PRINT MEDIA COVERAGE OF SAME SEX MARRIAGE LAW IN NIGERIA: 
A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SUN, THISDAY, GUARDIAN AND VANGUARD NEWSPAPERS

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ABSTRACT
This study dwelt on Print Media Coverage of Same Sex Marriage law in Nigeria. It was aimed at ascertaining the degree of coverage given to the same sex marriage law passed in 2014 with emphasis on ascertaining the frequency of coverage of the law, placement of the stories in the newspapers, dominant story type used in reporting the stories, and framing of the stories. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in the selection of sample size of 189 out of 360 newspaper published within the period of study. Dailysun, Thisday, Guardian and Vanguard Newspapers were selected and studied for a period of three months from among the 34 registered Nigerian Newspapers in circulation. Findings show that Nigerian dailies gave high volume of coverage to same sex marriage law within the period of study and framed the stories in favour of passage of the bill into law. The research therefore recommends that Nigerian newspapers should strive to adhere to objectivity in the reportage of issues in the society no matter their cultural connotations of such issues.

Introduction
Over the years, same sex marriage, no doubt has assumed global attention. This may be probably because of the rate at which moral decadence has attacked the conscience of the present day global society. In line with this, the small sexual minority gay and lesbian practitioners have vocally sprung out of their closet to demand for equal rights with the heterosexual constituents of the society; An aberration to natural law.

Some countries of the world have applauded this practice on the ground of fundamental human rights where as others including Nigeria has rejected it on the ground that it is against natural law and moral justice. Justifying the above fact, Andrew (2005, p.137) posits that Gay marriage has today become a front line issue for gays and lesbians and not only in United States. Gay marriage has become a
worldwide issue. Many societies have already enacted laws that permit gays to marry, for example - Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Netherlands. In Canada, France and Germany, laws have been passed that offer some type of “state” recognition to gay relationship. Denmark is the first country to legalize same sex marriage in 1989 and Veromor became the first country to legalize gay union in 2000 (James, 2003, p.486).

Owing to this state approval and recognition given to gay and lesbian relationship in some leading western countries of the world, gay and lesbian household begins to multiply in geometric progression. Analysis of same sex household conducted in 2000 shows that there are at least 600,000 gay households and gay and lesbian adult population approaching 10 million (Lau man et al 1994b, p.293; David Smith & Gates, 2001, p.184; cited in Richard, 2006).

When people migrate from their places of origin to other areas, they are likely to see new things, new behaviours and attitudes which they may likely to adopt even against their original behaviour or attitude. Onuselugo (2013) states that this attitudinal change is informed by the people’s ability to learn other people’s behaviour which they acquire through contact. This, she called acculturation. So, through international travels, education, urbanization and the widespread of internet, gay and lesbian practices have penetrated African continent in general and Nigeria in particular.

Unfortunately, gay and lesbianism did not succeed in Nigeria unlike other western countries. This follows the signing into law, of a bill for an act prohibiting same sex marriage and all related activities by any citizen of this state on 7th day of January 2014. With this bill signed into law, Nigeria has joined the league of the 78 countries where homosexuality is illegal (TVC NEWS ABUJA). In the light of the above antecedent, this research is set to observe media coverage of same sex marriage law passed by the country

Statement of Problem

Since the signing into law of the bill for an act prohibiting same sex marriage in Nigeria, it could be observed that there have been reactions from all nooks and cranny of this country. Some were against the signing of the law whereas others praise the law (Okoromah, 2014). The grounds of these arguments were basically on violation of human right of the gay and lesbian practitioners in Nigeria given the position of the law. From the cultural norms theory, it is obvious that the media serve as an agent of social change and/or reinforcement of a given cultural norms or values in the society (Asemah, 2011). The idea of gay and lesbian, no doubt has a cultural angle. As it is culturally acceptable in the Western Country, it is culturally unacceptable in African context given the cultural, moral and religious disposition of Africans (Onuche 2013, Igwe 2008). Society is shaped by the media either positively or negatively through portrayal of either positive trends or negative ones among its people. This justifies the social responsibility and agenda setting role of the media. In the power of these facts, the research work is set to investigate through reports from the media the nature of coverage given to the law banning same marriage in Nigeria.

The passage of this law recorded different reactions from different countries of the world, social groups, Non Governmental organizations, the church and individuals whose divergent views of the law formed part of the media messages at the period of the study. As this law was passed, the media reported it from many angles, sometimes with pictures of gay and lesbian practitioners.

However, not a few people believed that the media did not perform their duty creditably well during this period. They alleged that for instance, the media did not give adequate coverage, neither did they give prominence to the law (Nweke, 2014). Others alleged that the media were silent on the law after it might have been signed till the international community began to threaten Nigeria as consequences of the law which they alleged, was a violation of the fundamental human right of the gay and lesbian practitioners in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

1. To ascertain the level of prominence given to same sex marriage law in Nigeria by Nigerian Newspapers.
2. To ascertain the frequency of coverage given to same sex marriage law in Nigeria by Nigerian newspapers.
3. To ascertain the story type or Genre mostly used in the reportage of same sex marriage law in Nigeria by Nigerian newspapers.
4. To ascertain the sources of stories on same sex marriage law in Nigeria by national dailies.
5. To ascertain the newspaper framing of stories on passage of same sex marriage bill into law.
Theoretical Framework
This study was anchored on theories - the Cultural Norms theory and social responsibility theory of the press.

According to Anaeto, Onabanjo and Osifeso (2008) cultural norms theory is categorized under socialization theory. The theory postulates that the media deliberately emphasize and reinforce certain cultural norms (beliefs, perceptions, behaviours and values) through messages aired to the audience. Nwabueze (2014) writes that the theory suggests that the mass media selectively present and emphasize certain contemporary ideas or values; that the mass media influence norms by reinforcing or changing them. The import of this is that the media through their messages inculcate a given cultural beliefs, norms or values that belong to other people through acculturation. Media portrayal of Gay and Lesbianism as a culture could create a cultural perception of such lifestyle.

The social responsibility theory of the press states that though the press should have freedom to carry out their duties, such duties should have a level of obligations and responsibilities and should be guided by self-regulation and government regulations where necessary (Nwabueze 2012). McQuail (2005) writes that while it is necessary for the press to be free, the public also have the right to a free press and the right of the public takes precedence. Justifying the responsibility of the press towards societal peace and democracy, Dominick (2002) writes that this approach holds that the press has a right to criticize government and other institutions but also have a responsibility to preserve democracy by properly informing the public and responding to society’s need and interest.

Relating this theory to the study, the media are socially responsible to public; they are obliged to objectively inform the public about same sex marriage law without any biases that may be premised on cultural convictions.

Same Sex Marriage and Western Law
Research has shown that gay and lesbian marriage agitation was sustained and initiated by several court cases which have been decided in favour of gay and lesbian practitioners in most leading Western countries of the world. The supreme court of Texas in 2003 struck down the Texas law that banned homosexual relationship and prevented the state from criminalizing gay and lesbian sex. At about the same time, an Ontario court of law ruled that Canada’s marriage law discriminated against homosexual and soon after words, the Canadian cabinet proposed a plan to legalize same sex marriage in Canada (Andrew, 2005, p. 210-211; Lyall, 2004; & Ryhburg, 2003).

From the above information, it could be observed that the Western countries accept same sex relationship because their views of sexuality are shaped by two factors which are how their society is organized and their standard of living (Andrew 2005, p.185).

Nigeria’s Ideology of Marriage, Culture and Morality
In Nigerian and African setting, marriage is far beyond the relationship between a man and a woman. It extends to family and community of origin of the two equal halves that will come together to make a compatible whole (Ikegbunam, 2014). This is to say that marriage unites two different communities. It is a sacred institution held at a very high esteem by Nigerians. Marriage is regarded as an obligation by means which the individual contributes the seed of life towards man’s struggle against the loss of original immortality (Onuche 2013). In other words, this means that marriage is established for procreation and therefore, anything that is not capable of producing a child is not in any way qualified to be called marriage. Marriage and child bearing are inseparable.

This generates an argument between two different schools of thought on whether same sex relationship could be legalized as marriage. The first school of thought argues that marriage exists primarily for the sake of child bearing and therefore maintains that same sex must not be encouraged (Onuche 2013; Okoroma 2014 & Aborisede 2014; Ikegbunam, 2014). The second school of thought argues that marriage could be seen in terms of private rewards that it gives to adult participants as against child bearing and sums that same sex marriage should be encouraged. Should the stand of the first school of thought be held, the new law survives but if otherwise, gay and lesbian practices becomes justified (Onuche 2013; Okoroma 2014 & Aborisede 2014).

Culture is an attitude with which a particular group of people is identified. Nwabueze (2013) asserts that “culture is what defines the identity of a people. It consists of values, beliefs, attitudes, lifestyle, dominant dress code, or patterns of language and dialects among other variables which makes a group distinct from others, in the same or other society.
Supporting the stand of African moral belief, Andrew (2005) classified sexual activities into two namely; socially approved and socially disapproved sexual activity. The sociologists further discouraged all forms of socially disapproved sexual activities including gay and lesbian sex among others.

Mbiti (2006) cited in Onuche (2013) opines that the absolute condemnation of homosexuality has old roots: it arose from the classic “if everybody does it” standard, at a time in antiquity when the survival of a tribe, a race or a community depended on procreation between men and women. To Yiredu cited in Onuche (2013) gay “marriage” is a violation against natural law, objective truth and law of complementarities. The thrust of the matter in the above analysis is that gay and lesbian practice has failed the Nigeria culture and moral test and therefore must remain banned.

**Is same sex marriage foreign to Africa?**

Historically, there is an element of same sex marriage or relationship in Igbo land. In this relationship, a woman who is not fertile marries another woman for the sake of raising children through her. Supporting the argument, Susan (2005, p.603) affirms that gay and lesbian families come in different sizes, shapes, ethnicities, races, religions, resources, creed and quirks and even engage in diverse sexual practices. Igwe (2008) opines that gay in Africa has until recently been in the closet, expressing their sexual emotions and orientations in private, with heterosexuality as the norm. He further affirms that homosexuals in Nigeria contract heterosexuals for child bearing as a result of which some say that there is no gay in Nigeria.

Buttressing his argument further, Igwe cited in Ikegbunam (2014) writes that there existed the British common law introduced in Nigeria and other British colonized countries before 1960 prohibiting same sex relationship. In his own opinion, Mensah cited in Onuche (2013) asserts that the fact that the colonial masters put such law before going dismisses the argument th old roots: it arose from the classic “if everybody does it” standard, at a time in antiquity when the survival of a tribe, a race or a community depended on procreation between men and women. To Yiredu cited in Onuche (2013) gay “marriage” is a violation against natural law, objective truth and law of complementarities. The thrust of the matter in the above analysis is that gay and lesbian practice has failed the Nigeria culture and moral test and therefore must remain banned.

**Same Sex Marriage Law in Nigeria: An Overview**

On Tuesday, November 29, 2011, the Nigeria’s upper Legislative Chamber, the Senate, passed a bill banning same-sex marriages in the country. The bill, which is known as the Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2011, prohibits all marriages between man and man and between woman and woman (Mark, 2011, p. 1). The bill, which was sponsored by Senator Magnus Ibe, called for a 14-year sentence for anyone convicted of homosexuality. Anyone who aids and abets same-sex union or found guilty of operating a gay club within the country faces 10-years jail term, without option of fine. In part, the bill states that:

*Only marriages contracted between a man and a woman either under Islamic law, customary law or marriage Acts are recognized as valid in Nigeria, and that the registration of gay clubs, societies and organizations; their sustenance, processions and meetings are hereby prohibited. It also, prohibits the public show of same-sex amorous relationship directly or indirectly. The bill further nullifies a marriage contract or civil union entered into between persons of same-sex by virtue of certificate issued by a foreign country, as soon as both persons step on the soil of Nigeria. It states that any benefits accruing there from by virtue of certificate shall not be endorsed by any court in Nigeria (Okeke, 2012, p.14).*

The Senate, in passing the Anti-Homosexuality Bill, argued that the practice of same-sex marriage violates Nigeria’s tradition and customs. Oluoubi (2012, p. 3) Writes that the approved bill made Nigeria the second country in Africa to criminalize homosexuality, with Uganda being the first to amend its constitution to ban same-sex marriage in 2009.

However, for the Anti-Homosexuality Bill to be signed into law, it must receive ratification/corroboration of the House of Representatives. To that effect, the House of Representatives, on Tuesday November 14, 2012, after exhaustive debate, which lasted for about two hours, threw her weight behind the Senate in the Anti-Homosexuality issues. Nwosu and Akunn (2012, p. 3) quote the House Majority Leader, Hon Mulikat Adeola-Akande as saying during the debate: “It (homosexuality) is alien to our society and culture and it must not be imported. Our religions abhor it and our culture has no place for it.”

The above statement corroborates the Senate’s earlier position that the practice of Same-Sex Marriage violates Nigeria’s tradition and customs. Aside from violating Nigeria’s traditions and customs, the Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, Nnenna Elendu-Ukeje, during the house’s debate, argues that the bill “presented a competition between religious principles and international convention which Nigeria is a signatory to” (Nwosu and Akunn, 2012, p. 3). But House Minority Leader and leader of Opposition, Femi Gbajabiamila, contends: “The bill represents a convergence of both law and morality. The issue (Same-Sex Marriage) is both illegal and immoral. It (Same-Sex Marriage) is a clear breach of Nigeria’s marriage Act”.

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The Nigeria’s Anti-Homosexuality Bill sparked off mass media frenzy, and public outrage at local, national and international levels. There were arguments and counter arguments, in favour and against the bill. This is so much because, prior to the Nigeria’s Anti-Homosexuality Bill, the United States of America (USA) and Britain have legalized Same-Sex Union and threatened to punish any country of the world that fails to follow suit (Igbodo, 2012, p. 1).

Onuche (2013) writes after all legislative process, the bill secured approval of the joint house on May 29th 2013. In keeping with the political ideologies establishing a democratic state, (Nigeria) the presidency, having seen the stand of the national assembly placed his assent on the bill, thereby making it a law in Nigeria on the 7th day of January 2014, in spite of all pressure from the Western countries of the world. The signing of this bill was backed up by the provision of the authentication Act cap A2 laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 2014.

Singing of the bill has generated argument on whether it is a violation of gay rights or not. Okoruma (2014) while some believe that assenting to the bill is a right step in the right direction, others see it as a violation of fundamental human rights of the small vocal minority gay and lesbian community in this country. Gay marriage apostles assert that gay and lesbian practices are biologically inherited trait and therefore should be accepted. Those opposing it call for burning, decapitation or stabbing of these “vile” men with their disgusting lifestyle (Onuche, 2013). This is hiding under the provision of chapter 5 of the Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN) 1999 as amended but they have failed to realize that fundamental human rights are not absolute in itself. Again, the law was protected under section 45(1)(a) as follows: nothing in section 37, 38, 39, 40 and 41 of this constitution shall invalidate any law that is Reasonably justified in a democratic society- in the interest of defense, public safety, public order, public morality or public health.

Methodology
The content analysis method was adopted for this study. Contents of selected newspapers on same sex marriage law in Nigeria were carefully examined and analyzed. In the research, the above technique is used to ascertain the nature of coverage of same sex marriage law in Nigeria by Nigerian newspapers selected for this study.

Four national dailies were selected for the study Daily Sun, Thisday, Guardian and Vanguard Newspapers were selected from 34 registered newspapers in Nigeria. The criteria for choice of these newspapers were based on their wide circulation, readership and researchers’ discretion. A total of 31 editions were published in January, 28 editions in February, and 31 editions in March 2014. This gives a total of 90 copies per newspaper for a period of three months. Therefore the total population is 90 multiply by 4 which equals 360 copies published within the period of study from which the sample of the study was selected.

Using Taro Yamani’s formular, the sample size was drawn as follows;

\[ n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} \]

where \( n \) = sample size  
\( N \) = total population  
\( e^2 \) = error margin  
\( l \) = constant

\[ n = \frac{360}{1 + 360 \times (0.05)^2} \]

\[ n = \frac{360 + 360 \times 0.0025}{360} \]

\[ n = \frac{360}{1.9} = 189 \]

The sampling period of the study covers all the editions of the four selected newspapers from January 2014 the period when the signing of the anti-gay marriage prohibition art into law was in vogue till March 2014. Precisely, the period spans for three months. January, February and March 2014 which were also purposively selected because they are periods that are likely to contain information on the same sex marriage law signed by the President under review.
Units of Analysis
This study employs the following units as its yardstick for analyzing media coverage of same sex marriage law in Nigeria.

A. **Frequency of coverage**: this is the total number of same sex marriage law issues reported by the selected newspapers.

B. **Prominence**: this means how important the media considered same sex marriage law issues measured by the placement of such issues in the focal points of the publications by the selected Newspaper. Such as front page, inside and back pages.

C. **Story type or genre**: this ascertains the media form in which same sex marriage law coverage by the media is used that is whether it is inform of news stories, cartoon, editorials, opinion advertorials, letters to editors, interviews and features etc.

D. **Forum**: this means the drive for media coverage of same sex marriage law in Nigeria. This could be international drive, Government drive, Seminars, Media fora, Individual personalities or Social group, (Civil society organisation and NGO’s) Religious drive, moral drive and legal drive etc.

E. **Story Frame**: This refers to the choice of words adopted in presenting stories on Anti Gay Marriage Law thereby creating a favourable or favourable impression about the law. Here the study examines whether the choice of words frames the stories in support of the Law or against it.

Content Categories
These categories are straight news reports, editorials, features, opinions, cartoons, letters, interviews and columns.

Inter coder reliability
Formula for inter coder reliability Is \( R = \frac{2(M)}{N_1 + N_2} \)

Where M= number of coding decision the coders agree on.

\((N_1+N_2)=Total \ number \ of \ coding \ decision \ by \ the \ first \ and \ second \ coder \ respectively.\)

Therefore \( R = \frac{2(24)}{33 + 26} = \frac{48}{59} = 0.81 \)

This shows that the instrument has internal consistency.

The Findings
**Answer to Research Question One**
What is the level of prominence given to same sex marriage law in Nigeria by Nigerian Newspapers?

**Table 1 Showing prominence coverage of same sex marriage law**

| Variables          | Daily Sun | Thisday | Guardian | Vanguard | Total | %
|--------------------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|-------|---
| Front page        | 1         | 1       | 3        | 6        | 11    | 7 |
| Inside page       | 32        | 28      | 33       | 56       | 149   | 88 |
| Back page         | 2         | 3       | 4        | 0        | 9     | 5 |
| Total             | 35(21%)   | 32(19%) | 40(23%)  | 62(37%)  | 169   | 100(%) |

Source: Researcher’s Content Analysis 2014

Note: values in parenthesis are percentages

Generally, the above table shows that Nigerian newspapers did not give prominence to the coverage of same sex marriage law in Nigeria. By analysis, the table shows that inside page stories has a total of 149 items with a percentage of (88%) followed by front page stories which came a distance second with 11 items of (7%) whereas back page came last with 9 items of (5%).

**Research Question 2**
What is the frequency of coverage given to same sex marriage law by a Nigerian newspaper?
Table 3: Frequency of Coverage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of times</th>
<th>Dailysun</th>
<th>Thisday</th>
<th>Guardian</th>
<th>Vanguard</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 times</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 times</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8 times</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10 times</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researcher’s Content Analysis 2014

Table three above shows the frequency of coverage given to same sex marriage Law by Nigerian Newspapers. From the data generated, it is observed that 3-4 times gained the highest coverage with a total of 79 items (47%) followed by 1-2 times which gained 48 items (28.4%). 5-6 times came third with a total of 22 items (13%) where 7-8 times and 9-10 times has a total of 16 items (9.4%) and 4(2.3%) respectively. Therefore, the variable 3-4 has the greatest percentage of media coverage of the same sex marriage law. The above information therefore, shows that Nigerian media gave adequate coverage to same sex marriage Law in Nigeria.

**Research question 3:** What type of story is same sex marriage law mostly reported?

Table 5: Showing story type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Story types</th>
<th>Dailysun</th>
<th>Thisday</th>
<th>Guardian</th>
<th>Vanguard</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Straight news</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Column/Opinions</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Features</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cartoons</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>35(21%)</td>
<td>32(19%)</td>
<td>40(23%)</td>
<td>62(37%)</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researcher’s Content Analysis 2014

Table 5 above shows the story type in which same sex marriage law in Nigeria was reported in Nigerian Newspapers. The table shows that straight news stories led the coverage by gaining a total number of 52 items covering (31%) of the total publication on issues relating to the law. Column and opinion articles came second with a total of 37 items making (21%), pictures has a total of 27 items of (16%) followed by cartoons with 9 items (6%). Letters to the editor has 5 items (3%) and Editorial has 3 items making (2%). From the above analysis, vanguard has the highest number of straight news stories, feature stories, pictures and cartoons. Sun has the highest number of interviews and Guardian has the highest number of items on column/opinion articles. Both Guardian and This Day has two letters each. Three out of the four selected newspapers carried one editorials each. All of these editorials are favourable to same sex marriage law as they all condemn in entirety the western hypocrisy on the Law.

In her editorial published on the 21st day of January 2014, titled “the new anti-gay law”, Daily Sun Newspaper made their stand known before the public by telling the government of the federation never to decriminalize same-sex relationship as doing so will amount to trading our independence. They further state that the law is welcomed by overwhelming majority of the people given the fact that same sex relationship is against African cultural and moral standard.

This Day Newspaper has no editorial on the Same Sex Marriage Law. Guardian Newspaper in her Editorial titled “The Same Sex Prohibition Law, published on 22nd January 2014, condemned all the move and intentions of the western world to pressurize the President of Nigeria into accepting the gay and lesbian culture. They maintain that the attempt by the Western countries to force Nigeria or Africans to accept the gay culture is akin to slavery. And slavery is the biggest evil against human rights for which the Western nations have been repeatedly guilty. They further attacked the Western hypocrisy from their colonization of Africa which according to them, attracts apology from them and reiterate Nigeria and African countries to rise up to the challenge that lies ahead.

Vanguard Newspaper in their own editorial titled “we are not Americans”, published on January 8, 2014 also joined the league of other national dailies in outright condemnation of the western hypocrisy concerning the new Law applauding the government of the state for signing the Law. The editorial finally
supports the new Law and bade farewell to the western culture of gay and lesbianism which the Americans want to cultivate in Nigeria.

**Research question 4:** What kind of event mostly drove the coverage of Same Sex Marriage Law by Nigerian newspapers?

**Table 6: Event drive for coverage of the Law**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Story types</th>
<th>Dailysun</th>
<th>Thisday</th>
<th>Guardian</th>
<th>Vanguard</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rel./Moral</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>35(21%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>32(19%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>40(23%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>62(37%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>169</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researcher’s Content Analysis 2014

A look at the table above shows that coverage of Same Sex Marriage law was mostly driven by international fora which tops the chart with 51 items making (30.1%) followed by Religious and Moral fora with a total of 36 items (21.3%) with health and national drive finishing third with 24 items (14.2%) each. Legal drive came fourth with 21 items (12.4%) while media drive gained the button of the table with 13 items (8%). From the table, international drive gained the fora with which same sex marriage law was covered by Nigerian media.

**Question 5:** The Direction/ framing of coverage given to same sex marriage law by Nigerian Newspapers.

**Table 7: Showing story direction of coverage of same sex marriage law by Nigerian Newspapers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>Dailysun</th>
<th>Thisday</th>
<th>Guardian</th>
<th>Vanguard</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favourable</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavourable</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researcher’s Content Analysis 2014.

From table 7 above, it is observed that favourable direction of same sex marriage law coverage by the media gained the top of the table with a total number of 107 items (63%) of the total items published. It was followed by unfavourable story direction which gained a distance second position with a total of 37 items (22%) while neutral direction came last with 25 items (15%). From the above analysis, the mass media in Nigeria gave favourable coverage to same sex marriage law that was passed by the government of the state. This goes a long way to support the President’s statement on air; that signing the bill into law is in line with the wish of over 90% of the citizens of the state.

**Discussion of Findings**

The aim of this research was to ascertain the nature of coverage of the same sex marriage law by selected Nigerian Dailies. Generally, it was found that of all the four national dailies studied, Vanguard newspaper took the lead in the coverage of same sex marriage Law in Nigeria. It was liberal with pictures and space, publishing a total of 62 items representing 37% of the total population within the period of study. Second was Guardian Newspaper which published a total of 40 items representing (23%) of the total items published. Daily Sun and This Day Newspapers came third and fourth in the table with a total of 35(21%) and 32(19%) respectively (See table 1 for more details). From the above data, it could be deduced that This Day and Daily Sun did not devote more space for the coverage of this Law.

Looking at the findings, it was clear that the Law was not made prominent through the front and back page publications. This accounts for the reason why inside page stories had 149 stories on the law, accounting for (88%) of the total publication. Professionally, the media should be an agent of agenda building, mirroring and setting in order to create an avenue for public opinion, debate and discussion on salient issues of public concern like this same sex Marriage Law. The findings above goes against the stand point of Agenda setting theory which according to Wimmer and Dominik (2006), proposes that the public agenda or what kind of things people discuss, think and worry about is powerfully shaped and directed by what the media choose to publicize. In other words, the media have failed to devote their focal points, (the back page and front pages) (Nwabueze, 2011; Alozie, 2009) to the coverage, as well as display of both headlines and pictures about same sex marriage Law. Having failed to beat the drum, the public who are their dancers may equally have failed to dance (Asemah, 2011). One of the factors used in
ascertaining prominence is placement (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011). With most of the stories placed on the inside pages, it could be concluded that stories on homosexuality did not receive prominence in the newspapers in terms of page placement.

This study also found that the press gave high volume of coverage to same sex marriage Law. This conforms with Adeyanju (2013) when he said that the social responsibility theory has given the press the task of deciding what is socially responsible and what should not be done to harm the peace, unity and peaceful co-existence of the people as partners in progress. This finding disagrees with a similar study by Nweke (2013) which found that the press gave scanty coverage to same sex marriage law.

In all, a total of 169 items were published by the four National Dailies studied and of all the 169, 3 editorials were published. All the editorials welcomed the Law, condemned the Western hypocrisy and urged the government of the Federation to remain resolute in her stand on the Law in respect to the sovereignty of this country.

Looking at the story genre used in reporting the same sex marriage Law, it was observed that straight news report lead the table with a total of 52 items representing (31%) of the total items published. Use of feature stories and editorials will provide in-depth explanation on the same sex marriage law.

On the source for media coverage of same sex marriage law, the stories were mostly driven by international fora given the position of the Western world in the Law. On the direction of story published, Same Sex marriage Law received favourable coverage from Nigerian newspapers.

The findings from this research show that same sex marriage is not acceptable in Nigeria given the religious, cultural and moral context of the citizens in the country. This result was in tandem with the findings of Onuche (2013) where he concludes that as long as Nigerian Moral context remains communitarian, homosexuality as it is being propagated today, will remain an aberration, deviant, unnatural, foreign and unacceptable sexual practices.

**Conclusion**

From the data collected, presented and analyzed, the following conclusions were made, that the Nigerian Newspapers did not give prominence to coverage of same sex marriage Law in Nigeria; that the coverage given to same Marriage Law was basically on straight news report and the source was mostly international and that the same sex Marriage Law enjoyed favourable media coverage in Nigeria.

We conclude that the Law was welcomed by over 80% (percent) of Nigerian citizens as good Law; that the Press also are in support of the newly signed Law which was expressed in their editorials. Finally, we conclude that the government’s decision to sign the bill into Law was in line with the wish of the majority of people, reflected in the content of newspapers studied.

From the findings of this study, the researcher came up with the following recommendations; Nigerian newspapers should strive to increase the level of attention it gives to social issues in the society in keeping with the social responsibility role of the press to both the government and the citizens. Further studies on coverage of same sex marriage law could be carried out by other researchers to further establish whether a relationship exists between the attitude of journalists towards gays and their coverage of issues concerning homosexuals in the society.

**References**


