AUDIENCE ASSESSMENT OF THE COVERAGE OF BOKO HARAM ATTACKS BY CONVENTIONAL MEDIA AND ONLINE NEWS PLATFORMS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study was aimed at ascertaining the assessment of the audience on how both the conventional media and online news media have so far covered the Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study while questionnaire served as data collection instrument. The residents of South-East Nigeria constituted the population of the study. Using the annual population growth rate of 3.2 percent, a projected population of 22,649,928 was used as the population of the study. A sample size of 384 was drawn from the population using the Wimmer and Dominick online sample size determination calculator. Multi-stage sampling technique was employed to administer the data collection instrument on the respondents. The collected data were collated, analysed using percentages and presented in tables. Findings revealed that the conventional media provide detailed accounts of the Boko Haram attacks more than the online news platforms; the conventional media use credible sources more than the online news platforms; online news platforms sensationalise reports more than the conventional media; and finally, the conventional media often adopt peace building approach more than the online news platforms. In line with the findings, it was recommended that online news media operators should improve on their coverage of the Boko Haram attacks by providing detailed accounts, using credible sources, avoiding sensationalism and adopting peace building technique in reporting the attacks; Journalists who report for online news platforms should go for training to improve their skills in conflicting reporting.

KEYWORDS: Audience, Conventional Media, Online News Platforms, Boko Haram, Attacks.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the years, terrorism has continued to ravage many nations of the world. Terrorist organisations such as Al Shabaab, Al-Qaeda, Taliban, ISIS, etc, have continued to cause havoc in different parts of the world. They destroy properties, displace and ultimately occasion the demise of people within and around their operational environment. The increasing deadly activities of these groups have made residents of such environment to flee which has significantly contributed to the current global migration crisis.

Nigeria is no doubt on the list of countries currently experiencing the activities of terrorism in the world. Terrorism has seriously destabilized Nigeria's values and ways of life. The widespread sense of insecurity to life and property, occasioned by this endemic problem, has become a matter of serious concern to government, security agencies and the Nigerian citizenry at large. The situation has become most critical, consequent upon the apparent helplessness of the law-enforcement agencies to stem the tide of the epidemic (Senam, Ntiense,&Okorie, 2013).

As earlier stated, Nigeria is no exemption among countries ravaged by terrorist attacks. The Boko Haram sect is a terrorist organization in Nigeria which has continued to make peace illusive in the country.Only recently, the sect pledged allegiance to Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP). The group has become very strong to the extent that they have now taken the war to military formations. Military bases are attacked, soldiers are killed, and weapons are taken away by the members of the group.

The radical Islamic sect-Boko Haram, *Jama'atuAhlis Sunna Lidda'awatiwal-Jihad* (people committed to the propagation of the Prophet's teachings and Jihad but more popularly known as Boko Haram or Western education is sin) has been unleashing mayhem in Nigeria since 2009 ostensibly because of the killing of its leader, Utsaz Mohammed Yusuf by the police. The sect initially concentrated their gruesome attacks on selected government's targets especially offices ofsecurity agents. The sect later expanded its campaign to include places of worship especially churches and international targets like UN building in Abuja. Today, the sect has added media houses and markets as its prime targets (Ekwueme and Obayi, 2012).

Also victims of the Boko Haram sect are students. The sect invaded Chibok Community and kidnapped the students of Chibok Girls Secondary School at the time the students were getting ready to take their external examinations. The school girls in Dapchi were not also spared as they were as well kidnapped and taken to the forest by the Boko Haram sect. Though some have been released, a number of them are still held hostage including Leah Sharibu, a Christian girl who refused to convert to Islam. On the basis of the rising suicide bombings by teenage girls, it is also suspected that some of the girls in captivity are used by the sect for suicide bombing.

The activities of the Boko Haram sect have no doubt continued to attract media attention including international media such as Aljazeera, CNN and BBC. In performance of its primary responsibility of informing the public and helping them have better understanding of happenings in their environments, the media disseminate different reports about the Boko Haram attacks. It is also interesting to note that online news platforms in Nigeria are not left out in the coverage of the attacks by the sect. In addition to reports by the conventional media such as Channels Television, Nigerian Television Authority, African Independent

Television, Television Continental, etc, online news platforms such as Sahara Reporters, Premium Times as well as Information Nigeria, also participate in reporting the activities of the sect.

In 2014, Boko Haram had its most expansive media coverage in the international press. The group, at that time, kidnapped more than 200 schoolgirls from a secondary school in Chibok, northeast Nigeria. News of the abduction trended on Twitter with the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls which also became a movement, outside the online space, that demanded answers from the government relating to the safe rescue of the abducted schoolgirls. At the time, prominent political figures and celebrities including the then United States President, Barack Obama and the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, supported the online movement using the hash tag.

The massive online and offline media attention given to this Boko Haram attack since placed the schoolgirls at the centre of the conflict involving Boko Haram, such that any claim by the government as to the subduing of Boko Haram is critiqued with the continued detention of the schoolgirls. In fact, Nigeria's current president Muhammadu Buhari insists that Boko Haram cannot be said to be defeated until the schoolgirls are rescued (Guardian 2017; cited in Uwazuruike, 2018).

However, scholars have contended that the media must exercise caution in reporting the activities of such deadly terrorist group as Boko Haram. This is because the framing of the reports may cause unnecessary panic among the audience and ultimately ignite and embolden the terrorist organization. The implication is that the media must do away with sensationalism and adopt an approach that will ultimately contribute to the end of the activities of such sect. Accordingly, Ekwueme

and Obayi, (2012, p.6) assert that "The media in Nigeria, despite coming under attacks by the Boko Haram sect, can help immeasurably in building positive and courageous attitudes in the people in response to the sect's threats. This can be done through the way the media frame their reports on Boko Haram attacks. In this respect, choices of words, pictures and the language of the reports become pivotal".

There are essentially four reasons the media must exercise caution in reporting terrorism. These four reasons are referred to as the four terrorists' media objectives. The first is to gain attention and awareness of the audience and by so doing, condition the target population (and government) for intimidation and fear. The second goal is the recognition of the organization's motives.

They want people to think about why they are carrying out the attacks. The third objective is to gain the respect and sympathy of those in whose name they claim to attack. The last objective is to gain aquasi-legitimate status and a media treatment similar to that of legitimate political actors (Nacos, 2006; cited in Onwuzuruigbo, Okugo and Izuogu, 2017).

Terrorists rely on the psychological impact of acts rather than their immediate destructive consequences. To achieve such impact, they need to publicize their acts as widely as possible. Since the mass media have the ability to confer importance upon an individual or an event merely by presenting it, they play a major role in the spreading and intensification of the desired psychological impact. With the advent of increasing numbers of technological communicative advances, terrorists are able to command the immediate attention of millions, enabling these criminals to work their felonious will on the whole nations rather than just the hostages in their custody (Krattenmaker & Powe, 1978; cited in Ghetti, 2008).

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Since 2009 when the activities of the Boko Haram sect assumed a violent and deadly dimension, the media have continued to accord attention to the sect. Both the conventional and online news media have been reporting the sect's activities which essentially have to do with suicide attacks and kidnapping. Depending on the gravity of the attacks, the media do capture news about the sect as one of the top stories in the broadcast media as well as the front pages of the print media with loud headlines.

Whenever there is an attack by the sect, several reports with different media angles are transmitted to the audience by both the conventional media and the online news platforms. Some of the reports tend to make the audience scared; some tend to misrepresent the facts, while some are also likely to encourage more attacks. Consequent on the above, this study was carried out to ascertain the assessment of the audience about the way the conventional media and online news platforms report the Boko Haram attacks.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following specific objectives guided the study;

1. To establish which between the conventional media and the online news platforms providemore detailed accounts of the Boko Haram attacks
2. To find out which between the conventional media and the online news platforms use more credible sources in reporting the Boko Haram attacks.
3. To ascertain which between the conventional media and online news platforms often promote sensationalism in reporting the Boko Haram attacks

4. To determine which between conventional media and online news platforms often adopt peace building approach in reporting the Boko Haram attacks

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In line with the objectives of the study, the researcher addressed the following research questions;

1. Which between the conventional media and the online news platforms provide more detailed accounts of the Boko Haram attacks?
2. Between the conventional media and the online news platforms, which uses more credible sources in reporting the Boko Haram attacks?
3. Which between the conventional media and online news platformsoften promote sensationalism in reporting the Boko Haram attack?
4. Between the conventional media and the online news platforms, which often adopt peace building approach in reporting the Boko Haram attacks?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Terrorism is an anxiety inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby—in contrast to assassination-the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative of symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience(s)), turning it into a target of terror, a target of

demands, or a target of attention depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought. This definition highlights the intent of terrorism being to communicate a message and fear, and that those killed and injured are not intentional targets, but means to delivering a message to an organization or government (Schmid 1983; cited in Powell, 2018).

There are indications that the media thrive in crises reportage. That may be because crises reportage significantly increases readership, viewership/listenership, and by implication, attracts more advertisement patronage. Consequently, the media respond to terrorist attacks with undisguised zeal and zest. Thus, by energizing competition for audience size, circulation and advertising revenue through the dissemination of terror message, the mass media get rewarded. In addition to media's well known quest for advertisement patronage, there is also this issue bordering on the definition of news as media's ravenous appetite for the unusual, alarming, anecdotal, high melodramatic and the humanized. That is why there is this popular aphorism (though cynical) in journalism parlance that says "if it bleeds, it leads, but if it doesn't bleed, it certainly shouldn't lead, and indeed, may not fit for print at all" (Mueller, 2007; Nacos, 2006; cited in Onwuzuruigbo, Okugo and Izuogu, 2017). It is important for the media to exercise caution in reporting terrorism as too much publicity may be counterproductive.

One of the problems of combating incidences of terrorism is media involvement. Violence or threats of violence have long been deemed "newsworthy" items by the media. Terrorists have recognized this fact and put it to full use. By attacking highly visible targets in a dramatic manner, the terrorists guarantee themselves saturated news coverage. They make a shocking appeal to traditional news values by making full use of the news industry's attraction

to the dramatic, conflict-laden, and potentially tragic event. The media thus furthers the terrorists' objectives by publicizing an incident that was staged for the very purpose of obtaining media coverage. This has come to be called by many a "symbiotic relationship. Critics both within and outside the news industry have begun to voice an awareness, if not a concern, for the ease with which such terrorists obtain publicity on both a national and international platform (Ghetti, 2008).

Sensationalism is at its best when television stations broadcast grisly scenes. After each and every suicide attack, Channels 1 and 2 (and, at a later point, also the newly established Channel 10) of Israeli television dedicated long hours to bring to citizens' homes pictures from the killing scenes without considering the effects of needless repetition on viewers. Was it prudent to bring live pictures from the scene, when reporters could only rehash what they had said some minutes earlier and perhaps, in desperation, might relay the latest unchecked rumour? Were those photos considerate to the victims' families? Granted that the public wishes to know the situation and would like to see pictures from the event. Censorship is not the issue. Instead, balance and consideration are at issue. Respect for the victims and their families should be an interest. Sometimes it seemed that editors and reporters confused quantity with quality, thinking that more pictures would compensate for a lack of quality information and new insights (Cohen-Almagor, 2005).

The mass media and especially the internet is becoming a catalyst for the acts of terrorism. The spread of radical ideologies and propaganda including terror techniques such as how to assemble bombs and the detonation of bombs can be obtained easily on the internet. The mass media often instead show the terrorists as heroes, featuring scenes of arrests and raids by police which attracts the sympathy

of others for a terrorist act. Often the mass media have a particular interest to the exclusion of journalistic ethics and principles of journalistic work for the public interest. Terrorist groups exploit the mass media and the internet to show their ideology and spread their teachings of which are believed to be the truth. They attempt to create a record of the acts they did before they are published with the aim to attract the attention of the public (Muhammad, 2016).

Some scholars speak of the "theatre of terror." At the heart of the theatre metaphor is the audience. The media personnel are a bit like drama critics who convey information to the public. Furthermore, like good drama critics, the media also interpret the event. The slant they give by deciding what to report and how to report it can create a climate of public support, apathy, or anger. By their theatrics, the insurgent terrorists serve the audience-attracting needs of the mass media, and since the media care primarily about holding the attention of the audience, this symbiosis is beneficial for both. However, terrorism is *not* theatre. Terrorism concerns real people, with concrete fears, who wish to go on with their lives without being coerced into becoming victims (Rubin and Friedland, 1986; Catton, 1978; Jenkins, 1975; Schmid& de Graaf, 1982; cited in Cohen-Almagor, 2005).

An extreme measure is being taken by Singapore to cut media coverage of terrorism. The country intends to prohibit photo and video reporting from the scene of a terrorist attack as a strategy to stop giving terrorists the publicity they desire. Journalists and members of the public would face up to two years in prison or a fine of 20,000 Singaporean dollars (15,000 US dollars) if they took photos or video of a terrorist attack or *"communicated"* text or audio messages about the ensuing police operations. In its presentation of the bill, the Singapore's Ministry of Home Affairs argues

that live media coverage of terrorist attacks can endanger police and hostages and cites the example of the Hyper Cacher supermarket siege in Paris in January 2015 (two days after the Charlie Hebdo massacre) (Reporters without Borders, 2018, accessed fromhttps://rsf.org/en/news/singapore-wants-ban-coverage-terrorist-attacks).

A Rand Corporation review of 63 terrorist incidents between 1968 and 1974 showed that terrorists achieved 100% probability of gaining major publicity. Media coverage of some of these episodes was ethically problematic, helping terrorism or contributing to the prolongation of violent episodes. The media also glorify terrorism. Patricia Hearst was kidnapped by a small terrorist organization called the Symbionese Liberation Army. They demanded that the media carry their messages in full and the media agreed; in so doing the media magnified the case out of proportion and provided sensational mass entertainment that served the publicity needs of the ephemeral organization. The most disturbing aspect of this case was that the media gave a small group of criminal misfits a Robin Hood image and transformed it into an internationally known movement possessing power and posing an insurmountable problem to the authorities (Yonah, 1981; Bell, 1978; cited in Cohen-Almagor, 2005).

The debate over how to treat terrorist attacks and terrorists was not decided following a rational Habermassian-style decision-making process, but was the result of several transformations, at least two of which are related to the media: the emergence of advanced technologies of broadcasting, allowing for more immediacy and visibility, and the globalization of the heretofore national media, allowing national newspapers and broadcasters to provide a stage for dissident actors without automatically being accused of cooperating with terrorists. Moreover,

connections among terrorist organizations in various countries became closer, turning terrorist groups into international networks. These connections were facilitated by the emergence of social media technologies, making it easier to diffuse messages among terrorist organizations and recruit new supporters (Weimann 2006; cited in Kampf, 2014).

Onwuzuruigbo, Okugo and Izuogu, (2017)did a study entitled "Communication Audit of Cable News Network (CNN) Online Reports on Boko HaramInsurgency in Nigeria (2012-2016)".The study was predicated on the need to investigate the patterns and trends of the Cable News Network(CNN's) online reports on Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria over a period of five years, 2012- 2016. The study adopted the content analysis method of research and conducted a census of 58 online reports on Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria as obtained from Cable News Network website (http://edition.cnn.com/text=boko+haram).
While direction of reports, sources of report, prominence, balance and report genre provided content categories for the study, the Cronbach Alpha test was adopted for inter-coder reliability. The study found high prominence on CNN's online reports of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. There was high level imbalance in CNN's online reports on Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. The study found low level of objectivity in CNN's online reports on Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. It was also established that CNN made use of only one source of information in her reports on Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. The study found out that the straight news genre dominated CNN's online reports on Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. Finally, the study showed that CNN's online reports on Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria did conform to the allegation of information distortion leveled

against Western Media (Onwuzuruigbo, Okugo and Izuogu, 2017).

Lawrence (2011) revealed in his study that the Nigerian media have been biased in their reportage of the Boko Haram insurgency. He further contended that their reportage of the insurgency have most often glorified the act of terrorism. However, the idea that when it bleeds it sells more has a lot to play here that is why the media has been accused of this glorification (Lawrence, 2011). Another study by Ado (2017) revealed that the audience adjudged the conventional media to have better coverage than online news media in the reportage of terrorist attacks in Somalia.

In a comparative study of traditional media and internet news media coverage of terrorism in Iraq, Ahmad (2016) found that Iraqi residents indicated that reports from the traditional media are more credible than the reports from online platforms in the coverage of terrorism in Iraq. In a related study, Musa (2017) found that the conventional news media generally present better reports than the internet news platforms in the coverage of terrorism in Afghanistan.

In January 2015, Tarik Kafala, the head of BBC Arabic, announced that his news reports would not describe as 'terrorists' the attackers who killed 12 people at the Charlie Hebdo magazine in Paris earlier that month. He told The Independent newspaper: "We try to avoid describing anyone as a terrorist or an act as being terrorist. What we try to do is to say that 'two men killed 12 people in an attack on the office of a satirical magazine'. That's enough, we know what that means and what it is". Since terrorist is such a 'loaded word', he said that it was better to use language that was factual and value-free. This episode encapsulates many of the problems in media coverage of terrorism. How does Kafala know this choice will best serve his audience? With a factual description, he says, "we know what that means and what it

is". But who is the 'we' here? The BBC, BBC Arabic, all journalists, or Kafala and all those who consume BBC Arabic news? Does his audience really all know that the factual description is referring to? Would it not be quicker and easier to describe the event as a terrorist attack? Furthermore, even such neutral language offended the values of those who call a spade a spade and want to call a terrorist a terrorist. Conservative groups immediately raised objections. In the UK, the Daily Mail news site found various politicians willing to say the BBC's policy meant obscuring the nature of the attacks and attackers being reported. The US Newsbusters site accused the BBC of 'bias' and 'leftism' by refusing to use language that condemns violence. These critics argued that the BBC's choice of non-value-laden, descriptive language was a value-laden decision resulting in less accurate and less informative reporting to its audiences. This dispute indicates there is something at stake in media coverage of terrorism. It makes a difference in politics and is worth arguing about. It makes a difference to public understandings of political and religious violence; it therefore makes a difference to what counterterror policies those publics will find legitimate and desirable, and it makes a difference to the role journalists should play in signifying the moral nature of incidents they report upon (Kafala, Sherwin, 2015; Greenhill, 2015; Graham, 2015; cited in O'Loughlin, 2016).

For the purpose of effectively coverage/reportageof terrorism, Cohen-Almagor (2005) offers the following guidelines:

- The media need to be accountable for the consequences of their coverage.
- The media should not jeopardize human life.
- The media are advised to co-operate with the government when human lives are at stake in order to bring a peaceful end to the terrorist episode. This is not to suggest

that the police or other security organizations should have a veto power over reporting. What is suggested is co-operation and mutual respect and understanding between the government agencies and the media.

- The media should not glorify acts of terror as they glorified the SLA during the Hearst kidnapping.
- The media should refrain from sensational and panicky headlines, from inflammatory catchwords, and from needless repletion of photos from bloody scenes.
- Terrorism should be explicitly condemned for its brutality and violent, indiscriminate nature, as the Israeli media on the whole condemn terror.
- The media must not pay or be paid for covering terrorist incidents.
- The media are advised not to take upon themselves to mediate between the terrorists and the government. Special qualifications are required before one assumes such a responsibility upon oneself. Journalists are there to cover the event, not to become part of it.
- The media are expected to refrain from making dangerous speculations about the terrorists' plans, government response, hostages' messages, and other matters. Speculations might hinder crisis management.
- Media professionals should have background information about the terrorists they are required to cover. They should do research prior to their coverage. We should learn from the Hanafi incident, which luckily did not end with the murder of a hostage just because one reporter was ill-informed and did not do his homework as he should have.
- The media should not broadcast live terrorist incidents that include hostage taking. This is in order not to jeopardize human life and not to impede a

government's attempts to rescue the hijacked. This is not to say that the media should not cover such incidents. Rather, there should be a delay of a few minutes during which an experienced editor inspects the coverage and authorizes what should be on air and what should not, as was the case when hostages were released from the Iranian embassy in London in 1980.

- The media are advised not to interview terrorists while the terrorist incident is still in motion. Lines of communications between the authorities and the terrorists should be left open. The media should not impede the negotiations process, as they did in the Hanafi takeover in Washington.

- The media should not co-operate with terrorists who stage events. The BBC's decision not to broadcast the spectacle in Carrickmore was right.

- The media are required to show sensitivity to the victims and to their loved ones. This critical guideline should be observed during terrorist incidents and, no less importantly, also after their conclusion.

- The media are expected not to report details that might harm victims' families.

- The area in which the terrorist incident takes place should not be open for anybody who testifies that he or she is a journalist. Only senior and experienced reporters should be allowed in. Junior and inexperienced reporters should undergo a learning process during which they fathom the complexities involved. Adequate training is a necessary precondition.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The perception theory and the Individual Differences theory were used to explain this study. According to Bovee, Thill, Dovel and Wood (1995, p.97) perception is the process of being exposed to a stimulus, paying attention to some degree, and then interpreting the received message. It has to do with a receiver's assessment or view on the received message. Hence, perception involves the process of exposure, attention and interpretation. In other words, for perception to take place there must be exposure to stimuli with certain level of attention paid to the stimuli and finally the stimuli are interpreted by the audience. Among the assumption of perception theory according to Anaeto, Onabanjo and Osijeso (2008, p.66), are that "communicators want audiences to pay attention to their messages, and make appropriate changes in attitudes or beliefs, or produce the desired behavioural responses".

Perception involves the process of being exposed to a stimulus, paying attention to some degree, and then interpreting the received message. In line with this study, the audience may be exposed to media reports on Boko Haram attacks; accord attention to such reports and assess the qualityof the reports.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES THEORY

The Individual Differences theory was propounded by Melvin De Fleur in 1970. The theory emerged from expositions and laboratory experiments on behaviourism, classical conditioning, learning differences and attitude formation in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Anaeto, Onabajo, &Osifeso, 2012; and Folarin, 2002). Anaeto, Onabajo, and Osifeso, (2012, p.131) assert that the theory has two major assumptions:

1. Members of the mass media audience are made up of different people (in terms of psychographic characteristics)
2. Members of the mass media audience will react/respond to the same media messages in different ways. This is because of the differences in their psychographic characteristics.

The theory argues that because people vary greatly in their psychological makeup and because they have different perceptions of things, media influence differs from person to person (Baran and Davis, 2012). Citing DeFleur, (1970, p.122), Baran and Davis (2012, p.181) assert that more specifically, media messages contain particular stimulus attributes that have differential interaction with personality characteristics of members of the audience. In line with this study, the difference in the psychological disposition of the audience may likely affect the way they assess the conventional and online news platforms' reports on the Boko Haram attacks.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study while questionnaire served as data collection instrument. The residents of South-East Nigeria constituted the population of the study. Using the UNDP's annual population growth rate of 3.2 percent,a projected population of 22,649,928 was used as the population of the study. A sample size of 384 was drawn from the population using the Wimmer and Dominick online sample size determination calculator. Multi-stage sampling technique was employed to administer the data collection instrument on the respondents. The collected data were collated, analysed using percentages and presented in tables.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

As already stated, the collected data were collated, analysed using percentages and presented in tables.

Table 1.The kind of media that provide more detailed accounts of the Boko Haram attacks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Conventional media	202	54.4	54.4	54.4
	Online news platforms	163	43.9	43.9	98.4
	Same level of performance	4	1.1	1.1	99.5
	Not sure	2	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	371	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 above shows the respondents' responses on the kind of media that provide them with detailed accounts of the Boko Haram attacks. The data as presented in the table indicate that 202 respondents which constitute majority with a percentage of 54.4 indicated that the conventional media provide for them more detailed accounts of the Boko Haram Attacks.

Table 2.The kind of media that use more credible sources in reporting the Boko Haram attacks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Conventional media	211	56.9	56.9	56.9
	Online news platforms	152	41.0	41.0	97.8
	Same level of performance	5	1.3	1.3	99.2
	Not sure	3	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	371	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows the responses of respondents on the kind of media that use more credible sources in reporting the Boko Haram attacks. Majority of the respondents-211 respondents representing 56.9%, indicated that the conventional media use more credible sources in reporting the Boko Haram attacks.

Table 3.The kind of media that often promote sensationalism in reporting the Boko Haram attacks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Conventional media	152	41.0	41.0	41.0
	Online news platforms	214	57.7	57.7	98.7
	Same level of performance	3	.8	.8	99.5
	Not sure	2	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	371	100.0	100.0	

The data presented in table 3 above are respondents' responses regarding the kind of media they think often sensationalize reports on the Boko Haram attacks. The data show that most respondents-214 respondents representing 57.7%, indicated that the online news platforms often sensationalise their reports on the Boko Haram attacks.

Table 4.The media that often adopt peace building approach in reporting the Boko Haram attacks

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Conventional media	223	60.1	60.1	60.1
	Online news platforms	142	38.3	38.3	98.4
	Same level of performance	4	1.1	1.1	99.5
	Not sure	2	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	371	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 above shows the respondents' responses on the kind of media that often adopt peace building approach in reporting the Boko Haram attacks. The data in the table show that majority of the respondents-223 respondents representing 60.1%, indicated that the conventional media often adopt the peace building approach in reporting the Boko Haram attacks.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

For better understandings, the findings were clearly discussed in relations to relevant literature.

Research question one: Which between the conventional media and the online news platforms provide more detailed accounts of the Boko Haram attacks?

This research question was aimed at ascertaining the kind of media adjudged by respondents to provide more detailed accounts of the Boko Haram attacks. The data presented in table 1 above were used to address this research question. Table 1 above shows the respondents' responses on the kind of media that provide them with detailed accounts of the Boko Haram attacks. The data as presented in the table indicate that 202 respondents constituting 54.4% indicated that the conventional media provide for them more detailed accounts of the Boko Haram Attacks; 163 respondents representing 43.9% chose the online news platforms, 4 respondents representing 1.1% stated that both are equal in the depth of the accounts they give on the Boko Haram attacks while 2 respondents representing 0.5% were not sure. The implication of this data is result is that the audience believe the conventional media have so far provided more detailed accounts of the Boko Haram attacks. Accordingly, Ado (2017) revealed in his study that the audience adjudged the conventional media to have better coverage than online news media in the reportage of terrorist attacks in Somalia.

Research question two: Between the conventional media and the online news

platforms, which uses more credible sources in reporting the Boko Haram attacks?

The aim of this research question was to ascertain from the respondents, the kind of media they think often make use of credible sources in reporting the Boko Haram attacks. The data presented in table two above were helpful in addressing this research question. Table 2 shows the responses of respondents on the kind of media that use more credible sources in reporting the Boko Haram attacks. Based on data in the table, 211 respondents representing 56.9% indicated that the conventional media use more credible sources in reporting the Boko Haram attacks, 152 respondents representing 41.0% stated online news platforms, 5 respondents constituting 1.3% said both had equal performance while 3 respondents constituting 0.8% stated that they were not sure. This means that the most of the respondents adjudged the conventional media to have used credible sources more than the online news platforms. In a related study, Ahmad (2016) found that Iraqi residents stated that the traditional media use more credible sources than the online platforms in reporting terrorism in Iraq.

Research question three: Which between the conventional media and online news platforms often promote sensationalism in reporting the Boko Haram attack?

In advancing this research question, the intention was to determine the media respondentsthink often sensationalise reports on the Boko Haram attacks. Data presented in table 3 above were used to provide answer to this research question. The data reveal respondents' responses regarding the kind of media they think often sensationalized reports on Boko Haram attacks. The data show that 152 respondents representing 41.0% said the conventional media often sensationalise their reports on the Boko Haram attacks, 214

respondents representing 57.7% indicated the online news platforms, 3 respondents representing 0.8% said the level of sensationalism on both sides is equal while 2 respondents representing 0.5% were not sure. The implication is that most of the audience believe online news platforms more often sensationalise their reports on the Boko Haram attacks. Similarly, Ado (2017) found that the internet news platforms generally present sensational reports in the coverage of terrorism in Somalia.

Research question four: Between the conventional media and the online news platforms, which often adopt peace building approach in reporting the Boko Haram attacks?

Table 4 above shows the respondents' responses on the kind of media that often adopt peace building approach in reporting the Boko Haram attacks. The data in the table show that 223 respondents representing 60.1% indicated that the conventional media often adopt the peace building approach in reporting the Boko Haram attacks, 142 respondents constituting 38.3% indicated online news platforms, 4 respondents constituting 1.1% said both adopted equal level of peace building approach while 2 respondents representing 0.5% were not sure. This implies that majority of the respondents said that the conventional media most often adopt peace building approach in reporting the Boko Haram attacks. In line with this study, Musa (2017) found that the conventional media most often adopt peace building approach in reporting terrorism in Afghanistan.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Results from the analysis of data showed the following;

1. The conventional media provide detailed accounts of the Boko Haram attacks more than the online news platforms.

2. The conventional media use credible sources more than the online news platforms in reporting the Boko Haram attacks.

3. Online news platforms sensationalise reports more than the conventional media in the coverage of the Boko Haram attacks.

4. The conventional media often adopt peace building approach more than the online news platforms in reporting the Boko Haram attacks.

CONCLUSION

Sequel to the findings of the study, it is therefore concluded that the audience are more impressed with the conventional media than online news platforms in the coverage of the Boko Haram attacks. As was revealed in the study, the audience indicated that the conventional media had more detailed accounts of the sect's attacks, used more credible sources in reporting the attacks and more often adopted peace building approach in reporting the attacks. This implies that the conventional media are fulfilling its responsibility to the audience in the area of reporting the Boko Haram attacks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the findings of the study, the following recommendations are therefore put forward;

1. Online news media operators should improve on their coverage of the Boko Haram attacks by providing detailed accounts, using credible sources, avoiding sensationalism and adopting peace building technique in reporting the attacks.

2. Journalists who report for online news platforms should go for training to improve their skills in conflicting reporting.

3. Future researchers in this field should explore foreign media coverage of the Boko Haram attacks to get the perspectives of foreign media.

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