

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MEDIA COVERAGE OF WHISTLEBLOWING CASES

Ovie Sandra OCHUKO * Feriha Dikmen DELİCEIRMAK**

ABSTRACT: The way and manner, in which whistle blowing stories are told and constructed by the media, affect and influences the way the public view whistle blowers. For a whistle blowing story to receive attention from the media, it must fit with the prevailing news agenda and predominant social and economic trends. Through a comparative discourse and quantitative content analysis, the study concludes that with laws that protect the whistle blowers from victimization and retaliation, a legal framework that promotes, make ease the whistle blowing process, ensure that agencies investigate, respond to whistle blowers claims and protect whistle blowers in the public sectors. A sound media that exposes persecution of whistle blowers and penalty for employers both in the public and private sector that maltreat whistle blowers, more persons can come forward to expose misconduct.

Key Words: Media, Whistle-blower, Protection laws, Discourse analysis

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MEDYADAKİ MUHBİRLİK DURUMLARININ KARŞILAŞTIRILMALI ANALİZİ

ÖZ: Bilgi uçurma hikâyelerinin medya tarafından anlatıldığı ve oluşturulduğu yol kamuoyunun muhbirlere karşı bakışını etkiler. Bir ihbar hikâyesinin medyanın dikkatini çekmesi için, haber gündemine, baskın sosyal ve ekonomik eğilimlere uyması gerekir. Karşılaştırmalı bir söylem ve nicel içerik analizi yoluyla, çalışma, ihbarcıları mağduriyet ve misillemeye karşı koruyan yasalarla, ihbar sürecini teşvik eden, kolaylaştıran, kurumların soruşturmasını, ihbarcıların iddialarına yanıt vermesini ve korumasını sağlayan yasal bir çerçeve olduğu sonucuna varmaktadır. Muhbirlere karşı zulmü, hem kamuda hem de özel sektörde muhbirlere kötü muamelede bulunan işverenlere verilen cezaları ortaya koyan medya, suistimalleri ortaya çıkarmak için daha fazla kişi öne çıkabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Medya, Muhbir, Koruma yasaları, Söylem analizi..

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1. INTRODUCTION

Corruption is a serious scourge that exposes Nigeria and countries around the world to economic, social and developmental decline. Many developing and developed countries lose unquantifiable financial resources yearly due to corrupt practices in the public and private sectors. According to Transparency International, (T.I) 2013, irrespective of a country's economic, political system and level of development, corruption exist in the public and private sectors which poses a grave danger to the advancement of human rights. The revelation of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices by persons or organizations that may be harmful to the general public by both past and present members of that organization according to Near and Miceli (1985) is known as whistle blowing. Brennan and Kelly (2007) stated that there is no general definition of whistle-blowing. For one to say freedom of expression and free press exist in a modern day democracy, ordinary individual should be able to reveal to journalist information that exposes corrupt practices and injustice with the aim to right the wrong and bring those actions to public knowledge.

The whistle blower and the media may have shared interest, simultaneous interest or contrary interest this plays out when the media and the whistle blower are on common ground which justifies their corporation while contrary interest is often neglected by the media as the media seeks news stories that fit into its regular framework and audiences (Es, R., & Smit, G. 2003). Whistle blowing does not only exist in an organization it also cut across both the private and public sectors including the government. Government whistle blowing is said to be the revelation of illegal classified government information or state secrets to the media with the aim of challenging the distribution and use of power. This kind of whistle blowing is generally applauded by both the public and the government however whistle blowing that involves the leaking of confidential information involving national security is greatly criticized (Kines, C. M. 2013 & Candice Delmas 2015). We should not fail to note that the major aim of whistle blowing is the fight against corruption.

In order to complement efforts on the fight against corruption in Nigeria by agencies such as EFCC, (ICPC), etc., President Buhari in 2016, announced his decision to adopt whistle blowing policy with the promise of rewarding whistle blowers who exposes the fraud and other related crimes in the public or private sectors (Adetayo, 2016; Nwabughio, 2016). The decision was received with mixed feelings. While the majority perceives the decision as following the right part, others maintained that it's a waste of time and resources. This was so because of the implications that follow whistle blowing and the risk of retaliation from the organization be it the public or private sector. According to Transparency International (2014) Australia is one of the leading countries with the best whistle blowing policy. It was first introduced into the Australian parliament in the year 1993 with the aim of protecting their citizens from the repercussions of whistle blowing from their employers and colleagues. William (1995) whistle blowers protection in the work place was introduced in 2001 in the Australian corporations act. (Pascoe & Welsh 2011). The whistle blowers protection laws in Australia will be used as a standard, being one of the leading countries with the best whistle blowers protection laws to compare and analyze the whistle blowers protection laws in Nigeria for the following reasons. First, both countries practice the common law. Second, they are both common wealth nations and finally Australia's advanced whistle blowing policy and protection laws. With this in mind, what are the differences in the whistleblower's protection laws in Nigeria and Australia, how effective are the whistle blowing laws in Nigeria compared to Australia, how do the media cover

retaliation and victimization stories of whistle blowers in Nigeria and how do the media frame whistle blowing news stories in Nigeria and Australia?

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1 Whistle Blowing

Investigative journalist may be the most popular contact for whistleblowers as the professional functions of investigative journalists are to discover and expose wrongdoing. To have a clear understanding of whistle blowing, it should be viewed as a process instead of an event. Near and Miceli (1985) gave a clear theory for the approach of whistle blowing and this will be serve as a guide in this study. It was stated that the act of whistle blowing involves the whistleblower, the complaint, the party the complaint is made against and the party or organization where the complaint is made. All these are the elements of whistle blowing act. There are so many definitions on whom a whistle blower is but I will also like to note for the course of this study that a whistle blower is also some who lacks authority or legitimate base of power to change the wrong activities going on within his organization and must rely on another organization or party to make or effect those changes. Their lack of power is one of the main reasons they seek anonymity however this negatively affects the credibility of the whistle blowing act.

1.2 Steps Involved in Whistle Blowing

Whistle blowing is a process that is made up of four (4) sets of decisions made by the whistle blower and the organization or government whistled against. First, the whistle blower must decide if the actions or activities of the organization or government are illegitimate or harmful to society (Near and Miceli, 1985). However, at this point what is deemed illegal or immoral is in direct proportion with the whistleblower's personal values. Second, they know where to report the said misconduct. Immediately the whistle is blown on an organization or a government, it is only natural for them to respond one way or another. The organization or government must take action whether or not they validate the whistle blowers complaints or charges by either ignoring or silencing the whistle blower. This is often done by discrediting the whistleblower's charges or complaints.

1.3 Factors Influencing Whistle Blowing Process and Outcome

1.3.1 Motivation Act

A potential whistle blower is mostly concerned with the efficacy of his actions. In line with the theory of expectancy by Vroom (1964); a potential whistle blower's motivation to blow the whistle is in line with the expectancy that the outcome of his actions will lead to:

- Managerial attention to the wrongful actions.
- Recognition
- Public attention to the said misconduct or illegitimate actions and so on.

1.3.2 Circumstances Surrounding the Questionable Activity

There are two actions that May likely lead to whistle blowing. First, an act committed by at least one member of an organization/government or an outsider whose

action is under managerial control, and is viewed or perceived by another member as wrongful. Second, actions and outcomes viewed by a member as wrongful as a result of the inaction of another member or a connected outside.

1.3.3 Individual Characteristics

This is a very important factor in whistle blowing because the individual level of morality is necessary for determining if an observer a wrongful act will take action to correct it or not. Personality factors such as self-esteem, confidence, etc. also play an important role.

1.3.4 Power Relation

This is one of the most important variables of the whistle blowing process.

- The motivation of an observer to blow the whistle
- The responses of powerful others to the complaints received.

1.3.5 Dependence on the Whistle Blowing Channel

Observers of illegitimate activities will most likely blow the whistle if they believe that the channel through which the whistle is blown is reliable and will cause a stoppage of the wrongful act. Observer's dependence on either internal or external whistle blowing channels is as a result of personal observation or experience on organizational behavior, policies or practices, employment discrimination and working condition (Near & Miceli 1985).

1.3.6 Organizations Dependence

As earlier mentioned, whistle blowing responses by organization is one of the following: (Near & Miceli, 1985:11)

- Acknowledge and correct the wrongful activity and reward the whistle blower for providing useful information
- Organizations may try to co-opt the whistle blower (demote him or assign another role to him where he will not have enough information or credibility to be taken seriously)
- Organization will prevent the flow of information to the whistle blower and the communication of observed wrong doing to other,
- The organization may challenge the credibility of the whistle blower thus decreasing the amount of attention received
- The organization may retaliate in a punishable way, as an example to would be whistle blower

1.3.7 Organizations Dependence upon the Questioned Activity

The dependence of an organization on the said wrong doing or illegitimate activities is in direct proportion to the level of response the whistle blowing act will get. The severity of the misconduct determines the level of threat the whistle blowing act is to the organization. The greater the threat, the more likely the whistle blower will be punished or silenced by the organization.

1.4 The Media and Whistleblowing Stories

Journalist are often on the look out for news information, to get a news worthy story. This information could either be a person or a document, sometimes both. Persons that approach journalist with a news worthy story are either a witness to a crime or a whistle blower. It can be considered at this point that where and how an information is obtained by a journalist greatly determines how credible or trustworthy the public will regard their news report or story. The way and manner in which the stories are told and constructed by the media affects and influences the way the public view whistleblowers. Whistle blowing stories are often told from a neutral angle and before the stories are aired, they must fit with the prevailing news agenda and predominant social and economic trend (Wahl-Jourgensen & Hunt 2012).

1.5 Whistle Blowing and News Reliability

In recent times, the attention given to every complaints or claim by an individual or a group is measured in accordance to how it reflects the public or the complainers interest. This reflects the challenges whistle blowers face and must overcome when blowing the whistle, as the public or complaints receiver may think or perceive that the whistle blower purposefully distorts or exaggerated their claims. It must be considered at this point that the more a claim or complaints promotes the whistle blowers interest, the more likely it loses its credibility and reliability to those who not share the same interest i.e. state agencies and the news media.

1.6 WhistleBlowing Protection Laws

1.6.1 NigeriaWhistle-Blower Act

This is a law that protects Nigerias in both the private and public sectors that report any misconduct in their organizations. They are encouraged to report any kind of information or activity that is illegal or unethical. The whistleblowers can choose to operate within an organization or involve a third party.

1.6.1.1 Salient Features of Nigeria's Whistle BlowerAct

- This act makes provisions to protect the persons making public interest revelation of actions related corruption, abuse of power, or felonious acts by a public servant.
- It provides revelations can be made to Central or StateVigilance Commission by any member of the public and private service including members of non-governmental organizations.
- The Vigilance Commission must not reveal the identity of the whistleblower except the head of department considers it necessary and the complaint must include the identity of the complainant.
- The Act disciplines any person who has revealed the identity of the complainant.
- The Act recommends consequences for knowledgeably making false complaints.

1.6.2 Whistle Blowers Protection Laws in Australia

To have an effective whistle blowing in government institutions attention should not only be placed on legislations and regulations, it should also be placed on processes and governance frameworks within organizations.

1.7 Public Interest Disclosure Bill (WHISTLE BLOWING) 2013

The aim of the Public Interest Disclosure Bill also known as whistle blowing bill is to create a framework to promote and to make ease the reporting of wrong doing by public officials in the public sector. The purpose of this bill was to ensure that agencies investigate and respond to whistle blowers and provide adequate protection for public officials who blow the whistle.

1.7.1 Salient aspects of the Public Interest Disclosure Bill 2013

- The whistle blower protection law has a wide coverage that cut across all public sectors in the commonwealth which includes Australian public service and statutory agencies, common wealth authorities, military force, parliamentary departments, contractors for common wealth contracts.
- Behaviors can be disclosed if it falls within the perception of misconduct in the public sector. An action that relates to political or financial issues which a person disagrees with is not regarded as a whistle blowing issue. Therefore, the bill does not provide a policy for people to stir up political grievances.
- Whistle blowers can disclose misconducts to their supervisor within the public service or to the disclosure officer of that particular agency.
- Under certain conditions, a whistle blower can make his complaints to the media or a member of the parliament. If a whistle blower believes that the investigation into his complaints was inadequate. For him to be protected, he must first make his disclosure internally.
- Provision for emergency disclosures was also made. This can only apply when there is considerable and impending danger to the health and safety of the environment. Internal disclosures can be by-passed and made public in agreement with specific conditions.
- The common wealth ombudsman office will supervise and assist agencies and whistleblowers to understand and adequately obey the law. The office will supervise agencies decision and provide annual reports to parliament on the operations of the scheme.
- The Inspector General of Intelligence and Security will supervise the Intelligence Agencies. Issues related to Intelligence agencies and Intelligence information, are not permitted to be externally disclosed.

1.8 Whistle Blowers Protection Act 2019

Australia is at the fore front of whistle blowers protection for the private sector as it passed in December 2018 the Enhancing Whistleblower Protection Act 2019, then in July 2019, the whistle blower protection in the corporation act was expanded to provide whistle blowers with more protection. This Act mandated public companies, large proprietary companies etc to have a whistle blower policy from 1 January 2020.

1.8.1 Salient aspect of the whistle blowing protection act 2019 includes:

- Disclosures of matters beyond criminal breaches which include breaches of tax laws, ASIC and APRA laws will be protected. Non illegal behaviors that specify systematic issues will also be dis-closable. On the other hand, the protection will not extend to the exposure of personal employment or work place complaints such as interpersonal conflicts, transfer, promotion or disciplinary decisions.
- Eligible Whistle blowers includes anyone who has ever been in a relationship with a company such as former employees, contractors, associates and relatives of such individuals.
- Eligible receivers of exposures include senior managers, directors and auditors and in certain situations, journalist and politicians.
- Protection for whistle blowers includes anonymity, immunity against prosecution and victimization.

Employers who breach these laws will face severe civil and criminal penalties and the court is mandated to make order for relief against a company if a whistle blower in their organization suffers damage as a result of their failure to protect the said whistle blower.

2. Methodology

This study will proceed by using a descriptive and quantitative content analysis to analyze the prevailing frames recorded in the data collected and Van-Dijk socio-cognitive approach of discourse analysis to analyze the headlines as this approach is focused on media text. The sample of this study was selected using a convenience sampling method as three major newspapers from both Nigeria and Australia were used for this study. Discourse analysis was employed in the analysis of the newspaper headlines. The data was analyzed through the use of SPSS, to captivate the frequency count and percentage of the prevailing frames in the communication text and the newspaper headlines.

2.1 Discourse Analysis

The analysis of this study focuses on newspaper headlines. As stated by Van Dijk (1988), headlines summarize at macro-levels and also serve as a structural expression of the events. Fairclough (1995a, 1995) in his analysis of news text and headlines came to a conclusion that re-contextualization as shown in a headline is a crucial indication to confirm and expose the ideology of the text. Headlines serve as a transformational device as it is guarded by re-contextualization Van Dijk (2001) putting this into account, headlines shouldn't be studied in isolation but in comparison to their counterpart.

The following approaches was utilized in the analysis of the headlines in the whistle blowing stories in Nigeria and Australia

- a). Plain Headline. b)Speech as Headline. c) Headline with Pointer

2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

a). Semantic Macro-Proposition: This refers to the overall and general meaning of the communication text. Words and phrases are often used in understanding meanings in a communication text however; at the same time those words can also have a secondary macro-proposition that helps in understanding of the ideology of the text.

b). Global Superstructure: This is the analysis of news text in terms of structure. This provides information about the main story and its suggestions. The importance of structural features is that the audience identifies them and unconsciously uses them to aid understanding of the communication text.

c) Local Meaning: This gives a vivid and fundamental meaning of words and phrases at the local level of news discourse. The inter-relation between meanings and interpretations becomes obvious at the local level such as words, phrases, clauses and sentences.

d). Subtle Former Structures: This focuses on the linguistics features and markers that range from word order to the syntactic structures.

4. Findings and Discussions

SALIENT DIFFERENCES IN THE WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION LAWS BETWEEN NIGERIA AND AUSTRALIA.

NIGERIA	AUSTRALIA
Protection for only public service whistleblowers on corruption related issues.	Protection cuts across both public and private service
NOT AVAILABLE	Provision on those who can make and receive complaints.
Provides anonymity for whistleblowers as protection	Protection includes anonymity, immunity against persecution and victimization

The salient differences between the whistleblower protection laws in Nigeria and Australia is clearly shown. The Nigerian whistleblower act stated that they would protect public service whistleblowers who would reveal wrongdoing related to corruption. Abuse of power or felonious activities; with the promise to discipline anyone who reveals the identity of the whistleblower because that is the only form of protection the whistleblower act provides. The act also went further to state that members of the public and private service, including members of non-governmental organizations can receive whistleblower complaints.

The Australian whistleblower protection act cuts across all public sectors which includes public service and statutory agencies, commonwealth authorities, military forces, parliamentary departments and contractors for commonwealth contracts. The act also made provision for a whistleblower to make complaints or revelations to the media or members of the parliament under certain conditions; especially when he believes that an investigation into his complaints were inadequate or unsatisfactory.

Revelation of issues beyond criminal breaches which includes breaches of tax laws, ASIC and APRE laws will be protected. The act made provisions for the protection of whistle blowers which includes anonymity, immunity against persecution and victimization. The act went further to state those who are eligible to receive whistle blower complaints or disclosures. They include senior manager, directors and auditors and in certain situations, journalist and politicians. The act finally stated that anyone that has ever been in a relationship with a company such as former employee's, contractors, associates and relatives of such individuals are eligible to become whistle blowers.

Unlike Australia that has a whistle blowers protection Act, Nigeria does not have such. Nigeria only has a whistle blowing act that is all encompassing and only promises anonymity for the whistle blower as a means of protection. Australia's whistle blowers protection act is detailed stating eligible whistle blowers, eligible receivers of whistle blowing disclosures and protection from victimization and persecution for the whistle blower.

Van Dijk socio-cognitive approach to critical discourse analysis, was used to analysis the major newspaper headlines of whistle blowing stories in both Nigeria and Australia to ascertain the effectiveness of the whistle blower protection laws.

PLAIN HEADLINES

These headlines are simple statements that highlight important point in a news story. It is usually supported by a lead paragraph. Critical discourse analysis enables us to find the ideological perspective of the editor and the hidden meaning.

The following are plain headlines used in whistle blower protection news stories:

NIGERIA

Magu canvasses speedy passage of whistle blower protection law- *Guardian Newspaper*

Experts task government on better whistle blowing policy- *Guardian Newspaper*

ECOWAS commission seeks laws to protect whistle blowers- *Guardian Newspaper*

Sacked whistle blower reinstated after 18 months- *Vanguard Newspaper*

AUSTRALIA

Aged care whistle blowers to be protected- *The Advocate Newspaper*

Whistle blower case returns to court- *The Advocate Newspaper*

QLD whistle blower cop to fights bullying case- *The Advocate Newspaper*

AT&T whistle blower among winners- *Sydney Morning Herald*

From the above plain headlines in the Nigerian and Australian media, one can easily deduce that in Nigeria, the whistle blowers protection laws has not been passed however discussions are ongoing for the passage of the law with the aim to protect whistle blowers and encourage more citizens to blow the whistle when misconduct is observed. On the other hand, the Australian headlines showed that the whistle blowers protection laws have already been promulgated.

CRITICAL DISCUSS ANALYSIS FOR PLAIN HEADLINE

SEMANTIC MACRO – PROPOSITION

Van Dijk (1997) described semantic macro-proposition as the collective interpretation of words, phrases, paragraphs and sentences; as each word, phrase or item adds up collectively to make up the comprehensive meaning of the headline and the political / editorial ideology. From the headlines of the Nigerian media, semantic macro-proposition was displayed as they give a broad interpretation of the state of whistle blowing policy and protection in Nigeria. The headlines also show a secondary macro proposition that aids in better understanding of the ideology of the communication text.

The ideology as observed in the secondary macro proposition level of the plain headlines of the Nigerian media is that the editors are not completely in support of the whistle blower policy because it does not give full protection to the whistle blower. It also shows a desperate attempt to cajole the government into passing a whistle blower protection laws by using powerful names and organizations such as *Magu, Experts, ECOWAS*. The celebration of justice was also observed in *Sacked Whistle Blower Reinstated after 18 Months*.

The President Buhari administration rode on the back of Anti- corruption to get into power. Whistle blowing policy was one of the strategies employed by the government to curb corruption but the media report shows the failure of the strategy in the protection of whistle blowers.

The Five (5) W formulas for the headlines are carefully observed in details.

WHO-----Federal Government (FG)

WHAT----- Whistle Blowers Protection

WHEN-----Buhari Administration

WHERE-----Nigeria

From the Australian media, one can easily deduce the state of the whistle blowers protection, the political and editorial ideology from headlines such as: *Aged care whistle blowers to be protected, Whistle blower case returns to court, AT&T whistle blower among winners*. This shows the effectiveness of whistle blower protection laws and the involvement of the court in its implementation.

GLOBAL SUPERSTRUCTURES

Van Dijk (2011) described global superstructure as the organization of text in structural categories such as commentaries, background and evaluation. It further explains the stories and its implication for the clearer picture of events. It also aids understanding and touches the discursive nature of readers and mass communication audience. The above headlines of the Nigerian media on a global superstructure level, gives a clear picture on the need for a whistle blower protection and encourages readers to join the debate in the canvassing for a whistle blower protection law and against victimization of whistle blowers.

The Australian media on the other hand is very straight forward and gives a clear understanding of the state of whistle blowers protection in Australia.

LOCAL MEANING

Van Dijk (1988) described local meaning as the distinguished interrelation between words and phrases in a communication text. It also refers to the implications rooted at the local and cultural level as it gives a more rational interpretation of certain words and phrases. The Nigerian media made use of phrases like *Magu Canvasses Speedy Passage, Expert Task Government. ECOWAS Commission Seeks Laws, Sacked Whistle Blower*. This choice of words or phrases makes the proposed interpretation or agenda of the media message obvious. The Australian media on the other hand used phrases like *To Be Protected, Returns to Court, Cop To Fight Bullying Case, Among Winners*. The media message gives a clear interpretation and the local meaning/level.

“SUBTLE” FORMAL STRUCTURES

This refers to the linguistic markers of the headline such as word order, coherence, speech act or syntactic structures which reveals multi-layered meanings. A combination of strong verbs and adjectives were used by both the Nigerian and Australian media to provoke emotions in their readers. i.e. *Speedy Passage, Task Government, Seeks Laws, Sacked, Reinstated, Protected, Returns To Court, Fight Bulling Case, Among Winners*.

SPEECH AS HEADLINE

NIGERIA

FG failing to protect whistle blowers, says Falana- *Guardian Newspaper*

Why reports on whistle blowing dropped-FG- *Guardian Newspaper*

Whistle blowing policy may not outlive Buhari- *Guardian Newspaper*

Ahmad sacks CAF Secretary General over whistle blowing- *Vanguard Newspaper*

Why reports on whistle blowing Dropped- Presidency- *Vanguard Newspaper*

Persecution of whistle blowers, threat to anti-corruption fight- *Vanguard Newspaper*

Anti-graft activists seek legal protection for whistle blowers- *Punch Newspaper*

Whistle blowers now reluctant to come forward- *Punch Newspaper*

FRSC officers kill colleague over whistle blowing in Anambra- *Punch Newspaper*

AUSTRALIA

Blue sky “staffer” sacked after blowing whistle over fake values- *Sydney Morning Herald*

Tax commissioner attacks ‘out of control’ press over whistle blowing- *Sydney Morning Herald*

Whistle blowers can go to the police : Pezzullo- *The Advocate Newspaper*

Drop Timor whistle blower charge- *The Advocate Newspaper*

The quiet Australians I know were the silenced Australians- *The Advocate Newspaper*

From the above headlines, it was noted that direct speech is used and in most cases to make the news more authentic, names were mentioned. This kind of headline places emphasis on the WHO and WHAT of a news story. From the headlines of the Nigerian media, we can easily infer that there is attack on the federal government due to their inadequacies to protect whistle blowers with the right legal framework and due to that, whistle blowing in Nigeria will not outlive the current government. The Australian media on the other hand, shined the light on numerous issues like the attack on Blue Sky staff for blowing the whistle, a plea to drop charges against a whistle blower, the attack on the press by the Tax Commissioner for reporting disclosures by whistle blowers etc.

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SPEECH AS HEADLINE

SEMANTIC MACRO-PROPOSITION

The above headlines of the Nigerian media looks straight forward and easy to understand but at the secondary macro-proposition level, the editors ideology is showcased and subtle meanings are derived in headlines such as *F.G Failing To Protect Whistle Blowers; Says Falana, Whistle Blowing Policy May Not Outlive Buhari, Persecution Of Whistle Blowers; Threat To anti-Corruption Fight, Whistle Blowers Now Reluctant to Come Forward, FRSC Officers Kill Colleague Over Whistle Blowing In ANAMBRA*. From the thread of the headlines the deploring state of the whistle blowing law in Nigeria is seen and the inadequacies of the government are pronounced.

The Australian media also showed that the whistle blowing laws in Australia is not perfect and the attempt to silent the media regarding whistle blower reports/ stories with headlines such as *Blue Sky Staffer sacked After Blowing Whistle over Fake Values, Tax Commissioner Attacks out Of Control Press over Whistle Blowing, The Quiet Australians I Know Were The Silenced Australians*.

GLOBAL SUPERSTRUCTURES

This gives the reader/ media audience information about the stories and further suggestions on the current state of the policy. This was seen in the Nigerian media headlines such as *May not Outlive Buhari, F.G Failing To Protect, Reports Of Whistle Blowing Dropped*. The readers can easily infer that the whistle blowing policy is flawed and not here to stay. The cause of the issues with the whistle blower policy is also highlighted with headlines such as *Persecution of Whistle Blowers, Threat To Anti-Corruption, Ahmad Sacks CAF Secretary General Over Whistle Blowing*. The implication of the flaws policy is seen with headlines such as *Whistle Blowers Now Reluctant To Come Forward, FRSC Officers Kill Colleague Over Whistle Blowing In Anambra*.

The Australian media showed the issues of their whistle blowing protection law with headlines like *Blue Sky Staffer sacked After Blowing Whistle over Fake Values, Tax Commissioner Attacks out Of Control Press over Whistle Blowing* and the implication of the flaws in headline such as *The Quiet Australians I Know Were the Silenced Australians*.

LOCAL MEANING

The local meaning of the above headlines in the Nigerian media is straight forward and obvious. The reader understands the message at first glance, as the meaning and interpretations are clear. The Australian media headlines also gave a clear and straight forward meaning and interpretation except for *The Quiet Australians I Know Were the Silenced Australians*. This headline has an undertone with hidden meanings.

SUBTLE FORMER STRUCTURES

The Nigerian media made use of strong verbs and adjectives to provoke emotion and incite debate among readers such as, *Failing to Protect, May not Outlive Buhari, Sacks CAF S.G Over Whistle Blowing, Seek Legal Protection, Kills Colleague*. The Australian media made use of words and phrases such as *Staffer Sacked, Out Of Control, Silenced Australians*.

HEADLINES WITH POINTERS

NIGERIA

Ibrahim Magu assures whistle blowers of safety: wrote CJ, not CJN on Justice Nyako-
Guardian Newspaper

Whistle blower: Abuja varsity sacks 2 senior staffs- *Vanguard Newspaper*

Whistle blowing: Anambra council boss beats up worker- *Punch Newspaper*

Whistle blowing: AFRICMIL wants sacked FCMB auditor reinstated- *Punch newspaper*

AUSTRALIA

I was in despair, my demons were loudest at night: IOOF whistle blower speaks out-
Sydney Morning Herald

ATO Whistle blower 'to plead not guilty'- *The Advocate Newspaper*

The pointer in these headlines shows the ideological inclinations of the editors in their report of the news stories. It reveals the feelings and thoughts the reporter or editor as emphasis are placed on certain aspects of the story. The pointers give the headlines a boost and help the reader grasp the idea of the story at first glance.

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF HEADLINE WITH POINTERS

SEMANTIC MACRO-PROPOSITION

The above headlines in the Nigerian media have a secondary macro-proposition. With headlines such as *Ibrahim Magu Assures Whistle Blowers of Safety, Abuja Varsity Sacks 2 Senior Staffs, Anambra Council Boss Beats Up Worker, AFRICMIL Wants Sacked FCMB Auditor Reinstated*. These headlines shows that though the government assures the public and wants potential whistle blowers to feel safe , the reality about the after math of whistle blowing undeniable discouraging and scary. The headlines of the Australian media are not so different with headlines like *I Was in Despair, My Demons Were Loudest at Night, Whistle Blower to Plead Not Guilty*.

GLOBAL SUPERSTRUCTURE

The Nigerian media headlines gave a clear interpretation of the stories, issues and implication. The issue on whistle blower protection is seen in the headline *Ibrahim Magu Assures Whistle Blowers of Safety*. The implication was highlighted in the headlines *Abuja Varsity Sacks 2 Senior Staff, Anambra Council Boss Beats Up Worker*.

The Australian media highlighted the implication with the headline *I Was in Despair; My Demons Were Loudest at Night: IOOF Whistle Blower Speaks Out*

LOCAL MEANING

The Nigerian and Australian media made use of easy words in the headlines to facilitate understanding of their readers. Words like *Assures, Sacks, Beat-Up, Reinstated, Despair, Demons and Guilty* were used.

SUBTLE FORMER STRUCTURE

Strong words and phrases were used by both the Nigerian and Australian media to reveal multi-layered meanings such as *Assures....Of Safety, Sacks 2 Senior Staffs,Beats Up Worker, AFRICMII.....FCMB Auditor Reinstated, I Was In Despair, My Demons Were Loudest At Night,To Plead Not Guilty.*

In conclusion, analyzing the media stories, on whistle blowing and whistle blowers, aids in ascertaining the effectiveness of the laws and the experiences of the said whistle blowers. Through the various forms of headlines in both Australia and Nigeria, we can easily deduce that though Nigeria's whistle blowing policy has been put into practice, it still has a long way to go in terms of protection of whistle blowers from retaliation and victimization compared to Australia. However, the ideological inclination of the media is also another factor to consider in terms of the coverage of whistle blowing stories. The media could be for or against the whistle blowing policy, that in turn could affect the nature of their coverage and framing of whistle blowing related stories.

FRAMING

Many scholars have defined framing in different ways. Entman (1993) defined framing as a careful action of selecting specific areas or elements of a perceived reality with the purpose of making them more salient in a communication text in a way that will showcase a particular problem, interpretation, moral assessment and management of the said text. The following frames were prevalent in the coverage of whistle blowing stories in both Australia and Nigeria. Situation, Victimization, Sympathy, De-legitimization, Injustice, News, Responsibility, Accountability and Issues frames.

TABLE 1: Means of occurrence and standard deviation of prevailing frames in news stories in Nigeria.

INDICATOR	GUARDIAN		VANGUARD		PUNCH	
	MOC	D	OC	D	OC	D
Situation	.65	.764	.95	.0025	.62	.781
Victimization	.6	.940	.97	.0215	.8	.0025
Sympathy	.35	.776		.02	.55	.899
De-legitimization	.30	.732	.07	.006	.57	.895
Injustice	.42	.837	.15	.0015	.65	.9045
News	.70	.70	.90	.448	.70	.725
Responsibility	.27	.9765	.95	.776		.026

Accountability	.20	.0025	.90	.448	.87	.987
Restriction	.65	.953	.60	.94	.45	.8255
Issues	.75	.674	.72	.696	.62	.593

TABLE 2: Means of occurrence and standard deviation of prevailing frames in news stories in Australia

INDICATOR	The Advocate		The Examiner		Sydney Morning Herald	
	OC	D	OC	D	OC	D
Situation	.60	.5373	.90	.448	.85	.532
Victimization	.47	.858	.77	.999	.57	.927
Injustice	.27	.696	.37	.793	.40	.820
Sympathy	.425	.837	.27	.771	.12	.490
De-legitimization	.10	.448	.40	.820	.40	.820
News	.57	.7835	.75	.674	.75	.674
Responsibility	.50	.888	.20	.004	.95	.023
Accountability	.35	.776		.026	.95	.023
Restriction	.12	.49	.60	.933	.20	.616
Issues	.675	.713	.70	.725	.70	.725

From the above tables, the prevailing frames employed by the media in their coverage of whistle blowing stories can be seen. The MOC of victimization frame employed by the Nigeria media is 0.6 for Guardian Newspaper, 0.97 for Vanguard Newspaper and 0.8 for Punch Newspaper. This infers that the media seldom report stories or frames stories to reflect the victimization and retaliation that whistle blowers experience as a result of their whistle blowing action. Only a few headlines reflected victimization and retaliation on whistle blowers in the Nigeria media.

VANGUARD NEWSPAPER

AIG zone debunks alleged plot to eliminate whistle blower.

AFRICMIL slams Minister for sacking whistleblower, calls for reinstatement.

Whistle blower: Abuja varsity sacks 2 senior staffs

Sacked whistle blower reinstated after 18 months

GUARDIAN NEWSPAPER

FG failing to protect whistle blowers says Falana

PUNCH NEWSPAPER

FRSC officers kill colleague over whistle blowing in Anambra

Whistle blowing: Anambra Council boss beats up worker

Whistle blowing: AFRICMIL wants sacked FMBN auditor reinstated

The scarcity of whistle blowers victimization and retaliation stories in the media does not mean that whistle blowers do not face victimization and retaliation but it is a purposeful strategy by the media, to eliminate fear of whistle blowing from potential whistle blowers. However, this strategy keeps the federal government in darkness to the plight of whistle blowers and the necessity of a whistle blowers protection laws will not be known. From the above table, we can also see that there is a significant difference in the dominant frames employed by both the Nigerian and Australian media. The Nigerian media mainly used the situation, news, responsibility, accountability and issue frames while the Australian media employed the use of mainly situation, news and issues frames in their coverage of whistle blowing stories.

4. Conclusion

This study showed that whistle blowing in Nigeria is still in its baby stage and on the brick of collapse. This is because there is no proper legal and institutional framework, to protect its whistle blower citizens and provide a proper channel in the whistle blowing process. The culture of keeping silent among employees is as a result of lack of faith in the system and institutions. The government must strengthen system factors and institutions as trust in leadership by employees and a practical organizational justice could motivate employees to blow the whistle when a wrong doing is observed. The study further showed that the Nigeria media seldom over stories of victimization and retaliation except in peculiar cases that result is death or a physical life threatening attack this is so because reporting these stories is like a double edged sword. On one hand, it makes the government aware of the need to put in place, enforce and strengthen systems. On the other hand, I could deter potential whistle blowers because of the fear of retaliation. The study finally revealed that the Nigerian media covers whistleblowing stories from a neutral point and employs situation, news, responsibility and issues in the coverage of the stories.

In the Nigerian workplace, it is recommended that a proper whistle blowing channel be established and managers should view whistleblowers as justice seekers and potential whistleblowers should also be encouraged by putting a ban on retaliation ad punishment for those who victimize whistleblowers. For this to be effective, the media has a huge role to play. Whistleblowers should not be treated not just as a news source but as brave and patriotic citizens putting their lives and livelihood on the line for the greater good. It is also recommended to conduct a future study with a larger sample size and time frame to ascertain the role of public relation practitioners in whistleblowing, to find out if whistleblowing can be classified as a social responsibility, what guidelines can be given to

whistle blowers on the question of going public giving that the aim is to minimize damage for both the whistleblower and the organization.

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