INFLUENCE OF CORPORATE PUBLIC RELATIONS ON THE REPORTAGE OF CORPORATE ORGANIZATIONS BY *DAILY TRUST* AND *VANGUARD* NEWSPAPERS.

BY

HASHIM MUHAMMAD SULEIMAN

NOVEMBER, 2014

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MSC/SOC-SCIE/0787/2009-2010

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN MASS COMMUNICATION.

DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION,
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY,
ZARIA-NIGERIA.

NOVEMBER, 2014

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this Thesis titled "Influence of Corporate Public Relations on the Reportage of Corporate Organizations by *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* Newspapers" was conducted by me in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Social Sciences, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, under the supervision of Shittu, A.R.A and Mr. Cosmos Ikechukwu Eze. That information derived from literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and in the list of reference. No any part of this thesis was previously presented for another degree in this or any other Institution.

Hashim, Muhammad Suleiman **Signature** **Date**

CERTIFICATION

This Thesis titled INFLUENCE OF CORPORATE PUBLIC RELATIONS ON THE REPORTAGE OF CORPORATE ORGANIZATIONS BY *DAILY TRUST* AND *VANGUARD* NEWSPAPERSby HASHIM MUHAMMAD SULEIMAN meets regulations and a standard governing the award of the degree of Master of Science (M. Sc) in Mass Communication of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and it is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My gratitude goes to Allah, The Sustainer.

This work could not have been completed without the input of two great men; my supervisors. To Malam Shittu, A.R.A, who not only supervised this work but in many ways served as a father with a listening countenance, I say "Jazzakhallahulahukhair." To Mr. Cosmos Eze, I say thank you for enduring my youthful exuberances, I am really indebted to you.

To my Head of Department, Dr. Mahmud A. Umar, I say thank you sir. To my former Head of Department, Dr. Suleiman Salau, I say you've been more than a father to me. To my daddy, the youngest old man in the Department, Baba J.O Yusuf, I say thank you for always urging me to 'face' my work. To the Doctor of doctors, Dr. Sola Adeyanju, I cherish your elderly and academic consultations. My senior colleagues; Dr. Ladi Sandra Adamu, Dr. Yakubu Ozohu-Suleiman, Malam Ibrahim Jimoh, Malam Shamsuddeen Mohammed, Malama Adama Adamu, Binta Mohammed, Malama Maryam, and to my 'mates' in the struggle, Kabiru Danladi, Malam Abubakar, Malama Amina and Malama Murja, I say thank you for being soul mates.

To the various scholars whose works help shape this work, I say may the candles I light my candle from never cease to glow. To the anonymous journalists and corporate public relations personnel whom gave me invaluable insights in terms of interview, I say thank you. To that inspirational speaker, Isma'ila Dan-Muhammadu and the subtle guru, Emanuel Nathan Oguche, I say let our next meeting point be in PhD classes.

To the **woman** that added colour to my life, **Khadija Abdullahi Mustapha,** I say being with you is always fulfilling. To the young guy in the house, **Abdallah Muhammad Hashim,** I say thank you for always waking daddy up in the night to burn the night oil, may you surpass whatever achievement daddy may achieve.

To the **Mother** of men, **Hauwa'u Mu'azu**, I say your son is now a master holder.

DEDICATION

To the spirit of that man who inculcated in me, the zeal to pursue education at all cost, late **Suleiman Yamusa.**

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ABSTRACT

Corporate public relations demand that organizations maintain cordial relationship with the media. This situation gives rise to corporate public relations providing information subsidy and attempting to influence media's reportorial activities, with the goal of controlling media narrative. On the other hand, the press is expected to beam its lights on each and every societal institution in order to checkmate the activities of corporate organizations. However, the press in conducting its coverage has to contend with powerful interests such as those of the corporate organizations. Therefore, understanding the way corporate organizations influence the reportorial activities of the press is of paramount importance. Two theories, second level agenda setting and political economy were used as theoretical framework to the study. This study sought to find out the influence of corporate public relations on the reportage of corporate organizations by *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers. A content analysis of the two dailies from January 2010 to December 2012 was carried out. Further, key informant interviews, comprising of twelve informants were conducted with selected journalists from the two dailies and corporate public relations personnel. Data were collected with the aid of coding sheets and interview guides. Data collected from content analysis were computed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) while data from key informant interviews was analyzed using thematic textual analysis. Findings from this study indicated that corporate public relations do have significant influence on the way *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers give coverage to corporate organizations. This study recommends that press/journalists should strive to observe the principles of fairness, objectivity, balance and should give all claim makers equity in terms of access as well as resist being megaphones of corporate organizations. The Nigerian Press Council and Guild of Editors should promote conducive working environment for the journalists so as to checkmate the excesses of corporate organizations over the press. Indeed, the corporate public relations practitioners should always engage the press with factual information and should observe NIPR's ethical code that bars them from corrupting the press.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background to the Study

Corporate public relations is the strategic management of information and communication elements by corporate organizations in order to project, in synergy, the perceived responsibilities of corporate bodies. It is, according to Dolphin and Fan (2000: 2), "the strategic management process by which an organization communicates with its various audiences to the mutual benefits of both and to its improved competitive advantage."Corporate public relations is geared towards minimising frictions between corporate organisation and its public through mainly three approaches namely: maintaining favourable inter-organizational relationships, evaluating social trends and formulating corporate communication policies and to incorporate the drive between corporate identity and corporate reputation (Illia and Balmer, 2012).

To achieve and sustain the above mentioned three approaches employed by corporate public relations, there is need for a common sphere, a medium through which corporate public relations will reach its target audience. The media through which this can be done are the mass media which comprises both electronic and print media (to this study, *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers are presumed to represent the print media). It is in this regard that scholars of corporate public relations have entrusted the power of framing to the press (Macnamara, 2006). The link between corporate public relations, framing and press coverage of corporations comes from the basic understanding that it is important to recognize corporate public relations work involves the construction and framing of social reality. Corporate public relations workers have been referred to pejoratively as image makers and spin doctors, names that only portray their important role in constructing social reality. Indeed, corporate public relations counseling involves defining reality for organizations by shaping organizational perspectives about the outside world (Hallahan, 1999). Also in this aspect,

outbound corporate public relations communications involve attempts to define reality for the many publics on whom the corporate organization depends. Implicitly, framing plays an integral role in corporate public relations. If public relations is defined as the process of establishing and maintaining mutually beneficial relations between an organization and publics on whom it depends (Cutlip, Center, and Broom, 1995), the establishment of common frames of reference about topics or issues of mutual concern is a necessary condition for effective relations to be established. Framing is a critical activity in corporate public relations parlance because of its approach in the construction of social reality as it helps shape the perspectives through which people see the world.

In relation to the above understanding of the link between corporate public relations and newspapers' construction of reality, Hallahan (1999: 3) observed that:

> As a property of a message, a *frame* limits or defines the message's meaning by shaping the inferences that individuals make about the message. Frames reflect judgments made by message creators or *framers*. Some frames represent alternative valencing of information (i.e., putting information in either a positive or negative light, or *valence framing*). Other frames involve the simple alternative phrasing of terms (*semantic framing*). The most complex form of framing is storytelling (*story framing*). Story framing involves (a) selecting key themes or ideas that are the focus of the message and (b) incorporating a variety of storytelling or narrative techniques that support that theme.

It is the understanding of this framing power of the press that made Aruguete (2011: 274) to observe that, "A key dimension incorporated by framing analysis is the role of power for setting certain news frames to the detriment of others. It has been implicitly assumed that the production of news frames arose from media routines whose logics was favorable to certain sources that were influenceable on news frames." Corporate public relations comes into the framing process by providing to the news media a diversity of form, not of contents, and even less a diversity of opinions or ideologies (Napoli 1999). This diversity of form comes through validation or story denial, news releases, incentives, media relations, news conferences, sponsorships, news bytes, visitations and helping the reporter to beat datelines.

The reportage of news is with the understanding that press limit or define the story's meaning and thereby shape people's interpretation of a story because media power is generally symbolic and persuasive, in the sense that the press primarily have the potential to control to some extent the minds of readers or viewers. The press have a critical role in shaping public opinion about who is responsible for causing or solving key social problems (Mastin, Choi, Barboza, & Post, 2007). To buttress this stand, de Vreese (2005: 53) observes that "a frame is an emphasis in salience of different aspects of a topic… framing is concerned with the presentation of issues" thus, the framing and 'presentation of issues' by the press is what corporate public relations terms as its primary business. To create and maintain this common scale of preference, corporate public relations tries to exploit the framing of news by the press.

It is from the understanding of this relationship and influence of the media that Severin and Tankard (2001: 231) asked thus: "who sets the media agenda?" To find some answers to this question, Megwa and Barber (1990) posited that, "people with intimate knowledge of the workings of the news media and the political environment do influence the media agenda, organizational influences and attributes as well as the news media's inextricable reliance on individual and institutional news sources as effective influences on the mass media's agenda". According to Hamilton (2004: 6) "(N)ews emerges not from individuals seeking to improve the functioning of democracy but from readers seeking diversion, reporters forging careers and owners searching for profits". Further, according to Argenti (2003: 101) "the media is both a constituency and a conduit through which investors, suppliers, retailers and consumers receive information about and develop images of a company".

1.2 An Overview of Daily Trust & Vanguard Newspapers

The *Daily Trust* newspaper is published daily by the Media Trust newspaper, a company based in Abuja with Zonal offices in Kaduna, Kano and another coming up Maiduguri, Borno state. The paper was established in January, 2001. The paper is one of the largest circulating newspapers in Northern Nigeria (Kawu, 2008). The newspaper has online editions, and content from the newspapers is republished by AllAfrica.com and Gamji.com. The company presents the "*Daily Trust* African of the Year" award, recognizing and celebrating Africans who have made positive contributions that impact the lives of other people and elicit a pan-African attention during the award year (Kawu, 2003). Further, *Daily Trust* has as its editorial to be 'a world class media that earns public trust and disseminate credible information for the good of all stakeholders.' It has as its core values to maintain editorial integrity, ethical conduct, professionalism, production excellent, market driven and national unity and African brotherhood.

Similarly, *Vanguard* newspaper is published by the Vanguard Media limited which was established in 1984. It was initially a weekly paper but went daily on July 15th 1984. Presently, Vanguard newspaper comes in three editions: *Daily Vanguard*, *Saturday Vanguard* and *Sunday Vanguard*. *Vanguard* and *Daily Trust* newspapers combined, have a circulation that reaches most of the newspaper reading audience in Nigeria. *Vanguard* newspaper's editorial policy is 'to impact positively on readers and society by providing high quality, reliable and affordable media products thereby promoting knowledge, political stability and economic prosperity.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

One recurring issue about the understanding of the relationship between corporate public relations and the press is that of placement of influence between the two. The relationship between corporate public relations and the press tend to be mutually dependent: with each trying to outdo the other. One observable and desirable demand on the press is to source for the truth, impart the truth and help build knowledge and share experiences through factual and unbiased dissemination of information. Convergence between corporate public relations and the press will call to question the neutrality and unbiased empire pedestal upon which the press is built on. The press in doing the vital function of sieving through the millions of daily occurrences to get the news worthy ones has to contend with many powerful corporate forces, whose aim is to influence the way the press reports. These forces try not only to influence the framing by the press but also the attributes the press attach to the corporate bodies in its reportorial duties.

According to Fengler and Rub-Mohl (2008: 677) "professional sources are aware of the 'value' of the information they may have to offer, and they use it strategically to further their own interests, or the interests of the organization they are affiliated with, by remaining personally invisible". Further, Rich (2010: 91) opines that "many sources, named or unnamed, have their own agenda and want to manipulate reporters so the sources can promote their cause." Here, the setting is for exchange of information, to the corporate public relations which incidentally is the source, the aim is to supply the press with an information that would wittingly or unwittingly colour the angle of the story in such a way that it will add to the overall painting of the positive image of the corporate organization. To the press, which incidentally is the channel, its need is for a 'good' story which would make the next headlines and as such, the press is in an exchange environment in which the constraints are much. Thus, the press constraints at the exchange is being manipulated and used as sources to

the corporate public relations (David, 2005). Further, the individual settings in which the press and corporate public relations personnel interact give rise to different sets of rules and therefore result in different kinds of influences. For instance, in a situation where the representative of the corporate public relations has the economic wherewithal of supplying information subsidy to the representatives of the press through captivating visuals and appealing story angles, such a situation, puts the press at the receiving end (Anderson and Lowrey, 2007). To this end, studies have shown that corporate public relations activities are crucial to the formation of agenda setting (Berger, 2001). Further, Zoch and Molleda (2006:283) opine that "public relations practitioners who act as sources contribute to the framing of a story by highlighting or withholding specific information about a subject or issue." Also, Kiousis, Popescu and Mitrook (2007: 149) opine that "the broader concept of agenda-building views the process of salience formations as one involving reciprocal influence among multiple groups in addition to media and public opinion, such as policymakers, interests groups and corporations". It is in relation to this that Davis (2000: 40) observed thus, "is public relations simply a means by which corporate and state sources can further dominate access and media agendas? Or, does it enable non-institutional and 'resource-poor' groups to gain an influence in the media that was previously denied them?" Further, Kiousis, Popescu and Mitrook (2007: 150) posit that "Although most agenda-building research has concentrated on political news, a small body of work has emerged suggesting that public relations activities and programs can contribute to the salience of business news and its subsequent influence on public opinion and financial performance." In an attempt to manage attacks and still maintain profit margins, corporations began to call upon public relations to promote their side of the story through newspapers, heralding the rise of corporate public relations (Gower, 2007). Herein is the problem, the work of corporate public relations are incorporated into press's activities to the extent of influencing the

reportorial activities of newspapers, then the neutrality of the press as an unbiased forth realm of the estate would be called to question. And, what are the consequences of this situation on the overall developments drives of Nigeria and on the citizens' knowledge of corporate organizations whose corporate activities affects their general wellbeing?

1.4 Research Questions.

This study is premised on finding answers to the following research questions:

i: Do corporate public relations influence news coverage of corporate organisations by *Daily Trust* and the *Vanguard* newspapers?

ii: Is there any significant relationship between corporate public relations communication and importance attributed to corporate organization stories by *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers?

iii: Do *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* Newspapers cover corporate news more than any other type of news stories?

1.5 Research Hypotheses.

i: H0; *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers' coverage of corporate organisations are independent of corporate public relations' influence.

H1; Corporate public relations influences *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers' coverage of corporate organizations.

ii: H0; The level of importance attributed to corporate organisations by *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers is independent of corporate public relations communication.

H1; There is a significant level of importance between corporate public relations and coverage of corporate organizations by *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers

iii: H0; *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers do not cover corporate news more than any other type of news stories.

H1; *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers cover corporate news more than any other type of news

1.6 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to study how corporate public relations practices influence the reportorial activities of *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers, and the specific objectives of this study are as follows:

i- To find out the extent to which corporate public relations influence the reportage of corporate organisations by *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers.

ii- To find out the extent to which corporate public relations communication is having significant influence on the level of importance attributed to corporate organization stories by *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers.

iii- To find out the level of which *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers cover corporate news more than any other news stories.

1.7 Justification for the Study.

With the changing media (press) environment due to drive by many interests to influence the workings of the press, because of the press' perceived impact of helping members of the society to arrive at an informed decision about a particular organisation, the justification of this study is in its quest to understand what influences the workings of the press. Also, most of the studies on public relations in the Nigerian parlance have to do with the profession itself not on the relationship and influence it may be having on the press. Further, the study adds to the retinue of knowledge about what goes into agenda setting functions of the Nigerian press.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The press is an institution whose business is collating, processing and dissemination of information that concerns all other institutions in the society. As such, the press in its task of informing, educating, enlightening and entertaining the society, has to do with other institutional forces. Such forces that tend to exert some level of influence on the workings of the press include; corporate organisations, regulatory bodies, civil society, political parties, religious institutions, industries and governments. However, this study investigated the influence that corporate organisations may have on the workings of the Nigerian press in general and specifically, on the reportorial duties of *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers.

This means that the study does not cover other likely sources of influence on the workings of the press.

1.9 Limitations to the Study.

The major limitation to this study was that of time frame. A study that aimed to establish a trend or a pattern ought to have taken five or more years. However, this study was based on content analysis of only years: January 2010 to December 2012.Also, this study conducted key informant interviews with a relatively small number of newspaper journalists and corporate public relations personnel. The decision to interview eight working newspaper journalists and four corporate public relations personnel was made due to time and resource constraints. Each interview lasted approximately forty minutes and took an average of two hours to transcribe using the listen and type software. The researcher also found it difficult than expected to find newspaper journalists who were willing to participate in an interview. This may have been for several reasons including perceptions about anonymity, length of interview time, as well as the unpredictable nature of journalism, which meant it was difficult for journalists to guarantee their availability at a given date and time. That said, the researcher still believed twelve key informant interviews with elite participants was a very respectable number, particularly as it was not the only method of data collection for the study.

1.10 Definition of Key Terms

Corporate News:

These are news stories, items and cues that emanates from the persuasive activities of corporate public relations. Such news, items and cues are geared to generate favourable and positive publicity and acceptance to corporate organisations.

Corporate Public Relations Communication:

These are communicative elements such as press releases, corporate brands, souvenirs, tours, news conferences, subsidized information, phone calls, media relations and maintaining of contacts with journalists by corporate public relations personnel with the intent of influencing media narrative.

Coverage:

These are stories, features, editorials and other means by which the media use to narrate stories about corporate organizations.

Influence:

This is the capacity of corporate public relations to have effect on media's coverage of corporate organizations. It entails corporate public relations communication impacting on media's narrative with the sole aim of promoting corporate organizations as socially responsible and acceptable to the society.

1.10.1 List of Acronyms.

CPR: corporate public relations

CPRC: corporate public relations communication.

CPRO: corporate public relations officers interviewed for this study.

JOUR: newspaper journalists interviewed for this study.

LIACOS: level of importance attributed to corporate organization stories.

NCCO: news coverage of corporate organizations.

NIPR: Nigerian Institute of Public Relations.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, conceptual review of related literature is presented. Literature concerning the different aspects of the relationship between corporate public relations and the press was carried out in order to understand the global as well as local trend of understanding where the influence lay between the two professions. Further, an empirical review is carried out in order to establish a gap and try to fill into such a gap where necessary.

2.2 Concept of Corporate Public Relations

According to Akinfeleye (2011: 5) public relations is a "deliberate, planned and sustained action to create, maintain and sustain cordial relationship, good rapport, mutual understanding, harmony, concord, within and outside government", firms and corporate organizations. Iheme (2011: 48) citing the United Kingdom Institute of Public Relations, defines public relations as "a deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics." However, Oliver (2008: 1) opines that "many organizations, though, are making a move away from the term 'public relations' towards 'corporate communication management'… corporate public relations practice involves management of an organization's reputation by identifying perceptions which are held of the organization and working to inform all relevant audiences about organizational performance… corporate public relations is concerned with managing the relationships between an organization and a much wider variety of stakeholders or audiences and range of priorities at any given time."

Thus, corporate public relations deals with projecting and sustaining a synergy of positive image, maintaining brand loyalty and coordinating both internal and external communicative variable that has to do with the wellbeing of an organization. Corporate

public relations aims to “develop a consistent corporate message (and tone) that appropriately reflects the organization in a way that the organization wishes to be reflected, even as events, crises and issues are occurring” (Oliver, 2008: 16). Corporate public relations sees public relations as a process not a determinate way of taking actions, it anticipates issues and the best way to tackle such issues corporately even before the manifestation of such issues. Corporate public relations is strategic and it encapsulates all the communicative contacts of the organization to ‘speak in one voice’, to act as one, as a whole system, to communicate with substance in order to meet the demands of the various stakeholders with minimal conflict of ideas.

2.3 Corporate Public Relations and News Selection.

Cohen and Young (1973: 183) explain that “news values continually play against on-going beliefs and constructs about the world which most of its readers share, and without this consensus knowledge our routine knowledge of social structures, neither the news workers nor its readers would recognise the foregrounding” of the news . In essence, what we tend to know about reality is what the news media infer as present or absent. Again, what salience we construe to a phenomena, is to an extent construed by the salience given to such a phenomena by the news media. As such, the angle given to an issue by the news media tend to aid our conception of ideological interpretations about the world.

According to Hall et al(1978:54)“while the professional ideology of news helps in easily identifying those qualities that constitute what is newsworthy, the process of news selection is located within a range of known social and cultural identification” In relation to this assertion, news cannot be viewed as a rigid list that can be lifted and applied in all contexts. News values vary, and this depends on considerations given to the interests of the wider societal expectations of the news media. Some of the key points about news selecting, news making and the process of selecting sources include; that news does not occur in

isolation; rather it is an end product of social interrelations involving journalists, news sources, external and internal structures within and outside news media, and other factors in society. The other factor is that journalists and news sources are a product of socialization, which shapes their understanding and response to media. Both often share some perceptions about what is newsworthy and this helps their understanding in the process of constructing news (McNair, 1998).

The press directs the public attention towards the global and local problems and issues, exposing the corporate and commercial organizations to a thorough public analysis. As such corporate institutions seek to influence the way the press as an institution works (Newbold, Boyd-Barrett, & Van Den Bulck, 2002). The press itself is an institution within the society and it is not immune to the influences of other institutions it relates within the society (Curran, 2002). For instance, other institutions want to influence the agenda and frame how and what the press covers and present to the public as news. Among such institutions that want to frame and influence the workings of the press are the corporate organisations. To this end, press and news production is no longer determined by journalistic callings but by interests of advertisers, sources and investors (McManus, 1994). Also, Hamilton (2004: 7) corroborated this by asserting that:

> Journalists not only try to answer the classic '5 W' questions when selecting news, but also five economic questions: who cares about particular piece of information? What are they willing to pay to find it, or what are others willing to pay to reach them? Where can media outlets or advertisers reach these people? When is it profitable to provide the information? Why is this profitable?

Thus, the corporate public relations influence pertains to the first economic question of "who cares about particular piece of information?" The corporate public relations care about maintaining a synergy of positive information about the interests of its corporate organization. In maintaining this synergy of positive flow of information, corporate public relations through such tactics as information subsidy, try to influence the workings of the press (Davis, 2000).

Moreover the provision of reliable news is considered to be a requirement for a healthy democracy.

Furthermore, understanding of the process of news and source selection by the corporate public relations could be exploited to the disadvantage of the news media. To this understanding, Larsson (2009: 131) opines that "Public relations have become a significant and powerful industry, particularly in recent decades. This industry and its actors mainly work through the media to spread information, persuasion and opinions to the public on behalf of their clients". The quest herein lies in the issue of corporate public relations having the capability to "spread information, persuasion and opinions" into the media's process of news selection. Along this line of this thought, McNair (1998: 50) observes that "When the news focuses on a problem, the public's priorities are altered and altered again as it moves to something else" because according to Iyenga and Kinder (1987) cited by McNair (1998:50) "By priming certain aspects of national life while ignoring others, news sets the terms by which political judgments are rendered and political choices are made", as such news selection is not only about reality judgments but also makes value or preference on what is considered news worthy, albeit aided by other societal institutions such as corporate public relations.

In relation to the above, the importance of news sources in the construction of news is indisputable. The press depend on news source to validate information and also to identify and construct news stories (Shoemaker, 1991). Also, McNair (1998: 6) argues that, "though journalists construct their stories around their own values and beliefs, they largely depend for their information on the contributions of a wide range of information sources that acquire the power of becoming definers of journalistic reality" and the primary aim of corporate public relations is to maintain, through communication, a synergy of positive news coverage of their clients by the press. And as McNair (1998:6) asserts, "Non-journalistic witnesses or actors

have been mainstreamed in journalism to interpret issues, which in essence lends authority of information in the eyes of the audience". Because news sources are important in helping to validate news, the process of news selection could be exploited by corporate public relations sources. And because the primary aim of corporate public relations is to maintain positive image, they tend to have influence on news coverage determinants on what to be reported about them, a look at the pages of *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers show vivid examples of corporate public relations communication.

2.4 Corporate Public Relations and News Framing

Corporate public relations activities are geared towards affecting the frame through which the press give corporate organizations coverage. According to Hallahan (1999:207):

> Framing is a critical activity in the construction of social reality because it helps shape the perspectives through which people see the world. Although public relations practitioners commonly refer to framing effective messages in the same way that a builder frames a house from the bottom up, the framing metaphor is better understood as a window or portrait frame drawn around information that delimits the subject matter and, thus, focuses attention on key elements within. Thus, framing involves processes of inclusion and exclusion as well as emphasis.

Frames are powerful mechanisms that can help define and solve problems and shape public opinion (An & Gower 2009). According to Ryan (1999) "Frames are not consciously or deliberately constructed, but operate as underlying mind sets that prompt one to notice elements that are familiar and ignore those that are different. News frames are almost entirely implicit and they do not appear to either journalists or audience as social constructions but as primary attributes of events that reporters are merely reflecting". To frame a news item to a particular perspective is not the absolute prerequisite of the press nor is it that of the reporter. Mostly a news frame is sponsored by either the dominant ideology of the press or by some frame sponsors and all those who sponsor frames work to gain access to mainstream media (Ryan, 1999).

Framing involves a communication source presenting and defining an issue. Corporate entities engage in framing because People's perceptions of and inferences about events are dependent on what information or feature is salient in the environment. And by promoting a particular frame at the expense of another frame, corporate public relations activities, news editors and writers are often implicitly speaking to definite audiences. Thus, framing a story suggests that the press do even more than create importance attached to a particular news issue, by selecting what to include and what to exclude from a story, the news media frame a story to favour a particular angle of understanding reality (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Entman (1993: 55) is of the view that "Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in the communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition". As such, in trying to exploit the framing process, corporate public relations is trying to promote the definition of reality from the angle of its client; public relations work fundamentally involves the construction of social reality (Hallahan, 1999).To this end, corporate public relations engages in the designing of events that are attractive to journalists. As such, to represent societal values in the news, the press is helped in its professional practice by the sense of the nature of external reality in society (Gans, 1979). To this end, Mitrook, Wu and Seltzer, (2007: 269) observe that "The salience of objects and attributes in public relations messages can increase the salience of those elements on the media and public agendas".

2.5 Corporate Public Relations and Information Subsidy

Corporate public relations personnel tend to supply the press with information, data, corporately pimped perspective and other issues that may make a journalist's work easier to accomplish. However, all that the corporate public relations personnel supply to the press are with the intention of projecting the positive and wishful image of corporate organizations. All these are termed as information subsidy and according to McNair (1998: 7)

> News sources are selected on the basis that they enforce or add value to the news they speak to, and the news items they speak to are qualified on the basis of their newsworthy qualities. News sources are also selected because they embody attributes that are newsworthy. Thus, they are considered newsworthy in more or less similar terms that qualify a story to be newsworthy, and in this sense, the newsworthy attributes in them sometimes influence the selection of news.

It is on the basis of supplying the news media with news worthy items that 'add value' to the news that corporate public relations departments engage in what is termed as information subsidy. Corporate public relations engage in subsidizing information to the media with the hope of grabbing favourable public attention which is a scarce commodity. Corporate public relations departments try to subsidise information because the media's incessant search for such information and "journalists have a high self-interest at stake when selecting, producing, and disseminating news. They seek to maximize attention for their work; they try to minimize costs of investigation and research and to use their sources to their greatest professional benefit" Fengler and Rub-Mohl, (2008: 673). However, in subsidising the information to the media, corporate public relations do not send neutral scripts, text or visuals to the press. Rather the subsidised information may contain skewed facts and figures from an angle that may best serve the interests of the clients of the corporate public relations.

According to Dan, (1989: 4), "news sources also seek to gain influence in the agenda-building process by shaping their information to journalists' needs. Timing of information release is carefully considered in order to match news organizations' deadlines, as a resource's efforts to create concrete events that reduce journalists' costs for gathering and processing of information". Information subsidy is better understood when one knows how journalists work. The journalists work to meet dateline, research their news stories and daily engage in selecting from the many contending items within any category, those that are felt to be of interest to readers. As such the journalist is open to accepting subsidised information from corporate public relations personnel. One thing of note according to Brown and Sweetser (2008: 360) is that "journalists prefer to appear autonomous in their porting process

and use such subsidies less directly than merely reprinting a press release". By giving the media subsidised information, it does not mean that the media will automatically use the information as it is, the media uses information that will add value to the story they are covering.

In relation to the above, Ryan and David (1988: 134) are of the view that "unfortunately for them, journalists are not the only ones involved in public news production. Protagonists in the contemporary news game also wish to have some control over news production, and their interests are such that they are prepared to invest the necessary resources to achieve their goals". Corporate public relations tend to have the wherewithal to supply the media with subsidised information that tend to meet the journalists' needs. To this end Sweester and Brown (2008: 360) contend that "Journalists rely heavily on information subsidies such as making sources available, news releases, and other practitioner produced products". However, this does not mean the media is just a mega-phone of corporate public relations; rather the media performs its gate keeping function of sieving such information subsidy and chose the one that adds value to the news. After all, the source-press relationship is an on-going "tug of war" in which sources try to manage the news to their advantage and press try to manage sources to obtain information they need (Gans, 1979).

However, it is pertinent to note that the media agenda is constructed in part through source-media interactions, and the majority of news stories are source-originated (Berger, 2001). Also, Aruguete (2011: 274) argues that "news sources are a basic key raw material for the news production process. Journalists depend on their sources to produce information."These source originated materials are provided by corporate public relations through press releases, spokespersons, story suggestions, videotapes, souvenirs, timing the release of information to meet or avoid the deadlines of news organizations, staging of news conferences, staging of promos and dramatic events to draw media attention, promise of

exclusive reports, use of celebrities, and maintaining a cordial media relations departments. No wonder then Berger (2001: 94) observes that "The corporate agenda most often is located in studies regarding source influences on the media agenda". Corporate public relations mostly try to influence the workings of the press through the supply of information subsidy which is mostly tailored to suit the needs of currency, adequacy and timeliness; virtues that make an event a news worthy one to the press. Corporate public relations engage departments in the supply of information subsidy that reduces the costs of gathering and processing information with the hope that the press will make use of such information subsidy. The supply of information subsidy by corporate public relations departments is done with the understanding that the media seem to be particularly influential in making some issues more salient than others. Thus, Splichal (1999: 9) aptly observes that "whatever interests policy actors may pursue, they are likely to be more efficient when attempting to influence the actions of others by controlling their access to information and opinions disseminated through the media and the use of information relevant to their actions".

2.6 Corporate Public Relations and Media Pluralism

In an ideal society, the idea of media pluralism primarily refers to the multiplicity of voices, inclusiveness and evidence of diversity in the media and the public sphere, where several claim-makers can have access to the press towards nation building and harmonious co-existence. According to Splichal (1999: 11) "mass media as the site where ideas and interests can be freely presented and discussed, become a pre-condition for civil society. This is why the mass media are constitutive of any adequate contemporary theory of (political) democracy". This therefore hints to the instance that without participation of the public in the reportorial process, news media lacks its legitimacy. Citizen participation in public discussion is an essential element in the process of defining societal goals that should be met again through the involvement of citizens in the workings of the press.

Also, Berger (2002: 84) asserts that "journalist are expected to be autonomous from political forces, owners and advertisers and other vested interests and to work within conditions that assure them of editorial independence". The press is expected to be in such high pedestal of independence in order to maintain a pluralism of sources and access to information. However, some schools of thought do not see the media, particularly the news media from this perspective. For instance, Shoemaker (2006: 106) opines that "news is a commodity. It can be bought, sold, and traded. Journalists manufacture the news. Public relations firms manipulate the news. The audience consumes the news. Advertisers pay to place their products next to the news". Thus, if the news ought to be from multiple and plural sources and at the same times news could be sold and or could be manipulated, then news could not be said to be from plural sources. Herein lies the view that "in a situation where media organisations have finite resources of time and money, where deadlines are tight and exclusives increasingly important, there is much to be gained by ensuring the journalists' ease of supply, providing...an information subsidy"(McNair 2003: 71). To this line of thought, in a study (Curtin, 1999) found that "editors and reporters increasingly use public relations information subsidies due to growing economic constraints on media companies".

One thing that needs proper understanding is that understanding media pluralism is not always normative. It is mostly ontological as (Olorunyomi, 2005:6) asserts "to isolate the problems associated with covering diversity as simple matters of norms is to suggest that only endogenous factors influence the practice of the media. The fact of diversity in concrete editorial terms always assumes a pluralism that also includes the exogenous variables of ownership, employees, content and sources". Thus, media pluralism could be understood from two perspectives namely: content pluralism and form pluralism. While form pluralism deals with variety of media outlets, content pluralism deals with variety of sources of the information. Corporate public relations try to influence both the two not coercively but

latently. Accordingly, Yoon (2005: 768) observes that "efficacy of PR in the news production process may be not only in its ability to achieve media access but also in its contribution to accumulating institutional legitimacy for organizations". Further, Barker-Plummer (2002) concurs by asserting that "access to news making is a critical political resource in that it provides organizations the opportunity for their voices to be heard and to have an influence in public debate".

On the other perspective, the quest for multi-pluralism both in input and output seem to be a clarion call on the media. This call is premised on the understanding that if some extra-media social actors could exploit both the input and output process of news dissemination, then the media's pedestal of being a neutral umpire will be called to question. In relation to this Manning (2001: 1) aptly sums up this thinking as:

> One of the important issues to consider, then, in thinking through the relationship between the news media and democratic process in liberal, capitalistic societies, is whether or not the less powerful are significantly disadvantaged in the scramble to secure access to the news media. In turn, this will have an important bearing upon the question of just how diverse are the perspectives and interpretive frameworks that are present through the news media.

Also, in this line of thinking is Yoon (2000: 762) who is of the opinion that "Organizations that actively try to exert influence on a policy-decision process tend to seek access to the news media, with an assumption that greater and sympathetic media coverage of their stance will result in public opinion and policy making favourable to them". So, the dilemma here is, if pluralism is the watch word in participative media, and corporate public relations tries to manipulate the input and output process of how news is sourced and distributed, then as earlier observed, the media's role of promoting pluralism will be called to question.

2.7 Corporate Public Relations and Reputation Management

According to Barnett et al (2006: 34) reputation is "observers' collective judgments of a corporation based on assessments of the financial, social, and environmental impacts

attributed to the corporation over time". Reputation is an inter-temporal identity, a record of trust worthy or untrustworthy behaviour. Reputation is linked with past actions, "particularly the historical trustworthiness of parties in previous interactions with others" (Pizzorno 2004). Shittu (2008: 247) in his chapter contribution opine that "one can define good reputation management as the ways and processes for employing PR to structure organizations or government; political and elected office holders' policies, programmes, statements and actions to gain acceptance; trust and good image perception from the citizens and international community."While Doorley and Garcia (2007) give a summation of what reputation means thus, "Reputation = Sum of Images = (Performance and Behaviour) + Communication". To these scholars, reputation is not only about performance and behaviour of corporate organizations but also how these parameters are communicated to both internal and external publics. To this end, research on the subject of corporate reputation has shown associations between it and increased awareness and press coverage (Worcester, 2009).Perhaps, it is from this understanding that corporate public relations strives to influence any communication about its client because reputation is particularly valuable only after it has been recognized by significant others, particularly people whose opinion matters such as the press which tends to have advance access to information.

In relation to the above, reputation is not a short term affair, rather it is painstakingly built over time: with a lot of cost implications and potentials. As Goldstein and Doorley (2011: 1) observe "the reputations of firms may be linked to the degree to which they have formal reputation management programs". As such, reputation is a possibility; it brings along certain expectations such as increased positive awareness, investor trust, profitability and sympathy in terms of crises. While poor or negative reputation, corporate organizations need to justify their actions continually, people 'take them the wrong way' and suspect that they are doing something underhanded even if they are not. It is difficult to get anyone to put the

time in to assisting the organizations or to give them advice; mostly they just don't want to be associated with such organizations. People are not lining up to work with such firms. Their achievements are viewed with suspicion. To achieve positive reputation, corporate public relations departments engage in controlling information as Davies (2004) argues that "our assets are our people, capital and reputation. If any of these are ever diminished, the last is the most difficult to restore." Herein lays the necessity of corporate public relations in promoting corporate image, and sustaining such positive corporate image. As often, reputation and media visibility go together; those entities with especially good or especially bad reputations are more interesting to the media than those with neutral or normal reputations (Fombrun 1996).

In relation to the above, Murray and White (2004: 10) observe that "It's the role of public relations to make sure that the organisation is getting credit for the good it does. Great reputations are built on doing this consistently over a period of time in which a track record of delivering on promises and engendering trust is evident to everyone." Further, Argenti and Druckenmiller (2004, 369) argue that "in the corporate world, reputation is seen as a major element of an organisation's provenance alongside and included in financial performance and innovation." The duo further posits that "organizations increasingly recognize the importance of corporate reputation to achieve business goals and stay competitive.'' However, our concern here is not about the understanding of the relevance of reputation by the corporate organizations, rather it is about how these corporate organizations try to exact their influence on the media to maintain a positive corporate reputation. As Argenti and Druckenmiller (2004: 368) observe "reputation does not occur by chance. It relates to leadership, management and organisational operations; the quality of products and services; and crucially, relationships with stakeholders. It is also connected to communication activities and feedback mechanisms."

2.8 Corporate Public Relations and Media Economics

Media economics according to Albarran (2002: 5) focuses on ‘‘how media industries use scarce resources to produce content . . . to satisfy various wants and needs.’’ Media economics deals with the dual nature of media industries; both media products and media content. It tries to analyse how economics come to play on how information, which is most a times costly to obtain, is collated, processed and disseminated by the media. The duality approach to the media industry is under pinned by the fact that the industry is distinct from other industries because according to Napoli (2005: 5) “media firms often simultaneously market one product (content) to one set of consumers (audiences) and another product (audiences – or, more specifically, audience attention) to a different set of consumers (advertisers).” The connection between media economics and Corporate Public Relations is mostly at the point of producing the content which the media industry tries to disseminate to its target audience.

In relation to the above, Yoon (2005: 763) is of the opinion that “journalists also frequently use sources with superior economic power, as these sources provide information at something less than the cost the journalists would face in the absence of the information subsidy.” Herein lays the connection, media economics understands the media as a firm that churns out content for profit maximisation and the corporate public relations engages in subsidising access to information by the journalists with the intent of influencing the work of such journalists. What more, media and media releases have increased in recent years to the extent that the competition for the audience attention is greater than ever, which encourages journalists in their constant search for interesting and sensational news and information (Cutlip, Center and Broom, 1995).

In relation to the above scenario, Yoon (2005: 763) observes that “theorists argue that journalists view certain sources as more legitimate; thereby allowing those sources to pre-

empt media access and dominate the news in a public debate." To further buttress how economics come to play in content production by the media, Gans (179: 40) opines that to understand this relationship, one needs to tour the line of "what actors and activities are reported or ignored and in how they are described."To sum up the relationship between news production, media economics and corporate public relations, Dan (1989: 2) opines that

> Often, a large part of the news process involves sources' provision of information that is subsequently shaped by the journalists who report it. Because news organizations must spend money for equipment and personnel to gather the raw information from which news is made, every story that is reported carries a cost. News sources, cognizant of this expense, make efforts to reduce the cost of their own information for news organizations with hopes of thereby influencing the news agenda.

Media economics being a study of how economics and financial pressures affect the workings of the press, give an ample opportunity to understand the relationship between corporate public relations and the media. For one, the press is burdened by pressures of return on investment and maximization of profit. On the other hand, corporate public relations personnel are pressed by the need to portray their clients in the best possible way. To sum this up, McChesney (1997) is of the view that,

> To do effective journalism is expensive and corporate managers realize that the surest way to fatten profits is to fire editors and reporters and fill the news hole with inexpensive syndicated material and fluff… another way of reducing costs is for journalists to rely heavily on public relations documents, press releases, and news conferences as the primary source of news information. Reporting on artificially contrived news events become a substitute for investigating real events for the news.

Thus, to understand the influence economic considerations may have on the workings of the press, media scholars engage in researching for diversity in such a media's content (Einstein: 2004).Herein, diversity is seen as when the media source its information from multiple and varied sources so that no single institution or industry becomes the definer of reality. Diversity is not only restricted to sources but also to access to the media by various claim-makers on various issues being covered by the press. Further, an extension of understanding diversity is contextualization. To sum this up, one needs to understand that

news is selected in social context and this context itself influences the nature of how news is gathered how it is eventually processed and disseminated to the audience (Gans,1979). The context we are referring to here is the economic capability of the press in its pursuit of sourcing for information in proportionate relationship to the economic wherewithal of corporate public relations in subsidizing and supplying the information to the press at a far lower cost. In essence that news values cannot be separated from the economic contexts in which the newspapers or other news media operate. Thus, financial constraints on media and other economics dimensions tend to have some bearing on how news values and sources relations are applied in practice.

2.9 Empirical Review

This sub-theme review specific studies from books, journals, seminar papers and book chapters that have to do with explaining the relationship and influence between corporate public relations and journalists, press and the mass media in general.

2.9.1 Review on Relationship between Corporate Public Relations and the Press

The relationship between corporate public relations and the press is a complex and uneasy one. Shin and Cameron (2004) believe both sides bring conflict to the relationship through the nature of their roles and goals, and the values, attitudes and views they hold of each other. To fully understand the relationship between corporate public relations and the press, Fortunato (2000: 483) opines that:

> In this triangular relationship among public relations, mass media, and the audience, the mass media have power in two critical dimensions: (1) the power to potentially influence the public as studied in mass media effects research and (2) the power to perform a gate keeping function through processes of selecting and framing issues that will be exposed to an audience.

A recurring discussion in the context of the relationship between corporate public relations and the press is where the dependencies lay. The relationship has often been described as mutually dependent yet the suggestion that corporate public relations personnel may be held responsible for shaping news content in the national and local news media is increasingly suggested by journalists, academics and corporate public relations professionals (Hobsbawm, 2010). These suggestions will be more understood when taken with the observation of Shittu (2012: 47) where he asserts that one of the key functions of corporate public relations personnel is that "relating with the media: the manager should maintain cordial relationship with media personnel. He/she ensures free access, maximum attention, and provides full information whenever the journalists call."

It is in trying to understand this relationship that Baker's (2007) study focuses on the shrinking circulation figures and a decline in advertising revenue, coupled with the commercial interests of newspaper ownership to maintain or increase profits for shareholders. This, the scholar admits has had terrific impact on the working conditions of the newspaper journalist who has to fall back to materials emanating from the activities of corporate public relations. Further adding to the pressure that journalists face is the proliferation of news media outlets. This has resulted in "increased competition between journalists and an intense contest to make the news" (Neijens and Smit: 2006: 233). Such factors according to Comrie (2002: 158) have "led journalists to rely increasingly on corporate public relations practitioners as key sources of access, information and news so they can meet the demands of daily news production."

Also, in their work White and Hobsbawm (2007: 290) view the relationship between corporate public relations and the press from another perspective by claiming that "while public relations practitioners are aware of the extent to which they work with and provide information to journalists, journalists are perhaps less willing to acknowledge the use made of

public relations material." Also, Comrie (2002) follows a mid-range line by hinting that "journalists are often quick to make a song and dance about the number of media releases which they throw straight in the bin because they contain puffery or blatant advertising. What they are not so quick to talk about are the media releases that are published often in verbatim form." To this line of thought, Williams and Franklin (2008) during their study into the use of PR and news agency copy by journalists, stated, 'there is very little acknowledgment that it comes from PR even when materials are published in verbatim form.'

In relation to the above line of thinking, Shin and Cameron (2005: 320) put this lack of acknowledgement down to the fact that journalists strive "to maintain their autonomy in the news selection process" and that they may have a reluctance to admit that corporate public relations can and does influence the media agenda while DeLorme & Fedler, (2003: 113) admit that for the journalists and the press "admitting their dependence would shatter cherished ideals. Journalists were proud of their ability to uncover stories, verify details, and expose sham. Thus they were unlikely to admit their dependence, lack of scepticism, failure to verify, and failure to expose every sham".

2.9.2 Review on Influence of Corporate Public Relations on the Press

In their journal article Dolphin and Fan (2003) hint at the efficacy of corporate communication at promoting and sustaining the positive corporate image of organizations through giving the media craftily drafted communication elements that even a veteran journalist could not resist to incorporate into his reportorial activities. Also, to this line, in her seminal study, Bredemeier (2010) found out that, more than 90% of fashion news in the British media is corporately sponsored. And to buttress this stance, Beckett (2008) opine that "much of what the mainstream media has written and broadcast over the last 50 years has been driven by an agenda set by other organizations or simply recycled from other media outlets."

With regard to this thesis Becket (2008) further argues that the growth in lifestyle journalism, the expansion of the media space and the relative decline in reporting resources in mainstream media has tipped the balance of influence even more favourably towards corporate public relations. Corporate public relations in its true sense has gone a long way since Walter Lippmann suggested that public opinion, responds not to the environment, but to the pseudo environment constructed by the news media. Further, Manning (2001) suggests that powerful corporations dominate news agendas and that increasingly even less powerful groups employ sophisticated media strategies and new communications technologies to get their message across. It is in this line of reasoning that In an opening quote, in his chapter presentation, Jukes (2013: 1) asserts that "working in a news factory, without the time to check, without the chance to go out and make contacts and find leads, reporters are reduced to 'churnalism', to the passive processing of material which overwhelmingly tends to be supplied for them by outsiders, particularly wire agencies and PR."

Further to this, Matthews (2013: 243) is of the opinion that "due to practical considerations, journalists have routinely drawn on a small pool of sources for information, allowing them to act as the 'primary definers', which shape the character of a particular news story (this can have even more to do with ideological fit than expediency. As pressures have intensified, there has been a growing dependency on those types of sources that can be counted upon to provide information in a convenient, accessible form." In other words, even the environment those journalists operate in: open them to external influence. The environment is that of competitive rush both in terms of meeting dateline and in time of having exclusive news. At the same time, the corporate public relations personnel has the time to craft his information in such a way that it will be too juicy for the journalist not to go for it.

Also, Kaur and Shaari (2006) in their journal presentation, tried to understand and postulate on where influence lay in the process of engaging with each other between corporate public relations and the press/journalists. The duo sees the relationship as form of a dance in which the parameters set from the onset, has driven the journalists to the bottom of the relationship. To them, “the interaction between the sources who provide 'information subsidies' (press releases, news conferences, briefings and official organization documents and reports) and journalists who receive and are influenced by these subsidies was described as a 'dance'. More often than not, the sources do the leading, initiating contact with representatives of the news media, selling story ideas and seeking to 'manage the news by putting the best light on themselves' and those they represent” (Kaur and Shaari2006: 3).

Further to the above is another angle taken by some scholars which has to do with the financial stand of the press and journalists themselves. To this line of thinking, Matthews (2013: 242) posit that “interrelating financial, organizational and technological factors have spurred considerable changes in the professional practices of journalism. They include declining sales and advertising revenues, the emergence of new multi-media and digital technologies and a blurring of the boundaries between promotional communication and genuine news reporting.” It is worthy to not that ‘promotional communication’ is another appellation to the concept of corporate public relations. The scenario is that of a press and journalist working in dare times of economic hardship and financial hurdles, this scenario, though anecdotal in nature, have the capacity to expose the press/journalists to outside influence such as that of the corporate public relations. Also, in his journal article, Kensicki, (2000) put forward compelling arguments that there is a link between attribute salience on the media agenda and object salience on the public agenda. Therefore, when specific attributes are emphasized in the media agenda, the level of object salience on the public agenda is affected. It is at this level that emphasis on attributes, or frames, is fully united with second level

agenda setting. The ‘compelling arguments’ position suggests that the frames used by media have direct influence on the level of object salience the public has for an issue.

Available literature also points to another aspect of understanding where the influence lay between corporate public relations and the press. This aspect is that of understanding information subsidy and its eventual acceptance by the press. According to Wilson and Supa (3013: 4) “journalists use public relations-supplied information subsidies today more than ever before. Practitioners have the potential to serve as the most influential sources for mass media news by supplying information subsidies to journalists. In fact, use of subsidies has become so routine that journalists take it for granted that the news is created by sorting through the public relation-supplied information each day.”For instance, the journalists take home pay in Nigeria is relatively low compared to other professionals’ pay. This a time may open up the press for influence from other institutions such as corporate public relations.

Though the journalists may still lay claim to being professionals who sift through, edit and proof read stories before such stories are published, Shrinking circulation figures and a decline in advertising revenue, coupled with the commercial interests of newspaper ownership to maintain or increase profits for shareholders, has had a major impact on the working life of newspaper journalists (Baker, 2007).Further adding to the pressure that journalists face is the proliferation of news media outlets. This has resulted in “increased competition between journalists and an intense contest to make the news” (Neijens & Smit, 2006: 233). Such factors have led journalists to rely increasingly on corporate public relations personnel as key sources of access, information and news so they can meet the “demands of daily news production” (Comrie, 2002: 158).White and Hobsbawm (2007: 290) agree to this line of thinking by claiming that “while public relations practitioners are aware of the extent to which they work with and provide information to journalists, journalists are perhaps less willing to acknowledge the use made of public relations material”

Also, another perspective on understanding influence of corporate public relations on news coverage and news framing was by discerning through the claim by journalists that they hardly make use of corporate public relations-sourced information. According to Comrie (2002) "journalists are often quick to make a song and dance about the number of media releases which they throw straight in the bin because they contain puffery or blatant advertising. What they are not so quick to talk about are the media releases that are published often in verbatim form." Studies abound that track the movement of press release from the source, through to the press and their eventual publishing, often times published verbatim. To buttress this, Williams and Franklin (2008) found evidence for, during their study into the use of public relations and news agency copy by journalists, stating there is very little acknowledgment that it comes from public relations, even when materials are published in verbatim form. Shin and Cameron (2005: 320) put this lack of acknowledgement down to the fact that journalists strive "to maintain their autonomy in the news selection process" and that they may have a reluctance to admit that corporate public relations can and does influence the media agenda.

In relation to the above understanding of relationship between corporate public relations and the press, White & Hobsbawm (2007) point to the view that journalists have traditionally prided themselves as being morally superior to public relations practitioners because they believe they act in the interests of public good. To add to the understanding of this complex relationship, DeLorme & Fedler, (2003: 113) observe that to journalists "admitting their dependence would shatter cherished ideals. Journalists were proud of their ability to uncover stories, verify details, and expose sham. Thus they were unlikely to admit their dependence, lack of scepticism, failure to verify, and failure to expose every sham". Also, other scholars such as Broom and Ritchie (2000: 18) who observe that "relationships consist of the transactions that involve the exchange of resources between organisations and

the public, these being represented by patterns of interaction, transaction, exchange, and linkage between an organization and its public". Also, Kaur and Shaari (2006: 7) posit that "though journalists may not be satisfied with having to rely on public relations practitioners for information, they do use the information subsidies."

After conceptually and empirically reviewing various literature on the relationship between corporate public relations and the press, at a safe distance, it can be deducted that, It is only truism to say the press rely on the use of informed, credible sources in their production of news content, sources provide journalists with information materials including corporate public relations-generated information such as press releases, press conference, corporate reports and copies of speeches. Such news materials generated by corporate public relations practitioners have been found to directly or indirectly contribute to journalists' news production (Wilcox, Ault, Agee & Cameron, 2000).

A key gap that remains in Nigerian public relations inquiries is their inattention to considering how public relations and news media work together to shape public opinion. Carroll and McCombs (2003), for instance, contended that public salience of major corporations should rise when news coverage of companies and organized corporate communication efforts (primarily coming from public relations sources) are increased.The gap for this study to fill up is to empirically and qualitatively confirm or disapprove the trend highlighted by the literature from various places and countries on the level and pattern of influence that corporate public relations may be having on the two selected newspapers for this study.

2.10 Theoretical Framework

This study used two theories: Second Level Agenda Setting Theory and Political Economy Theory of the media. Agenda setting theory was propounded by Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw in the year 1972/73. The Agenda Setting Theory implies that

the mass media determine what issues the public consider important at any given point in time. According to McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, (1997: 21) "Agenda building emerged from political science as a -key concept and was first defined as the *process* by which various groups sought to have their interests and demands represented in the policy agenda and taken into consideration by public officials in setting public policy."

First level agenda setting theory asserts that whatever issues or objects are represented most become what the public pays the most attention to and adopts as important. The second level seeks to understand salience attached to issues. In essence, Second level agenda setting refers to object salience; attributes and importance attached to particular issue by the press. Salience is linked to framing in suggesting that, not only does media attention influence what people think, but it also affects how they think about objects based on the attributes the media emphasized. Also, the second level of Agenda building addresses the need to further explore how the media agenda is set and includes object and attribute salience (either positive or negative) because according to Fortunato, (2000: 484) "media attention doesn't just happen in a vacuum." Thus the second level agenda setting asks not about influencing the media's audience, rather it asks about the process of agenda formation known as agenda building. According to Shoemaker and Reese (1996: 16) "agenda building asks how or by what process the media is influenced. Where does the media's information come from?" Here, the understanding has gone beyond setting the public agenda by the press but about setting the media's agenda by the activities of external forces such as corporate organizations and other agents of societal cohesion. To this end, Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007: 12) are of the opinion that "frame building and agenda building refer to macroscopic mechanisms that deal with message construction rather than media effects. The activities of interest groups, policymakers, journalists, and other groups interested in shaping media agendas and frames can have an impact on both the volume and character of news messages about a particular

issue."The study of second level Agenda Setting Theory is focused on an analysis of the process of building media agenda and the factors impacting on it. The analysis of this process explains "the process of news selection and news production" (Brandenburg, 2002; Kiousis, Mitrook, Wu and Seltzer, 2007).

On the other hand, Political Economy theory of the media emanates from the works of classical scholars like Max, Engel and other neo-communists and socialist writers (Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso, 2008). The theory and its numerous extensions basically explain the economic and political power base that influences the production and distribution of media products. According to Taylor and Harris (2008: 68)

> It is important for the ruling class to affect people's consciousness by giving them certain ideas; in this way the wealthy, who benefit most from the social arrangements in a capitalist country maintain the status quo. According to Marx the ideas of a given age are those promulgated and popularized by the ruling class in its own interest. Generally speaking, then the ideas people have are the ideas that the ruling class wants them to have. The ruling class believes its own messages .This is because it has within itself a group of conceptualizing ideologists who make it their chief source of livelihood to develop and perfect the illusions of the class about itself. The ruling class according to this theory propagates an ideology that justifies its status and makes it difficult for ordinary people to recognize. This notion that the masses of people are being manipulated and exploited by the ruling class is one of the central arguments of modern Marxist cultural analysis. According to Marxist approach the mass media and popular culture are centrally important in the spread of false consciousness, in leading people to believe that 'whatever is, is right'

Here, the understanding is that the economic base of the media determines how the media works and relates with other institutions, particularly corporate organizations. The press is understood as a business venture that has the responsibility of churning out profit to its investors. And there are those whose business is to use the press as intermediary in reaching out to their publics in the process of projecting a synergy of positive image of their organizations and brands. Here, the corporate public relations try to use the press to project the best possible image of its client.

2.11 Justification for the use of the Theories.

The relevance of the second level agenda setting theory and the political economy theory of the media to this study was anchored on the understanding that the thesis was about unearthing what influence corporate public relations may or may not have on the reportorial responsibilities of the press. And the second level agenda setting theory examines the influence of external factors on news reported in the media. Further, the political economy theory of the media projects the media as a means of continual economic domination. As such, the tenets these two theories serve as the rationale through which data gathered from this study was analyzed, interpreted and findings were explained.

Notwithstanding, the two theories have some observed defects. For instance, Baran and Davis (2009: 212) observed that political economy theory "has little explanatory power at microscopic level… it is based on subjective analysis of finances." This, in the long run, means that, political economy theory of the media is still being subjected to the rigours of empirical tests in order to bring it out of its subjective criticism. Further, some of the observations about agenda setting theory include its much diversity which complicates finding any single approach. For instance agenda setting comes in different appellation such as first level agenda setting, second level agenda setting and inter-media agenda setting. To this end, Afonso, da Rosa and Procopio (2008: 24) observed that "in a contemporary view, the need to keep agenda setting theory itself updated reflects some theoretical limits on research procedures." Here too, one is apt to observe that for a theory to remain one, it needs to adapt itself to the changing scenarios that may come its way.

Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed Triangulation or mixed methods; Content Analysis and Key Informant Interview. Triangulation according to Wimmer and Dominick (2011: 49) "refers to the use of both qualitative methods and quantitative methods to fully understand the nature of a research problem." Further, Hussein (2009: 3) observes that "triangulation is more precise as it aims to reveals complementarities, convergence and dissonance among the findings." The essence of using these two methods in this study was for complementarity and corroboration of the two sets of data.

In understanding content analysis, this study used a definition given by Macnamara (2006: 2) as "media content analysis is a specialized sub-set of content analysis, a well-established research methodology." While Key Informant Interviews are in-depth interviews with people who have first-hand knowledge about the issue under investigation. It refers to getting information from an individual who is knowledgeable about the topic of interest. The Key Informant Interview was to add additional information toward understanding the quantitative data from the Content Analysis.

3.2 Study Variables

The independent variable of this research is the corporate public relations activities while the dependent variable is the result of influence (eg, corporate brands, news, features, news stories, anonymous quotes and pictures) it has on the duties of *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of this study are of three types. These are the journalists (journalists were chosen because they go out to scout for news) working in *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard*

newspapers who must have at least five years working experience, public relations practitioners who must also have at least five years working experience and the daily editions of the newspapers from 2010 to 2012. The journalists and corporate public relations practitioners were for key informant interview while the paper editions were for the content analysis. The two newspapers were chosen because of their national coverage even though *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers are based in Northern and Southern Nigeria respectively; both papers have a wide coverage and wide readership loyalty (Jibo, 2003).

3.4 Sampling Universe

The sampling universe for content analysis was a total of 780 (making a total of 1560). Daily editions of each of the paper were studied from January, 2010 to December, 2012. Also, since the researcher was using *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers for the analysis; the total issues were1562 editions from January, 2010 to December, 2012.

3.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The sample size of this study was of two types; sample for the content analysis and that of key informant interview. A sample size of a study could be 10% of the entire sample frame (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011). However, for the content analysis of this study, the researcher picked sample size of 20% (=312) to achieve more representativeness of the population under study. This falls within the ambit of (The Research Advisors, 2006) who advised that for a sampling frame of 1500, a sample size of 306 will give a confidence level of 95.0% at 0.05 margin of error.

This study employed use of multi-stage sampling techniques; for the content analysis, the study used purposive sampling at the level of selecting the years of publication of the two dailies, while systematic random sampling technique was used for selecting sampling size of the daily editions of the newspapers. According to Babbie (2010: 211), "in systematic sampling, every kth element in the total list is chosen (systematically) for inclusion in the

sample."Here, our ƙth or Nth element or sampling interval is 5th element from the randomly selected universe. And for the Key Informant Interviews, the researcher purposively selected 12 personalities, 4 each from *Daily Trust*, *Vanguard* newspapers and public relations personnel, each of whom must have spent at least five years in the job. For the key informant interview, the researcher used purposive sampling technique.

3.6 Instrumentation

The study employed two instruments to gather data which was used in answering research questions. The first instrument was Coding Sheet while the second was a set of carefully designed interview questions and digital recording sets.

3.7 Categories and Units of Analysis

The categories of analysis for this study are news stories, features, pictures, editorials, corporate brands, quotations and anonymous sources while the units of analysis are stories and visual elements within these categories. Each of these units was analysed based on whether they were positive, negative or were neutral about corporate organizations. Each of the units was measured as one and the summation of all units in a category was taken for statistical analysis. Further, each summation was delineated into positive, negative or neutral to the corporate organizations.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

According to Lombard, Snyder-Duch and Bracken (2002: 589), "intercoder reliability is the widely used term for the extent to which independent coders evaluate a characteristic of a message or artefact and reach the same conclusion." While Neuendorf (2002: 142) is of the view that "there is growing acknowledgement in the research literature that the establishment of intercoder reliability is essential, a necessary criterion for valid and useful research when human coding is employed." Thus, to achieve reliability, this study employed the use of percentage agreement between coders. According to Lombard, Snyder-Duch and Bracken

(2002: 590), "percentage agreement is the percentage of all coding decisions made by the pairs of coders on which coders agree." The formula for inter-coder reliability coefficient (ICRC) is:

$$CR= \frac{2M(100)}{N1+N2}\%$$

Where, M=Number of coding agreed by both coders.

N=Total number of coding decisions made by each coder.

Five 400 level students were selected and trained by the researcher. After the training sessions, each of the coder was independently given 6 daily editions of newspapers (3 each of *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers) to content analyse. Each coder made a total of 768 codes making a total of 3840 out of which there was an agreement on 3250 codes. Inter-coder reliability coefficient is 84.64, which meets the required standard of acceptance (Lombard et al, 2002).

3.9 Method of Data Presentation

Data gathered from the study was analysed and presented using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data was presented in percentage frequency distribution table and charts where necessary.

Chapter Four

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents results, interpretation and analysis. The results generated for this study are in two categories: data gathered from content analysis and that of key informant interview. Data analysis and interpretation from content analysis is empirically presented first then followed by data analysis gotten from key informant interview. This researcher employs the use of thematic textual analysis to analyse the key informant interviews conducted. Thematic content analysis approach to analyzing the key informant interviews was chosen by the researcher for some reasons. First, rather than dealing with numerical data which has already been taking care of at the level of analyzing content analysis, thematic content analysis of the interviews deal with meanings expressed through words and contained "non-standardized data requiring classification into categories" (Saunders *et al*., 2000: 381). Secondly, thematic analysis was chosen for its ability to assist with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of concepts, patterns and themes embedded within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In relation to the key informant interviews, thematic analysis provides a useful approach to identify and interpret recurring thoughts, experiences, feelings and meanings as a way to uncover and understand relationship and influence between corporate public relations and the press. The thematic analysis helped in corroborating numerical data gathered from content analysis towards answering the study research questions and in analysis of the statistical models used in testing this study's hypothesis. In relation to the above reasons for exploring thematic textual analysis, the researcher presents, in tabulated format, the various themes and their definitions from the interviews conducted with journalists as:

Interview Themes	Themes Definition
Relationship perceptions	Journalists' perception of their relationship with corporate public relations/activities.
Usefulness of corporate public relations materials	Journalists' understanding of usefulness or otherwise of corporate public relations/activities.
Reasons for usage	Journalists' reasons for using or not using corporate public relations sources and materials.
Percentage of usage	Level of usage of materials/sources that emanated from corporate public relations.
Pattern of usage	Journalists' pattern of usage of corporate public relations sources/materials i.e. edit before usage.
Expectations	What do journalists expect from corporate public relations materials, are the expectations met?

Also, below is a tabulated presentation of themes and their definitions from the interview conducted with corporate public relations personnel:

Interview Themes	Themes Definition
Relationship Perception	Personnel relationship with the press/journalists & how it is sustained.
Materials used	What types of materials do they send to the press.
Percentage/eventual usage by media	What percentage of their materials is eventually used by the press.
How and why.	How and why do the media use the materials.
Enticing the press	What & how they make the press/journalists to publish their materials.

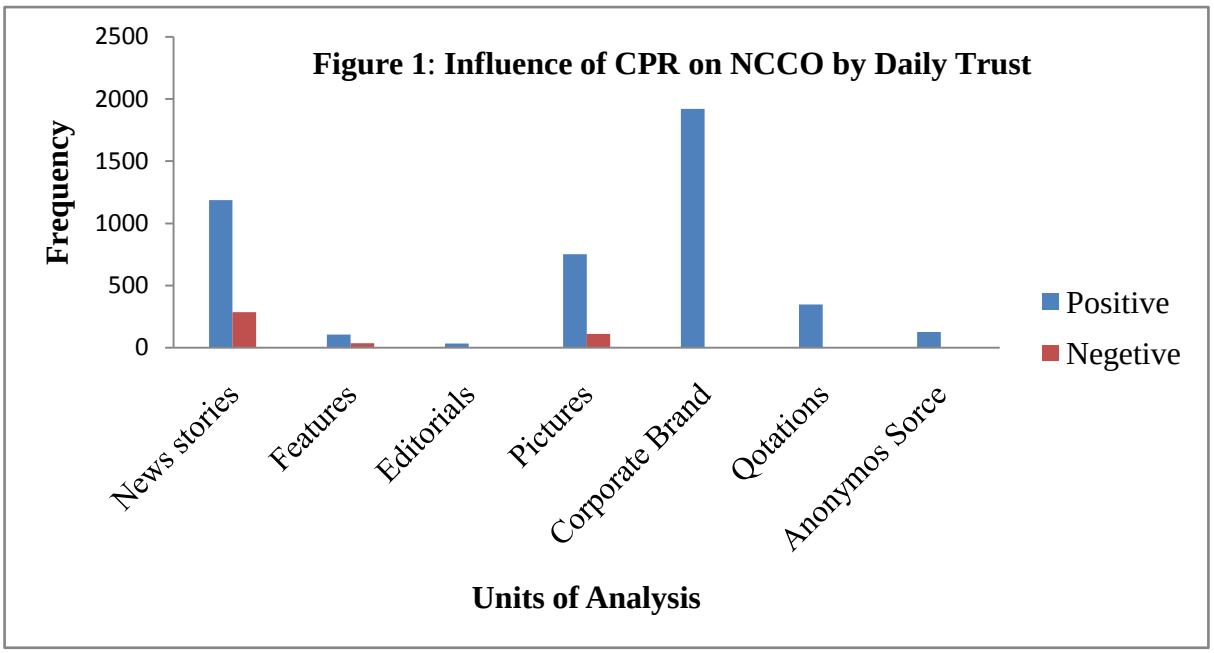
Each of the interviewee has been allotted identification code. For the journalists, the codes are **JOUR01** to **JOUR08** while to the corporate public relations personnel it is **CPRO01** to **CPRO04**.Also, Chi-squire test of analysis and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test analysis are used to statistically analysed data from content analysis while thematic data presentation is used to present, analyse and interpret data from key informant interview.

4.2 Data Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis

Assessment of the Influence of Corporate Public Relations on the News Coverage of Corporate Organisations by *Daily Trust newspapers*

The chi-square significance test analysis of the influence of corporate public relations (CPR) on News Coverage of Corporate Organizations (NCCO) by *Daily Trust* newspaper is presented in Table 1. In this research, CPR was measured in a quantitative manner based on seven categories namely news stories, features, editorials, pictures, corporate brands, quotations anonymous sources all appearing on first page, opinion edited page, back page, and others of *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers. Table 1 is contingency table where the row variable is represented by the elements of CPR and the column variable is represented by the observed influence of CPR on NCCO by *Daily Trust* newspaper which was dichotomized into positive and negative influences. Observed or empirical frequencies where compared to the expected also known as theoretical frequencies of the influence on NCCO given the elements under of CPR to assess whether the influence of CPR on NCCO was due to chance or whether it was actually significant.

Both graphical (Figure 1) and numerical (Table 1) analyses were done. From Figure 1 it can be readily observed that the estimated frequencies of positive influence of CPR on NCCO were greater than those of negative influence of CPR on NCCO. However, we cannot conclude that CPR had a significant influence on NCCO without resorting to a proper hypothesis testing process.



The analysis of the influence of CPR on NCCO was further assessed by means of numerical reasoning. The result of the analysis revealed a total of 4,510 positive frequencies out of 4,949 answers. This suggests a 91% positive influence against only 9% of negative impact of CPR on NCCO. The computed chi-square was 505.11 while its critical value was 16.81 at 1% level of significance. On the basis of the result, since the calculated chi-square was greater than the critical or tabulated value, the null hypothesis of no significant influence of CPR on NCCO was rejected. In other words, the influence of CPR on NCCO was significant at 1% level of probability. The result was further confirmed by assessing the p-value which was very low and less than 0.01. Thus, we can conclude that corporate public relation has a significant influence on news coverage of corporate organisations by *Daily Trust* newspaper. Moreover, the coefficient of contingence is 0.98, suggesting a high degree of relationship between CPR and NCCO. This result is consistent with the value of chi-square computed which was far greater than the tabulated one.

Table 1: Chi-square Significant Test analysis of the Influence of corporate public relations (CPR) on News Coverage of Corporate Organizations (NCCO) by *Daily Trust* newspaper

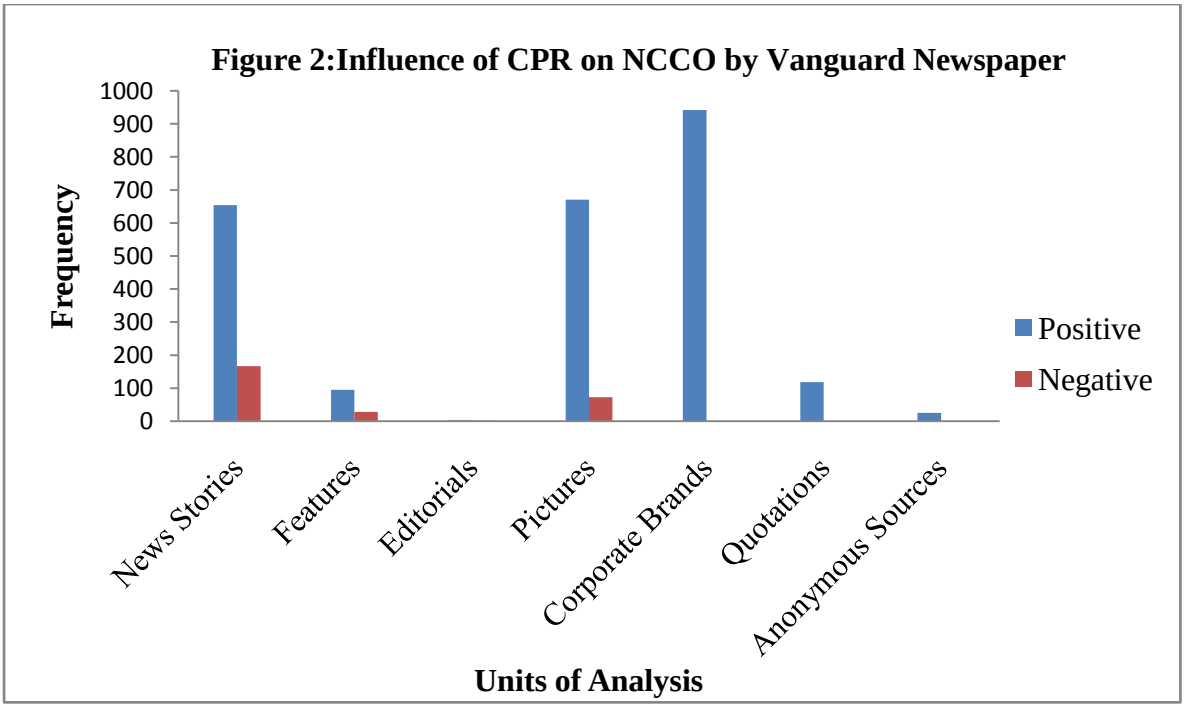
	NCCO by *Daily Trust* newspaper			
	Positive Influence	**Negative Influence**		
CPR	**Frequency**	**Frequency**	**Total**	**Statistics and Test**
News Stories	1187	284	1471	
Features	106	39	145	
Editorials	34	4	38	
Pictures	753	110	863	
Corporate Brands	1920	0	1920	
Quotations	384	2	386	
Anonymous Sources	126	0	126	
Total	**4510**	**439**	**4949**	
Coefficient of Contingency			**0.98**	
P-value			**0.00****	

DF = 6, level of sig.= 0.01, Chi-square calculated = 505.11, Chi-square critical = 16.81
Significant at 1% level

Assessment of the Influence of corporate public relations on the News Coverage of Corporate Organisations by *Vanguard newspapers*

The analysis of the influence of corporate public relations (CPR) on News Coverage of Corporate Organizations (NCCO) by *Vanguard* newspaper was done in two stages namely: graphical and numerical stages. During the graphical stage, positive influence of CPR was compared to its negative influence (Figure 2).

The outcome revealed that the positive influence (Blue bars on the bar chart) of CPR was greater than its negative influence (Red bars on the bar chart) on NCCO by *Vanguard* newspaper at every category of CPR. The result, thus suggested a likely influence of CPR on NCCO. However, the results should be taken cautiously since the difference observed between the positive and negative influence needs to be tested statistically.



The numerical analysis of the influence of CPR on NCCO by *Vanguard* news paper is presented in Table 3 below. This was done in order to further know whether the observed positive difference between positive and negative influences of CPR on NCCO by *Vanguard* newspaper was due to chance or whether it was actually significant. The total positive influence of CPR on NCCO by *Vanguard* newspaper as expressed by its frequency was found to be 1,566 (85.3%) against 270 (14.70%) for its negative influence. Pictures as a feature of CPR were found to have the highest positive influence with frequency of671 (36.55%) on NCCO by *Vanguard* newspaper followed by new stories with a frequency of 654 (35.62%). The smallest positive influence of CPR on NCCO by *Vanguard* newspaper was given by editorials with an associated frequency of 3 (0.16%). Considering the negative influences, although new stories had the second highest positive effect as a feature of CPR on NCCO, it was also found to have the most negative influence on NCCO by *Vanguard* newspaper. The overall influence of all the features of CPR on NCCO by *Vanguard* newspaper was then estimated into a statistical quantity called chi-square statistic. This value was found to be 68.57 while its expected valued obtained from the chi-square probability distribution was

11.07 at 1% level of significance. Since the calculated chi-square on the basis of these findings was greater than its theoretical value, the null hypothesis of no significant influence of CPR on NCCO by *Vanguard* newspaper was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. In order words, corporate public relations had a significant influence on news coverage of corporate organization by *Vanguard* newspaper at 1% level of probability as the exact likelihood (P-value) of observing the null hypothesis was found to be very small and thus, less than 0.01. The finding is robust as the coefficient of contingency was found to be very high. That is, the coefficient of contingency which was found to be 0.85 showing that 85% of variation in NCCO was related to CPR.

Relationship Perception

All the corporate public relations practitioners interviewed for this study claimed to have good and cordial relationship with the press and journalists. According to CPRO03, "we have very cordial relationship; we see them as partners in progress." Also, CPRO02 is of the opinion that "I have a very good relationship with the media; I have cordial relationship with them. Further, CPRO04 asserts that "we engage the media in a professional way and we always relate with them in good terms" and to CPRO01, "I will say we have good relationship… to the extent that anytime we have an occasion, we rely on them to come."

To understand cordial relationship between corporate public relations and the press/journalists, there is need to understand what each participant brings to the table and what the expectations of each are. The press/journalist is supposedly working for the good of the society while the corporate public relations personnel works for the good of his corporation. Both are professionals who have ethical considerations to adhere to. The journalists in in particular have to defend their journalistic ethos of maintaining plurality of news form and content. To this extent, Kaur and Shaari (2006: 10) observe that "the common denominator of the functions of the two professions is information – while the public

relations practitioners execute the publicity function by providing information to the media, the journalists seek out the public relations personnel for news material."

It is in the process of the journalist's seeking for information that the corporate public relations personnel establish and try to maintain a favourable relationship with the journalist. In maintaining this relationship, the corporate public relations practitioners, as shown in the above views, always try to exploit the relationship to their advantage, to "tell the truth persuasively" (Hobsbawm, 2001). The influence corporate public relations have on press/journalists (findings from this study) starts at the relationship level. Right from the onset, the relationship is skewed in favour of the corporate public relations personnel who have more economic and information power over the journalist. It was in this line of argument that McManus (2013: 231) asked some rhetorical questions, "Given the increasing power exercised by corporations, how might government increase corporate reporting requirements to allow journalists greater opportunities… if public relations subsidizes reporting on issues of interest to those who can afford such representation, might such efforts be taxed to generate press subsidies for societal interest?" This in essence, was to show how corporate public relations try to assert its influence on the press right from the relationship stage. As Howard (2004: 36) offers "the emphasis in a media relations program should be on the *relations* aspect – working to build long-term relations with the people who cover your organization."

Table 2: Chi-square Significant Test analysis of the Influence of corporate public relations (CPR) on News Coverage of Corporate Organizations (NCCO) by *Vanguard* newspaper

	NCCO by *Vanguard* Newspaper			
	Positive Influence	**Negative Influence**		
CPR	**Frequency**	**Frequency**	**Total**	**Statistics and Test**
News Stories	654	167	821	
Features	95	28	123	
Editorials	3	2	5	
Pictures	671	73	744	
Corporate Brands	118	0	118	
Quotations	25	0	25	
Anonymous Sources	25	0	25	
Total	**1566**	**270**	**1836**	
P-value				**0.00*** **
Coefficient of contingency			**0.85**	

DF= 6, level of sig.= 0.01, Calculated Chi-square= 68.57, Chi-square Critical= 16.81
Significant at 1% level.

Also, qualitative data from the key informant interviews tend to corroborate the above empirical analysis. Here, both interviewed corporate public relations personnel and journalist agreed that there is cordial relationship between the two professions, apart from some few instances of professional apathy. For instance, CPRO01 opine that "we have good relationship to the extent that any time we have an occasion; we rely on them to come and cover it." Also, JOUR03 is of the view that "most of the time the relationship is cordial," and to JOUR02, the relationship is "very excellent."

In relation to the above, it is worthy to note that trust and relationships are clearly key factors in establishing favourable attitudes. If newspaper journalists do not believe they have a relationship with corporate public relations personnel, they are less likely to trust that practitioner. Without it, relationships will likely be more difficult and the public relations practitioner may not be as successful at influencing the work of the journalist. To this line of

thought, Franklin *et al;* (2008: 5) in their report on The Quality and Independence of British Journalism argue that "much of current journalism is PR in the sense that stories, ideas, features and interviews are either suggested, or in the extreme actually written by PR people."

Therefore, this study asserts that influence of corporate public relations on the workings of the press starts at the point of maintaining a cordial relationship with the journalists. What more, with the expansion of the media space and the relative decline in reporting resources in mainstream media, has tipped the balance of influence even more favourably towards corporate public relations.

Assessment of the Influence of Corporate Public Relations Communication on the Level of Importance Attributed to Corporate Organisations Stories by *Daily Trust* newspaper

The analysis of the influence of corporate public relations (CPRC) on the Level of Importance Attributed to Corporate Organisations Stories (LIACOS) by *Daily Trust* newspaper is presented in Figure 3 and in Table 3. The Level of Importance Attributed to Corporate Organisations Stories by *Daily Trust* newspaper was categorized into three levels: low, medium and high. From the graphic, it can be readily observed that the low level of influence of CPRC was the most observed followed by the high level and finally the medium. However, nothing can be said based on this analysis concerning the significant influence of CPRC on LIACOS by *Daily Trust* newspaper.

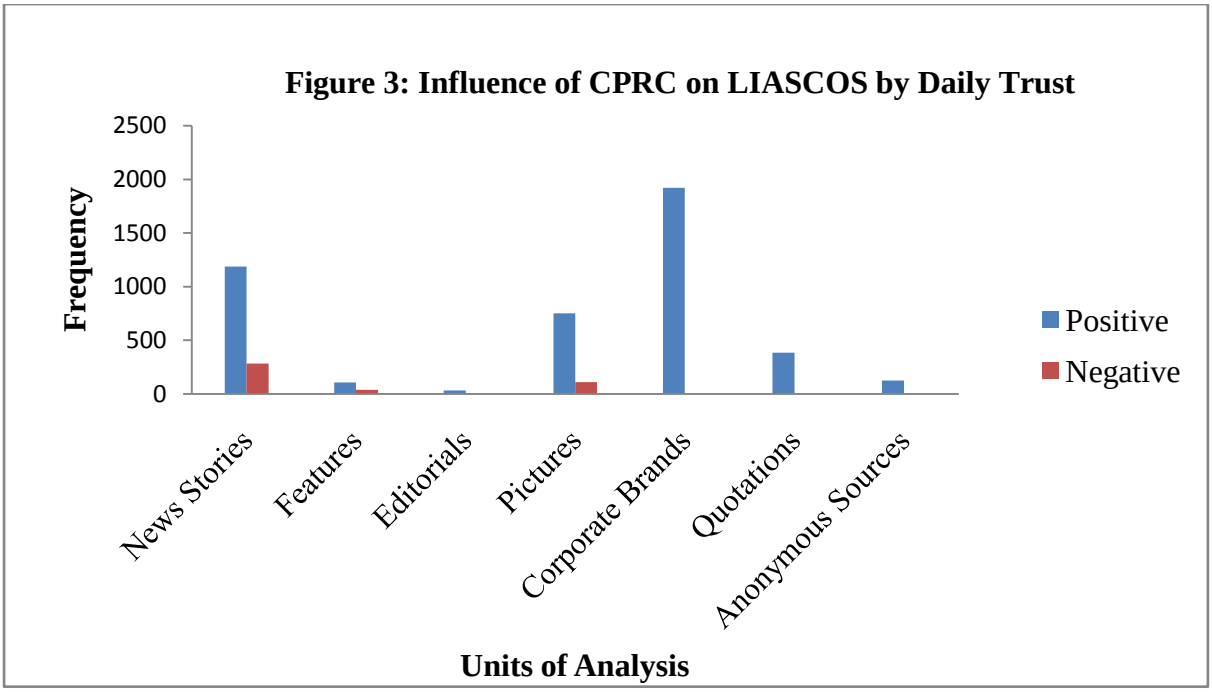


Table 4 below presents the numerical analysis of the influence of CPRC on LIACOS by *Daily Trust* newspaper. As suspected from the graphical analysis, out of a total frequency of 5,228, 4,510 (86.30%) were in favour of low level of importance followed by high level with a frequency of 439 (8.40%) and finally the medium level with an estimated frequency of 279 (5.34%). Seven features of CPRC were considered namely: news stories, features, editorials, pictures, corporate brands, quotations and anonymous sources. Table 4 indicates that, under low importance, corporate brands had the highest frequency followed by news stories. The smallest frequency was however observed across editorials with an estimated frequency of 34 (0.65%). Under the medium level of importance attributed to corporate organizations by *Daily Trust* newspaper, news stories had the highest frequency at 196 (3.75%) followed by pictures 42 (0.80%). The smallest influence of CPRC on this category was given by quotations and anonymous sources as the two features had zero frequency. Under the high level of importance, the highest influence of CPRC came from news stories with an observed frequency of 284 out of a total of 439 for all the categories, news stories itself being included.

The second highest source of influence came from pictures with an estimated frequency of 110. The smallest influence on this category was provided anonymous sources as its frequency was estimated to be 0. In order words, anonymous sources did not have any influence on LIACOS by *Daily Trust* newspaper across the high level category.

The chi-square statistic estimate of the influence of CPRC on LIACOS by *Daily Trust* newspaper was 776.67 while its tabulated value was only 26.22. On the basis of this result, we can affirm that the influence of CPRC on LIACOS was significant at 1% level of probability as the calculated chi-square was greater than the tabulated one. Moreover, the p-value was very small and thus, less than 0.01. The coefficient of contingency was equally estimated and its value was 0.99 suggesting a very high degree of correlation between CPRC and LIACOS by *Daily Trust* newspaper.

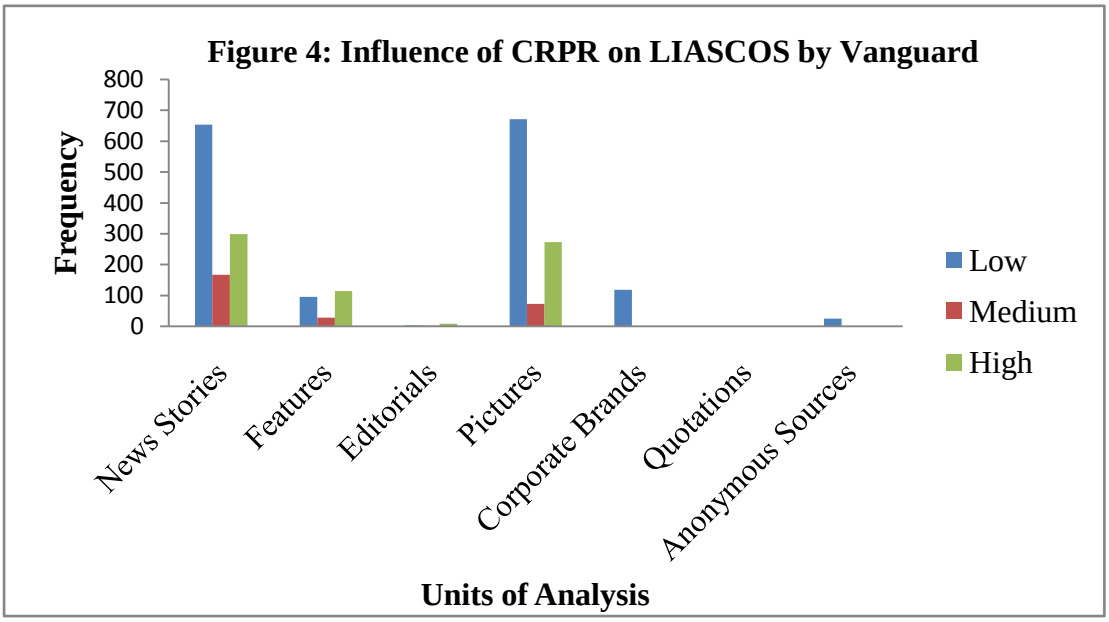
Table 3: Chi-square Significance Test Analysis of the Influence of Corporate Public Relations Communication (CPRC) on the Level of Importance Attributed to Corporate Organizations Stories (LIACOS) by *Daily Trust* newspaper

	LIACOS by *Daily Trust Newspaper*				
CPRM	**Low Importance Frequency**	**Medium Importance Frequency**	**High Importance Frequency**	**Total**	**Stat. and Test**
News Stories	1187	196	284	1667	
Features	106	25	39	170	
Editorials	34	3	4	41	
Pictures	753	42	110	905	
Corporate Brands	1920	13	0	1933	
Quotations	384	0	2	386	
Anonymous Sources	126	0	0	126	
Total	**4510**	**279**	**439**	**5228**	
P-value					**0.00*** **
Coefficient of Contingency					**0.99**

DF= 12, level of sig.= 0.01, Calculated Chi-square= '
square Critical= 26.22

Assessment of the Influence of Corporate Public Relations Communication on the Level of Importance Attributed to Corporate Organisations Stories by *Vanguard* newspaper

The influence of corporate public relations on the Level of Importance attributed to Corporate Organisations Stories by *Vanguard* newspaper is presented in both Figure 4 and Table 5. The low level of importance (Blue bars) was highest across the majority of features of CPRC followed by the high level of importance category (Grey bars). This is especially true among news stories, features, editorials and pictures according to Figure4.



A numerical look of these differences is provided in Table 5. Under the low importance category, pictures had the highest frequency followed by news stories. The smallest frequency in this category is observed across quotations even though editorials looked very low as well. Under the medium importance category, news stories had the highest frequency followed by pictures. Three features of CPRC had no relationship with the category as their observed frequency was 0. In the third category namely: high importance, the major source of influence of CPRC on LIACOS by *Vanguard* newspaper came from news stories with a frequency of 299 followed by pictures with a frequency of 273. The only feature of CPRC that did not have an influence on this category is anonymous sources as its frequency was estimated to be 0. The overall analysis of the influence of CPRC on LIACOS by

Vanguard newspaper on the basis of these frequency values reveal that CPRC had its highest influence on the low importance category with an estimated total frequency of 1,566 followed by the high importance (694) category and finally the medium (270).

The chi-square statistic estimate was 188.2 while its theoretical one was 26.22. These findings show that the null hypothesis of no significant influence of CPRC on LIACOS by *Vanguard newspaper* was rejected and the alternative accepted. In order words, corporate public relation communication had a significant influence on the level of importance attributed to corporate organisations stories by *Vanguard* newspaper at 1% level of probability. In effect, the p-value was less than 0.01, confirming therefore the previous conclusion. The coefficient of contingency was equally estimated to evaluate the degree of association. It was revealed to be 0.96. The value shows that the relationship between CPRC and LIACOS by *Vanguard* newspaper was very high.

Table 4: Chi-square Significant Test Analysis of the Influence of Corporate Public Relation Communication (CPRC) on the Level of Importance Attributed to Corporate Organizations Stories (LIACOS) by *Vanguard* newspaper

	LIACOS by *Vanguard Newspaper*				
CPR	**Low Importance Frequency**	**Medium Importance Frequency**	**High Importance Frequency**	**Total**	**Stat. and Test**
News Stories	654	167	299	1120	
Features	95	28	114	237	
Editorials	3	2	8	13	
Pictures	671	73	273	1,017	
Corporate Brands	118	0	0	118	
Quotations	0	0	0	0	
Anonymous Sources	25	0	0	25	
Total	**1566**	**270**	**694**	**2530**	
P-value					**0.00*** **
Coefficient of Contingency					**0.96**

DF= 12, level of sig.= 0.01, calculated chi-square= 188.2, chi-square critical= 26.22
Significant at 1% level of probability.

Here too, thematic analyses of the interviews corroborate the quantitative data from the content analysis. All the 8 journalists interviewed for this study agreed, with varying differences on the usefulness of corporate public relations materials. For instance, JOUR05 is of the believe that "PR materials give me an angle" and to JOUR01 corporate public relations materials 'can serve as basis for scoop" while to JOUR02, his relationship with corporate public relations personnel "might give you privilege information." And to JOUR03, corporate public relations materials "are very informative, because it gives the journalist information about certain happenings that need clarification." To cap it all, JOUR04 is of the believe that corporate public relations materials "are helpful, because they may lead one to do an investigative report… we use them always." To buttress this finding, DeLorme and Fedler (2003: 101) point out that "nature of relationship between journalists and PR practitioners as evolving necessary dimensions of both cooperation and conflict. While the struggle for control over the production of news may create political conflict between the two groups, they are interdependent economically and must negotiate and compromise in order to exchange resources and accomplish their goals."

To bring out the salience in the context of relationship between corporate public relations personnel and journalists, is to understand where influence lay between the two. To this extent, a recurring discussion in the context of corporate public relations and press is where the dependencies lie. The relationship has often been described as mutually dependent yet the suggestion that corporate public relations people may be held responsible for shaping news content in the national and local news media is increasingly suggested by journalists, academics and public relations professionals (Hobsbawm, 2010).

Reasons for Usage

This theme is purposely drawn in other to understand why journalists make use of corporate public relations materials in their journalistic activities. All the journalists

interviewed adduced various reasons as to why they make use of corporate public relations materials. JOUR08 asserts that "you know…these materials help me to beat dateline, and at times, as a journalist, you don't have enough resources and these materials come handy." JOUR03 adduce that "as long as they are of good news value, they get used." Also, JOUR02 observe that "what I look for in the press release is what is contained inside may be of national interest, something that affects Nigerians in general." Further, JOUR01 is of the view that 'there is a kind of a lobby… if necessary, you need each other and you have to use materials they supply to you." Indeed, JOUR04 caps it as "most press releases now have become better, because the shorter the better, economy of words is important.

From the above reasons given by the interviewed journalists, it is clear that all of them make use of corporate public relations materials, hence the stance that corporate public relations has not only influence on the works of these journalists but also tend to ascribe values on how they cover corporate organizations, is valid. This line of thought is also buttressed by the stance of Matthews (2013: 242) that, "Interrelating financial, organizational and technological factors have spurred considerable changes in the professional practices of journalism. They include declining sales and advertising revenues, the emergence of new multi-media and digital technologies and a blurring of the boundaries between promotional communication and genuine news reporting."

Percentage of Usage

To this theme, the interviewed journalists could not be definitive about the percentage of corporate public relations materials they eventually make use of in their journalistic activities. All of them agreed that they make use of many corporate public relations materials they receive. For instance, JOUR01 opine that "sometimes it (corporate public relations materials) makes you lazy as you just get the pages all over and put them… that is the danger because you are in a hurry to meet dateline… you just put them on the paper." Also, JOUR04

puts it as “it is all about dateline… we receive a lot via e-mail but I think even the news editor cannot tell you the number, because we receive them, we receive a lot… we can receive up to 500 or even 1000 press releases in a week… we accept press releases freely, but we have to make sure it is worth it.” While to JOUR03, it depends on the editorial judgment of the house, almost all press releases go through this vetting system, as long as they are of good news value, they get used.” This scenario of corporate public relations having such powers over journalists is not only about journalists in the two newspapers selected for this study. Moloney, Jackson and McQueen (2013: 262) sum it up as “the great Niagara of PR material now descending on newsrooms, and the changes in the working practices of journalists have led to PR material appearing in a disturbingly high proportion of important news stories. Perhaps, unsurprisingly, given the pressures and time constraints news gatherers must contend with, resistance amongst journalists to this increasing colonisation of news by a well-resourced public relations industry is difficult.”

Enticing the Press

This subtheme is drawn in order to understand how corporate public relations personnel convince journalists to publish their PR copy. CPRO02 insist that “I promise them that if my stories are published, I will do something for them… if they come to greet me, from that greeting something must come out of it. At least, I will have to say ‘ga kudin mota’ (to pay his transport fare).” While CPRO03 was a little defensive, according to him “ehn, ehn I wouldn’t want to use the word entice, we normally appreciate them, and there are various ways of appreciating them. Let’s just leave it there; we appreciate them in various ways. Also, CPRO01 puts it this way, “I don’t find it difficult to use the media because of my good relationship with the journalists. Anytime we have an event and they come to cover it, the entertainment and how I receive them aid our relationship.”

These perspectives given by the various corporate public relations personnel above tally with the perception of Kaur and Shaari (2006: 3) who observe that "central to the journalists-public relations relationship is the issue of access to information; while it is readily accepted that the media are important providers of information, it is the sources (that is, the public relations practitioners acting on behalf of their organisations) that decide what information about the organization gets transmitted to the relevant public."

Analysis of the difference between Corporate News covered by *Daily Trust* and other new stories

Table 5 presents the output of the analysis of the difference between corporate news and other news stories covered by *Daily Trust* newspaper. A Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test analysis was conducted in order to affirm whether or not corporate stories covered by *Daily Trust* newspaper were greater than other news stories covered by *Daily Trust* newspaper. The result showed that 3, 843 (66.67%) corporate stories were covered by *Daily Trust* newspaper against 1, 917 (33.3%) for other news stories making a difference of 1, 926 stories. These values were obtained after considering a number of corporate news' elements such as News Stories, Features, Editorials, Pictures, Corporate Brands, Quotations and Anonymous Sources. The average corporate news covered by Daily Trust newspaper under these elements was 1,770.29 with a standard error of 1,228.01 against an average value of 746.86 with a standard error of 285.85 for other new stories, therefore making a difference of 1,023.43 stories with a standard error of 942.17. The variation in the corporate news covered by *Daily Trust* newspaper was found to be significantly greater than that of other new stories at 1% level of probability. This was confirmed since the p-value of 0.003 of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank-statistic (0.12) is less than 0.01. The difference in variation across the corporate news covered was accounted for while comparing the mean coverage of corporate news and other new stories covered by *Daily Trust* newspaper. Using a Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test with

unequal variance, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between corporate news and other new stories covered by *Daily Trust* was not accepted. In order words, other new stories were not covered more than corporate stories by *Daily Trust* newspaper in the course of the period of study. Thus, we can conclude that *Daily Trust* newspaper do not cover other type of new stories more than corporate news.

Table 5: Wilcoxon Signed-Ranktest of the difference between Corporate News and Other News covered by *Daily Trust* newspaper

	Newspaper			
	Corporate News	Other News		
Corporate news	Frequency	Frequency	Difference	P-value
News Stories	875	153	722	
Features	569	172	397	
Editorials	83	51	32	
Pictures	289	1029	-740	
Corporate Brands	1933	0	1933	
Quotations	30	386	-356	
Anonymous Sources	68	126	-58	
Total	**3847**	**1917**		
Hypothesis Test				
Wilcoxon Signed-Rank				.012
** Significance level				.05

Analysis of the difference between Corporate News and other new stories covered by *Vanguard* newspaper

Table 6 presents the output of the analysis of the difference between corporate news and other news stories covered by *Vanguard* newspaper during the period of study. A Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test analysis was conducted in other to attest whether or not corporate stories covered by *Vanguard* newspaper were greater than other new stories. The result showed that 7, 731 (75.55%) corporate news stories were covered against 2, 502 (24.5%)other news storiesby *Vanguard* newspaper making a difference of 5,229. These values were obtained after considering a number of elements such as News Stories, Features, Editorials, Pictures, Corporate Brands, Quotations and Anonymous Sources. The average corporate news stories covered by *Vanguard* newspaper under these elements was 969.86with

a standard error of 439.79 against a mean value of 492 with a standard error of 188.39for other news stories, therefore making a difference of 477.86 with a standard error of 251.40. The variation in the corporate news was found to be significantly different than that that of other new stories covered by *Vanguard* newspaper at 5% level of probability. This was confirmed since the p-value of 0.35 of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank (.018) is greater than 0.05 the null hypothesis of no significant difference between corporate news and other new stories covered by *Vanguard* news paper was not accepted. In order words, *Vanguard* newspaper did cover corporate new stories more than other news stories in the course of the study period. Thus, we can say that *Vanguard* newspaper does cover corporate news stories more than other type of new stories.

Table 6: Wilcoxon-Signed-Rank test of the difference between Corporate News Stories and Other News Stories covered by *Vanguard Newspaper*

	Newspaper			
	Corporate News	Other News		
Corporate News	**Frequency**	**Frequency**	**Difference**	**P-value**
News Stories	2738	1092	1646	
Features	503	237	266	
Editorials	75	13	62	
Pictures	2514	1017	1497	
Corporate Brands	942	0	942	
Quotations	773	118	655	
Anonymous Sources	186	25	161	
Total	**7731**	**2502**		
Hypothesis Test				
Wilcoxon-Signed Rank				.018
** Significance level				.05

Expectations

By expectations as a sub theme, this study wants to find out what journalists expect from corporate public relations materials and to know if such expectations have been met by the activities of corporate public relations. This subtheme is aimed at correlating the two sets of empirical and qualitative data. JOUR04, when asked about what qualifies corporate public

relations materials to be news worthy materials, he opined thus, “the language is becoming better because most press releases are now becoming better… we use public relations materials as literarily that has to do with description of whatsoever… let’s be frank, you have to have what is called acquaintance, language of PR is getting better, with pictures and things like that, you don’t even need to call the PR person, everything is there, pictures with caption, it comes with bi-line.” Also, JOUR08 has it as “here you are rushing to beat dateline and you fall back on a PR copy that has all that you need for your story, the backgrounder, the visuals and even link to videos… you just have to help yourself.” Further, JOUR01 posits that “there is a kind of lobby, it is necessary… you need each other and sometimes you are suspicious of each other… I think it is for the basic information to be accurate and those are the type of PR I will use.” JOUR05 states that “after receiving any PR material that I decided to use, I call the PRO to have a different angle other than the one on the PR material.” In this line of reasoning, JOUR03 insist “they (public relations) send it over and journalists generate news out of it.” Also, JOUR02 opines that “what I look for in the press release is what is contained inside may be of national interest, something that affects Nigerians in general.”

Materials Used

Here, in trying to corroborate findings from data obtained from content analysis, the study try to understand what type of corporate public relations material are mostly used by the personnel and why. To CPRO04, “we use all PR materials but we mostly make use of press releases and personal calls.” And to CPRO02, “I extract promise from them.” While CPRO03 explain it this way, “we call to remind them about stories we have sent.” Here, the corporate public relations personnel indicate the use of press releases and personal calls to remind the journalists of a kind of ‘agreement’ they have entered with them. This in itself, is kind of gimmick played on the journalists, to show to them that they have ethical consideration to fulfill by publishing stories from the PR copies they receive. In order words,

the corporate public relations personnel do not allow the journalist to dominate in the relationship and in the eventual use of PR materials.

Percentage/Eventual Usage by the Press

Here, the essence is to corroborate findings on eventual use of materials by the journalists that are corporately sourced. To CPRO03, "50% of my press releases are eventually published… sometimes they carry it verbatim, I have seen many, many papers that if I send, they will carry it verbatim, sometimes they will just reduce the paragraphs based on availability of space." To CPRO02, she asserts that "I have to use some tricks… all my stories eventually get published." Here, CPRO01 was even specific, "if I send like 3, they will use like 2, there has never been a time they use only one, even if it is 5, they will use 3 and may be keep the remaining 2 for further use." In fact, CPRO04 was even categorical, "there was never a time my material was not published."

When one reads the above instances, one is bound to ask whether corporate public relations personnel are becoming the reporters' reporter. Indeed, Jukes (2013: 2) solemnly observe this scenario as "it is difficult to escape the conclusion that modern journalism is thus facing an unprecedented set of challenges, a collapse in public confidence, a decline in original news gathering potentially weakening its watchdog role, a decidedly uncertain financial future and an at best ambiguous relationship with an increasingly influential army."

The discerning line that cuts through all these responses is that of an expectation being met, to an extent. This suffices corporate public relations by aligning their activities to satisfy some needs of the press journalists in the two media houses, do have some level of influence over the work of the journalists. This stance is further corroborated by the assumption of Davies (2008:59) who observe that "Churnalism is where press releases, agency stories and other forms of pre-packaged material are 'churned out' by journalists who are no longer gathering news but are reduced instead to passive processors of whatever

material comes their way, churning out stories, whether real events or PR artifice, important or trivial, true or false."

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings of this study is presented through research questions earlier asked in chapter one of the study.

RQ 1: Do corporate public relations influence news coverage of corporate organisations by *Daily Trust* and the *Vanguard* newspapers?

In answering research question one, the researcher falls back to data from both the empirical and qualitative analysis. Specifically, from figure 1, it was observed that the positive influence of corporate public relations on news coverage of corporate organizations by *Daily Trust* newspaper was greater than negative ones for the time frame of this study.

Also, data gleaned from Figure 2 indicated that corporate public relations had more positive observations relating to its influences on coverage of corporate organizations by *Vanguard* newspaper. Further, numerical analysis of units of analysis from *Vanguard* newspaper indicate that out of a total of 1, 836 observable frequencies, 1, 566 were favourable to corporate organizations compared to only 270 observable negative frequencies. In relation to this, all observable features of corporate public relations from *Vanguard* newspaper were estimated into chi-square statistics. The value was found to be 68.07 while the expected value 11.07 at 1% level of significance: this meant that the calculated chi-square value was greater than theoretical value. Also, coefficient of contingency was very high at 0.85 showing that 85% of news coverage of corporate organizations was as a result of the activities of corporate public relations. In other words, the answer to the research question one, based on data gotten from this study is in the affirmative. That is, yes corporate public relations do have positive influence on the way *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers cover corporate organizations.

In relation to the above statistical findings relating to research question one, findings from the interviews conducted with both journalists and corporate public relations personnel were in corroboration with each other. From the interviews, it was understood that corporate public relations personnel tend to cultivate a cordial relationship with the press and journalists in order to some leverage over how the press and or journalists cover their organizations. One of the corporate public relations personnel (CPRO03) observed that "we have cordial relationship; we see them as partners in progress… we normally appreciate them; there are various ways of appreciating them." In the same vein, CPRO02 opine that "I have to use some tricks to get my stories published. All my stories eventually get published." To the journalists themselves, JOUR04 agreed to this line of accepting corporate public relations-generated information by asserting that "they are helpful, they may lead one to do an investigative report… we use them always, we go through them and they give us scope on things to do… we accept press releases." JOUR01 also has this line of perception when he opined that "they can serve as basis for scoop, they are useful as materials for you to use." In this aspect, JOUR03 was even emphatic when he posited that corporate public relations "materials are very informative, because they give journalists information about certain happenings or events that need clarification." Another emphatic acceptance of the influence of corporate public relations on the activities of journalists came from JOUR02 when agreed that "yes the relationship helps, because you accept their press releases, they might give you privileged information. If you want to get something, you can call them and they will give you the help you need."

Indeed, available literature corroborates the answer to this research question. For instance, Kaur and Shaari (2006: 7) observed that "when there is consumption of an organization's message by the media (and it becomes part of the media's agenda and content), the organization stands a chance of influencing the public agenda." To corroborate

this stance, Matthews (2013: 246) was of the opinion that "using a single source, one that seeks to present a positive image of an organization, obscures the boundaries between promotion and truth-seeking and may weaken journalism's authority to provide objective and balanced accounts of issues and events." Other scholars who agree to this understanding are Zoch and Supa (2014: 4) when they insisted that "studies that examine the relationship between journalists and public relations practitioners have found that the primary basis of that relationship is the perceived credibility of the practitioner as a source."

RQ 2: Is there any significant relationship between corporate public relations communication and importance attributed to corporate organization stories by *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers?

As with research question 1, here too data from statistical analysis indicate that there was significant relationship between corporate public relations communication and importance attributed to corporate organizations by both *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers. When subjected to statistical analysis, corporate public relations was shown to have a significant influence on the level of importance attributed to corporate organizations by *Vanguard* newspaper.

To buttress the above findings, thematic analysis of key informant interviews highlights the following: JOUR08 averred that "you know… these materials help me to beat dateline and a times as a journalist, you don't have enough resources and these materials come handy." Also, JOUR04 opine that, "most press releases now have become better" while JOUR01 agreed thus, "sometimes it makes you lazy as you just get the pages all over and put them." On the perspective, CPRO02 on how the press publish her stories averred that "most of the time it is published the way I send them because I give them instruction not to temper with my stories and most of the times they bring it out the way I want it because of the cordial relationship we have… some of them (journalists) will even go to other papers to beg them publish my stories because they want to fulfil their promise to me." Also CPRO01

agreed to this when he relates that "I think our relationship is like that of a symbiotic relationship, they gain from me and I gain from them."

In relation to the above findings concerning research question 2, the answer is that, based on the findings of this study, corporate public relations do have significant influence on the level of importance attached to corporate organizations by both *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers. In relation to this finding, McCombs (2004: 104) explains that agenda-building is important because "control of the media agenda implies significant influence on the public agenda". Thus, the opportunity to influence the media agenda is the primary reason for the importance of corporate public relations. Also, Wilson and Supa (2013: 3) confer to this understanding when they argued that "agenda-setting deals with the media's impact on the public. Practitioners use information subsidies to aid in setting the media agenda, leading to the process of agenda-building" and that pre-packaged news copy derived from corporate public relations sources will be more likely to feature prominently in news reports (Lewis, Williams and Franklin, 2008).

RQ 3: Do *Daily Trust* and the *Vanguard* Newspapers cover corporate news stories more than other type of new stories?

Data generated from table 5 indicate that for the period of this study, observable frequencies about this study from *Daily Trust* newspaper stand at a total of 5, 764. Out of this computation, observable frequencies on corporate organizations stand at 3, 843 representing 66. 67% while other news' observable frequencies stand at 1, 917 representing 33.3%. That is, *Daily Trust* did covered corporate news more than other news stories during the period of this study.

Furthermore, data from table 6 indicate that, during the period of this study, *Vanguard* newspaper had observable frequencies of 10, 233 out which 7, 731 representing 75.54% had to do with corporate news stories while 2, 502 observable frequencies representing 24.45%

had to do with other news stories making a difference of 5, 229 frequencies. This therefore means, during the period of this study, *Vanguard* newspaper covered corporate news stories more than other type of news stories.

In relation to the discussion of data from tables 5 and 6, this study can, based on the data gathered, answer that, yes both *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers, during the period of this study, covered more corporate stories than any other news stories. This suffices that both papers portray corporate organizations in positive attributes. In examining influences on news content, this study has demonstrated that corporate public relations activities are crucial to building the media agenda (Williams, 2004). In essence, corporate public relations practitioners contribute to the agenda-building process by providing information subsidies to journalists via news releases, media advisories, press conferences, interviews, corporate brands, features, news, and maintaining of cordial relationship between corporate organizations and the press/journalists.

This study was aimed at understanding the influence of corporate public relations on the coverage of corporate organizations by *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers. The aim was informed on the premise of understanding what goes on to become news item and how the source of that news item can influence it is eventually covered by the press. This study established that sources, particularly trained ones like corporate public relations personnel can and do influence the way press as an institution works. Also, this study establishes that not all that goes into the media are subjected to the ethical considerations of objectivity, fairness, truthfulness and equal opportunity to all. This therefore calls to question the moral pedestal upon which the press claim to have on check mating other institutions. In other words, this study establishes the fact that the two dailies rely more on news releases and subsidized information from corporate organizations because the press will not properly scrutinize and expose such organizations if they are found wanting in one way or the other.

All these empirical and qualitative data findings tally with the work of Lewis, Williams and Franklin (2008) in which they empirically estimated that more than 80% of news stories published by British 'top end' news outlets were from direct press releases and indirect news sources. Also, a study by Wareham (2009) found out that most of the stories carried by the Japanese newspapers about the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster, largely relied on the activities of corporate public relations. Indeed, Wilson and Supa (2013: 4) categorically opine that "journalists use public relations-supplied information subsidies today more than ever before." And in this line of thought, Shin and Cameron (2003:242) observe that corporate public relations "practitioners have the potential to serve as the most influential sources for mass media news by supplying information subsidies to journalists." To this end, this study can be said to be in the global trend of trying to explore the relationship and likely influence that corporate public relations have the reportorial activities of newspapers.

Further, the findings of this study fall within the caprices of the Political Economy Theory of the press and the Second Level Agenda Setting Theory. The political economy theory of the press explains how economic interests determine the reportorial activities of the press. In an interview conducted by Robert W. McChesney accessed from http://www.chomsky.info/onchomsky/198901--.html Edward S. Herman observed as follows:

> The third filter is that of sourcing, where the mass media are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest. The media rely heavily upon news provided them by corporate and government sources, which have themselves developed enormous bureaucracies to provide this material to the media. They have developed great expertise at "managing" the media. In effect, these bureaucracies subsidize the media and the media must be careful not to antagonize such an important supplier. Furthermore, these corporate and government sources are instantly credible by accepted journalistic practices. Anti-elite sources, on the other hand, are regarded with utmost suspicion and have tremendous difficulty passing successfully through this filter. Herman and Chomsky's fourth filter is the development of right-wing corporate "flak" producers such as Accuracy in Media to harass the mass media and to put pressure upon them to follow the corporate agenda.

In their chapter contribution, Moloney, Jackson and McQueen (2013: 267) observe that, “press were important contacts: well worth dining, winning and winning over. They reached important audiences company bosses wanted to influence.” Also, the second level agenda setting theory in its traditional conceptualization and research has focused on the transfer of issue salience from one agenda to another. However, more contemporary scholarship has suggested that the second level agenda-setting theory could not only be applied to public issues, but also to products, corporate images, and other ‘objects’ in the news (McCombs and Reynolds, 2002).

As earlier indicated in this study (chapter two), two theories were used as theoretical framework for this study. The theories were second level agenda setting and political economy theory of the media. The two theories explained how other societal institutions, particularly politico-economic institutions tend to exert influence on the way the press/journalists conduct their journalistic duties. Thus, the findings of this study are in line with the postulations of these identified theories. Here, corporate public relations, seen as having the mandate to portray, in positive image, its parent corporate organizations. And according to findings of this study, to a larger extent, corporate public relations has succeeded in influencing not only the coverage given to corporate organizations but also the way the coverage is being assigned values and attributes. Thus, the theoretical implication of this study is that of corroborating the principles of the two theories.

Chapter Five

Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents summary of each chapter, a detailed conclusion of the study and proffer recommendations based on the outcome of the study.

5.2 Summary of Chapters

Chapter one introduced the research work with a background to the study. The background linked the concepts of the study, gave an overview of the two newspapers used for this study and established the problem statement upon which this research pedestal stood. That, if the activities of corporate public relations can influence the reportorial and coverage activities of the press, then the claim of objectivity and being a neutral umpire by the press will be called to question. Further, the study's significance lay in its attempt at bridging the gap of understanding where influence lay in the inter-media relationship between corporate public relations and the press. The chapter also itemised the aim and objectives and research questions of the study, justification for the study and capped it with scope of the study.

Also, chapter two was divided into two: conceptual and empirical reviews. The conceptual review analysed the concepts of the study through available literature to establish the global trend of studies relating to the topic of this study. The empirical review established a gap in knowledge about understanding the relationship between corporate public relations and the press: it was the gap established that this study tried to bridge. The previous studies reviewed indicated a trend whereby economically powerful corporate organizations use corporate public relations to control media narrative towards a frame that gives favourable coverage to their claims.

Two theories: second level agenda setting and political economy were analysed and their link to this study was established. The political economy theory of the press postulates

how economic interests limits and or bias media narrative through such things as subsidizing information to the press, press releases, news conferences and power of advertising. Also, second level or inter-media agenda setting postulates on who sets agenda for the media. It deals with where the media agenda comes from; that media agenda comes in different layers, from the news source, from corporate public relations and even government press officers.

Further, chapter three dwelt on the methodology for the study. Mixed method that comprised of content analysis of *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers from January 2010 to December 2012 and key informant interviews were used for the study. A sample size of 312 editions of the newspapers was adopted for the content analysis and 12 key informants were adopted for the interview. The independent variable to this study was corporate public relations activities while the dependent variable was the influence on the coverage of corporate organizations by the press. The instrumentations for the study were coding sheet and interview guide. The categories of analysis were news stories, features, pictures, editorials, corporate brands, quotations and anonymous sources while the units of analysis were stories and communicative elements under the categories of analysis. Also, inter-coder reliability test was used to check validity and reliability of coding tool.

Furthermore, in chapter four data from both content analysis and key informant interviews were presented and analysed using chi-square, Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test of analysis and thematic content analysis of the interviews for the numerical and qualitative data respectively. The findings from content analysis and key informant interviews were further grounded in available literature and theoretical underpinnings. The three research questions were answered using data derived from this study. That, corporate public relations do have influence on the way *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers give news coverage to corporate organisations. And there was a significant relationship between corporate public relations communication and the level of importance attributed to corporate organizations by both

Daily Trust and *Vanguard* newspapers. And that, both *Vanguard* and *Daily Trust* newspapers covered corporate news more than any other type of news stories during the time frame of this study. Therefore, Findings from this study, statistically and qualitatively established the influence of corporate public relations on the reportage of corporate organizations by both *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the above findings, the following conclusion is forwarded. This study found that corporate public relations communication exact influence on the way the two papers cover corporate news. The ways by which corporate public relations exert such influence on the workings of the press vary. However, two approaches were prominent and these include press releases and maintaining 'cordial' relationship with the journalists; all the public relations personnel interviewed for this study kept on hammering on maintaining cordial relationship with the press. Maintaining such cordial relationship, as the study found out, may include ethically flawed ways such as giving the journalists "transport money" and "entertaining" them. The implication of this is that to the professionals in the field of public relations, it may, in the long run come back to haunt the practice in a negative way. As for the journalists, accepting gratifications, no matter the way they come, will cloud the journalists' sixth sense of being fair, objective and being a neutral umpire.

Also, this study concludes that by accepting subsidized information from corporate public relations personnel, the press has already accepted a biased and preconceived idea from biased sources. In this instance, the level of importance attached to corporate organizations by the press will always be high, thereby calling to question the press call to observing the ethical stance of giving all claim makers equal chance and opportunity. Thus, the press' functions of watchdog, ethicisation, correlation, surveillance, and cultural diffusion are all subjected to the wishes of the corporate world.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the above findings and conclusion, the following are recommendations for both the press and corporate public relations personnel:

i. To the press/journalists, the allure and importance of journalism is in its observing the professional ethos of objectivity, fairness, balance and professional detachment from sources of their news stories. A situation whereby the press/journalists become megaphones of the corporate organizations will not augur well for the long time relevance of their profession to the scheme of things. As such, it is recommended that the press/journalists should continue to be independent and try to give all claim makers equal platforms subject to the importance of the news item provided by the source.

ii. The Nigeria Press Council and the Guild of Editors should put and execute policies that will lead to robust and conducive working conditions for the journalists as this will checkmate corruption of the press by the corporate public relations personnel to induce the press with some gratifications with the intent of colouring the news to favour their perspective.

iii. To the corporate public relations personnel, the recommendation is for them to avoid unnecessary inducement to the press for favourable publication. They should practice ethical public relations.

iv. The corporate public relations personnel should always engage the press at professional level: always be factual and situational in their dealings with the press. Once monetary gratifications come in, it becomes a trend that can hardly be stopped and there may come a time that monetary inducements may not help.

5.5 Recommendation for future research

The following are recommendations for future studies on the area of understanding influence between corporate public relations and the press:

- An area that needs further study is that of understanding ethical considerations in the relationship between corporate public relations and the press. From the findings of this study, it seemed both journalists and corporate public relations personnel tend not to adhere to the principles of objectivity, fairness and balance in the process of information management. For instance, the corporate public relations personnel tend to use monetary incentives to have leverage over the press/journalists. There is need for research in the area of practicing ethical public relations.
- Another area of further study is of how media organizations can empower the press/journalists to keep them abreast on how to surmount the allure of corporate public relations-sourced communication.
- An area that needs in-depth study is on the influence of information subsidies on the coverage of corporate organizations. Findings from this study indicate that not only information was subsidized by corporate public relations personnel; even transportation of the journalists to cover corporate organizations was subsidized by the corporate organizations.
- Also, there is need for a further research that will bring to fore, other means by which corporate organizations tend to manipulate the press/journalists in other to control the narrative of the public sphere.There is need to understand other likely sources of influence on the press used by the corporate world. Such sources of influence may include legal environment and advertising patronization.

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Appendix A

CODING SHEET

Appendix B

Interview Guide for Journalists

1- How often do you receive Public Relations/Publicity Materials?

2- How helpful are these Public Relations materials to your journalistic duties?

Prompts; if the materials are helpful, can you explain in which way they are, i.e it helps you to beat dateline; it gives you a scoop; it helps in offsetting the financial burden of scouting for news; it gives a fresh angle to news stories.

3- How often do you use such Public Relations/Publicity material?

4- How will you explain your relationship with Public Relations personnel?

Prompts; it is helpful, it is waste of time, it does not help my work, it helps me to beat dateline, it gives me scoop on stories, it gives me an angle I couldn't have gotten on my own.

5- On average how many public relations materials do you receive in a week?

Prompts; do the public relations/publicity materials you publish undergo some form of editing or are they published as received? What are your guiding principles for editing public relations/publicity materials? What do you want from public relations/publicity materials to qualify them for news?

6- Which type of public relations material do you mostly use and why?

7- Generally, what will you say about public relations personnel and publicity materials?

Appendix C

Interview Guide for Corporate Public Relations Personnel

1- How would you describe your relationship with the media?

2- How do you get your public relations/publicity materials to the media?

3- Which of the public relations/publicity materials do you mostly use and why?

4- How do you track your public relations/publicity materials?

5- Have any of your public relations/publicity materials been rejected by the media before? Prompts; did you attempt to reintroduce the material again? Was it subsequently accepted? What did you do to get it accepted? How often do you have to reintroduce such materials?

6- How do you entice the media to make use of your public relations/publicity materials?

7- On an average, how many public relations/publicity materials do you send to the media in a week?

8- What percentage of those materials do you think the media uses?

Prompts; how do you know the percentage?

9- Do you think the media uses your materials the way you send them or they alter them to suit their work?

Prompts; why do you think so?

10- Why do you think the media makes use of your public relations/publicity materials?

Appendix D

Transcribed Interviews

JOUR01

Q: Hello sir. How do you often and receive public relations publicity material during your work as a journalist?

A: well I supposed … it depends on how you even defined public relation. I remember even as a reporter vividly you get a lot of materials from United State information service more than you need. Invariably, you have to leave some. Some people may not regard them as pr material but as far as am concern there is pr material because what they are trying to do is to put the best thing of their country forward. Other than that I don't know.

Q: So these materials you receive. How helpful are they in terms of your journalistic duties?

A: well not variably but it depend as a journalist you have to verify a lot of these information, do some independent work on your own before you published that. A lot of these materials they intend to slap them on the faces of your paper. Of course is useful as a basis for information. Some sometimes it makes you lazy as you just get the pages all over and put them.

Q: Did they give you to bit dead line? Do they give you scoop or do they help in upsetting financial burden?

A: Defiantly they won't give you scoop. Because pr materials they want as much publicity as possible. So you will have been sure they would have sent it to as many newspapers as possible. But they can serve as bases for scoop it depend on if you have initiative; you can go beyond what they have given you. May be figures other reporters haven't got up. Deadline yes as I said because that is the danger that because

you are in a hurry to meet deadline if you don't do enough verification you just put them on the paper. Financially off course if you serve rotten materials, you are not going to get enough readers. So it like many weapon. It caught both places. It depends on how you handle it.

Q: How often do you use these materials in your work?

A: Not very often. Because as I tell you as a good reporter or good editor , because the editor is supposed to ask the reporter questions when he files a story facts and all that. You are not to use them just like that. You have to verify first. They are useful as materials for you to use them.

Q: How will you explain you relationship with the public relations personnel?

A: It's like mutual, suspicion and at the same time. They supply you with materials depend on individual. Because of cost they want you to put everything in word as a page. The exert subscription. So I don't want to use the phrase but there is a kind of lobby if is necessary. You need each other and at the sometime you are suspicious of each other.

Q: If you can recall. On average how much public relation material you receive in a week for instance?

A: The one I can remember most is United States information service deals with the issue. There was no internet. They are in hard copies. You might probably get thirty forty in a weekly period.

Q: So, such materials you receive, do you edit them to conform to in-house policy or do you use them just like that.

A: No of course you have to read them, edit them, you know each newspaper has its own house style. Them, they have their own house style to use and send it to all

newspaper. You don't want your newspaper to look like any other so you have to edit it to your own house style.

Q: As a veteran journalist, what do you expect from public relations materials?

A: Well, of course you expect them to tell the truth but off cause naturally they have to boast up the public image of their employer .but I hate it if you tell me lie. Because you can still published the image and still tell the truth.

Q: Which type of PR materials do you mostly use and why do you use them?

A: Well, PR materials I think is the basic information to be accurate and those are the type of PR I will use.

Q; lastly, and generally, what will you say on pr personnel and materials generally?

A: I am always suspicious of them. as far as am concern they were primary sources/secondary sources. And whether they are primary or secondary I will always try to cross check. The PR themselves are primary sources but the bulletins they issue out are secondary. I am always skeptical on the two. Am not saying I won't use but I will want to cross checked.

JOUR02

My name is Muhammad Hashim Suleiman. I am conducting a study to understand the relationship between journalists and public relations materials. The recording is solely for research purpose, it will never be used other than what it is meant to achieve. With me is a journalist working with …..

Q: How often do you receive public relations materials or publicity materials?

A: In this age, because of the development and technology, we always receive our materials through our e-mails or sometimes, the hard copy.

Q: How helpful are these public relations materials to you as a journalist? Thus, do they help you in doing your work?

A: Although, we like getting news from the press releases, but for me, even if I get a press release, I have to follow the story and make some researches and calls to confirm some issues, because sometimes, we are very weary of PR materials. They are news, but it is one sided.

Q: You call these PR materials one-sided, but does it in anyway help you to beat deadline, gives you scope, given the fact that sourcing for news could be capital intensive. Does it help in reducing such? How does it specifically help you?

A: Of course, they help because sometimes you might not be able to go for an event, and if you're not there, they will just package everything and give you and that will give you an idea of where to get the news from the press release. And may be there would be an idea written in the press release for another story.

Q: How often do you do you use the press release in your work as a journalist?

A: I always use press releases in my stories

Question: How will you explain your relationship with the public relations personnel**?**

A: we have a very excellent relationship because most of them are journalists practicing public relations. Though sometimes, we have differences because when they give you the press release, you take another angle, make enquiries about what they claim in the

releases which might be different from what they wrote down. We sometimes have issues, but the relationship is a very good one.

Q: How does the relationship help you in your work? Does it give you scope, new angle or other things you may like to explain?

A:Yes the relationship helps because you accept their press release, they might give you privilege information sometimes. If you want to get something, you can call them and they will give you the help you need sometimes.

Q: On average, can you tell us how many public relations materials you receive, like in a week?

A: In a week, I receive like seven to ten press releases

Q: This seven to ten on average, how do you use them, do you edit them? Garnish them or you use them as they come?

A: No, I have to edit, I don't use press releases as they come, because some are written in news style, while others are just write ups that you need to select what you will use.

Q: By selection, you mean editing, so what guidelines and principles do you follow in editing such public relations materials?

A: In editing PR materials, one has to be very careful. It is basically meant to promote the organization or origin of the press release, so something that is promotional have to be reduced to something that is news worthy, something that people will like to read, not about the organization.

Q: What do you specifically look for from these materials that may qualify it to be news worthy?

A: What I look for in the press release is what is contained inside may be of National interest. Something that affects Nigerians in general or a part of them and not what the organization is.

Q: What type of PR materials do you use and why do you use them?

A: I use press release. But sometimes they call for press briefing, that is, a live one. So depending on the topic, I can attend a press briefing by briefing by PR personnel of an organization.

Q: lastly, generally, what would you say about public relations personals and their materials they send?

A: There are some professional PR personnel, the way they respond when you interact with them makes you makes you know that this is a professional PR personnel. But there are some of them that are not properly trained in public relations. You know how government jobs are; somebody that has been trained as a PR personnel will be seen practicing PR which is not good. PR personnel always have excellent relationship with the relationship with the journalists.

JOUR03

Q: How often do you receive public relation or publicity materials?

A: Almost on daily basis sometimes more than three or four press releases or statement from spokesperson of army, air force, navy, police, EFCC, and other security agencies, because that is my beat. Directors of public relation of this organization usually have phone or E-mail addresses of reporter from different newspaper publishing house, so occasionally you get invitation to come for press conferences at their head offices.

Q: How helpful are these public relation materials in your journalistic work?

A: The materials are tailored for dissemination to the public, the opinions or information that the organization wants to push out to the public. The materials are very informative, because it gives the journalist information about certain happenings or events that needs clarification. As a journalist you have to rewrite these press releases in such a way that your audience will get the information. In order to get information or clarification you can call the spokesperson and ask more questions so as to give out a balance and complete story that does not arose more question from the audience.

Q: How often do you use such public relation material received from these spokespersons?

A: It depends on the news values and editorial judgment of the house; almost all press releases go through this vetting system. As long as they are of good news value they get use.

Q: How can you describe your relationship with public relation personnel?

A: Most of the time the relationship is cordial, sometimes they don't like it when you do independent of investigative story, because they do not want any story that will expose or embarrass their principal. Once in a while you fall out of favour.

Q: Do you edit the PR material before you use them to meet in-house policy?

A: Definitely you edit them to make sure that they meet in house policy and ask more questions for clarification.

Q: What type of material do they send to you?

A: Usually press releases, of journals, magazine that they published in-house, they distribute it to journalist to help them publicize it. Sometimes, pamphlets of an ongoing campaign at the head- quarters. They send it over, and journalists generate news out of it.

Q: What can you say about PR material and PR personnel?

A: Most often PR materials that the organization PR personnel want to push out, from experience this material does not represent things as it is. You have to make extra effort to gate they original information. PR personnel are basically tools of government they do the biddings of their masters, whatever the agenda of government at any given time. That is what the PRO will try to push. Some even lie and do whatever they can to protect the status qou.

JOUR04

My name is Mohammed Hashim Suleiman. I'm here with Journalist. If he likes he will tell us his name and we would kick the interview into full.

Q. Sir, may I know you?

A. I am ……..

Q:Malam, how often do you receive public relation publicity materials?

A: It's daily even by the seconds not even by the minutes. Because it is an in-house policy of *Daily Trust* that every information must be treated equally. So we won't differentiate whether it's from the North, from the South, a Muslim or by a Christian, as you know Nigeria these religious and whatever divides or by disabled people or by from Aso rock or whatsoever. So we accept press releases and free their takings seriously. But they must be on letter headed paper, they must be signed, so that people should know, it should be on letter headed paper, it must be signed, must have reference or G.S.M number so that if there's any clarification it can be made through.

Q:So how helpful are these public relation materials to your journalistic duties?

A: They are helpful, because they may lead one to do an investigative report. Because an instance where a press release was…let's say SS, there was a time there was a press release from national security advisers office with telephone numbers, that these numbers are what one can easily call if there's any security breach. Of recent I called the number but it didn't go. You see from that press release. I called the number one time it went but after sometime, I called the number but it did not go and it was only one number they gave. One number for texts, one number for GSM talk. I called, it did not go, you see from that press release and from that call I made, I can make a

very good investigative report. Assuming, it is somebody that is being attacked, a very influential person, although everybody is important, so one can do… investigative desk. With even advertisement or whatsoever we go through them and they give us a scope on things to do.

Q: So, how often do you use such public relations publicity materials?

A: We use them always, but there is what we call let them-be. Maybe a press release that has to do with public relations that, you know of these governors, they'll ask "we are in Abuja now, FCT minister has sank boreholes in satellite towns, 50 boreholes. Relatively, that is no news because how was it sunk? Who did the sinking? And then is it strategic or they sank them in front of PDP stakeholders? So all these things matter a lot. We accept them often but if it is if it has to do with PR. I mean because at times they use to cover let them-pay under public relations but if it is pure public relations, we take it.

Q:So how can you explain your relationship with public relation personnel?

A: It is good because most instance there are many places where you have a public relation manager, corporate affairs manager or things like that but they are not personals. So liaise with a professional they'll be calling you time by time, or they get a professional whom they employ as a lower cadre under that PRO who is not a professional to link them up.

Q: Alright so these are relationship that you described, how is it helpful to your work? Does it help you to beat deadline? Does it give you scope or other things?

A: Of course it does, one, It's all about deadline, it is. There was an instance where I was coming here to the office when I saw smoke around Jabi garage, when I came here, I

asked a colleague here, a reporter to quickly go and cover that event. I told him that I parked and asked why the smoke because the smoke was bellowing from 3 parts of the garage. I asked they said that some soldiers came and burnt some tents and things like that, so I asked the person to go and get the story. After getting the story, he published that story we cannot publish it in *Daily Trust* we had to talk to the PRO of the police… Affini Daniel because we have to confirm from her because soldiers cannot be easily contacted. Then we contacted the army too, they said that yes they came for the event but at the instance of the FCT police because that time, there was an event, the President was going out so all the police were at the airport so soldiers came and did the work and it helped because it was almost an hour to the deadline when she called back saying that yes they are aware of that security breach or whatsoever in the park. So that is why they gathered the items together and burnt them. So it helps a lot, and as you talk about scope it helps a lot. In an instance whereby now, you see if you can remember this Nigeria sort of Nigerian Immigration service recruitment, people from Aba metropolis would give us a scope, people from the Immigration service will give us a scope and people from the retired personnel of Immigration are also giving scopes. So it matters a lot.

Q: On average, how many public relations or public materials can you say you receive averagely in a week?

A: There are many, because we know in daily trust here we have *Daily Trust*, *Weekly Trust*, *Sunday Trust* and *Aminiya*, so we at times even this *Tambari*, this fashion page and then we have youth page now. So, but the main staples are 3, *Daily Trust*, *Sunday Trust* so we receive a lot via e-mail but I think even the news editor of *Daily Trust*cannot tell you the number, because we receive them, we receive a lot because

you know politics is coming, election is coming most of them are PR *givings*. But we receive a lot.

Q:Averagely, can you give us an average?

A: Mallam, let's just be frank, let's just be truthful. because if you have a beat, let's say you'recoveringdefence, all defence press releases come to you do not go to the… this Chibok something now, Chris Olukolade from the defence HQ is talking, that one from Army is talking, SS are sending their own, Police are sending their own, But on average, we can say weekly we can receive up to 500 or even 1000 press releases.

Q: These press releases you receive, are they published as they come or there are other guidelines you use in editing and making them to form part of the news.

A: A while back I told you that there must be letterhead, they must be signed and they must have correspondents where we can call back. So, when we receive them, we have to edit them because let's just be frank, one can say a press release in Hausa, in Igbo or whatsoever but you know let's assume that military something. When the military are sending their press release, they will say To Whom It May Concern, then they will say one, they will list. They don't do it in a prose or literary form. They have to tabulate it 1,2,3,4 you can't take it like that. Then you delete all those one, two, three junk and make sure you use language, because you know military if not now, their grammar is not newspaper grammar, so you have to make sure you go through it before you take it. Even this people, this vigilante they used to send press releases but you don't expect vigilante's language to go into the papers. It must be edited before it is.

You cannot just say the president is a good person, fine we can take it, but you cannot just say the president is a bad person, you alleged that the president that the president is a bad person, we have to use that word alleged to be free from libel and whatsoever case that will follow and we will lose money or things like that and when you cause any problem due to yourpress release when you cause any problem, you will be surcharged, you and your editor. If that person went to court and maybe we settle out of court in daily trust and maybe that person was given a hundred thousand, it will be deducted from your salary and that of your editor that is what you see in daily trust. Nobody will take his work likely and that your charge will deny you some credit for promotion and things like that, you can see somebody in daily trust employed who was employed in the last ten years, he is editor programme or editor property or things like that, when somebody he has met who has spent 13-14 years is under him. Due to that laxity, you have to very cautious of words and things like that.

We accept press releases free but we have to get them, we have to make sure it is worth it. That is why we emphasise on online when we have your email address if a P.R.O is coming in newly are you maintaining the email or you create a new email, you know how this things are these days, we have to be very careful of what to do, and before we round up there is deadline. You cannot send a press release late in the day and expect us to create a space for it, we don't. You have to make sure timeliness is important too. You send the press release very early so is it.

Q: What do you think qualifies a press release material to be news worthy for you to use it?

A: One, let's just be frank, you have to have what is called Acquaintance with the person treating that area, because if somebody under me now is covering security like here,

Let's just be frank, Ronald Mutum cannot bring me a piece on APC or PDP from Aso rock because it's not his beat, so acquaintance is very important between that PR (Public relation person but there are what we do now, gate crashing as you are now, you are a media man. You meet the P.R.O of A.B.U you will try and get the number of the editor or news editor, whenever something comes up you go to Isa Saidu in Zaria or send it here direct but the main thing is you have an acquaintance liaise with that person you are dealing with, it is very important.

If you liase with him, you send it, he will like it but daily trust too, mind you don't take this smuggling of news , take this news to say APC is boko haram, let's say OlisaMetu released that press release, if daily trust will not carry that news, because there is no fact behind that. If it is denied weekly take it to Sunday or smuggled it there, if the editor notices you, you will be Sub-charged too.

Q: What type of public relation materials do you mostly use and why do you use them?

A: We use public relations material as literarily that has to do with description of whatsoever and then pictures too. An instance when you look at our public relations labour page, if a new Vice-Chancellor is appointed in A.B.U but that will not go into that page without the picture, because A.B.U must have somebody who can use the e-media to send the picture, so we try and make sure that the stories go with the picture and things like that. And if it is sport, you cannot wait for the picture, sport is very, in one way or the other sports can change anytime, maybe there is a match and Nigeria has scored, you can use an old picture or you can use a picture of the Nigerian squad or flag to match with it but the main thing comes mostly is politics.

In Academics you don't have many press releases but in politics you do, Shekarau has decamped, Shekarau will be made the minister, Shekarau will be this, Shekarau will

be that, Shekarau has left,Shekarau will say he will never leave the party, those are the most press releases we have for politics because everybody wants to smell or polish somebody. So that is it. But on the promotion page, the labour page I told you these are times the man handling the labour page will go round begging, Dan Allah Mallam do you have anything to enter my page. Oh I remember there is a new manager for chija hotel let me get the story for you, then he gets the story but in politics even if you give twenty pages , you have to drop some stories, there may be space for fifty pages but you have only forty or twenty pages but for that labour page, just one page per week but at times, the person handling that page will go round begging, scouting before he fills up the page.

Q: Lastly on a general note, what will you say about public relation personnel and about publicity materials?

A: One, public relation personnel now are being mostly graduates of mass communication or graduates of or those that gate crash into Mass Communication with post graduate or Masters degrees in public relations and this is like that. The language is now becoming better because most press releases now have become better, because the shorter the better, economy of words is important, you do not hardly get people now to get to read more than two pages even if its advertisement, so that is about the personnel. Then about publicity timing is important too, if you choose between radio, mostly in the north, radio takes the message in the Igbos in the city. TV takes the message and the in the west newspapers. So one has to get it, who is your target audience? Who are the recipients? Who are my target audience for this particular message?

For instance, where now not many people buy newspapers, and you want to talk about something that has to do with mass or about the poor people to do with hygiene, you put in the newspapers; most people that read newspaper are hygienically sound. So that is it. The personnel and the publicity materials matters but you have to know the item that is supposed to go to daily trust, weekly trust, Sunday trust, or *Tambari* or *Aminiya* the Hausa vanacullar newspaper, though things are becoming better now, whenever items come on public relations now, you see that you do not waste too much time, language is better and even if it matters with the picture or thongs like that, you see that you don't even need to call the person, everything is there, pictures with the caption, it comes with the bi-line and whatsoever.

CPRO01

Q: How will you describe your relationship with the media?

A: Well, I will say we have a good relationship because if I say we have a cordial relationship it will be an exaggeration but we have good relationship to the extent that anytime we have an occasion we rely on them to come. Most of them are journalist from newspapers like The Nation, Daily Trust, Leadership and so forth. Then even from the Radio house like Radio Nigeria Kaduna, Queen's FM and so on and so forth. We also have a relationship with other community papers too that do come to grace our occasion any time we have one.

Q: So how do you how do you get public relations or publicity materials to the media?

A: If we want to make announcement or we want to advertisement particularly if we want to issue out contract or we want to talk to our students that are away from school and if we want to admit students we will contact the media with our draft or structure of the message then we will just give it to them then they will help us make the publicity.

Q: So, how do you track your public relations or publicity materials?

A: Can you please enlighten me more, I don't understand.

Q: You know you send information for the media to publish or broadcast, so how do you track tomake sure they release or they broadcast such your materials?

A: Well, particularly what I use to do for about ten years now with Radio Nigeria, I would have called them and notify them then seek for what time they will be able to attend to me. Then once they give me the appointment I will go to Kaduna and will be there with them in the studio because most of them are my friends and I will be there when they play it.

Q: All this while have any of your Public Relations or publicity materials been rejected by the media?

A: I can say on two or three occasions. Their complaint was that a press statement I took to them has an element of advertisement so I have to go and edit it. We were there together to edit it, I was there for about three hours for us to sit together and reconstruct the statement and the message.

Q: So, you made an attempt to reintroduce the material?

A: Yes.

Q: So was it accepted?

A: Yes, when I gave them my reason, because the way I structured the message in line with our organization policy and by the time we argued it out, they were able to know that I am much aware of what they were trying to argue it about so we strike the balance there. The areas they said will offend their own practice we had to delete it and reconstruct some sentences there.

Q: So how do you in quote "entice the media to make use of your public relations or publicity materials"?

ANSWER: well, I think it is my rapport with them. Apart from that there was this man AlhajiKabiruDangogo is the proprietor of school of communication Kaduna use to contact me once in a while for his seminars he organize for journalists and PROs in Government establishment to moderate or facilitate the event so from there I got to know journalist particularly from Abuja and since then we keep in touch and have a good relationship. Anytime I have work I don't find it much difficult to use the media because of my good relationship with the journalist. Any time we have an event and they come and cover it, the entertainment and how I receive them aid our relationship.

Q: So, on average, how many Public Relations or Publicity materials do you send to the media let's say in a week or in a month?

A: At least in a month we have like two, three contact with the journalist.

Q: This contact as you put them, what percentage do you think of the materials are eventually been used by the media that you sent?

A: If I send like three, at most they will use two. There has never been a time they use one out of my material out of three or four so they use like two, even if its five they will use three and maybe keep the remaining one for further use so by the time we still need it they can use those ones if they have the space.

Q: Do you think the media uses you materials the way you send it or do they alter them to suit their work?

A: I think I said it the other time that the ones they feel that there are issues that I have touched which we will offend their own work, they will call me and we will sit together and we will look at it so by the time we argue the points in order not to cause friction between us so we strike a balance. If they insist on the one they don't want, I can reframe it so that I will not lose my own message and they too will not be affected by the message.

Q: On our last question, why do you think the media uses your Public Relations or publicity materials?

A: I think one of the reasons they use it is because they feel that we are stakeholders/ partners and they have to be interested in the progress of my organization as much as am also interested in the progress of their organization, so I think our relationship is like that of a symbiotic relationship, they gain from me and I gain from them.

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Interview with CPRO02

A: I think it should start proper.

Q: Okay. Thank you. Madam, how would you describe your relationship with the Media aspublic relations personnel?

A: Well, I have a very good relationship with the media. I have a cordial relationship with them except for the usual problem that usually arises between the public relations officer and the media. And when there is any such problem, we handle it immediately and clear everything.

Q: Now, with this relationship with the media, how do you get your publicity materials to the media?

A: Normally, I write whatever I want to give to the media and after that, there is one particular person I work with who will distribute it to the rest of them. Mostly it is done when, maybe, a negative thing is written about our organization then we write a rejoinder or we publish advertisements. When there is, we call the journalists to cover it. That, I think is the main thing I give out for publication.

Q: Madam, how do you track these materials you send for publication? How do you track to make sure they are published?

A: Yes, you know, usually, if you call them, the press people; you see 10 to 15 of them. But only two or three out of those people that came to your office will publish what you have. So, usually, what I do is, I try to get a promise from all of them. I try to kind of encourage them to please publish the story I have for them and I also try to entice them by tell them that when they bring my story, if I see it published I will do something for them that is how I get a few of them to publish my story. They have to go to, some will go to other papers to beg them to publish the story because they want to fulfill their promise, but some will not. That is how I try to get some of them to publish my story.

Q: Madam, still on the relationship, have the media at any time rejected any of the stories you sent to them?

A: No. I have not had such problem with the media. All the stories I give to them they publish. But I told you I have to use some trick to get them published.

Q: So, on the average, how many publicity or public relation materials do you send to the media let say in a month, in a week.

A: I cannot say exactly the number of publications either on weekly or monthly basis.

Q: Madam, can you give an estimate of stories you send out and eventually get published?

A: Let me be sincere. All the stories I send out are published but not as much as I want it.

Q: Do you think the media publish the stories the way you send or do they change stories?

A: Most of the time it is published the way I send them because I give an instruction for them not to temper with my stories and most of the time they bring it out the way I want it.

Q: So, why do you think the media make use of your publicity or public relation materials?

A: Well, maybe because of the cordial relationship we have and I don't know but that is the basic issue behind it that is the cordial relationship that we have.

Q: How do you maintain the cordial relationship between you and the journalists?

A: Well, you know journalists. I am very sure you used to be one. I used to be one too. So, the only thing is that sometimes even when there are no events they come in to say Hajiya, we have come to greet you. And you know something must come out for that greeting. Somebody will not just leave his office in town to come to me and I will let him go just like that. At least I have to say *gakudinmota* i.e. give him transport fare back. That is the major thing and I try to see that anybody that introduce himself as a journalist, because I know my position, I am the public relations officer of this organization, so I will have to ensure I have a very good relationship, even if we don't agree in some areas, I try to make him understand that this thing you in I was in it too and I know the nitty-gritty of it. So we sometimes agree and disagree but it ends up well.