British Journal of Mass Communication and Media Research
ISSN: 2997-6030
Volume 6, Issue 1, 2026 (pp. 126-140)
www.abjournals.org

OUR ECONOMY; THEIR VIEWS: HOW INTERNATIONAL NEWS MEDIA PRESENTED THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU'S ECONOMIC POLICIES TO THEIR AUDIENCES

Innocent Hayford Kasarachi[1] and Ekwuluo Precious Uche[2].

[1]Department of Broadcasting, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
Email: kasarachi.innocent@uniport.edu.ng; Tel.: 08038909349

[2]Department of English and Communication Arts, Faculty of Humanities, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria.
Email: ekwuluoprecious00@gmail.com; Tel.: +2349126958923

Cite this article:

Innocent Hayford Kasarachi, Ekwuluo Precious Uche (2026), Our Economy; Their Views: How International News Media Presented the First Two Years of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Economic Policies to Their Audiences. British Journal of Mass Communication and Media Research 6(1), 126-140. DOI: 10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ

Manuscript History

Received: 28 May 2026

Accepted: 29 Jun 2026

Published: 16 Jul 2026

ABSTRACT: *This study examined how selected international news media presented President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's economic policies to their global audiences, with particular attention to the nature and extent of coverage, dominant frames, and tonal orientation of reportage. Anchored on the Framing theory, the study adopted a qualitative–quantitative method to sample and analyse 200 news items published by the BBC, Al Jazeera, Reuters, and The New York Times between May 29, 2023, and September 30, 2025, the media organizations were selected based on their international media status, having a global audience and wide reporting of events around the world. The findings revealed that international news media coverage of President Bola Tinubu's economic policies was moderate but uneven, with a focus on major reform milestones, including the removal of fuel subsidy, unification of the exchange rate, and fiscal restructuring. While Reuters and The New York Times focused predominantly on market reactions and investor confidence, the BBC and Al Jazeera emphasised the social and human consequences of the reforms. The dominant frames identified included economic reform, human impact, and governance accountability, which collectively portrayed President Tinubu's policies as bold, yet socially disruptive. In terms of tone, the reportage ranged from neutral to negative, reflecting cautious skepticism about the short-term outcomes of the reforms despite acknowledging their long-term necessity. The study concluded that international media significantly shape global perceptions of Nigeria's economic governance through selective framing and tonal emphasis. It is therefore recommended that international news media build a balanced coverage of Nigeria's economic reforms beyond initial headlines, while adopting multi-perspective framing frameworks that reflect both the economic rationales and human consequences of President Bola Tinubu's reforms.*

KEYWORDS: Economic reforms, Framing, International media, Nigeria, President Tinubu.

INTRODUCTION

The international media, particularly the media conglomerates, including news agencies, play a central and critical role in constructing global perceptions of policy across the globe. As McCombs and Shaw (1972) argued in their agenda-setting theory, these media behemoths may not dictate what international audiences think, but they profoundly shape what they think about, across economic and political spheres. Similarly, Entman's (1993) concept of framing theory emphasises that media outlets select certain aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in communication, thereby promoting specific problem definitions, causal interpretations, and moral evaluations. This applies very profoundly in international news, where international news media serve as the only windows through which international audiences view happenings in governments and geographical locations far-flung from them. Within this theoretical lens, the ways international outlets such as *BBC*, *Reuters*, *Al Jazeera*, and *The New York Times* reported President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's economic reforms and policies in the first two years of his assumption of office had the potential to serve as frames through which global audiences interpret Nigeria's democratic and economic trajectory under the regime.

Historically, Nigeria's relationship with international media has been marked by fluctuating narratives that oscillate between optimism about its democratic progress and skepticism about its governance and corruption challenges (Okoro & Nwafor, 2018). During the 1980s and 1990s, the portrayal of Nigeria's Structural Adjustment Programmes under General Ibrahim Babangida largely reflected Western neoliberal perspectives, often prioritising the language of "reform," "stabilisation," and "modernisation," while under-reporting the social dislocations that accompanied such policies (Adesina, 2010). Today, similar representational patterns persist, as international media outlets assess President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's market-oriented policies through global economic frameworks often influenced by Western institutional narratives, such as those of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (Mohammed, 2023).

The global information order is deeply intertwined with how nations are perceived, evaluated, and discussed in international media spaces. In the era of digital globalisation, the international press has become a significant player in shaping global narratives about political leadership, governance, and economic reforms, especially within emerging democracies such as Nigeria. The representation of national policies by foreign media outlets not only influences international perception but also has profound implications for economic partnerships, diplomatic relations, and domestic legitimacy (Thussu, 2019). Consequently, how international news organisations present President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's economic policies to their global audiences offers a crucial framework for understanding the interplay between global communication, political economy, and media framing.

Patterns of coverage are not merely descriptive; they are inherently ideological. As Hall (1997) observed, representation is the production of meaning through language and discourse. The global media's depiction of Nigeria's economic reforms is thus not neutral but shaped by editorial values, geopolitical interests, and the financial priorities of their host nations. Studies in international communication have shown that Western media tend to frame African nations within deficit-oriented narratives emphasising crisis, instability, and dependency while marginalising stories of resilience and reform (Banda, 2022; Nyamnjoh, 2010). This tendency has raised enduring debates about media imperialism and the power asymmetry in global news

Article DOI: 10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ
DOI URL: https://doi.org/10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ

flow, where the Global South is primarily represented through the lenses of the Global North (Boyd-Barrett, 2015). This is the scenario and context that foregrounds this study, which aimed at content analysis of the dominant narratives that pervaded international news media presentation of the economic policies of the President Ahmed Bola Tinubu-led government in the first two years of the regime.

Statement of the Problem

In an increasingly interconnected global media environment, national policies are no longer interpreted solely through domestic communication channels. The international news media play a significant role in shaping how global audiences perceive the political and economic directions of nations, particularly those within the developing world. For Nigeria, Africa's most populous democracy and one of its largest economies, this global media attention carries substantial weight. Since the inauguration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu in May 2023, the Nigerian government has introduced varying economic reforms, including the removal of fuel subsidies, exchange rate unification, and fiscal restructuring. While these reforms aim to stabilise the economy and attract foreign investment, according to their authors, they have also generated widespread debate both within and outside Nigeria, which debate is largely mediated through global news platforms such as *BBC*, *Al Jazeera*, *Reuters*, and *The New York Times*.

However, despite the centrality of these international media in shaping global discourse, there remains a significant gap in understanding how President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's economic policies are framed and presented to international audiences. The media are not mere conduits of information; they construct and circulate meaning through processes of selection, emphasis, and omission. Framing determines how issues are interpreted by highlighting certain aspects of reality while marginalising others. Consequently, the portrayal of Nigeria's economic direction by international media may either reinforce narratives of reform and progress or perpetuate enduring stereotypes of economic mismanagement and political instability that have historically characterised Western representations of African nations.

This imbalance in global news flow, often conceptualised as media imperialism, raises critical questions about objectivity, fairness, and ideological bias in international reporting. There is growing concern that global news organisations, operating within Western economic and political paradigms, may frame President Tinubu's market-oriented policies predominantly from a neoliberal perspective that privileges global financial institutions' viewpoints while downplaying the local socioeconomic impacts on Nigerian citizens. Such representations can significantly influence international investor confidence, diplomatic relations, and even domestic perceptions of government legitimacy.

Therefore, this study sought to fill this critical research gap by analysing how selected international news media, specifically the *BBC*, *Al Jazeera*, *Reuters*, and *The New York Times*, presented President Tinubu's economic policies within the first two years of the regime. It aimed to examine the extent and nature of coverage, the dominant reportorial frames and themes, and the overall tone and direction of such coverage.

Article DOI: 10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ
DOI URL: https://doi.org/10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ

Aim and Research Questions

The study analysed how international news media presented President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's economic policies to their audiences between May 29, 2023, and September 30, 2025. The research questions include:

RQ 1: What is the nature and extent of coverage of President Ahmed Bola Tinubu's economic policies by the *BBC*, *Al Jazeera*, *Reuters*, and *The New York Times* between May 29, 2023, and September 30, 2025?

RQ 2: What are the dominant frames and themes employed by the *BBC*, *Al Jazeera*, *Reuters*, and *The New York Times* in reporting President Ahmed Bola Tinubu's economic reforms between May 29, 2023, and September 30, 2025?

RQ 3: What is the tone and direction of the reportage of President Ahmed Bola Tinubu's economic reforms between May 29, 2023, and September 30, 2025?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

International News Media and Global Image Formation

The international news media are transnational information systems that gather, produce, and disseminate news to audiences across borders. Media outlets such as the *BBC*, *Reuters*, *Al Jazeera*, *CNN*, and *The New York Times* possess global reach and agenda-setting power, influencing how nations and leaders are perceived worldwide (Thussu, 2019). These institutions are not neutral conveyors of information; rather, they operate within political, cultural, and ideological contexts that shape how stories are selected, framed, and disseminated.

According to Boyd-Barrett's (2015) concept of media imperialism, Western media systems often dominate the global flow of information, reinforcing Western worldviews and marginalising voices from the Global South. This imbalance contributes to recurring stereotypes in the portrayal of African nations, often emphasising corruption, poverty, and instability while downplaying reform, innovation, and resilience (Nyamnjoh, 2010). Consequently, the representation of President Tinubu's economic policies within international media discourse can be understood as part of this larger dynamic, where Nigeria's policy initiatives are interpreted through externally defined lenses that may not align with domestic realities or priorities.

Economic Policy Communication

Economic policies are government actions designed to influence a nation's economic direction, encompassing fiscal management, monetary policy, investment strategies, and market reforms. The communication of such policies is as critical as their design and implementation. According to Ekeanyanwu and Okoro (2012), effective policy communication shapes public understanding, promotes legitimacy, and attracts foreign investment. However, when such communication extends beyond national boundaries, the role of international media becomes crucial in framing global interpretations.

Article DOI: 10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ
DOI URL: https://doi.org/10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ

President Bola Tinubu's economic policies, such as fuel subsidy removal, exchange rate unification, and fiscal reforms, according to the presidency, represent attempts to reposition Nigeria within the global market system. Yet, the success or failure of these reforms in the global perception often depends on how international media communicate them. The media diplomacy framework posits that media narratives can influence a country's international standing and foreign relations (Gilboa, 2008). Thus, coverage of President Bola Tinubu's economic reforms by international media outlets contributes to shaping Nigeria's reputation as either a reform-oriented democracy or a nation struggling under controversial neoliberal adjustments.

Media Representation, Ideology, and Power

Media representation operates within ideological structures that reflect and reinforce power relations. Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model posits that media systems often serve elite interests by filtering information through ownership structures, advertising pressures, and geopolitical affiliations. International news agencies, though professing objectivity, can reflect the political and economic interests of their home countries (Thussu, 2019). Hence, their coverage of African leaders' economic policies may align with broader Western economic philosophies, such as neoliberalism and market liberalisation, while neglecting the socio-cultural implications of such policies on local populations.

This ideological underpinning becomes significant in analysing international portrayals of President Bola Tinubu's economic agenda. If the dominant discourse emphasises compliance with global financial standards rather than domestic welfare concerns, it reveals the persistence of Western hegemony in global economic reporting. Understanding this ideological influence provides insight into how narratives about Nigeria's democracy are constructed not solely through facts but through interpretive frameworks embedded in global power relations.

Theoretical Review

Framing Theory

The study is anchored in the Framing Theory, originally introduced by Erving Goffman (1974) and later developed by communication scholars such as Gitlin (1980), Robert Entman (1993), and Scheufele (1999). The theory postulates that the way information is presented in the media, and what aspects are emphasised or downplayed, shape how audiences interpret and understand social and political realities. In Goffman's view, frames are the "schemata of interpretation" that enable individuals to locate, perceive, identify, and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large.

According to Entman (1993), framing involves selecting certain aspects of perceived reality and making them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, or treatment recommendation. In this context, international media outlets such as the *BBC*, *Al Jazeera*, *Reuters*, and *The New York Times* frame President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's economic policies by emphasising specific issues such as subsidy removal, currency devaluation, inflation, and investment reforms while omitting or minimising others. This selective presentation influences how foreign audiences perceive Nigeria's economic direction and the democratic leadership managing it.

Article DOI: 10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ
DOI URL: https://doi.org/10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ

The Framing theory is especially relevant to this study because media framing has a profound impact on international image construction and perception of national policies. As McCombs and Shaw (1972) suggest in the closely related agenda-setting paradigm, media do not just tell people what to think about; they also tell them *how to think about it.* When international news outlets frame President Bola Tinubu's policies as reformist, bold, and investor-friendly, they generate narratives that legitimise the administration within global economic discourse. Conversely, when the same policies are framed as harsh, anti-poor, or poorly implemented, they reinforce skepticism toward Nigeria's governance and economic stability.

As it relates to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's economic agenda, especially the removal of fuel subsidy and currency unification, international media framing can determine whether foreign investors view Nigeria as a reforming democracy or a struggling economy. For instance, *Reuters* and *The Financial Times* may frame policy changes through a neoliberal economic lens, emphasising market liberalisation and fiscal discipline, while *Al Jazeera* or *BBC Africa* may frame them in human-interest terms, highlighting public hardship and social inequality. Each framing perspective carries implications for Nigeria's democratic image and the perceived legitimacy of President Bola Tinubu's leadership on the global stage.

Thus, the Framing theory provides the analytical foundation for this study by offering a lens to understand *how* and *why* international media represent President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's economic policies in specific ways and *what meanings* are communicated to global audiences. It also helps explain the power dynamics inherent in cross-national communication, where Western media may unconsciously reproduce neo-colonial narratives or ideological biases that shape global opinion about African democracies.

Empirical Review

The first relevant study is entitled "Framing Africa: How Western Media Represent Economic Reforms and Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa," conducted by Alemayehu Tadesse (2021). The study investigated how Western mainstream media such as the *BBC*, *CNN*, and *The New York Times* frame economic policies and governance reforms in Sub-Saharan African countries, particularly Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa. Specifically, the objectives were to (1) examine the dominant frames used in representing African economic policies, (2) determine the tone of coverage toward African political leaders, and (3) assess the implications of such media representations for Africa's international image.

The researcher adopted a qualitative content analysis design, analysing 120 news reports published between 2015 and 2020 from the selected media outlets. Coding categories were developed to identify frames such as "crisis," "corruption," "reform," and "recovery." The findings revealed that international news media predominantly framed African economic policies through a crisis and corruption lens, often emphasising mismanagement, instability, and poverty. Positive reforms were underreported or presented with skepticism, suggesting a persistent Western bias in framing African governance. The study concluded that these representations reinforce stereotypes that undermine global confidence in African leadership and economic progress.

The relevance of Tadesse's (2021) study to the current research lies in its demonstration of how framing shapes international perceptions of African economic reforms. However, while Tadesse examined multiple African countries in a general sense, the current study narrows its

Article DOI: 10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ
DOI URL: https://doi.org/10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ

focus to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's economic policies in Nigeria, thereby offering a more context-specific analysis. This research also extends Tadesse's findings by incorporating recent post-2023 economic policy shifts under Tinubu, including fuel subsidy removal and currency unification, which have attracted significant global news media attention.

The second empirical study reviewed is entitled "Media Framing of Nigeria's Democratic Transitions in International News: A Content Analysis of *CNN* and *Al Jazeera* (2015–2023)" by Okafor, Chinedu Emmanuel (2024). This study sought to explore how international media framed Nigeria's political and economic transitions during and after elections, focusing on issues of governance, democracy, and economic reform. The objectives were to (1) identify the dominant frames used by *CNN* and *Al Jazeera* in covering Nigeria's democratic leadership and economic policy decisions, (2) evaluate the tone and direction of such coverage, and (3) determine the implications for Nigeria's image in global media discourse.

Okafor (2024) employed a mixed-method approach combining quantitative content analysis and qualitative textual analysis. A total of 200 articles and broadcast transcripts from 2015–2023 were analysed using framing indicators such as attribution of responsibility, human-interest framing, and conflict framing. The study found that the coverage of Nigeria's democratic transitions was predominantly negative or skeptical, especially as it related to economic matters. The reports often emphasised corruption, inflation, and mismanagement, framing Nigeria's reforms as externally driven or politically unstable. However, *Al Jazeera* occasionally provided human-centered narratives highlighting the resilience of Nigerian citizens. The findings demonstrated that international news framing of Nigerian democracy is shaped by both editorial biases and global geopolitical interests.

The study's relevance to the present research lies in its conceptual and methodological alignment. Okafor's use of framing categories and tone analysis offers a valuable framework for analysing international news media coverage of President Bola Tinubu's economic policies. However, while Okafor's study explored general democratic transitions, the present study focuses exclusively on economic reforms under a single administration, that of President Bola Tinubu, allowing for a deeper examination of how international framing influences global understanding of Nigeria's economic identity. Moreover, by incorporating recent data from 2023–2025, this study provides an updated perspective on Nigeria's evolving portrayal in the international press.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed-method content analysis, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine how selected international news media presented President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's economic policies. The quantitative component involved the systematic coding and statistical analysis of the frequency, dominant frames, and tonal orientation of news reports, while the qualitative component facilitated the interpretation of the narratives, contextual meanings, and ideological patterns embedded in the reports.

The population of the study comprised all news reports, feature articles, analyses, editorials, and broadcast transcripts published by the BBC, Al Jazeera, Reuters, and The New York Times that focused on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's economic policies between 29 May 2023 and

Article DOI: 10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ
DOI URL: https://doi.org/10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ

30 September 2025. A comprehensive search of the digital archives of the four media organisations using keywords such as *Tinubu*, *economic reforms*, *fuel subsidy removal*, *exchange rate unification*, *naira devaluation*, *tax reforms*, and *Nigeria economy* yielded 642 relevant reports, which constituted the study population after duplicate and syndicated reports were removed.

The study period was selected because it covers the first two years of President Tinubu's administration, a period characterised by the introduction and implementation of major economic reforms, including the removal of fuel subsidy, exchange rate unification, fiscal restructuring, and related monetary policy adjustments. This period also attracted sustained international media attention, making it appropriate for examining global media framing of Nigeria's economic policies.

A purposive sampling technique was employed. The four media organisations were deliberately selected because of their extensive global reach, editorial influence, credibility, and longstanding record of reporting political and economic developments in Africa. News stories were retrieved from the official online archives of each media organisation using the predetermined search keywords. To be included in the study, a report had to: (i) focus substantially on President Tinubu's economic policies or reforms; (ii) be published within the specified study period; and (iii) originate from one of the four selected media organisations. Reports that merely mentioned Nigeria without discussing the administration's economic policies, opinion pieces unrelated to economic reforms, duplicate publications, syndicated copies of the same report appearing across multiple platforms, and reports outside the study period were excluded from the analysis. Where identical Reuters stories were reproduced by other news platforms, only the original Reuters publication was retained to prevent duplication.

Following the application of these inclusion and exclusion criteria, 50 news stories were selected from each media organisation, giving a total sample of 200 reports. The equal allocation ensured balanced representation across the four international media outlets and facilitated meaningful comparative analysis without allowing one outlet with a larger volume of publications to disproportionately influence the findings. Moreover, a sample of 200 news reports provided sufficient analytical depth for identifying recurring patterns in coverage, framing, and tonal orientation while remaining manageable for detailed content coding and qualitative interpretation.

The unit of analysis was the individual news story. A structured coding sheet was developed to record information relating to the nature of coverage, policy focus, dominant frame, thematic emphasis, and overall tone of each report. Quantitative data were analysed using frequencies and percentages, while qualitative analysis was employed to interpret the contextual meanings and framing patterns evident in the reports. The integration of both analytical approaches enabled a comprehensive understanding of how international news media presented President Tinubu's economic policies to global audiences.

Article DOI: 10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ
DOI URL: https://doi.org/10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data presentation

Research Question One: What is the nature and extent of coverage of President Ahmed Bola Tinubu's economic policies by the *BBC*, *Al Jazeera*, *Reuters*, and *The New York Times* between May 29, 2023, and September 30, 2025?

Table 1: Nature and Extent of Coverage of the first Two Years of President Ahmed Bola Tinubu's economic policies

Policy theme	BBC (n=50)	Al Jazeera (n=50)	Reuters (n=50)	NYT (n=50)	Total (n=200)	% of total
Fuel subsidy removal	15	18	12	10	**55**	27.5%
Foreign-exchange/currency reform	10	6	14	8	**38**	19.0%
Inflation/cost of living	8	12	6	10	**36**	18.0%
Foreign direct investment (FDI)/investor confidence	9	4	10	12	**35**	17.5%
Tax/fiscal policy reforms	5	6	5	6	**22**	11.0%
Governance/macroeconomic overview/other	3	4	3	4	**14**	7.0%
Total	**50**	**50**	**50**	**50**	**200**	**100%**

Table 1 shows the distribution of international news coverage according to the major policy themes. Fuel subsidy removal received the highest level of attention, accounting for 55 reports (27.5%), making it the most extensively covered economic policy across the four media organisations. This was followed by foreign exchange/currency reform with 38 reports (19.0%), inflation and cost-of-living issues with 36 reports (18.0%), and foreign direct investment (FDI)/investor confidence with 35 reports (17.5%). Tax and fiscal policy reforms constituted 22 reports (11.0%), while governance and general macroeconomic overview attracted the least attention with 14 reports (7.0%). Across the individual media organisations, Al Jazeera devoted the greatest attention to fuel subsidy removal, Reuters reported more extensively on foreign exchange reforms and investor confidence, while *The New York Times* gave relatively greater emphasis to foreign direct investment and inflation-related issues.

Research Question Two: What are the dominant frames and themes employed by the *BBC*, *Al Jazeera*, *Reuters*, and *The New York Times* in reporting President Ahmed Bola Tinubu's economic reforms between May 29, 2023, and September 30, 2025?

The frame categories employed in this study were developed through a deductive coding approach based on the theoretical propositions of Framing Theory (Entman, 1993) and previous framing studies on political and economic news reporting (e.g., Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Tadesse, 2021; Okafor, 2024). Prior to coding, a coding guide was developed defining each frame category. During analysis, each news report was examined to identify its dominant frame based on the central theme, headline emphasis, narrative structure, source attribution, and overall interpretive focus. Although multiple frames occasionally appeared within a single

Article DOI: 10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ
DOI URL: https://doi.org/10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ

report, only the predominant frame was coded to ensure consistency and mutual exclusivity across the dataset.

Table 2: Dominant frames and themes employed by International News Media in reporting President Ahmed Bola Tinubu's economic reforms between May 29, 2023, and September 30, 2025

Frame category	**Frequency**	**%**
Crisis (economic hardship, social unrest, immediate negative impacts)	**72**	**36.0%**
Reform (policy as necessary, long-term structural fix)	**58**	**29.0%**
Corruption/governance failure (blame attribution)	**24**	**12.0%**
Human-interest (personal stories of citizens affected)	**22**	**11.0%**
Investor-friendly / market confidence (appeals to FDI)	**16**	**8.0%**
Neutral/explanatory (policy description without evaluative language)	**8**	**4.0%**
Total	**200**	**100%**

As shown in Table 2, the crisis frame was the most dominant, accounting for 72 reports (36.0%), followed by the reform frame with 58 reports (29.0%). Reports employing the corruption/governance failure frame constituted 24 reports (12.0%), while the human-interest frame accounted for 22 reports (11.0%). The investor-friendly frame represented 16 reports (8.0%), whereas the neutral/explanatory frame was the least represented with 8 reports (4.0%). These findings indicate that international news coverage of President Tinubu's economic reforms was predominantly framed around economic hardship and policy reforms.

Research Question Three: What is the tone and direction of the reportage of President Ahmed Bola Tinubu's economic reforms between May 29, 2023, and September 30, 2025?

Each news report was coded according to its dominant tonal orientation using predefined coding criteria. Reports were classified as positive when the overall narrative portrayed President Tinubu's economic policies favourably by emphasising anticipated benefits, policy achievements, investor confidence, or positive economic prospects. Reports were coded as negative when emphasis was placed on adverse economic consequences such as inflation, hardship, protests, policy criticism, or governance failures. Reports were classified as neutral/mixed when they presented balanced accounts by reporting both positive and negative aspects without adopting a clearly favourable or unfavourable evaluative position.

Table 3: Tone and direction of reportage of President Tinubu's economic reforms

Tone	**Frequency**	**%**
Negative	106	53.0%
Neutral/mixed	48	24.0%
Positive	46	23.0%
Total	**200**	**100%**

Table 3 indicates that negative reports constituted the largest proportion of the coverage, accounting for 106 reports (53.0%). Neutral or mixed reports followed with 48 reports (24.0%), while positive reports accounted for 46 reports (23.0%). The findings therefore suggest that international news media coverage of President Tinubu's economic reforms was predominantly

Article DOI: 10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ
DOI URL: https://doi.org/10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ

negative, although a considerable proportion of reports adopted either balanced or favourable perspectives.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research Question One: What is the nature and extent of coverage of the first two years of President Ahmed Bola Tinubu's economic policies by the *BBC*, *Al Jazeera*, *Reuters*, and *The New York Times* between May 29, 2023, and September 30, 2025?

The findings presented in Table 1 reveal that the selected international news media devoted varying levels of attention to different aspects of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's economic policies during the study period. Among the policy themes examined, fuel subsidy removal received the greatest coverage, accounting for 55 reports (27.5%) of the total sample. This was followed by foreign exchange/currency reform with 38 reports (19.0%), inflation and cost-of-living issues with 36 reports (18.0%), and foreign direct investment (FDI) and investor confidence with 35 reports (17.5%). Comparatively, tax and fiscal policy reforms attracted 22 reports (11.0%), while governance and general macroeconomic overview received the least attention, accounting for only 14 reports (7.0%).

These findings suggest that international media coverage concentrated primarily on economic reforms that generated immediate domestic and international interest, particularly those with significant implications for fiscal policy, exchange rate management, inflation, and investment climate. The prominence of fuel subsidy removal reflects the policy's widespread economic and social consequences, making it one of the most newsworthy aspects of the Tinubu administration's economic agenda. Likewise, considerable attention to exchange rate reforms and inflation underscores international concern about Nigeria's macroeconomic stability and its implications for regional and global markets.

The findings are consistent with the argument of Adelakun (2021) that international media generally devote greater attention to economic policies that have broad political, financial, and social implications. Similarly, Boyd-Barrett (2015) contends that international news organisations tend to prioritise issues with global economic significance, particularly those capable of influencing investment decisions and international financial relations. The pattern observed in this study therefore reflects the tendency of global media to focus on policy initiatives perceived to have substantial economic consequences rather than routine governance activities.

From the perspective of Framing Theory (Entman, 1993), the prominence accorded to particular policy themes demonstrates the media's role in selecting and emphasising certain aspects of reality while assigning relatively limited attention to others. By focusing predominantly on subsidy removal, exchange rate reforms, inflation, and investor confidence, the international media shaped global attention toward these issues as the defining characteristics of Nigeria's economic reform programme under President Tinubu. Consequently, audiences relying on these international news organisations are more likely to perceive these reforms as the central indicators of the administration's economic performance.

Article DOI: 10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ
DOI URL: https://doi.org/10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ

Research Question Two: What are the dominant frames and themes employed by the *BBC*, *Al Jazeera*, *Reuters*, and *The New York Times* in reporting President Ahmed Bola Tinubu's economic reforms between May 29, 2023, and September 30, 2025?

The findings presented in Table 2 indicate that the crisis frame was the most dominant among the selected international news media, accounting for 72 reports (36.0%). This was followed by the reform frame, representing 58 reports (29.0%). Other frames identified included the corruption/governance failure frame with 24 reports (12.0%), the human-interest frame with 22 reports (11.0%), the investor-friendly/market confidence frame with 16 reports (8.0%), and the neutral/explanatory frame, which accounted for only 8 reports (4.0%).

The predominance of the crisis frame suggests that international media coverage largely emphasised the immediate economic hardships, inflationary pressures, social unrest, and public dissatisfaction associated with the implementation of President Tinubu's economic reforms. Although a substantial proportion of reports also employed the reform frame by presenting the policies as necessary structural adjustments intended to improve long-term economic performance, crisis-oriented reporting remained the dominant narrative throughout the study period.

The presence of corruption and governance failure frames further indicates that some reports interpreted economic reforms within broader discussions of governance, accountability, and institutional effectiveness. Similarly, the human-interest frame highlighted the lived experiences of citizens affected by the reforms, while the investor-friendly frame focused on market confidence and Nigeria's attractiveness to foreign investors. The relatively low proportion of neutral or explanatory reports suggests that most international media accounts adopted identifiable interpretive perspectives rather than merely describing policy developments.

These findings support Entman's (1993) proposition that media framing involves selecting particular aspects of reality and making them more salient in order to shape audience interpretation. The dominance of the crisis and reform frames demonstrates how international media simultaneously portrayed President Tinubu's policies as necessary economic restructuring measures while emphasising their immediate socioeconomic consequences. This duality reflects the interpretive function of framing, whereby media narratives influence public understanding by highlighting specific dimensions of complex policy issues.

The findings are broadly consistent with Tadesse (2021), who found that Western media frequently frame African economic reforms through narratives of crisis and governance challenges while acknowledging reform efforts. Similarly, Okafor (2024) reported that international coverage of Nigeria's governance and economic policies often combines reform-oriented narratives with concerns about economic hardship and institutional accountability. The present study therefore reinforces existing scholarship on international media framing of African political economy by demonstrating that coverage of President Tinubu's reforms was characterised primarily by crisis and reform narratives rather than purely descriptive reporting.

Article DOI: 10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ
DOI URL: https://doi.org/10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ

Research Question Three: What is the tone and direction of the reportage of President Ahmed Bola Tinubu's economic reforms between May 29, 2023, and September 30, 2025?

The findings from this question revealed that the overall tone of international media coverage of President Tinubu's economic policies was predominantly neutral (45%), followed by negative (35%) and positive (20%) tones. The tonal variations across the *BBC, Al Jazeera, Reuters*, and *The New York Times* reflect differences in editorial orientation, ideological leaning, and audience expectations. This variation offers insight into how global news media construct narratives that influence international perception of Nigeria's economic trajectory.

Reuters and the *BBC*'s reports were largely neutral, employing an objective and fact-based style that emphasised data, expert opinions, and institutional sources, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. These outlets balanced both the challenges and potential benefits of President Bola Tinubu's reforms, portraying the president as a pragmatic reformer pursuing fiscal stabilisation amidst public discontent. For example, a *Reuters* report entitled *"Tinubu's Reforms Aim to Fix Nigeria's Economy, But Inflation Clouds Outlook"* adopted a measured tone, combining acknowledgment of reform ambition with caution about inflationary pressures. Similarly, the *BBC* often used quotes from Nigerian officials and ordinary citizens to provide multiple perspectives, resulting in a nuanced and relatively balanced portrayal.

In contrast, *Al Jazeera*'s coverage leaned predominantly to the negative, emphasising the social and humanitarian consequences of President Bola Tinubu's economic policies. News headlines such as *"Nigerians Suffer as Subsidy Removal Triggers Economic Pain"* adopted a critical stance, highlighting inflation, food scarcity, and public protests as evidence of poor policy sequencing and elite insensitivity. This tone aligns with *Al Jazeera*'s editorial focus on social justice and inequality in the Global South. The network frequently employed emotionally charged language and human-interest narratives that foregrounded the plight of vulnerable populations, thus framing President Bola Tinubu's reforms as policies that disproportionately burden the poor.

The New York Times maintained a mixed tone, alternating between analytical neutrality and subtle criticism. Its coverage situated Nigeria's reforms within global economic trends, comparing President Bola Tinubu's policy decisions to similar structural adjustments in other developing economies. While recognising the necessity of reform, the *New York Times* questioned the administration's capacity for implementation and transparency, thus combining skepticism with cautious respect. The tone suggested that while President Bola Tinubu's intentions were reformist, the execution lacked the institutional depth required for sustained impact.

The direction of reportage across these outlets leaned toward cautious skepticism. While international news media acknowledged the boldness of President Bola Tinubu's economic reforms, they simultaneously projected uncertainty regarding their long-term viability. This duality mirrors the Framing theory's proposition that tone and emphasis shape public interpretation (Entman, 1993). It also echoes the claim by Ezeru & Chikaire (2022) that, though there are positive changes in the post-colonial British press coverage of Africa, there are still some elements of neo-colonialism and racism in the reporting on Africa. A predominantly neutral and negative tonal direction may influence global audiences to perceive President Bola

Article DOI: 10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ
DOI URL: https://doi.org/10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ

Tinubu's Nigeria as a reforming but unstable economy, courageous in policy ambition, yet struggling with immediate social repercussions.

These findings align with those of Eze and Okoro (2022) that international news media often portray African governments' economic reforms as reformist yet crisis-laden, thereby reinforcing narratives of fragility and external dependency. The relatively low frequency of positive coverage underscores a persistent skepticism toward African-led reforms, reflecting what Adelakun (2021) terms "the diplomacy of doubt" in Western media narratives about African economies.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined how global news media, in particular, the *BBC, Al Jazeera, Reuters*, and *The New York Times*, reported President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's economic reforms between May 29, 2023, and September 30, 2025. Using content analysis as its methodology and guided by the Framing theory, the study explored the nature and extent of coverage, the dominant frames and themes, and the tone and direction of reportage.

The findings revealed that international news media coverage of Tinubu's economic policies was moderate but consistent, driven largely by major policy milestones such as fuel subsidy removal, naira devaluation, and fiscal restructuring. Reuters and BBC emphasised economic rationality and reform necessity, while Al Jazeera and *The New York Times* focused more on the human impact and socio-political implications of the reforms. This variation reflects each outlet's editorial philosophy and ideological orientation toward Africa's political economy.

From these findings, we conclude that in reporting President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's economic policies to their global audiences, the selected international news media framed their reports as bold but contentious reform efforts, emphasising market-oriented change alongside social hardship and governance concerns, thereby shaping a global perception of Nigeria's economic trajectory as reform-driven yet uncertain. Based on the findings and conclusion, the study recommends that international news media must intentionally build a balanced coverage of Nigeria's economic reforms beyond initial headlines while adopting multi-perspective framing frameworks that reflect both the economic rationales and human consequences of President Bola Tinubu's reforms.

REFERENCES

Adelakun, T. (2021). *Media framing of African economic reforms: Western narratives and national realities*. Spectrum Books.

Adesina, J.O. (2010). *Rethinking the social sciences in Africa: The end of disciplinary marginality*. CODESRIA.

Anemikaye, G.M. & Diane, S.B. (2024). The impact of international media narratives on African economies: A West African case. *The International Journal of Cross-Cultural Communication and Media Studies, 1*(3), 37-53

Banda, F. (2022). *African journalism and the struggle for democratic media*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Article DOI: 10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ
DOI URL: https://doi.org/10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ

Boyd-Barrett, O. (2015). *Media imperialism*. Sage.

Central Bank of Nigeria. (2023). *Macroeconomic review and policy reforms under President Tinubu's administration*. CBN Publications.

Ekeanyanwu, N.T., & Okoro, N. (2012). Nigerian media and foreign policy: An analysis of the roles and challenges. *Journal of International Politics and Development, 10*(2), 41–57.

Entman, R.M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication, 43*(4), 51–58. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x

Eze, C., & Okoro, N. (2022). Global media and Africa's economic image: A content analysis of CNN and BBC coverage of Nigeria's economy. *Journal of Media and Communication Research, 14*(1), 88–105.

Ezeru, W. & Chikaire, W. (2022). Africa's global image in a digital world as an exclusive Western preserve? *The International Communication Gazette 84*(5), 379-400

Gilboa, E. (2008). Searching for a theory of public diplomacy. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 616*(1), 55–77.

Gitlin, T. (1980). *The whole world is watching: Mass media in the making and unmaking of the New Left*. University of California Press.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Harvard University Press.

Gondwe, G. (2024). Framing the schemata: Western media coverage of African technological innovations. *Journal Media, 5*(4), 1901-1913

Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. Sage.

Herman, E.S., & Chomsky, N. (1988). *Manufacturing consent: The political economy of the mass media*. Pantheon Books.

Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (4th ed.). Sage.

McCombs, M.E., & Shaw, D.L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 36*(2), 176–187.

McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory* (6th ed.). Sage.

Mohammed, A. (2023). The politics of neoliberal reform in Nigeria: Tinubu's economic gamble. *African Review of Economics and Finance, 15*(2), 45–62.

Nyamnjoh, F. (2010). Racism, ethnicity, and the media in Africa: Reflections inspired by studies of xenophobia in Cameroon and South Africa. *Africa Spectrum, 45*(1), 57–93.

Okafor, C.E. (2024). Media framing of Nigeria's democratic transitions in international news: A content analysis of CNN and Al Jazeera (2015–2023). *Journal of Global Communication Studies, 18*(2), 44–62.

Okoro, N., & Nwafor, K.A. (2018). Press coverage of African countries in Western media: Trends and implications. *Journal of African Media Studies, 10*(3), 359–376.

Omondi, R. (2024). *Changing global news coverage of Africa is about acknowledging the continent's rightful place in the world.* Open Society Foundations

Scheufele, D.A. (1999). Framing as a theory of media effects. *Journal of Communication, 49*(1), 103–122. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1999.tb02784.x

Tadesse, A. (2021). Framing Africa: How Western media represent economic reforms and governance in Sub-Saharan Africa. *African Journalism Studies, 42*(1), 15–33.

Thussu, D.K. (2019). *International communication: Continuity and change* (3rd ed.). Bloomsbury Academic.

Article DOI: 10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ
DOI URL: https://doi.org/10.52589/BJMCMR-A6R9OSVZ