universities.

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