

# **One Country, Two Eras: Analysis of How Three Nigerian Newspapers Framed President Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari's Economic Policies**

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## **Abstract**

The manner in which the mass media frame an issue contributes largely in determining public knowledge and perception of the issue. Such framing also sets the agenda for public opinions, discussions and actions. This study investigated how three Nigerian national dailies framed the economic policies of President Goodluck Jonathan and President Muhammadu Buhari in their first one year in office. The study was anchored on the Framing and Reflective-Projection theories and adopted the content analysis method. Findings indicate that the newspapers studied adopted five categories of frames: **Game and Strategy frame**, Conflict frame, Material frame, Issue frame and Value frame in reporting the economic policies of the two administrations. The first two frames were the most dominant, however, there was 100% prevalence of the five categories in the papers but they appeared in different proportions. The implication of this finding is that the newspapers reported the issue in political and conflict

perspectives. Such perspectives denied citizens the opportunity to understand the core issues and values of such economic policies on their day-to-day lives. The study recommends more media attention on Issues, Materials and Value frames in reporting government policies to enhance citizens' better understanding of government intentions.

**Key Words:** Nigeria, Media Framing, Economic Policies, Transformation Agenda, Change Agenda.

## **Introduction**

Government economic policies constitute major indices for measuring nations' development index. Since the nineteenth century, when Adam Smith wrote his famous book in which he was concerned with finding the reasons behind the wealth of nations, his thesis and findings have been largely corroborated by successive studies that governments' policies predominantly influence the wealth of nations. Acemoglu and Robinson (2013, p. 12) agree that “there is an intricate web of relationship between a nation's development and the economic philosophies of the government”. However, critics of this line of argument hold that development indices predicated on economic determinants is an old paradigm, and advocate for other yardsticks. The commonest of them all is the Human Development Index (HDI). This is published on a regular basis by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its *Human Development Report*. The HDI is a composite index that rates countries according to their overall performance in relation to three criteria: Life Expectancy, Education, and Per Capita Income (using PPP dollars) (UNDP Report, 2013).

This suggests that one of the inalienable constitutional responsibilities of governments is making the wisest economic decisions in the best interest of the greater number of her citizens.

In Nigeria, in the last few years, the two administrations of President Goodluck Jonathan and President Muhammadu Buhari are unarguably among those that made frantic efforts to grow Nigerian's economy. The Goodluck Jonathan administration at inception developed an economic plan termed Transformation Agenda Initiative. The programme was a five-year guide for the infrastructural and economic resuscitation of the country (Aye 2011; Ardo 2012; Mato 2012; Chima, 2013; Gyong, 2013) through the development of all the critical sectors of the economy with strong foundation on the rule of law (Gyong, 2013).

The Transformation Agenda, which focused on three key thematic areas of strong, inclusive and non-inflationary growth; employment generation; and poverty alleviation and value re-orientation, had the then Finance Minister, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, as the head of the economic management team (Abubakar, 2014). The initiative was perceived, at some quarters, as a well thought out idea initiated to address the poverty, unemployment, insecurity needs of the country, and diversification of the economy for total, massive and overall development of the country (Itah, 2012 cited in Abubakar, 2014) and (Gyong, 2013). Some scholars, among them Mato (2013) and Wakil (2013), however, view the Jonathan's policy “as the worst rhetoric of all times”, arguing that the policy was positioned towards the macroeconomic sector and neglected education and social reforms which would have driven the expected transformation.

The defeat of President Goodluck Jonathan at the 2015 presidential poll ushered in the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, as the president of Nigeria. The change in government led to the termination of the Transformation Agenda policy, and the launch of the Change Agenda Policy of the Buhari's administration (Amadou, 2016). The crux of the new policy is to “revive the decayed infrastructure and economy of Nigeria through investment in agriculture, power, education, manufacturing, housing, and other sectors, and diversify the

economy” (Amadou, 2016). Critics of the Buhari's economic policy, on the other hand, describe it as “the height of foolishness” (Johnson, 2016), “archaic and opaque” (Ezekwesili, 2016).

In all these, the media play a vital role in information dissemination to the general public. They do not just disseminate information; they raise large amount of discourse around an issue, thereby, shaping public knowledge and perception of the issue (Brown, 2013, Odoemenam and Okoro, 2013). This is in concurrence with the submission of Anyadike (2015) that the amount of report given to an issue in the media goes a long way in determining public knowledge and perception of the issue. And that such reportage also sets the agenda for public opinion and discussion. This, perhaps, explains Ohaja's (2005) positions that whatever the audience makes of media information or messages is determined by the way such messages are mediated or framed.

Okoh (2005) argues that events bothering on government policies always attract and spur media attention, and that reporting economic policies of different government on different pages of newspapers, especially in Nigeria remains a practical example. Shaping of such reportage sets the agenda for public opinion and discussion. This is technically called 'framing' in media studies parlance. Odoemelan and Okoro (2013) agree that 'framing' refers to the shaping of key events in the society by the news media in a particular perspective. The news frames serve as journalistic tools through which journalists recount a story in a limited amount of space and place an event within its broader context (Hallahan, 1999). This suggests that analysis of mass media content is essential to studying the pattern of media frame of news. Bullock and Williams (2001) add that framing affects how a story is told and influences public perception of the story in question. This is because the public's lack of awareness, along with their reliance on media for information and decision making, make them more likely to be influenced by framing (Auerbach & Bloch- Elkon, 2005). According to them, when the media place

stories in specific frames, they lend a different meaning to the news. This is to say that the media can increase or decrease the salience of issues, which allows the public to remember and make judgments on such issues. The implication is that subtle changes in the wording of the description of a situation might affect how audience members think about the situation and their concern towards the issue.

In view of the above, it is expected that analyzing the way in which Nigerian newspapers framed the economic policies of Presidents Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari will help push the frontiers of our understanding in this area and contribute to igniting intellectual discourse on possible ways to move the nation's economy forward. Meanwhile, a search for literature on media framing and economic policies in Nigeria revealed paucity of intellectual academic conversations on the issue except for a few on public policies, terrorism especially in the United States of America (Valentino, Puglisi, Riccardo and Snyder, 2007; Brown, 2013 ); India (Sadath & Krott, 2013), Nigeria (Ezeah and Emmanuel, 2016) and United Kingdom (Ette, 2016). Lacking also, is information on patterns, prevalent and dominant frames adopted by newspapers in reporting government economic policies in Nigeria. An attempt to fill up this academic and knowledge lacuna prompted this study.

### **Research Objectives**

The general objective of this study is to analyse how three Nigerian newspapers framed Presidents Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari's economic policies in the first twelve months of their administrations. Specifically, the study is meant:

1. To find out the patterns of news frames of the economic policies of GEJ and Buhari administrations.
2. To ascertain the dominant frame used in the coverage of the economic policies of the two administrations.
3. To determine the prevalent frames in the news reportage of

economic policies of the two administrations.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What were the patterns of news frames of the economic policies of GEJ and Buhari administration in Nigerian newspapers?
2. What was the dominant frame used in the coverage of the economic policies of the two administrations?
3. Which of the frames was prevalent in the news reportage of the economic policies of the two administrations?

### **Frames of Analysis**

The kind of frames adopted in a media content analysis study is largely dependent on the subject of inquiry. This study investigated the issue involved under: Game and Strategy frame, Material frame, Issue frame, Value frame and Conflict frame. These frames were developed by Jamieson (1998); Lawrence, (2000); Semetko & Valkenburg (2000); and Lee (2008) for analysing frames in media coverage of similar government policies. The Game and Strategy frame describes political actors who are constructed into a structure of 'winners' and 'losers' with emphasis on the strategies adopted by the key players to sway the outcome of the issues of interest, in our context, the economic policies of the two administrations. The material frame looks at the economic and financial gains of the policies, in our case, the Transformation and Change Agendas. This frame lays emphasis on cost of the policies, the economic implications, and how the policies would be funded by the government. The Issue frame is about the substantive matters of the policies. The fifth frame, the Conflict frame was added for greater clarification of the Game and Strategy frame and to reflect the increasing political polarization of Nigeria. It emphasizes conflict among individuals, groups, or

institutions as a means of capturing audiences' attention (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

### **Scope of Study**

The timeline for this study covers the period of the first twelve months of the both administration (May 29, 2011 – April 29, 2012 and May 29, 2015 – April 29, 2016). This was the period when different economic policies of the administrations dominated discussions and occupied most pages of the nation's newspapers. The study focused on three carefully selected Nigerian newspapers - *The Guardian*, *Vanguard* and *BusinessDay* newspapers. The justification for the selection of these newspapers was on the basis of their reputation for incisive analysis of national issues, detail coverage of business and economic matters, national outlook, and for the sake of comparison.

### **Review of Literature**

#### **Framing and the News Media**

Framing refers to how messages are encoded with meaning so that they can be efficiently interpreted in relationship to existing beliefs or ideas (Chilisa, 2012). Hallahan (1999) sees media framing as the process by which an issue is portrayed in the news media. Goffman (1974) was the first to study framing as a form of communication and defines the concept of “framing” as a “schemata of interpretation” that enables individuals to 'locate, perceive, identify and label' occurrences or life experiences”. Robert Entman modernised this definition by specifying that “to frame a communication text or message is to promote certain facets of a 'perceived reality' and make them more salient in such a way that endorses a specific problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or a treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993, p. 51).

Media frames provide boundaries around a news story.

They help to determine what is and is not newsworthy or notable (Shah, 2002). Journalists rely on media frames to decide what to include in a story and what to leave out, a process that may be conscious, instinctive or culture-bound (Scheufele, & Iyengar, 1999). Just as a picture frame may draw attention to certain details and relegate other elements to the background, a media frame may draw a viewer's attention to specific parts of a journalist's news story, de-emphasize other parts, and leave out some aspects completely (Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss, & Ghanem, 1991).

Today, media effects can be characterised as “social constructionism” (Scheufele, 1999). This is because, mass media construct social reality by “framing images of reality in a predictable and patterned way” (McQuail, 1994, p. 112). Gamson and Modigliani (1989) agree that “media discourse is part of a process by which individuals construct meaning, and public opinion is part of the process by which journalists develop and crystallize meaning in public discourse” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

Generally, the news media employ two main frames: episodic and thematic (Mato, 2012). Episodic news frames are the predominant frames on news media that depict public issues in terms of concrete instances. They focus on discrete events that involve individuals located at specific places and at specific times. Episodic news frames are used about 80 percent of the time in newscasts (Gyong, 2013). Thematic news frames, used about 20 percent of the time, are news frames that place public issues in a broader context by focusing on general conditions or outcomes such as reports on poverty trends (Mato, 2012).

Studies such as those of Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), Abubakar (2014), and **Odoemelam and Okoro (2013)** have shown that the type of news frames employed in a study have profound effects on the way in which target audience understand

the message and attribute responsibility. Iyengar (1991) shares the same view that the use of either the episodic or the thematic news frame affects how individuals assign responsibility to political issues: "...while episodic framing tends to elicit individualistic rather than societal attributions of responsibility, thematic framing has the opposite effect". Since television news is heavily episodic, its effect is generally to induce attributions of responsibility to individual victims or perpetrators rather than to broad societal forces (Iyengar, 1991).

### **Jonathan and the Transformation Agenda**

Several administrations in Nigeria whether military or civilian, had attempted developing some policy documents to serve as guidelines to achieving their development plans. One of such was the 1976 Obasanjo's Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) programme which recorded a great failure such that the critics changed the slogan from '*Operation Feed the Nation*' to '*Obasanjo Fooled the Nation*' (Okoro and Nwafor, 2015). Others include the Green Revolution and Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), War Against Indiscipline (WAI), Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Vision 2010, National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) and the Seven-point Agenda of the Shagari, Babangida, Abacha, Obasanjo and Yar'adua's administrations respectively (Abubakar, 2014).

The Jonathan administration followed the footsteps of the other administrations by launching the Transformation Agenda "to serve as guiding document for the infrastructure and economic turnaround of the country in five years" (Aye 2011; Ardo 2012; Mato 2012; Chima, 2013; Emmanuel, 2013). The policy was aimed at repositioning the country to fast track development in all the critical sectors of the economy with strong foundation on the rule of law (Gyong, 2013). To ensure that the aim of the programme was achieved, Goodluck Jonathan, assembled and

organised an economic management team of 28 renowned technocrats headed by Dr Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, the then Minister of Finance. It is on record that the Transformation Agenda focused on 3 key thematic areas: strong, inclusive and non-inflationary growth; employment generation and poverty alleviation; and value re-orientation of Nigerians (Abubakar, 2014).

Many commentators have appraised the programme since it was conceived. Itah (2012) observes that the Transformation Agenda was a policy intended to address the poverty, unemployment, insecurity issues and over dependence on oil, thereby transforming and diversifying the economy for the overall development of the country. Likewise, Olusegun Aganga, the then Minister of Trade and Investment, described the policy as a holistic effort geared towards enthroning good governance, stable power supply, effective security and opening opportunities in non-oil sectors such as manufacturing and solid minerals, investment in infrastructure, education and anti-corruption crusade (Abubakar, 2014).

Similarly, Gyong (2013) writes that the Transformation Agenda was hinged on three key areas such as “strong, inclusive and non-inflationary growth; employment generation and poverty alleviation and value re-orientation of the citizenry”. This would be achieved through job creation, education, health, power, transportation, Niger Delta development, Labour and productivity, foreign policy and economic diplomacy, legislature, good governance, judiciary and justice delivery, public expenditure management, and information technology.

Despite the lofty promises of the Jonathan Transformation Agenda, it was not devoid of criticisms and dissenting voices. For instance, Mato (2012, p. 7) describes the programme as “the worst rhetoric of all times”, arguing that the policy direction tilted towards the macroeconomic sector and neglected education and social reforms which would have driven the expected transformation. In the same vein, Professor Ben Nwabueze,

former minister of education was described in Wakil (2013) as saying that the Transformation Agenda should have embraced other aspects of economic affairs besides enhancement of economic growth and development.

### **Buhari and Change Agenda**

With the victory of the opposition party, the All Progressive Party (APC), during the 2015 Presidential election in Nigeria, the stage was set for the emergence of a new President in Nigeria in the person of President Muhammadu Buhari. Buhari in his inaugural address declared to the world that his administration shall belong to nobody but to everybody. On that premise, he announced that his government would pursue vigorously the war on corruption and with forthwith usher in a new economic policy anchored on change called 'Change Agenda'. The foundation of the Change Agenda was on the notion that the economy and infrastructure of Nigeria were in decay state resulting from long years of neglect and corruption and required overall change to develop (Begnium, 2016).

The President, Muhammadu Buhari, speaking at a National Economic Council Retreat, March 20, 2016 in Abuja the Federal Capital Territory, observed that Nigeria required enormous transformation for a holistic economic and infrastructural development to be witnessed; stressing that for his government to revive the economy, greater emphasis must be placed on restoring stability and security, creating jobs and eradicating poverty and fighting corruption (*Vanguard*, March 21, 2016). To the desired change, President Buhari stressed the need to invest in agriculture, power, education, manufacturing, housing, and other sectors to diversify the economy. This he said forms the nucleus of his Change Agenda (Asinugo, 2016).

The announcement of the economic policy came with different reactions from different people. For instance, the Vice president of Nigeria, Professor Yemi Osibanjo, speaking at the

Diaspora Day 2015 celebration, lauded the economic policies of the administration arguing that for a new Nigeria to emerge, there is need to build an economy led by a strong and responsible private sector; a nation of self food sufficiency and production based and a nation where there will be a stable and constant power supply (*Vanguard*, August 8<sup>th</sup> 2015).

However, the economic policies have received more knocks than praise from commentators. Johnson (2016) describes the Buhari's economic policies as “Height of Foolishness” noting that such policies had failed on arrival in as much as they are tilted towards Venezuela's exchange policy and China's failed market policy. According to him, the policies are not investors friendly and would force some investors to leave the Nigerian market. Also, Ezekwesili (2016) rebuffed the same economic policy calling it “archaic” and “opaque”. She argued that the policy of “command and control” adopted by the present government would not only encourage massive corruption and abuse of power, but would make life more miserable to the poor.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

This study was built on the assumptions and arguments of Framing and Reflective-Projection theories. The decision to adopt these theories hinged on the fact that the study was concerned with message or text theories. Hence, framing and reflective projection was considered best situated for analyzing the framing of the economic policies of Goodluck Jonathan and Buhari administrations in Nigerian newspapers.

### **Framing Theory**

Framing theory has attracted extensive literature (Gamson, 1989; Gamson, 1992; Entman, 1993; Norris, 1995; Kuypers, 2002; Callaghan, 2005; Chong, 2007). According to communication and media scholars, framing was viewed from the point of either theory or approach of analyzing media content and messages

(Entman, 2002; Druckman, 2007; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). The theory states that readers or consumers of media messages are able to interpret and evaluate new information based on the frames used by the media (Norris, 1995). This suggests that journalists place 'figurative picture frames around the ever-moving target of events and actions, thereby focusing our attention on particular issues, ideas, and individuals while obscuring what lies outside the frame' (Boykoff, 2011, p. 345).

According to McQuail (2005, p. 555), Framing theory is defined as a philosophical postulation that explains "the way in which news content is typically shaped and contextualised by journalists". This explains that journalists deliberately create, select and shape news stories in particular frames to reflect the reality they wish to form or create. Entman (1993) agrees that framing involves selection and salience, which means a certain aspect of issues are constructed to appear as perceived reality and made more pronounced in a communication text in a way that "promotes a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman, 1993, p. 52 cited in Brown, 2014, p. 5). Entman (2010) however argues that a frame must provoke existing elements for it to be successful.

However, despite the justification of a Framing theory, the theory has come under scholarly criticisms. McCombs (2004) argues that framing is not strong enough to be seen as a theory but, rather a part or sub-set of Agenda Setting Theory. Nevertheless, some media scholars raise a counter argument against McCombs' criticism of the Framing theory. According to them, there exists a meeting and different points of agreement and departure among framing, agenda setting and priming theories (Lee, 2010; Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007; and Weaver, 2007).

The suitability of this theory to this study derives from Weaver (2007) argument which suggests that while agenda setting and priming deal with "which" issue received media prominence,

frequency and what effects on readers, framing deals with “how” such issues are constructed in the media. This justifies the suitability of this theory to this study because it seeks to ascertain 'how' the selected Nigerian dailies framed the economic policies of Goodluck and Buhari regimes.

### **Reflective-Projection Theory**

The reflective projection theory shares a common boundary with framing theory owing to the fact that both dwell on the contents and messages on the pages of newspapers or broadcast media. Propounded in 1968 by Lee Leovinger, the theory offers explanation on image representation in the media (Leovinger, 1969; Folarin, 1998; Ngoa, 2012). It argues that like a mirror that cannot create an image, the media cannot create or project something that does not exist. Hence, reflective-projection theory suggests that the press projects or portrays accurate or biased picture and “it can reflect an image that is very vague and ambiguous or one that is very clearly defined” (Loevinger 1969, p. 284). It further postulates that readers, viewers and press consumers “see their own version on the pages of newspaper, magazine, radio, television and other forms of media; and that messages projected by the media can make them happy or dissatisfied (Abubakar, 2014). As a result, the projected issue, “offer selected sensations which provide the basis for individual interpretations that vary with intellectual, emotional, and sensory responses” (Loevinger, 1969). This clearly explains why press coverage on a particular government, government policies or politicians can represent a favourable reality or unfavourable reality (Odoemelum and Okoro, 2013).

This theory has also come under heavy attacks for being unscientific and intuitive. Folarin (1998) argues that the theory is part of the commonsense perspectives that was qualitatively constructed and it emanated from deep and reflective thinking by its proponents.

The reflective projection theory relates to this study because the manner in which the economic policies of the two administrations were reflected and projected on the newspaper pages could influence the interpretation of such policies by the media consumers, in this case Nigerians. The projection of the policies in the papers is also a reflection of the deduction of such journalists of the policies in question.

Hence, it is hoped that the combination of these theories would enable readers to relate with the key issues and that they should be able to guide them in making reasonable inferences about the newspaper framing of the economic policies of former President Goodluck Jonathan and President Muhammadu Buhari's administrations.

### **Method of Study**

This study adopted the content analysis method, which according to Reinard (2001), aids analysis of manifest contents of communications to discover the extant patterns. To gather data for the content analysis, the researcher triangulated the process by combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Chilisa (2012) and Cresswell and Parker (2011) agree that objectivity can be achieved through combination of multiple measures and triangulating the data collection process. The quantitative procedure involved the use of numeric values to collate, analyse and present data. This was done using statistical tools like frequency, percentages, SPSS and Excel. The qualitative data was collected using the discourse analysis research technique.

The population of the study encompassed all reports in the Nigerian dailies on the economic policies of Goodluck Ebele Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari within the study period (May 29, 2011 – April 29, 2012 and May 29, 2015 – April 29, 2016). Two sampling techniques were used to determine the sample size. Purposive technique was employed in selecting three Nigerian

dailies (*The Guardian, the Vanguard and BusinessDay*). The three dailies published a total of 1,560 editions within the study period with the exclusion of Saturday and Sunday editions (see Table 1 below). The justification for their selection draws from the fact that they are national in outlook, they report business and the economy in details (Odoemelam, Okeibunor and Okorom, 2016) and also for the purpose of comparison.

**Table 1: Showing Population of the Study**

May 29, 2011 – April 29, 2012 (GEJ's Administration)				May 29, 2015 – April 29, 2016 (Buhari's Administration)		
Newspaper	No of editions per week	No of weeks in a year	Total number of editions per year	No of editions per week	No of weeks in a year	Editions per year
<i>The Guardian</i>	5	52	260	5	52	260
<i>The Vanguard</i>	5	52	260	5	52	260
<i>BusinessDay</i>	5	52	260	5	52	260
<b>Total</b>			<b>780</b>			<b>780</b>
<b>TOTAL POPULATION OF STUDY =</b>				<b>1,560</b>		

Secondly, the Nwanna's (1981) formula was used to calculate the sample size as follows:

$$n = \frac{NV(P)}{100}$$

Where:

n= sample size

NV=Population value

P=Expected frequency value = (10%)

$$\text{Therefore } n = \frac{1,560(10\%)}{100}$$

$$n = 156$$

n = 156 (Actual sample size).

In determining the sampling frame, the composite week procedure was adopted. Riffe, Aust and Lacy (1993) in Wimmer and Dominick (2011, p. 163) demonstrated that “a composite week sampling procedure is superior to both a random sample and a consecutive day sample when dealing with newspaper contents”. Thus, the editions of newspapers for the month under investigation were grouped according to the days of the week and each of the editions within the days of the week was selected at random.

In all, 26 editions were studied for each of the newspapers in the first era (May 29, 2011 – April 29, 2012). Same was repeated in the second era (May 29, 2015 – April 29, 2016). This gives a total of 156 editions. The composite sample was designed in such a way that the editions randomly selected applied for the three newspapers.

The study used the code sheet for gathering information on the frames in the news coverage of the economic policies of the two administrations, and the code guide served as an instructional or training/resource material for the coders. The Inter-coder reliability was 0.86. This was calculated using Holsti's inter-coder reliability formula of Reliability =  $\frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$

Where: M = the number of coding decisions which two coders agree. N1 & N2 = the number of coding decisions by the first and second coder respectively.

News was the focal unit of analysis. The justification is that news is the main genre of media content that gives an accurate and objective account of an occurrence (Okoro and Odoemelam, 2013; Ogunsiji, 1989).

## **Data Presentation**

**Research Question One:** What were the patterns of news frames of the economic policies of GEJ and Buhari administration in Nigerian newspapers?

**Table 2: Patterns of news frames of the economic policies of GEJ and Buhari's administration in *Guardian* newspaper**

<b>Patterns of News Frames in <i>The Guardian</i></b>	<b>GEJ's Administration</b>	<b>Buhari's Administration</b>
Game and Strategy frame	20 (26%)	2 (3%)
Material Frame	8 (10%)	25 (42%)
Issue Frame	10 (13%)	12 (20%)
Value frame	15 (19%)	20 (33%)
Conflict Frame	25 (32%)	1 (2%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>78 (100%)</b>	<b>60 (100%)</b>

As shown on Table 2 above, there were a total of 78 and 60 frames used by *the Guardian* newspaper in the coverage of the economic policies of the Jonathan and Buhari's administrations respectively. Out of this, starting with the Transformation Agenda of Goodluck Jonathan, the attribution of conflict frame had the highest frequency of 25 (32%) while for the Change Agenda policy of President Buhari, the highest was the Material frame with 25, representing (45%) of the entire frame. Others are as presented in Table 2 above.

**Table 3: Patterns of news frames of the economic policies of GEJ and Buhari's administrations in *the Vanguard* newspaper**

<b>Patterns of News Frame in <i>Vanguard</i></b>	<b>GEJ</b>	<b>BUHARI</b>
Game and Strategy frame	20 (56%)	25 (32%)
Material frame	10 (17%)	15 (19%)
Issue frame	5 (9%)	8 (10%)
Value frame	10 (38%)	10 (13%)
Conflict frame	13 (22%)	20 (26%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>58 (100%)</b>	<b>78 (100%)</b>

Table 3 above shows that *the Vanguard* newspaper recorded a total of 58 stories on the Transformation Agenda and 78 on the Change Agenda. The Game and Strategy frame was employed 20 times representing 56% in reporting the GEJ's transformation agenda. The least was Issue frame which had 5, representing 9%. For the Change Agenda policy, 25 representing 32% was devoted to the game and strategy frame. This shows that the dominant frame employed in the *Vanguard* in reporting the two agendas was the Game and Strategy frame with 20 (56%) and 25 (32%) respectively.

**Table 4: Pattern of news frame in *the BusinessDay* Newspaper**

<b>Patterns of news Frame by BusinessDay</b>	<b>GEJ</b>	<b>BUHARI</b>
Game and Strategy frame	20 (31%)	15 (26%)
Material frame	5 (8%)	10 (18%)
Issue frame	3 (5%)	10 (18%)
Conflict frame	32 (49%)	8 (14%)
Value frame	5 (%)	14 (24%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>65(100%)</b>	<b>57 (100%)</b>

Table 4 above indicates that there were a total of 65 stories on the Jonathan's transformational agenda in *BusinessDay* newspaper and 57 for the Buhari's change policy within the period under review. For the Jonathan's transformation agenda, the game and strategy frame appeared 20 times (31%) while the material and value frames appeared 5 times each representing (8%) each. However, during the Change agenda era of the Buhari administration, the Nation newspaper gave more emphasis to the game and strategy frame 25 (26%).

**Research Question 2:** What was the dominant frame used in the coverage of the economic policies of the two administrations?

**Table 5: Showing the dominant frame used in the coverage of the economic policies of the two administrations in the three selected newspapers**

DF	<i>Guardian</i>		<i>Vanguard</i>		<i>BusinessDay</i>		Total
	GEJ	Buhari	GEJ	Buhari	GEJ	Buhari	
G & S F	20 (26%)	2(3%)	20 (56%)	25(32%)	20 (31%)	15(26%)	102 (26%)
MF	8 (10%)	25 (42%)	10 (17%)	15 (19%)	5 (8%)	10 (18%)	23 (18%)
IF	10 (13%)	12 (20%)	5 (9%)	8 (10%)	3 (5%)	10 (18%)	48 (12%)
VF	15(19%)	20 (33%)	10 (38%)	10 (13%)	32 (49%)	8 (14%)	95 (24%)
CF	25 (32%)	1 (2%)	13(22%)	20 (26%)	5 (8%)	14(124%)	78 (20%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>78(100%)</b>	<b>60 (100%)</b>	<b>58(100%)</b>	<b>78 (100%)</b>	<b>65(100%)</b>	<b>57(100%)</b>	<b>396 (100)</b>

Table 5 above shows that a total of 396 stories on the two policies of the two administrations appeared in the three newspapers during the period of study. Out of this, the game and strategy frame had the highest frequency 102, representing (26%). It means therefore that, the game and strategy frame was the dominant frame used in the coverage of the Transformation Agenda and Change Agenda policies. This shows that Nigerian newspapers presented issues in the light of Game and Strategy frame that is attacking the economic policies of the two administrations instead of advocating for their acceptance by the citizens. This was followed by the Value frame which had a frequency of 95 (24%). The least was the Issue frame, which had a frequency of 48 (12%).

**Research Question 3:** Which of the frames were prevalent in the news reportage of the economic policies of the two administrations?

**Table 5: Showing the prevalent frames in the news reportage of the economic policies of the two administrations.**

	<b>G and S F</b>	<b>MF</b>	<b>IF</b>	<b>VF</b>	<b>CF</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Guardian</i>	20 (26%) – 2(3%)	8 (10%) – 25 (42%)	10(13%) – 12 (20%)	15(19%) – 20 (33%)	25 (32%) – 1 (2%)	78(100%)– 60 (100%)
<i>Vanguard</i>	20(56%)-- 25(32%)	10 (17%) -- 15 (19%)	5 (9%)--- 8 (10%)	10 (38%)--- -10 (13%)	13(22%) --- 20 (26%)	58(100%)- 78 (100%)
<i>BusinessDay</i>	20 (31%) – 15(26%)	5 (8%) – 10 (18%)	3 (5%) - 10 (18%)	32 (49%) – 8 (14%)	5 (8%) – 14(124%)	65(100%) – 57(100%)

As can be deduced from Table 5 above, all the 5 categories of frames representing (100%), were prevalent (common) in the selected newspapers. These frames include the Game and Strategy frame, Material frame, Issue frame, Value frame, and Conflict frame. However, that they were commonly used does not suggest, that all the frames were dominant. Some were highly used while others were not.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The study discovered different patterns of frames used by the studied newspapers in the coverage of economic policies of the former President Goodluck Jonathan and the current President Muhammadu Buhari for a period of one year. For the Goodluck Jonathan economic policies, *The Guardian* and *BusinessDay* newspapers emphasized the Conflict frame 32% each as against 13% emphasized by the *Vanguard newspaper*. However, for the Buhari economic policies, the *Guardian* and the *Vanguard* newspapers emphasized more on the Game and Strategy frame 42% against 26% by *BusinessDay*. The implication is that during the GEJ era, the Nigerian newspapers framed his economic policies in the Conflict frame by emphasizing more on conflict of interest of the policies on different individuals and groups in order to capture the attention of the citizens. Attention on the quality of

the economic policies was not put into consideration. On the other hand, the Buhari economic policies were framed mostly on the Game and Strategy frame. The implication is that the policies were covered in the same manner as election campaigns, with more emphasis on attack over advocacy, tactics over issues, and scandal over substance.

Also, among the five frames adopted for measuring newspaper coverage of the economic policies of the two, the dominant frame identified in the coverage, was the **Game and Strategy frame** (26%). Findings also show that there was 100% prevalence in the use of the frames by the newspapers in the coverage. Although the frames did not appear in the same proportion as some frames appeared more than the others. The hallmark is that all the frames were represented in the newspapers analyzed.

### **Conclusion**

Arising from the findings of this study, the paper concludes that: (1) the papers adopted Game and Strategy, Material, Issue, Value and Conflict frames in their pattern of framing of the economic policies of the two administrations. (2) Whereas 'Conflict' frame dominated in the reportage of Goodluck Jonathan's Transformation Agenda, Game and Strategy frame was predominant in reporting President Muhammadu Buhari's Change Agenda. (3) There was prevalence of 'game and strategy' frame in the three newspapers' reportage of the economic policies of the two administrations.

### **Recommendations**

The study recommends greater adoption of 'Issue and Value' frame for Nigerian newspapers in reporting government economic policies to enhance citizens' better understanding of the real content and intent of such policies instead of 'Conflict' and 'Game and Strategy' frames which more or less, attack governments'

ideas, and focus on accusations and counter accusations respectively, once the policies are perceived not in line with the reporters' and newspapers' biases and idiosyncrasies. This would provide more ample opportunities for the general public to gauge every economic policy of government on its merits, and take better informed decisions for their individual benefits and collective national interest and development. It would also help to increase public trust on the government, and engender more concrete and constructive criticisms of their economic programmes and policies.

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