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Newspaper Framing of Twitter Ban in Nigeria: A Retrospective Perspective

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ABSTRACT

With the first-ever ban on social media handle, it is clear that the abuse of information rights and the improper application of power are reaching a new level in Nigeria, meriting widespread concern. This study aimed to examine, in retrospect, the quality of newspaper framing of the twitter ban issue in Nigeria, where the media's efficacy in covering recent events in the country has been questioned due to persistent public opinion that the media is performing its fourth estate of the realm's duties in accordance to odious governing standards. This study examined the newspaper framing of President Mohammadu Buhari's ban on twitter in Nigeria with particular emphasis on a The Punch and Daily Trust newspapers. The framing theory of the mass media was adopted in the study and the content analysis research design was as well employed. The finding of the study indicated among other things, that both 'Daily Trust' and 'The Punch' newspapers framed reports of twitter ban in Cause, Effect and Reaction frames. The study concluded that both newspapers considered in the study had covered the issue of the Nigerian twitter ban in different measures and perspectives, as arising from the differences in the slants accorded the reportage. The study recommended that the government should uphold the tenet of a true democratic state by ensuring that no ban is placed on social networking sites as such actions undermines the fundamental human right of expression of the citizens

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The concept of mass media framing news is related to the agenda-setting tradition but expands the research by focusing on the essence of the issues at hand rather than on a particular topic. The basis of mass media framing of news focuses attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning. Framing is an important topic since it can have a big influence and therefore the concept of framing expanded to organizations as well.

In essence, mass media framing of news suggests that how something is presented to the audience (called "the frame") influences the choices people make about how to process that information. Frames are abstractions that work to organize or structure message meaning. Goffman (1974). The most common use of frames is in terms of the frame the news or media place on the information they convey. They are thought to influence the perception of the news by the audience, in this way it could be construed as a form of second level agenda-setting.

The media is known for its critical evaluation of issues such as: The Twitter ban to help the public understand concepts associated with news events. Framing a news story in the online newspapers can be influenced by different factors such as highlighting news angle that arouse reader's interest, economic motive of the reporter and competitive media debacle (Adelakun & Hamedi, 2016).

The understanding of news frame from a handful of research look quite similar. According to Babaeko (2021), news frames refer to the nuances, bias, opinions and meanings journalists introduce to stories with a view to

breaking down complex reality for readers and viewers to assimilate. Framing explains the power structure of the media to create news story items with predefined and narrow contextualization to enhance understanding or used cognitive shortcuts to link stories to the bigger picture (Odoemenam & Okoro, 2013).

The implication of this submission is that the media can influence news content by subtle submission to downplay the perceived negative effect of the story on the general public by choosing a particular frame pattern. The media can also through choice of frame aggravate the supposed subtle effect to more dire consequences on the general public. In a similar way Paulinus & Obi (2021) believes that the volume of report given to an issue in the media explains the public knowledge, understanding and perception on the issue.

Mass media framing of news was first put forth by Goffman, under the title of Frame Analysis. He put forth that people interpret what is going on around their world through their primary framework. This framework is regarded as primary as it is taken for granted by the user. Its usefulness as a framework does not depend on other frameworks.

Mass media mobilization (also known as social mobilization or popular mobilization) refers to mobilization of civilian population as part of contentious politics. Mass media mobilization is defined as a process that engages and motivates a wide range of partners and allies at national and local levels to raise awareness of and demand for a particular development objective through face-to-face dialogue. Members of institutions, community networks, civic and religious groups and others work in

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a coordinated way to reach specific groups of people for dialogue with planned messages. In other words, social mobilization seeks to facilitate change through a range of players engaged in interrelated and complementary efforts. (“Communication for development”)

Framing’s roots go back, in part, to Erving Goffman’s (1974) exploration of how experience are organized. He argued that humans experience life both in terms of how information is received and interpreted, what an individual considered as “reality” depends on the frames the media employ to approach, analyze, and understand the world around us. Accordingly, given the power of the media in setting the public agenda, then, how media frame certain topics and events influences this process, and directly affects how people “know what the media know” about the world at large.

Print media (newspaper) have been chosen by the people to access information from the beginning before the Advent of broadcast media such as radio and television (Freelon, 2010). However, radio and television became a part of the life of the urban community to the rural area, print media still appeared as if they were not displaced. The advantage of print media is the documentation of information because all print media information is always in permanent form. If electronic media can be heard or watched only once and cannot be saved, but it is different from print media. Print media will be read at any time and at your own convenience, last week’s newspaper can be read today. The aspect of documentation becomes important for print media.

As a product of technology, the mass media will develop every time, without leaving its main functions which is to educate inform and entertain. Platform shifts in mass media are necessity because technology as a cultural product created by humans continues to develop. The media is not left out, it all started from print media to electronic media and now digital media known as the new media.

On June 5th 2021, the Nigerian government announced that it had suspended Twitter’s operations in the country (Aja, 2021). The announcement came two days after the social media company removed a tweet by President Muhammadu Buhari, in which Buhari issued a thinly veiled threat against secessionist groups in the southeast “to treat them in the language they understand.” Since the ban, the government has issued directives to federal prosecutors to arrest anyone still using Twitter — and ordered internet providers to block access to the platform. After some initial confusion as to whether Twitter remained accessible, it appears as of mid-June that most Nigerians can no longer access the platform.

The Twitter ban is only the latest example of governments using their control over the Internet and other digital technologies to survey censor and suppress the people (Iyatse & Adepetun, 2021). But the ban has not stopped Nigerians from trying to hold the government accountable both on and offline. Here are three things the Twitter ban shows us about the push and pull between governments,

activists and social media giants.

The massive protests in Nigeria, explained that Nigerians took similar measures during the abuses of the Nigerian police Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). The #EndSARS movement attracted enormous support from around the globe and twitter even unveiled a custom emoji in support of the campaign. Economic “collateral damage” may make it hard to sustain the twitter ban because the ban has drawn particular aspect only because of its implications for free expression, but also for purely economic reasons. Many Nigerians rely on Twitter to support their work for instance, Employers, use the platform to circulate job openings. Freelancers use it to advertise and promote their services and the country’s vibrant start-up community — Nigeria has the most start-ups in Africa — uses Twitter to attract investment. (Iyatse & Adepetun, 2021).

Social science research can help us understand a fundamental weakness of using social media bans and Internet shutdowns to quell domestic opposition: As indiscriminate tools of repression, they are particularly hard to sustain and may even be likely to backfire. Before the Twitter ban, Nigerians were using “#June12Protest” to get people to turn out for an anti-government protest on that date. This hashtag regained momentum after the Twitter ban — our research found many people using it alongside #TwitterBan and KeepitOn, the two primary hashtags that emerged to protest the ban, as the figure below shows. A network graph for the hashtag #KeepitOn on Twitter between June 4 and 12, as Nigerians and others on Twitter protested the government’s Twitter ban. Each node or dot represents a hashtag used alongside KeepitOn in a tweet, with labels indicating the hashtags that appeared most frequently. It is unclear how long the Buhari government will be willing to keep the ban in place. The day after the government announced the “indefinite suspension” of Twitter’s operations, officials clarified that the ban was intended to be temporary. On Friday, the attorney general and minister of justice, Abubakar Malami, also appeared to back off from prosecuting Nigerians who continue to use Twitter. Instead, he said the initial directive given to federal prosecutors was only intended to target people or groups that are helping Twitter evade the ban.

The media can manipulate, influence, persuade and pressurise society, along with even controlling the world at times in both positive and negative ways; mentally, physically and emotionally (Kehinde, 2019). Controversial stories are reported and printed with no reliance of it being fact or not.

The purpose of the media is to give information about current news, gossips, Fashion, and the latest gadgets in the marketplace of the people. The role of the media has to be one way trading and marketing of products, and prejudices. It gives geographical knowledge about how people are divided. The media claimed to be governed by righteousness and equity for the common man to the rich man.

Statement of the Problem

The Nigerian federal government's suspension of the operation of American micro-blogging company, Twitter, in Nigeria, might have left both in a catch-22 situation as the duo had lost millions of followers that they had built for more than half a decade. For Twitter the saga has cost it billions of cash, while Nigerians, in both private and public sectors have lost their means of instant communication. The Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, had announced the suspension of Twitter after the firm deleted some aspects of President Muhammadu Buhari's tweet, which the company found to be in breach of its rules. Following searing attacks of the suspension by social activists, who said it was an abuse of Nigerians' freedom of expression as guaranteed by Section 39 (1) of the Constitution as altered,

The suspension order had attracted a directives from the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), asking all Telecommunications and broadcasting media to deactivate their Twitter handles and block access to the internet facility. Many Nigerians, have, however, circumvented the federal government's blockage of the micro-blogging facility, resorting to the virtual private network (VPN) to connect Twitter. The federal government sought the understanding of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, the European Union and Ireland over its suspension of Twitter's operations in Nigeria. It, however, gave conditions to lift the suspension.

The question is, to what extent has the press in Nigeria successfully overcome the hurdle towards a more efficient reporting of freedom of speech and expression? This study therefore seeks to investigate the coverage that was given to the ban of Twitter in Nigeria by The Punch and Daily Trust online

LITURATURE REVIEW

Concept of Mass Media

Mass media is a channel, medium, utility, device, or instrument used in the mass communication process. The mass media also includes, printed media, electronic media and cyber media. Printed media such as newspapers, magazines, books, pamphlets, billboards and other technical tools that bring out the message by touching the senses of sight. Electronic media such as radio and recorded programs use the senses of hearing and television programs, motion picture and video recording covering both senses which is hearing and vision (Barbour & Plough, 2009). Meanwhile the online media (online media, cybermedia) is the internet-based mass media. Mass media happens to be the suggestions for cultural development, not just culture in the sense of art and symbol but also in the sense of the development of settings, fashion, lifestyle and norms (McQuail, 1987).

The mass media has a strong influence on the lives of people. Media has the power to transform and shape the pattern of human thought behavior. Mass

media has its own social role and function in society, which serves as a function of social supervision, interpretation function, transitional function and entertainment function (Ewang, 2019). In addition, the mass media serves as a platform for criticizing the rulers and guardians of society as well as the space or the link between of the communities. Hawn (2009) said that the mass media played a role in changing the attitudes and perceptions of audience.

At the end of the 19th century until the end of the 20th century, there was a marked change in the broadcasting technology world and turned the field into a major medium in distributing information. The change in sophistication is essential in facilitating the activities or processes of communication while information can be generated at a more efficient and effective rate (Caldwell, 2000). However, in the 21st century, communication activities began changing. Users prefer to use internet service to get information online. This method allows easy data transfer process and also efficient time saving. In addition, more information input can be achieved by using the internet. A variety of worldwide information available through the internet, such as news, sending and receiving electronic mail, commerce, entertainment including watching and more can be accessed (Okoro & Ekwueme, 2013).

The existence of computer systems and the internet has further expanded the use of information and communication technology, thereby increasing the space to gain knowledge as a result through this technology exposure (Coyle & Vaughn, 2008). Because of some reason, media acted as restriction for the users due to limitations in giving their opinion or independent views on news broadcasts. However, the mass media seems to be the platform for consumers to express their opinions and communicate globally without hindrance (Charlotte, 2011). While social media is an internet-based application that builds on Web 2.0 ideology and technology and enables the creation and exchange of social media most commonly used by people around the world (Kaplan & dan Haenlein, 2010).

The use of digitizing technology through popular websites and social networks enables many things such as Facebook, Twitter, BlogSpot and Pinterest to channel more interactive, fast and engaging historical information. In addition, information that is readily accessible and has more flexible space can increase the supply and uses of evidence (Gitlin, 1980).

The change in the form of communication passed through the development of technology, or structural and technical communication revolution (Van Dijk, 2006). This also cause of the advancement of mass media that increases every year (McAdams, 1995). From every age of ancient times to the era of literacy, the printing era, and the electronic era, each represented by a particular form of communication either through writing, oral, printing and telecommunications that had a lot of influence on society as a whole (Reese, 2007).

Human communication has entered the fifth phase that emphasizes interactive communication with internet-based and computing technologies that witness new media or the second media era to be introduced. Mass media as a means of mass communication can also serve as a significant social change agent (Kaplan & dan Haenlein, 2010)

Mass media development has both positive and negative impact on community development. Mass media plays a role in shaping the cultural uniformity that is produced as one of the effects of the influence of media on the system of value, thoughts and actions of individuals. According to Reinsrd (1994) the influence and impact of media can be seen from small scale (individual) and wide scale (society) as well as sooner or later the spread of certain influences. Media is a tool that can stimulate and influence the attitudes and behaviors of individuals or communities that embrace all aspects of human life. It also plays a role in establishing a nation's identity and culture for its overall development (Aja, 2021). Diverse social and cultural facilities are channeled through television, VCDs, magazines, story books, radio, mobile phones, internet, and so on. The mass media is not only an information channel for entertainment and knowledge, but also a variety of social, cultural, personality development and empowerment of individuals, whether positive or negative. However, the negative influence of the mass media comprising the print media and the electronic media is, in fact, indirectly affecting the behavior of the community and as a cause of the youth misconduct and bad behavior (Chukwu, 2014).

The role of the mass media is thought to be positive when it can spread and instill moral values as examples of loving fellow citizens, respecting the rights of other communities, and evaluating a high moral. Media as a field of information dissemination is one of the most influential social forces in shaping the attitudes and social norms of a society. Mass media can be a wise example in changing the behavior of society. The negative effects of the broadcasts and the shows presented can shape the negative thinking of the community. Broadcasting stories and outdoor drama are able to alter local culture and values as a result of Western modernization that is far from contrary to the value of the east. Print media, as well as electronic media, are the mass media most widely used by various level age of society (Bungin, 2001).

Framing of Press Freedom Stories by the Media

According to McQuail (2005), there are two types of bias namely intended bias and unintended bias. While the former stems mainly from partisanship, advocacy and the ideological standpoint of the medium or source, the latter is generally attributed to organizational and routine factors in selection and processing of news. Media bias is the bias of journalists and news producers within the

mass media in the selection of events and stories that are reported and how they are covered. The term "media bias" implies a pervasive or widespread bias contravening the standards of journalism, rather than the perspective of an individual journalist or article. The direction and degree of media bias in various countries are widely disputed. (McCombs, 2006).

Practical limitations to media neutrality include the inability of journalists to report all available stories and facts, and the requirement that selected facts be linked into a coherent narrative. Because it is impossible to report everything, selectivity is inevitable. Government influence, including overt and covert censorship, creates media bias in some countries, for example North Korea and Burma (McQuail, 2005). Market forces that result in a biased presentation include the ownership of the news source, concentration of media ownership, the selection of staff, the preferences of an intended audience, and pressure from advertisers.

Kist (2008) disagrees with the argument that Western news agencies are biased against Third World countries and since many third world or developing countries like Nigeria do not have enough correspondents in those parts, their reports invariably influence ours. He states that "the Third World also wants Western journalism to be "unbiased" and to present news on a "continuing" basis, eliminating the piecemeal sporadic nature of news coverage. Kist agrees that this is the goal of journalism but he argues that it is unrealistic. He states that the existence of bias in news from the Third World is not an indication of Western prejudice. In his view, "News is always a piecemeal and biased as to reality, and is so because of somebody's perceptive. A journalist in any society selects what will be news and fashions it according to his value system." (Kist, 2008) He argues that due to the journalist's subjectivity, all news is biased in some way so it would be unreasonable for Third World nations to expect no bias in international news.

Influential democracies in the world, large segments of the population are no longer receiving unbiased news and information (Strauss & Schoder, 1994). This is not because journalists are being thrown in jail, as might occur in authoritarian settings. Instead, the media have fallen prey to more nuanced efforts to throttle their independence. Common methods include government-backed ownership changes, regulatory and financial pressure, and public denunciations of honest journalists. Governments have also offered proactive support to friendly outlets through measures such as lucrative state contracts, favorable regulatory decisions, and preferential access to state information. The goal is to make the press serve those in power rather than the public.

The problem has arisen in tandem with right-wing populism, which has undermined basic freedoms in many democratic countries (Weaver, 2007). Populist leaders present themselves as the defenders of an aggrieved majority against liberal elites and ethnic minorities whose loyalties they question, and argue that the interests of

the nation as they define it should override democratic principles like press freedom, transparency, and open debate.

Twitter Ban: Implications on Nigerian Economy

On 5 June 2021, the Nigerian government officially put an indefinite ban on Twitter restricting it from operating in Nigeria after the social media platform deleted tweets made by the Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari warning the south eastern people of Nigeria predominantly Igbo people, of a potential repeat of the 1967 Biafran Civil War due to the ongoing insurgency in Southeastern Nigeria (Washington, 2021).

The Nigerian government claimed that the deletion of the President's tweets factored into their decision but it was ultimately based on "a litany of problems with the social media platform in Nigeria, where misinformation and fake news spread through it have had real world violent consequences citing the persistent use of the platform for activities that are capable of undermining Nigeria's corporate existence.

The ban was condemned by Amnesty International as well as the British and Canadian missions and the Swedish Embassy in Nigeria. Two domestic organizations - the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project and the Nigerian Bar Association - have indicated intent to challenge the ban in court (Reuters, 2021). Twitter itself called the ban "deeply concerning". Nigeria's Cultural Minister Lai Mohammed stated the ban will be lifted once Twitter submits to local licensing, registration and conditions. "It will be licensed by the broadcasting commission, and must agree not to allow its platform to be used by those who are promoting activities that are inimical to the corporate existence of Nigeria. Digital media like Twitter are essential for information exchange, marketing customer services and remote work, especially during public health and safety emergencies like the COVID19 pandemic. The suspension can slow commerce, cut productivity and ultimately cost jobs (Iyatse & Adepetun, 2021).

Nigerians in Diaspora Movement (NDM) stressed that banning Twitter in Nigeria was an act of insensitivity considering the fact many Nigerians make a living through the site. NDM recollected that social media like Twitter have been proven to lift people, especially the youth, out of poverty through the acquisition and exchange of value adding ideas. To this effect, NDM hereby, unequivocally, calls upon the Nigerian government to reconsider the ban on Twitter without further delay (Paulinus and Obi, 2021). Valentine Ozigbo, the immediate past President and Group CEO of Transcorp PLC acknowledged that in a statement Twitter is a platform that drives business and creates jobs for millions of Nigerians, especially the youth. "As a business leader and investor in technology and communications, I appreciate the role of social networking platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook in driving business and the economy.

This suspension will have untold negative consequences to our economy, or image as a democracy and the youth who use Twitter as a platform to advance their career (Iyorah, 2021). The suspension has already created a market access gap for millions of small business and medium scale enterprises that use the platform to reach their customers. This could potentially complicate the challenges COVID19 and other defects had imposed on businesses. Also affected is the structural commerce market in the country, estimated at \$12 billion (Iyatse & Adeptus, 2021).

The chairman, Mobile Software Solution, Nigeria, Chris Uwaje, opines that the ban would bring a monumental economic dysfunction, with the capability to fuel more unemployment, whose disaster recovery damages will cost a long time to amend. He identifies the following as among the possible consequences of shutting down Twitter: massive damage to consumer, delay development of Nigeria's digital ecosystem, massive cyber-attack on Nigeria etc. (Aja, 2021). Most Information and Communication Technologies professionals described government ban on Twitter as a decision made without knowledge of technology's dynamism. They argue that the decision could undermine the economic boost technology gives the country by way of consistently strengthening the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

THE ORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Framing theory was used to explain the contents and objectives of this study. The framing theory which has root in different disciplines was first used in communication circles by Erving Goffman (1974). Its usage was further popularised by Entman's (1993). The major thrust of the theory is that how an issue is characterised in reports can have influence on how it is understood by audiences. The framing theory is one that deals both with media content as well as media effects on audience. The patterns and angles used by, or emphasised by journalists in their reports of a particular issue will always affect the understanding of such issues by the audience. Seeing that the press is a mirror of the world to the audience, the press is a window through which audience members view the world, hence it is what the press chooses to feed the audience and more especially how they choose to feed the audience with information on issues that form the basis of the theory.

Framing theory thrives on the selection and emphasis of some certain facets to report while neglecting other aspects of the same issue. Framing helps us understand how the slant used by journalists to report issues help in audience understanding of such issue which leads to the kind of subsequent action taken upon such message.

Assumptions of the theory

The following concepts are associated with framing:

1. Journalists select the topics they will present and decide how they will be presented. This determines the issues audiences think about and how they think about

them.

2. Audiences interpret information through their own frames. Audiences' frames may overlap or contradict the media's frames.

3. Frames are reinforced every time they are evoked, whether positively or negatively.

4. Frame building is a systematic process that occurs over time.

Criticisms of framing theory indicates that framing builds mistrust against the media, creates gap between the truth and the public awareness by creating a point of view, distorts truth, limits debates by placing vocabularies and metaphors that can be used in news that is used by all public and it is becoming less as new media is developing and giving people an opportunity to think about same topic with different point of view. The theory is highly relevant to this study since the study is out to ascertain the frames used in reporting the Buhari's Twitter ban and also the subject matters discussed in the reports. The theory aids the researcher in making educated inferences as to the influence and the knowledge of audience members about the issue of the Twitter ban. It helps explain what pattern of frame was given to the Twitter ban to the public and how they are making use of the information. This will help to a large extent, monitor the efforts of the Nigerian press in supporting and helping to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals with special

emphasis on democratic participation. This is because the first objective is to know the pattern of frame given to twitter ban because information is power. The theory also explains the reasons behind the probable actions that the audience members may take as a result of exposure to information on the Twitter ban (not necessarily from the media), hence the theory is also relevant for the survey aspect of this study.

Research Design

Content analysis research design was adopted for this study. Content analysis was considered suitable for this study due to its ability to help conduct an objective enquiry into the manifest content of media products. Kerlinger as cited in Okoro & Ekwueme (2013) highlights that the content analysis helps in making a systematic and objective measurement of variables, hence its relevance to this study. The method provides a platform to check the frames of the Buhari's Twitter ban stories in the online newspapers. The instrument used for data collection is the code sheet.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

A total of 124 editions of Daily Trust and The Punch newspapers were sampled on the framing of twitter ban in Nigeria. The data obtained from the study are presented below:

Table 1: Pattern of frame The Punch and the Daily Trust online use in Twitter ban news

Variable		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
The Punch	Causes Frame	2	9%
	Effect frame	8	35%
	Rumour and misinformation	-	-
	Reaction frame	13	56%
	Total	23(52%)	100%
Daily Trust	Causes Frame	2	9%
	Effect frame	9	43%
	Rumour and misinformation	-	-
	Reaction frame	10	48%
	Total	21(48%)	100%
Grand Total		44(100%)	

Table 2: Prominence given to twitter ban stories in Daily Trust and Punch Newspaper

Variable		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily Trust	Front page	6	26%
	Inside page	14	61%
	Center Spread	-	-
	Back page	3	13%
	Total	23(52%)	100%
The Punch	Front page	7	33%
	Inside page	12	57%
	Center Spread	-	-
	Back page	2	10%

	Total	21(48%)	100%
Grand Total		44(100%)	

Table 3: Slant given to Twitter ban stories in Daily Trust and The Punch Newspaper

Variable		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Daily Trust	Favourable	14	61%
	Unfavourable	2	9%
	Neutral	7	30%
	Total	23(52)	100%
The Punch	Favourable	12	57%
	Unfavourable	-	-
	Neutral	9	43%
	Total	21(48%)	100%
Grand Total		44	100%

Table 4: Factors upon which the Twitter ban coverage was based by The Punch and Daily Trust online

Variable		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Daily Trust	Political factor	7	30%
	Economic Factor	5	22%
	Social Factor	11	48%
	Total	23 (52%)	100%
The Punch	Political factor	5	24%
	Economic Factor	6	29%
	Social Factor	10	47%
	Total	21 (48%)	100%
Grand Total		44	100%

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The table 1 represent the pattern of frame in which The Punch and Daily Trust online report news of twitter ban. The table indicated that out of the 44 (100%) items coded, The Punch online reported 23 (52%) stories in which they framed news of twitter ban in effect frame (35%) Reaction frame (56%) while causes frame had only 9%. Daily Trust newspaper reported a total of 21 (48%) stories of twitter ban in which they framed their stories in causes frame (9%) effect frame (43%) reaction frame (48%). The implication of this is that both Daily Trust and The Punch online framed reports of twitter ban majorly in effect and reaction frame. Findings from this table corroborates with Chukwu (2014) who argued that the media should go back to the concept of journalism in public interest to be able to discharge its proper role in the times of crises. The role of the media is similar to that of a middle man in providing information or issues of significance to the society. Therefore, the media should be fair, objective and accurate way in reporting Twitter ban stories in Nigeria.

Table 2 represents the prominence given to twitter ban by Daily Trust and The Punch online. Out of 44 coded items, it shows that Daily Trust reported 6 of the stories in its Front Pages, 14 were reported at the Inside Pages, while 3 of the stories were reported at the Back Pages.

On the other hand, The Punch online reported 7 stories of Twitter ban in their Front Pages, 12 at their Inside Pages while only 2 stories were reported at their Back Pages. The implication of this is that the reportage of twitter ban stories in Daily Trust and The Punch online was prominent in the Inside Pages. According to Freelon (2010) newspapers are saddled with the responsibility of publishing the opinions and views of the citizens of the country as these enable them to take active part in the growth and development of the country.

Also, according to Kehinde (2019) that the media can foster human right and be a useful instrument for peace and conflict management, which promotes peace messages, strategies that can lead to peaceful agreement and tolerant behavior in a given society. In order for the media to promote human right and peace, there is need to give prominence to reports of twitter ban. Media audiences are always excited to read detailed stories on how events unfold and this is largely based on the prominence given to such news stories. Media attention given to stories reflect on where stories are placed which invariably affects readers' perception of the story.

Table 3 represents the way stories of twitter ban in Daily Trust and The Punch online are being slanted. The table indicates that stories of twitter ban in Nigeria by Daily Trust was largely favourable (61%) minimally neutral

(30%) while (9%) were found unfavourable. While The Punch slanted 12(57%) of their stories of twitter ban favourably and 9 (43%) neutral. The foregoing implies that stories of Twitter ban by Daily Trust and The Punch online were slanted favourable.

In line with framing theory of the media, the determination of what is or not news, what is or is not significant, is a function not of the nature of the world out there but of the work of those who must somehow bring into being some things which are more important than others and hence, more worthy of publication (Sambe & Ikoni, 2004).

Table 4 above represents the various factors upon which the twitter ban coverage was based by The Punch and Daily Trust newspaper. Out of 44 (100%) coded items, Daily Trust covered twitter ban on 7(30%) on political factor, 5(22%) economic factor and 11(48%) social factor while. The Punch newspaper covered stories of twitter ban on 5(24%) political factor, 6(29%) on economic factor while 10(23%) on social factor. The foregoing implies that the factors upon which Daily Trust and The Punch online covered twitter ban stories were Political factor, Economic factor and social factor.

CONCLUSION

The Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, had announced the suspension of Twitter after the firm deleted some aspects of President Muhammadu Buhari's tweet, which the company found to be in breach of its rules. Following searing attacks of the suspension by social activists, who said it was an abuse of Nigerians' freedom of expression as guaranteed by Section 39 (1) of the Constitution as altered. The suspension order had attracted a directive from the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), asking all Telecommunications and broadcasting media to deactivate their Twitter handles and block access to the internet facility.

However, this study has been able to shed light on the obscurity that lies in the question of to what extent have the press in Nigeria successfully overcome the hurdle towards a more efficient reporting of freedom of speech and expression. This study concludes that, Daily Trust and The Punch newspapers had covered the issue of the Nigerian twitter ban in different measures and perspectives, as arising from the differences in the slants accorded the reportage, some which were favorable and others which were not.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government should uphold the tenet of a true democratic state by ensuring that no ban is placed on social networking sites as such actions undermines the fundamental human right of expression of the citizens.
2. The study recommends that Daily Trust and The Punch online should sometimes write editorials on the

issue of social media users right protection as it might help sprout stakeholders into action as it involves forestalling any plan of a future social medium ban.

3. The study recommends that prominence should be given to the reports on any violation of the basic human rights especially in regards to freedom of speech and expression on the front pages of the national dailies.

4. It recommends that the Daily Trust and The Punch online should increase the Effect Frame of human expression right violation.

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