

NEWSPAPER FRAMING OF COVID-19 VACCINE COVERAGE IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF THE GUARDIAN, DAILY TRUST AND NATION NEWSPAPERS

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Abstract

This study of Newspaper Framing of Covid-19 Vaccine Coverage in Nigeria: A Study of the *Guardian*, *Daily Trust* and *Nation* Newspapers. The study lasted seven months and fifteen days (March 2 to October 15, 2021). This period encompasses critical stages of vaccine rollout and public discourse, offering a comprehensive view of how news framing influenced vaccination campaigns. The study anchored on Framing Theory. The research adopted content analysis of three widely read Nigerian newspapers: *The Guardian*, *Daily Trust* and *The Nation*. The reason for choosing these newspapers was that they reported COVID-19 vaccines compared to other newspapers. Seventy-three (73) stories were coded out of 228 editions of newspapers under review. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

The study found that the framing of COVID-19 vaccines was not accorded the prominence they deserved. Prominence in this study was measured by the placement on the front page, but the stories were buried inside pages, suggesting that the newspapers in Nigeria did not give adequate attention to the vaccination campaign. The study also revealed that COVID-19 vaccine stories were not reported frequently as expected. Even though there were more COVID-19 vaccine-related stories for the period under review in the three selected newspapers, little was said about the COVID-19 vaccination campaign. The study concluded that the framing of COVID-19 vaccines in the newspapers has not been given adequate prominence in the vaccination drive. This was evident as COVID-19 vaccine supply/delivery was emphasised, yet only 4,680,000 Nigerians had been vaccinated against the virus, representing 2.34% of a population of 200 million. The study, therefore, recommended, among others, that newspapers should place COVID-19 vaccine stories on the front pages to give prominence to vaccine information. It could have encouraged people to get vaccinated instead of burying information inside pages of newspapers, and emphasis should be placed on the safety of the vaccines instead of supply/delivery. Nigerian newspapers should endeavour to frame vaccination stories in such a way as to stem the tendency of creating rumours and misinformation.

Keywords: Framing, COVID-19 Vaccination, Newspaper, Vaccination

Introduction

Newspapers have remained a vital resource during any pandemic in the 21st century. The role of newspapers was witnessed during Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003, Ebola in 2014, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in 2015 and now the COVID-19 pandemic (Mutua & Oloo, 2020). The basis of news framing is that the newspaper focuses on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning. This field of meaning can affect the audience's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours by connecting a particular meaning or interpretation of the issue (Ajashi & Alawari, 2020). Since the HIV/AIDs crisis in the 1980s, the media have taken a leading role in informing the public about emerging infectious diseases that have the potential to affect large populations (Gerlach, 2016). This means that when a disease outbreak emerges, the news media play a crucial role in organising everyday reality about the problem, providing meaning to the unfolding stripes of events and promoting a particular definition of the outbreak, providing causal interpretation, moral responsibility and recommendations for the prevention of the disease. Therefore, news framing involves a communication source presenting and defining an issue (Claes, 2016).

When the COVID-19 vaccine was introduced, millions turned to newspapers for the latest updates, information and advice from researchers, government officials, and disease experts on whether to comply with the vaccination campaign. This decision is dependent on how the newspaper presents the vaccination story. The media acts as the bridge between public awareness and understanding of vaccination (Hirnelsen, 2020). The way newspapers framed COVID-19 vaccine stories will go a long way in determining how people react to the stories. Perhaps this makes the good claim that "frames that paradigmatically dominate news are also believed to dominate audience" (Ogbodo, Onwe, Chukwu, Nwasum, Nwakpu, Nwaakwo, Nwamini, Elem & Ogbaeji, 2020, p. 265). The way information is framed during vaccination campaigns, Ophir (2018) posits, is crucial for improving disease prevention, minimising spread and impact and advancing treatment. The news media, therefore, help monitor and track the evolving science about the virus, prevention and treatment, and the recommended policy response.

According to Ufuohu-Biri and Bebenibo (2021), newspapers shape public perception of how they interpret the Covid-19 pandemic. They facilitate the massive dissemination of information by the government and health authorities through frames to prevent the spread of the disease. When journalists select and produce news, how they frame it is crucial for citizens' understanding of the issue (Vreese & Letcher, 2019). Supporting this view, Mtewa, Ndege, Atela, Alam, and Kinyanjui (2021) posit that information tailored to specific audiences can influence individual decisions whether those individuals take the vaccine or not. Vaccine compliance and hesitancy remain a global challenge, but the worst hit is in developing countries. Because of this, Soyemi, Ewedairo and Olomofe (2021) assert that vaccine refusal can lead to disease outbreaks, with a typical example seen during the polio outbreaks in Northern Nigeria in 2003, leading to a significant rise in polio incidence in the country. This refusal was sparked by rumours that vaccines were unsafe and aimed at controlling the sterility of a religious set as well as spreading HIV. This may be the reason President Muhammad Buhari says his decision to take the COVID-19 vaccine in public was "a demonstration of leadership and faith in the safety and efficacy of the vaccine Jimoh (2021, p.7). The fact that Covid-19 is a dreaded disease affecting all sectors of society and its impact made it a news subject in Nigeria's newspapers. Nigerian newspapers, especially, are saturated with stories covering various aspects of the pandemic, including straight news, features, editorials, and vaccine discussions. The frames these newspapers use to report the COVID-19 vaccines and their impact on the people usually have the power to influence their decisions on whether those individuals take the vaccines.

The news framing of COVID-19 vaccines in newspapers often manifests by the choice of keywords, phrases and images which reinforce a particular presentation of the reality and a specific emotion towards it, and the omission of other elements often suggests a different perspective or triggers a different sentiment. It can also be observed in the journalist's selection of whom to quote, what to quote and where this quote will be placed in the story. This decision often gives different interpretations to COVID-19 vaccine stories. The selection process is also known to be influenced by multiple factors, including the journalist's personal belief system, his working conditions, the editorial position and journalistic practices in media organisations,

as well as more distant factors such as the economic environment, the political climate, and the border ideological and cultural conditions prevalent in the society.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the urgent and compelling need for the COVID-19 vaccination, considerable COVID-19 vaccine apathy and profound non-compliance are still ingrained among the public. Therefore, the vaccine's compliance remains low globally and in Africa, especially in Nigeria. At the current rate, Nigeria may likely fall short of its Covid-19 vaccination aspirations. It is unlikely that Nigeria will vaccinate more than 15% of its target population. Similarly, about 111 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in Nigeria as of February 5, 2023 (WHO, 2023). Only 30.5% of the Nigerian population have had full COVID-19 vaccination as of February 2023 (Mathieu, Ritchie, Rodes-Guirao, Appel, Giattino & Hasell, 2023). This rate is equally low relative to the 211 million population. Hence, the country missed the WHO's 70% vaccination coverage target by the end of June 2022 (Idris, Ayeni, Adebisi, 2022). This is particularly worrisome given the prevailing non-compliance among the health workforce and the population who are most at risk of severe COVID-19 infection (the elderly and people with co-morbidity), who appear to be more reluctant to take the jabs. If the vaccination target is not met, the epidemic will persist and continue to cause unnecessary loss of lives, which has implications for poor mobility and mortality indices (Olu-Abiodun, Abiodun & Okafor, 2022).

This situation poses public health risks when vaccines are available, yet people continue to die of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is, therefore, evident that the perception of many might be influenced by the channel of information and their long-held beliefs. Also, there is concern that the framing of COVID-19 vaccine-related information drives genuine questions about vaccination's benefits and safety. This makes vaccine non-compliance a critical issue in Nigeria and may be linked to the influence of newspaper reports. It was reported that only 30.5% of the Nigerian population have full Covid-19 vaccination as of February 2023. This rate, therefore, is low compared to the 211 million population, hence the country's inability to meet WHO's 70% vaccination coverage target by the end of June 2022. The issues raised above, therefore,

necessitate this present study on the newspaper framing of the COVID-19 vaccination drive in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine Newspaper Framing of Covid-19 Vaccine Coverage in Nigeria: A Study of the *Guardian*, *Daily Trust* and *Nation* Newspapers, while the specific objectives are to:

- i. Assess the level of prominence given to COVID-19 vaccination stories
- ii. Determine the frequency of stories on COVID-19 vaccination coverage
- iii. Examine specific solutions framing proffered on COVID-19 vaccination coverage in Nigeria.

Research Questions

- i. What are the levels of prominence given to COVID-19 vaccination stories?
- i. How frequent are stories on COVID-19 vaccination coverage?
- ii. What are the specific solutions proffered on COVID-19 vaccination coverage in Nigeria?

Review of Related Literature

Framing is a growing area in communication research focusing on how media present a specific topic by drawing attention to specific issues at the expense of others, the various factors and actors that may exert influence on this selection process, and the potential impact news framing may have on its audience's perceptions and actions. Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) explain that media framing is based on the notion that how an issue is characterised in the news reports can impact how the audience interprets the story. Therefore, the media has the power to generate a specific reaction from the public based on how the story is portrayed. The way in which news is covered by the press can affect how receivers of that news come to understand the events. Recipients of the news story build their opinions based on how the news story was framed and their own individual frames. Frames allow readers to interpret and elevate new information by separating it into recognizable categories. News frames are

interesting as "they constitute an exercise (intentional, or quite often, unintentional) of journalistic power; frame can draw attention toward and confer legitimacy upon particular aspects of reality while marginalised other aspects (Lawrence, 2000, p.93).

Framing has been explored by various scholars and has been defined in various ways. According to Chong and Drunckman (2007), an individual's attitude has a major influence on how one interprets media. In addition to attitude, selection and salience are categorised within framing. Entman (1993) explains that to frame a story is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation. The press highlights a certain piece of information about main topic of a news story, which raises the salience of the issue. The term salience means "making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to the audience (Entman, 1993, p.53). An increase in salience improves the probability that the audience will remember the information. Information can be added or taken out according to the message that media want to communicate to the public. For a better understanding of the press framing, Entman (1993) explains four illustrations of the theoretical debates in the study of communication. The first illustration discussed is audience autonomy. One of the key concepts to the framing concept is the notion of dominant framing. "From a framing perspective, dominant meaning consists of the problem, causal evaluative and treatment interpretations with the highest probability of being noticed, processed, and accepted by most people. The dominant meaning can be identified by a particular framing of a situation that is frequently mentioned in the text and is the most common opinion among the audience.

Next, journalistic objectivity is discussed. "Journalists may follow the rules for 'objective' reporting and yet convey a dominant framing of the news text that prevents most audience members from making a balanced assessment of a situation" (Entman 1993, p. 56). Since some journalists lack the understanding of framing, they can unknowingly impose their dominant frames on the news. If they had a better understanding of the difference between "including scattered oppositional facts and challenging a dominant frame, they might be better prepared to build news stories that make each issue equally salient. The next item discussed is content

analysis. Content analysis has "the major task of determining textual meaning and the identity of frames in the media. The coders need to be aware of drawing conclusions about dominant meanings. Proper coding instruction and agreement can result in valid results about issues and the frames that are being portrayed in the media. Public opinion and normative democratic theory are the final elements mentioned.

Furthermore, Claes (2005, p.54) classifies frames to be either generic or issue-specific. Generic frames "transcend thematic limitations and can be identified in relation to different topics, some even over time and in different cultural contexts." Generic news frames focus on coverage of politics, for instance, and can be further particularised to a specific election. On the other hand; issue-specific news frames "are pertinent only to specific topics or events". Such issues can be terrorism, women's movements, social justice movements, labour disputes, health, immigration, et cetera. Therefore, depending on the research area, underscoring media frames can help determine a news material's particular focus.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Framing Theory.

Framing Theory

Framing theory was used to prosecute this study. A sociologist by the name of Erving Goffman suggested the theory in 1974. In Goffman's view, human beings typically make meaning of events around them using key points called frames. The fundamental point in framing is not on the number of stories but the media's angle in reporting an issue (Marcus, Alom & Joseph, 2020). According to Entman (1993), to frame a communicating text or message is to promote certain facets of a perceived reality and make them more salient in such a way that endorses a specific problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation. According to Entman (1993), to frame a communicating text or message is to promote certain facets of a perceived reality and make them more salient in such a way that endorses a specific problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation. The concept of framing theory is related to the agenda-setting tradition but expands the research by focusing on the essence of the issues at hand rather than on a particular

topic. In short, a frame emphasises the salience of different aspects of a topic. While agenda-setting theory deals with the salience of issues, framing is concerned with presenting the problems (Claes, 2005). He further explains that a frame provides a way to understand an event or issue.

Similarly, Cappella and Jamieson (1997) state that considering any production feature of verbal or visual texts as a candidate for a news frame is a too broad view. They suggested four criteria that a frame must meet. First, a news frame must have identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics. Second, it should commonly be observed in journalistic practice. Third, it must be possible to distinguish the frame reliably from other frames. Fourth, a frame must have representational validity. This implies that the choice of language is, of course, vital because language evokes frames- moral and conceptual frames. The most comprehensive empirical approach to news framing is offered by Tankard (2002), who suggests a list of eleven framing mechanisms or vocal points for identifying or measuring news headlines, subheads, photos, photo captions, and leads. Others are source selection, quote selection, pull quotes, logos, statistics and charts, and concluding statements and paragraphs. This implies that news framing is very dependent on the content being analyzed based on the topic and content. This theory is relevant to the current study because frames can impact how media audiences think about COVID-19 and accept the vaccination being introduced by the Federal Government. News framing acknowledges the ability of the media message to define a situation like COVID-19 and deter misinformation and rumours about taking the vaccine through their presentation. Public health advocates can use the media to influence decision-makers and audiences to develop and support health policies.

Methodology

The research adopted content analysis; content analysis was used to analyze how Nigerian newspapers framed/depicted COVID-19 vaccines. The newspaper editions (for the content analysis) comprised 228 editions of *The Nation*, *Daily Trust*, and *The Guardian* newspapers for the period of seven months (2nd March-15th October 2021; this time frame is considered appropriate because it is the peak of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign in Nigeria. The three selected newspapers were selected because they feature high readership and are influential in

setting the tone for reporting the coronavirus pandemic in Nigeria. In determining the sample size for the study, the researcher used Stempel's (1952) Composite week sampling to determine 228 editions of selected newspapers (*The Guardian*, *Daily Trust* and *The Nation*) starting from March 2 to October 15 2021 (76 days). To give the three newspapers under review equal opportunity of representation, the researcher used the constructed week sampling method for the three newspapers (*The Nation*, *Daily Trust*, and *The Guardian*).

In order words, a calendar was constructed for each of the editions, beginning from March 2, 2021. The instrument used in this study is Stampel's constructed week. Using this method in quantitative content analysis, the study adopted an interval of three days that is, 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, and 29 for a month (March=10 days, April=10days, May=10days, June= 10 days, July=11 days, August=10 days, September=10days and October =5days) = 76 days per newspaper. The total sample size, therefore, was three newspapers (76 days multiplied by three is 228), which yielded editions that were content analyze d.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Placement of stories on Covid-19 vaccines

Placement	The Guardia	Daily Trust	The Nation	Total
Front page	6	2	1	9 (12.3%)
Inside page	25	16	22	63(86.3%)
Back page	1	0	0	1(1.4%)
Total	32	18	23	73 (100%)

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 1 revealed the placement of stories on COVID-19 vaccines. One out of eight stories appeared in the front page of the selected newspapers, with *The Guardian* having the highest number of placements on the front pages. In comparison, the inside page had six out of seven stories, with *The Guardian* recording the highest than other newspapers, and the back page

reported one out of seventy-three stories as *The Guardian* had the highest, while *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* had no story reported at the back pages of the selected newspapers. This implied that most COVID-19 vaccine information was presented inside pages of newspapers under study. The front and back pages were given less attention in its presentations.

Table 2: Frequency of stories on COVID-19 vaccines reported

Month	The Guardia	Daily Trust	The Nation	Total
March	9	4	5	18 (24.6%)
April	3	2	0	5 (6.84%)
May	1	2	5	8 (10.9%)
June	5	2	5	12(16.4%)
July	3	5	1	9 (12.3%)
August	4	3	4	11(15.0%)
September	6	0	1	7(9.5%)
October	1	0	2	3(4.1%)
Total	32	18	23	73 (100%)

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 2 shows the frequency of stories on Covid-19 vaccines reported. In March 2021, the highest number of COVID-19 vaccine stories was recorded, coinciding with the initial wave of vaccine introduction and heightened public interest in understanding the vaccination process. In April and May 2021, there was a drought of COVID-19 vaccine news stories, but in June, July and August of the same year, coverage surged as the second wave of vaccine

administration began. News stories began to taper off in September and October 2021, reflecting a shift in news priorities.

Table 3: The issues treated in the coverage of COVID-19 vaccines.

Treatments	The Guardia	Daily Trust	The Nation	Total
Vaccine confidence	8	5	10	23(31.5%)
Vaccine mandatory	9	0	3	12 (6.4%)
Vaccine availability	5	3	2	10 (13.7%)
Astra Zeneca vaccine	6	3	2	11 (15.1 %)
Vaccine awareness	2	2	4	8 (11.0%)
J & J vaccine	1	3	2	6 (8.2%)
Moderna vaccine	1	2	0	3 (4.1%)
Total	32	18	23	73 (100%)

Source: Field Survey 2023

From the table above, data revealed the issues treated in Nigeria's coverage of the COVID-19 vaccination drive. The findings suggested vaccine confidence, mandatory vaccine, availability, and Astra Zeneca vaccine. Others included vaccine awareness, the J & J vaccine, and the Moderna vaccine. This finding implied that newspapers' suggestions on the issues treated in the coverage of COVID-19 vaccines supported the vaccination drive but were ineffective in encouraging the vaccination drive.

Discussion of Findings

Similarly, as revealed from the findings, these news stories were buried inside the pages of the selected newspapers, and it could be said that newspapers did not promote the COVID-19

vaccination drive adequately. This is based on the data from Table 1, which revealed the placements of COVID-19 vaccine stories where the inside page had six out of seven stories. This placement shapes how news reports are framed. Supporting this finding, Thuesen (2020) asserts that the press's involvement in news stories could be noticed in terms of 'where' on the newspapers (front, inside or back page). The decision on where a news item appears on the pages of a newspaper and through which format can make such stories salient. Cater (2013) also emphasises that the most important pertinent stories are usually on the front page. Entman (1993) also illustrates this finding that text can make bits of information more salient by placement. It can be deduced from the above data that Covid-19 vaccine stories are not given adequate attention. Not paying adequate attention to COVID-19 vaccine stories could have been one of the reasons for hesitancy and misinformation among the public.

The study found that the Covid-19 vaccines' stories were not given the frequency they deserved. Even though there were more stories about COVID-19 vaccines for the period under review in the three newspapers, little was said about the COVID-19 vaccination campaign. This finding resonates with an observation by Oronje et al. (2011) that the media house majorly focuses on stories that bring revenue, such as advertisements and other stories such as political news rather than health news. Newspapers have the potential to promote a successful health awareness campaign. They can disseminate timely messages to the audience (Nelson, Kehinde, Williams & Soola, 2014). Findings also revealed that building vaccine confidence is one of the suggestions for promoting the vaccination drive. This was evident as reported by Olaniyi (2021) in *Daily Trust* newspaper that President Muhammadu Buhari's decision to take the COVID-19 vaccines publicly was a demonstration of leadership and faith in the safety and efficacy of the vaccines. Notwithstanding debates on vaccines, at present, it is still a very wise measure to adopt. So, NCDC and other relevant government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDGs) should persuasively dispel and latch on to the facts to discount the misinformation and build vaccine confidence with expert views (Editorial, 2021) of *The Guardian* newspaper.

The researcher also found that the Astra Zeneca vaccine was safe, as the newspaper suggested in a way to promote the COVID-19 vaccination campaign. It was reported that the Yobe State

Committee on Prevention and Control of COVID-19 has called on the people to disregard any misinformation and rumour against the Oxford/Astra Zeneca vaccine, that it remains safe and effective and suggested for the citizens to make themselves available for vaccination. Agidi (2020) also reported in the *Daily Trust* newspaper that the Astra Zeneca vaccine was safe and urged Nigerians to ignore the conspiracy theories and misinformation, stressing that no known adverse vaccine effect has been recorded. In making COVID-19 vaccines compulsory, data showed that Edo State Governor Godwin Obaseki and his Ondo State counterpart had made efforts to make COVID-19 vaccines compulsory to increase vaccination compliance.

Their effort was criticised because not only do they not have enough doses to make vaccination compulsory, let alone bar the unvaccinated people from accessing public facilities such as hospitals, banks, markets, and worship centres, but they have remained unpersuasive about the vaccine's efficacy. Another coverage by news media on the COVID-19 vaccination drive was making vaccines available. Osuntokun (2021) confirmed in *The Nation* newspaper that the number of vaccines given to Nigeria was meagre considering her population. It was suggested that if Covid-19 were available, most Nigerians would line up and get the lifesaving shot. Data from the findings has also shown that newspaper reports confirmed global scarcity of COVID-19 vaccines due to high demand, especially in countries where vaccines are being produced. Findings from this study also revealed that creating vaccine awareness is a way to increase the vaccination drive. Supporting this finding, Diedong (2013) avers that creating awareness is crucial to influencing people's behaviour and health-seeking attitudes. According to Emorinken (2021), as published by *The Nation* newspaper, more information and education programmes should be stepped up due to misinformation to create more awareness of the need for citizens to be vaccinated. *Daily Trust* also suggested that NPHCDA must educate and encourage Nigerians about vaccination campaigns.

Highlighting the importance of public awareness during the outbreak of the pandemic, Asaolu, Ifijeh, Iwu-James, and Osayande (2016) opine that it can not be overemphasised as a lack of awareness can lead to confusion, fear and misconceptions. Opuke and Umar (2020) contend that the Nigerian press has done well in creating awareness of the pandemic outbreak but has not been effective in educating the public on preventive measures to take. In view of this, the

study suggested awareness as one of the news media treatments for the COVID-19 vaccination drive. Data from the study also showed that the press suggested the Janseen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine to achieve the Covid-19 vaccination drive. Akor (2021) reported in the *Daily Trust* newspaper that after a thorough evaluation, the NAFDAC Vaccine Committee concluded that the vaccine data met the efficacy and quality criteria. The data showed that the vaccine's known and potential benefits outweigh its known and potential risks, thereby supporting the manufacturers' recommended use to cushion the spread of the pandemic. This, therefore, explains the facts and anticipated delays in the subsequent supply of the vaccines to Nigeria.

Findings from the study also indicated the advantage of the Janseen COVID-19 vaccine; the single-dose vaccine will be a viable tool to interrupt the spread of the pandemic, especially in rural areas, riverine and hard-to-reach places. It would be more beneficial for Nigeria, given its huge difficult terrains and weak systems for keeping track of people and logistics involved in delivering the second doses. This finding suggests that since people complained of the cumbersome process of the Oxford-Astra Zeneca vaccine, requiring one to take the first and second jabs to be fully protected, Johnson & Johnson can be recommended for just a dose, and the stress would be over. The Moderna vaccine was the last suggestion by news media on the Covid-19 vaccine. Nigeria received 4.8 million doses of the Moderna vaccine on August 1, 2021, through the COVAX facility, which NAFDAC approved for onward administration. Data from the finding showed that NAFDAC confirmed the doses of the Moderna vaccine donated to Nigeria by the United States of America were "safe and meant to save lives.

The findings suggested vaccine confidence, mandatory vaccine, availability, and Astra Zeneca vaccine. Others included vaccine awareness, the J & J vaccine, and the Moderna vaccine. This finding implied that newspapers' suggestions on the issues treated in the coverage of COVID-19 vaccines supported the vaccination drive but were ineffective in encouraging the vaccination drive.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis in this study, it is clear that the framing of COVID-19 vaccines in the newspapers has not been given adequate prominence in vaccination coverage. From the data,

information about COVID-19 vaccines was buried on the inside pages, which suggests that the newspapers did not give adequate attention to the vaccination drive. The study found that the Covid-19 vaccine stories were not given the frequency they deserved. Even though there were more stories about COVID-19 vaccines for the period under review in the three newspapers, little was said about the COVID-19 vaccination campaign. The newspapers suggested having confidence in the vaccines, creating awareness, and making vaccines compulsory, which were the treatments or suggestions made by newspapers to encourage vaccination campaigns.

Recommendations

- i. Newspapers should consider front pages when presenting vaccination stories instead of burying information on the inside pages, and emphasis should be placed on the safety of the vaccines instead of the supply/delivery.
- ii. Newspapers should step up in the coverage of vaccine information to combat the widespread rumours and misinformation about future pandemics.
- iii. The press should focus more on building confidence and increasing awareness by sensitizing and educating the public to have a positive attitude toward and acceptance of future vaccines.

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