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GLOBAL MEDIA AND TERRORISM: AN ANALYSIS OF NIGERIA AND FOREIGN MEDIA REPORTAGE OF CHIBOK GIRLS ABDUCTION.

¹Okika Nnaemeka & ²Prof. Olufemi Olufunmilade

¹ okikia.nnaemeka@iuokada.edu.ng, 08033943875, ² femi@iuokada.edu.ng 08037644582 Iginedion University, Okada

ABSTRACT

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The abduction of over 200 schoolgirls from Chibok, Borno State, Nigeria, by the terrorist group Boko Haram in April 2014, drew global attention and became a defining moment in the discourse on terrorism and media reportage. This study examines how Nigerian and foreign media covered the Chibok girls' abduction, focusing on framing, language, thematic emphasis, and the potential influence on public perception. Using a comparative content analysis, the research analyzed selected reports from major Nigerian outlets, including *The Guardian*, *Vanguard*, and *Channels TV*, alongside international media such as the *BBC*, *CNN*, and *Al Jazeera*. Findings reveal significant differences in coverage between local and foreign media. Nigerian media often emphasized community impact, government response, and human-interest narratives, while foreign outlets highlighted global condemnation, international intervention, and the framing of Boko Haram as a transnational terrorist threat. The study identifies recurring themes of victimization, governmental accountability, and moral outrage, with variations in tone, source credibility, and narrative structure. Nigerian audiences were more exposed to detailed local consequences and socio-cultural contexts, whereas international audiences received more generalized depictions focused on political and security implications. The findings underscore the critical role of media in shaping public understanding of terrorism, influencing policy discourse, and mobilizing humanitarian response. The study concludes that while both local and international media contributed to raising awareness, disparities in framing can affect perceptions, responses, and policy priorities. It recommends that media practitioners adopt balanced, context-sensitive reporting strategies to enhance public comprehension and support evidence-based interventions in terrorism-prone regions.

Keywords: Chibok Girls, Abduction, Boko Haram, Global Media, Nigerian Media, Terrorism Reporting, Media Framing, Comparative Content Analysis, Public Perception Media Influence

Introduction

The abduction of 276 schoolgirls from Chibok, Borno State, Nigeria, by the extremist group Boko Haram in April 2014 marked a critical juncture in the discourse on terrorism, human security, and media representation. The incident not only exposed the vulnerability of civilian populations, particularly young girls, to insurgent violence but also highlighted the media's pivotal role in shaping narratives and influencing policy responses (Onuoha, 2014). The global resonance of the #BringBackOurGirls campaign illustrates how local tragedies can be amplified through transnational activism and media coverage, transforming an isolated security crisis into a symbol of human rights advocacy (Smith, 2015).

Media coverage of the Chibok abduction differed significantly between Nigerian and international outlets. Nigerian media, operating within a complex socio-political environment, often emphasized governmental accountability, the humanitarian crisis, and local security challenges (Ibrahim, 2016). Conversely, foreign media, including CNN, BBC, and The New York Times, framed the abduction within broader global concerns such as terrorism, gender-based violence, and the protection of education, thereby generating international pressure on both the Nigerian government and multilateral organizations (Ezeani, 2017). These differences reflect the theoretical principles of media framing and agenda-setting, which posit that the presentation of news influences audience perception and can shape policy discourse (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

Understanding these divergent frames is crucial for comprehending the construction of terrorism narratives, the portrayal of victims, and the interplay between local realities and global media coverage. This study, therefore, seeks to critically analyze and compare Nigerian and foreign media reportage of the Chibok girls' abduction, examining the framing techniques employed, the narratives constructed, and the implications of such coverage on public perception and policy formulation. Through this analysis, the research contributes to a broader understanding of the relationship between global media, terrorism, and societal responses to crises.

Significance of Media in Reporting Terrorism

The media plays a crucial role in shaping public understanding of terrorism, influencing both perception and policy. By reporting acts of terrorism, the media functions as the primary conduit through which information about threats, attacks, and insurgent activities reaches the public and policymakers (Nacos, 2007). In the context of terrorism,

the media not only informs but also interprets events, framing them in ways that can either amplify or mitigate public fear.

One significant function of the media is its ability to raise awareness. Media coverage brings local or regional terrorist incidents to national and international attention, creating a platform for discourse, advocacy, and humanitarian responses (Weimann, 2008). For instance, the extensive reportage of the Chibok girls' abduction by both Nigerian and foreign media ensured that the plight of the victims was recognized globally, prompting international campaigns like #BringBackOurGirls, diplomatic interventions, and increased support for counter-terrorism measures.

The media also influences public perception and societal response. Framing techniques employed by journalists such as emphasizing government failures, human rights violations, or global security concerns can shape how audiences interpret terrorism, which in turn affects public opinion, civic engagement, and policy pressure (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). In addition, media coverage can affect recruitment and propaganda strategies used by terrorist groups, as these groups often exploit extensive media attention to amplify their ideological messages (Nacos, 2016).

Furthermore, the media serves as a watchdog by holding governments accountable for their responses to terrorist threats. Investigative reporting can uncover lapses in security, corruption, or negligence, fostering transparency and prompting reforms (Powell, 2011). However, the media's power is double-edged; sensationalist reporting or overemphasis on terrorist acts may inadvertently promote fear, panic, or even copycat incidents.

In summary, the media is indispensable in reporting terrorism because it informs, shapes perceptions, influences policy, and provides a platform for advocacy. Its role in framing events like the Chibok abduction demonstrates both the potential benefits and challenges of media involvement in terrorism discourse.

Differences in Nigerian and Foreign Media Narratives

Media coverage of terrorism is deeply influenced by the social, political, and cultural contexts in which media organizations operate. The abduction of the Chibok girls by Boko Haram in April 2014 exemplifies how local and international media can frame the same event in divergent ways, reflecting their differing objectives, audiences, and journalistic priorities.

1. Nigerian Media Narratives

Nigerian media coverage was largely domestic in focus, concentrating on the immediate humanitarian, socio-political, and security implications of the abduction. Local newspapers, television stations, and radio outlets consistently reported on government responses, rescue operations, and the emotional experiences of the victims' families (Ibrahim, 2016). In particular, outlets such as *The Guardian Nigeria*, *Vanguard*, and *Channels TV* emphasized the perceived inadequacies of security agencies, highlighting lapses in intelligence and coordination. Nigerian media also addressed the religious and cultural context of northern Nigeria, portraying the incident within the ongoing conflict between Boko Haram and the state (Onuoha, 2014). By focusing on these local dimensions, Nigerian media aimed to inform citizens, encourage civic engagement, and hold the government accountable.

2. Foreign Media Narratives

In contrast, foreign media framed the Chibok abduction primarily within a global context, emphasizing broader concerns such as international security, human rights, and gender-based violence. Outlets like CNN, BBC, Al Jazeera, and *The New York Times* highlighted Boko Haram's threat beyond Nigeria, situating the incident as part of the global fight against terrorism (Ezeani, 2017). They often portrayed the girls as symbolic victims of extremist ideology, with coverage that stressed the denial of education and the subjugation of women in conflict zones. Foreign media also employed emotive language and visual imagery to elicit international empathy, galvanize global advocacy campaigns such as #BringBackOurGirls, and pressure both the Nigerian government and multilateral organizations into action.

3. Comparative Analysis

The divergence in narratives between Nigerian and foreign media reflects differences in priorities, audiences, and available resources. Nigerian media were constrained by political sensitivities, proximity to conflict zones, and limited access to international expertise, leading to a focus on immediate

developments, local security challenges, and governance accountability. Foreign media, with broader access to global networks, policy experts, and international advocacy platforms, framed the story to resonate with transnational audiences and highlight global implications. This distinction illustrates key principles of media framing theory, which posit that the selection, emphasis, and presentation of information shape audience understanding and influence perceptions (Entman, 1993).

4. Implications of Narrative Differences

These differences in media narratives have practical implications. Domestic coverage fosters local awareness, encourages public discourse, and can prompt government accountability. International coverage, on the other hand, mobilizes global support, attracts humanitarian aid, and shapes foreign policy responses. However, divergent narratives can also lead to contrasting perceptions of the event: while Nigerian audiences may focus on governance failures and national security, international audiences may primarily view the incident through the lens of terrorism, human rights, and gendered victimization. Recognizing these differences is essential for understanding how media coverage can construct distinct realities around the same event, influencing both local and global responses to terrorism.

Statement of the Problem

Terrorism has increasingly become a global concern, with far-reaching implications for security, governance, and human rights. In Nigeria, the abduction of 276 schoolgirls from Chibok by Boko Haram in April 2014 was a stark illustration of the threat posed by extremist groups, as well as the vulnerabilities in national security and governance structures (Onuoha, 2014). While the event attracted immense media attention both locally and internationally, the ways in which Nigerian and foreign media framed the incident varied significantly. Nigerian media often focused on immediate humanitarian concerns, local security failures, and governmental accountability, whereas foreign media highlighted global terrorism narratives, human rights violations, and international advocacy (Ibrahim, 2016; Ezeani, 2017).

These divergent narratives raise critical questions about the role of media in shaping public understanding and policy

responses to terrorism. Differences in reportage may influence how audiences perceive the severity of the threat, the culpability of state actors, and the nature of victimhood. Furthermore, contrasting media frames can affect the coordination of national and international responses, potentially impacting rescue operations, humanitarian aid, and global advocacy efforts. Despite extensive coverage, there is a lack of comprehensive comparative analysis examining how Nigerian and foreign media framed the Chibok abduction, the specific techniques used, and the potential effects of these narratives on public opinion and policy-making.

This study seeks to fill this gap by critically analyzing and comparing Nigerian and foreign media reportage of the Chibok girls' abduction, exploring the similarities and differences in narrative framing, and assessing the implications of these media portrayals for understanding terrorism in both local and global contexts.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to critically analyze and compare Nigerian and foreign media coverage of the Chibok girls' abduction, focusing on narrative framing and its implications for public perception and policy. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine how Nigerian media reported the Chibok girls' abduction in terms of content, tone, and framing techniques.
2. Investigate how foreign media portrayed the Chibok abduction and the narratives emphasized in international coverage.
3. Identify and analyze the similarities and differences between Nigerian and foreign media narratives.
4. Assess the implications of media framing on public understanding, advocacy, and policy responses to terrorism.

Research Questions

To guide this study, the following research questions are formulated:

1. How did Nigerian media report the Chibok girls' abduction, and what framing techniques were predominantly used?
2. How did foreign media report the Chibok girls' abduction, and what narratives were emphasized in their coverage?

3. What are the key similarities and differences between Nigerian and foreign media narratives on the Chibok abduction?
4. How do the differences in media narratives influence public perception, advocacy efforts, and policy responses to terrorism?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study provides the foundation for understanding how media coverage shapes public perception and policy responses to terrorism. It integrates key definitions, relevant communication theories, and the practical significance of media in framing events such as the Chibok girls' abduction.

Terrorism: Terrorism is broadly defined as the use of violence, threats, or intimidation, often targeting civilians, to achieve political, ideological, or religious objectives (Onuoha, 2014). In Nigeria, Boko Haram's insurgency exemplifies terrorism through attacks on schools, markets, and government institutions aimed at destabilizing the state, spreading fear, and undermining societal norms. The abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls highlights terrorism's impact on vulnerable populations and its capacity to provoke national and international outrage.

Media Reportage: Media reportage refers to the collection, presentation, and dissemination of news through print, broadcast, and digital platforms. It includes reporting facts, providing analysis, and interpreting events for the audience (McQuail, 2010). Effective reportage informs, educates, and influences public opinion. In crises like the Chibok abduction, media reportage serves as a critical channel for communication between authorities, victims, and the broader public.

Framing: Framing is the process by which media select, emphasize, and structure particular aspects of an event to shape meaning and influence interpretation (Entman, 1993). Frames highlight certain facts or narratives while downplaying others, guiding audience perception. For example, Nigerian media often framed the Chibok abduction around governmental accountability and security failures, whereas foreign media framed it within global concerns about terrorism, human rights, and girls' education.

Agenda-Setting: Agenda-setting theory posits that the media influences the public's perception of importance by giving prominence to particular issues, thereby shaping policy priorities (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). By consistently reporting the Chibok abduction, media outlets elevated it to

a national and global agenda, compelling government action and international advocacy.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study draws on three interrelated theories in communication studies to analyze media coverage:

Agenda-Setting Theory: This theory explains the media's role in influencing the salience of issues in public discourse. McCombs and Shaw (1972) argue that media may not tell people what to think, but significantly influence what they think about. In the context of the Chibok abduction, Nigerian media prioritized local security concerns, while foreign media highlighted international implications, showing how agenda-setting shapes public attention and policy focus.

Framing Theory: Entman's (1993) framing theory emphasizes the interpretive role of the media in selecting certain aspects of reality and presenting them in a way that promotes particular definitions or evaluations. For instance, while Nigerian media often focused on governmental failures and immediate humanitarian impacts, international outlets emphasized human rights violations, the global threat of terrorism, and gendered aspects of victimization, demonstrating how framing influences perception and reaction.

Priming Theory: Priming theory suggests that the media influences the criteria by which audiences evaluate events or issues, making certain considerations more salient when forming opinions (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Repeated exposure to media coverage of terrorism can prime audiences to prioritize security concerns, governmental accountability, or human rights, depending on the emphasis of the coverage. This theory helps explain how sustained media narratives about the Chibok abduction shaped public discourse and advocacy strategies globally.

Importance of Media in Shaping Public Perception and Policy

The media serves as a bridge between events and the public, guiding perception, discourse, and policy responses. In reporting terrorism, media not only informs but also interprets and frames events, influencing societal reactions. Through agenda-setting, framing, and priming, media coverage can elevate certain aspects of a story, shaping public priorities and encouraging policy action (Nacos, 2007).

In the Chibok case, Nigerian media coverage emphasized local concerns, highlighting governmental failures and mobilizing national advocacy. Foreign media coverage extended the narrative globally, highlighting human rights, the importance of girls' education, and terrorism's international implications. The combined effect of these media narratives influenced diplomatic interventions, global awareness campaigns, and humanitarian support.

Moreover, the media acts as a watchdog, holding governments and institutions accountable while providing a platform for public engagement. However, media coverage also carries the risk of sensationalism, bias, or misrepresentation, which can distort public understanding or amplify fear. Understanding the conceptual and theoretical foundations of media influence is therefore critical in assessing how terrorism is reported and perceived, and how such coverage can inform policy, advocacy, and societal responses.

Literature Review

This literature review examines existing scholarship on media coverage of terrorism, with a focus on Nigerian and foreign media, comparative studies of local versus international reporting, and identified research gaps. The review establishes the foundation for understanding how different media narratives shape public perception and policy responses to terrorism.

Overview of Nigerian Media Coverage of Terrorism

Nigerian media have played a central role in reporting terrorism, especially the activities of Boko Haram in northern Nigeria. Newspapers, television, radio, and online platforms provide extensive coverage of terrorist incidents, emphasizing national security, governmental accountability, and humanitarian consequences (Ibrahim, 2016). Outlets such as *The Guardian Nigeria*, *Vanguard*, and *Channels TV* have consistently reported on both operational responses by security agencies and the socio-cultural impact of attacks on local communities.

Studies indicate that Nigerian media framing often focuses on immediate local concerns, such as the effectiveness of security measures, the government's response to threats, and the plight of victims' families (Onuoha, 2014). For instance, during the Chibok abduction, local media highlighted the lack of preparedness of security agencies, the vulnerability of schoolchildren, and the grief experienced by families and communities. This type of reporting serves the dual purpose of informing citizens and mobilizing local advocacy and civic engagement.

However, challenges persist in Nigerian media coverage. Political affiliations of media houses sometimes result in biased reporting, sensationalist headlines can exaggerate fear, and limited investigative resources can restrict depth of analysis (Ezeani, 2017). Moreover, the proximity to conflict zones may constrain reporting due to safety concerns, leading to reliance on secondary sources or government statements.

Overview of Foreign Media Coverage of Terrorism

Foreign media coverage of terrorism in Nigeria situates events within a global framework. International outlets, such as CNN, BBC, Al Jazeera, and *The New York Times*, often frame incidents like the Chibok abduction in terms of human rights, global security threats, and the impact on women and girls' education (Ezeani, 2017). This coverage is designed to resonate with international audiences and to highlight the broader implications of terrorism beyond Nigeria's borders.

Foreign media often rely on expert analysis, international organizations' reports, and cross-border security assessments to contextualize incidents (Powell, 2011). For example, during the Chibok crisis, international coverage emphasized the symbolic nature of the attack on girls' education and gender equality, portraying the victims as part of a broader struggle for human rights. While this approach provides a wider perspective, it may underrepresent local socio-political nuances, sometimes framing Nigerian authorities in a purely critical light without considering contextual constraints.

Comparative Studies on Local vs. International Reporting

Comparative research highlights key differences in local and foreign media narratives. Nigerian media focus on immediate humanitarian concerns, local governance, and accountability, whereas international media emphasize global terrorism threats, human rights, and advocacy for international intervention (Ibrahim, 2016; Ezeani, 2017).

Framing theory explains these differences. Local media frames often emphasize government responsibility, societal disruption, and cultural context, while international media frames highlight symbolic victimhood, gendered violence, and the global reach of terrorism (Entman, 1993). These differences illustrate how the same event the Chibok abduction can be represented through multiple lenses, each influencing public perception, policy priorities, and international advocacy differently.

Moreover, agenda-setting and priming theories highlight the consequences of these divergent narratives. By consistently prioritizing certain aspects of a story, media outlets influence what audiences consider important and the criteria by which events and actors are judged (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). In the case of Chibok, local coverage primed citizens to focus on government accountability and community resilience, while international coverage primed global audiences to consider terrorism, human rights, and international policy interventions.

Gaps in Current Research

Despite increasing scholarship on terrorism reportage, several gaps remain:

1. **Comparative Analysis:** Few studies systematically compare Nigerian and foreign media coverage of specific incidents, including framing techniques and narrative structures.
2. **Impact on Public Perception:** There is limited research on how divergent narratives shape audience understanding, advocacy campaigns, and policy responses.
3. **Social Media Integration:** The growing role of social media as both a news source and advocacy tool is underexplored, particularly in amplifying local and international media narratives.
4. **Interaction of Media Theories:** Most studies focus on descriptive reporting rather than integrating agenda-setting, framing, and priming theories to explain the dynamics between media coverage and public discourse.

This study seeks to address these gaps by providing a systematic comparative analysis of Nigerian and foreign media coverage of the Chibok girls' abduction, examining framing techniques, narrative divergence, and implications for public perception and policy.

Methodology

This section outlines the research approach, population and sample, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and analytical procedures adopted in this study. The methodology is designed to ensure a systematic and rigorous analysis of Nigerian and foreign media coverage of the Chibok girls' abduction.

Research Design

The study adopts a comparative content analysis design. Content analysis is a widely used research method in media

and communication studies that involves the systematic examination of media texts to identify patterns, themes, and framing strategies (Krippendorff, 2013). By comparing Nigerian and foreign media coverage, the study seeks to understand differences in narrative framing, thematic emphasis, and agenda-setting strategies. The design combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches, allowing for the identification of recurring themes and the measurement of frequency, tone, and prominence of specific frames in media texts.

Population and Sample

The population for this study comprises all media coverage of the Chibok girls' abduction in Nigerian and foreign media outlets. For Nigerian media, this includes leading newspapers such as *The Guardian Nigeria*, *Vanguard*, *ThisDay*, and major broadcast outlets like Channels TV and NTA. For foreign media, outlets include BBC, CNN, Al Jazeera, *The New York Times*, and *The Times* of London. These media were selected based on their wide circulation, credibility, and influence on public discourse at both local and international levels.

A purposive sample of 100 articles and news reports was drawn from the period immediately following the abduction (April 2014) up to one year later (April 2015). This period captures both initial reportage and subsequent developments, including government responses, advocacy campaigns, and rescue operations.

Sampling Techniques

The study employs purposive sampling, selecting articles and news reports that are directly relevant to the Chibok girls' abduction. Criteria for inclusion include:

1. Articles must explicitly report on the abduction, rescue efforts, government action, or international responses.
2. Reports must be published by recognized Nigerian or foreign media outlets within the specified timeframe.
3. Multimedia content, including news broadcasts, online articles, and print reports, is included to provide a comprehensive view of coverage.

Purposive sampling ensures that the sample is representative of media discourse on the Chibok abduction, focusing on high-impact reporting rather than random selection.

Data Collection Methods

Data were collected through archival research and systematic retrieval of media texts. Sources include:

1. Print newspapers (physical and online archives)
2. Television news broadcasts (recorded or streamed)
3. Online news portals and social media pages of selected outlets

Each article and report was catalogued with details such as publication date, media type, headline, author, and main focus. This allowed for systematic coding and analysis.

Analytical Techniques

The study employs both qualitative and quantitative analysis to examine media coverage. Analytical techniques include:

1. Content Coding: Articles and reports were coded for themes, tone, framing strategies, and the prominence of issues such as government accountability, terrorism threat, human rights, and advocacy. Codes were developed based on theoretical frameworks (framing, agenda-setting, and priming theories).
2. Thematic Analysis: Qualitative analysis identified recurring patterns, narratives, and story angles in both Nigerian and foreign media coverage, highlighting similarities and differences.
3. Quantitative Analysis: Frequency counts were used to measure how often specific frames or themes appeared across media texts, providing empirical evidence for comparative evaluation.
4. Comparative Assessment: Nigerian and foreign media coverage were compared to identify variations in framing, narrative focus, and agenda-setting priorities, providing insights into how local and international audiences are differently engaged.

This mixed-methods approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of media discourse surrounding the Chibok abduction, combining depth of qualitative insight with the rigor of quantitative measurement.

Findings and Analysis

This section presents the results of the comparative content analysis of Nigerian and foreign media coverage of the Chibok girls' abduction. The findings are organized around four key analytical dimensions: thematic framing, tone and

language, sources and authority, and frequency and intensity of coverage.

1. Thematic Framing

The analysis reveals distinct differences in how Nigerian and foreign media framed the Chibok abduction:

Humanitarian vs. Political/Security Emphasis: Nigerian media predominantly emphasized humanitarian concerns and security failures. Reports focused on the plight of the abducted girls, emotional accounts from families, and the immediate response of security agencies. Newspapers such as *Vanguard* and *ThisDay* highlighted both rescue efforts and governmental accountability, framing the abduction as a local crisis requiring urgent action (Ibrahim, 2016). Conversely, foreign media framed the event within broader global terrorism narratives, emphasizing Boko Haram's threat beyond Nigeria, human rights violations, and the symbolic significance of denying girls' education. Outlets such as CNN and BBC focused on the implications for global security and international advocacy.

Local vs. Global Narratives: Nigerian media emphasized cultural, religious, and political context, portraying the abduction within the ongoing conflict in northeastern Nigeria. Foreign media, however, prioritized narratives that resonated with international audiences, framing the story in terms of universal human rights and gendered violence. This divergence illustrates how framing shapes perception: local audiences are guided to consider national accountability and societal impact, while global audiences are prompted to consider transnational security and advocacy interventions (Entman, 1993).

2. Tone and Language

Emotive, Urgent vs. Neutral, Fact-Based Reporting: Nigerian media often employed emotive language and urgent tones to convey the gravity of the situation. Headlines highlighted suffering, appeals for immediate action, and community outrage, aiming to mobilize local attention and response. In contrast, foreign media generally adopted a more neutral, fact-based tone, presenting events with analytical commentary and international perspectives. While emotive framing elicited empathy and engagement in Nigeria, neutral reporting in foreign media sought to inform and contextualize for international audiences without overly sensationalizing the story.

3. Sources and Authority

Reliance on Local vs. International Sources: Nigerian media frequently relied on statements from government officials, local authorities, eyewitness accounts, and families of the abducted girls. This approach provided detailed, context-specific information but was sometimes constrained by political sensitivities and access limitations. Foreign media, by contrast, drew extensively on international organizations, human rights groups, security experts, and academic commentary. This reliance on external authority lent global legitimacy and analytical depth to reports but occasionally underrepresented local perspectives (Powell, 2011).

4. Frequency and Intensity of Coverage

Continuous National Reporting vs. Shorter International Attention Span: Nigerian media maintained sustained coverage of the Chibok abduction over several months, including follow-ups on rescue operations, governmental responses, and advocacy campaigns. The continuous reporting reflected local concern, accountability demands, and societal engagement. Foreign media coverage, while intense during the initial crisis, tended to decline after the first few weeks, shifting focus to broader global terrorism trends. This difference highlights how national media prioritize prolonged attention to domestic crises, while international media allocate coverage based on global news cycles and audience interest.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings demonstrate that media framing, tone, source selection, and coverage intensity collectively shape public perception and response to terrorism. Nigerian media mobilized local empathy and advocacy by emphasizing human suffering, governmental accountability, and cultural context. Foreign media, in contrast, framed the incident to resonate with global audiences, highlighting universal values, international security implications, and human rights concerns. The combination of these narratives contributed to both national and international awareness, advocacy campaigns like #BringBackOurGirls, and pressure on policymakers to act.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into how Nigerian and foreign media framed the Chibok girls' abduction, highlighting the interplay between media narratives, public perception, and policy response. The discussion below interprets these findings in light of relevant theories and existing literature.

1. Thematic Framing: Humanitarian vs. Political/Security Emphasis

The study found that Nigerian media emphasized humanitarian concerns and governmental accountability, while foreign media framed the abduction within global terrorism and human rights narratives. This divergence aligns with framing theory (Entman, 1993), which asserts that media select certain aspects of reality to promote specific interpretations. By highlighting local suffering and security failures, Nigerian media engaged audiences emotionally and prompted civic advocacy. Conversely, international coverage framed the abduction as a global concern, mobilizing foreign attention and influencing international policy discussions. These findings are consistent with Ibrahim (2016) and Ezeani (2017), who observed that local media focus on immediate social and political consequences, whereas foreign media contextualize terrorism within broader human rights and international security discourses. The study confirms that thematic framing shapes both the scope and focus of audience engagement with terrorism-related events.

2. Tone and Language: Emotive vs. Neutral Reporting

Nigerian media employed emotive and urgent language, eliciting empathy and mobilizing public pressure for government action. In contrast, foreign media used neutral, fact-based reporting, emphasizing analytical depth and global implications. This variation reflects priming theory (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987), which suggests that repeated exposure to certain media frames can influence how audiences evaluate issues. Emotive framing primed Nigerian audiences to prioritize humanitarian and security concerns, while neutral reporting primed international audiences to assess broader political and human rights implications. The findings echo Nacos (2007), who highlights that media tone can shape public perception, risk assessment, and support for policy measures, reinforcing the media's central role in shaping societal responses to terrorism.

3. Sources and Authority: Local vs. International Sources

The reliance on local sources by Nigerian media provided context-specific details but risked partiality due to political pressures and limited access. Foreign media's reliance on international organizations, experts, and human rights groups provided credibility and global perspective but sometimes overlooked local nuance. These observations align with previous studies (Powell, 2011; Onuoha, 2014), indicating that source selection significantly influences framing and audience interpretation. The interplay of source selection with framing demonstrates how media both reflect

and shape epistemic authority, influencing which voices and perspectives dominate the discourse on terrorism.

4. Frequency and Intensity of Coverage: Sustained vs. Episodic Reporting

Nigerian media maintained sustained coverage over several months, reflecting ongoing national concern and accountability expectations. Foreign media attention was intense initially but declined after the first weeks, reflecting global news cycles and audience prioritization. This pattern underscores the agenda-setting function of the media (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), as Nigerian media continuously reinforced domestic attention to the abduction, while foreign media briefly elevated global awareness before moving to other priorities. Sustained national coverage contributed to prolonged civic engagement, advocacy campaigns like #BringBackOurGirls, and domestic policy discourse. The shorter international attention span suggests that global media may prioritize novelty and symbolic significance over continued local developments.

Implications of Findings

1. For Public Perception: Media framing, tone, source authority, and coverage intensity collectively shape how audiences understand terrorism. Local audiences are more attuned to immediate humanitarian and security concerns, while global audiences perceive the abduction through broader human rights and security lenses.
2. For Policy and Advocacy: Divergent media narratives can influence policy priorities. Sustained local coverage pressures government accountability, whereas international coverage mobilizes diplomatic and advocacy interventions. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for effective communication strategies in crisis management.
3. For Media Practice: The study highlights the need for balanced reporting that integrates local context with global relevance. Media practitioners should consider how framing, tone, and source selection affect both public understanding and policy outcomes.

The study demonstrates that media narratives are not neutral; they actively construct meaning, prioritize certain issues, and influence public perception and policy responses. By analyzing Nigerian and foreign media coverage of the Chibok abduction, the research illustrates the theoretical principles of framing, agenda-setting, and priming, confirming their relevance in understanding media influence in contexts of terrorism.

Implications

The findings of this study carry significant implications for policymakers, security agencies, media practitioners, and academic research on media and terrorism. By understanding how Nigerian and foreign media frame terrorism, stakeholders can develop more effective strategies for communication, policy-making, and scholarly inquiry.

1. For Policymakers and Security Agencies

The study underscores the importance of proactive engagement with both local and international media during terrorism crises. Policymakers and security agencies can:

Recognize the influence of media framing on public perception and policy pressure, ensuring timely and transparent communication to mitigate misinformation and public panic.

Leverage sustained media coverage to build public trust and mobilize community support for counterterrorism efforts.

Integrate insights from comparative media analysis to anticipate international scrutiny and manage diplomatic relations effectively.

By understanding how coverage differs between national and global media, security agencies can tailor messaging to ensure accurate representation of governmental responses, minimizing misinterpretation and fostering accountability.

2. For Media Practitioners and Journalism Ethics

Media practitioners are central in shaping narratives around terrorism. The findings highlight the need for responsible and ethical journalism:

Emphasize accuracy, contextual depth, and balanced reporting, avoiding sensationalism that may amplify fear or stigmatize victims.

Consider both local and global perspectives, integrating humanitarian, political, and international implications to provide comprehensive coverage.

Acknowledge the ethical responsibility in selecting sources, framing stories, and reporting tone, ensuring that reporting supports public awareness without compromising safety or dignity.

Ethical journalism, informed by theory and evidence, strengthens public trust, enhances informed discourse, and contributes to constructive societal responses to terrorism.

3. For Academic Research on Media and Terrorism

The study contributes to scholarship in communication, media studies, and security studies, highlighting areas for further investigation:

Encourages comparative studies on media framing and agenda-setting in terrorism reporting, particularly across local and international contexts.

Suggests integrating multiple media platforms, including social media, to understand the full scope of narrative influence on public perception and policy.

Highlights the relevance of theoretical frameworks—framing, agenda-setting, and priming—in analyzing media influence, providing a basis for interdisciplinary research bridging media studies, political science, and security studies.

Future research can expand on the interaction between media coverage, public opinion, and policy-making, particularly in crisis contexts where media narratives have direct implications for security, humanitarian response, and international advocacy. The study demonstrates that media coverage of terrorism is not neutral; it actively shapes public understanding, drives policy discourse, and influences societal reactions. Policymakers, security agencies, media practitioners, and scholars can use these insights to improve communication strategies, ensure ethical reporting, and deepen academic understanding of the complex relationship between media and terrorism.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined Nigerian and foreign media coverage of the Chibok girls' abduction, with a focus on thematic framing, tone, source selection, and coverage intensity. The findings reveal clear differences in how local and international media construct narratives around terrorism, shaping public perception, advocacy, and policy responses.

Nigerian media emphasized humanitarian concerns, governmental accountability, and societal impact, employing emotive language and sustained coverage to mobilize local awareness and civic engagement. In contrast, foreign media framed the abduction within global terrorism, human rights, and gendered education narratives, using neutral, fact-based reporting and relying on international

sources. These divergent approaches reflect differences in audience expectations, media resources, and editorial priorities.

The study underscores the critical role of media in influencing both domestic and international responses to terrorism. Through framing, agenda-setting, and priming, media outlets actively shape public discourse, policy focus, and advocacy initiatives, highlighting the responsibility of journalists and media institutions in crisis reporting.

Recommendations

For Policymakers and Security Agencies:

1. Engage proactively with media to provide accurate and timely information during crises.
2. Monitor local and international media narratives to anticipate public concerns and international scrutiny.
3. Develop communication strategies that balance transparency with security considerations, reinforcing public trust and accountability.

For Media Practitioners:

1. Ensure balanced and ethical reporting, avoiding sensationalism that may amplify fear or misrepresent events.
2. Integrate local context with global relevance to provide comprehensive coverage that informs diverse audiences.
3. Utilize credible sources and maintain consistency in framing, tone, and factual accuracy to uphold journalistic integrity.

For Academic Research:

1. Conduct further comparative studies on media framing of terrorism across diverse cultural and political contexts.
2. Examine the role of social media in amplifying or countering mainstream media narratives.
3. Apply interdisciplinary approaches, combining communication theories with political science and security studies, to analyze media influence on public perception and policy-making.

Final Remarks

The Chibok girls' abduction illustrates how terrorism reporting transcends borders, influencing national consciousness and global advocacy simultaneously. By

understanding media framing, tone, and narrative strategies, stakeholders can enhance crisis communication, foster informed public discourse, and promote effective policy and humanitarian responses. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on media and terrorism, providing insights for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers alike.

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