



## NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF BRAIN DRAIN IN NIGERIAN HEALTH SECTOR: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF *VANGUARD*, *DAILY TRUST* AND *PUNCH* NEWSPAPERS

**NWOSU, Chibuike Julius, PhD**

**OKEKE, Adaobi Olivia, PhD**

**MICHAEL, Dada Oluyemi**

**ANYAOGU, Emmanuel Ugonna**

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> Department of Mass Communication, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

**Corresponding author:** Chibuike Julius Nwosu, **Email:** nwosujuliusc@yahoo.com.

### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the extent that the problem of migration among Nigerian health workers has been reported by Nigerian newspapers. Employing the content analysis research design, the authors of the work studied three Nigerian newspapers – *Vanguard*, *Daily Trust* and *Punch* newspapers. The researchers found out that the newspapers gave frequent coverage to the stories on brain drain. Similarly, the study discovered that these newspapers also gave prominence to the stories on brain drain. However, the researchers discovered that the newspapers did not actually give depth to the stories published on brain drain. Lastly, the study revealed that the newspapers did not frame the stories on brain-drain positively. It is based on the findings that the researchers recommended among others, that Nigerian leaders must not sit irresponsibly and pretend to be ignorant of the cause of brain drain. They should, as much as possible, look within, work hard, and as fast as possible, come up with realisable plans that will first deal with the decadent nature of the country, and consequently engender workable policies that will, at long run, address this quagmire.

**Keywords:** Brain drain, health sector, health workers, Japa syndrome newspaper coverage.

### Introduction

It is obvious that majority of patients and attendees in most Nigerian hospitals today are experiencing very poor health delivery. This current challenge is most times attributed to the massive shortage and migration of skilled healthcare delivery (Akinwale & George, 2023, p.1). The above statement somewhat paints a vivid picture of the sad situation of the Nigerian health sector which is not only under-resourced, but have had its skilled workers leave the country in droves.

Over the decades, the migration of health workers from Nigeria has increased. According to Nweke and Iheonu (2021, p.45) “The NOI poll in 2018 revealed that 88% of Nigerian doctors were seeking employment abroad” Furthermore, between 2015 and 2021, just a period of eight years, about 4528 Nigerian trained doctors migrated to United Kingdom (UK) (Iheonu & Nweke, 2021, p.49). Sadly, research has indicated that this trend is unlikely to stop (WHO, 2020, Iheonu & Nweke, 2021). The picture painted above is no doubt worrisome and raises serious concern. This study investigated the extent that Nigerian Newspapers, (*Vanguard*, *Daily Trust* and *The Punch*) have reported the brain drain problem in Nigeria.

## Statement of the Problem

The media stand in the very critical position to picture, and as it were, examine or purvey every society (Agba, 2002, cited in Nwosu & Okeke, 2020). In the same manner, in order to understand the social realities surrounding her, each society to a certain degree depends on the media (Duru, 2020, p.240). In other words, it might not be out of place to argue that what the media report in respective societies is what to a large extent, exists in such societies, and what they fail to report may never be taken serious (Agba, 2002, cited in Nwosu and Okeke, 2020). Furthermore, certain issues become gradually popular, widespread and of great importance when they are frequently reported or projected by the media, through their agenda setting power (Okunna & Omenugha, 2012, p.160). Apparently, one of such very perturbing concerns that has continued to negatively affect the advancement of the Nigerian health sector in recent time is migration of medical personnel in the country to other countries; a development known as “*Japa Syndrome*” (Edeh, 2023, p.1). Research has increasingly demonstrated that at present, a large number of Nigerian health workers (medical doctors, nurses and other medical personnel) have continued to exit the country in search of better working condition elsewhere. This challenge certainly spells huge doom to the Nigerian health sector, as the supposed managers of the sector continue to leave in their thousands in search of better condition of living. This social quandary, is unquestionably bothersome and certainly raises huge concern for the society. It is against the foregoing therefore that this study was considered absolutely imperative at a time like this in order to ascertain the extent that Nigerian Newspapers have, as crusaders and watchdogs of the society, reported the issue of brain drain. The reason for this academic enquiry being that the extent the problem of brain drain is reported and/or framed in these selected newspapers would largely determine the extent that it becomes an agenda for discussion, consequently attracting possible solutions from relevant quarters that will principally address the quagmire (Nwosu & Okeke, 2020).

## Objective of the Study

The central objective of the study is to examine the newspaper coverage of brain drain in Nigerian health sector. The study however targeted the following specific objectives:

1. To measure the frequency of *Vanguard*, *Daily Trust* and the *Punch* newspapers towards the coverage of brain drain.
2. To ascertain the level of prominence that *Vanguard*, *Daily Trust* and *The Punch* newspapers gave to the issue of brain drain..
3. To discover the extent that *Vanguard*, *Daily Trust* and *The Punch* newspapers gave the depth to the stories on brain drain.
4. To find out how *Vanguard*, *Daily Trust* and *The Punch* newspapers framed the issue of brain drain.

## Literature Review

### Conceptualizing Brain Drain

The word, brain drain, can also be referred to as “human capital flight”. It simply denotes the massive movement or migration of top-flight manpower from various developing countries, predominantly, African countries to more developed countries, notably, the United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Holland, Newzeland and Austrailia (Elechi, 2013, p.110). In the same way, the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines brain drain as “a movement of highly skilled professional people from their own country to a country where they can earn money” Utile (2008, p.234) further conceptualizes brain drain as “the mass exodus of the highly trained and well experienced professionals from countries with poor conditions of service to those with better working conditions, in search of greener pasture” From the foregoing, it is clear that the concept of brain drain encompasses “the exodus of professionals, or skilled workers in a particular field of endeavour to other countries (usually more advanced countries) in search of good working conditions” Although this challenge was largely prevalent amongst the Nigerian academia in the 90’s (it is still noticed till today among them) (Elechi, 2013, p.110), it is at present more common in the health sector. According to Elechi (2013, p.112) “Brain drain remains one of the current huge challenges faced in the Nigerian health sector, as medical doctors, pharmacists, medical laboratory scientists, nurses, technologists etc. leave in their large numbers to more advanced countries in search of better living condition” The challenge of brain drain is considered to leave large economic cost on the part of the releasing countries as migrants take with them the value of their training sponsored by the government to other countries (Elechi, 2013). In other words, as Elechi (2013) argues, “While the releasing countries are drained professionally, economically and financially, the receiving countries gain both professionally and economically”

Essentially, brain drain entails the transfer of knowledge, experience, skill and expertise from one region, country or geographic location to another. A number of scholars have argued that brain drain has continued to escalate in the recent time in Nigeria and other African countries as a result of a number of factors that include recent developments in modern electronic information technology, the widening of gap between the South and the North and spread of corporate globalization, political instability, civil wars, social and religious strife in many African countries, of which Nigeria is one (Elechi, 2013; Ipinnimo et al., 2023).

Lamenting on the implication of the challenge of brain drain, Elechi (2013) argues:

Sadly, when some of these Nigerian health workers fail to secure their dream job to the countries they migrate to, they eventually end up as taxi drivers in some large United States of American cities like: New York, Chicago, Texas, Michigan, Washington, etc. The obvious implication of this scenario is that Nigeria is being deprived of valuable contributions of this highly skilled manpower who are grossly underutilized in those countries. This is because they would have been contributing their quota to the development of the country if they were at home.

### **The Causes of Brain Drain in Nigeria**

Agba et al. (2020) argue that “irrespective of the fact that a number of factors are responsible for brain drain, there are very crucial factors that are at the fore front of the reasons why most developing economies of the world experience this challenge” The authors continue, “Remuneration, safe working environment and working equipment remains top reasons for brain drain” In other words, there appears to be a correlation between brain drain and the factors identified above. These factors are discussed in detail below.

### **Brain Drain and Remuneration System in Nigeria.**

Agba et al. (2020) explain that “discrepancies in wages between the rich and the poor countries offer a pull towards the developed nations” Most times, health personnel feel that the salaries they earn abroad cannot be matched with those earned locally (Attah & Angioha, 2019). Agba et.al. citing Tessema (2010) maintain that “wage differentials is a major cause of brain drain”. It is sad to note that as a result of the poor economic situation in developing nations, most professionals are paid wages that are significantly lower than that of their colleagues in developed nations. These professionals, who are usually from developing countries like Nigeria, only manage very poor wages that they earn and consequently live below poverty level.

Interestingly, Dimaya et al. (2012) agrees with the position above when they assert that “higher wages, better employment opportunities and technologies in industrialised nations motivate health care professionals in developing nations to migration” In his study on brain drain among Zambian workers, Kiraya (2000) note that “nurses receive an average monthly salary of 1.1 million kwacha (US\$ 299), clinical officials receive a salary 1.1 million kwacha (US\$229). The discrepancy between the salary paid locally and what is paid in advanced economies is no doubt much. It is against the above backdrop that Agba et al (2020) argue that “such poor remuneration cannot cater for decent housing, transportation, and other basic amenities such as water, electricity etc.” Health professionals in a bid to have better working condition migrate to places where remunerations are better.

### **Brain Drain and Safe Working Environment in Nigeria**

One of the very fundamental rights of workers globally is a safe working environment. Lamentably, good working conditions in most government owned establishment in Nigeria are not always guaranteed (Agba et al. 2020, p. 96). In most cases, in some of the hospitals in Nigeria, employees are subjected to risky, substandard and very poor working conditions. Reports from International Labour Organisations (ILO, 2012), notes that employees should be protected from workplace injury, disease and sickness” The reason for this being that workplaces account for more than 2.3 million deaths per year of which 350, 000 are fatal accidents and nearly 2 million due to work related diseases (ILO, 2012) – the statistics provided here is no doubt worrisome, yet in Nigeria, unlike what obtains elsewhere in more advanced countries, there are usually poor working environments (Agba et al., , 2020; Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2000). On the contrary, extant literature has shown that employers who pay attention to all the details that affect the welfare of their workers, including their work environment are likely to retain the best people, save cost, enjoy cordial work relation and most importantly, improve the productivity of their workers and at long run, boost the morale of workers, while it correspondingly reduces the challenge of brain drain (Kampert, 2008; Ndagana, 2007).

### **Brain Drain and Working Equipment among Health Workers in Nigeria**

Most advanced countries like: the United States of America, United Kingdom; Australia, Canada etc. provide good infrastructures and funding in their health system, this is unlike developing countries like Nigeria, where these facilities are very scarce (Agba et al., 2016; Agba & Ushie, 2010;). The problems indicated above are principally responsible for brain-drain among medical practitioners in Nigeria. Lack of funds to support research and innovations has also remained one of the paramount reasons for brain drain among health workers in Nigeria (Ikenwilo, 2007, p.12). These inadequacies most times push medical practitioners to move to countries where these facilities are available. Similarly, lamenting on the causes of brain drain in Nigeria, Edeh (2023) agrees with the problems already identified above thus:

Unemployment and low paying jobs, lack of financial security, poor health care facilities, and bad leadership has remained the leading factors for brain drain in Nigeria. Everyone wants to be employed and paid well. However, in Nigeria, jobs are very scarce, the few that find one are poorly remunerated. More so, due to the economy of the country, the way workers are being laid off, and salaries inadequate to cover daily expenses of workers, financial stability

is therefore something very rare and untenable for people in Nigeria. In the same manner, the health sector of the country is a mess, low facilities and infrastructures are the order of the day. Worst still is that every four to eight years Nigeria keep electing new leaders, who keep promising the same thing, but keep failing to fulfil their promises when they get into power. These have remained the main reasons for the migration of Nigerian medical workers to other climes for better working terms.

Sadly, Edeh (2023, p.1) recounts that “the effect of this social challenge has continued slowly, but consistently succeeded in hampering the growth and development of the health sector in Nigeria. The situation, Ede (2022) continues: “has left a devastating blow on the economy of Nigeria” The author provides some of the effects of migration of medical workers in Nigeria’s health sector this way.

Apparently, one of the major effects of brain drain or human capital flight in Nigeria is the reduction of quality of services. This is particularly due to absence of skilled professionals in the health sector, tertiary institutions and research centers. This has resulted in shortage of qualified manpower in critical sectors like education, health care, technology etc. Similarly, the scourge of brain drain in the health sector and the continuous outflow of skilled labour has led decline in economic growth of Nigeria. Also, this challenge has resulted to poor health services in the country given that health care professionals, who ordinarily should contribute to effective management of our health sectors keep migrating in their large numbers, to other countries. In the light of this, there appears to be increased death rate and maternal mortality in the recent time.

### **Brain Drain, Governance and the Media in Nigeria**

Some scholars argue that the government is the first major cause of brain drain in Nigeria (Joy & Ajala, 2019, Osigbesan, 2021). This is so because, as Joy and Ajala (2019), notes, “the government’s disregard for the growth of the country, very poor infrastructures in health sector, especially the public health sector, poor remuneration and working conditions of health workers remain the reasons for mass exodus of Nigerian health workers to developed countries. It is against the above backdrop that Joy and Ajala (2019, p.123) argue that “the government must as a matter of urgency come up with policies and solutions that will help to retain health professionals and talents in the country and as much as possible, encourage brain gain” Furthermore, Edeh (2023) agrees with Joy and Ajala (2019) when he notes that “Nigerian government have not really created a conducive environment that will ensure employment better opportunities for the medical workforce and as well reduce poverty.

It might be imperative to note that in 2022, the House of Representative hinted plans to enact a law that will define the period that medical workers, especially, medical consultants would serve the country before going to overseas to practice. The bill, Nwaoku, (2022) explains “would mandate consultants to serve the country for a period to give back to the system before leaving the country for greener pasture” However, scholars argue that the bill might not be the best measure to curb brain drain, as there are core systemic and fundamental problems that should be addressed before such law can address the challenge of brain drain. Similarly, Idachaba (2022) argues that “brain drain is a product of weak government that cares less for its professional class” The Nigerian government has not really done much to check this problem (Dauda, 2019). Segun et al. (2014) provide a very instructive position of the problem of brain drain, leadership and capacity building in Nigeria. The authors argue that “the elites that constitute the ruling class can be blamed for not providing an enabling environment for Nigerians to utilise their professional skills, causing them to seek greener pastures in the developed economies”. The authors also offer more insight into the challenges of governance and how it has progressively affected the system this way: “The Nigerian elite in power empty the treasury to the detriment of the poor masses. They see access to political power as

opportunity to share the spoils of political office” This somewhat throws light to the reason Achebe (1983) averred that “the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership” A note that was also re-echoed by Adebayo (2000) like this:

Nigeria’s major problem is its visionless and irresponsible political elites manipulating politics, economy and religion to serve their selfish interests. In fact, while they stash away billions of dollars in foreign accounts, they urge the masses to endure decades of austerity and structural adjustment programme. In addition, the country has not been able to reap what it has expended on the education of its nationals who have migrated to developed countries because of the inability of the government to provide an enabling environment for them to utilize their God-given potentials.

The media is attributed with enormous power to influence the society, and to a large extent engender serious social change (Okunna & Omenugha, 2012, p.59). They do this through their agenda setting function – the mass media therefore, are known to either overtly or covertly force attention to certain issues (Uwakwe, 2015, p.129). They build up images of issues, while constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals in the mass should think about, know about and have feeling about. In other words, the mass media creates a situation that helps certain issues of importance presented to appropriate quarters – issues like the one under discourse. They constantly present objects, suggesting what individuals in the mass should think about, know about and have feelings about. The media is used to create awareness and also project issues of importance in every society, they through this projection raise such issues for discussion and debate. In the past, the Nigerian media has been credited with such enormous power of reporting and as well, raising certain issues to prominence (Ndolo, 2012; Uwakwe, 2015; Aladi et al., 2022). It is therefore on the basis of the media as an agenda setting platform that it becomes a tool to project, create more awareness, raise concern and find ways of influencing the government towards finding possible ways of curbing the problem of brain drain in Nigeria. However the extent that Nigerian media has done this, especially with the newspaper, remains a subject for continuous empirical investigation, it is therefore as a result of the foregoing that this research work becomes increasingly imperative, especially, in a time like the one we live.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The media framing and the agenda setting theories provide the theoretical anchorage of this study. The framing theory can be interpreted as closely related to the agenda setting theory of mass communication (Uwakwe, 2010, p.188). However, research has demonstrated that while the agenda setting theory looks at the way the media helps in shaping social reality, the framing theory deals more with the fact that media coverage largely shapes the way people see issues (Suparnol Tripambudi, 2004; Dalhatu, & Shehu, 2020). The concept of framing, Uwakwe (2010) explains "has led to a situation where media managers are seen as hidden persuaders, mind managers, electronic colonialists and media imperialists" What the above statement presupposes is that the press can frame how the public perceives reality. It therefore might be instructive to note that news coverage does not call for people to take positions, but on the basis of what people learn from coverage, people do take positions (Uwakwe, 2010). The theory enables people to “locate, perceive, identify; label events and occurrences. In other words, it is predicated on the assumption that the media gives spotlight view of specific aspects of reality that directs audience attention to those aspects by promoting specific definitions, descriptions and/or analysis that capture the imagination and consequently forms the mental films by which media consumers cognitively respond to issues and events distilled from the world by the media (Obi et al., 2021, p. 667). The implication of the foregoing is that the media creates frames by which raw information is filtered and presented to the public. This is usually done with the purpose of focusing their attention on considered angles of the issue or event (Obi et al., 2021, p.667).

Framing therefore, is a system of information processing and presentation whose structure enables the magnification of particular facets of an event or story by elucidating on the import and cause of event, issue or story, while identifying the relevant actors, including whom or what should be held accountable (Obi, Obi et al., 2021, p. 667). Framing theory seeks to identify and explain frames; how they are developed, their sources and their effect. Generally, however, frames function as highlighters or moderators of key points about specific information subset. As moderators, they play down certain features of an issue which may be relevant, but for one reason or the other, considered dispensable. But as highlighters they magnify dimensions that are for one reason or the other, considered indispensable. Lee, Liu & Cheng, (2018) provide a clear insight into the concept of framing thus: “frame explains how a specific piece of information is shown by the media to audience and, how it is organised or structured to influences the mindset (perception) of people and similarly impacts their decision making on the topic which is reported by media.

Framing sometimes is divided into the positive and negative frames, as well as equivalence and emphasis frames (Lee et al., 2018 p.30). When an image is framed in a positive manner, such image or text is considered positive and vice-versa. In summary, framing research considers how frames are constructed, disseminated and consumed by the audience. It also considers the dynamics that influence audience interpretation of received frames. This therefore explains the reason Igboeli et al. (2017) argue that the basis of the framing theory is that "the media focus attention on certain events and then place them within a context that can impact on the beliefs, attitudes and the behaviour of the recipients.”

Based on the foregoing, and viewed from the perspective of the framing theory, it is in the view of the researchers, that until the press sees issue of brain drain in the Nigeria health sector as totally unfavorable to the growth and development of the country, and as it were, correspondingly frame them as such, they might not be able to properly lend their voice, and accordingly, play the watchdog role they are expected to play in bringing the issues to the front burner for discourse in order to provoke possible solutions.

On the other hand, the Agenda-setting theory describes the ability of news media to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002). This happens when news item are covered frequently, and prominently until the audience begins to regard such issues as important. The theory was formally developed by McCombs and Shaw (1968) in the Chapel Hill study of 1968 American presidential election. the mass media can set agenda for the society, by deciding what topics people talk about” The media in other words can decide on what they think should be priority consideration; be it political, economic social, moral or other important issues. They set the tone and fix the rules, making certain issues to predominate discussions at all cost, as well as determine when in their view, the society had had enough, while they introduce another issue (Okunna & Omenugha, 2012; Alphonsus et al., 2022). The underpinning factor according to Kosicki (2003, p.54), “is that the media easily elevate an issue to prominence just as they play down other issues”

Based on the conjectures of this theory, it becomes reasonably essential to discuss the present study within the core assumptions of the theory. It therefore becomes instructive to note that the media can do well to set the present level of brain drain in Nigeria as a very important agenda. Put differently, till the issue of brain drain is set as a very essential agenda, the government, both at the Federal, State, and maybe, the Local Government might keep underestimating the horrendous effect of the exodus of their skilled workers to other climes. So, in order to interpret this work from the prism of the agenda setting theory, it might be reasonable to infer that “when the media dutifully projects, through the reportage of Nigerian newspapers, the issue brain drain, they would covertly or overtly have succeeded in making the issue not

only a public issue, but that which will be discussed not only by the media, but the citizens and the government as it were, and by this way, create ways and policies to address the challenge.

### Methodology

As a result of the nature of data sought to be generated in this study, the content analysis was chosen. These data are embodied in the newspaper issues sampled by the study and accessed via the analysis of the manifest newspaper content. The population of the study are three national dailies (*Vanguard*, *Daily Trust* and *The Punch* newspapers), published within a period of one year that ran from 10th March, 2022 to 10th March, 2023. The decision to select the newspapers was made because they are widely circulated and reached newspapers in the country. Furthermore, the researchers selected the period of the study based on the fact that the period was particularly the time that large number of health workers were recorded to have left the shores of Nigeria in search of better working condition in more advanced countries (Ipinnimo et al., 2023; Musa, 2023). It is therefore expected that the media would expectedly focus on this issue during that period.

The sample size of the study was 312 newspaper editions. This size was chosen based on the Basden and Wright's (1997) recommendation that selecting one edition per week would be appropriate for a newspaper study extending up to a period of six months – and this study extended to a year period. Hence for each of the three newspapers, 156 editions (one from each of the 52 weeks that ran between March, 2023 to March 2022). These whole amounted to 156 editions.

The sample selection was conducted in two stages: the first stage involved selecting newspaper titles. Here the researchers looked out for major characteristics, first the market strength of the title, second the ethnic background of the owner, hence, the researcher purposively selected the *Vanguard* and *Daily Trust* and *The Punch*. The second stage involved choosing particular editions of the newspaper titles. Here the researchers aim was to ensure that every day of the week, excluding Saturday and Sunday was duly represented. Thus the researchers began picking the first day that occurred within the first week of the study – Thursday, 10th March, 2022. Then moving to the second week, they chose Friday edition (March 18), then the third week, the Monday edition (March 28), the fourth week, (Tuesday, 27) and so on. This process continued up to the first week of March, 2023, where the Wednesday edition (March, 8) was selected on the whole 52 for each of the three newspapers and editions for the three newspapers became the sample. The following formed the basis of the coding of newspapers: the newspaper titles, newspaper headlines, news depth and newspaper framing.

The units of analysis for the study were the news stories, features, pictorials, editorials and cartoons. A coding sheet was used as the data collection instrument. The researchers were assisted by coders were first trained and an inter coder reliability conducted using the Kappa formula as put forward by Cohen (as cited in Lombard 2010). The test result stood at 0.96 which amounted to 96% reliability. Data was quantitatively analysed, using simple percentages.

### Data Presentation

**RQ: 1:** To what extent did *Vanguard*, *Daily Trust* and the *Punch* cover the stories on brain drain?

Frequency was measured by examining the number of times reports on drug abuse among youths were published in the newspapers. Data generated in that regard are as presented in table one.

### Table 1



Newspaper Coverage of Brain Drain in Nigerian Health Sector: A Content Analysis of Vanguard, Daily Trust and Punch Newspapers

	<i>Vanguard</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>The Punch</i>
Editions with reports on the issue of brain drain	N = 88 56.4%	N= 106 67.4%	N=100 64.1%
Editions without reports on the issue of brain drain	N68 43.6%	N=50 32.6%	N=56 35.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>N156</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>N156</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>N156</b> <b>100%</b>

Table one shows that for *Vanguard* newspaper, 54.4% of the editions had reports on brain drain, while a lesser percentage 43.6% of the reports had o reports on brain drain. Similarly, *Daily Trust* newspaper had about 67.4% reports on brain drain, while about 32.6% had nothing. In the same manner, for *The Punch* newspaper, 64.1% of the newspaper editions had reports on brain drain only 35.9% of the editions did not have reports on brain drain. This discovery to some extent suggests that reports on the present brain drain challenge in Nigeria were viewed as imperative and precarious by newspaper gatekeepers.

From the result of the data above it was evident that a significant number of the newspapers frequently covered the stories on brain drain. In other words, it might be correct to say that the newspapers gave adequate coverage to the issue under discourse.

**RQ: 2:** What level of prominence did *Vanguard* and *Daily Trust* and The Punch accord to the issue of brain drain in Nigeria?

**Table 2**

<b>Prominence</b>	<i>Vanguard</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>The Punch</i>
Front Page	N=46 29.5%	N=50 32.1%	45 28.8%
Back Page	N=41 26.9%	N=25 16.0%	45 28.8%
Central Page	N=40 25.6%	N= 25 16.0%	45 28.8%
Others	N=29 16.6%	N= 56 35.9%	N=21 13.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>N=156</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>N=156</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>N=156</b> <b>100%</b>

The table above shows that 29.5% of the stories on brain drain found on the Vanguard newspaper are on the front page, 26.9% were found at the back page, about 25.6% were found in the central page, while 16.6% were found in the page for others. For Daily Trust newspaper, 32.1% of the stories were found I the front-page, 16.0% were found in the back page, another 16.0% were found in the central page, while 35.9% was found in the page for others. Furthermore, the table also indicated that *The Punch* had about 28.8% of the story on brain drain, another 28.8% were on the back page another 28.8 were on the center page while about 13.5% were found in the page for others.

**Table 3: Headline size**

<b>Headline size</b>	<b><i>Vanguard</i></b>	<b><i>Daily Trust</i></b>	<b><i>The Punch</i></b>
Large	N=68 43.6%	N=70 44.9%	N=69 42.3%
Medium	N=49 31.4%	N=50 32.1%	N=64 41.0%
Small	N=39 25%	N=36 23.1%	N=23 14.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>N=156</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>N=156</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>N=156</b> <b>100%</b>

Table 3 shows that *Vanguard* had 43, 6% of the stories on brain drain in large headlines, and 31.4% of the stories were published in medium headlines and only 25% of the reports in small headlines. For *Daily Trust*, 44.9%, 32.1% of the stories were published in medium headlines and 23.1% of the stories in Daily Trust newspaper were found in small headlines. Similarly, *The Punch* had about 42.3% of the stories in large headlines, 41.0% of the stories for *The Punch* newspaper were in medium headlines, while only 14.7% of the headlines were in small headlines. From the data gathered in the table above, it was very clear that significant number of the stories were published in large headlines. A considerable number was also published in medium headlines.

In answering research question two above tables 2 and 3 were consulted and based on the data gathered from this tables, it was clear that a significant number of the newspapers published the stories on front-pages, back pages and the center pages, which are predominantly prominent pages. Similarly, it was also very evident that significant number of the stories were published on large headlines in the three selected newspapers. As a result of this assertion, the researchers therefore conclude that the newspapers gave prominence to the stories on brain drain.

**Research Question 3:** To what extent did *Vanguard*, *Daily Trust* and *The Punch* newspapers give depth to the stories on brain drain?

**Table 4: News Depth**

Newspaper Coverage of Brain Drain in Nigerian Health Sector: A Content Analysis of Vanguard, Daily Trust and Punch Newspapers

<b>News Depth</b>	<b><i>Vanguard</i></b>	<b><i>Daily Trust</i></b>	<b><i>The Punch</i></b>
Investigative	N=3 1.9%	N=10 6.4%	N=8 5.1%
Interpretative	N=5 3.2%	N=7 4.5%	N=7 4.5%
Investigative & Interpretative	0 0%	N=4 2.6%	N=0 0%
Neither	N=148 94.9%	N=135 86.5%	N=120 76.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>N=156</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>N=156</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>N=156</b> <b>100%</b>

Table 4 above analysed the news depth of the selected newspapers for this study. The data showed that *Vanguard* had only 1.9% of investigative stories on brain drain in Nigeria. Furthermore, only 3.2% of the stories were interpretative. There was no story covered as investigative and interpretative story. However, a significant number (94.9%) of the stories neither interpretative nor investigative stories. For the *Daily Trust* newspaper, only 6.5% of the stories on brain drain were investigative, similarly, 4.5% of the stories were interpretative, 2.6% were investigative/interpretative stories and about 86.5% of the stories neither had interpretative nor investigative stories on the brain drain issue in Nigeria. In the same manner, for the stories published in *The Punch* newspapers, 5.1% of the stories were investigative, 4.5% were interpretative, none was investigative/interpretative stories; about 76.9% of the stories were neither of the areas.

The data gathered above is highly instructive. In other to answer the research question 3 it is important to note that significant number of the publications on brain drain were neither investigative nor interpretative stories. In other words, the researchers therefore assert that the newspapers did not give any depth to the stories published on brain drain.

**Research Question 4:** How did *Vanguard*, *Daily Trust* and *The Punch* newspapers frame the stories on brain drain?

**Table 5. Framing**

<b>Frames</b>	<b><i>Vanguard</i></b>	<b><i>Daily Trust</i></b>	<b><i>The Punch</i></b>
Causal Factors Frames	N=12 7.7%	N=12 7.7%	N=20 12.8%
Economic risk/impact frames	N= 30 19.2%	N=20 12.8%	N=12 7.7%

Action of migrants frames	N=40 26.6%	N=50 32.1%	N=55 36.3%
Blame frames	N=20 12.8%	N=30 19.25%	N=25 16.0%
Government action frames	N=20 12.8%	N=10 6.4%	N=15 9.6%
Human impact frames	N=24 15.4%	N=20 12.8%	N=15 9.6%
Corrective policy frames	N=10 6.4%	N=16 10.3%	N=14 8.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>N=156</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>N=156</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>N=156</b> <b>100%</b>

The above table indicates that for *Vanguard* newspaper, the frame on causal factors of brain drain was only 7.7%, the frame on economic risk/ impact of brain drain was 19.2%, that of action of migrants is 26.6%, blame frames were 12.8%, government action frames were only 12.8% human impact frames was 15.4% and corrective policies frames was only 6.4%. On the other hand, for *Daily Trust* newspaper, causal factor frames were 7.7%, economic risk/impact frames were 12.8%, action of migrant’s frames were 32.1%, Government action frame was only 6.4%, human impact frame was 12.6%, and corrective policies frame was only 10.3%. In the same vein, for *The Punch* newspaper, causal factors frame was 12.8%, economic impact frame only 7.7%, action of migrants frames had 36.3%, blame frames, 16.0%, government action frames 9.6%, human frames 9.6 and corrective policies frames, 8.9%.

From the foregoing, it clear that the newspapers framed these stories on brain drain more on action of the migrants, this is followed by human impact frames. Such frames like economic impact were not really receive positive frames. What the foregoing presupposes therefore, is that the newspapers framed the stories on brain drain more on the action of migrants. Based on the foregoing it is the view of the researchers that the newspapers did not really give the stories on brain drain positive framing.

### Discussion of Findings

The finding of this study emerged from the gathered, analysed and interpreted data. The findings are discussed below:

The first finding of the study clearly indicates that a significant number of the newspapers gave frequent coverage to the stories on brain drain. Put differently, the first finding throws light to the fact that Nigerian newspapers gave regular coverage to the issue of brain drain. Sadly, this finding somewhat clearly reinforces the fear expressed by Osigbesanon (2021) that the exodus of health workers in Nigeria appears to be raising much concern in practically every facet of the society – including the gatekeepers. Likewise, Humphrey and Ukah (2020), “hold similar view that the media has actually given enough frequent coverage to the issue of brain drain in Nigeria” Similarly, the finding is consistent with Humphrey and Ukah (2020), as the authors discover that “the media has really given frequent coverage to the problem of brain drain in

Nigeria over the years” Because the media operates as the mirror of every society, beaming light on certain issues that are grossly important (Nwosu & Okeke, 2020, p123), it is thus incumbent upon them to always highlight areas that in any shape or form, hamper the growth of the society. Sadly, the problem of capital flight of health professional workers in Nigeria has remained a very grave issue that requires frequent media coverage.

The second finding of the study also indicate that the “the newspapers gave prominence to the stories on brain drain” ‘Prominence’ in the sense that this study looks at it has to do with the level of importance that the newspapers attaches to a story (Nwosu & Duru, 2018; Nwosu & Okeke, 2020). In other words, when viewed from this study, prominence would simply mean the level of importance or significance that the newspapers gave to the issue of brain drain. Therefore, a story that is seemingly deemed to be of great importance appears in the front page and other prominent pages, while those of lesser importance are reserved for other pages (Duru & Nwosu, 2012, p.123). What the above assumption presupposes is that based on the finding of this study, one would agree that the issues of brain drain in Nigeria has received prominent feature over the years. Nonetheless, the position of this paper somewhat appears not to be consistent with the finding of Gjerazi, (2024), who discovered that “the media did not really give prominence to issues of migration and brain drain in Albania” The author argued that the media largely downplayed the subject of brain drain. On the other hand, the present study is consistent with the finding of Nwosu and Duru (2018).

The third research finding showed that the newspapers did not actually give depth to the stories published on brain drain. The concept of “depth” of story presupposes the ability of the media to provide details about the newspaper report or story (Duru & Nwosu, 2018, p.12). It is the amount of details that the newspaper accords to a particular story, which consequently determines the weight of such story. Sadly, irrespective of the fact that *Vanguard*, *Daily Trust* and *The Punch* gave not only frequency, but prominence to stories of brain drain, they somewhat faltered by paying little attention to the depth of stories on brain drain. More so, it is important to note that giving time to the details of stories practically form the very core and important part of the agenda setting function (Nwosu & Okeke, 2020, p.12). In other words, the extent that newspapers pay attention to the depth of a story largely correlates with the way such story will be projected as public agenda. It might at this point be imperative to note that while prominence and frequency or regularity plays very important role in the agenda setting role of the media, giving depth (details) to stories also remain an essential part of the effort of journalism to report, and as it were, project an issue of salience. Interestingly, the present study is in line with Ujor (2018).

The last research question however indicate that is that the newspapers framed the stories on brain drain more on the action of migrants than such frames like: economic risk and impact of brain drain to the Nigerian society, government’s corrective policies and human impact frames. It is based on the foregoing that the researchers aver that that the newspapers did not really give the stories on brain drain positive framing. So in the opinion of the researchers, the newspapers did not really do well in the way they framed the issue of brain drain. This position is largely in tandem with that of Folorunso et al., (2020) who argue that “To uphold a non-existent national image, the media negatively influences the content of what is aired by focusing on the actions of migrants and not on the causal factors of migration, such as the political economic and the socio-cultural milieu of the country” In other words, Foloruso et. al. (2020)are of the view that instead of framing the issue of brain drain in a way that it will highlight government’s failure to provide comfortable working conditions for health workers as a result of political and other factors, Nigerian newspapers focus more on why medical personnel should not leave the country that made them for other climes. Funny enough, such frames, Folorunso (2020) argues, “do not paint the right picture of the challenge posed by brain drain”

Furthermore, when the findings above are viewed from the prism of the framing and the agenda setting theory – the two theories that formed the theoretical anchorage of this study, it becomes reasonably imperative to argue that irrespective of the fact that the media to some extent set the issue of brain drain as an important agenda, through their frequent coverage of the issue, the prominence and depth they accorded to it, they somewhat failed in their ability to frame the stories in a way that it will attract the attention of not only the government, but policy makers to find ways of addressing this problem. The above argument becomes pertinent given that when the media places emphasis on framing certain issues in the right manner, they certainly produce phenomenal effect (Nelson & Osley, 1999; Putra & Suroyo, 2022). From the foregoing therefore, it becomes reasonable to argue that while Nigeria newspapers sets agenda of certain issues, they also, as much as possible, frame those issues in ways that they will attract attention of policy makers.

### **Conclusion**

From the foregoing, it is clear that irrespective of the fact that Nigerian newspapers tried in their reportage of brain drain as an issue of importance, they somewhat still have important gaps to fill. The submission here is important given that the newspapers gave the issue under study frequent coverage, prominence and also depth, but they failed in the way the framed the stories.

### **Recommendations.**

The truth remains that no country loses her professional work-force to other climes and flourishes for a long time. Like Professor Sunny Udeze, carefully puts the question, “when all Nigerian skilled health workers leave the shores of the country to elsewhere in search of better working condition, how would the country manage her health sectors and the challenges arising therein? Against these prevailing challenges therefore the researchers recommend:

- Nigerian leaders must not sit irresponsibly and pretend to be ignorant of the causes of brain drain. They should look within, work hard, and come up with policies that will first deal with corruption, which remains the bane of this country and consequently engender workable plans that will, at long run, address this quagmire. Until this is done and urgently, a day will come when quacks will take over the health sector of the Nigeria.
- Similarly, the Nigerian media, especially, newspaper organisations should make it a point of duty, to report with depth, the issue of migration in the Nigerian health sector, identifying clearly, the areas that the government should come in to help in addressing the challenge. In other words, the media (broadcast, print and social media) should as much as possible, learn not only to frame, but project the negative effects of health worker’s migration as an important agenda. This when done, will no doubt, place the issue of brain as one of those very important subjects that must not only be attended to, but enduringly corrected.
- Similarly, with Nigerian newspapers being at the forefront of reporting the issues of brain drain in a way that it will attract the attention of the government and policy makers, there is no doubt that policies which will look into the problems that has engendered this social quandary will be re-examined and as much as possible, the problem of brain drain addressed.

### **References**

## Newspaper Coverage of Brain Drain in Nigerian Health Sector: A Content Analysis of Vanguard, Daily Trust and Punch Newspapers

- Achebe, C. (1983). *The trouble with Nigeria*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers. Retrieved from: <https://www.scirp.org/reference/ReferencesPapers?ReferenceID=1499890>
- Adebayo, A. (2000). Sign post of Armageddon Tell Magazine, p.49.
- Adeoye, A. (2022). Can Nigerian brain drain be reversed? Retrieved from: <https://www.ft.com/content/ddaf0477-0122-4a1a-828e-cfd5badac869>.
- Agba, A. M. O. & Ushie E. M. (2013). Wage differentials and industrial disputes in Nigerian hospitals. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 11(5), 1-10.
- Agba, A. M. O., Eteng, F. O., & Coker, F. G. (2016). Skills training and workers' productivity in Cross River State, Nigeria. *FULafia Journal of Social Sciences* (Maiden Edition), 327-341
- Agba, A.M., Udom, H.T., & Ide, T.E. (2020). Why Brain Drain in the Nigerian Health Sector? *Asian Journal of Applied Sciences* 8 (2), 85-1.
- Akinwale, O.E & George, O.J. (2023).Personnel brain-drain syndrome and quality healthcare delivery among public healthcare workforce in Nigeria", *Arab Gulf Journal of Scientific Research*, 41(1), 18-39.
- Aladi, J.A., Ohieku, A.O., Etumnu, E.W. & Gever, V.C. (2022). Health education effort is holistic when it considers the vulnerable: How IDPs in Nigeria fare in media reports on COVID-19 pandemic. *Ianna Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4(1),44-61.
- Alphonsus, U.C., Etumnu, E.W., Talabi, F.O., Fadeyi, I.O., Aiyesimoju, A.B., Apuke, O.D & Gever, V.C. (2022). Journalism and reportage of insecurity: Newspaper and television coverage of banditry activities in Northern Nigeria. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 43(3), 343-357. <http://doi.org/10.1177/07395329221112393>
- Attah, F. M. & Angioha, P. U. (2019). Examining the level of relationship between working condition predictor variables; remuneration, working hours, office design, job security and workers wellbeing and productivity in commercial banks. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications (IJSRP)*, 9(5), ??
- Basden, K., & Wright, E. (1997). *Social research: An Introduction* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Bombay: Bridge Publications.
- Bureau of Labour Statistics (2000). National census of fatal occupational injuries, 1999 (USDL Publication no. 00–236). Washington, DC: Author
- Dauda, R.S (2019). International migration and brain drain: drags on sustainable development in Nigeria. Retrieved from: <http://www.mondopoli.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Dauda-Nigeria-INTERNATIONAL-MIGRATION-AND-BRAIN-DRAIN.pdf>
- Dimaya, R.; McEwen, M.; Curry, L. & Bradley, E. (2012). Managing health worker migration: A qualitative study of the Philippines response to nurse brain drain. *Journal of Human Resources for Health*, 47(10), 2-8.
- Ede, V. (2022) Curbing the brain drain in Medicare Retrieved <https://dailytrust.com/curbing-the-brain-drain-in-medicare/>
- Edeh, S.C (2023), Brain Drain in Nigeria: Causes, Effects & Solutions. Retrieved from :<https://bscholarly.com/brain-drain-nigeria/>
- Elechi, E.E. (2013). Brain drain as a clog in the wheel of Nigeria's development: The university education system in focus. *International Journal of development and management Review (INJIDEMAR)*. 8 (1), 201-210.
- Folorunso, G.I., Oyeyemi, A.I., Udoh, O.D., Ayodele, O.T., Nchekwubechukwu, O.E. (2020). *Rethinking the Role of Traditional media on migration issues in Nigeria*. Handbook of Research
- Gjerazi, B. (2024). Media influence on brain drain perceptions: An in depth examination of framing dynamics. *European Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 234-239
- Idachaba, E. (2022) How brain drain suffocates Nigeria's health care delivery. <https://www.blueprint.ng/how-brain-drain-suffocates-nigerias-health-care-delivery/>
- Igboeli, C., Ikegbunam, P.C., Ikinimoreh, R.A., Nwanolue, I.M., (2017). Newspaper coverage of implementation of President Buhari's Treasury Single Account Policy in Nigeria. ACCE book of Reading. [https://www.academia.edu/39201344/Newspaper\\_Coverage\\_of\\_Implementation\\_of\\_President\\_Buhari\\_s\\_Treasury\\_Single\\_Account\\_Policy\\_in\\_Nigeria](https://www.academia.edu/39201344/Newspaper_Coverage_of_Implementation_of_President_Buhari_s_Treasury_Single_Account_Policy_in_Nigeria).
- Ikenwilo, D. (2007). Brain drain: Painting a picture for Africa. Nairobi: African Technology Policy Studies Network.

- International Labour Organization (ILO, 2012). Estimating the economic costs of occupational injuries and illnesses in developing countries: Essential information for decision-makers. Geneva: International Labour Office
- Ipinnimo, T.M., Ajidahun, E.O., & Adedipe, A.O. (2023). Medical brain drain in Nigeria: A health system leadership crises. *IBOM Medical Journal*, 16 (1), 94-97
- Joy, C. N., & Agala, H. O. (2019). Quality assurance in the management of Nigeria University education. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 6 (8), 240–247
- Kampert, P. (2008). Good work environment improves satisfaction, and productivity. *Tribune* June 8
- Kiraya, V. (2000). Should I stay or should I go: migration under uncertainty: A new approach: [http: Retrieved from: www.sasac.ulc/economics/research/workingdoctorapas](http://www.sasac.ulc/economics/research/workingdoctorapas)
- Kosicki, G. (2002). The media priming effect: news media and considerations affecting political judgments. In D. Pfau (Ed.), *The persuasion handbook: Developments in theory and practice*. New York: Thousand Oaks: Sage
- Lee, H., Liu, S., & Cheng, Y. (2018). Positive or Negative? The influence of message framing, regulatory focus and product type. *International Journal of Communication* 12, 788-805
- Lombard, M. (2010). Understanding Inter-coder reliability in content analysis research <http://mathewlombard/reliability>
- McCombs, M., & Reynolds, A. (2002). News influence on our pictures of the world. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/209409864\\_News\\_Influence\\_on\\_Our\\_Pictures\\_of\\_the\\_World](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/209409864_News_Influence_on_Our_Pictures_of_the_World)
- Musa, A.A. (2023). Shortage of doctors: A new arising issue for the healthcare sector in Nigeria. *Journal of Medical and Health Sciences*, 5(2), 59-69
- Ndagana, J. M. (2007). Behavioural pattern of non-academic staff of Federal Universities in Nigeria to Job dissatisfaction. *Educ. Forum*, 10(1), 1677-1184
- Ndolo, I. (2015). The power of the media as a setter of political, economic and financial agenda. In I. Ndolo (Ed.). *Understanding the media*. Rhyce Kerex.
- Nelson, T.E., & Oxley, Z.M. (1999). Framing effect on belief importance and opinion. *The Journal of Politics*, 61 (4), 1040-1067.
- Nwaoku, O. (2022) Federal Law makers move to curb brain drain in health sector. <https://guardian.ng/news/federal-lawmakers-move-to-curb-brain-drain-in-health-sector/>
- Nweke, E.M., Iheonu, C. (2021). Medical brain drain in Nigeria and its impact on sustainable development goal 3. <http://southernvoice.org/medical-brain-drain-in-nigeria-and-its-impact-on-sustainable-development-goal-3/>
- Nwosu, C. J., & Okeke, A.O. (2021). Assessment of newspapers pattern of reportage on public accountability issues in Nigeria. *Journal of Communication and Media Studies* 2 (3), 1-13.
- Nwosu, C.J., & Duru, H.C. (2018). Nigerian Newspaper coverage of Drug abuse among the Nigerian youth: A content analytical study. *Journal of Health Communication* 2 (5), 123-135
- Obi, K., Okon, G.B., Mbazie, S.J. (2021). Framing theory and composite framing analysis model: Towards a holistic view of frames in the news. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative research* 8 (12), 667 -67
- Obi, K.C.M., Okon, K.C., & Mbazie, S. (2021). Framing theory and composite analysis model: Towards a holistic view of frames in the news. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research* 8 (12), 667-678
- Okunna, C.S., & Omenugha, K. A. (2012). *Introduction to mass communication*. New Generation Books.
- Putra, B.M., & Suroyo, S. (2022). The impact of framing: How framing affects students in choosing university major. *Journal Analisa Sosiologi*, 11 (2), 167-191
- Osigbesan, O. (2021). Medical brain drain and the effect on the Nigerian health. Retrieved from: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=12099&context=dissertations>
- Segun, J., Ilemobola, P., & Ebiri, O. (2014) Leadership, brain drain and human capacity building in Africa: The Nigeria experience. *Research of Journal in Organisational Psychology & Educational Studies* 3(4) 283-290
- Suparnol B.A., & Tripambudi, S. (2004). The convergence of Agenda setting and framing. Retrieved from: <http://eprints.upnyk.ac.id/19253/1/the%20convergence%20agenda.pdf>.



Newspaper Coverage of Brain Drain in Nigerian Health Sector: A Content Analysis of Vanguard, Daily Trust and Punch Newspapers

- Ukah, O.E. (2020). Nigerian newspaper coverage of brain drain in the health sector. *Journal of Mass Communication*, 1 (8), 123-134
- Utile, T. (2008) University autonomy and brain drain syndrome in Nigeria. Being a paper presented at the 3rd Conference of the ACU's Human Resource Management Network. 23rd – 25th May, Trinidad and Tobago.
- Uwakwe, O. (2010). *Introduction of mass communication in the digital age, print-radio-TV- film - internet and industry effects*. Base 5 publishers