

## TELEVISION WEBCAST FRAMING OF THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA

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### Abstract

The manner in which international news media discuss contemporary issues on conflict such as the insurgency by 'Jama' Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awatiwal-Jihad' (*Boko Haram*) in North-East Nigeria has been of concern in media studies. The media is often critical especially of government; with emphasis on their inadequacies, relegating other aspects of their actions. This study sought to comparatively evaluate the framing of government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency over three years (2012-2014) on the *YouTube* webcast channels of: *Aljazeera*, *Cable Network News (CNN)*, and *Channels Television*. Adopting the content analysis research design, 157 videos were purposively sampled and analyzed using a validated coding sheet and manual subject Cohen Kappa's inter-coder reliability test which revealed an almost perfect agreement (Kappa= Coder 1, 2 & 3: 0.9997, 0.997, and 0.818). Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that all three international televisions gave prominence to government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency through its *Security Agency Operations* at 46% on *Aljazeera*, 36.5% on *Channels*, and 48.4% on *CNN*, while the analysis of the yearly trend in their framing presented a significant difference. *Aljazeera* and *CNN* adopted a more *critical* approach in their discourse, while *Channels* was mostly *Distance*. The study concluded that television webcast framing of government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency in 2012 - 2014 was of significant difference. It was recommended that foreign international television stations should be more objective and balanced in their framing of government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency.

**Keywords:** International Television, Framing, Webcast, Government's Response, Insurgency in Nigeria, *Boko Haram*, *Aljazeera*, *CNN*, *Channels Television*.

## • INTRODUCTION

The rise in religiously and politically motivated insurgency has become a concern for leaders in government, global society, and the media. Over the past decade, there has been a global escalation of insurgencies and violence by various organized sects as seen through daily news reports on international news media which have been at the forefront of reporting these events; keeping their audiences abreast as they occur especially in Africa, the Middle-East, and some affected countries of the West. According to Tull and Mehler (2005), insurgency has been at center stage of violent conflicts in Africa especially in its Central and Western regions since the end of the Cold War. Such insurgent movements have led to a series of civil wars in countries such as: Uganda, DR Congo, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. Although the Federal Republic of Nigeria has had its share of insurgencies in the past, never had it been faced with one as audacious as that by the Islamic militant sect; *Jama' Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad* otherwise known as *Boko Haram*.

The Nigerian government has employed quite a number of strategies in a bid to curb *Boko Haram* insurgency through: the declaration of a state of emergency in affected states of: Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, and Bauchi, deployment of military troops to the affected states, creation of a Joint Military Task Force (JTF), Amnesty offer, international collaborations, detention, trial and imprisonment of suspected *Boko Haram* members, as well as dialogue and ceasefire negotiations with the sect imposition of curfew, banning of GSM, intensifying security agency operations, as well as appeal and assurances of curbing the menace from the presidency. Although Nigeria is directly feeling the brunt of *Boko Haram* insurgency, it remains an ongoing news focus on both local and international news media. The manner in which international television report news on contemporary issues such as conflict in Africa raises significant questions on how framing can meet journalistic standards of 'balance', and 'objectivity'. This is one of the major areas of concern of international television news framing of Africa (Norris, Kern, and Just, 2003 p.3).

In a recent study which sought to analyse international broadcast coverage of *Boko Haram* insurgency particularly focusing on the news coverage by CNN and Al Jazeera English through content analysis of 100 news content, Aliyu and Muhammad (2013), found that these international broadcast organizations rely on what they referred to as 'parachute reporting – whereby correspondents are only dispatched to the scene of the conflict from their offices or beats abroad'. This questions the credibility of the reports as the correspondents' access to local sources is hindered and their understanding and context of the conflict are often based on the account of eyewitness or personal perceptions which could lead to misunderstanding and misreporting the crisis.

Another area of concern in the framing of insurgency by the media is the continuous criticism from the media over the counter-insurgency strategy of intelligence gathering. According to Kruys (2007), in a bid to maintain democratic freedom, the media tend to be very critical of intelligence collection methods such that it could lead to the handicapping of intelligence agencies operatives. The possible implication is that this could result in the ineffective intelligence operations of these agencies (military, police, State Security Services), due to media distractions and the need to defend its operations and motive.

It is in view of these concerns that this study therefore sought to examine the framing of an aspect of the discourse (government's response) to *Boko Haram* insurgency in North-East Nigeria by three international news television organizations. In the context of this study, international television is classified into two categories of: foreign international television – Aljazeera, and CNN, and domestic international television – Channels Television. The

implications of international television agenda and discourse on *Boko Haram* insurgency in the North-East spurred the researchers' interest in this area of study.

- **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions were raised in this study:

- What area of government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency was prominent in the discourse by Aljazeera, Channels television, and CNN?
- Through what type and direction of framing did Aljazeera, Channels Television, and CNN present their discourse of government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency?
- What is the yearly trend in the framing of government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency by Aljazeera, Channels Television, and CNN over the study period (2012-2014)?

- **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The Framing theory of mass communication effect provides the theoretical anchor upon which this study was conducted. The theory began as an offshoot of the agenda-setting theory. The process of framing depicts a system through which the media can shape public opinion on events and issues. According to Baran and Davis (2012 p.42), "framing theory asserts that people use expectations of social world to make sense of that social world". In essence, mass media audiences make sense of their environment/ events within their immediate and extended environments based on the manner in which the media project such issues.

Framing theory originated from studies in the field of cognitive psychology. Over the years, it became widely accepted in other area of discipline such as: sociology, economics, linguistics, public-relations, and media (Baysha, 2008). The framing theory of mass communication resulted from McCombs attempts to expand and develop the agenda-setting theory. The theory is also regarded as the 'second-order agenda-setting. McCombs argued that agenda-setting operates at two levels or orders of: the object level and the attribute level. The conventional agenda-setting focuses on the object level of media coverage of issues, candidates, events and problems, of 'what to think about', while the attribute level concentrates on 'how to think about' the issue- thereby telling its audience what objects (issues) are important and which are not (Baran and Davis 2015, p.350). Therefore, his argument was hinged on the fact that it is at the second level of attribute that framing sets in.

Media framing is a crucial function of mass communication. It is critical to producing the world as we know it. According to Vreese (2005), the presentation of news in frames may affect learning, interpretation, and evaluation of issues and events. Likewise, Scheufele in Baran and Davis (p.350), opine that "...framing influences how audiences think about issues, not by making aspects of the issue more salient, but by invoking interpretive schemas that influence the interpretation of incoming information". Kee, Ibrahim, Ahmad, and Khiang (2012), clarifies Scheufele's position through their differentiation of what agenda-setting and framing mean respectively. They opine that while agenda setting attempts to explore the manner in which media present salience issues that aim to notify audiences about what make the important news of the day, framing on the other hand "examines the selection and salience of certain aspects of an issue by exploring images, stereotypes, metaphors, actors, and messages". In a nutshell, the distinction between agenda setting and framing is that while one looks at the bigger picture, the other is focused on the presentation of specific issues.

Framing theory is of relevance to this study because the manner in which international television such as: Aljazeera, Channels Television and CNN present their discourse of government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency in the North-East informs public discourse. Just as the theory posits, the level of understanding and interpretation international audiences come to make of government's response the insurgency is determined by the information they receive through the television, and the manner in which these information are presented, because these audience members come to interpret, understand, and form opinion about the true situation of this crisis in Nigeria based on how the media tells the story.

#### 4 FRAMING

Framing is a media concept which examines the manner in which news information are reported by the media. It is an intentional process of disseminating news reports in a manner that gives salience to certain elements of the news which the media consider to be of importance. Framing involves the manner in which the media present information messages to their audience. It is the process of conceptualizing, packaging, and delivering news information of issues on media agenda.

Framing as defined by Clausen (2010 p.132) is a media function of: 'recognizing, defining, selecting, and organizing news in a way judged to be appropriate for the intended audiences'.

In the same vein, Entman as cited by Robinson (2002 p.137), defines framing to be: "the specific properties of a narrative that encourage those perceiving and thinking about events to develop particular understanding of them...which offers ways of explaining, understanding and making sense of events". In other words, framing offers recipients of media messages an opportunity to receive salient aspects of a news occurrence in order for them to gain an understanding of the issue and form an opinion.

Miller (2002 p. 262), define framing as:

A process through which the media emphasize some aspects of reality and downplay other aspects. Framing can be accomplished through the consideration of particular subtopics, through the size and placement of news items, through the narrative form and tone of the presentation, and through particular details included in the media coverage.

Framing studies have been an area of interest among communication researchers most of whom seek to either determine the manner in which specific media discourse are constructed, or find out the effect of media framing of diverse topical issues on the audience. Matthes (2009), adopted a different approach to framing studies by reviewing 131 studies on media framing of: newspaper, online, television, magazine, and videos from fifteen international journals. Through the use of content analysis research design, Matthes' sought to: determine the definition that was prominent in the operationalization of media frames, find out the type of frame that were prominently used by the scholars in their content analysis, determine the extent of the use of visual elements in the news to identify frames, and the extent of framing studies that were theory driven.

The findings of this study revealed that the operational definition of framing in majority of the studies were Entman's definition of framing. Majority (42%) of the articles measured 2-3 types of frames, textual elements were treated as the main constituents of frames as only 5% of the studies had directly coded visuals. Only 28% of the studies on television content coded visual content. Although majority of the studies were theory driven, 68% did not test hypothesis regarding framing in the study. The study therefore concluded that the limitations in framing

studies lies in the lack of systemic analysis of media framing in research as regards to conceptualizing and coding framing in media studies. This is because there are no unified bases of determining framing, and as such scholars focus on aspects of framing that might not capture the media framing in its entirety. For instance, quite a number of framing studies disregard the use of visuals in the news and pay more attention to what is said or written.

#### **4.1 Types of Frames**

Frames are the specific constructs that are identifiable in media presentation of an issue which enable audience to make sense of its discourse. Gamson and Modigliani as cited by Vreese (2005), define frames as the ‘interpretative packages’ that give meaning to an issue. Several scholars have conceptualized news frames in different ways in their analysis of media discourse.

There are four major types of media framing:

- **Gains vs. Loss frames:** this type of frame is often used by the media while reporting issues of health concern (such as: environmental hazards), whereby media coverage are framed to capture risks and consequences. Here, the media present information on such issues from two standpoints of: advantage (gain), and disadvantage (loss). Gotlieb, Anderson, Borah, Gabay, Lee, and Mcleod (2008), posit that the effect of presenting logical and factual information in term of gains or loss can be understood through Kahneman and Tversky’s (1979 & 1984) prospect theory which predicts that under conditions that involves making risky choices, decision making will be contingent on whether “options are framed in terms of their associated gains or losses, or more generally their advantages or disadvantages”.
- **Episodic vs. Thematic frames:** according to Benjamin (2007), episodic frames reduce life to a series of disconnected episodes, random events or case studies, while thematic frames identify shortcomings at the community or systems level that have contributed to the problem. Episodic and thematic frames are differentiated by the fact that while episodic frames focus on individuals, a single event, thematic frame focus on issues, trends over time. The more episodically social issues are framed, the less likely it is that citizens will hold government and other civic organizations accountable for solving the problem. The more thematic and contextual the coverage, the more likely it is that citizens will see the issue as one appropriate for collective action.
- **Strategy vs. Issue frames:** this type of framing is mostly adopted in reporting political issues. Strategic frames as defined by Aalberg, Stromback, and Vreese (2011), refers to news stories that are centered around interpretations of candidates’ or parties’ motives for actions and positions; their strategies and tactics for achieving political or policy goals; how they campaign; and choices regarding leadership and integrity, including personal traits. According to Aalberg et al (2011), the strategic game framing is characterized by a focus on

questions related to who is winning and losing, the performances of politicians and parties, and on campaign strategies and tactics.

- **Human interest vs conflict vs economic consequence frames:** according to Seon-Kyoung and Karla (2011), these frames are mostly utilized for media coverage of crisis within the society. Of the four types of frames, it is best suited for this study. According to Semetko and Valkenburg (2000 p.95), “the human interest frame brings a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem”. This type of news frame has been found to be significantly prominent in television news coverage. Conflict frame refer to the way that participants define conflict situation- that is, what they attend to or ignore in an on-going stream of events, what counts as important, and what actions should they take. Conflict frames are presented in two forms of: discourse use (naming or labeling of events, use of words that imply blame, and explanation about the nature of a situation), and development of the issues (Putnam and Shoemaker, 2007). Economic consequence frame examines the effect of the crisis on the economy. It is often found in in-depth media analysis of a crisis. The human interest, conflict, and economic consequence frames were adopted in this study.

#### **4.2 Direction of Framing**

There are certain elements and characteristics that are attributed to news framing. For one, it presents the direction from which an issue is discussed from which the stand point of the media organization should be clearly seen. Robinson (2002), identifies four basic techniques of news framing which reveal the direction of the story. These techniques have been found to be prominently utilized by the media in its framing of news on disasters and conflict. They are:

- **Distance framing:** distance framing as defined by Robinson is a type of news framing that “creates emotional distance between the audience and people suffering in a conflict”. The news is presented in a manner that does not strike an immediate emotional connection or empathy for the victims in the minds of media audiences. Such news as perceived by the audience as another event happening somewhere because of the non-analytical manner in which the story is told which makes the audience to have a passive disposition to the issue presented by the news. Distance framing is also referred to as neutral framing. The media does not take a position.
- **Empathy framing:** this is the direct opposite of distance framing. The focus is on the plight and sufferings of the victims of a crisis or conflict. Media organizations utilized empathy framing to identify victims; showcasing the need for interventions and relief (aid) from the “outside” world. According to Robinson, empathy framing was largely utilized by BBC’s Michael Burke and Mohammed Amin in their 1984 report on Ethiopian famine in which the use of graphic footage of starving refugees in various camps shocked television audiences from around the globe.

- **Support framing:** support framing lends credence to official policy. It showcases the intervention efforts made by the government to curb a crisis within its territory. In Robinson's exact words, support framing is "implicitly supportive of and promote government's policy and decisions. It focuses on presenting efforts made by the government by way of policy enactment, and other specified efforts to resolve a crisis peacefully and in the interest of its citizenry.
- **Critical framing:** this is a more radical approach to news framing. It focuses on the inactions of policy-makers and the government through a negative coverage of the subject matter. In Robinson's opinion, it "is precisely this kind of coverage that creates a political imperative on policy-makers to "do something". In essence, media adopt critical framing of issues that are of political sensitivity as a constant reminder of the shortcomings and or failures of government, in a bid to spur the government into action.

The use of these four types of framing can be identified by ascertaining keywords that are recurrent in news report, as well as through visuals. These keywords help to develop the units of analysis. For instance, in a 1995 study on media coverage of the United Nations (UN) and the West (centred on evaluating the fall of Srebrenica and evaluating Western Policy), 35 newspaper articles were selected over a period of eight days (July 11 -18, 1995) from the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, keywords such as: Refugees, People, Women, Children, and Elderly were used to test empathy framing, while Muslim, Bosnian, Men, Soldiers, and Fighters were used to analyse the distance framing (Robinson 2002 p.80). The distant, support, and critical directions of framing were adopted in this study.

- **INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION WEBCASTING**

Television remains the most global and powerful of all media of mass communication. According to Thussu (2010 p.362), television 'imagery crosses linguistic and national boundaries with relative ease, making it the most important of public information, such that the influence of television news on how everyday life is lived from the developed to the developing world is so profound it is difficult to comprehend. One of the earliest forms of television content genre at inception in the mid twentieth century was news (Van Ginneken in Clausen 2010). According to Thussu (p.363), television news-gathering (particularly foreign news) is an expensive operation which requires high levels of investment. International television organizations largely resort to the use of news agencies as news sources in order for them to bring news reports from countries in which they do not have correspondents.

Studies on international news have primarily been centred on how news about foreign countries is distributed and structured before global audiences through content analysis. Gerbner and Marvanyi's (1977) analysis of international news coverage by select newspapers in nine countries revealed that variations in the amount of international news coverage are correlated with political systems. Also more recently, Wu (2000), reviewed international news in thirty-eight countries and suggested that coverage is primarily determined by economics and availability of news sources (Shoemaker and Cohen, 2006).

The convergence of television with telecommunication and the internet has not only led to an improvement in broadcasting, but given rise to a diversified media through which global audiences can experience the television, at their convenience; allowing for the recall of broadcast content, thereby eliminating the limitation of waiting for a repeat broadcast in order to view

missed content which characterized the traditional television tube. According to Holmes (2005), the internet lifts individuals out of the isolation created by media walls- particularly as these walls are reinforced in urban context.

The cyberspace has been characterized as one of the driving forces of news in the twenty-first century in that media organizations world over have gradually given way to this cyber-revolution; subscribing to an online presence through the “more passive and consumer-oriented” home pages of the World Wide Web (WWW). Both print and broadcast media have taken advantage of the cyberspace. In 1995, the managing editor at Times magazine outlined his opinion about cyber-revolution. According to him, the decision to establish an online platform for the magazine was born out of the need to: familiarize its editors, writers, and correspondents with a new journalistic avenue, as well as foster better interactivity between the magazine and its readers (Allan, 2010).

Lee (2007), in a study tests the competing hypotheses about whether diversification of news channels results in fragmentation of public opinion and decline in media power to provide the public with common subjects to think and talk about. Employing a content analysis of blog posts and mainstream media news stories during the 2004 presidential campaign, this study discovered webcasting creates a platform through which media audience can be better, and promptly quickly informed through online news. According to Stacks and Salwen (2009), much attention has been given to the internet as a new medium of news. The idea of internet news creates the impression that media audience will be exposed to more diverse and personally relevant sources of news, readily gain access to global news, and have the opportunity to personally interrogate the news sources.

Aitchison and Lewis (2003 p.97), also express concerns about the effect of online news. They state that online news content are structured in a manner that the “news is presented at several levels of detail” that weaken the concept of news story’ in two ways. First, it eliminates the ‘need for a basic level of story in that it does not allow for content to be broken down into more finely grained textual and visual element as it is with the traditional media.

- **THE RISE OF ‘JAMA’ AHLIS SUNNA LIDDA’AWATI WAL-JIHAD’ (BOKO HARAM) IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA**

Nigeria has witnessed the lengthiest and most gruesome acts of insurgence in its history from the group *Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad* meaning “people committed to the propagation of the Prophet’s Teachings and jihad”. The group was nicknamed *Boko Haram* by locals of Maiduguri in Borno State based on its ‘strong aversion to Western education’ (Umar, 2013 p.18). The Name Boko Haram is a combination of two terms of Hausa (*Boko*) and Arabic (*Haram*) origin which means “Western education is sinful”.

Although the group is said to have been founded in 2002, scholars suggest that the advent of *Boko Haram* in Nigeria’s North-East region can be linked to Maitasine group of Kano. Perhaps Mohammed Yusuf’s reason for establishing the group was informed by his father’s involvement with the Maitasine group. According to Niworu (2011 p.79), beginning the *Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad* movement was ‘an ideology inherited by Mohammed Yusuf from his biological father who was an active member of Maitasine group...’. Likewise, Aliyu (2012), opine that there are striking similarities in the emergence, ideology, operation, and enabling situations of both Maitasine and *Boko Haram*, such that one might conclude that it was established to continue propagating the gospel of Maitasine.

According to reports by *The Guardian Newspaper* (2013), the founding leader of *Boko Haram* (Yusuf) 'retained support by providing meals and economic schemes, including a youth empowerment programme and support for trading. He also arranged cheap marriages between sect members. The provision of economic and social support by *Boko Haram* has led some to ascribe the group's growth to a failure of governance in Nigeria'. The ideology of the sect is claimed to be drawn from the teaching of Islam which can be derived from the name *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad*, meaning "people committed to the propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and jihad". This can be seen through the recitation of certain portions of the Quran, and prayers by the militants. According to *The Guardian Newspaper* (2013), *Boko Haram* is 'fighting to overthrow Nigeria's government and establish an Islamic state'. Considering the multi-religious nature of Nigeria, this is clearly asking for the impossible.

Another area of demand by the sect is prison exchange of its members who have been jailed by the federal government for years. According to *France24* (2014), the sect is demanding the release of its detained members in exchange for freeing the over 200 girls that were abducted from the Chibok Government Girls Secondary School of Borno state on April 14, 2014. According to their report, the present leader of *Boko Haram* (Ibrahim Abubakar Shekau) in a 17 minutes online video released by the sect stated that "I swear to almighty Allah, you will not see them again until you release our brothers that you have captured". The abduction of these girls and the gruesome mass killings of students (especially male students) across schools in the North-East marked a major turning-point of *Boko Haram* insurgency.

*Boko Haram* has established an attack pattern over the years that reveal its targets to be: churches, mosque, educational institutions, prisons, markets, parks, malls, police stations, media organizations, government officials, as well as international organizations. The sect automatically turned global focus to its activities with the 2011 suicide bombing at the United Nations office in Abuja. According to Akpan, Ekanem, and Olofu-Adeoy (2014 p. 151), the 2011 bombing of the UN office in Abuja perhaps preceded the enlisting of the sect among terrorist organizations by the US.

The sect has spread its tentacles way beyond the North-East, perpetrating various numerous unprecedented attacks in neighbouring states of Plateau, Kaduna, Kano, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja.

#### • NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO *BOKO HARAM* INSURGENCY IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA

The emergence of *Boko Haram* insurgency marks the highpoint in the nation's experience of violence insurgencies in the history of both military and civilian/democratic government. An overview of the history and trends in insurgency in Nigeria reveal that with the return to civilian/democratic government in Nigeria, insurgence movements such as *Boko Haram* have become more pronounced and on constant increase beginning from 2002 during the dispensation of former president Olusegun Obasanjo.

Following the death of the founding leader of the sect (Mohammed Musa) in 2009 under late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's dispensation, Nigeria began to witness a drastic revolution in the nature and frequency of attacks. The Nigerian government began to fall under the scrutiny over its attitude and method of response to managing the magnitude of the security threat which had befallen the people of the north. The citizenry began to express concerns as to what its government was doing and how it planned to prevent *Boko Haram* from spreading their tentacles to other parts of the country as the media continued to report the attacks.

Also, the international community began to express fears such that Nigeria was placed on terrorist watch list of the United States of America and other international organizations. According to Bakare as cited by Okoro and Chukwuma (2012), statistics from a survey by UK based Global Analysts; Maplecroft in August 2011 revealed that Nigeria was ranked the 19<sup>th</sup> “most at risk” country from terrorist attack in the world. This was largely attributed to the uprising by *Boko Haram*. The activities of the sect within the study period of this research (2012 - 2014) have been gruesome. There has been: mass killings of students, abduction of students, destruction of villages, and declaration of Caliphate. Forest (2012 p.86), opine that the ‘long-term prospects of *Boko Haram* ‘depend greatly on how the Nigerian government responds to it’. Specific areas of government response to the insurgencies are discussed below:

- **Amnesty offer to *Boko Haram*:** the escalating nature of the insurgencies led the federal government to consider extending amnesty to the sect. According to report from Andrews and Awofadeji of This Day newspaper (2014), President Goodluck Jonathan announced the conditional amnesty offer to the members of the sect as one of the ‘reserved options the federal government has considered in its effort to curb the menace of the terror group. This move brought about divided opinion as some elders of the north were in agreement, while it was strongly opposed by religious entities such as the Christian Association of Nigeria, and other Islamic religious entities. The main bone of contention was that offering *Boko Haram* amnesty because it had caused the Niger Delta Militants to renounce violence was wrong because the motive of the militants differed in every aspect from *Boko Haram*.
- **Ceasefire negotiation:** over the years, several attempts have been made by the government to dialogue and negotiate for ceasefire with *Boko Haram*. In 2014, the government confirmed that it had signed a ceasefire agreement with the sect only for it to be discovered that they were negotiating with *Boko Haram* impersonators who were demanding for huge sums in exchange.
- **Declaration of state of emergency:** the government declared a six month state of immergence in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states of the North-East respectively in 2012 which was extended severally resulting from the increase of the insurgency. Akpan et al (2014 p.152), opine that government’s response to the vicious attacks of *Boko Haram* has been a diverse mix of hope and trepidation...from the ability of the insurgents to regroup and strike even with the imposed state of emergency’. The fact that *Boko Haram* was able to plot and successfully execute attacks even while a state of emergency was declared and troops deployed heightened concerns about the effectiveness of government’s response strategy.
- **Deployment of troops:** thousands of Nigerian peacekeeping troops have been deployed to the North-East.
- **Establishment of civilian Joint Task Force:** the civilian joint task force consists of local vigilante groups made up of young men and retirees of the various Nigerian security agencies such as the military. Although this group of vigilantes was established by the locals of the North-East, it has been considered an area of government’s response in this study based on the fact that their operation was permitted by the government.
- **Establishment of military Joint Task Force:** according to United Nations (UN) reports as cited by Forest (2012 p. 91), Nigeria’s Joint Task Force is a “federal unit comprising

army, police and customs officials, who make up for their lack of operational intelligence with a wholly counterproductive willingness to use lethal force”. Furthermore, Amnesty International in its report states that the Nigerian police are largely responsible for hundreds of extra-judicial killings and disappearances each year across the country that largely goes uninvestigated and unpunished. This statement was their affirmation to the fact that the men of the police were not fit to be involved in the JTF because of their lack of ethical behavior and regard for the rule of law.

- **Imposition of curfew:** following the attack on the Air Force base and Military post in Maiduguri, the government imposed a 24 hour curfew.
- **International collaborations:** the presidency reached out to international governments to help combat the insurgency. Neighboring governments of Chad, Cameroon, Niger all converged at the France summit to deliberate over ways to curb the insurgencies.
- **Judiciary action:** this involves the Prosecution, and imprisonment of suspected *Boko Haram* Members who were captured by the security agencies.
- **Security agency operations:** This area of government’s response subsumes the response from the: Nigerian military, police, State Security Service (SSS). This reveals that in the discourse of the prominent central idea of: *Boko Haram* attack, State of security in Nigeria, and *Boko Haram* abduction, the area of the Nigerian government’s response of focus was response of the government through the actions of its security agencies such as: intelligence gathering, raid, interception and arrest of suspected *Boko Haram* members commuting to other parts of the country, response to distress calls, protection of the border, and attempts at rescuing the abducted Chibok girls.
- **Security agency machinery:** in order to reinforce the military who had machinery that could not be compared in sophistication to that of *Boko Haram*, the presidency sought to get a 1 billion Dollar loan from the international community. According to *Premium Times* in *Forbes* (2014), in a letter from the President to Parliament for which he sought approval to secure the loan, the President stated that the government needed the loan to “upgrade the equipment, training and logistics of the armed forces”.
- **Presidential appeal and assurances:** the government has on several occasions given Nigerian the assurance that it will curb *Boko Haram* insurgency by way of response to the increasing menace. President Jonathan has been reported to have given one of such assurance of curbing *Bokom Haram* during his 2014 Democracy day broadcast.

#### • METHODOLOGY

The content analysis research design was adopted in this study. Katz and Liebes (2010 p.372) opine that content analysis is “clearly an essential prerequisite for defining what’s on television... which constitutes a basis for the construction of hypotheses about viewer decoding and effects...” Content analysis is the only objective research method through which media content such as: textual materials of the print and audio visual materials of the broadcast media can be studied without bias. 157 videos were systematically selected from a population of 380 videos on *Boko Haram* insurgency that addressed government’s response. These videos were downloaded from the YouTube channels of Aljazeera [www.youtube.com/user/aljazeeraenglish](http://www.youtube.com/user/aljazeeraenglish); Channels Television [www.youtube.com/user/channelsweb](http://www.youtube.com/user/channelsweb); and CNN, [www.youtube.com/user/cnninternational](http://www.youtube.com/user/cnninternational) from January 2012 to December 2014.

The coding sheet research instrument was used to analyse the videos having determined its reliability through Cohen's Kappa inter coder reliability test between the three coders, revealing an almost perfect agreement 0.9997, 0.997, and 0.818. The Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) formally known as the Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to process the data and the results presented using statistical tools of charts for clarity.

- **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

**Figure 1: Areas of government's Response to *Boko Haram* Insurgency**

Based on figure 1, the declaration of a state of emergency, and security agency operations are identified to be prominent in Aljazeera's discourse at a proportion of 14.3%, and 46%, ceasefire negotiations, and security expert operations were prominent in Channels TV discourse at a proportion of 23.8%, and 36.5%, while international collaborations and security expert operations were most prominent in the discourse of the Nigerian governments response to *Boko Haram* on CNN at a proportion of 16.1%, and 48.4%. Based on the findings, security agency operations was most prominent. This area of government's response subsumes the response from the: Nigerian military, police, State Security Service (SSS). This reveals that in the discourse of the prominent central idea of: *Boko Haram* attack, State of security in Nigeria, and *Boko Haram* abduction, the area of government's response of focus was response of the government through the actions of its security agencies such as: intelligence gathering, raid, interception and arrest of suspected *Boko Haram* members commuting to other parts of the country, response to distress calls, protection of the border, and attempts at rescuing the abducted Chibok girls.

In answer to Research Question 1, all three media gave far more attention to security agency operations than it did other areas of government's response. This can also be seen in the total number of videos on security agency operations; as 67 (43%) of the 157 videos coded in this study addressed the response of government through security agency operations. It also confirms Miller's (2002) analysis of media framing that the media emphasize some aspects of reality and downplay other aspects.

**Figure 2: Type of Frame and Government's Response to *Boko Haram* Insurgency**

The conflict and human interest were the most prominent frames utilized by all three television stations at: 60.3% and 33.3% on Aljazeera, 46% and 44.4% on Channels, and 41.9% and 58.1% on CNN as seen in figure 2. Also, the economic consequence frame was the least utilized type of frame by all three televisions – Aljazeera, Channels, and CNN at 6.3%, 9.5%, and 0%. The findings point to the fact that the increasing nature of the insurgency, the battle between the government through its security agencies, and the effect of the increasing insurgency on the lives of the people of the North-East were of focal point. It was also observed that there is a significant relationship with the use of Human interest and conflict frames by Channels television. A proportion of 44.4% of its sampled population adopted the Human interest frame which is merely 1.6% below the use of conflict frame.

### Figure 3: Direction of Framing and Government's Response to *Boko Haram* Insurgency

The Critical and Distance framing were most prominently used by all three televisions at 50.8% and 42.9% by Aljazeera, 41.3% and 44.4% by Channels, and 67.7% and 19.4% by CNN. Also, while majority of the discourse on Aljazeera and CNN were presented using Critical direction of framing at 50.8% and 67.7%, majority of the discourse on Channels were presented using the Distance direction of framing at 44.4%. The table also reveals that of the three television organizations, CNN was the most critical of government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency at 67.7%.

The prominence of distance direction of framing implies that the select televisions were often seen to be neutral in their discourse, while the prominent use of critical framing points to the inadequacies of the government. The security agency operations was the most criticized area of government's response which was perceived to be fuelling the insurgency rather than curbing it. The findings made show a significant difference in the use of both distance, and critical direction of framing by the foreign international television (Aljazeera and CNN), and the domestic international television. For instance, while Aljazeera and CNN adopted the critical direction of framing the most at 50.8% and 67.7%, only a proportion of 41.3% on Channels were critical of the Nigerian government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency, while majority (44.4%) of its discourse were presented through the Distance framing.

The critical framing of government's response on CNN could be seen beginning from the title of the videos some of which read as follows: '*parents fed up with Nigerian government*', '*Nigerian father: nothing has been done*', '*Nigeria ignores warning of Boko Haram attack*'. The inability of the government to tackle the root problems that brought about the deprivation and eventual revolt from among the people of the North-East formed a major area of discourse in the critical framing of the foreign international televisions. Another predominant area of critical direction of the framing of government's response to *Boko Haram* was intelligence gathering. This gave credence to Krus's (2007) statement that the media tend to be very critical of intelligence gathering methods during conflicts.

In response to Research Question 2 as seen in figure 2, there is a significant difference in the prominent use of type and direction of framing. Channels Television tried to strike a balance in the use of the Human interest, and conflict frames, and the distance and critical framing. On the other hand, Aljazeera and CNN prominently utilized the conflict frame, and the critical framing.

### Figure 4: Yearly Trend of frame adopted in the discourse of Government's Response to *Boko Haram* insurgency by Aljazeera, Channels Television, and CNN

It can be observed that *conflict frame* consistently had the highest proportion in the discourse of government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency in 2012 and 2013 on Aljazeera at 76.2%, and 81%; and on CNN at 66.7% and 75%, while Channels Television recorded the lowest at 38.1%, 33.3%. However, a significant difference in the frame trend was observed in 2014 as Channels had the highest proportion of conflict frame at 66.7%, while both Aljazeera and CNN recorded its lowest use of conflict frame at 23.8% and 28.6%.

The *Human Interest* frame was consistently higher in the discourse of government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency on Channels Television in 2012 and 2013 at: 38.1% and 61.9%; while at 19% and 14.3% on Aljazeera, and at 33.3% and 25% on CNN. However, in 2014, the reverse

became the case; as the *Human Interest* frame was prominently seen utilized in the discourse of government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency on Aljazeera and CNN, at 66.7% and 71.4%; while it was lower for Channels Television at 33.3%.

Finally, the *Economic consequence* frame was the lowest of the three types of frame in all three years for on Aljazeera, Channels Television, and CNN. In 2012 Channels Television adopted the highest use of the economic frame at 23.8%, while Aljazeera recorded 4.8% proportion of economic framing and CNN has none (0%). In the year 2013, Aljazeera and Channels had an equal proportion of 4.8% of economic consequence frame in their discourse, while CNN had none (0%). Finally, in 2014, the lowest use of economic consequence frame was recorded as only Aljazeera adopted the economic consequence frame in its discourse at a proportion of 9.5%, while both Channels Television and CNN had none (0%).

**Figure 5: Yearly Trend of Direction of Framing of Government's Response to *Boko Haram* insurgency by Aljazeera, Channels Television, and CNN**

First, there is a glaring inconsistent use of the direction of framing by the select televisions in 2012 to 2014. In 2012, the *Distance* direction of framing on Aljazeera and Channels were highest and the same at 42.9% respectively, while CNN recorded the lowest at 33.3%. In 2013, the adoption of The *Distance* direction of framing was higher on Aljazeera (61.9%) and Channels (52.4%). However, a significant upsurge was noticed in its adoption by CNN; which recorded the highest use of the *Distance* direction of framing for that year at 75%. In 2014, the adoption of *Distance* direction of framing by all three select television stations became significantly lower although its use on Channels was highest at 38.1%, while Aljazeera and CNN had a proportion of 23.8%, and 4.8%.

The adoption of the *Support* direction of framing was low. In 2012, both Aljazeera and Channels Television recorded a proportion of 14.3% each, while CNN had none (0%). In 2013, there was an increase in the use of support direction of framing on Channels at 19%, while Aljazeera had a significant decrease at 4.8%, and still none (0%) on CNN. However, in 2014, the use of the support direction of framing was noticeably highest on CNN at 19.1%, while a significant decrease occurred in Channels Television as the support direction of framing was at 9%.6, and none (0%) On Aljazeera.

The adoption of the *Critical* direction of framing by the select television stations was relatively high from 2012 to 2014. In 2012, CNN was the most critical of government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency at a proportion of 66.7%, while it was at the same level on Aljazeera and Channels Television as they both recorded 42.9% use of the critical direction of framing. In 2013, a significant decrease in the use of the critical direction of framing was observed however, Aljazeera was the most critical of government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency at a proportion of 33.3%, while Channels Television had 28.6%, and 25% critical direction of framing was recorded for CNN. Finally, a significant increase occurred in the use of *Critical* direction of framing on all three television stations in 2014; while Aljazeera and CNN had equal proportion of 76.2% *critical* direction of framing, Channels Television had a proportion of 52.4%.

In response to Research Question 3 as seen in figure 4, and figure 5 presents a significant difference between the trend by the foreign to the domestic international television in the type of frame, and direction of framing adopted in their discourse of the Nigerian government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency in 2012-2014. The yearly trend of the type of frame adopted revealed that Aljazeera and CNN had an agenda that differed from Channels Television. Beginning in

2012, *Boko Haram* insurgency were mostly perpetrated through suicide bombing, attack on churches and policies in the North-East. During that period, Aljazeera and CNN reported the attacks from the angle of conflict – reporting on the increasing attacks, and the government’s inability to engage the insurgents and curb the situation. However, Channels Television on the other hand reported the insurgencies from the emotional point of view, reporting the insurgencies as it affects the victims.

In 2014 when abductions and brutal killing of students became the order of the day for *Boko Haram*, Aljazeera and CNN had a shift in its framing to be centred on the human interest- how the insurgency and government delayed response and actual response especially through its security agencies effected victims, and the people of the North-East, as well as the underlying causes of the insurgency which are echoed by the Relative Deprivation Theory, and while the focus on Channels television was on the increase in the insurgency, and the operations of the security agency as government’s response to curbing the insurgency.

The yearly trend of the direction of framing reveal that Channels Television only became critical of government’s response to *Boko Haram* in 2014 with reference to the state of security in the North-East given the rise in the insurgencies, and the magnitude of the insurgencies, whereas the foreign international television have been more critical of the government’s response to *Boko Haram*. Another major area of finding that can be observed from the yearly trend in terms of support direction of framing is that of the three television, Channels Television consistently gave some level of support (although it was minimal) to government’s response to *Boko Haram* yearly, while CNN recorded the least level of support for government’s response to *Boko Haram* in the North-East.

#### • CONCLUSION

The Findings revealed that the international television stations gave prominence to government’s response to *Boko Haram* insurgency through its *Security Agency Operations* at 46% on Aljazeera, 36.5% on Channels, and 48.4% on CNN. Also, the analysis of the yearly trend in their framing showed that there was a significant difference in their framing: Aljazeera and CNN adopted a more *critical* approach in their discourse, while Channels was mostly *Distance*. The implication of this finding is that the level of objectivity and balance was more on the domestic international television than it was on the foreign international television. Also, the study established that government’s response did not significantly influence their framing of *Boko Haram* insurgency ( $p>0.05$ ). Also the *critical* nature of the framing influenced a critical audience attitude to government’s response to *Boko Haram* insurgency at 69%.

Based on the findings, the study concludes that television webcast framing of the government’s response to *Boko Haram* insurgency in 2012, 2013, and 2014 by Aljazeera, Channels and CNN significantly differed. Although all three international television gave prominence to the same area of government response to *Boko Haram* insurgency in the North-East in their coverage, Aljazeera and CNN were more Critical of the government’s approach to curbing the menace; as they set an agenda that constantly focused on the inadequacies of the government’s approach, while Channels television was seen to be more Distant in its agenda; giving the government the opportunity to expatiate on its approach.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations have been made based on the findings of this study;

- Foreign international television such as Aljazeera and CNN should strive to strike a balance in the use of news reports and other patterns of coverage in its discourse on the Nigerian government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency. This is because the prominent use of news reports does not allow for an in-depth discourse of the issue which results in inadequate depth of coverage.
- There is need for all three international televisions (Aljazeera, CNN, and Channels) to broaden their discourse on the government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency as areas of response such as: compensation of victim families, and judiciary action were not given prominence especially by the foreign international television. Also, despite the fact that all three international televisions adopted the human interest type of frame significantly in their discourse, insufficient attention was given to issues on Internally Displaced Persons in their discourse which should have been captured.

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