

ASSESSMENT OF FRAMING OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES (ASUU) STRIKE OF 2022 BY SELECTED ONLINE NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS

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Abstract

In this paper, selected online Nigerian newspapers' (Leadership, The Punch, and Vanguard) framing of the ASUU strike of 2022 from February 14 - October 14, 2022, is examined. The study investigated the frequency of framing of the ASUU strike of 2022, what were the themes used in framing the strike, the types of frames that dominated the coverage, and the direction of framing. Anchored in the framing theory and the agenda-setting theory, a total of 255 newspaper editions were analyzed for content in this study. Data was collected using a coding sheet and analysed. Results are that the framing of the ASUU strike was less frequent in the newspapers, but Vanguard had the most frequent of the reports with 51.9%. It was also found that insincerity in negotiation and implementation of MOA with 32(16.7%), protest 22(11.5%), and delegitimation 13 (6.8%) were the most predominant themes found in the strike. Findings also revealed that the ASUU strike has a dominant frame in the coverage of definition/motivation with 43(22.5%) reports. It was further established on the direction framing of the strike that 132 (69.1%) news reports were positively framed. This research concluded that the newspapers did not accord much attention to the framing definition/motivation of the 2022 ASUU strike. Therefore, this study recommended, among other things that Nigerian newspapers, in their framing of collective action, emphasize the definition/motivation frame to justify the essence of such an action in the public domain.

Keyword: Newspaper Framing, Nigeria, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The mass media is a purveyor of information in society. Kirkorian, Wartella and Anderson (as cited in Oduor, 2015) acknowledge that the mass media plays an important role in human life today. With its traditional function of entertaining, enlightening and informing the public, the authors argue that the media is still

today the most important means of socialisation.

As a medium of mass communication, the newspaper performs the basic functions of providing information, education, entertainment, surveillance, and correlation in society. The functions of newspapers in society constitute what Akinfeleye (2011, p.12) refers to as "the

philosophical foundations of the mass media."He goes on to say that the fundamental philosophical underpinnings of the media of communication in any society include informing, educating, and entertaining, and more recently, setting the agenda for the people, overseeing governance, and engendering the accountability of the government to the people.

Mboso and Ezeh (2019) argue that newspapers, as important printed media of communication, are used to inform, enlighten, and entertain readers in socio-political, economic, health, and other fields by providing analysis, debate, and critique on a variety of topics. As a medium of mass communication, newspapers serve as a tool for shaping individual and collective thoughts, a means of controlling social spheres, and essentially a place where cultural meanings are constructed, shaped and renegotiated. According to Weber (as cited in Suleiman, 2021), as a medium of mass communication, the newspaper is a tool for shaping individual and collective thought, a means of controlling social spheres, and essentially a means through which cultural meanings are constructed, shaped and renegotiated.

The mass media in the performance of their education, surveillance, mobilisation, agenda-setting and other functions reported the ASUU strike. For example, according to Tolu-Kolawole and Edema (2022), *The Punch* reports that the union launched the previous strike on 14 February 2022. ASUU, founded in 1978, has often protested against the government's failure to honour union demands through strike actions (Ugwuona, 2016). For example, the union has in the past carried out strikes to challenge the military regimes of General Muhammad Buhari, General Ibrahim Babangida, and General Sani Abacha, the strike organised by Kokori's NUPENG, the strike to void June 1994 elections and a general strike against fuel subsidies in 2012 (Ojonemi, Onechojon & Attai, 2013). Drawing on various Nigerian statistics, Omidiora (2013) also notes that ASUU's history of strikes in Nigeria dates could be traced back to post-colonial times and continues to the present day. The union has also gone on strike to demand fair wages, university autonomy and funding for Nigeria's public universities, among other things. The union has also staged strikes to demand fair wages, university autonomy and funding for Nigeria's federal universities, among others. Consistent with the above, strikes actions in Nigeria have been described as an ongoing problem that has resisted resolution since the 1980s.

Despite previous protests and pressure by unions (of

which the ASUU is a part), urging the government to act upon their demands and to address the ASUU strike action in Nigeria, the ASUU strike action continues. The fact that the ASUU launched another strike on February 14, 2022, for failure to comply with an agreement with the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) is an inadequate solution to the ASUU strike. It shows that no solution has been found yet.

It is well known that people in all societies turn to the media for news and information about issues and events surrounding them (Abana, 2018). Thus, it could be assumed that people turn to newspapers for reports on the ASUU strike. The media has, no doubt, provided a context through which their audience members understand the ASUU strike hence the need for empirical investigation. Therefore, it would not be out of place to assess the Nigerian newspaper framing of the ASUU strike of 2022.

Framing in communication is about how news, events, or happenings in society are presented to the public. Framing is the way communication sources define and structure communication information (Ugochukwu & Nwolu, 2021). There is no gainsaying that newspapers reported the ASUU strike of 2022 and they presented their reports in various ways and shades. That is to say that they framed their stories on the dispute. However, how they framed it can only be determined through empirical investigation. It is in this light that this study sets out to assess how online Nigerian newspapers framed the ASUU strike of 2022.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research work is guided by the following questions:

1. What is the frequency of framing of the ASUU strike of 2022 by selected online Nigerian newspapers?
2. What were the themes used in framing the 2022 ASUU strike?
3. What types of frames dominated the coverage of the 2022 ASUU strike?
4. What was the direction of framing the 2022 ASUU strike?

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Framing

The kernel of framing is that the way issues are presented in the mass media can affect audience perceptions of such issues. The conceptualisation of framing has been somewhat elusive. However, Entman (1993, p. 52) bequeaths a landmark insight into the

concept of framing when he says that "framing is essentially concerned with selection and prominence." For Epkins (2011, p. 19), framing describes "the process of selecting and excluding content, emphasising some aspects more than others to convey a particular point of view."

A communication message, whether informative or persuasive, needs a narrative structure to organise its discourse. For the media, reporting seems to be organised around narrative conventions that describe who is doing what and why. Tuchman (1978) describes the news as a window through which executives limit our perception of reality by narrowing our perception of different realities and focusing on specific sections. The result of these processes is that some aspects of reality perceived through the news become more important than others.

Therefore, news is a textual and visual structure built around a central axis of thought, viewed from a particular point of view and by information experts (not just them), and interpreted by viewers exposed to the news. From this approach, framing selects aspects of reality and applies them to define a problem, diagnose its causes, make ethical judgments, and recommend solutions and actions. It can be defined as a process of emphasis or importance (Entmann, 1993).

The American political scientist, Robert Entman, one of the most prolific researchers of frame theory, wrote in 1993 about how frames are constructed, how they are represented in the text, and how they affect the human mind (Ardevol-Abreu, 2015). Entman felt that this lack of theory made it difficult for robust and unified progress in the discipline and required very different methodological approaches, both in terms of measuring impact on individuals and audiences.

Weaver (2007) argues that the terminology framework still lacks clear and outdated concepts to express the model of interpreting events, agendas about the properties of a particular subject or object, and the process of messages affecting people (Van Gorp, 2007). Researchers studying frames have found their definitions of this concept to be highly inconsistent, leading to contradictions at times (McCombs, 2006).

From the previous conceptual description of framing, it appears that framing as a theoretical construct is closely tied to the agenda-setting tradition, but

broadens its focus to the nature of the problem at hand rather than to a specific topic (Druckman, 2007). In the meantime, a superficial review or distinction between the three media impact models is not out of place, at least to reduce existing conceptual confusion. Three models, flaming, agenda setting, and priming have received considerable academic attention since their inception. Some argue that framing and priming are second-level agenda-setting, while others argue that agenda-setting and priming are accessibility models and training is a model of applicability (McCombs & Shaw, 1972 Years, Scheufele & Tewkesbury, 2007).

Collective Action Frames

Frames help understand events and happenings, help organise experiences, and guide actions. It simplifies and condenses aspects, but "aims to mobilise potential supporters and voters, win public support, and demoralise opponents" (Snow & Benford 1988, p.198). The frameworks for collective action, therefore, are the action-oriented beliefs and meanings that inspire and justify the activities and campaigns of social movement organisations.

Academic research on collective action, such as framing of union strikes, states that the framing process is considered a central driving force for understanding the characteristics and trajectories of collective action movements, alongside processes of resource mobilisation and political opportunity (Egbunike, 2015). Building on Wilson's (1973) analysis of ideology into its three components, Snow and Benford (1988) describe these central framing tasks as 'diagnostic framing' (problem identification and attribution), prognostic framing, and what is called motivational framing. In pursuing these fundamental tasks, activists direct their attention to the interrelated issues of mobilising consensus and mobilising action (Klandermans 1984). Simply put, the former encourages or promotes consent, while the latter encourages action and pushes people from balconies to barricades.

But the collective action framework also defines, inspires, and validates the organisation and functioning of collective action. Benford and Snow (2000) propose three main framing tasks. The diagnostic framework asks the following questions: What is the cause of the problem? While the prediction framework aims to find a solution, the motivational framework identifies and drives the mobilisation needed to validate/validate campaigns through

collective action platforms. To date, scholars have devoted considerable empirical attention to identifying and analysing the different types of diagnostics, prognostic and behavioural frameworks that specific mass action movements such as built and provided (Benford, 1993; Johnson, 1997). The significance of framing theory lies in its importance in a developing country such as Nigeria, where the democratic experiment is still being tested. In the context of ASUU strike 2022, this study hopes to contribute to the global conversation about framing theory.

Strike

In this study, a strike is seen as a refusal to work organised by a group of workers as a form of protest, often to obtain concessions from the employer. A strike is actually a form of protest. This is the result of unresolved conflicts between employers and employees (Enomah, 2010). Strikes are defined to last for a specific period (i.e. days, weeks, months or years), while unrestricted strikes have no specific time limit. Warning strikes last for several days and are intended to alert government or agency officials of a planned all-out strike.

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), according to ASUU, Nnamdi Azikiwe University (as cited in Ntiasagwe, 2020), is a union in which its activities are legal and in accordance with spirit and practices of the labour movement. The (ASUU) was established in 1978 as the successor to the National Association of College Teachers in 1965 and is comprised of teaching staff from all universities; federal and state in the country. Trade unions were actively involved in the fight against military rule in the 1980s.

The history of strikes in the Nigerian university system dates back to May 20, 1980. At that time, a commercial dispute was declared in the governing board of Nigerian universities, calling for the creation of a special agency on university funding, academic freedom, autonomy, and establishment. Working conditions of university staff (Yasunoba, 2015). In 1988, unions organised a nationwide strike demanding fair wages and university autonomy. As a result, on August 7, 1988, ASUU was banned and all its assets were confiscated. It was allowed to reopen in 1990 but was banned again after another strike on 23 August 1992 (Nwala, 1994).

On May 3, 1993, ASUU members announced another five-month strike, protesting the University's repeal of the University Salary Scale (UASS). In 1994, ASUU

announced another politically motivated strike to prevent the holding of the June 12, 1993, presidential election. Aviola won the case and requested proper funding for the education system. In 1994 and 1996, under the late Sani Abacha's government, ASUU was involved in more than a year of union-wide labour disputes over good working conditions and layoffs.

In his March 2002 report on the Oversight Board of Federal Higher Education Institutions in Nigeria, Obe (2003) notes that from 1992 to 1999, there were labour strikes, disputes, and disputes, trade, internal strikes and national strikes. It shows that its seven strikes, including on June 22, 2009, ASUU state officials issued a full, indefinite mandate to force the federal government to sign an agreement with ASUU to renegotiate the FGN-ASUU agreement in June 2001. Also in 2001, ASUU announced that they had been on strike for three months. Also in 2002, ASUU went on strike six months earlier, demanding better working conditions (Doublelegist, 2013).

In 2010, the Association of Teaching Staff of Universities in the Southeastern States of Nigeria began a five-month strike to protest against the non-implementation of the 2009 FG-ASUU agreement. In August 2011, the General Assembly of Nigerian labour also launched a nationwide strike warning against the federal government's failure to enforce the new national minimum wage, as promised by President Goodluck Jonathan during his campaign. In June 2013, ASUU also started a nationwide strike that lasted from 8 to 9 months citing the 2009 FG-ASUU agreement and the refurbishment of universities with 1.3 trillion Naira in the 6-year period was not met as promised earlier. The strike lasted for nearly six months and ended in the last week of December 2013. On 14 February 2022, ASUU started another labour dispute with the Federal Government of Nigeria which ended on October 14, 2022.

Review of Relevant Empirical Studies

Makinde (2022) carried out a study - "Visual Representation of ASUU Strikes in Nigeria: A Semiotic Analysis of Cartoons in Selected Nigerian Newspapers." The study explores the semiotics of cartoons in selected Nigerian newspapers intending to examine the meaning-making resources that were employed in the visual representation of ASUU strikes in Nigeria. The study, therefore, analyses how cartoonists manipulate symbols, signs, and other semiotic resources to convey specific meanings through visual and textual representations. Here, metaphorical manipulation and representation of visual elements in the selected

cartoons were interrogated. The study adopted a qualitative research design; data comprising cartoons sourced from selected Vanguard Newspapers and websites were analysed using Kress and Van Leeuwen's visual semiotics and interpreted from the standpoints of Halliday's Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach and O'Halloran's position on metaphorical constructions of meaning. Research results show the use of semiotic resources in the portrayal of reality in the context of the seemingly intractable ASUU strikes and their consequences on academic activities in Nigeria.

Adeyemo and Elegbe (2020) did a study entitled "Trends in Media Framing of Industrial Crises Reporting: Implication for Media Research in Nigeria." There has been academic debate among media scholars about the best way for media analysts to research media perspectives on reporting on an industrial crisis by addressing research methodology, opinion theories and research methods 'data analysis. Content analysis and meta-analysis methods were used to collect data from published scientific articles and online consulted theses. One hundred and fifteen (115) studies were analysed, collated and identified according to the studies that focused their problem on the communication framework of the labour crisis. Evidence from the studies analysed shows that content analysis and in-depth interviews are mostly applied to media depictions of the industrial crisis, mixed methods research is applied to data collection while profiling the medium, and the Agenda context and primer theories were mainly applied by most the studies.

Adeyemo (2016) carried out a study entitled "Theoretical Foundations on Media Representations of Industrial Crises in Nigerian Universities between Academic Staff Union of Universities and Federal Government of Nigeria Between 2009 - 2014." The study was aimed at understanding the pivotal relationships between Nigerian print media and the ASUU to find out whether the Nigerian print media gave adequate and fair attention or representations to the ASUU labour struggles. Consequently, the study attempts to find out whether the activities of Nigerian print media undermine the ASUU's intentions to secure legitimacy in the public sphere. Findings from the study see the media as propaganda agents in the hands of the powerful and those who have access to mental production. However, few framing theorists have pointed out that, at times, journalists could be absorbed in their ideological representation on the grand that journalists make their representations

unconsciously.

Ugwuona (2016) conducted a study titled "Discussions on 2013 ASUU strike in Nigeria: An important discourse analysis. The study aimed to identify and analyse several ideological uses of language in the 2013 ASUU strike speeches in Nigeria. Data is collected mainly from websites on the Internet: Using van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) models (2001), the article has identified several mental models (ideologies) of the use of language in discourse. The document, therefore, recommends that the language of truth in speeches, the appropriate use of language in print media by political commentators and journalists, and peaceful dialogue between the government and ASUU are essential to prevent future ASUU strikes in Nigeria. In relation to the empirical literature reviewed, there however seems to be evidence of a dearth or absence of a study on media framing of the ASUU strike, especially that of 2022. Consequently, these have formed the gap this study seeks to fill by examining newspaper framing of the 2022 ASUU strike in selected Nigerian newspapers.

Theoretical Framework

News Framing Theory

According to McQuail (2010), the idea of framing is attributed to Irving Goffman. According to Goffman (cited in McQuail, 2010, p. 350), we need a framework for organising discrete pieces of experience and information. The idea of a "news framework" is often used loosely in place of terms such as "frame of reference", "context", "topic", or "news perspective". In the context of journalism, stories make sense by referring to a particular news item that links one event to other similar events. Gitlin (1980, p. 7) defines framing as "continuous patterns of perception, interpretation, and representation of choice, emphasis, and exclusion that symbologists frequently use to organise discourse."

Norris, Kern and Just (2003) agree with Gitlin that framing theory offers an opportunity to explore the intricacies of the news generation process because it opens a door to the patterns mentioned by Gitlin, which provides a consistent interpretation and assessment of events. . A framework can be thought of as a vehicle for organising and presenting events and issues covered by the media and media gatekeepers, and how the public interprets what is presented. McQuail (2010, p. 380) adds that "framing is a way of giving common

interpretations of isolated events”.

According to Entman (1993, p.52), frames in news can be examined and identified by "the presence or absence of certain keywords, common expressions, stereotyped images, sources of information and sentences which provide topic groups of facts or judgments." In this sense, Gamson and Modigliani (1989, p. 10) define a "framing device" that condenses information and provides a "media package" for a problem. They include (a) Metaphors (b) Exemplars (c) Catchphrases (d) Depictions, and (e) Visual images. The most seemingly elaborate empirical approach is offered by Tankard (as cited in Obaje, 2017) who outlines 11 framing mechanisms or areas of focus in identifying and measuring news frames: a. Headlines b. Subheads h. Pull quotes c. Photos d. Photo captions j. Statistics and charts, and e. Leads k. Concluding statements f. Source selection g. Quotes selection i. Logos.

When McCombs (2006) points out that both theories are equivalent, he does not refer to this elemental level of the agenda, but to the second level. For McCombs, a frame is a very special case of attributes as it would be made up of a set of micro-attributes which together form a macro-attribute. But while agenda setting describes which issues will enter the public domain and how they may later influence political judgment, Terkildsen and Schnell (1997, p.57) believe that "the theory of framing holds that issues, in and of themselves, can be arranged or presented in multiple fashions and as such influence citizens ensuring issue considerations and level of policy support."

The relevance of the framing theory to this study is that providing a contextual report on the ASUU strike would take public understanding and perception of the issue beyond the personal level to a social level. Through selection and emphasis, newspaper reports would supply the context for the strike in Nigeria through diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames which spur mobilisation, necessary for validation/ legitimacy of campaigns by the ASUU strike, which this study intends to investigate.

The Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda-setting theory explains how the mass media influences specific issues on the public agenda. A public programme is the primary concern of members of society or the general public. The term agenda-setting theory was first used by McCombs and Shaw (1972). This theory builds on the relevance of the relationship between media attention to an issue and the media's or mass audience's reaction or attribution

to the issue (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

Agenda-setting theory begins with an explanation of how the mass media alters patterns of political behaviour during elections (Cohen, 1963). This theory has since influenced and developed hundreds of recent studies of how mass media prepare and shape issues for their audiences. The discussion is not limited to this, but also refers to how mass media present particular events for their media audience (Matsaganis & Payne, 2005). The mass media can therefore be seen as responsible for influencing and shaping public opinion and agendas. The influence of such mass media on public agendas and opinions may be intentional or unintentional (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987).

Agenda-setting theory continues to be recognised as an important theory that extends not only to mass communication but also to other related social science studies such as political communication (Reese, 1991). Agenda-setting theory acknowledges that the mass media lack the ability to set public agendas, especially on issues of opinion and attitudes (Cohen, 1963). However, mass communication has a specific approach to contribute to or influence public perceptions, values, orientations and priorities. Due to the influence of these mass media, audiences of the media tend to form their own opinions and focus on issues that deserve to be added to the agenda (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

Over the years, scholarships set the agenda focusing on larger issues such as (a) who is responsible for setting the mass media's agenda? (b) what are the mass media's agendas?, and (c) how far is the mass media able to influence or frame the public agenda? Agenda setting theory is found relevant to this study because the newspaper framing of the ASUU strike has the potential to lead the public to perceive the issue as a critical one with the essence of understanding it in a given direction.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design: This study applied a mixed method design, which is a combination of quantitative and qualitative research design. In mixed-method research design, qualitative research asks open-ended questions with no predetermined answer, while quantitative research asks closed-ended questions. In a mixed-method research design, qualitative research asks open-ended questions with no predetermined answer, while quantitative research asks closed questions (Creswell, 2014).

Research Method: The content analysis is adopted in

this study as the research method to assess how the online versions of *Leadership*, *The Punch* and *Vanguard* framed the ASUU strike of 2022. Parveen and Showkat (2017, p.1) perceive content analysis as “the study of recorded human communications such as diary entries, books, newspaper, videos, text messages, tweets, Facebook updates, etc.”

Population: The population is composed of all the sampling units to which the study will infer (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2014). According to Dailytipsfinder.com (2022), there are 51 newspapers online newspapers published in Nigeria. Out of this number, three newspapers are purposively selected for the study. The newspapers are *Leadership*, *The Punch* and *Vanguard* with a total of 723 editions/issues which then serve as the population. The population is chosen within the 8 months of 14th February 2022 and 14th October 2022 which the ASUU strike endured. Each of the three newspapers published daily makes up 241 editions/issues during the study period.

Sample Size: The sample size, according to Best and Khan (in Eregho, Nkama, Nwabufoe, and Nwachukwu, 2011), is a fraction of the population selected for observation and analysis by observing the plotted features. A sample base of 723 editions/issues was selected from February 14 to October 14, 2022, for *Leadership*, *Punch*, and *Vanguard*. Each newspaper has 15 issues in February, 31 issues in March, 30 issues in April, 31 issues in May, 30 issues in June, 31 issues in July, 31 issues in August, 30 issues in September and 14 October number.

Out of the population of 723 editions/issues of the newspaper, the Taro Yamane online electronic sample size calculator programme by the Survey System retrieved at <https://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm> produced the sample size of 251 editions/issues of the selected newspapers with each newspaper having a sample size of 34.4 when we divide the total sample size with the number of newspapers ($251/3=83.6$). Therefore, to bring the sample size of each newspaper to an evenly divisible round figure among the three newspapers, the researcher oversampled by adding, the researcher oversampled by adding 4 editions of newspaper making a total of 255 newspapers selected for analysis, with each publication having a total of 85 editions. Simple random selection, a probability sampling technique was used to select the first issue of each of the three selected online newspapers studied.

Sampling Technique: In the first stage, the judgmental or purposive sampling technique is used to select

newspapers for content analysis as earlier justified. The person doing the research should focus on like-minded people or subjects to have the necessary information and be willing to share it (Etikan & Bala, 2017). A systematic random sampling technique was used to select newspaper publications. According to Babbie (2010, p. 211), in systematic sampling, every kth element of the sum list is selected (systematically) for inclusion in the sample. Here, the kth or Nth element or sampling interval is the 3rd element of the randomly chosen population. This is obtained by dividing 723 by 255.

Validity: The validity of this study was reviewed. The validity of a content analysis study refers to the correspondence of categories to the conclusions and the ability to generalise the results to a theory (Palmquist, 2004). In particular, the validity of categories in implicit conceptual analysis is achieved by using multiple classifiers to arrive at a unified definition of a category. Measure the occurrence of frames in widely reviewed content categories and conclude the data. Content categories are defined and ideas and elements are precisely measured. Rules that allow encoders to interclassify and encode the same data in the same way over a period of time have been developed.

Instruments of Data Collection: The study employed the coding sheet to gather data which is used in answering the research questions for this study. Just as a title represents and captures the main content and essence of a book, movie or poem, a code represents and captures the main content and nature of the data (Saldana, 2008).

Units of Analyses

Units of analysis are one of the most important elements in content analysis. For example, the basic prominent message types in the newspaper according to (Uyo 1987, p.9) include "news stories, special news reports, news analysis/interpretative reports, features, editorials, advertisements, columns/opinions, letter-to-the-editor, review/criticism, portraits/personality profiles and cartoons/comics. However, for this study, only the following message types are selected as unit analyses in the contents that constituted the framing of the 2022 ASUU strike. The units of analysis included straight news reports, feature stories, editorials/opinions, interviews and photos/illustrations.

- *Straight News Reports:* Straight news stories devoid of sentiments or opinions. These are

hard news reports that concerned the ASUU.

- *Feature Stories*: These include in-depth analytical articles on the ASUU strike.
- *Editorials*: Newspaper coverage that contains the newspaper organisation's opinion and stand on any issue related to the ASUU strike.
- *Opinion/Columns*: Newspaper coverage that contains the people's opinions and stand on any issue related to the ASUU strike.
- *Interviews*: A question and answer session between a journalist and an expert/resource person concerning the ASUU strike.
- *Photos/Illustrations*: These refer to independent pictures or photos accompanying news stories on the ASUU strike.
- *Cartoons/comics*: Cartoons and comic reports on the ASUU strike.

Reliability: To Wimmer and Dominick (2011, p.170), "inter-coder reliability is reliable when repeated measurement of the same material results in similar decisions or conclusions of the material to the levels of agreement among independent coders who code the same content using the same coding instrument. In this work, two coders were trained and trusted to code the February 14 - October 14, 2022 editions of *Leadership*, *The Punch* and *Vanguard* respectively. They judged a sample of 10 units and they agreed on 8.

Therefore, to calculate the intercoder reliability; the following formula is employed to determine the percentage of agreement between the coders:

$$\text{Thus, reliability} = \frac{2m}{N_1 + N_2}$$

Where M is the number of coding decisions that the two coders agree on, and N1 and N2 are the sum of the first and second coder's coding decisions, respectively.

$$\text{Therefore: } \frac{2(9)}{12+12} = \frac{18}{22} = 0.81$$

So each coder has identified and classified 12 topics, but they only agreed on 9 topics. The inter-encoder reliability gives 0.81, which implies that the tool is reliable and valid.

Method of Data Analysis: Data generated would be analysed in statistical figures of item counts and presented in tables. In other words, quantitative data on the assessment of newspaper framing of the ASUU strike of 2022 would be measured, analysed and presented in simple statistics.

4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The presentation and the analysis of data based on 255 publications of four newspapers used for the study over 8 months (February 14-October 14, 2022) with frame reports of the 2022 ASUU strike reflecting the research questions are carried out.

The data presentation and analysis were based on the 255 editions of the four newspapers used for the study for the period of eight months (from February 14 -October 14, 2022) with reports on the framing of the ASUU strike of 2022. The presentation and analysis are based on research questions.

Research Question One: What is the frequency of framing of the 2022 ASUU strike by selected Nigerian newspapers?

Table One: Frequency of Framing of the ASUU of 2022 by Selected Nigerian Newspapers

Newspaper	No of Stories	Percentage
<i>Leadership</i>	44	23.0
<i>The Punch</i>	48	25.1
<i>Vanguard</i>	99	51.9
Total	191	100

Source: *Content Analysis, 2022*

As is found in table one, the selected newspapers, reported the following number of stories on the ASUU strike: *Leadership*, 44 (23.0%), *The Punch* 48 (25.1%), and *Vanguard* 99 (51.9%). It is observed that *Vanguard* had the most frequent reports on the ASUU strike of 2022, followed by *The Punch*, and *Leadership*.

Table Two: Journalistic Genres of Framing of the ASUU of 2022

Type/Genre coverage	Newspaper							
	Leadership		The Punch		Vanguard		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Straight News Story	25	56.8	29	60.5	68	68.6	122	63.8
Editorial	3	6.8	3	6.2	5	5.0	11	5.7
Feature	2	4.5	3	6.2	5	5.0	10	5.3
Opinion/Column	6	13.7	5	10.5	11	11.1	22	11.5
Cartoon/Comic	3	6.8	4	8.4	3	3.1	10	5.3
Interview	2	4.6	1	2.0	3	3.1	6	3.1
Photo News	3	6.8	3	6.2	4	4.1	10	5.3
Total	44	100	48	100	99	100	191	100

Table two is the genres of journalistic news reports obtainable in the framing of the 2022 ASUU strike by selected Nigerian newspapers. *Leadership* published 25(56.8%) straight new stories, *The Punch* 29 (60.5%), and *Vanguard* 68 (68.6%). For the number of editorial reports, *Leadership* published 3(6.8%), *The Punch* also 3 (6.2%), and *Vanguard* 5(5.0%). On the number of feature reports, *Leadership* has 2(4.5%), *The Punch* 3(3.2%), and *Vanguard* 5(5.0%). There are 6(13.7%) opinion/column stories reported by *Leadership*, 5(10.5%) from *The Punch*, and 11 (11.1%) from *Vanguard*. The number of cartoon/comic reports from *Leadership* was 3 (6.8%), *The Punch* 4 (8.4%), and *Vanguard* 3 (3.1%). For the number of interview reports, *Leadership* published 2(4.6%), *The Punch* 1 (2.0%), and *Vanguard* 3(3.1%). For photo news, *Leadership* had 3 (6.8%), *The Punch* 3 (6.2%), and *Vanguard* 4(4.1%).

There were 122 (63.8%), straight news stories, 11(5.7%) editorials, 10 (5.3%) feature stories, 22 (11.5%) opinion/column, 10 (5.3%) cartoon/comic, interviews 6 (3.1%), photo news 10 (5.3). It can be inferred that the straight news genre got the most number of stories with a total of 122 (63.8%), followed by opinion/column stories 22(11.5%), 11(5.7%) editorials, 10 (5.3%) feature stories, 10 (5.3%) cartoon/comic, photo news 10 (5.3%) interview 6 (3.1%) respectively.

Research Question Two: What were the themes used in framing the 2022 ASUU strike?

Table Three: Themes used in Framing the ASUU Strike

Themes used in Framing the ASUU Strike	Newspaper						Total	
	<i>Leadership</i>		<i>The Punch</i>		<i>Vanguard</i>			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Corruption	1	2.2	2	4.2	3	3.0	6	3.2
Misplacement of priorities	3	6.8	2	4.2	5	5.0	10	5.3
Insincerity	3	6.8	2	4.2	8	8.0	13	6.8
Foreign Education	1	2.2	1	2.0	2	2.0	4	2.0
Nonchalance	2	4.5	3	6.2	5	5.0	10	5.5
Injustice	1	2.2	2	4.2	8	8.0	11	5.6
Legitimation	2	4.5	3	6.3	5	5.0	10	5.3
Sympathy	1	2.2	-	-	2	2.0	3	1.5
Trust Deficit	2	4.5	2	4.2	8	8.0	12	6.3
Delegitimation	3	6.8	4	8.3	6	6.0	13	6.8
Alternative Funding	2	4.5	3	6.3	5	5.0	10	5.3

Ban on Foreign Education	2	4.5	1	2.0	1	1.0	4	2.0
Legal Redress	4	9.0	5	10.4	10	10.0	19	9.9
Protest	5	11.4	6	12.5	11	11.1	22	11.5
Resignation/Sack Ministers of Labour & Education	2	4.5	3	6.3	2	2.0	7	3.7
Sincerity in Negotiation & Implementation of MOA	8	18.9	8	16.7	16	16.1	32	16.7
Sympathy Strike	2	4.5	1	2.0	2	2.0	5	2.6
Total	44	100	48	100	99	100	191	100

Source: Content Analysis, 2022

On the themes used in framing the ASUU strike by the selected Nigerian newspapers, results available in table three have indicated that the newspapers have framed the 2022 ASUU strike as corruption with 6 (3.2%) reports, misplacement of priorities 10(5.3%), insincerity 13(6.3%), foreign education 4(2.0%), nonchalance 10 (5.5%), injustice 11(5.6%), and legitimisation 10(5.3%). Other themes found in the newspapers framing included sympathy 3(1.5%), trust deficit 12(6.3%), delegitimation 13 (6.8%), alternative funding 10(5.3%), ban on foreign education 4(2.0%), and legal redress 19 (9.9%). Other themes were protest 22(11.5%), resignation/sacking of Ministers of Labour and Minister of Education 7(3.7%), sincerity in negotiation and implementation of MOA 32(16.7%), and sympathy strike 5(2.6%).

It can be observed that sincerity in negotiation and implementation of MOA 32(16.7%), protest 22(11.5%), insincerity 13(6.3%), and delegitimation 13 (6.8%) were the most predominant themes found in the newspaper framing of the 2022 ASUU strike.

Question Three: What types of frames dominated the coverage of the 2022 ASUU strike?

Table Four: Types of Frames that Dominated the Coverage of the 2022 ASUU Strike

Causes of ASUU Strike	Newspaper						Total	
	<i>Leadership</i>		<i>The Punch</i>		<i>Vanguard</i>			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Definition/Motivation Framing of ASUU Strike	10	22.8	10	20.8	23	23.2	43	22.5
Framing of the Causes of ASUU Strike	9	20.4	11	22.9	29	29.2	49	25.7
Framing of Solutions to ASUU Strike	25	56.8	27	56.2	47	47.7	99	51.8
Total	44	100	48	100	99	100	191	100

The results available in table four have shown that newspapers framed the most dominant frames in the coverage of the ASUU strike with the definition/motivation of the strike with 43 (22, 5%) reports, frame the cause of the strike report ASUU 49 (25.7%) report and find a solution to the strike report ASUU 99 (51.9%).

It is clear from the results that the most predominant frame in the online newspapers framing of the ASUU strike was the solution to the ASUU strike with 99(51.8%) reports, followed by the causes of the ASUU strike 49(25%), and the definition/motivation of the ASUU strike 43(22.5%) reports.

Question Four: What was the direction of framing the 2022 ASUU strike?

Table Five: Direction of Framing of the ASUU Strike

Definition of/Motivation for the ASUU strike	Newspaper						Total	
	Leadership		The Punch		Vanguard			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Positive	27	63	32	66	73	73	8	61
Negative	7	15	9	18	13	13	1	15
Neutral	10	22	7	14	13	13	1	15
Total	44	100	48	100	99	100		100

Source: Content Analysis, 2022

On the direction of the framing of the 2022 ASUU strike by the newspapers, 132 (69.1) were positively framed, 29 (15.1%) were negatively framed, and 30 (15.8%) reports were neutrally framed.

It is clear that most of the stories in the online newspapers are positive or supportive of the ASUU strike with 132 (69.1%) and neutral with 30 (15.8%) and 29 (15.1%) newspapers. protest against the ASUU strike.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Responding to the research question that sought to establish the frequency of framing of the ASUU strike of 2022 by selected Nigerian newspapers, it was realised that the newspapers under study frequently reported about the ASUU strike as most of the editions/issues sampled for investigation contained

stories on the ASUU strike. It was, however, discovered that *Vanguard* had the highest number of stories about the framing of the ASUU strike of 2022 with 99 (51.9%) news reports, followed by *The Punch* 48 (25.1%), and *Leadership*, 44 (23.0%). From the above results, it can be seen that online newspapers have performed well in the function of information and education as the fourth field of society.

More so, the genres of journalistic report applied by the selected Nigerian newspapers in framing the ASUU strike of 2022 showed that the following genres were used with the straight news genre most recurrent with 122 (63.8%) stories, followed by opinion/column stories 22(11.5%), 11(5.7%) editorials, 10 (5.3%) feature stories, 10 (5.3%) cartoon/comic, photo news 10 (5.3%) interview 6 (3.1%) respectively. These research results are consistent with the research results of Uwom and Oloyede (2011) identifying journalism genres/genres including reportage, reportage and live editorial and with direct reporting predominating position.

In reaction to the question that was out to find out what themes were used in framing the 2022 ASUU strike, results available in table three indicated that the newspapers framed the 2022 ASUU strike as corruption with 6 (3.2%) reports, misplacement of priorities 10(5.3%), insincerity 13(6.3%), foreign education 4(2.0%), nonchalance 10 (5.5%), injustice 11(5.6%), and legitimisation 10(5.3%). Other themes found in the newspapers framing included sympathy 3(1.5%), trust deficit 12(6.3%), deligitimisation 13 (6.8%), alternative funding 10(5.3%), ban on foreign education 4(2.0%), and legal redress 19 (9.9%). Other themes were protest 22(11.5%), resignation/sacking of Ministers of Labour and Minister of Education 7(3.7%), sincerity in negotiation and implementation of MOA 32(16.7%), and sympathy strike 5(2.6%). It can be observed that sincerity in negotiation and implementation of MOA 32(16.7%), protest 22(11.5%), insincerity 13(6.3%), and delegitimation 13 (6.8%) were the most predominant themes found in the newspaper framing of the 2022 ASUU strike. Some of the themes cuts across the definition/motivation for the strike. This is why Benford and Snow (2000) argue that building motivational frames provides a call to action or reason to engage in collective improvement action, including the development of appropriate motivational vocabulary.

To answer the question of what types of frames dominated the coverage of the 2022 ASUU strike? The results available in table four have shown that

newspapers have dominant frames in coverage of the ASUU strike expressed in the definition/motivation of the strike with 43(22.5%) reports, framing of the causes of ASUU strike 49(25.7%) reports, and framing of the solutions to the ASUU strike 99 (51.9%) reports. It is clear from the results that the most predominant frame in the online newspapers framing of the ASUU strike was the solution to the ASUU strike with 99(51.8%) reports, followed by the causes of the ASUU strike 49(25%), and the definition/motivation of the ASUU strike 43(22.5%) reports.

The findings of the study are related to the ones in a study conducted by Akinwotu (2013) "The Role of Discursive Constructions in Nigeria's ASUU-FGN Labour Conflict of 2013" demonstrated that low wages and poor teaching and learning facilities were the primary factors driving strike action in the Nigerian higher education sector. The delegitimation, trust deficit, injustice, legitimisation sympathy, frame as motivational frame for the ASUU strike can be explained by the factors identified by Akinwotu. Findings from the study "Causes, Effects and Management of ASUU Strikes in Nigeria, 2003-2013" by Ogbette, Ekeand Ori (2017) see the government's indifferent attitude and lack of commitment to the welfare of the education sector as causes, others blame ASUU for its radicalism, confrontational approach, and insatiable demand.

On what was the direction of framing the 2022 ASUU strike by the newspapers, 132 (69.1%) were positively framed, 29 (15.1%) were negatively framed, and 30 (15.8%) reports were neutrally framed. It is clear that most of the online newspaper articles are positive or supportive of the ASUU strike with 132 (69.1%) neutral stories and 30 (15.8%) and 29 (15.1%) respectively negative reports against the ASUU strike.

It was evident that most of the news reports in the online newspapers were positive or in favour of the ASUU strike with 132(69.1%), and neutral stories 30(15.8%), and 29(15.1%) negative reports against the ASUU strike.

6. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that newspapers in Nigeria have continued to be pertinent instruments in framing the ASUU strike. The frequency of framing of the ASUU strike of 2022 by *Leadership* and *The Punch* as compared to *Vanguard* was overwhelmingly low. It can

be observed that insincerity in negotiation and implementation of MOA, protest, insincerity, and delegitimation were the most predominant themes found in the newspaper framing of the 2022 ASUU strike. The newspapers did not accord much attention to the framing component of the definition/motivation for the ASUU strike. There is an overpowering notion created in the newspapers that the strike is a product of other parochial motives or delegitimation frames other than genuine concern for the improvement of the Nigerian university system. It is noticeable that the solutions frame was overemphasized to the detriment of the motivational frame and causes frame. It is manifest that most of the articles online are positive or supportive of the ASUU strike.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has triggered the following recommendations:

1. Other Nigerian newspapers such as *Leadership* and *The Punch* should scale up the frequency of publication while reporting on such industrial actions. The gap in frequency of coverage of *Leadership*, and *The Punch* when compared to that of *Vanguard* left much to be desired.
2. Nigerian dailies should foreground positive frames since media attention is vitally important for the movement's mobilisation, but negative frames do not and cannot sell movements because they reduce public support.
3. While framing solutions to strikes, media should not overemphasise solution frames to the detriment of other frames.

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