

## Comparative Content Analysis of Press Coverage of Kidnapping Cases in Nigeria

### *Análisis de contenido comparativo en la cobertura periodística de los casos de secuestro en Nigeria*

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#### **Abstract:**

The study used content analysis to examine press coverage of kidnapping cases in Nigeria in the Daily Trust and The Guardian newspapers from August to October, 2020. The objectives of the study are to examine the frequency; prominence and direction so as to measure the extent of kidnapping cases by the selected newspapers. Issue-Attention Cycle Theory and Framing Theory were used as theoretical framework. The basic assumption of the issue attention cycle theory is that issues regarding the environment tend to suddenly leap into prominence, remain there for a short time and then gradually fade from the center of public attention while Media Framing Theory believes that individual frame entails individual's cognitive understanding of a given situation. The study found that the two newspapers reported kidnapping cases more in their inside pages with 52.6% (Daily Trust) and 46.8% (The Guardian).

**Keywords:**

Daily Trust, Kidnapping, Nigeria, Press coverage, The Guardian.

**Resumen:**

*Este estudio utilizó el análisis de contenido para analizar la cobertura periodística de los casos de secuestro en Nigeria en los periódicos Daily Trust y The Guardian desde agosto a octubre de 2020. Los objetivos de la investigación son examinar la frecuencia, la prominencia y la dirección para medir el alcance de los casos de secuestro por los periódicos seleccionados. Como marco teórico se utilizaron la teoría del ciclo de atención a la temática y la teoría del encuadre. El supuesto básico de la teoría del ciclo de atención a la temática es que los temas relacionados con el medio ambiente tienden a ser repentinamente más notorios, permaneciendo así durante un breve tiempo y luego se desvanecen gradualmente del centro de la atención pública, mientras que la teoría del encuadre de los medios de comunicación defiende que el encuadre individual implica la comprensión cognitiva del individuo en una situación determinada. El estudio reveló que los dos periódicos informaron más de los casos de secuestro en sus páginas interiores, con un 52,6% (Daily Trust) y un 46,8% (The Guardian).*

**Palabras clave:**

Daily Trust, Secuestro, Nigeria, Cobertura de prensa, The Guardian.

## 1. Introduction

It is documented in the literature that there are frequent incidences of particular crimes, such as sectarian violence, ethno-religious conflict, political assassination, ransom kidnapping, campus cultism and electoral thuggery to human rights violations (Ezemenaka, 2018). Apparently, insecurity is rife. This could be the reason why Oarhe and Aghedo (2010) observed that Nigerian security agencies have largely been ineffective, which has led to a colossal amount of insecurity and violence in the country. Corroborating, Ngwama (2014) is of the view that kidnapping as a security discourse is not new in Nigeria and its prevalence alongside the strain on security and there is a need to investigate it thoroughly. To an extent, these assertions hold weight. However, it must be noted that the effectiveness of security in the state is a causal effect of the political order. Politicians are not exempt from the ills they have created through kidnapping. The ineffectiveness of Nigerian security leading to the prevalence of crimes, such as kidnapping has multi-causal connotations; among these causal variables, corruption is salient in the reasons and explanation of ineffective security.

Similarly, Inyang (2013) maintained that kidnapping has become endemic in the Nigerian society. It is fast becoming a lucrative alternative to armed robbery offence. The gravity of kidnapping is so intense that it has virtually affected most persons in the society. Kidnapping cases became alarmed in the Niger Delta region when militants in February 2006 abducted some oil workers, ostensibly to draw global attention to the dire situation in the oil rich Niger Delta region of the country, the victims were mostly foreigners. Since then the social problem of kidnapping has spread like wild-fire in most parts of the country, especially in the south-eastern region and Kaduna to Abuja road,

which is a no go area today. The targets are no longer foreigners alone; practically every Nigerian is now a target. Therefore, kidnapping is not actually new in the area but the current lucrative ransom demanding strategy has become a serious social problem for the Government and people of Nigeria (Inyang, 2013).

For instance, in the year 2018 Nigeria was placed sixth on the global kidnap index. This rating puts the country Nigeria among countries with serious kidnapping problems, behind Philippines, Venezuela, Columbia, Brazil and Mexico (Ezemenaka, 2018). Also, Ezemenaka (2018) reported that Nigeria recorded 512 cases of kidnapping and 30 dead persons in kidnappers' than the year against 353 cases recorded throughout 2015. Similarly, Kyrian (2017) also reported that the former Inspector General of Police in Nigeria had noted that kidnappers and hostage takers got ₦15 million in ransom (about ₦100 million) between 2015 and 2017. Kidnapping cases in southern Nigeria have been ravaging daily incidents. The safety of persons in Nigeria and their properties cannot be guaranteed. Kidnapping is an offence punishable by the law in Nigeria. Anybody caught involved in the act is expected to face a penalty of 10 years imprisonment (Kyrian, 2017).

There are other studies conducted on the kidnapping phenomenon. Okoro and Odoemelam (2013) investigated the problem of kidnapping but set focused mainly on print media framing of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. Another study was conducted by Muobike (2018) on the framing of the abduction of Chibok girls in Nigeria. Their study narrowed it the Southern Nigeria, where the causal factors might be limited to economic while the dominant factor for kidnapping in the South-south is environmental struggle and in the Northwestern and Northeastern parts could be poverty and terrorism, respectively.

Apparently, the media are often in liberal theory referred to as the “Fourth Estate of the Realm” and the “watchdog of the society”, meaning that the media exist as an organ of information sourcing and dissemination, educational promotion, surveillance, social enlightenment and mobilization. These functions set the media apart as an important link or factor in the relationship between the government and the governed and make them a sine qua non to societal growth and development. Thus, the expectation is that, the media will be vibrant in reporting kidnapping cases so that the government can be able to take proper action. It is in this perspective that this study set to ascertain the coverage of kidnapping cases in Nigeria.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Empirical evidence in the literature shows that studies have discussed mass media coverage of issues of national and international interests. Some of these studies revealed that kidnapping is worthy of reporting by the media. However, the degree of prominence, frequency and direction given to such events or issues by the press go down to a lower position as captured in the literature by (Inyang, 2013). Hazen and Horner (2007) recommend that kidnapping cases required a systematic examination of the problem in order to identify its underlying factors and its devastating consequences for policy recommendations for tackling the problem in Nigeria and beyond.

Therefore, the degree of prominence given to kidnapping cases by the press in Nigeria determines what Nigerians feel and thinks about kidnapping and its attendant consequences. As the “Fourth Estate of the Realm”, the mass media is expected to bring forth kidnapping cases into discourse, thereby setting the agenda and keeping its diverse audiences abreast of the situation. Thus, going by the gap in the literature, posers like do Nigerian media report kidnapping cases and what is the degree of coverage given to such cases apparently motivated this study to examine the coverage of kidnapping cases in Nigeria.

### 3. Objectives of the Study

In order to achieve the purpose of the study, the following objectives are set:

1. To determine the level of frequency given to kidnapping cases in *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* newspapers from August to October, 2020.
2. To find out the level of prominence given to kidnapping cases in *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* newspapers from August to October, 2020.
3. To determine the direction of the kidnapping cases in *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* newspapers from August to October, 2020.

### 4. Literature Review

In a study conducted by Christian, Okwudiri and Chukwuemeka (2015) using mixed research methods- content analysis and survey methods to investigate how selected Nigerian newspapers (*The Guardian, The Sun, The Trust and Leadership Newspapers*) report the Chibok school girls’ kidnapping or abduction in Government Secondary School, Chibok Borno State found that Nigerian newspapers used frames like: rescue efforts frame, hopelessness frame, political frame, religious frame, ethnic frame, conspiracy frame and economic frame in their news reports of the abducted girls and of these frames used by Nigeria newspapers, the frame of hopelessness is mostly used by the selected papers.

The study also found that the South East residents who are print media audience believe that the way Nigerian press report the Chibok kidnapping or abduction influenced their perception of rescue effort negatively. Therefore, the researchers recommended that print media journalists and owners should understand that it does not do any country good when the media concentrate only on government frustration in the face of terrorism. Since it is established that terrorism thrives when media organisation project it as succeeding, the media must learn to emphasize the strength of the government. The study recommends that other studies should look at other media contents apart from news. This will give an enriched result of media framing of terrorism, especially the abducted girls.

Shutt *et al.*, (2004) found that the threat of child kidnapping or abduction has been a socially constructed problem, resulting from mass media sensationalism and fabrication. In line with Spector and Kitsuse (2006), Shutt *et al.* (2004) support that the public has responded to this socially constructed problem by trying to fix it through several policy initiatives, such as Megan’s Law and Carlie’s Law. While these policy initiatives certainly address the problems of nonfamily abductions and stereotypical kidnappings,

they fail to address the issue and root causes of family abductions, which comprise the largest portion of kidnapping incidents with the media playing a significant role in terms of frequency of coverage to kidnapping cases.

Muobike (2018) using the content analysis method and Entman's Framing Theory as theoretical guide discovered in his study that the newspapers tend to give a new meaning or definition to the kidnapping or abduction like that of Chibok girls. The newspapers framed the problem as insecurity (64.4%) by giving salience to it, implying a gross existence of insecurity in the nation. He also believes that the government is part of the problem the nation has. Surprisingly, the media blamed Boko Haram to a very small extent (14.4%) implying that national insecurity could be caused by anybody and any group if the government does not put up measures to control it.

The findings point that kidnapping is a trend the country has been battling with diverse conflicts for more than two decades and the media are yet to report conflicts in a manner that will encourage the government and the governed to team together to solve the problem. It implies that there is a possibility that the media frame news from a realist's perspective.

## **5. Theoretical Framework**

The study is espoused on 'Issue Attention Cycle Theory and Framing Theory'. The first theory was propounded by Downs (1972); subsequently, scholars like Chong and Druckman (2007); Richard (2013) also contributed to the development of the theories. The basic assumption of the issue attention cycle theory is that, issues regarding the environment tend to "suddenly leap into prominence, remain there for a short time, and then gradually fade from the center of public attention." He calls this process the "issue-attention cycle," one of the most intriguing theories regarding environmental public opinion. Downs' theory contains crucial insight into what is currently happening with public opinion about the environment today. Ultimately, the issue-attention cycle has the potential to aid in the understanding of how kidnapping cases are reported in Nigeria.

In order to analyze the public's current opinions on the environment, it is critical to first understand how Downs defines the issue-attention cycle, specifically his description of the stages that are involved. Essentially, and rooted both in "the nature of certain domestic problems and in the way major communications media interact with the public," there are five stages of the issue-attention cycle. The first stage, known as the pre-problem stage, takes place when a highly undesirable condition or situation occurs that has not yet caught the attention of the public, regardless of whether or not experts or interest groups were already aware of the problem. The next stage, known as the stage of alarmed discovery and euphoric enthusiasm, consists of the public suddenly becoming both "aware of and alarmed about the evils of a particular problem." This awareness is usually accompanied by what Downs refers to as "euphoric enthusiasm," due to the common belief that one can "solve the problem" or achieve something effective within a relatively short time.

The next two stages highlight the decline of interest within environmental issues, resulting in an immense decline in euphoric enthusiasm. Thus, the third stage of the issue-attention cycle is realizing the cost of significant progress. This entails the spread of a gradual realization that the cost of solving the problem is much higher than originally expected. More specifically, it would take a great deal of money and resources, as well as “major sacrifices by large groups in the population.” This results in a realization by the public that the problem is usually a direct result from some extremely beneficial aspect of their lives.

Thus, Downs succinctly puts it, the previous stage “almost imperceptibly” transforms into the fourth stage; the gradual decline of intense public interest. Essentially, and as more and more people realize the difficulties and time consumption involved with solving the problem, several reactions take place. Some people may get discouraged, others feel “positively threatened by thinking about the problem,” and still others simply become bored with the issue. Of course, a combination of these feelings can occur as well, but it is essential to note that what tends to happen during this stage is that the public desire to keep attention focused on the issue at hand gradually fades away. Ultimately, by this point in time another issue seeking attention has already emerged within the second phase, becoming a “more novel and thus more powerful claim upon public attention.”

The fifth and final stage, the post-problem stage, occurs when an issue has been replaced and “public concern moves into a prolonged limbo.” Furthermore, sporadic instances or recurrences of interest are likely to occur, especially due to the fact that during the time of interest on a given topic, new institutions, programmes, or policies may have been created that contain the possibility to have continued, albeit to a much smaller degree, aiding in discovering solutions to the issue. What is key to understand here is that any major problem that was once elevated through the previous stages of the issue-attention cycle has the potential to “sporadically recapture public interest” once in the post-problem stage. The problems that have managed to go through the cycle contain a much higher average level of attention, public effort, and general concern than those still in the pre-discovery stage.

One of the shortcomings of the theory is that not all major social problems go through these stages of “issue-attention cycle”. That is to say that not all major social problem go through this “issue-attention cycle.” This is because some majority of persons in society may not be suffering from the problem nearly as much as some minority. Notwithstanding, despite its shortcoming, it is still relevant to this study.

On the other hand, Framing Theory, according to McQuail (2005, p. 555), is a philosophical postulation that explains “the way in which news content is typically shaped and contextualized by journalists.” Therefore, Framing Theory can be applied at both macro-level and a micro-level construct. The macro refers to the frame building and presentation of schemas which serve like a window through which readers can view issues such as the arms scandal. Entman (1993, p. 52) further said that Framing Theory is talking about selecting “some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way to promote a particular problem

definition (regional, cultural or social), causal interpretation, moral evaluation or treatment recommendation for the item described.”

Concisely, the focus here is on media framing of kidnapping cases in the Nigerian newspapers, which might contribute to regional, religious, cultural and social stereotype. Framing theory also takes salience into consideration. Salience is the act of making information more prominent, noticeable, meaningful or memorable in order to enhance the probability that the receivers of a message and process it and remember it (Entman, 1993). Frames “introduce or raise salience or apparent importance of certain ideas, activating schemas that encourage target audiences to think, feel, and decide in a particular way.” The nexus between these theories and the study is that, issue-attention cycle theory contains crucial insight into what is currently happening with public opinion about kidnapping in Nigeria today. Therefore, the issue-attention cycle as presented by Downs contains many practical uses within the understanding of public opinion and environmentalism. Over long periods of time, kidnapping in Nigeria has potentially pique and drop on multiple occasions, with the media playing an influential role in exactly where and when this occurs. Thus, the theory holds a vital position in the understanding of how the press covered and report kidnapping cases in Nigeria. As such, media frames can also aid in changing the perception of the society on the coverage and reportage of kidnapping cases in Nigeria. The theory serves the research goal in the context of understanding the type of issue that attracts prominence by the press from August to October 2020. This is because ‘Issue Attention Cycle Theory and Framing Theory’ interrogate how the press tend to pay attention or frame stories that affect the society in the public domain and how attention is been shifted to such issues like the kidnapping cases in Nigeria.

## 6. Methodological Approach

The study used content analysis. It is a research process that involves a rigorous procedure of investigation in order to arrive at a conclusion that is systematic and empirical by using certain categories and coding procedures that are standard and informed by the understanding of the topic or concept under investigation. The study used content analysis in order to follow the systematic way of communication content. As are search technique in the social sciences, content analysis became popular and its application increased in the early 1950s as a result of the work of Berelson who provided an insight into the analysis of communication research using content analysis (Berelson, 1952). Other studies have shown that content analysis has been used since 1914; this was so because of its ability to use “non-quantified” “verbal material” into a “quantitative data” that can be “manipulated for purposes of description or hypothesis testing”

Therefore, content analysis was considered to be an appropriate methodology for this study. Content analysis is an analysis based on the manifest content of the media messages. Rather than observe people’s behaviour directly or ask them to respond to scales or interview them, the researcher takes the communication messages, which have been produced. Content analysis is a research technique for the *objective*, systematic and qualitative description of the manifest content of communication. Wright (1986, p. 125) describes content analysis as a research technique for the systematic classification

and description of communication content according to certain, usually predetermined categories.

Kerlinger (2000) observed that content analysis is also considered as an unobtrusive or non-reactive method of social research, instead of asking people to respond to questions, it takes the communications that people have produced and asks questions of communications. Broadly, content analysis may be seen as a method where the content of the message forms the basis for drawing inferences and conclusions about the content. Wimmer and Dominick (2011) also established five uses of content analysis as follows: Describing communication content and systematic period: They examine what exist. For example, press coverage of kidnapping cases in Nigeria.

Testing hypothesis of message characteristics: This has to do with measuring the hypothesis. For example, if a source has characteristic A, then message containing element X and Y would be produced. If a source has a characteristic B, then message containing elements W and Z would be produced. Comparing media content to real world: Some content analytical studies reflect on the degree of agreement, correlation or harmony between recorded matters and plain reality. While the former is supposed to describe the latter, the level of authenticity of the former is often accessed by real world experience especially where no major introduced correlation between situation A and Situation B. Cases of the media coverage: here, one may be interested to see how kidnapping cases are cover and report by Nigeria newspapers. Find-line of investigation include; direction of coverage and scope of coverage. Establishing a starting point for studies of media effects: The use of content analysis as a starting point for subsequent studies is relatively new; the best example is the cultivation analysis, what is the dominant messages and themes in the media, which are documented by systematic procedure and several areas of studies are conducted to see whether the messages are fostering similar attitude among heavy media users.

However, Onabanjo (2010) raised two problems with content analysis. First, can it serve as an instrument for inquiry into social reality? Second, to what extent is content analysis contaminated by 'reactivity'? The latter means the effect of differences of viewpoint among coders in the way a coding frame is applied to the analysis of media content. This problem may become especially pronounced where more subjective, evaluative measures are taken. Despite this, in order to achieve the objectives of this study, the method of content analysis was employed. This method was employed because it create opportunity for an explicit, organized plan for assembling all the data collected, enhancing and simplifying data collection, measuring of concept under study and their interpretations.

In order to achieve the objectives of this research, the method of content analysis was employed to make a comparative analysis of kidnapping cases as reported by the selected newspapers. This method was employed because it creates opportunity for an explicit, organized plan for assembling all the data collected, enhancing and simplifying data collection, measuring of concepts under study and their interpretations. The population of the study consists of the 310 newspapers operating in the country as established by (Nigerian Press Council, 2019). Systematic sampling technique was used



to select the editions to be examined in the study. Similarly, the two newspapers formed the sample size of the study.

Apparently, the unit of analysis consists of news stories and feature articles based on the content categories selected for the study. Therefore, to determine the variable to be studied in *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* newspapers, the following content categories will be considered as examined thus: *Kidnapping*: these are news stories and feature articles reported by *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* newspaper on kidnapping cases within the study period. *Conflict News*: these are stories that give information about conflict situation in the society as reported in the two newspapers. *Entertainment News*: these are news stories that give information about entertainment events in the society. This comprises all items on the newspapers that give delight to the readers for example show biz, games and cartoons. *Religious News*: these are news stories about Islam, Christianity and Traditional religion in Nigeria as well as the activities of the practitioners which only aim at propagating their faith and belief system. *Social News*: these are news stories published in the newspapers about social activities, such as wedding, burial, meetings, conference, etc. The data gathering instrument is coding sheet. Coding entails the act of placing a particular unit of analysis into a content category.

The printed newspapers were selected because of their national outlook in terms of reach and content. Also, the selection is based on the fact that the papers are among the 12 National newspapers. Besides, it covers selected content categories with specific attention to kidnapping cases in Nigeria. Similarly, August to October, 2020 was chosen because this was the time that issue under investigation was at peak.

## 7. Findings

Table 1 shows the level of frequency given to kidnapping cases in the *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* newspapers within the study period.

**Table 1**

*Level of frequency given to kidnapping cases in Daily Trust and The Guardian newspapers (August to October 2020)*

Variables	<i>Daily Trust</i>		<i>The Guardian</i>		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Kidnapping	24	31.6	19	30.6	43	31.1
Conflict News	29	38.1	23	37.1	52	37.7
Entertainment News	11	14.5	13	20.10	24	17.4
Religious News	8	10.5	2	3.2	10	7.2
Social News	4	5.3	5	0.8	9	6.5
Total	76	100	62	100	138	100

The data shows that *Daily Trust* report 31.6% on kidnapping cases, 38.1% on conflict news, 14.5% on entertainment news, 10.5% on religious news and 5.3% on social news.

*The Guardian* on the other hand report 30.6% on kidnapping cases, 37.1% on conflict news, 20.10% on entertainment news, 3.2% on religious news and 0.8% on social news within the period under investigation. The result shows that the two papers under investigation report more stories on conflict compare to kidnapping cases within the study period. Similarly, *Daily Trust* covers and reports more stories on kidnapping cases than *The Guardian* newspaper. In a comparative context, *Daily Trust* covers and reports more on kidnapping cases because of the geographical location of the paper (Northern Nigeria) where kidnapping cases are significantly high.

**Table 2**

*Level of prominence given to kidnapping cases in Daily Trust and The Guardian newspapers (August to October 2020)*

	<i>Daily Trust</i>		<i>The Guardian</i>		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
News Stories						
Front Page	27	35.5	20	32.2	47	34.0
Inside Page	40	52.6	29	46.8	69	50
Back Page	-	-	-	-	-	-
Feature Articles	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Front Page	-	-	-	-	-	-
Inside Page	7	9.2	9	14.5	16	11.6
Back Page	2	2.6	4	6.4	6	4.3
Total	76	100	62	100	138	100

Table 2 shows the level of prominence given to kidnapping cases in the *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* newspapers from August to October 2020. Based on the data generated, *Daily Trust* reports 35.5% of kidnapping cases in the front page, 52.6% in the inside page and nothing was recorded at the back page. In terms of feature articles, *Daily Trust* reports 9.2% in the inside page, 2.6% at the back page and nothing was account in the front page. Similarly, *The Guardian* newspaper reports 32.2% on kidnapping cases in the front page, 46.8% in the inside page and nothing was recorded at the back page. Regarding feature articles, *The Guardian* newspaper reports 14.5% in the inside page, 2.6% at the back page and nothing was account in the front page.

The data indicates that, *Daily Trust* reports more stories on kidnapping cases in the front page than *The Guardian* newspaper. Apparently, *The Guardian* newspaper reports more feature articles on kidnapping cases than *Daily Trust* newspaper. From the data, it is evident that the two newspapers under investigation cover and report kidnapping cases in the inside page within the period under study. The comparative study shows that *Daily Trust* reports kidnapping cases more on their front pages and front pages stories are stories that attract attention by readers. This means that kidnapping cases in Nigeria was given prominence by *Daily Trust* than *The Guardian* newspaper.

**Table 3**

*The direction of the kidnapping cases in Daily Trust and The Guardian newspapers (August to October 2020)*

	<b>Daily Trust</b>		<b>The Guardian</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
News Stories						
Positive	19	25	12	19.3	31	22.5
Negative	2	2.6	3	4.8	5	3.6
Neutral	46	60.5	34	54.8	80	57.10
Feature Articles	No	%	No	%	No	%
Positive	3	3.9	4	6.4	7	5.1
Negative	1	1.3	2	3.2	3	2.2
Neutral	5	6.6	7	11.3	12	8.7
Total	76	100	62	100	138	100

Table 3 shows the direction of kidnapping cases in *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* newspaper from August to October 2020. It is evident from the findings that, *Daily Trust* reports 25% of kidnapping cases on positive direction, 2.6% on negative direction and 60.5% on neutral level. From the feature articles, *Daily Trust* reports 3.9% on positive direction, 1.3% on negative direction and 6.6% on neutral ground. *The Guardian* on the other hand reports 19.3% on positive direction, 4.8% on negative direction and 54.8% on neutral level. In terms of feature articles, *The Guardian* reports 6.4% on positive direction, 3.2% on negative direction and 11.3% on the neutral ground. The findings of the study show that the two papers under investigation report kidnapping cases more on neutral ground.

### 8. Discussion of Findings

Based on the findings, the result of the study shows that the two papers under investigation report more stories on conflict compare to kidnapping cases within the study period. Similarly, *Daily Trust* covers and reports more stories on kidnapping cases than *The Guardian* newspaper. Corroborating, Jacobs (2014) findings are similar, the study found that the way in which the media report on school violence influences public perceptions, gives rise to particular attitudes and can influence decisions by policy makers. The more frequently an issue is presented in a specific way, the more likely it is for readers to perceive the media’s version as the truth. Although news is assumed to be reliable, comprehensive and unprejudiced, journalism can be questioned. This study explores how school violence is reported in the South African print media.

The study discovered that the two newspapers under investigation cover and report kidnapping cases in the inside page within the period under study. The findings of this study is similar to that of Patricia and Olusegun (2015) who established that international television stations gave little prominence to government’s response to Boko Haram insurgency through its Security Agency Operations at 46% on *Aljazeera*, 36.5% on *Channels* and 48.4% on *CNN*. Also, the analysis of the yearly trend in their coverage showed that there was a significant difference in their reportage: *Aljazeera* and

CNN adopted a more critical approach in their discourse, while *Channels* was mostly distance. Also, the findings of the study revealed that government's response did not significantly influence their report of Boko Haram insurgency. Also the critical nature of the reportage influenced a critical audience attitude to government's response to Boko Haram insurgency at 69%.

The findings of the study revealed that the two papers under investigation report kidnapping cases more on neutral ground. Jibril (2015) findings attest to this, that the newspapers under investigation in his study made concerted efforts to cover the campaign positively, unlike what usually obtains in Western media reporting of social movements where status quo biases are often maintained and recommended that further research on media reporting of protests would be useful. A comparison of the data by Onwe *et al.*, (2017) also showed that the reportage by the media in Kenya is not in much use by the Nigerian media. There are differences in terms of the prevalent frames used by the media in the two countries, therefore, framing of news on terrorism takes place in the media of both countries but while the Nigerian media tilt towards the positive frames, the media in Kenya use mostly the negative and divisive reports.

Theoretically, the assumption of issue attention cycle theory is that issues regarding the environment tend to suddenly leap into prominence, remain there for a short time, and then gradually fade from the center of public attention. Ultimately, the issue-attention cycle has the potential to aid in the understanding of how kidnapping cases are reported in Nigeria. Similarly, Media Framing Theory believes that individual frame entails individual's cognitive understanding of a given situation. Similarly, the media frame deals with the words, images, phrases, and presentation styles used in the media outlet about an issue.

### 9. Comparism of the Methodological Approach in the Coverage of Kidnapping Cases in Nigeria

A comparism calls for messages derived from the same source, but spread or address to several audiences. A good example is comparing the style of writing and reporting between *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* newspapers. The above description was examined based on the comparism of the content of communication across to time, situation and audience. Thus, this all fall within inter-message study (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011). This involves comparing messages from a single source over time and drawing carefully observed trends (Holsti, 1968). For instance, looking at how the research method helps in understanding the coverage of kidnapping cases in the selected newspapers in Nigeria over time.

**Key:**

- ABCD - Source or recipient of messages
- XY - Content variables
- Z - Non-content variable
- S<sub>1</sub> S<sub>2</sub> - Situation
- T<sub>1</sub> T<sub>2</sub> - Time

An arrow with  $\longleftrightarrow$  is representing comparism between categories.

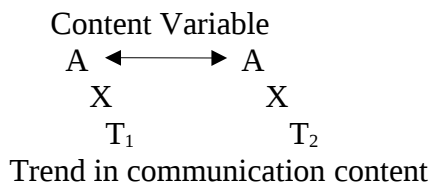
An arrow with  $\longrightarrow$  represent influence to be drawn from comparism.

E.g.  $A \times B \longleftrightarrow B \times A$

$T_1$                        $T_2$   
 $A$         =        represent the sender  
 $B$         =        represent the receiver  
 $X$         =        content variable  
 $T1$        =        time one  
 $T2$        =        time two

Message produced  
by A:time t 1    by A:time t 2  
 2019                      2020

Message produced



Therefore,  $A = Daily Trust$  and  $B = The Guardian$ . Thus, going by the analysis and the result obtained in the two newspapers, it is clear that the XY, which is representing the content variables, is active in the study. As the coverage of kidnapping cases by the two newspapers varies, this led *Daily Trust* newspaper to records the highest number of coverage on kidnapping cases within the period under review. The comparism shows that *Daily Trust* is located in the Northern part of Nigeria while *The Guardian* newspaper is located in the Southern part of Nigeria. Based on the findings, most of the kidnapping cases are more prone in the North than South. This justified the reason why *Daily Trust* covered and reported kidnapping cases in Nigeria more than *The Guardian* newspaper within the period of the study.

### 10. Conclusion

Methodology is the overall and detailed approach taken by a researcher in the research process. It involves broad theoretical and philosophical framework under which there are procedural rules or methods used to collect and analyze data. Methodology is all about why a researcher should conduct his or her study in a certain way and “it is a guide to what problems are worth investigating and how the research should proceed”. Social research scholars view methodology from either quantitative or qualitative. The former is mostly attributed to the positivist researchers (empiricists) who care more about quantity, frequency and numerical values of data that can be analyzed statistically while the latter is usually ascribed to the critical and cultural social science researchers

whose concern is quality, meaning and interpretation of data presented in a 'text' and they mostly derive their answers through interpretation, experiential and inferences.

Going by the findings, the study revealed that the two newspapers under investigation normally report kidnapping cases more in form of news stories. From the findings also, the study discovered that the newspapers papers under investigation report more stories on conflict compare to kidnapping cases within the study period. The findings of the study show that the two papers under investigation report kidnapping cases more on neutral ground compare to positive and negative. This implies that the media have responsibility to play as far as reporting of kidnapping cases is concern considering the power of the media as the 'Fourth Estate of the Realm', reportage of such issues will address societal problems like kidnapping cases.

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