

## Press Coverage of World Tobacco Day in Nigeria (2014-2016) and Smoker Journalists Attitude towards Coverage of the Event

Chinenye Nwabueze\*, Emmanuel Igwenagu and Casmir Obiakor

Department of Mass Communication, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Nigeria

### Abstract

The mass media have enormous potentials to influence health-related behaviors and perceptions. Much research has focused on how the media frame health issues. This study sought to explore how world no Tobacco day was framed in the print media and smoker journalists' attitude towards coverage of the event. Three privately-owned national dailies were studied to find themes dominating reports on World No Tobacco day and to find the prominence given to the reports as well as sources of such stories. Twenty-two smoker journalists were also surveyed to find their attitude towards coverage of the event. It was found that world no tobacco day was not given enough prominence by the selected newspapers and majority of smoker journalists will be uncomfortable to cover the event. It was recommended among others that Nigerian press should give a priority attention to the coverage of world No Tobacco Day issues in the country.

**Keywords:** Mass media; Journalists; Press coverage; Public health

### Introduction

A major public health challenge of this century is finding a way to harness the powerful influence of the media to curtail tobacco use Davis et al. [1]. Cigarette smoking is an important risk factor for many non-communicable diseases globally. It is one of the greatest contributors to preventable illness and premature death, Mather and Lancer [2]. It kills a third to half of those who use it Peto, et al. [3]. The global tobacco epidemic threatens the lives of at least one billion people, Peto and Lopez [3]. Tobacco use is a risk factor for six of the eight leading causes of death globally [4]. Cigarette smoking is a significant risk factor in the development and acceleration of the atherosclerosis, Peto and Lopez [3] citing Schoen and Cotran [5] and Taylor especially those who started smoking before the age of 20 years, Voller and Strong [6]. Tragically, more than 80% of tobacco deaths occur in developing world [4]. Tobacco use is growing fastest in low-income countries due to steady population growth and the tobacco industry target this vulnerable population. Unlike other dangerous substances for which the health impacts are immediate, tobacco related disease usually begin to manifest up to 3 decades after tobacco use starts Lopes, et al. [3]. It has been suggested that as tobacco use rises globally, the epidemic of tobacco related disease and death is expected to increase [4]. Youth smoking is a major concern through the world, Peto and Lopes [3]. A survey by Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) cited in premium tunes [7], showed that south easterners in Nigeria are the highest consumers of tobacco, with about 9% of its adult population currently smoking, closely following the south east, is the North central- middle belt, where at least 8.5 percent of its adult population is hooked on tobacco. In developing countries, the trend is on increase in cigarette smoking among adolescents [8]. The habit of cigarette smoking with onset during adolescence is difficult to break in adulthood, Paavla, et al. [9]. Most adult smokers began to smoke or where already addicted to smoking before the age of 18, Paavla, et al. [9]. To this end, the research aims to examine newspaper faming of world no tobacco day and smoking journalists' attitude towards coverage of the event. Since behavioral change is the key to stemming the tobacco epidemic, this study is significant in alerting stakeholders on what needs to be done in mobilizing the media for the task.

### Statement of the Problem

The growth of mass media has been critical to the rapid expansion

of tobacco use in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the subsequent evolution of effective tobacco control intervention into the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The mass media have an equally powerful role in influencing individuals and policymakers and have made critical contributions to the cause of tobacco control. The media have an equally powerful role in influencing individuals and policymakers and have made critical contributions to the cause of tobacco control [10]. In developing countries generally, tobacco consumption is a policy issue because of the increasing health implication. In Africa, currently the largest market for tobacco companies, governments are implementing measures to control consumption of tobacco products. However, there have been difficulties imposing and enforcing restrictions on the use of tobacco [10]. Nevertheless, Nigeria has made a significant leap through the signing of the tobacco control act by former president Goodluck Jonathan administration. However, the bill has failed to address the issues of smokeless tobacco as well as corporate social responsibility by big tobacco companies. It is against this back drop that this paper set out to assess print media coverage of world no tobacco day activities especially based on the importance of effective media coverage of the event in prevention and control of the epidermic.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To determine themes dominating the reports on world no tobacco day.
2. To determine prominence given to reports on world no tobacco day.
3. To determine sources of such reports.

\*Corresponding author: Nwabueze C, Department of Mass Communication, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Nigeria, Tel: 234-8033425686; E-mail: [cdnwabueze@yahoo.com](mailto:cdnwabueze@yahoo.com)

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4. To find out smoker journalists attitude towards coverage of the event.

5. To find smoker journalists perception of the campaign.

## Research Questions

1. What are the themes dominating reports on world no tobacco day in the selected newspapers?

2. What prominence do the selected newspapers give world no tobacco day?

3. What are the dominant sources on world no tobacco day reports?

4. What is the attitude of smoker journalists towards coverage of the event?

5. What is the perception of smoker journalists towards the campaign?

## Theoretical Underpinning

Theories to be concentrated on this chapter is Framing theory and social category theory.

### Framing theory

Framing theory is based on the assumption that how an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences, Scheufele and Tewksbury [11]. Framing is often traced back to roots in both psychological and sociological pan and Kosicki cited in Scheufele and Tewksbury [11]. McCombs cited in Tewksbury and SCheufele argued that Framing is simply a more refined version of agenda setting [11]. Framing from that perspective means making aspects of an issue more salient through different modes of presentation and therefore, shifting peoples' attitudes. He labels this phenomenon "second-level agenda setting". Framing theory suggests that how something is presented to the audience (called "the frame") influences the choices people make about how to process that information. Framing is in many ways tied very closely to agenda setting theory. Both focus on how media draws the public's eyes to specific topics. In this way, they set the agenda. But framing takes this a step further in the way in which the news is presented creates a frame for that information. This is usually a conscious choice by journalists. In this case, a frame refers to the way media as gatekeepers organize and present the ideas, events and topics they cover. This further underscores the importance of knowing the themes and prominence given to reports on world No Tobacco day which constitute one of the research questions guiding this study.

### Social category theory

Social category theory is a theory of mass communication that argues that individuals within broad subgroups such as (age, classes, sex, social or educational class) react similarly to the mass media ([oxfordindex.oup.com](http://oxfordindex.oup.com)). The social category theory focuses on reaction against the powerful effect of the media. Okenwa [12] observes that the social category theory exists as reaction against the powerful effects on the media. It assumes that people of the same social category will respond to the mass communication messages in more or less uniform ways. Bittner cited in Okunna [12] explains that in social categories theory, the audience is made up of different sub-group, each constituting a mass within a mass, meaning that mass communication audiences are differentiated according either their age, gender, religious and ethnic affiliation, income level etc. Okunna explains that

members of each subgroup belong to a social category and are likely to have similar interests and attitudes which differ from those of members of other social category, and which determine which mass media they use and how they use them [12]. Within each category, members have had commonly shared experiences and therefore have similar social norms, attitudes and values. The above being the case, it is important to ascertain the views of smoking journalists who might knowingly or unknowingly be charged with the duty of covering the no tobacco day events.

## Literature Review

### Overview of tobacco consumption in nigeria

Nigeria is one of the three largest tobacco markets in Africa, others being Egypt and South Africa [13]. Tobacco sales in Nigeria have continued for long with profits of the Nigerian tobacco companies increasing year by year. A 2012 WHO report has estimated that Nigeria has a population of almost 13 million smokers and 18 billion cigarettes are sold each year at a value of about \$931 m (185 billion Naira). Nigeria has a relatively low smoking prevalence rate compared to other countries across the globe [13]. The smoking prevalence among males and female in Nigeria was 10% between 2012 and 2014. This percentage compares low to other West African countries like Burkina Faso, which has a prevalence of 22%. Nigeria has one of the lowest smoking prevalence rates among females, estimated at 1% of her population. This pales in comparison to countries like Papua New Guinea, Chile and the Russian Federation, which have smoking prevalence rates of 34%, 28% and 27%, respectively among females. Smoking prevalence is low when compared to alcohol prevalence rate at 6.7% of the entire population aged 15 and above. The median amount spent on one pack of 20 manufactured cigarettes is N187.70. The Nigerian global adult tobacco survey (GATS) published by the WHO showed that the median monthly expenditure on manufactured cigarettes was N1205.5. On the whole, Nigerians spend an average of N7.45 billion on tobacco monthly and N89.5 billion yearly. A lot of Nigerians are also exposed on a daily basis to Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) also known as "second-hand smoke". Overall, 29.3% of the populations are exposed in restaurants, while 17.3% are exposed to smoke in the work place ([cppresearch.org](http://cppresearch.org), 2016). Second hand smoke poses serious health risks worldwide, especially among infants. Infact, exposure to second hand smoke is one of the leading causes of preventable deaths. In a recent study published in the journal of American Medical Association, smoking causes more than 80% of lung cancer deaths as well as 77% of larynx cancer deaths. The harmful effect of tobacco use is what has motivated countries over the world to implement control measures on the consumption and advertisement of tobacco. The Nigerian government has over the years implemented measures aimed at controlling tobacco consumption among its population.

### Government efforts at reining in tobacco consumption

Till date, Nigeria has passed only two pieces of legislation aimed at controlling tobacco consumption among its citizens. These are the 1990 tobacco (smoking) control decree and the 2015 tobacco control act. The 1990 tobacco (smoking) control decree banned smoking in certain public places and advertisements of tobacco products among other provisions and remained in place until 2004 when the country signed the WHO framework convention on tobacco control. However, the bill took years to be incorporated into Nigeria laws. The slow passage of the bill and increasing health challenges led to the suing of "big tobacco" in 2007 by three Nigerian states (Lagos, Gombe and Kano) and the federal government. "Big Tobacco" a collective name used to refer to British

American Tobacco, Phillip Morris (Altria) and international Tobacco for \$38.6 billion. Subsequently, the Nigerian government withdrew the suit without any reason adduced for its withdrawal. Big tobacco has always influenced legislation aimed at restricting their activities or affecting their profits. In 2008, a draft reading of the Tobacco Control Bill passed through second reading in the Nigerian senate and then it went missing. In 2009, British American Tobacco (BAT) controller of the largest share of Nigeria's tobacco market allegedly coordinated lobbying efforts in stalling passage of the tobacco control bill. That same year, the tobacco control bill passed through the senate but never received the required presidential assent. The same situation repeated itself in 2011. The bill was finally signed into law by Nigeria's outgoing president, Goodluck Jonathan, hours to the end of his tenure on May 29, 2015 [7].

## World No Tobacco Day

The member states of the world health organization created world no tobacco day in 1987 to draw global attention to the tobacco epidemic and the preventable deaths and diseases it causes [4]. In 1987, the world health assembly passed resolution WHA 40.38 calling for 7<sup>th</sup> April, 1988 to be a "world no smoking day". In 1988, resolution WHA42.19 was passed calling for the celebration of world no tobacco day every year on 31<sup>st</sup> may. The objectives of the day were to urge tobacco users worldwide to abstain from using tobacco products for 24 h, an action they hoped would provide assistance for those trying to quit. Since 1988, the WHO has supported world no tobacco day every year, linking each year to a different tobacco related theme. 2016 world No tobacco day was themed "Get ready for plain packaging" the theme refers to measures to restrict or prohibit the use of logos, colors, brand images or promotional information on packaging other than brand names and product names displayed in a standard color and font style. In preparation for the event celebration on May 5, This day published a full page feature titled "Nigeria children at risk of flavored cigarette Addition", also on the same day Guardian did a full page feature titled 'watercress reduces cancer risk in smokers'. The theme for 2015 was "stop illicit trade of tobacco products" while 2014 was "Raise taxes on tobacco".

## Methodology

Three privately owned national dailies were content analyzed for this study. The papers are the guardian, thisday and sun newspapers. They were purposively selected based on their wide circulation. No national daily newspaper owned by government exists in Nigeria. This study was restricted to a period of three years (2014-2016). May and June editions of the selected newspapers were studied. World No tobacco day takes place on May 31 every year. It is expected that activities and programmes to mark world No tobacco day, including others issues on tobacco not directly tied to world No tobacco day, would be featured prominently in the media weeks before and after the day, including on that day. It is against this backdrop that all May and June editions of the selected newspapers were studied. This brings the total number of editions of the selected newspapers studied to 549. In finding smoking journalists' attitude towards coverage of the event and their perception of the campaign, 22 smoking journalist were purposively selected and interviewed. The researcher combined face to face interviews and telephone interviews in collecting the opinions and views of smoker journalists.

## Unit of Analysis and Content Category

**Themes of stories:** The themes of stories are categorized into:

activities and pronouncements of NGOs, Actions of the government, Enlightenment campaign/tobacco education and others.

**Prominence:** The prominence of the stories in the study was determined by the placement of the stories such as in: front page, editorial, back page, news page and inside page.

**Story sources:** The sources of story are categorized into: staff reporters/correspondent, foreign news agency and opinion and letters.

## Analysis and Discussion

As one can see from the above Tables (1.0, 1.1, 1.2), a good number of the stories on coverage of world no tobacco day carried in the three papers within the period under study were devoted to the enlightenment campaign/tobacco education. These are the typical "may cause or it causes" stories and accounts for 56 percent of tobacco related stories the guardian newspaper carried within the period of study; 100 percent of that of the sun and 25 percent of the thisday. On the activities and pronouncements of NGOs theme, 50 percent of tobacco stories in thisday were on the activities and pronouncements of NGOs and it accounted for 44% of tobacco stories in guardian. Only thisday had a story with theme on actions on government and it accounted for 12.5 percent, 12.5 stories on thisday also went to others. Just as sun have zero stories on theme of activities and pronouncements of NGOs.

## Prominence of Usage

This study was also concerned with prominence of usage of stories on world tobacco today. This is whether such stories were placed on the front page, back page, news pages and inside pages. The table below contains data on the prominence of usage of the stories in the three newspapers.

As Table 1.4 suggests, the guardian gave more prominence to world No tobacco day event compare to the other two newspapers. Though none of the stories appeared on the front page, editorial page and back page, the paper carried 7 reports on No tobacco day in the inside page which accounted for 77.8%. The paper's news page carried

| S. No | Theme                                    | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|--|-----------|------------|
| 1     | Activities and prouncements of NGO's     | 4         | 50         |
| 2     | Actions of government                    | 1         | 12.5       |
| 3     | Enlightenment campaign/tobacco education | 2         | 25         |
| 4     | Others                                   | 1         | 12.5       |
|       | Total                                    | 8         | 100        |

**Table 1.0:** Thematic focus of stories (Thisday) researcher content analysis 2016.

| S. No | Theme                                    | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|--|-----------|------------|
| 1     | Activities and prouncements of NGO's     | 4         | 44         |
| 2     | Actions of government                    | 0         | 0          |
| 3     | Enlightenment campaign/tobacco education | 5         | 56         |
| 4     | Others                                   | 0         | 0          |
|       | Total                                    | 9         | 100        |

**Table 1.1:** Thematic focus of stories (the guardian) researchers' content analysis 2016.

| S. No | Theme                                    | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|--|-----------|------------|
| 1     | Activities and prouncements of NGO's     | 0         | 0          |
| 2     | Actions of government                    | 0         | 0          |
| 3     | Enlightenment campaign/tobacco education | 3         | 100        |
| 4     | Others                                   | 0         | 0          |
|       | Total                                    | 3         | 100        |

**Table 1.2:** Thematic focus of stories (sun) researchers' content analysis 2016.

| S. No | Placement  | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|------------|-----------|------------|
| 1     | Front page | 0         | 0          |
| 2     | Editorial  | 0         | 0          |
| 3     | Back page  | 0         | 0          |
| 4     | News page  | 1         | 12.5       |
| 5     | Inside     | 7         | 87.5       |
| Total |            | 8         | 100        |

**Table 1.3:** Prominence of usage (Thisday) researchers' content analysis 2016.

| S. No | Placement  | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|------------|-----------|------------|
| 1     | Front page | 0         | 0          |
| 2     | Editorial  | 0         | 0          |
| 3     | Back page  | 0         | 0          |
| 4     | News page  | 2         | 22.2       |
| 5     | Inside     | 7         | 77.8       |
| Total |            | 9         | 100        |

**Table 1.4:** Prominence of Usage (The guardian) researchers' content analysis 2016.

| S. No | Placement  | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|------------|-----------|------------|
| 1     | Front page | 0         | 0          |
| 2     | Editorial  | 0         | 0          |
| 3     | Back page  | 0         | 0          |
| 4     | News page  | 0         | 0          |
| 5     | Inside     | 3         | 100        |
| Total |            | 3         | 100        |

**Table 1.5:** Prominence of usage (sun) researchers' content analysis 2016.

2 stories which accounted for 22.2% of world no tobacco day report in the paper within the period of the study. Just as the Guardian, Thisday Newspaper carried one story in its news page and it represents 12.5 percent of world no tobacco day news in the paper within the time of study. Also thisday as it can be seen on Table 1.3 carried 7 stories on its inside page which represents 87.5 percent of the stories carried in the paper within the period of study. The sun featured the three stories it has on its inside page (Table 1.5).

## Source of Stories

This study also sought to determine the sources of stories on world no tobacco day. In line with this objective, the following tables below shows how the world no tobacco day stories published in the three national papers was sourced.

As can be seen from Tables (1.6, 1.7 and 1.8) all the stories on world No tobacco day published in the three papers within the period of study were written by staff reporters and correspondents except thisday which had one story in form of opinion/letter which accounted for 12.5 percent.

## Demographic Data

In studying smoking journalists' attitude towards coverage of the event and their perception of the campaign, several items that constitute the demographic data were presented in Table 1.9 and simple percentages. The items are age group and gender.

The age group table above shows that the respondents cut across diverse age groups. 5 respondents according for 23 percent reported 24-28 years; 59 percent of the respondents were between the ages of 29-33 years; 18 percent of the respondents are between the age of 34 years and above.

| Source                     | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Staff/report/correspondent | 7         | 87.5       |
| Foreign news agencies      | 0         | 0          |
| Opinion/letters            | 1         | 12.5       |
| Total                      | 8         | 100        |

**Table 1.6:** Source of stories (thisday) researchers' content analysis 2016.

| Source                     | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Staff/report/correspondent | 9         | 100        |
| Foreign news agencies      | 0         | 0          |
| Opinion/letters            | 0         | 0          |
| Total                      | 9         | 100        |

**Table 1.7:** Sources of stories (the guardian) researchers' content analysis 2016.

| Source                     | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Staff/report/correspondent | 3         | 100        |
| Foreign news agencies      | 0         | 0          |
| Opinion/letters            | 0         | 0          |
| Total                      | 3         | 100        |

**Table 1.8:** Sources of stories (sun) researchers' content analysis 2016.

| Variable     | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------|-----------|---------|
| 24-28        | 5         | 23      |
| 29-33        | 13        | 59      |
| 34 And Above | 4         | 18      |
| Total        | 22        | 100     |

**Table 1.9:** Age group field survey, 2016.

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Male     | 20        | 91         |
| Female   | 2         | 9          |
| Total    | 22        | 100        |

**Table 2:** Gender field survey 2016.

The above Table 2 showed that 20 respondents representing 91 percent were males while 9 percent of the respondents were females.

What is the Attitude of Smoker Journalists towards Coverage of The Event?

In some face to face and telephone interviews the researcher had with the respondents, 15 of the smoker journalists informed the researcher that they wouldn't be comfortable covering world no tobacco day and other tobacco related issues. A smoking journalist with one of Nigeria National dailies by name Kingsley described himself covering the event as a "a judge sentencing himself" he further noted that he wouldn't want to cover the event. Another smoker journalist by name Kyrian noted that coverage of tobacco issues is better left with the non-smoking journalists, he further asserts that he would not be comfortable covering the event and for objective report on tobacco issues, the non-smoking colleagues should cover the event. However, 7 smoker journalists told the researcher that they wouldn't want their personal life to affect their job. A smoking journalist by name Phil, told the researcher that as a journalist, he owes the society of reporting issues including health risk and such report should be objective and devoid of any personal feelings and attitude.

What is the Perception of Smokers Journalist Towards the Campaign?

The respondents had various perception for the campaign as a "weak and less serious" campaign. A female smoking journalist by name Samantha told the researcher that for anti-tobacco campaign to

be taken serious, first the government needs to place ban on tobacco. She further noted that anything less than a ban on tobacco, the campaign is fighting a lost war. Another smoker journalist by name Tolu noted that the campaign has been over-laboured and overstressed, saying that even in cigarette packs and adverts, the campaign has always been there. Six of the respondents told the researcher that the campaign is a good and right one as it is a case of health risk. In the words of one of the respondents, it will be wrong to ignore a health risk behavior. However, 4 respondents could not tell the researcher their perception of the campaign one of those in this category when asked by the researcher said the campaign is just there.

## Discussion/Findings

The findings of the study are revealing. Findings show that enlightenment campaign/Tobacco education is the dominating reports on world No Tobacco day during the period of study. This finding dispels the outcome of study Newspaper coverage of HIV/AIDS and stigma by Kayoed et al. [14] which noted that government efforts and actions were the major themes dominating the report. Another finding of the study reveals that world No Tobacco day was not given enough prominence in the Newspaper as only 20 stories of inside page and news were published in 549 editions of the three Newspapers under study. This finding reinforces that position of Uwom and Olayede [15] which states that Newspapers do not give prominence to health issues by way of placement and giving it enough space. Gupta and Sinha citing Weber and Oso and Odunlami [16]. Supports this assertion that the health beat is not particularly high news yielding beat like politic sort the economy. In this study, most sources of stories on No Tobacco day were reporters/correspondents. This outcome/finding affirms Kayode J, et al. [14] Newspaper coverage of HIV/AIDS which showed that reporters/correspondents were the most source of stories on HIV/AIDS. Also, on findings moker journalist attitude towards coverage of the event, it was found that majority smoker will be uncomfortable to cover World No Tobacco day. This outcome reinforced by Okenwa [12] Social category theory which suggests that people of the same social category will respond to the mass communication message in more or less uniform ways. Finding of the study also reveal that majority of smoker journalists perceive No Tobacco day campaigns weak and less serious. This finding compliments the position of Okunna [17] social category theory which states that members of each subgroups belong to a social category, and are likely to have similar interests and attitudes which differ from those other social category and which determine which mass media they use and how they use them [18-22].

## Conclusion

After the study the following conclusions were drawn: the major theme dominating the report on the 2016 world no tobacco day is enlightenment campaign/ tobacco education. The reports and activities to mark 2016 world no tobacco day was not given enough prominence by the newspapers under study. Also reporters and correspondents are the sources of all the stories to mark 2016 world no tobacco day and majority of smoking journalist are not comfortable covering the event just as majority of them also perceive the campaign as a weak one.

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