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FRAMING OF THE 2016 BUDGET CONTROVERSIES ON THREE NIGERIAN ONLINE NEWSPAPERS

*Nnanyelugo OKORO
&
Kenneth Adibe NWAFOR*

ABSTRACT

This study investigated how three Nigerian online newspapers framed the 2016 budget padding controversies in the House of Representatives. The study was anchored on Framing and Agenda Setting theories. Adopting a content analysis design, a total of 158 reports on the budget padding saga found on the websites of three selected online newspapers were analysed using simple percentages. Findings indicate that five different kinds of frames were employed in reporting the act: political, conflict, conspiracy, issues and value frames. Whereas political, conflict and conspiracy frames appeared predominantly in the Sahara Reporters and Premium Times, issues and value frames manifested in a greater dimensions in the Vanguard. The implication of this, is that majority of the online newspapers reported the act with political, conflict and conspiracy undertone. Such approach in the reportage could have denied many citizens the opportunity of understanding the core issues, values and implications of such acts on their day-to-day lives. The study recommends, among others, more media attention on issues and value frames in reporting important societal issues of this nature to engender more informed citizens' decisions and actions.

Keywords: *Budget, Padding, Online Newspapers*