NEWS FRAMING AND ESCALATION OF ETHNO-POLITICAL ANTIPATHIES ISSUES: A QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPERS

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Abstract

Ethno-political antipathies issues such as Farmers/Herdsmen clashes and post-election violence have persisted and lingered for decades in developing countries. In view of these clashes, ethno-political groups are wandering the path of hatred and irreconcilable for decades. Hence, this paper investigates and discloses the patterns of news framing on these issues in Nigerian newspapers. News headlines and story lead paragraphs from three Nigerian national daily newspapers, (the Daily Trust, Nigerian Tribune, and the Sun newspapers) were content analyzed. The findings indicated three main patterns of news framing which are stereotypes, favoritism, and ethnic apathy during the period under study. The three newspapers examined correlated with factors such as ownership, proximity, and accepted those ideas of political elites in framing ethno-political antipathies in Nigeria. Therefore, this study suggests that newspapers have apparently adopted both positive and negative labeling/depictions as the elements that shape their regional and ethno-political proclivity. The framing of antipathies seemed to exploit national integration through acceptance of this political rhetoric. This study is beneficial for policy makers to construe the causes, consequences, and offered solutions on proposed reviews of existing media laws within Nigeria's political entity. An investigation of issues on ethno-political antipathies in other genres of mass media like radio is recommended for future research direction.

Keywords: *Nigeria; news framing; political process; ethno-political antipathies; election*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the advent of newspapers as medium of communication to inform, educate, and enlighten has sustained important roles in our societies. But patterns of Newspapers' framing have been identified as the scourge of issues on ethno-political antipathies such as cynicism, rivalry, clashes and the slack of multi-ethnic relations in societies. In Nigeria, Kur, Agudosy, and Orhewere (2015) observed how various media framed news reports that prompt antipathies and build discord among many ethnic groups in the country.

These patterns of news framing on ethno-political antipathies are more of what newspapers reported on such issues as the farmers/herdsmen clashes, unequal representation in public/civil service and rotational presidency. For example, in news framing and ethnic group leaders conflict behavior (Adisa, Mohammed, & Ahmad, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c) discovered that the media are oblivious in reporting problems on ethno-political concerns which shapes different ethnic groups leaders' conflict behaviors and subsequently revitalized ferocious tendencies. Furthermore, in contemporary Nigeria, the patterns of news framing in conjunction with heightened political situation in the country dominate the mass media scene with divergent rather than united ethno-religious apprehension among ethnic groups such as the Famers/Herdsmen clashes. Similarly, the instability for imbalanced representation in the civil/public service as well as "rotational presidency paradox" in order to create prospects for the less dominant ethnic groups strive for leadership positions has created series of tensions and ethno-political discord in the country (Ezeibe, Abada, & Okeke, 2016; Yerima, Ibrahim, & Terwase, 2016; Usman, 2015).

Grounded on these concerns, these patterns of ethno-political antipathies pose serious and suspicions vulnerable to create more vicious relation in Nigeria's development and integration. For the reasons that the patterns, and tone of news headlines are framed is reproducing sequences of incitement in the event of ethnic, political and religious concerns among the diverse ethno-religious groups in Nigeria (Ojo, & Adebayo, 2013). However, the federal government of Nigeria through its relevant agencies' struggles to manage and promulgate durable solution on ethno-political antipathies noticeably failed to thrive with the amplified cases of renewed ethno-political antipathies since the country's return to democracy in (1999) hence prompting further questions regarding efficacy of the system (Ugorji, 2012). Based on this concerns, Onwudiwe and Berwind-Dart (2010) contended that the entangled socio-cultural and politico-economic clashes with greater ethno-religious suspicion persisted and lingered.

Furthermore, with regards to the unswerving concern of scholars worldwide on media framing studies generally, it is apparent that there is salient dearth of studies on the patterns of media coverage of issues on ethno-political antipathies alongside news framing as the helix of these anxieties. Hence, enduring solutions specifically for developing nations has dwindled and insufficient. Nevertheless, framing offers a lucrative way of interpreting how news media design and project news as well as publics' opinions of it but the precinct lacks accuracy and precision. Thus, the need for attention towards the examination of contents analysis of newspapers is necessary for solutions as noted by (Adisa, et. al., 2015a & 2015b) who stated that it has become imperative, in most of the multiethnic societies, clashes remain obstinate and resolution elusive. Therefore, in order to accomplish this task, the objectives of this paper, which the findings will answer, are: Times New Roman 11, justify, 4 to 6 paragrphs. One paragraphs should consists or at least 4-6 sentences.

1.1 Objectives

 i)   to examine the patterns of news framing employed by the newspapers' reportage of ethno-political antipathies in Nigeria.

ii)   to determine the dominant patterns of news framing on ethno-political antipathies in Nigeria during the period under study.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   News framing and Ethno-political antipathies

In developing nations with a throng of multiethnic groups where different cultures are given the opportunity to attain and practice their 'mother tongues' and venerate the religion of their interest. While

such veneration helps in retaining distinctive characteristics of each ethnic group, at the same time, it generates confounding problems for creating a shared identity for national integration because of ethno-religious suspicion among ethnic groups. In this regard, the media are burdened with the tasks of advancing interethnic relations and greater forbearance amongst multiethnic adherents of the society.

But in Nigeria, the patterns of news framing are catalyst of confounding the myriad of ethno-political antipathies. According to Musa (2010) Nigerian media are profoundly ingrained as a polarized and contentious alongside geographic and ethno-religious differences. This patterns, as recognized by Ayoola (2010) is in reaction to the major interethnic and regional consecration most tribal groups pay concerning the areas they originate from. Subsequently, these diverse ethnic groups mostly subscribed to newspapers that empathetically framed news reports on their social, cultural and political inclination. In support of this views, Kur et al (2015) also observed and agreed that different media organizations in Nigeria, have framed in their contents, reports that prompt social tensions and create divisions among multiethnic groups in the country. Based on this, the need for attention towards the analysis of contents of newspapers has become necessary for solutions (Adisa et al 2015a).

Psychologically, individuals are more inclined to bad news as such newspapers heightened their news stories and promote provocative images of ethno-political antipathies. Despite this array of problems, not much consideration is directed at understanding the solutions towards these issues which is glaringly influenced by the news framing and in addition that many of them are helpful on the recurrence of ethno-political antipathies and escalation.

2.2   News framing analysis

For decades, the historic epochs of framing theory were embedded in sociological studies, political science, psychology, and its introduction in the field of communication by (Goffman, 1981). Goffman was among the early scholars to explore the impact of framing in the construction of social reality by investigating the practices through which meanings are explicated in communication (Feuerstein, 2014). Numerous studies have discovered that framing has the capacity to reveal the obscurities and multiplicities implanted or deficient in contents of news stories (Durham & Carpenter, 2014).

Alongside the polysemic dimensions of news contents as well as the patterns of repression and relegation that may perhaps constrain polysemy (Carragee, 2003). Frame analysis is critical in investigating persuasive news in addition to evaluating reports directed towards the practice of media's established ideologies (Eilders & Albrecht, 2000; Tankard, 2001). To frame is to select any angle of a professed reality and constitute them to be salient in news coverage to such a degree as to explicitly cultivate a problem identification, causative understanding, moral judgment, and or treatment recommendation for the piece described (Entman, 1993).

Similarly, Entman and Rojecki (1993) recognized that in this practice of generating news reports from everyday reality, reporters give prominence to stories and focus on specific parts and leave others out, inevitably giving the news an overriding features through framing. According to Cissel (2012) framing is the practice through which news reports are tailored and released to the audiences. Therefore, framing as a construct, is a process that inculcate a specific notion and perception of an issue on the audiences or shapes their cognition on a phenomena (Chong & Druckman, 2007). In a similar vein, Nisbet (2009) indicated that "frames are interpretive storylines that set a specific train of thought in motion, communicating why an issue might be a problem, who or what might be responsible for it, and what should be done about it" (P.15). Supporting this notion, Tewksbury and Scheufele (2009) argues that whereupon journalist select in what manners to interpret political matters, journalists often times instinctively inject antipathies in the framing process.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1   Quantitative Content analysis

This paper adopts quantitative content analysis approach. Quantitative content analysis collects data on materials such as news stories, evidences from facts and figures of news reports on themes, and volume of references of media messages determined through keyword search in context (KWIC) of the media circulation (audience scope) and frequency (Macnamara, 2005). Though, this idea is concealed and offered obscured general implications which produced scholarly incongruity on media reportage of social problems as well as the framing process (Freelon, 2010).

Nevertheless, it may bring forth some basic concepts, but scarcely suggest any solution to the anomalies in framing inquiries: the explanation and the operationalization of frames. It is worthy to note that scholars (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Eilders & Albrecht, 2000; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Nisbet, 2009; Tankard, 2001) describe frames and interpret them in practical examination and exploration by giving intuition in the methods of operationalization, which provided some basic ideas in replicating the data. Hence, this paper has focused on the operationalization of the signature matrix 'package' Gamson and Lasch (1983) and incidence of the labeling of Palestinian/individuals/leaders/groups and labeling of actions in both negative or positive terms as identified and researched in the coverage of the First Intifada by Deprez and Raeymaeckers (2010). This list of frames begins with a series of prospective frames, correspondingly well-defined through keywords search in context (KWIC), such as metaphors, depictions/labeling and catchphrases, as imperative content categories. The reliability of the devices involved were calculated and kappa coefficients indicated a high reliability tested with all variables scored a kappa of .75 or above, except for the 'consequences' variable which scored .64. Deprez and Raeymaeckers, (2010) declared further that the variables and the procedure do not pose any problem as the kappa still indicates a good reliability.

Therefore, in this paper, quantitative analysis approach was used to examine the contents of news stories on news framing of ethno-political antipathies in Nigeria. It studies the patterns of news framing published by the three purposively sampled regional newspapers in Nigeria namely: Daily Trust, Nigerian Tribune and the Sun. This method comprises a deductive and systematic analysis, through a list of predetermined frames and media package mentioned above (Tankard, 2001). The latter technique stressed the 'media package' model offered by (Gamson & Lasch, 1983; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Accordingly, "the media package presents the keywords and shared language that would assist in identifying a certain frame" (Tankard, 2001, p. 99), categories which suggest that frames can commonly be recognized by way of combining a number of extra media sources (Tankard, 2001).

Based on this established procedure, the researcher hereby selected as time frame the periods between 1st Jan 2015 and 31st December, 2015 for content collection from the three sampled newspapers. This method correlated with Kiousis (2004) study of New York times issues coverage during the 2000 U.S presidential polls through which data was collected from the content only from 'the entire 2000 election year and saved monthly counts from January to December to assess trends of coverage over time'. Similarly, the periods were selected because it was the time the nation conducted general polls which serve as the beehive of ethno-political events characterized by antipathies as observed by Fafchamps and Vicente (2013).

4.0   FINDINGS

4.1   Patterns of news framing

From the data analysis in this paper, the patterns of news framing on ethno-political antipathies are categorized under these three main frames: (i) Stereotypes/labeling of individuals/leaders/groups (ii) Favoritism/labeling of actions and (iii) Ethnic Apathy/source/content/visual images. Likewise, each of the frames produced in the matrix frames spell out its underlining effects in both Positive and Negative as presented below (see Table 1).

Table 1 Results of articles by newspaper and framing

	Stereotypes		Favoritism		Ethnic Apathy		Total
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	
DT	6 (28.6%)	2 (9.5%)	1 (4.8%)	6 (28.6%)	1 (4.8%)	5 (23.8%)	N = 21 (34%)
NB	7 (35%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	11 (55%)	N = 20 (33%)
TS	9 (45%)	1 (5%)	7 (35%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	2 (10%)	N = 20 (33%)
	Total = 22	Total = 3	Total = 10	Total = 7	Total = 1	Total = 18	Total = 61

4.1.1   Stereotypes

This analysis on ethno-political antipathies indicated how the three newspapers framing stereotypes through labeling of individuals/leaders/groups. As a result, the findings (Figure 1) showed these stereotypes as negative labeling and positive labeling.
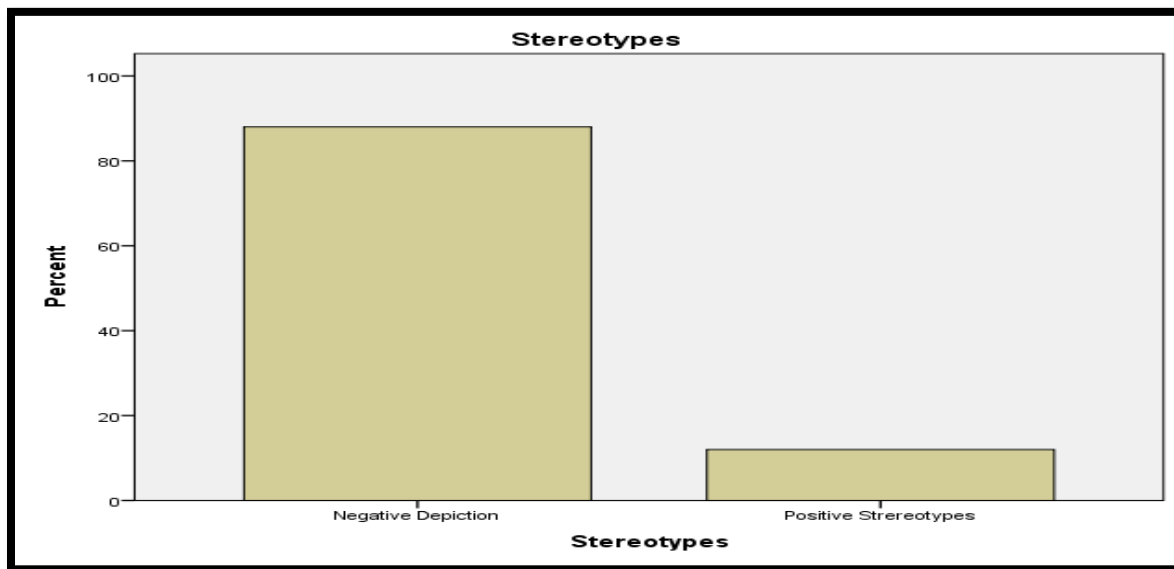

Figure 1 Nigerian newspapers' framing of stereotypes in both negative and positive frames

Examples of stories on positive stereotypes and labeling of individuals/leaders/groups (Table 2) (Table 3)

Table 2 Instances of stories on negative stereotypes and labeling of individuals/leaders/groups

1	"*Fulani* herdsmen conquer Abuja"	TS www.sunnewsonline.com
2	"Breaking News! *Fulani* invasion: 80 feared killed in Agatu village"	TS www.sunnewsonline.com
3	"*Ijaw* nation blames *major ethnic* groups for conspiracy against Jonathan's re-election"	DT www.dailtrust.com.ng
4	"APC accuses Jonathan of *engineering violence*, sponsoring ethnic militias"	DT www.dailtrust.com.ng
5	"*Buhari* operating as president of the North"	TS www.sunnewsonline.com
6	"NNPC restructuring: *Northerners* may take juicy positions"	NT www.tribuneonlineng.com
7	"*Buhari* must ensure equity in appointments, Yoruba group insists"	NT www.tribuneonlineng.com

Table 3 Analysis of labeling published in a sample articles

1	"Ijaw to negotiate co-existence with other ethnic groups"	DT www.dailtrust.com.ng
2	"Nigeria divided along religious and ethnic lines"	DT www.dailtrust.com.ng

4.1.2   Favoritism

The analysis in this paper also revealed negative bias in labeling of actions as well as Positive favoritism with unselective judgments on ethno-political antipathies. Figure 2 indicates the details of Positive and Negative favoritism.
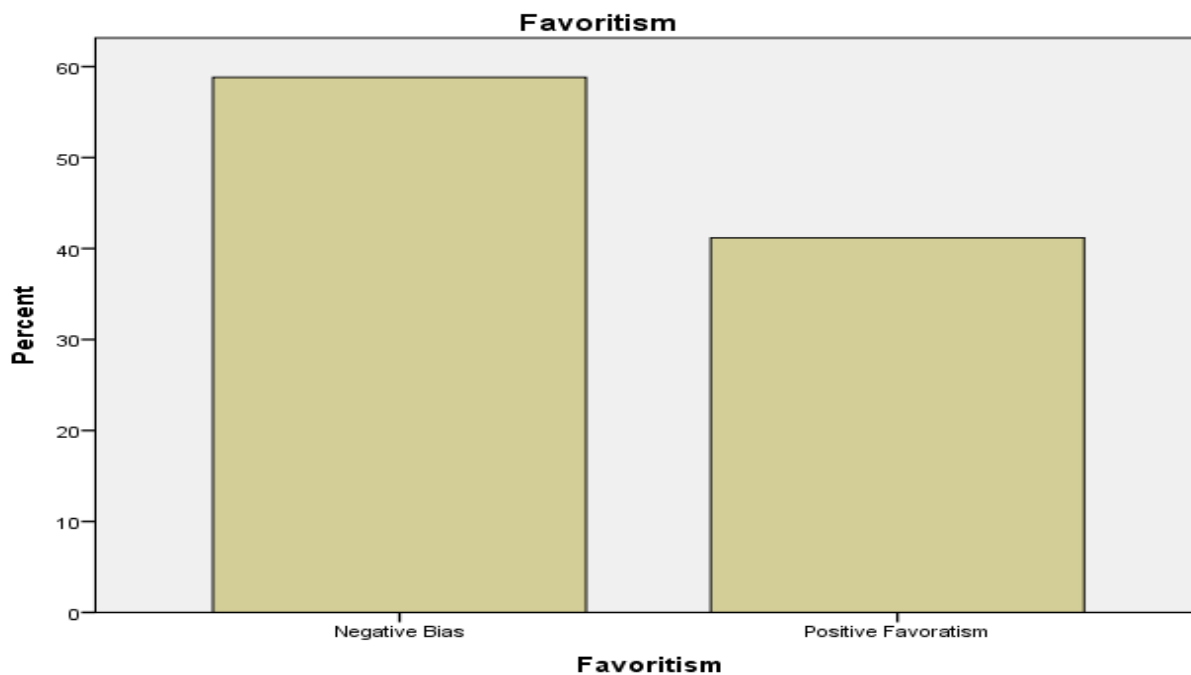

Figure 2 Analysis of positive and negative favoritism in news framing

Patterns of stories on negative bias and labeling of actions in news framing (Table 4).

Table 4 Favoritism framing in Nigerian newspapers

1	"*Welcome to change* – Fani- Kayode accuses Buhari of favoring *North* in his the North"	TS www.sunnewsonline.com
2	"Akure: *The Eze Ndigbo's audacity*"	NT www.tribuneonlineng.com
3	"Falae's kidnap, a ploy to destabilize Nigeria —Northern group"	NT www.tribuneonlineng.com

Instances of stories on positive favoritism and labeling of actions in the patterns of news framing (Table 5).

Table 5 analysis of negative bias and labeling of actions published in a sample articles

1	"*Nigerians* must stop using ethnic and religious sentiments to look for positions"	DT www.dailtrust.com.ng
2	"*Security agents* not favoring any ethnic group - Lalong"	DT www.dailtrust.com.ng
3	"*Religion, ethnicity trumps ideas* in Nigeria's *presidential vote*"	TS www.sunnewsonline.com

4.1.3 Ethnic Apathy

The findings of this paper discovered both Negative with one (1) frame signifying (5.3%) and 18 Positive which constitute (94.7%) stories on ethnic apathy as third pattern of news framing.

Figure 3 categorizes the specifics of Negative and Positive Ethnic apathy framing in Nigerian newspapers.
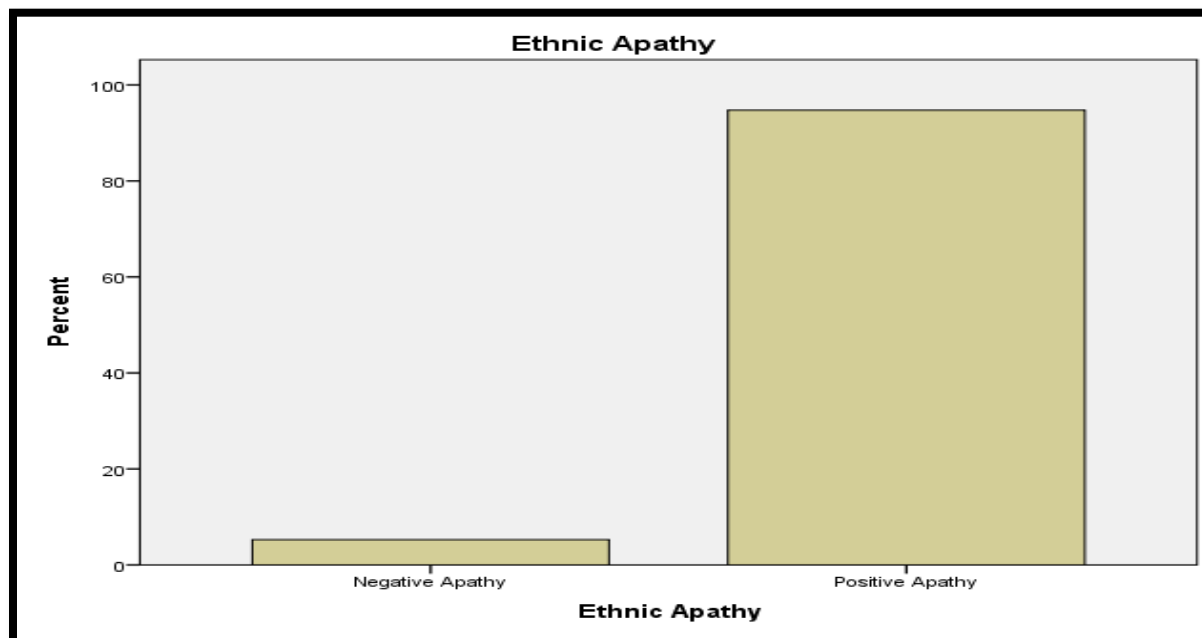
Table 6 Examples of frames on positive ethnic apathy/source/content/visual images

1	"Chief Imam cautions youth on religious, *ethnic bigotry*"	DT www.dailtrust.com.ng
2	"National reconciliation and integration as catalysts for sustainable development"	NT www.tribuneonlineng.com
3	"*Build bridges of unity*, Osinbajo urges Nigerians"	TS www.sunnewsonline.com
4	"El-Rufai *abolishes settler/indigene dichotomy*"	NT www.tribuneonlineng.com

4.2   Patterns of dominant frames

However, the investigation of relationships amongst both newspapers merged into related frames revealed how ethno-political antipathies are reported in both regions to form the dominant patterns as stated in the table below.

Table 7 the labeling of News framing under each media frames

	Stereotypes	Favoritism	Ethnic Apathy	
Negative frames	22 (88%)	10 (58.8%)	1 (5.3%)	Total = 33 (54%)
Positive frames	3 (12%)	7 (41.2%)	18 (94.7%)	Total = 28 (46%)
	Total= 25	Total= 17	Total= 19	Total= 61

Source: Developed for this study

5.0   DISCUSSION

5.1   Patterns of news framing

The analysis in this paper has revealed three patterns of news framing. These patterns, which are in line with scholars, such as Suleiman and Salau (2012) who have observed the persistent patterns of news framing from biased viewpoint by the newspapers as not only unethical, but frivolous which often times, intensified antipathies among ethnic groups on issues of national concerns. These issues have both Negative results presented in 33 (54%) of the stories and Positive shown in 28 (46%) of the 42 sampled articles within the study period as shown in Table 2.

First and foremost, scholars' conception on stereotypes, as noted by Abraham and Appiar (2006) are that communication and language as means of exchange, news media and dialogue offers the ultimate avenues in which stereotype is sustained. The media remained influential agents of socialization in the society emerging with insightful news coverage (Roussou, 2011). In contrast, from an investigation of media coverage on "Muslims, Islam and Shari'a", it is discovered that news stories are largely based on negative connotations used to depict these groups (Bowe & Hoewe, 2016). Stereotypes/labeling of individuals/leaders/groups were recognized and displayed in two frames that explained the patterns of news framing on ethno-political antipathies as follows: (1) Negative depiction with ethnic coloration offered 22 stories making (88%) and (2) Positive stereotypes conveying reports that are based on facts, no coloration were shown in 3 stories making 3 (12%).

The findings of this paper showed both the three newspapers, namely: Daily Trust, Nigerian Tribune and the Sun newspapers as causes of antipathies who aggravate the hub of ethno-political relations among the general populace with 22 stories (88%), although with only 3 positive stories making 3 (12%). These findings have shown that Daily Trust, Nigerian Tribune and The Sun newspapers were involved in using

Negative stereotypes/labeling of individuals/leaders/groups in their framing. In principle, this type of framing only portrayed, for instance, the Fulani/herdsmen and Hausa ethnic groups as prone and susceptible to violence, more so, the stories are grounded on purported assumptions. For this reasons, Aliagan (2015) identified that newspapers in Nigeria pegged on ethno-political obligation engaged sentiments to deceitfully bend the market. Besides, he listed some newspapers as propagating ethno-political and regional support in their reports.

Similarly, favoritism occurs when journalist engaged in the sensationalism of events or issues reported. In journalistic tradition, the frame might be a story slant, news peg or hook, which is a story about diverse racial or ethnic groups. Therefore, favoritism in journalism is the inequity or apparent subjectivity of reporters in the selection of events or issues and stories that are conveyed and how they are reported which violate the principles and values of journalism (Adisa, et al, 2015). This second frame sought to determine in what ways favoritism/labeling of actions constitutes the patterns of the newspaper's framing on ethno-political issues in both Negative and Positive ways.

The findings revealed favoritism in Negative bias framing presented in 10 stories signifying (58.8%) and (2) Positive favoritism in 7 stories making (41.2%) with indiscriminate judgments. Tewksbury and Scheufele (2009) argues that whereupon journalist select in what manners to interpret political matters, journalists often times instinctively inject antipathies in the framing process. Negative favoritism is built on selective judgments and emerged in this study as the second component of favoritism in 10 stories signifying (58.8%), although, there is Positive favoritism in 7 stories making (41.2%). Newspapers conveyed negative framing on ethno-political antipathies and intensified the political atmosphere throughout and after the 2015 general elections with other ensuing issues like the farmers/herdsmen dispute. Likewise, ethnic apathy appeared in with 1 Negative frame signifying (5.3%) while 18 Positive frames constituted (94.7%) stories on ethnic apathy/source/content/visual images.

In line with Musa (2010) who mentioned that in the event of sectional rivalry, newspapers thrives in framing their front pages to reflect regional or religious affiliation. Similarly, Akpan, Olofu-Adeoye, and Ering (2013) believed Newspapers subscribed to negative bias/labeling of actions and Ethnic apathy in /source/content/visual images to convey sentiments to the audiences with serious concerns between ethnic groups in the country. This finding ratifies the scholars who labeled newspaper's framing of negative antipathies between diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria. Instead of integrating, promoting, enlightening every section of the typically fragmented and separated societal members into a well-integrated societal group (Viswanath & Arora, 2000) the media, through the patterns of framing escalate antipathies between people. The consequences of such patterns of adverse bias/labeling of actions and in source/content/visual images by the media on ethno-political matters in multi-ethnic country such as Nigeria, is unabated and devoid of any form of political will and concern for diversity.

6.0   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The result of this investigative content analysis indicates that while there are ferocious elements in the patterns of news framing on ethno-political antipathies that traverse through the dominant frames identified, it has expounded the causes and consequences in newspaper framing of positive and negative ethno-political antipathies in the Nigerian context. As this research focuses its examination within framing theory, this research contributes to theoretical application that brings forth the significance of how the stereotypes and favoritism build the understanding of news framing.

This paper has tactfully examined its purposes; therefore the following recommendations are being made for future researches. It is being recommended that the framing of issues on ethno-political antipathies in the other genres of mass media like radio be investigated. The necessity to focus on these genres is

because radio is the medium for the masses and most victims of ethno-political antipathies are the masses. Similarly, looking at the devastating effects of ethno-political antipathies in Nigeria's integration and consolidation, these issues seems to pervade civil service, business certification, educational system, domestic security as well as foreign policy.

 It is expected that this research will encourage more efforts in emergent ethno-political antipathies in Nigeria's fallible political institutions. In addition to proposed reviews of existing media laws, however, stringent measures in the application of these laws be considered against any news media organization promoting ethnic chauvinism in order to checkmate the unwarranted activities and regulate news content of mass media in Nigeria.

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