

Analysis of How Nigerian Newspapers Reported the Aso Rock Feud between the National Security Adviser, Babagana Monguno and the late Chief of Staff, Abba Kyari

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Abstract

The study adopts a content analysis research method to examine whether or not Nigerian press covers the crisis in Aso Rock, the Nigeria seat of power between Mallam Abba Kyari, the Chief of Staff to President Muhammadu Buhari and the National Security Adviser, General Babagana Monguno. The contents were examined to ascertain if the selected newspapers promoted the issue on front page and in the editorial. The study was restricted to *Vanguard*, *The Punch* and *The Nation* of February 17 to March 3, 2020. The findings of the study showed that the issue was not given prominence by the Nigerian press particularly from the *Vanguard* and *The Nation* newspapers respectively. However, the researcher concludes that *The Punch* gave prominence to the issue. This conclusion is based on the fact that, *The Punch* covers the issue twice on front page and in the editorial. These two critical components (front page and editorial are often used to measure media prominence given to an issue). The researcher therefore recommended that Nigerian press should pay adequate attention to serious political development by promoting it on the front page and in the editorials. The non-coverage of the issue by *Vanguard* and *The Punch* is worrisome and appears to have some conspiracy theory which should not be. In this regards, it is recommended that Nigerian press should not take sides with political office holders in order to perform its watchdog function creditably.

Keywords: Front Page, Editorial, Nigerian Press Coverage, Feud.

Introduction

Media and communication experts believe that the more the media attention is given to a topic, the greater the importance attributed to it by the news audience. The media influence is not only on the direction of opinion but also on what people think about. Cohen cited in Okunna (1994) states that the media may not sufficiently tell us to think but can sufficiently tell us what to think about. McCombs and Shaw cited in Ndolo (2005) assert that, audiences not only learn about public issues and other matters through the media they also learn how much importance is attached to an issue or topic from the emphasis the media place upon it. In the words of Udoakah in Wilson, (2006,p.12) “mass media products are dependent products-products of social, political and economic forces”. McQuail supports Udoakah’s claims and states that, media take their priorities from public opinion as well as politician. However, the media influence in setting agenda to the public is often a function of the frequency of coverage given to an issue, its placement (prominence) and slant (direction) given to the story. Baran (2002, p. 385) quoting Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in attempting to explicate how the mass media shape political reality wrote:

In choosing and displaying news, editors, news rooms staff and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers lean not only about a given issue, but how much importance to attach to that issues from amount of information in news story and its position. The mass media may as well determine the important issues that is, the media may set the agenda of the campaign.

The mass media raise issues and also create awareness on various topics. The media can open up an unusual and new topic for public debate. The media can also sensitize the public on current event by bringing such topic to the front burner of public opinion and concern. It can open the minds of men and women to truth by presenting accurate pictures of events in the society to enable people separate facts from fantasy. Thus, it is correct to say that the primary role of the press is to act as the watchdog of the society thereby monitoring all political developments in the society.

The Nigerian press also holds a sacred responsibility to inform Nigerians about the political happenings, misdemeanor, corruption and other qualm in the public offices. This implies that the press should give adequate information that would enhance the people's knowledge, understanding of any of these matters, Shaw Jamel and Flowe cited in Anyanwu & Uche (2015,p.226) assert that, "the public rely on the print media to fill the gaps in their experiential knowledge". The volume of coverage of political crisis and the angle to which the press expose the issues will actually determine the understanding of the issues. This therefore implies that in reporting political issues the press ought not to interfere or take side with any party involved. The fact remains that we cannot ignore the relationship between the media and politics, it therefore becomes incumbent that any politically-related issues must be examined on the account of the media. According to McQuial (2010) the relationship between the mass media and politics has been an age-long issue and seems in- alienable. In his words:

At the level of performance, the content of most daily media is still often dominated by politics, but not usually because it is so fascinating and newsworthy for the public. While citizens do need to be informed and advised in the longer term, they do not really need what they are offered every day. The reasons lie partly in the advantages for news media in terms of free staples commodity and partly in the enormous efforts made by political interests (in widest sense) to gain access to the public for their diverse ends. It also stems from the long standing links between media and political institutions that cannot easily be broken. Politics cannot do without the media and the kind of (news) media we have would struggle without politics(p.123).

In Nigeria, the press has always mingled in politics. Commenting on the media involvement in Nigerian politics in the post-independence era Siddique in Sambe (2005, p.151) asserts that:

During the 1964 federal elections, the Western Nigeria Broadcasting's radio and television, played a leading role in sparking off the Western Regional crisis which later led to the coup of 1966, by deliberately broadcasting false election results intended to cause dis affection. These same false election results were picked up and given further diffusion by Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Service.

The above scenario also contributed immensely to the Nigerian civil war but shortly after the war, Nigerian press tried to form allies across the nation to paint a picture of national press instead of regional press. However, the old nature of the Nigerian press played out again, from 1979-1983, the press performed so poorly, in the words of Dare cited in Sambe (2005, p.151):

Any journalist, who could not 'make it' then, declared an editor of my acquaintance, would never make it again. He and many others 'made it' with the politicians of course, but at the expense of the constitutional injunction that they uphold the accountability of the government of the people

Between 1984-1999 May 28, Nigeria was buried under several military juntas that promulgated several decrees that dealt roguishly with the press and pressmen but with rogue fight Nigerian press survived these tough times. Though Nigerian press is yet to proof its transparency in handling political reportage; it is assumed that the press watchdog role is greatly compromised partly due to poor welfare package.

Madelaine Drohan, a Canadian journalist who visited Nigeria in the year 2000 gave the headline of her story that was published in the *Globe* and *The Mail* newspapers of Canada thus; ‘the best press money can buy, with the rider, Nigeria’s journalists are paid so little that professionalism ethics are a luxury they can’t afford’ (Sambe,2005).

Beyond news reportage, it is also important for Nigerian journalists to expose any evil perpetrated by any political office holder in Nigeria as part of the sacred function of the press to the public. It is quite unethical for the press to glorify indiscipline by political office holders no matter who is involved in it. Such act will only promote a state of lawlessness. Ironically, Nigerian political elites have continued to ignore the grave consequences of abuse of power, as we have continued to experience crisis in our political system. Ikeanyibe & Osadebe(2013,p.12) state that, “Nigeria citizens today lives in a world of insecurity with high profile threats, which include hunger, epidemiology, accident, violent crimes, terrorism, socio-economic agitations, ethno-religious crisis, ethnic militia, boundary disputes, cultism, criminality, organized crime, electioneering and political conflict”. This is due to none-challant attitude of Nigeria’s political office holders in confronting issues with seriousness but rather showoff affluent and influence of their offices at the detriment of the common man. Going by this assumption therefore, it becomes imperative to content analyse Nigerian press on the priority given to feud between National Security Adviser, Babagana Monguno and Chief of Staff to the President, Abba Kyari.

Statement of the Problem

The tasks of the press are enormous in any given society. One of such task is to perpetually monitor the society and report every development that affect the life of the citizenry. In doing this, the press is expected to question every action and inaction of politicians by bringing them to the front burner of public opinion through its surveillance and interpretation functions. However, the frequency and the placement of the issue determine the importance or prominence attributed to it. Recently, Nigeria’s seat of power boils to the extent that the two key security handlers in Aso Rock, the National Security Adviser, Babagana Monguno and the Chief of Staff to the President, Abba Kyari began to show off supremacy of office through their verbal attacks at each other. Their verbal squabbles seems to expose some kinds of lacuna in the security architecture of the country with which they were chosen to manage. To worsen the matter, the National Security Adviser to Mr President, wrote a memo to Mr President asking the him to prevail on service chiefs not to take further instructions from the Chief of Staff. Though it has been alleged that the memo was leaked to public through the media. It is not yet certain if the entire feud is well reported in the media with prominence attached to it. The aim of this research therefore is to find out the prominence of coverage given to the issue in Nigerian press looking at whether or not Nigerian press promotes the stories on its front page or in the editorial.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study:

1. To find out the frequency of coverage given to the crisis between the National Security Adviser, Babagana Monguno and the Chief of Staff, Abba Kyari by the Nigerian press.
2. To ascertain the direction of coverage of the crisis between the National Security Adviser, Babagana Monguno and the Chief of Staff, Abba Kyari by the Nigerian press.
3. To ascertain if the selected newspapers accord prominence to crisis between the National Security Adviser, Babagana Monguno and the Chief of Staff, Abba Kyari.

Research Questions

1. What is the frequency of coverage given to the crisis between the National Security Adviser, Babagana Monguno and the Chief of Staff, Abba Kyari?
2. What is the direction of coverage of the crisis between the National Security Adviser, Babagana Monguno and the Chief of Staff, Abba Kyari by the Nigerian press?
3. Do the selected newspapers accord prominence to the crisis between the National Security Adviser, Babagana Monguno and the Chief of Staff, Abba Kyari?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Audience and the Media Role in Information Dissemination

The mass media are channels of communication that provide information to the people. The mass media channels include but not limited to; radio, television, film, newspaper, magazine, book, billboard, and social media platforms. Mass media messages are constructed by professional and sometimes non-professional communicators (practitioners from the new media) who act as the 'senders' of media messages'. These communicators are the reporters, writers, editors, graphic experts, layout designers, announcers and commentators of newspapers, news magazines, television, radio, press associations and syndicates, drama, news photographers, book and publications editors and creative personnel in graphics arts industry, advertising personnel, public relations practitioners and information writers, business management personnel for the mass media, radio and television script and continuity writers, film writers, producers and directors, magazine writers and editors, trade and business publication writers and editors, industrial publication writers and editors and all online writers in the visual world.

These communicators create their messages to the audience who are the 'receivers'. The media audience members are large and spread across the globe. They are usually unknown to each other, lack self-awareness and identity, receive messages anonymously and they are heterogeneous; of different sex, educational level, age bracket, income level, religious belief, ethnic background and nationality. They are clearly distinguished by their psychological dispositions such as attitudes, values, opinions, self-esteem, needs, interests and knowledge. These characteristic features of the media audience are universal and basically influence their consumption and perception of the media message. Media audience therefore defines and perceives media messages differently whether the messages are designed to inform, educate, entertain, persuade and by extension mobilize the target audience to believe what the media or media professionals say. In addition to characteristic features of the global media audience, there are several other factors that may account for the consumption and believability of the media messages by mass media audience. This may be rooted in their understanding of the message, the credibility of the professional communicators as well as the medium that disseminate the message, what Marshall McLuhan called the "medium is the message".

Other factors are affordability, accessibility, proximity, slant and style of reportage. Some audience members may see a particular media outlet as playing up racial, ethnic, political or parochial interest in their reportage while others may treat the subject differently. But in the international media arena what actually defines readership and viewership of the media is the political cum economic interest of the people.

Nigerian Press and Political Office Holders: A Brief Overview

In Nigeria over the years the mass media have played a significant role in setting agenda for political discourse, in spite of the allegations of direct involvement of the media in politics. Media history has it that in December 3, 1859 *Iwe Irohin* was founded by Henry Townsend, precisely in October, 1867 this

newspaper disappeared from the newsstand due to its political involvement in the political brouhaha between Lagos people and Egba people of Abeokuta over the annexure of a piece of land belonging to Egba people of Abeokuta. Since then Nigerian press has been accused of one political entanglement or the other. During the alien-dominated era of the press which saw the proliferation of the newspapers, started in 1863 with Robert Campbell's *Anglo African*, Nigerian press became a weapon to checkmate the abuse of power by the colonial administration. Due to this treat, Governor Freeman imposed heavy tax on the newspaper to ensure that he stopped the newspaper from operation (Duyile,2019).This development continued up to the Zik's era. During the era, Zik's *West African Pilot* became the strongest voice that checkmated the abuse of power by the colonial leaders and was christened anti-colonial and nationalist newspaper. But with the gaining of political independence in 1960, a new Nigerian press surfaced. Most of the newspapers were established and owned by the government. This era witnessed non-critical journalism since most of the newspapers were controlled by the state. In fact, the newspapers became state apparatus. In spite of this, the government which was controlled by Nigerians was still skeptical of the press. Sambe (2005,p.164) states that the period witnessed sour relationship between the government and the press despite the fact that Nigerians were in control of the government. He also quoted Chief Rotimi Williams who commented on the unfortunate trend thus:

In Nigeria, the politicians in control of the machinery of government
Are inclined to be very sensitive about their new powers and to resent
Any interference (real or imagined) with the exercise of those power

This was the beginning of government impunity towards the Nigerian citizenry. However, in the early 80s some powerful business moguls established and owned their newspapers. These include Chief M.K.O Abiola who owned Abiola Concord Group, Sam Amukaponu established the *Vanguard*, and Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu established *The Champion* while Chief Alex Ibru established *The Guardian*. This era also lasted up to 1998 and witnessed some level of press independence and increased its surveillance function. One of the notable press-government relations was the demand for accountability of the oil wind fall by General Ibrahim Babangida Administration and the fight against General Sani Abacha's repressive regime.

By 1999 with the arrival of fourth republic, Nigerian press returned to the era of privately owned press. This time most of the newspapers were owned by the serving governors, for instance, *The Nation* newspaper was established by Ahmed Tinubu of Lagos State, while *Daily Sun* by Chief Orji Kalu of Abia State, and *Daily Independent* by Chief Onanefe Ibori of Delta State. The Nigerian press played a crucial role in monitoring and reporting activities of political office holders within this period under review. Among the notable press achievements in relations to political office holders' exposure of impunity in office was the revelation of certificate forgery by the Speaker, Federal House of Representative, Mallam Ibrahim Salisu by *The News* magazine.

Ironically, since the return of democracy in Nigeria and the proliferation of the newspapers, Nigeria has witnessed careless and thoughtless governance than ever in the history of its existence. Kidnapping, murder, vandalization of properties, armed robbery, financial crime, unemployment, political crisis and brazen use of government powers leading to impunity of office by public office holders have become the order of the day. Though political maladjustment has been traced to post independence era. According to Anifowose (2011) the historical development of political crisis in the post-independence Nigeria is said to have started thus:

The campaign and conduct of the 1964 Federal election itself were clear examples of the bitter struggle for power among the politicians of the major political parties. On October 1965, the people of Western Nigeria went to polls to elect a Regional Government. It was the first election since the 1962 emergency had brought the NNDP into existence. Thus, by the beginning of 1966, it had become obvious that the democratic constitution of

Nigeria was unworkable in the hands of corrupt, effective and irresponsible politicians. The events of the Federal elections of 1964/5 and Western Region elections of 1965 had thoroughly shaken the faith of Nigerians in the future of democracy in Nigeria. It was in this explosive situation, when the Government of Western Region seemed to have lost power to govern, and the Federal Government seemed unwilling to exercise its overall responsibility for the maintenance of law and order, that the army intervened on 15 January, 1966, to fulfill the hopes and expectations of many Nigerians (p.65).

The Monguno and Kyari Feud at a Glance

The National Security Adviser, Babagana Monguno and the Chief of Staff to the President, Abba Kyari face-off is one of the latest highbrow crisis in Nigeria political circle. Precisely, February 17, 2020, the two powerful public office holders in Aso Rock, Nigeria, had a bitter face-off. The face-off was likened to the un-bearing influence of Mallam Abba Kyari, the Chief of Staff to President Muhammadu Buhari who was accused of interfering with security matters by the National Security Adviser, General Babagana Monguno. By February 18, 2020 *Premium Times* reports on the headline, ‘EXCLUSIVE: NSA Monguno attacks Abba Kyari over police equipment contract’. According to Ogundipe who reports for *Premium Times* revealed the shady deal further thus:

A lucrative contract for the procurement of defence equipment for Nigeria Police Force appeared to have triggered the raging confrontation at the highest levels of the Buhari administration. Freshly obtained documents showed how the national security adviser, Babagana Monguno, tackled President Muhammadu Buhari’s Chief of Staff, Abba Kyari for allegedly overriding a previous directive of the president in a contract to procure equipment for the police from the United Arab Emirates(2020, p.1)

The above accusation may have been the main reason or among other notable reasons why the National Security Adviser sent a memo to President Muhammadu Buhari asking him to warn Mallam Abba Kyari, the Chief of Staff from interfering with security matters. In the memo, General Babagana Monguno warned services chiefs from taking further security instructions from the chief of staff. This memo was said to have been leaked to the public through the main stream media. This raised a serious issue of concern to many Nigerians who are already fade up with failure of the Buhari-led administration in tackling insecurity in the country. Some political and social commentators have also argued that the two officers should be relieved of their appointment following the leaked memo, many feel is the height of national security lacuna. *The Punch* editorial of Friday, February 28, 2020 reported in its lead thus:

If ever there was any doubt, the leaks of memos from the National Security Adviser confirm the long-running whispers of disarray, confusion and fighting within the presidency and its negative impact on the country’s security. In the memos, whose authenticity has not been denied, the NSA, Babagana Monguno, painted a disturbing picture of interference in security and diplomatic matters by the President’s Chief of Staff, Abba Kyari, inertia by the President, Maj. Gen. Muhammadu Buhari(rtd.), and a muddle in the reporting chain by security chiefs. To save the country from the unprecedented insecurity challenges, Buhari should take charge of his regime and restore order in the protection agencies (p.22).

Looking at this study from empirical perspective the following works are examined. Nwabueze, Ugwonna & Ngonso(2010) examined Nigerian press coverage of Obasanjo/Atiku crisis and found out that Nigerian press gave adequate coverage to the crisis between President Olusegun Obasanjo and his Vice, Atiku Abubakar in Aso Rock. The findings also showed that the studied newspapers were not bias in their reportage of the crisis.

Ngonso, (2019) carried out a study on press coverage of political crisis in the 2019 gubernatorial elections in Rivers State: a content analysis of *The Nation* and *The Vanguard* Newspapers. Studying 32

editions of these newspapers found out that, Nigerian press pay adequate attention to Rivers State 2019 governorship election crisis. The findings also showed that the two selected newspapers did not take side with any of the party involved in the crisis.

Theoretical framework

This study is anchored on social responsibility theory of the press. This is one of the five normative theories of the press. A media philosophy that owes its origin to an American press philosophy. This theory dates back to 1947 American initiative instituted under Hutchins Commission on the freedom of press. The idea was borne out fear of free market place of ideas concept of the media. The society were already threatened by the private ownership and irresponsibility on the part of the pressmen. The idea was to instill some social responsibility on the media practitioners. This also implies that the media owe the public a responsibility to present adequate information without blowing it out of proportion or taking side with the private owners of the media or allow themselves to be influenced by the powerful in the government. This theory finds relevance in this study based on the fact that, Nigerian press is expected to be socially responsible to the public by reporting happenings in the society without taking sides or place financial interest far and above national interest nor allow the powerful in the society control its contents.

Methodology

The methodology for this study is content analysis. This methodology is chosen because of the nature of the enquiry. Content analysis allows for the examination of the manifest contents of the mass media. For this study, *The Nation*, *The Punch* and *The Vanguard* newspapers were purposively selected for the study. The three selected papers were considered because of their national spread and strong influence on the stable. The contents were examined on how the stories are promoted to ascertain their prominence since the focus of the study is to determine whether Nigerian press give the issue prominence. This was measured on the placement- front page and nature of story-editorial. The three selected newspapers were studied based on census (17 February to March 3, 2020). From the day the story surfaced on public domain which was traceable to February 17, 2020. The researcher decided to study all the editions because of the short duration under consideration. A total of 48 issues (sample) were studied from a population of 48. The contents examined were categorized as editorials, news, news feature, investigative and interpretative stories on the crisis. The contents were also broken into units; front page, headlines, editorial column, positive and negative stories. The descriptive data from the content analysis were later converted into empirical quantitative data using SPSS. The data were presented on table with graphs and also discussed in line with the three earlier stated research questions.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Distribution of Newspapers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Vanguard	13	32.5	32.5
	The Punch	15	37.5	70.0
	The Nation	12	30.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0

Table 1 above showed the distribution of newspapers content analyzed for this study. From the table, 40 editions were found of the 48 sampled from the three selected newspapers. The implication is that eight (8) editions were missing meaning that 3 editions of the *Vanguard* newspaper were not found, 1 edition of *The Punch* newspaper was missing and 4 editions of *The Nation* newspaper were not also found.

Newspapers * Placement Crosstabulation

Table 2:

		Placement		Total
		Front page	Nil	
Newspapers	Vanguard	0	13	13
	The Punch	1	14	15
	The Nation	0	12	12
Total		1	39	40

Figure 1:

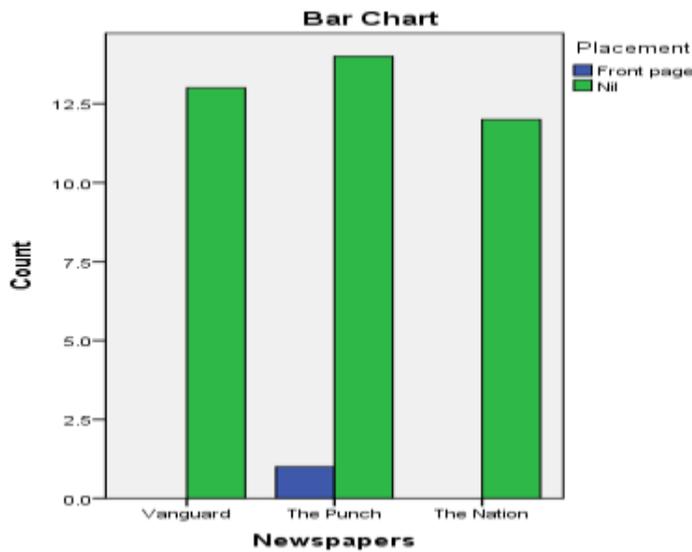


Table 2 and figure 2 above present data on placement of stories of the feud between Mallam Abba Kyari, the Chief of Staff to President Muhammadu Buhari and the National Security Adviser, General Babagana Monguno. The data showed that only *The Punch* newspaper covered the story and promotes on its front page (gave prominence to the issue) within the period of study.

Newspapers * Editorial Crosstabulation

Table 3:

		Editorial		Total
		Editorial	Nil	
Newspapers	Vanguard	0	13	13
	The Punch	1	14	15
	The Nation	0	12	12
Total		1	39	40

Figure 2

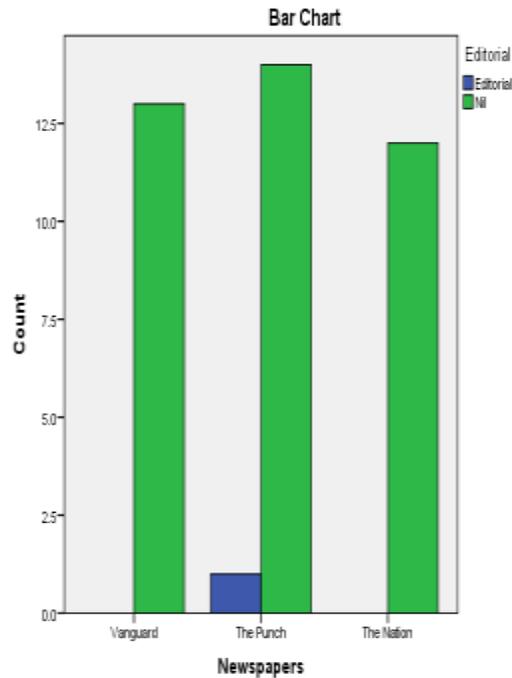


Table 3 and figure 2 above showed the distribution of data in relations to editorials done on the crisis between Mallam Abba Kyari, the Chief of Staff to President Muhammadu Buhari and the National Security Adviser, General Babagana Monguno. The data showed that only *The Punch* newspaper did editorial on the issue.

Table 4: Newspapers * Direction Crosstabulation

Count		Direction		Total
		Negative	Nil	
Newspapers	Vanguard	0	13	13
	The Punch	1	14	15
	The Nation	0	12	12
Total		1	39	40

Figure 3

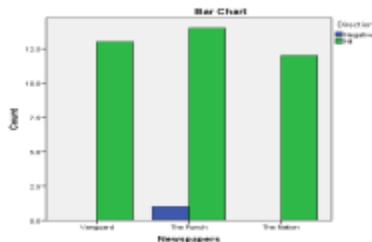


Table 4 and figure 3 showed that *The Punch* newspaper recorded 1 negative story from the two stories covered. The stories appeared on the front page, incidentally as news story and another as editorial. The editorial comment was negative (showing the disarray due to power play in Aso Villa) while the news story was neutral.

Discussion of Findings

1. What is the frequency of coverage given to the issue of feud between the National Security Adviser, Babagana Monguno and the Chief of Staff, Abba Kyari?

The findings of this study showed that the selected Nigerian newspapers did not give adequate coverage to the issue bordering on the feud between the National Security Adviser, Babagana Monguno and the Chief of Staff, Abba Kyari. The data showed that only *The Punch* newspaper covered the issue twice, one as news on the front page titled, “Buhari meets service chiefs, NSA Monguno absent”. By Ameh & Adetayo(2020) and another story carried in the editorial and titled, Disarray in the Presidency endangers Nigeria”. *The Punch*, Friday, February 28, 2020. The data further showed that *Vanguard* and *The Nation* newspapers did not cover the story at all within the period under study.

2. What is the direction of coverage of the issue under study?

Though the frequency of coverage was abysmally poor giving the fact that, the issue appeared two times in *The Punch* newspaper only accounting for (5%) of 40 editions content analyzed from the three newspapers. The angle or direction of study was 50:50:0, which is 1 negative, 1 neutral and nil for positive.

3. Do the selected newspapers accord prominence to the issue under study?

Inferring from the analyzed data, it could be said that Nigerian press did not give prominence to the crisis since two newspapers out of the three selected newspapers did not cover the issue (neither promote on front page or do editorials on it). However, the data showed that *The Punch* newspaper gave prominence to the issue for the fact that, the issue appeared on front page and in the editorial. Though Nwabueze, Ugwonne & Ngonso(2010) study on the crisis between Obasanjo and Atiku and Ngonso(2019) study on Rivers State 2019 electoral crisis showed that Nigerian press do pay adequate attention to political crisis.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The study adopts a content analysis research method to examine whether or not Nigerian press covers the crisis in Aso Rock, the Nigeria seat of power between Mallam Abba Kyari, the Chief of Staff to President Muhammadu Buhari and the National Security Adviser, General Babagana Monguno. The contents were examined to ascertain if the selected newspapers promoted the issue on front page and in the editorial. The study was restricted to *Vanguard*, *The Punch* and *The Nation* of February 17 to March 3, 2020.

The findings of the study showed that the issue was not given prominence by the Nigerian press particularly from the *Vanguard* and *The Nation* newspapers respectively. However, the researcher concludes that *The Punch* gave prominence to the issued. This conclusion was drawn based on the fact that, *The Punch* covers the issue twice (front page and in the editorial). These two critical components (front page and editorial are often used to measure media prominence given to an issue) Baran (2002: 385) quoting Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in attempting to explicate how the mass media shape political reality wrote: “In choosing and displaying news, editors, news rooms staff and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers lean not only about a given issue, but how much importance to attach to that issues from amount of information in news story and its position”.

Based on these findings the researcher recommended that Nigerian press should take serious political development seriously by promoting them in the front page. The non-coverage of the issue by *Vanguard* and *The Punch* is worrisome and appears to have some conspiracy theory which should not be. In this regards, it is recommended that Nigerian press should pay attention to political issues and should not also take sides with political office holders in order to perform its watchdog function creditably.

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