

NEWS FRAMING AND SOCIAL MEDIA RESPONSES TO THE RELEASE
OF BOKO HARAM FEMALE CAPTIVES

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This qualitative study sheds light on the framing of the sexual abuse of the Boko Haram's female captives sent to the internally displaced persons (IDP) camps and analyzes emotional themes from tweets focusing on the release of the Boko Haram's female victims, the Chibok girls. Six articles were chosen from BBC (a British news source), *Punch* (a Nigerian news source), and the *New York Times* (an American news source) to reveal the frames. In addition, 118 tweets were examined to address emotional tweets under #ourgirlsareback, #82chibokgirls, #chibokgirls82, and #chibokgirls. The findings discovered the presence of the human interest frame, conflict frame, responsibility frame, and a stereotype in the articles. The tweets showed positive common themes- joy, gratitude, and hope. Also, the tweets included conspiracy theories.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 2003, Muslim Cleric Mohammed Yusuf founded Boko Haram in Maiduguri, Nigeria. He built a mosque and an Islamic school for families who stood against government-run schools and Western education. Children from low-income families in the area and other neighboring countries enrolled in the school. The group's interest is not only in the creation of Islamic education, but to form an Islamic state. Boko Haram recognizes its members as "Jama'at Ahlissunnah Lid-Da'watwal Jihad, meaning people committed to the propagation of the Prophet's teachings and Jihad" (Edogor, I. O., Dike, K., & Agbana, 2015; Okemi, 2013, p.2).

Jihadis began recruiting to expand territories and achieve their goals. Police stations and government offices got destroyed and many people killed. As a result, there was a shoot-out between Nigeria's forces and Boko Haram militants, which led to the deaths of hundreds of their members, including Yusuf, and thousands fled the city. Yusuf's death brought about the feeling of safety and people believed the days of terror was over, but that wasn't the case. The militant fighters reassembled under the command of, Abubakar Shehu.

In recent years, the terrorist organization is well-known for countless of bombings and kidnappings in Northern Nigeria, Northern Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. Boko Haram believes that activities related to Western values such as secular education, voting in elections, and wearing secular clothing should be forbidden. International communities declared the group as a terrorist organization in 2013. There are speculations of the organization's affiliation with other extremist organizations such as ISIS and al-Qaeda. They successfully declared some cities as Boko Haram territory. Military operations took place to expel the militants. Some of the operation led to victories and others, not so much.

Boko Haram sparked global outrage after kidnapping 275 girls from the Government Girls' Secondary School, Chibok. There was intense coverage by local and international media outlets and the social media campaign "Bring Back Our Girls" (#bringbackourgirls) was established to stand in solidarity and pressure the government for the return of the girls. The former first lady of the United States, Michelle Obama, and prominent Hollywood celebrities like Angelina Jolie and Lady Gaga, and human rights activists supported the campaign. In 2016, 82 Chibok girls and other female victims were released.

The release of the 82 Chibok girls prompted mixed feelings across Nigeria and on social media. Celebrations were held in communities where they were kidnapped. They also mourned those who didn't return because they were either held back or feared dead. On social media, people around the world reacted mostly positively, but there was also an outpour of sympathy toward the victims and resentment for Boko Haram and the government.

Some Chibok girls were given full scholarships to study at the American University of Nigeria in Adamawa (BBC, 2016), while other released victims were taken to internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. Human Rights Watch (HRW) released a study shortly after documenting the sexual exploitation and abuse of 43 girls and women in seven of the IDP camps in Borno State (Human Rights Watch, 2016).

News source like *Punch* and the *New York Times* began to research and provide more news stories about the ill treatment of women and girls in the IDP camps. Security officials, who were in charge of ensuring safety was taking advantage of the vulnerable girls and women. This was a sad reality for girls who had just been released from the hands of their capturers, who also sexually exploited them during captivity.

The Essence of the Study

The two areas (framing of news articles and common emotional tweets) of this research focus on the released Boko Haram female captives. The first goal I aimed to highlight in the framing narrative of the Boko Haram's female victims in IDP camps is the representation of the victims; the similarities and difference between the coverage on BBC (British), the *New York Times* (American) and *Punch* (Nigerian) in terms of portrayals of the women; the presence of framing techniques like metaphors and stereotypes; and the possibilities why the reporters portrayed the girls and women in the manner they did. BBC, the *New York Times*, and *Punch* report news related to Boko Haram and their victims. They all covered the sexual abuse of girls and women in IDP camps and they're respected news outlets. Nwabueze and Oduah (2015) found that the Nigerian media under report rape cases and covers rape stories in hard news formats.

I wanted to find out if these stories by the *New York Times*, the two BBC, and the three *Punch* articles follow the same reporting pattern in the framing of the stories. How the patterns aid or harm the Nigerian women's struggles to get rid of the sexual violence culture? If the coverage is positively skewed to favor the abused women, then, how does it benefit the women's movement in the Nigerian society generally? Or vice versa.

Few studies have been located on responses to the release of female Boko Haram victims, so this research is adding to the body of knowledge about the terrorist organization and raises other ideas on the subject matter.

One of the reasons for analyzing emotional tweets is to understand the impact Twitter had on the Nigerian public, who used the media to express their feeling after the release of the Chibok girls, another set of Boko Haram's female captives. It was important to address the

subject because it shows the mood and reaction of the Nigerian community on Twitter after positive news about the freedom of Boko Haram captives. The #ourgirlsareback, #82chibokgirls, #chibokgirls, and #chibokgirls82 were used to evaluate common emotional tweets from Nigerians in the Chibok girls' release.

Based on my goals, I came up with the following research questions:

1) How did BBC, the *New York Times*, and *Punch* frame stories on the release of female victims? 2) What are common emotional themes found in tweets about the release of the Chibok girls?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Framing Theory

While objectivity and fairness is the motto of most media outlets, they are often seen telling stories with the intent of shaping and influencing the public's thoughts on issues.

Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996 defined framing as:

The ability to shape the meaning of a subject, to judge its character and significance. To hold the frame of a subject is to choose one particular meaning (or set of meanings) over another. When we share our frames with others (the process of framing), we manage meaning because we assert that our interpretations should be taken as real over other possible interpretations. (Fairhurst, 2005, p. 3)

Entman (1993) noted that framing consists of “selection and salience.” A frame is developed when there is a ‘selection’ of a perceived reality and made ‘salient’ when conveyed in texts.

Framing fosters “a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). The following are lists of things research can do under framing. They include: define problems, determine the causes, evaluate the effects, and propose solutions.

News frames are attributes of the news applied by the press to set up news discourse (Mumah, 2012; Zhongang & Kosicki, 1993). The news discourse emphasizes the perceived reality, leaving the media to take advantage of it and presenting it in stories to attract the attention of the audience (Entman, 1991; Ryan, Carragee & Meinhofer, 2001). The audience either receives the framed messages positively or negatively, depending on their beliefs and information presented.

McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver (1997) called framing an extension of agenda setting. They created the term *second-level agenda-setting*, which conveys “the impact of the salience of

characteristics of media coverage on audiences' interpretation of these news stories" (Scheufele, 1999, p. 103). Agenda setting dictates what's essential and what's not, while framing works on the prescribed issues set by agenda setting and construct narratives that fit.

Journalists decide the presentation of the news, in other words, the way stories are reported. Their choices can be based on the social class, race, and gender. Framing can also influence the news outcome based on the author's experience or belief system. It tends to be problematic when it advances stereotypes and views about individual, groups, and societies that are wrong and harmful. In some cases, it is a possibility for misinterpretation because a reader or viewer may or may not grasp the intended frame communicated by the journalist.

Framing theory was introduced by Erving Goffman, a Canadian-American sociologist, and writer. He modeled it after Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of language games (Baran & Davis, 2006). In his book, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, Goffman (1974) explained how individuals construct frames in societies through what he called "primary framework" (Mass Communication Theory, n.d.). The primary framework gives meaning to events that would be considered irrelevant. The framework is broken down into two parts: natural and social. Natural frameworks occur in a physical frame while the social framework is formed on the basis of natural frames and understands will, agency, and human intelligence by certain justifications.

Baran and Davis (2015) stated that "Goffman's theory provides an intriguing way of assessing how media can elaborate and reinforce a dominant public culture" (p. 320). Goffman studied the advertisement and discovered how women were depicted to catch men's attention. Even though sex-roles didn't begin in advertising, it had become a standard in the industry (Baran & Davis, 2015). Nwabueze (2012) pointed out that the portrayal of genders comes from

the long history of certain views and stereotypes. Women have virtually been analyzed through stereotypical images perpetrated for generations. The reinforcement of stereotypes trivializes and condemns the agency of women especially women of color (Arango, Flannigan, Guevara, Hamilton, & Sanchez, 2017). A 2010 research by Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) discovered that women were under-represented in media coverages (Nwabueze, 2012). Media coverage has centered on the trauma the victims endure, and the stigma they face in their communities. Adding to the list is one of the focus of this research, the abuse the women suffered in IDP camps.

Framing theory helps analyze the news coverage of the abuse by engaging some of the criteria to discover frames in the articles. Most research of frames surrounds the operational definitions, but as Vreese (2005) stated, little had been written regarding the identification of frames. Majority of researchers support the use of a succinct and practical definition of frames in studies. Some also proposed some criteria frames should meet. Cappella and Jamieson (1997) proposed news frame identifier that helps researchers recognize frames (Vresse, 2005). Frames must have conceptual and linguistic characteristics, be used constantly in journalistic settings, have different frame reliability, and lastly, must be visible to researchers (Vresse, 2005).

Gameson and Modigliani (1989) identified framing techniques such as metaphors, visuals, and buzzwords. In this study, the choices of words and languages used are looked into to find out if they were appropriate in describing the women's ordeals, i.e., rooting out stereotypical words, sentences by the writer and sources. It checked if the subjects were fairly represented. It also covered the similarities and difference in coverage between the Nigerian and Western press if any exists.

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory serves as another scaffold for this analysis; the premise of feminism has been to unveil problematic forces that stand for oppression, victimization, and inequality. There isn't a standard definition of the theory because it's not unitary belief (Lempert, 2005). Tong (1998) also argued that "feminist thought resists categorization, especially categorization based on 'fathers' labels" (Lane, Grubb-Swetnam, Rush, & Sarikakis, 2008, p. 505). The labels are radical, liberal, and socialist feminism, but Tong (1998) believed the labels doesn't capture the entire movement because feminists think differently. Feminist theory explores how institutions or societies normalize gender practices (Carlson & Ray, 2011). Letherbery (2003) stated that:

However, whatever theoretical and epistemology position feminists hold, it is fair to say that all feminists take a critical position on the 'woman question' and argue that: 'The single most distinguished feature of feminist scholarly work has been its overtly political nature and feminism's commitment to material and social change has played a significant role in undermining traditional academic boundaries between the personal and the political. (p. 4)

The feminist theory also reveals problematic social, economic, and political trends that have been seen from the male perspective from the beginning of time (Crossman, 2018).

The common misconception of the feminist theory or feminism in general by many is that it exclusively advocates for the superiority of women over men rather than seeking equality and justice. Feminism pursues fairness in status, opportunities, and rights for all. Feminist theory is a 'dominant model' that defines violence on women (Gelles, 1993; Yodanis, 2004). Social institutions such as religion, government, schools, etc., have a culture of overlooking unhealthy behavior toward women. The oppression of women begins at childhood due to the structured roles assigned that end up taking control of how women view themselves (Lane, Grubb-Swetnam, Rush, & Sarikakis, 2008).

"According to feminist theory, rape functions as a mechanism of social control in

patriarchal societies” (Baron & Straus, 1987, p. 467; Brownville, 1975; Riger & Gordon, 1981). In societies where women are viewed as objects of pleasure for men, there is always an increase of sexual violence against women. These societies allow men hold and maintain power by threatening and overpowering women. Societies rooted in patriarchy produce oppressive systems that disservice women and favor men (Boakeye, 2009; Brownmiller, 1975).

From the feminist theory perspective “rape ideologies (mostly conceptualized as myths), essentially emanating from the patriarchal system, encourage and justify sexual coercion, trivialize sexual violence, and demean and devalue women who become victims of sexual assault” (Boakeye, 2009, p. 1635). Feminist scholars like Ellis (1989) and Gibbon (1984) have addressed the reasons for the prevalence of sexual violence such as rape and the treatments victims of the crime receives when the tales of their rape experience become public (Boakeye, 2009). Male rapists show their vicious contempt for women by using physical force to violate them. The contempt isn’t developed in a day, it’s part of the distrust, disdain, and domineering attribute they’ve been groomed into believing for years.

In terms of war, “while men may fight on different sides and for different reasons, in one sense they are all warriors on behalf of their gender- and the enemy is woman” (Gottschall, 2004, p. 131). Traditional roles and masculine traits such as the feeling of superiority and hostility towards women are believed to be contributors of rape.

Baron and Straus (1989) conducted a study that discovered that the higher the political and economic status of a woman, the lower her chances of getting raped (Yodanis, 2004). This implies that women with lower status are more prone to suffer sexual abuse. They also found that “this relationship exists because in a male-dominated society, rape both reflects the devaluation of women and contributes to their subordinate position in the gender stratification system”

(Baron & Straus, 1989; Yodanis, 2004, p. 659).

When tradition takes a front row in abuse of any form, women tend to suffer because men make laws that protect the perpetrators of violence against women (Mackinnon, 1996; Onyejekwe, 2008). The army, which is mostly run by men, denied all allegations of sexual misconducts in the camps. In a statement, the acting director of Defense Information, Brigadier General John Agim said, “Amnesty International has not only positioned itself as an enemy of the Nigerian army but the country as a whole” (Momoh, 2018, para. 4). Amnesty International was the first to report the abuse and was essentially deemed as an enemy for the reporting and exposing powerful men.

Girls and women in Africa are significantly affected by rape, harassment, and domestic violence because the society is deeply rooted in patriarchy and promotes sexism. Studies have drawn the link between gender inequality and violence against women. In many situations, sexual violence or abuse is to exact power over the victims. Several Nigerians have accused the Nigerian force of using lethal force and intimidating them to get what they want. Women are mostly target of these abuses. Women in IDP camps made claims that the officials purposely starved them to have sex with them. Some had no choice but to oblige and those who refused were raped. The research aimed to study the rape culture going on in the Nigerian society and how the Nigerian media aids in promoting dangerous rape stereotypes. It also examined if any cultural practices that impact the raped victims were noted.

Uses and Gratification Theory

Uses and gratifications theory is a communication theory that does not draw out the effects of mass media on people, but explains how people adopt or build relationships with the media. Uses and gratifications theory (U&G) is based on

(1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in need (6) gratifications and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones. (Blumer, Katz, & Gurevitch, 1974, p. 20)

Smock, Elison, Lampe, and Wohn (2011) defined the theory as the study of how the “media, including social media, are utilized to fulfill the needs of individual users with different goals” (p. 2323). Uses and gratifications is an audience and goal-focused theory. The audience has the liberty to freely choose any form of mass media they want and actively use it to satisfy their needs. Being active is relative depending on the level of activity a person does on a particular medium. Media platforms can be accepted or rejected based on “rational decisions” (Chen, 2010; Rubin, 1993).

Two major conclusions have been proposed from previous researches on the uses and gratifications approach. First, people choose a medium because of its contents and secondly, the experience they derive from them (Cutler & Danowski, 1980; Stafford & Stafford, 1996; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). McGuire (1974) argued that discovering media platforms is not of importance, but how it attracts users after use. Media scholars can better understand individual beliefs, behaviors, and goals for engaging the platforms in the initial stage.

Critics of the theory claimed it's highly individualistic. People can ignore the media, and personal gratification from the medium is the only part taken into account even in cases where the individuals aren't seeking it out for pursuing satisfaction, but instead forced on them. Uses and gratification approach best serves when an audience utilizes a specific type of media at a time.

The uses and gratification theory applies to the internet and social media because of the desire by many to stay informed and communicate with others. Blumer (1979) asserted that

“studies have shown that audience gratifications can be derived from at least three distinct sources: media content, exposure to the media per se, and social context that typifies the situation of exposure to different media” (p. 24). The media outlets we have today all serve these purposes. On Twitter, individuals can easily access the latest news, discuss events, express their opinions, watch viral videos, and so on.

During the Chibok girl’s crisis, most Nigerians opted to Twitter sharing their voices under #bringbackourgirls. They gravitated toward the medium because they knew how effective it was in creating exposure and social change. They also wanted an avenue to pressure the government and international bodies. When some were released, people used the medium once again to seek gratification and express their feelings. Some people were happy and encouraged, and some were also disappointed mainly because the rescue came rather late.

This study applied the uses and gratifications theory because it tries to understand why people derive satisfaction using Twitter for social activism and at the same time, pull out emotional themes from people’s reaction to the release of the girls using the #ourgirlsareback, #chibokgirls, #82chibokgirls, and #chibokgirls82. It adds to the body of information on why people need social media gratification.

The Culture of Violence against Nigerian Women

In the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the United Nations defined “violence against women as ‘any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life’” (UN, 1993, para, 2). One in three women is a victim of gender-based violence globally (World Bank, 2018).

The repression of women as a result of cultural and religious practices in Nigeria cannot be denied. The Nigerian culture and religions favor the right of men having total control of women and excuses a man's decision to punish them for going against their authority. Northern Nigeria has the most culturally repressive restrictions against girls and women compared to the other regions in the country. More than 10 states in the North, including Borno State, where the girls and women are mostly kidnapped, practice Sharia law. Sharia law are principles based on the teachings of Prophet Mohammed. The interpretations of the Sharia law vary depending on the various Islamic societies where it's in operation (Glaze, 2018). Some believe it might be a reason for Boko Haram's obsession with the states. Boko Haram's notion of imposing Sharia law causes gender-based violence "through rigidly gendered ideological structures" (Onuoha, 2010; Zenn & Pearson, 2014, p. 51).

The idea of girls going to school not only threatens the extremist group, but according to them, goes against Sharia law. The implementation and expansion of Sharia law in the states led to a significant increase in violence against women. Women's rights under the Sharia penal codes in Northern Nigeria are not protected (Akiyode-Afolabi, 2003). Their abuse is socially accepted, and they pay much higher prices for the same act a man gets away with. Not all Muslims in the Northern Nigeria believe or practice Sharia law. There is also a widespread belief in Northern Nigeria that women are inferior and should be treated as second-class citizens. Most women have lost their ability to access quality education, independence from men, and other rights.

Bloom and Matfess (2016) asserted that some of the Boko Haram's female victims were not kidnapped, but gifted by their parents, who were Boko Haram sympathizers. They were

exchanged for money. For generations, families sell their daughters to write off debts or make money.

“Women’s lives and their bodies have been the unacknowledged casualties of war for far too long” (Sverdlov, 2017, p. 333). Women and girls suffer several forms of abuses during war times. Boko Haram has a long history of intentionally practicing gender-selective terrorism against girls and women by forcing them to perform domestic servitudes. The vast majority of their captives were Christians and were immediately asked to convert to Islam. Human Rights Watch (2014) confirmed that the punishment for refusing were subjected “to physical and psychological abuse; forced labour; forced participation in military operations, including carrying ammunition or luring men into ambush; forced marriage to the captors; and sexual abuse, including rape” (Sherwood, 2014, para 7).

Soldiers in IDP camps became perpetrators of gendered based violence and rape. After the stories on the abuses in IDP camps came to light, multiple victims were encouraged and proceeded to share their stories of their victimization. Several new articles documented the stories of the sexual exploitation of the released female victims.

These women kept quiet because they feared no one would believe them. A patriarchal society values the words of men, especially men in positions of power over women. Women are often labeled liars or accused of purposefully seducing these men with the intention of getting something in return. This occurs because of the culture of rape in the society.

Rape Culture in Nigeria

The first set of questions most people ask when a woman is sexually assaulted is what was the victim wearing? Was she under the influence of alcohol? And did she decide to go into his apartment alone? These questions are mostly asked as a means to discredit women. The term

“rape culture” describes “a culture in which sexual violence is treated as the norm and victims are blamed for their own assaults” (Taub, 2014, para. 1). The victims are judged by the public for bringing the plight on themselves. It is one of the top reasons why women don’t report rape cases. “Generally, victim blaming seeks to degrade individual women’s capability to receive sympathy, understanding, and justice by shifting focus and responsibility away from the perpetrators and onto the victims” (Gilmore, 2016, p. 10).

Rape culture continues to be prevalent in communities in Nigeria, and no action is taken to curb the practices. Girls and women are raped for various reasons. It can be “from “testing” virginity or “having a share” of an allegedly promiscuous woman to “curing” homosexuality (Agbo & Ndeche, 2018). The victims are made to feel shame and guilt for the harmful actions perpetuate by someone else. Religious and various cultural entities in the world have always preached that the body of a woman is sacred. The top reason for shame and guilt in rape cases as “the violation of the body” (Benedict, 1992; Thapan, 1997; Nwabueze & Oduah, 2015).

Women are given numerous advice on what to do and what not to do to avoid rape. They are asked to stop sharing their stories on social media instead report to the police. A lot of people giving this advice forget that cops are human and plenty of times, fail the victims. Countries like Nigeria have a corrupt justice system. Victims would rather remain quiet than face humiliation. A woman is always accused of having a hidden agenda like wanting money from the perpetrator. An accusation of false allegation is leveled against rape victims. False accusation is unfounded or untrue statements made with malicious intent to harm a person (Aiken, 1993). It rarely happens, but people always bring it up as a defense. Why did she wait 30 years before saying anything? Some people believe waiting long to report automatically translates that the rape accusation must be false. A woman who waits for a long time to share her rape story is

automatically discredited of her claims. Men blame women for their abuse more than women do.

A survey released by the Thomas Reuters Foundation ranked Nigeria as the ninth most dangerous country for women (Thomas Reuters Foundation, 2018). The country also ranked number 10 when it came to the nation with the highest forms of sexual violence. Although the society recognizes the rape epidemic going on, it is hard to find out the exact number or percentage of women who have been affected by the epidemic. This is mostly because rape is still one of the top underreported crimes. Dr. Kemi Da-Silver Ibru, the founder of the nonprofit organization combating sexual violence in Nigeria, WARIF (Women at Risk International Foundation), stated that “one in four girls by the time she reaches 18 would have experienced at least one form of sexual assault” (Ake, 2017, para. 3).

Many leaders of countries where rape is prevalent have often made promises to curb the crime, but so far little to no action has been taken to fix the problem. Finding solutions to the problem can be possible in a nation where women are in leadership positions, which gives them the power to change laws that discriminate against women. There are only eight female senators in Nigeria. If there are more female leaders, then we'll have a major room for change, which means better living conditions for girls and women. They can live in societies where their safety is fully guaranteed.

Under Section 357 of the Criminal Code Act in Nigeria, rape happens when a person:

...has unlawful carnal knowledge of a woman or girl, without her consent, or with her consent, if consent is obtained by force or by means of threat or intimidation of any kind, or by fear of harm, or by any means of false and fraudulent representation as to the nature of the act, or in the case of a married woman, by personating her husband is guilty of an offence called rape (Ibitoye, 2018, p.11)

A sentence of life imprisonment is the punishment of anyone found guilty of rape in Nigeria.

However, a Nigerian human rights lawyer claimed that a total of 18 convictions had been made

so far in the country's legal history (Igomu, 2017). Statutory rape is only valid if the victim is younger than 10. The age of consent in the county is 11. Many critics have called for the change of the consent age arguing it creates a breeding ground for Pedophiles to continue preying on children.

Marital rape isn't recognized as a crime. The cultural and religious stance takes precedence in this situation, so victims are mostly sent back to their abusers. In Sharia law, a woman's testimony is worth half of that of a man. They are required to produce proof and often end up revictimized (Onyejekwe, 2008). If a woman can't prove rape happened, she would be punished. She's usually labeled an adulterer or fornicator (Lydon, 2018). Boko Haram argued that since some of the victims are married to their members, rape isn't a thing. Although there is an approved Child Right Act in the country that protects girls and boys under the age of 18, it doesn't help since it isn't in the constitution. The constitution tends to hold more power.

Skjelsbæk's (2007a) book, *Voicing Silence*, "points to one of the most widespread coping strategies employed by people who have to live with painful and shame-provoking experiences—silence" (Ericsson, 2010, p. 73). As a result of the shaming culture, many victims resort to silence. They begin to develop negative feelings about themselves. Silence is the absence of sound or noise. Voice is known as "having the ability, the means, and the right to express oneself, one's mind, and one's will. If an individual does not have these abilities, means, or rights, he or she is silent" (Reinharz, 1994; Ahrens, 2006, p. 264). Silence in rape culture avoids a second victimization of the abused. The girls and women in the IDP camps felt it was better to remain silent than report because they feared retribution from their abusers. The silence culture has become the norm in many societies. Destroying the silence culture protects the next generation from experiencing the same circle.

“While rape by soldiers has been prohibited by national military codes for centuries, it has frequently been given license as a reward for soldiers' service or as a matter of strategic policy” (Meron, 1993; Maxwell, 2009, para. 3). In reality, the military code doesn't stop many soldiers from committing rape. Women and children are vulnerable in war conflicts and they become easy targets to prey on. The military protects its members accused of sexual violence against girls and women. The Nigerian Army continued to deny the allegation that some of the men raped girls and women in IDP camps. They claimed the cases were unfounded. They also refused to carry out an investigation or hand over the alleged abusers to the police for proper investigation. The only way to improve legal and criminal proceedings of rape is if the society deeply studies why rape is underreported and why the cases don't get the deserved outcome.

As of now, no Boko Haram member has been convicted of rape or sexual violence cases; However, the Prosecutor's office at the International Criminal Court said there is hope for future prosecutions of rape and sexual violence cases against the extremist group (Ochab, 2017). No charges have equally been brought forth against accused officials since the report broke. The government claims it's investigating the allegations, but no one is sure it would happen because of the prevailing culture of the system letting men in high positions accused of rape walk free.

Emotional Discourse on Twitter

According to Leinweber (2009), there are five major contributions of Twitter to real news information. They consist of “news, prenews rumors, the formation of social media and subjects-based networks, and molecular searching using granular data tools.” (Chiluwa & Adegoke 2013, p. 86). Social networks such as Twitter enables researchers to “gain insights into the emotional ‘pulse of the nation,’ and indeed the global community” (Larsen, Boonstra, Batterham, O'Dea, Paris, & Christensen, 2015, p. 1246; Mislove, Lehmann, Ahn, Onnella, & Rosenquist, 2010). It

has become an excellent resource for studying social and behavioral attitudes (Kim, Bak, & Oh, 2015).

Researchers have found that anger and discontentment are common emotional trends when people express politically related issues on social media. Happiness has been determined as a common sentiment shared during sporting events depending on cities and countries. High level of emotional expression on Twitter is also detected in disasters and terrorist attacks (Menten, 2017)

It is normal for communicated words either written or spoken to showcase emotions, feelings, and attitudes. To Ihara (2006), receivers of communicated messages can clearly determine the intentions and the stance of the person behind the information (Chiluwa & Ifukor, 2015). Some have argued that detecting emotions on shorter texts like a microblog can be unreliable, but it is possible when analyzing themes (Roberts, Roach, Johnson, Guthrie, & Harabagiu, 2012).

Twitter has established itself as not just a news or information sharing site, but as a weapon for mobilizing protests globally. Activists and citizens alike can share their frustrations and demand notable changes. In 2007, Nigerians used Twitter to protect the election (Ifukor, 2010). Hashtag activism is the act of fighting or advocating for social causes. It is a recent digital development. Social protests are coordinated through hashtagged words to spread messages and create awareness about a subject matter. Arab Spring is an example of hashtag activism. Hashtag “Sidi Bouzid” (#sidibouzid) became an avenue for protestors to demand economic change and rights to free speech (Mohyeldin, 2011; Sadiki, 2010; Lotan, Graeff, Ananny, Gaffney, Pearce, & Byod, 2011).

The abduction of the Chibok girls drew people all over the world to voice how they felt

on Twitter. They demanded the girls' release through the #bringbackourgirls. The emotional discourse surrounding the Chibok girls' incident has always been based on anger, frustration, discouragement, and fear. That changed a bit after some regained their freedom. People opted to use the #ourgirlsareback, #82chibokgirls, #chibokgirls, and #chibokgirls82 to once again share their thoughts. The tweets had mostly positive sentiments such as joy and praises, but there were pessimistic reactions too.

Previous Research on News Framing of the Chibok Girls

Previous research of news framing related to the Chibok girls mostly anchored on the framing theory. Chiaha, Ekwe, and Ngwu (2015) researched news frames of Chibok girls' stories and its impact on readers. They generated data through content analysis and survey. Two Nigerian newspapers from the South and two from the North -- *The Guardian*, *The Sun*, *The Trust*, and *Leadership* newspapers were selected for the study. The researchers wanted to find what types of frames each coverage had, the most dominant frame, and the influence it had on the audience in Northern and Southern Nigeria.

Chiaha, Ekwe, and Ngwu (2015) also referenced the seven frames (rescue efforts frame, hopelessness frame, political frame, religious frame, ethnic frame, conspiracy frame and economic frame) in conflict situations. They concluded that all seven frames existed in the articles. The frame of hopelessness was popular. Lastly, the audiences in the South perceived from the news that a rescue effort would fail.

The purpose of Muobike's (2017) study was to determine if newspaper stories compelled the Nigerian government to react. Muobike believed identifying the means and the extent to how frames can effectively lead to actions can't be discovered easily. The research questions were based on the news frame while reporting, framing around the abduction; frames on provided

solutions; and the quantity of the frames used. Content analysis was used to obtain results from Nigerian newspapers, *The Guardian* and *The Nation*. Based on the outcome, Muobike discovered that insecurity and bad governance were frequent themes across the two papers while disappointedly, Boko Haram and terrorism received less condemnation from the press.

Although this research also incorporates the framing theory, it defers from these studies because it seeks to inspect frames surrounding the details of the abuse of female victims and not the capture of Chibok girls. It focuses on frames studied how the girls and women abused in the IDP camps were viewed in the media. I also aimed to discuss how it impacts Nigerian women's quest for equality.

Previous Research on Twitter Evaluation of the Chibok Girls

Twitter has played a huge role in the social media aspect of research on Chibok girls. The research examines the pragmatic acts in Twitter discourse and evaluates responses on Boko Haram-related activities. To Chilwa, and Adegoke (2013), pragmatics involves inferred contents, therefore, the context of a message. They adopted the method "that identifies pragmatic acts such as identifying with or co-opting, denouncing, rejecting, or implicitly denying, performed by Twitterers and responders within the context of reactions to the bombing in Nigeria" (Chilwa & Adegoke, 2013, p.88). The conclusion of the study found that Twitterers expressed intense emotion like anger and delight. They voiced their opinions as victims and called for action to end the terror.

Another study addressed the idea of social media activism that only yields results when actions are taken offline. Chilwa and Ifukor (2015) stated that if there's no action outside of the social media world, then the movement becomes "slacktivism," the act of supporting a cause without putting much effort or dedication, e.g., signing an online petition. The research was

rooted in the stance discourse. The aim of applying the interpretative frame was to shed light on the efficiency of stance in making online movements or campaign viral. It shows how issues surrounding insecurity can be lost on social media. Findings from 2,500 tweets and 2,500 posts on Facebook disclosed that with the involvement of countries like the U.S. and U.K. in the rescue mission, there is a higher chance of gaining results not just through Twitter and Facebook, but in reality.

Chiluwa and Adegoke (2013) did study tweets concerning Boko Haram and also pointed out emotional themes, but this research is different because it investigates the audience reaction on Twitter after the liberation of some Chibok girls. I extracted the recurrent themes from tweets that signal emotions. Both previous studies are based on the use of Twitter during the kidnap of Chibok girls. This research is different because it sheds a light on how people felt after the release of the Chibok girls and the power Twitter contains in letting people express their emotions through words.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research methodology was applied to examine the articles. Qualitative research “aims to understand the richness and complexity of social experience by attending closely to the actions, interactions, and social contexts of everyday life” (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002, p. 1155) This approach was chosen because it presents a deeper understanding of complex issues by addressing the “why” and “how” questions. Qualitative methods involve the breaking down of everyday behavior, patterns, and phenomena. It “provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research” (DeFranzo, 2011, para. 4).

This methodology is not only seeking findings, but it also pays attention to the process that leads to the results (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990; Merriam, 1988; Creswell, 2014). Sliverman (2004) described the best part of qualitative method as implementing it to study a topic that hasn't been done before. The results found in qualitative research are open to different interpretations. Analyses done by this method cannot be quantified in numbers. Individuals can use a structured or semi-structured method to obtain answers, which include themes and patterns. Ways to gather data through the research method includes interviews, focus groups, textual analysis, and observation. This research involves answering questions based on information presented in texts, and thus, a qualitative approach is suitable for this study.

I used textual analysis to examine news content and tweets. McKee (2001) explains, “when we perform textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text” (p. 3), Making sense of the media messages and their roles entails understanding the meaning of texts. Data can be obtained from films,

music, documents, newspapers, etc. Cultural scholars view textual analysis as the preferred choice when probing media content (Fursich, 2009). This approach is appropriate and useful for analyzing news articles and tweets about IDP women. The study explored news framing of the women in IDP camps after their release from Boko Haram captivity and the emotional themes that appear on Twitter.

Data was obtained through six online news articles on the abuse of women in IDP camps. These news sources are the *New York Times*, BBC, and *Punch*. I chose the *New York Times* because it's one of America's trusted news outlets that often reports news on Boko Haram and updates the public on issues related to the group. It was also among the first news sites to dive deeper into the story of sexual violence of Boko Haram victims in IDP camps after the Human Rights Watch released its report. BBC is a British news source. Nigeria is the first international market for BBC news services, and 40% of the population consumes BBC news (BBC, 2018). *Punch* is the country's second-largest daily newspaper with a circulation of over 80,000 daily publication (Answers Africa, n.d.). *Punch* has more than 4 million unique visitors on its digital platform (Punch, n.d.). These news sources are highly ranked in their countries. "Leading national newspapers are useful for framing studies because news stories are likely to have a cascading effect on other media outlets, elite views, and ultimately mass opinion" (Entman, 2008; Moscato & Ofori-Parku, 2018, p. 2486).

I examined one *New York Times*, two BBC, and three *Punch* articles. I was only able to find these articles on the issue. I'm using *Punch*'s articles from 2015 and 2016. The *New York Times* released an article in 2017, while BBC published their story in 2015, 2016, and 2018. I'm analyzing them because they cover the investigation on alleged sexual abuse and the stories of raped victims in IDP camps.

Semetko, Valkenburg, and De Vreese (1999) proposed four ways that frames can occur in news articles. They include conflict frame, human interest frame, responsibility frame, economic consequences frame.

- Conflict frame addresses a dispute between individuals or groups. It is a popular frame used in political news.
- Human interest frame presents people, situations, issues in an emotional way. Reporters apply the frame to generate sympathy, anger, and other emotional attributes from readers in a competitive market (Bennett, 1995; Semetko, Valkenburg, & De Vreese, 1999).
- Responsibility frame “presents an issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for its cause or solution to either the government or to an individual or group” (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000).
- Economic frame describes the financial setback an individual or group suffers or enjoys as a result of occurrence (An. & Gower, 2009).

In 2000, Semetko and Valkenburg introduced the morality frame. The frame portrays a story through a religious and moral stance.

I used descriptive codes because I'm identifying words and patterns, and organizing them in categories representing the type of frames the journalists used in telling their stories. Also, the code helped in determining the themes of emotions from tweets. Also, I took a grounded theory approach to coding the data. Grounded theory methods are rules applied in qualitative research that guides researchers when obtaining and examining data. Researchers can theorize the results (Charmaz, 2006). I studied the articles with the line-by-line coding method. Line-by-line coding is perfect for detail-oriented studies. “Detailed observations of people, actions, and settings that

reveal visibly telling and consequential scenes and actions lend themselves to line-by-line coding” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 50). The process allowed me to define frames, compare the data I got from the six articles, and the implications of the results. I read each article four times and then, on the fifth read, I began highlighting words, phrases, and sentences using the line-by-line coding strategy. The idea was to detect words, phrases, and sentences that correspond with the definition of any of the frames. I also got the answer to my first research question:

RQ1: How did BBC, the New York Times, and Punch frame stories on the release of female victims?

In addition, I found out if the narratives of the stories took one side over the other, that is, if the writers stood with the victim by declaring the perpetrators the villains, or made the victim the villain in the stories. Did these articles take a neutral stance in their reporting? I wanted to know if the reports indicated the government or military bullied victims into silence and the patterns of victim shaming, if any exists. This exercise helped me understand and identify the image the writers painted for the victims.

The other focus of the research is the public’s reactions after the girls’ release, and I explored common emotional themes through tweets. Additionally, it examines how powerful Twitter is in letting people capture their sentiments in words. Due to the lack of access to the community because of the continued attacks of the terrorist group in the region, this study applies Twitter as a social media research platform.

Twitter is a microblogging platform created in 2006 with a large following of more than 300 million active users. Seventy-nine percent of these users are international users (Alsam, 2018). It is considered one of the fastest growing social media sites. Users can tweet their thoughts and replies in 280 characters or fewer. There are daily conversations about trends, social events, politics, and interests. It is also an excellent connection and collaboration tool.

Twitter is accessible and a productive place to gather “real time and the latest” data (Hackernoon). Ahmed (2015) revealed that Twitter's popularity remains high in social media research. Townsend and Wallace (2016) argued that tweets under hashtags words are intentionally put out because they want it to attract the attention of multiple users (Ahmed, Bath, & Demartini, 2017).

For these reasons, I evaluated 118 tweets from May 6, 2017, to May 24, 2017. I examined the start and finish date from #chibokgirls, #82chibokgirls, #chibok82, and #ourgirlsareback. It was discovered that people started tweeting about the release from May 6 and the engagement level was lower after May 24. Although I only evaluated tweets under #chibokgirls on May 6 because many Nigerians tweeted about the release of the Chibok girls at that time period, they didn't after that. I gathered the tweets using TweetDeck. TweetDeck is a social media application that organizes and “manages” Twitter accounts (Moreau, 2018). Twitter acquired TweetDeck in 2011 (Lawer, 2017). TweetDeck has columns that display one's Twitter notification, messages, trends, and other activities. I chose the application because it is easy to navigate. I could narrow the tweets based on date range, location, and the level of engagement.

I searched hashtags carrying contents relating to the release of Chibok girls. The process led to the discovery of these four hashtags- #ourgirlsareback, #82chibokgirls, #chibokgirls82, #chibokgirls. I examined tweets made specifically by Nigerians. I checked out the names and profile to determine who was and wasn't a Nigerian. Non-Nigerians tweets were discarded because I'm studying the reactions of Nigerians and their use of Twitter to express their feelings. I included tweets from Nigerian organizations. I did not analyze tweets with handles of news organization and retweets of news articles made by Nigerians. In cases where an individual tweeted multiple times under the hashtags, the tweets got counted individually.

Coding was used to identify answers to the research questions. “A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana, 2008, p. 3). Coding leads to the identification of terms and frames in visual and textual contents. It is the identification of similar patterns and the creation of labels based on them. It allows easy recognition of relations between concepts and strings in texts worthy of further investigations. Codes are applied when studying phrases, actions, themes, ideas, and so on.

There are three forms of coding: descriptive codes, categorical codes, and analytical codes. Descriptive codes are the grouping of texts with labels. Categorical codes mean giving descriptive codes a more general meaning. Analytical codes “capture a broader range of meaning beyond describing your participant’s specific activities or range of special events they relate to you” (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 315).

The first step I took after identifying the hashtags was to determine the number of tweets I wanted to analyze. The goal was 300, but I had to *cut* down tweets that didn't meet the criteria highlighted previously. Then, I studied the tweets using the word-by-word coding method. This research is looking for meaning in words and constructing themes based on them. Word-by-word is an excellent tool for studying internet data (Charmez, 2006). I went through the hashtags four times. On the fifth read, I noted essential themes such as joy. I went through the tweets again, but this time I began to tally the expressions under the themes. Although, a lot of emotional themes were discovered, I documented the common ones.

Charmaz (2004) also raised five questions that help when coding. They are; what is going on? What are people doing? What is the person saying? What do these actions and statements take for granted? How do the structure and context serve to support, maintain, impede, or change

these actions and statements? I specifically focused on the first three questions on the emotional responses to the release of the Chibok girls because of their relevance to the second research question:

RQ2: What are common emotional themes found in tweets about the release of the Chibok girls?

For the framing aspect of the study, I applied the five questions.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The News Frame

The findings showed different frames depending on the news outlet. The *New York Times* tilted more to telling the girls and women's stories than BBC and *Punch*. BBC and *Punch* took a more neutral stance and told the story mostly based on existing facts and studies done by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty. One of *Punch*'s articles focused on the military's investigation and not the victims. It mainly indicated that the government demanded for an investigation (Adetayo, 2016). The *New York Times* story began its report by sharing the horrors the victims endured at the hands of Boko Haram and then dived into stories of girls raped by security operatives in the IDP camp. It gave the girls and women a voice, and portrayed them as survivors (Searcey, 2017). There are two major frames evident in the articles. They include the human interest frame and the conflict frame.

The Human Interest Frame

The human interest frame took center stage in the *New York Times* article, two BBC articles, and one *Punch* article. However, all had different styles of framing the stories. The *New York Times* and BBC were a feature stories while *Punch* covered the story in a hard news fashion. The BBC articles are mini-feature piece. It doesn't go into details as the *New York Times* did. *Punch* had some human interest frame elements in their articles. They included brief descriptions about the experience of the girls and women from the Human Right Watch and Amnesty report. Feature stories give a more descriptive explanation of events that are especially important when telling victims' stories. Readers do not get in-depth coverage simply with essential facts in hard news stories. BBC and *Punch* relied heavily on the findings produced by

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty. The reporters didn't go to the location to get the information, even for the newspaper based in Nigeria. The *New York Times* reporter, Diane Searcey, went to the scene, listened, and wrote about the survivors recalling their experience from their victimization in the IDP camps to gaining freedom (leaving the camp).

The sexual abuse crisis in the IDP camps is a pressing issue. Involving people who are directly victims, in the case of the victims in the IDP camps, there is a sense of urgency (Cho & Gower, 2006). Since feature stories are a powerful emotional tool, readers can feel connected and sympathize with these girls' and women's experiences. A study by Piña, Ramírez, and Valenzuela (2017) showed that stories based on human interest frames get more social media shares. They can go viral. However, there is no indication that any of these stories went viral. The *New York Times* story has 184 comments, and the others have none.

Below are some examples from the articles that illustrate the human interest frames relating to the sexual abuse case.

- *New York Times*

“The same day I was brought to there, soldiers started coming to rape me,” Falmata said. “They did it one after another. I’m not even sure those two knew about it.”

Hadiza was injured, she said, but didn't ask for medical care, fearing that the officers would revenge. She said she tried to keep a low profile..., but officers spotted her and raped her again. She said she had been raped as many as 20 times in the camp.

Security forces tightly control who goes in and out of the camps, sometimes coercing women and girls to trade sex for food.

- *Punch*

Four of the victims told HRW that they were drugged and raped, while 37 were coerced into sex through false marriage promises and material and financial assistance.

A 17-year-old girl said just over a year after she fled the frequent Boko Haram attacks in Dikwa, a town, 56 miles from Maiduguri, a policeman approached her for “friendship” in the camp, but turned around to raped her.

- BBC

In its report, they betrayed us, Amnesty recorded the testimony of a 25-year-old woman who said a soldier raped her while she was pregnant.

He knew I was five or six months pregnant. He said he saw me three times before. He didn't offer me any food, he called me and I ignored him but on the third day, he forced me to a room and raped me.

These are stories that draw readers' attention and evoke strong emotions. The human interest frame is also “a significant predictor of blame and responsibility” (An & Gower, 2008). Some sources in the BBC and *Punch* stories called for government investigations, transparency, and a reset on the organizations in charge of the camps.

Conflict Frame

The conflict frame draws attention between disagreeing parties, ideologies, and groups (An & Gower, 2009). In this situation, the conflict frame revolves around the conflicting reports between the military and the organizations--Human Rights Watch and Amnesty--fighting for the girls and women. The debate between the military and the organizations involves the next step of action, which is whether the accusers ought to be prosecuted or not. The army statement in all the articles stated that none of the alleged abuse accusations were true and that the groups advocating for justice were resulting in a “media war.” On the other side of the debate, the organizations are demanding for proper investigation and fitting punishments for the perpetrators if found guilty.

These are examples of the military's response to the alleged abuse.

- *Punch*

If there is any evidence, they should please come forward; they should not make it a media war.

The military authorities said they would discipline the indicted personnel, but there is no guarantee that this would be done.

- **BBC**

These false reports, which are capable of derailing the good work being done by our patriotic and selfless soldiers, must stop," the military said in a statement.

- *New York Times*

But an Army Special Board of Inquiry said in June that allegations against its soldiers at the camps were unfounded, while Jimoh Moshood, a police spokesman, said the investigations were continuing.

Amnesty and Human Rights Watch shared their discomfort in the lack of investigation and troubling conduct on the part on the security personnel. Here are some Human Right Watch / Amnesty's responses to the alleged abuse.

- *Punch*

It is disgraceful and outrageous that people, who should protect these women and girls, are attacking and abusing them.

- **BBC**

Amnesty said it was "absolutely shocking that people who had already suffered so much under Boko Haram have been condemned to further horrendous abuse by the Nigerian military."

- *New York Times*

Very little progress has been made by Nigerian authorities to implement President Buhari's promise of justice for the survivors, . . . The delay reinforces displaced people's sense of helplessness, and likely emboldens more perpetrators to prey on their vulnerability.

The difference in response showcases the conflict in response on both sides. All the articles also point to the direction that no action would be taken on the accusations of the girls and women.

The Human Rights Watch and Amnesty response is more empathetic toward the girls. Both organizations are well-known for their dedication to help human rights causes. They demonstrate anger toward the soldiers and the failure of the government. There is a conflict frame, which reflects how both sides of the spectrum are handling the case. One is bent on denying the allegations and calling the other side attention-seekers for wanting to establish justice.

Stereotype

A cultural and stereotypical angle spotted in the *New York Times* was the reference to the soldiers requiring young women to cook and clean up after the security operatives:

But in one camp, called Teachers Village, some residents said the security forces had worked out a system to select their victims. Young women were called to cook for them. After the women finished, security officers insisted that they clean up, telling them to go bathe in the officers' quarters as the men watched.

The soldiers are grown men who should be able to take care of themselves. One of the girls even referred to them as men old enough to be her father. Girls assume the responsibility of household chores such as cooking, cleaning, and washing early on. It establishes the historical and problematic belief that girls and women ought to be domesticated. While their male counterparts have fun, girls, who are from low-income families are told to be perfect in their roles because they'll have higher chances of getting good husbands. The security personnel aren't only abusing the victims, but using them as cooks to satisfy their stomachs. Searcey (2017) didn't support the action of these men, but she featured the gender exploitation.

Responsibility Frame

Not all the articles focus on the victims' experience and the perpetrators. Some mostly mentioned the president's requesting an investigation. Only the *New York Times* reported the

actions the government took to curb sexual violence in IDP camps. This part falls under the responsibility frame, which is the least recognized frame of the articles. The frame attributes responsibility for the cause and the solution on individuals or group. The responsibility is mostly placed on the government to take action. There was also the power dynamic theme in the majority of the articles. The victims kept the rape to themselves because they feared there would be retaliation from their abusers. They were scared these men in powerful positions would come back to traumatize them, and that happened countless of times. Some of the victims had to have sex with the security operatives to get food. These girls and women were not only failed when Boko Haram kidnapped them, but they were also failed by their countrymen entrusted to keep them safe.

- *New York Times*

Last year, President Muhammadu Buhari called for an investigation into sexual assaults at the camps after Human Rights Watch detailed the abuse in a report, ordering new measures to protect the vulnerable. Security officers have received more training, and at least 100 female officers have been deployed inside the camps.

- BBC

In the summer of 2017, Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo set up a panel to investigate human rights abuses by the military, but its findings have not yet been made public.

- *Punch*

President Muhammadu Buhari on Monday instructed the Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Idris Ibrahim, and governors of affected states to immediately commence investigations into the cases of sexual abuse and exploitation of women and girls in Internally Displaced Persons Camps as contained in a report by the Human Rights Watch.

Meanwhile, Buhari on Monday instructed that the alleged exploitation of women and girls in the IDPs camps as contained in the HRW report be investigated.

The President had on November 1, 2016, directed the Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Ibrahim Idris, to commence investigations into the allegations by the HRW.

Common Emotional Themes

After waiting for three years and a few months, 82 Chibok girls were back home. Not only were the girls celebrated by their families and friends, but also the social media community also welcomed them. This research found common emotions from Nigerian Twitter users on the girls' release. A lot of tweets under the #chibokgirls and #ourgirlsareback had positive reactions, The #Chibokgirls82 and #82chibokgirls results came back with a large percentage of the tweets leaning toward conspiracy theories. That doesn't mean there weren't common positive emotions, but not many tweets were positive. First, I will address some of the few common positive themes. The positive emotions expressed words such as joy, thanks, great, and so on. Gratitude and joy are two popular positive emotional themes expressed.

Gratitude

“Gratitude is the appreciation of what is valuable and meaningful to oneself and represents a general state of thankfulness and/or appreciation” (Sansone & Sansone, 2010, p. 18). Gratitude is either expressed through emotions or a sense of virtue. Positive results and recognizing an external factor are two stages in the gratitude process (Emmons, Froh, & Sefick, 2008). Although the country is a secular state, it's primarily known for its devotion to religion. More than 40% of the population identifies as Christian or Muslim, and 1% or less than practice other religions or are atheists (Pew Forum, n.d.). Gratefulness is significantly expressed in the religious and political context:

How EXCELLENT is YOUR NAME! How EXCELLENT is YOUR NAME!! How EXCELLENT is YOUR NAME!! Oh LORD!!! #ChibokGirls82 🧑🏻🧑🏻🧑🏻
#AndWeShallPersist113👊 (Ezekwesili, 2017).

#82chibokgirls@Abuja May the glory of this nation continue to shine on. God bless Nigeria (Asunmo, 2017).

God bless @NGRPresident God bless Nigeria God bless @BBOG_Nigeria God bless #ChibokGirls God bless #chibokcommunity God is great (The Attorney, 2017).

Gratitude toward the government recognizes its effort in the girls' rescue. Supporters of the ruling political party, APC cheered on the party for delivering one of its campaign promises. One of the APC's agenda before getting elected was to get rid of Boko Haram and rescue the victims. Some tweets used the opportunity to take a jab on the former president, Goodluck Johnathan, and his administration. Below are some examples of tweets highlighting the appraisal.

A million thanks to @MBuhari and his administration for rescuing the 82 #Chibokgirls. I believe the rest are on their way. #ChibokGirls82 (Okechuwu, 2017).

Promise made promise kept. Well done Mr presdnt @MBuhari. Surely under your leadership all captives will regain thier freedom. #ChibokGirls (Alibe, 2017).

Joy

The theme joy was a trend across the hashtags. Stewart-Kroeker (2019) reference defined joy as an:

affective state that, unlike fear and grief, has a certain continuity with the anticipated affective dispositions of heavenly life: for those who long for the heavenly "life of felicity," joy responds to the same object of love and contemplation, i.e., God, whether they are on earth or in heaven. (p. 66)

Joy can also mean the overwhelming feeling of happiness and triumph. Individuals experience joy when they attain favorable results, or they achieve favorable results. Many events can trigger the emotion depending on the circumstance surrounding them (Noam & Tai, 2015). The phenomenon is used in a situation when interpreting any situation as indicating progress toward or completion of a personally relevant goal (Watkins, McLaughlin, & Parker, 2017). People joyfully respond to good news. However, there are other emotions such as happiness and cheerfulness. According to Vaillant (2018), joy is not widely examined as a positive emotion,

even though it's mostly expressed (Watkins, McLaughlin, & Parker, 2017). Joy can come in the form of redemption, which means celebrating the recovery of hope. Nigerians cheered on the return of the Chibok girls on Twitter using words that reflect joy as a way to acknowledge the long-awaited positive news. The easy access to Twitter was a plus because it allowed them to share their thoughts to the rest of the world:

#Chibokgirls. It a great joy that our girls have been recovered...well I congratulate the president for this success (Prof. Kenny, 2017).

Yes, I'm so excited that #ourgirlsareback. #bringbackourgirls (Laz, 2017)

Feel very overwhelmed by the safe return of #ChibokGirls82. But evn more by the knowledge that the government listens to us & are sincere 2/ (Abu#Aabid#Asna, 2017).

3 years of consistent advocacy. God is great. #OurGirlsAreBack #ChibokGirls #82 #BringBackOurGirls (Olawale, 2017)

Although people were happy, they remained hopeful that the government and the public wouldn't forget the remaining the Chibok girls and other victims held captive in Boko Haram camps. The theme of hope wasn't as popular, but an important aspect a few people touched about the release. Hope is anticipating for something positive to happen in the nearest future. People expressed hope that the other Chibok girls will be brought home safely to their families.

We're equally happy about #ChibokGirls82 release. Please don't forget 113 #ChibokGirls & other Nigerians in BH captivity. Rescue them too (Okome, 2017)

Conspiracy Theories

Positive sentiments didn't get shared by a lot of Nigerian Twitter users. The theme "denial" is referenced using all the Twitter hashtags. They referred to the widespread belief by some that the kidnapping of the Chibok girl was a sham and no release happened. The theory began immediately after the news of the Chibok girls' abduction broke out. In the case of the

Chibok girls' crisis, there are video evidences from the kidnap and testimonies from parents and friends to back up their release. Doubters claimed:

See Sense! Our president dropped another 82 girls like an album...just so he can go on tour 🤔🤔 #Naija #ChibokGirls82 (Richie_Patricks, 2017)

May God punish the people that used these girls as pun in their games. #82Chibokgirls released.. am so 😊😊😊😊😊 (Hillz, 2017).

Shekau is the most caring terrorist ...he deserves an award ..fed those girls with Spaghetti 🍝and tuwo shinkafa #ChibokGirls82 (King of Lagos (MFR), 2017).

These chibok girls that are looking like chibok aunties, we're they eating cow in Sambisa #ChibokGirls #ChibokGirls82 (Onwuma, 2017).

In 2017, the president took a two-week medical leave to London, but the trip was extended to almost three months.

The release of d #82chibokGirls was a well-planned &executed PR stunt, to distract Nigerians 4 questioning PMB's 2nd extended medical leave (Balogun, 2017).

Another ploy to distract us from the missing president #82ChibokGirls (Fashakin, 2017).

The tweets above showcase people doubt and suggest that the government is manipulating the public by coming up with a plan to release the Chibok girls. They accused the government of using this strategy to stop the people from complaining about his medical trip to London.

What Happens Next?

Few Nigerians also asked significant questions and made comments about the next step of actions such as rehabilitation of the girls, and rescue missions that should take place after 82 of the girls were released:

What bothers me is, how the girls can cope imagining the level of traumatic experience they've gone through #ChibokGirls82 (Asoh, 2017).

There's got to be a form of debriefing n reorientation of #ChibokGirls82 they can't just be thrown back into the public #fpn @ClassicFM973 (Lumzy, 2017).

Some tweets also questioned the media's decision to publish the names of the girls. It stems from the fear that the girls can be traced by Boko Haram members:

Like seriously? Whos idea is this? The society don't need the full name of the #ChibokGirls82 #ChibokGirlswe just need them safe (Olawale, 2017).

The positive themes display the ability for humans to pass information that represents their feeling on Twitter. They cared about the girls when they were kidnapped, and they pleaded for the release of the Chibok girls through #bringbackourgirls. Now, they use the same platform to share their joy, gratitude, and hope for their release. The findings also exhibit that people are capable of expressing their denial of events, even in the face of factual information about the issue, in this case, the Chibok girls release.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The qualitative analysis of data studies how the Nigeria and Western media framed the sexual abuse of Boko Haram female victims. Also, it addresses how Nigerians reacted to the news of the released Chibok girls on Twitter. The research focused on the released female Boko Haram captives (girls and women in IDP camps and the Chibok girls). I adopted the framing and feminist theory to further understand the way the media frame stories surrounding women and used the uses and gratification theory to understand people's need of social media to satisfy a need. The framing discovered some crucial elements such as the two significant frames: the human interest (humanizing the stories of the girls through narrative elements and quotes) and the conflict frame (the difference in response between the military and Humans Right Watch and Amnesty). It also touches a bit on the responsibility frame. The result revealed a stereotypical frame from the stories on the victim. It reports the soldiers taking advantage of them through domestic servitude and then sexually exploiting them.

Based on the findings, the representation of the girls and women was more compelling in the *New York Times* article compared to BBC and *Punch*. I saw a clear distinction in the reporters' approach and presentations of the victims' stories. The *New York Times* humanized the victims than BBC and *Punch*. An important distinction to also point out is that a woman wrote the *New York Times* article while the authors of the *Punch* articles were men. Women may be more sympathetic to the plight of other women than men are. Enwefah (2016) determined the representation of men and women in editorial and reportorial staff based on a one-week coverage in four Nigerian news outlets (*The Guardian*, *The Vanguard*, *The Nation*, and *Next*). The findings discovered that men dominated the reportorial staff leading by 79% and women

represented 2% (Enwefah, 2016). I couldn't determine the reporters who wrote the BBC stories because no bylines identify them. According to researchers, "gender affects how stories are researched, sourced, framed, and written, and that women are socialized differently into the newsroom" (Steiner, 2017, p. 7). Female reporters can reach them on a personal level as they might have been victims of sexual assault and harassment as well. Van Zoonen (1993) stated that female reporters are more likely to write stories in "informal style" that has a "personal and human interest content" (Ross, 2001, p. 541).

The research exposes *Punch's* inability to explore the story in detail. They had more access to the area geographically. They could have found a reporter or a freelance journalist in the North, who understood how to navigate the communities and can also build a relationship with the victims. Generally, the number of female employees or leadership positions in Nigerian organizations is low (World Economic Forum, 2016). The news organization is a male-dominated workforce (Enwefah, 2016). Women in journalism are also affected by the cultural and religious standard in the society. They experience gender discrimination (not given enough stories) and face sexual harassment (Abubakar & Jibril, 2017). Women's issues "belong to a genre of information considered lightweight news" (Anyanwa, 2001). Having a one-on-one documentation of can the plight of the abused girls and women can likely spark a broader discussion on rape culture.

The use of the feature writing approach in the *New York Times* makes the story more credible, and it's easy for readers to connect and sympathize with the victims compared to the BBC and *Punch* articles. There is a solid representation of the victims in the *New York Times* article. Applying the human interest frame through the stories of the girls can put an emotional angle that shines a spotlight on a broader issue, which is the treatment of girls and women in

Nigeria, particularly in the Northern part of the country. BBC and *Punch* focused a lot more on the investigations rather than the victims (Bathelt & Rosius, 1994; Brosius & Zillmann, 2000; Boomgaarden, H. G., Boukes, M., De Vreese, C. H., & Moorman, M., 2015). The victims' stories were somewhat neglected and didn't seem like a priority for the reporters.

The effect of *Punch's* decision to have a league of male reporters could have impacted their sources. Their identified sources from the military sources to the government's spokesperson to the Human Rights Watch spokesperson were only men. Comparing it to the *New York Times*, women had more voices in that story. The *New York Times* story only had two male sources, a representative from the Human Rights Watch and the Army. Nigerian news platforms tend to exclude women from matters that most affects them. "Women, women's issues and problems are not newsworthy unless they can be labelled according to traditional female roles of wife, mother, daughter" (Watson, 2008; Nzuma, 2015, p. 74). *Punch's* articles could be said to have failed to create a more extensive discussion on the prevalence of sexual violence committed by the military, not only in the IDP camps, but in the nation.

The conflict frame indicates the difference in response between the military, and Human Rights Watch and Amnesty. Based on the reports, there's a reason to believe the allegations weren't taken seriously by the military. Although the *New York Times* reported some soldiers received disciplinary actions and more female officials deployed to the IDP camps, the quote from a top military official still said the results were unfounded. It doesn't directly call the victims liars, but it is implied. The frame signifies the military's use of official power to take advantage of the system and protect their fellow men. It also results in the further victimization of victims by calling them liars. The Nigerian military claims it protects all citizens, but why does it continue to fail girls and women in rape cases? It is due to the long history of the

believing “boys will be boys” (Maxwell, 2009). The patriarchal belief grooms boys and men into thinking they’re entitled to women’s bodies. If a woman refuses to have sex, rapists feel the need to overpower and control her (Dunkle, Jewkes, Morrell, & Sikweyiya (2011). This standard is everywhere, including the nation’s top security force. The leadership structure is responsible for handling sexual assault cases most times. The investigations are usually dropped or sentences reduced. Higher-rank positions are held by men, who prefer to cover up the allegations rather than turning the perpetrators in for justice. There is a feeling of helplessness coming from the other side of the discussion. They’re mostly frustrated nothing will be done to solve rape from continuing in the camps (Searcey, 2017).

The *New York Times* story also highlights the domestic servitude the victims were coerced into. The soldiers are grown men who should be able to take care of themselves. One of the girls even referred to them as men old enough to be her father. Girls assume the responsibility of household chores such as cooking, cleaning, and washing early on. They are placed with the burden of taking care of their brothers, uncles, and fathers (Robson, 2006). It establishes the historical and problematic belief that girls and women ought to be domesticated. While their male counterparts have fun, girls are told to be perfect in their roles because they’ll have higher chances of getting good husbands. Using the girls showcases the feeling of entitlement men have to require women’s domestic labor (Burkeman, 2018). These were girls and women rescued from harsh conditions being asked by grown men to take care of their needs (Searcey, 2017).

Aside from the girls cooking and cleaning, they were asked to take their baths while the officials watched. This is an example of dehumanization. The girls and women are forced to show off their bodies to these men, who abuse their position and they used them to satisfy their

sexual needs. From a cultural and religious perspective, the common belief of Nigerians is that a woman's body is a temple and she should treat it with respect (Fulsta, 2004). It's common to see women wear covered clothing including the hijab in Northern Nigeria and in places where Sharia law is legal, it is compulsory (Mahdi, 2009). The clothing differentiates the girls and women from most girls and women in other parts of the country. Their husbands are the only ones allowed to touch them. According to society, the covered clothing is a way to protect them from abuse. Women are sexually objectified and, in the process, dehumanized (Puvia, & Vaes, 2013). The soldiers asking the victims to take their clothes off dehumanizes them. The girls mostly feel ashamed because they believe they've failed. Some of the girls and women are also shunned from the villages because they had kids fathered by Boko Haram (Searcey, 2016). It is a sad and disheartening experience that is normalized in Nigeria.

For the second research question, I was surprised by some of the findings. It's normal that tweets about the release the Chibok girls should be constructed with 'joy,' 'happiness,' 'hope,' 'thanks,' and other positive reactions, but a surprising number of tweets focused on conspiracies about the event. The lack of trust between the media and the public factors into the reasons why people started the conspiracy theories about the kidnaping and the release of the girls (Raz, 2017). A survey done by The Conversation, a global network of newsrooms, showed that Nigeria had the lowest level of trust in their national, local, and social media news (Mardid-Morales & Wasserman, 2018). They trusted the global media more. Many Nigerian homes watch or subscribe to Western news outlets to keep informed. The government restrictions and involvement with the press led to many Nigerians losing their respect for the Nigerian new media. In another study, Nigerians trusted the private media over the public media, but the margin between the two was close (Moehler & Singh, 2011). There's also mistrust because of

the closeness between politicians and some media owners. The public is aware of the state of the world because of the media (Happer & Philo, 2013). The growing threat of “fake news” on social media doesn’t make trust building easy. Once the press loses its credibility, people begin to rely on their own beliefs and interpretations even in the face of facts.

Because of the political tension going on at the time of the release of the Chibok girls, many of the conspiracy theorists didn’t support President Buhari, including the now former governor of Osun State (one of the Southern states). He visited various media platforms claiming the Chibok girls’ release was a distraction from finding out the president’s health status (Vanguard, 2017). There’s a probability that the people whose tweets doubted the release weren’t fans of the president. However, there is no direct evidence to prove that. Some argued the current administration used the 82 Chibok girls for a photo op and to help win the next election. The conspiracy theorists weren’t concerned that the release of the girls could have been true. They assumed there was a hidden agenda. They can’t be blamed in totality because it’s usually a wide practice for the government to do the right things when they expect something in return and the media aids in their propaganda (Ali, 2015). This is how it has been done for years, and sadly, it comes to play in the Chibok girls’ situation.

The positive common emotional themes I was able to pull from the tweets under #chibokgirls, #chibokgirls82, #82chibokgirls, and #ourgirlsareback are joy and gratitude. Even though these tweets did not make up a majority, I included hope because it shows that some are anticipating more positive outcomes in rescuing the other Chibok girls. The reaction demonstrates that it is possible to detect emotions in tweets. A majority of Nigerians who tweeted about these themes were happy the girls got released safely, they were back in their communities, and the government took action. They were grateful to God and the government

for the release. Their gratitude to God just displays that religion is a big deal in the country. The government was praised for delivering its promise to rescue the Chibok girls. Some also asked questions about the rehabilitation of the girls. These are reasonable because they give ideas of what should be done. The questions also play a huge part in determining the future of the rescued Chibok girls and those who are yet to be rescued. The trauma they went through during the kidnapping and spending three years in Boko Haram's camp definitely affected them. It's only reasonable for the public to know what would be done to help the girls. The framing of these tweets expressed that curiosity, joy, hope, and gratitude.

In situations like violent unrests, crisis, and so on, framing dictates the emotional reaction the receiver will have to the news story (Maier, Mayorga, & Slovic, 2017). People are attached to stories that give them more details about the experience of victims and at the same time, can use Twitter to react emotionally through their messages

Conclusion/Recommendation

“In all societies, the media are considered potent forces that are very active in shaping popular beliefs and perceptions” (Edim & Endong, 2015, p. 101). The study sheds light on the different possible solutions that can address the way news stories are reported by Nigeria news outlets. First, the addition of female reporters on stories, female editors, female leaders in the journalism industry. Amobi (2013) recognized an equal employment opportunity for both genders in the Nigerian journalism industry. However, women remain almost invisible in their participation as reporters. From a feminist perspective, having more women in the journalism industry can mean more visibility of women, a lesser stereotypical representation of women, and the use of frames to humanize women's stories (Amobi, 2013). According to some researchers like Liebler and Smith (1997), female reporters are much likely to cover stories in the same

fashion as their male colleagues. Female reporters don't necessarily use female sources. They instead try to find a balance to appeal to their audience (Liebler & Smith, 1997).

Secondly, the media can better represent rape victims in coverages. The media is powerful in influencing and shaping minds (Edim & Endong, 2015). People see women in certain ways due to the repetition of the representation of women we currently see in the Nigerian media. For example, rape victims are raped because how they dress, or end up marrying the abusers in movies (Aromona, 2016). Thirdly, the participation of women in politics might increase the chances of implementing better laws that favor women. The appointment of women to serve for the greater good of other women is known as substantive representation. Substantive representation means "the congruence between representatives' actions and the interests of the represented" (Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, 2005; Orji, Orji, & Agbanyim, 2018, p. 10). A successful addition of women in politics might place women as relevant decision-makers and led to better results, including the changing of laws that don't support women (Ayabam & Ngara, 2013).

Recently, Northern Nigerian women had their #metoo moment. They started a #Arewametoo to launch a campaign against rape, pedophilia, and sexual harassment (Alake, 2019). They called out the misuse of religion by many men, including Boko Haram to commit sexual violence against girls and women. Many women shared their stories calling out their abusers. One of the accused is an aide to the minister of finance and an aide to a former governor of Kaduna State (AllAfrica, 2019). He recently used SARS (Special Anti-Robbery Squad) to get a prominent voice of the movement arrested (AllAfrica, 2019). Despite the backlash a lot of women faced, they're still sharing their stories. The politician tried to shame and silence them. He still has his job, and no investigation has been called. Power is a major driver of rape. It's the

same tool the soldiers in the IDP camps used to intimidate and control the women and girls. They tried to silence the #arewametoo voices, but these women are still speaking up through social media (AllAfrica, 2019).

Fourthly, Nigerian journalism schools could have contributed to the current system Nigerian news outlets operate on. According to Amenaghawon (2010), Nigerian journalism schools don't function well because of the following: Professors having low practical experience, less accredited schools, lack of emphasis on news training, professors earn low salaries, and lack of journalistic equipment. Fixing these highlighted areas, especially placing more emphasis on news training and promoting more human interest writing style can possibly let journalists measure up to the journalistic standard practiced in developed societies. The hard news style of writing Nigerian journalists uses is effective for providing factual information, but the feature story approach may better connect readers with the subjects of the stories. The readers can sympathize more with the victims, and it can drive people to start social media campaigns to pressure the police for an investigation. Talking about rape investigations are necessary, but it doesn't always have to be the highlight in stories.

Campaigns on social media have prospered in not only mobilizing protests, for example, #bringbackourgirls, but it has proven useful for sharing emotional messages after a positive result is gotten from a campaign. In this study, I wanted to determine positive themes under the #chibokgirls, #ourgirlsareback, #chibokgirls82, #82chibokgirls to celebrate the retrieval of the Chibok girls. The tone from the positive messages exhibit appreciation to God and the government, happiness for the rescue, and hope for the future. People were glad the Chibok girls were back home to their families and friends. A portion of the result also shows conspiracy theories, which is can be because of the lack of trust in the government and media. People

believe whatever they want to see regardless of its fakeness. The rise of fake news in Nigeria is a problem. The media can rebuild its trust with the people by ensuring it puts out factual information. People have caught the press spreading propaganda on behalf of the government and reporting untrue stories. Improving the journalism industry in Nigeria can create favorable options that facilitate a better representation of girls and women, and can lead to an increase in the trust people have in the media.

One feature that limited the results of the research is the limited articles I had to work with to evaluate the frames. The *New York Times* only had an article specifically tailored to the abuse of girls and women in the IDP camps, BBC had two, while *Punch* had three. It gave me a small number of articles to evaluate. The results might have contained more of the frames if I had more articles from the same publications. The tweets under the #82chibokgirls and #chibokgirls82, #chibokgirls, and #ourgirlsareback that had Nigerians (individuals and organizations) talking about the released Chibok girls were limited. #82chibokgirls and #chibokgirls82 had tweets mainly based on conspiracy theories, so the results also included the conspiracy aspect rather than just the positive reactions of the released girls.

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