COVERAGE OF RITUAL KILLING AND KIDNAPPING IN VANGUARDNEWSPAPER

BY

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project work has been read and approved as meeting the requirement of the Department Mass Communication, for the award of Higher National Diploma (HND) in Mass Communication, Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this rescarch work to God Almighty my creator, my strong pillar, my source ofinspiration wisdom, knowledge and understanding. He has been the source of mu strenuth throughout this propramme and on his wings only have I soared. Thank Allah for the love.

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Abstract

This study investigates the extent, pattern, and prominence of the coverage of ritual killings and kidnapping by Vanguard Newspaper between January and June 2023. It aims to assess how frequently these crimes are reported, the narrative direction of the stories, and the placement prominence in the publication. Using content analysis methodology, a total of 273 articles from Vanguard Newspaper were systematically examined. Findings reveal that the majority (72%) of the articles on ritual killings and kidnapping were presented as straight news, with limited feature stories (19%) and editorials (7%). Furthermore, most reports (75%) consisted of medium-length content (6 – 10 paragraphs), while 79% of the stories were placed in the middle pages, indicating relatively low prominence. The study also found that 76% of the stories portrayed the issues in a positive or condemning light. These findings suggest that although Vanguard Newspaper reports on kidnapping and ritual killings consistently, it does not assign them significant editorial prominence. The study recommends that media outlets should allocate more prominent space and depth to such serious societal issues to raise public awareness and influence policy responses.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Kidnapping for ritual billing has become common place in Nigeria, and is growing at alarming proportion. In the last ten years, the volatile oil rich regions of the Niger Delta witnessed this phenomenon on a large scale with the target being mostly expatriates and Nigerians in the oil business (Ngwama, 2014). It has spread throughout the country extending to places as far as Kano and Kaduna in the far Northern part of Nigeria. South-East and South-South Nigeria have become known as the kidnappers' playgrounds of Nigeria (Ngwama, 2014).

Kidnapping seems easier compared to other forms of serious crimes. According to Davidson (2010), a group of criminals armed with guns and cell phones apprehend unsuspecting victims and drag their victim into a secluded spot and begin to make phone calls to whomever and demand for a ransom. The police with a mandate to provide security for the people are often unprepared for the task at hand. They think their job is done if they manage to secure the kidnapped, but of the kidnappers nothing much is ever heard (Davidson, 2010).

It is common knowledge that the police are poorly trained and poorly equipped, but beyond these inadequacies there are worrying signs that their patriotism is suspect, some whistle blowers have come to grief for confiding in them. Nigerians have thus, become religious as whole families barricade themselves at night in prison-high walls and pray for God's protection.

But kidnapping as a variant of armed robbery is infinitely more disturbing as it often occurs in the open among persons going about their normal business (Davidson, 2010).

The widening scale of insecurity in Nigeria is a cause for concern as many are affected by it. Churches, mosques, markets, schools, homes and the highway, all are susceptible to this menace. The abductees and their families are traumatized by the ordeal of kidnapping (Davidson, 2010). In view of this, foreign investors are scared away from Nigeria. Nigerians are paying the price of poor governance and failures of leadership. Davidson (2010) points out that the general state of insecurity in some parts of the country has, no doubt reached a stage where virtually everybody is now worried about the direction the region is going. Presently, hardly can people sleep because of the fear of being robbed or kidnapped. Businessmen have taken flight with their businesses for fear of being kidnapped or robbed (Davidson, 2010).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nigeria is currently caught in the web of crime dilemma, manifesting in the convulsive upsurge of both violent and non-violent crimes (CLEEN Foundation, 2013). Notable in this regard are the rising incidents of armed robbery, assassination and ransom-driven kidnapping, which are now ravaging the polity like a tsunami and spreading a climate of fears and anxieties about public safety (Dambazau, 2007).

The upsurge in crime has been ongoing as Nigeria has been on the global crime map since the 1980s (Martin, 2003). These throes of crime for are traceable to poverty, poor parental upbringing, and greed among the youth, get rich quick mentality, inadequate crime control model of national security, among others (Martin, 2003).

Since crime is an abnormal human condition, unwanted and most undesired, it requires a paradigm shift on our popular conception of man in an organized society and the chances for a better and peaceful future (Maxwell, 2011). The violent crime of kidnapping, currently a global menace, has kept many residents in Nigeria without sleep, as every person (male and female, young and old) seem to command some kidnapping value within the country (Maxwell, 2011).

Kidnapping groups are often beyond the reach of the law enforcement agencies. This is evident in the time taken in conducting their violent bargains by requesting a second payment after reaching agreement and the release of a victim (Maxwell, 2011). On other occasions, kidnappers have portrayed inefficiency (whether deliberate or not) with regards to their "data base", as they have abducted some persons overhand over again. The government with little or no political will and a deteriorating moral authority has made several attempts utilizing force in its approach to kidnapping diplomacy (Maxwell, 2011).

The purpose of newspaper is to inform and educated the readers. Obviously, Vanguard newspaper giver more coverage on politics issues, crises and criminal issues in Nigeria but little or no attention is paid to coverage of kidnapping and ritual killings in Nigeria. Therefore, this study is set to find out the pattern of coverage, frequency and prominence Vanguard newspaper gives to kidnapping and ritual killing stories (Maxwell, 2011).

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To find out the pattern of coverage of kidnapping and ritual killing by Vanguard Newspaper

2. To determines the frequency of coverage of kidnapping and ritual killing by Vanguard Newspaper

3. To access the level of prominence of the coverage of kidnapping and ritual killings by Vanguard Newspaper

1.4 Research Question

1. What is the pattern of coverage of kidnapping and ritual killings in Nigeria by Vanguard Newspaper?

2. How frequent are issues on kidnapping and ritual killings are reported by Vanguard Newspaper?

3. What is the level of prominence of the coverage of kidnapping and ritual killings by Vanguard Newspaper?

1.5 Significance of the study

The study is significant because it will add to the knowledge of people on the coverage of ritual killings and kidnapping by the newspapers in Nigeria. This is because countless Nigerians have been kidnapped or being used by fetish people for ritual purpose, without commensurate effort to checking the menace.

This study will also help the Government agencies to know the hazard of kidnapping and ritual killings and how they will tackle the evil doers in the society. Also it will be imperative to the media organization in knowing the level of kidnapping and ritual killings in Nigeria and how to bring such issue to public notice.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study covered the coverage of ritual killings and kidnapping in Vanguard newspapers. The study draws only on the analysis of reports as published by Vanguard by examining the,

headlines, story and news placements etc. It does not seek to investigate the influence of these reports on the readers.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Coverage: According to Goldberg (2018), Coverage is whatever the media decides to cover which include no-brainer crime, wars, local developments e.t.c Therefore, coverage in this context refers to the level of Vanguard newspaper reportage of ritual killing and Kidnapping.

Ritual Killings: Inyang and Abraham (2013, p. 532) define kidnapping as "the forcible seizure, taking away and unlawful detention of a person against his/her will. It is a common law offence and the key part is that it is unwanted act on the part of the victim". Therefore, ritual killing in this context is the act using human being for money ritual.

Kidnapping: Ugwu (2010, p. 3) opined that kidnapping has been viewed in many dimensions. He defines kidnapping as "an aggravated form of false imprisonment that usually involves the transportation or concealment of kidnapped person". However in the concept of this study kidnapping is referred to as false imprisonment that exercises a measure of control over another person's freedom of movement with an intention to make gains, often financial, through a form of bargain for ransom or for purpose of ritual.

Newspaper: MacDougall and Reid (as cited in Ogbiten, 2007), see the newspaper as an institution developed by modern civilization to inform and lead public opinion and to furnish that check upon government which no constitution has been able to provide. Therefore, the newspaper as used in this study refers to Vanguard newspaper

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses and reviews literatures related to the study. The conceptual and theoretical framework as well as review of empirical studies on the project of the study.

2.2 Concept of Kidnapping

Kidnapping is defined by various scholars with varying degree of successes. Firstly, Inyang and Abraham (2013, p. 532) define it as "the forcible seizure, taking away and unlawful detention of a person against his/her will. It is a common law offence and the key part is that it is unwanted act on the part of the victim".

Another definition is offered by Fage and Alabi (2017, p. 289) who conceive kidnapping as "forceful or fraudulent abduction of an individual or a group of individuals for reasons ranging from economic, political, and religious to struggle for self-determination". The authors add that the forcefully or fraudulently abducted individuals are carried off as hostages for ransom purposes. This implies that while political and economic factors can instigate kidnapping, the economic reason is the most common predisposing factor of the phenomenon (Fage & Alabi, 2017).

Also, Uzorma and Nwanegbo-Ben (2014, p. 132), define kidnapping as the "act of seizing and detaining or carrying away a person by unlawful force or by fraud, and often with a demand for ransom. It involves taking a person from their family forcefully without their consent with the motive of holding the person as a hostage and earning a profit from their family". From the foregoing, the definition of kidnapping vary according to auuthors, but it is clear that for an act to be deemed kidnapping, it must involve coercive movement of a victim from one place to another, detention or seizure of that person be it a child or an adult. That is why Inyang and Abraham (2013) add that it is legally regarded as a restriction of someone else's liberty which violates the provision of freedom of movement as enshrined in the constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, where every other law takes its cue from.

Kidnapping can be seen as false imprisonment in the sense that it involves the illegal confinement of individuals against his or her own will by another individual in such a way as to violate the confined individual's right to be free from the restraint of movement (Ngwama, 2014). This involves taking away of person against the person's will, usually to hold the person in false imprisonment or confinement without legal authority. This is often done for ransom or in furtherance of another crime. No one is free from being kidnapped. In Nigeria, kidnappers are everywhere targeting both foreigners and non-foreigners alike with little or no resistance from law enforcement agents (Ngwama, 2014).

Nigerian security system has been weakened in the face of this confrontation as a little has been done to find the socio-economic and underlining factors precipitating this crime. Several theories have been put forward to explain kidnapping within the Nigerian context. Accordingly, the "Economic Theory" views kidnapping from economic concept of making ends to meet Nseabasi cited in (Tzanelli 2006, Gerth & Mills, 1948: pp.56-7) has raised the idea that

kidnapping is regulated by the laws of demand and supply and is a type of social action that involves calculation on the most efficient means to the desired ends.

2.3 Kidnapping as a Business in Nigeria

Adewale (2009) points out that kidnapping now appears to be an emerging concern in Nigeria though it is not a new phenomenon. It is as old as the word itself. But the motive may vary from country to country. Since 1673 the world had been familiar to the practice of stealing of children for use as servants or labourers in the American colonies. Thus, kidnapping has come to mean any illegal capture or detention of a person or people against their will, regardless of age (Adewale, 2009).

Kidnappers have been found to engage in the criminality for several complex motives, ranging from unemployment, idleness, vengeance, rituals, monetary gains and political reasons (Adewale, 2009). The first act of organized kidnapping in Nigeria started 2006 when the militants of the Niger Delta engaged in hostage taking to protest the neglect of the region. According to the militants, Nigeria is built at the expense of the region which serves as the cash cow for the whole country (Adewale, 2009).

The action which started from the kidnapping of expatriates has moved to kidnapping of government officials and their families, Nigerian politicians and their children, and religious leaders and their kin.

In addition, kidnapping is usually motivated by financial gain or political demand. Thus, opportunist or traditional criminals as well as political dissidents can resort to kidnapping in order to illegally obtain economic gains or have their demands granted. Recent typologies of kidnapping, whether they originate in social science or business milieux, focus on criminal motivation (Zannoni, 2003).

Some examples that belong to the sophisticated end of the analytical spectrum: criminologist and risk evaluator Elio Zannoni proposes a distinction between criminal (with economic motivation) and political (with political motivation) kidnapping (Zannoni, 2003), suggesting that 'in many instances 'kidnapping is a "business" involving a demand for ransom which may vary considerably, depending on the type of criminals involved and the victim's personal status' (as cited in Tnazelli, 2006). Two claims are important here: (a) that in every kidnapping a form of economics is involved, and (b) that the status of the hostage is of significance in the payment of ransom

The "Political theory" sees the act as a Political Tool which is motivated by attempt to suppress, outsmart, intimidate and subjugate political opponents, like the case in Anambara state when the former Central Bank governor who then was PDP gubernatorial candidate had his father kidnapped by the aggrieved opponents of the same party who felt marginalised by the PDP political process (Ngwama, 2014).

Turner (cited by Nseabsi, 2009) established relationship between "money and politics" accordingly, where there are political motivations for kidnapping and where ransoms are also demanded. Such ransoms are often used to further the political objectives of the kidnapping organization or simply to facilitate the survival of the organization.

Nseabasi (2009) states that the most top kidnapping operations are masterminded by government officials, opposition groups, unrewarded or uncompensated members of election rigging militant groups, among others.

Kidnapping is then seen as aid instrument for political vendetta and settling of political scores. The operation is organized and targeted mainly at key serving politicians or foreign workers or contractors working directly for government (Nseabasi, 2009). Once the victim is kidnapped, a high level negotiation is expected which will ultimately lead to a very heavy ransom. Such a ransom is used to further political goals, self -settling of aggrieved groups or a way of financially crippling a serving politician (Nseabasi, 2009).

Another theory views kidnapping from the angle of unemployment which pervade the countries labour market. This is blamed on the inability of the government to create adequate employment for the youth (Nseabasi, 2009).

2.4 An Overview of Kidnapping in Nigeria

Kidnapping is on the increase in Nigeria. Statistically, Nigeria records more than 1,000 kidnapping incidents a year, and there are undoubtedly many that are unreported (Catlin Group, 2012).

The British government decried the fact that at least 25 British and dual British citizens and more than 200 other foreign nationals were in the Niger Delta area since January 2007 alone. That is why Fage and Alabi (2017) recogniz that one of the elements of militancy and/or insurgency in the Niger Delta is kidnapping. From the unstable situation in the Niger Delta, kidnapping has spread across the country. These kidnappings can either be for financial or political gain. Victims were originally foreign oil workers, but today many are locals, often

employees of international oil and oil service companies, and not necessarily wealthy; anyone whose family might pay a ransom can be targeted. In June 2012, police rescued international footballer Christian Obodo who were been kidnapped in front of a church (Catlin Group, 2012).

There remains a high threat of kidnapping and other armed attacks targeting oil and gas facilities and workers. This also applies to ships and oil rigs at sea off the coast of the Niger Delta. In January 2012, kidnappers abducted a US citizen from his vehicle in the Delta and killed his security guard (Catlin Group, 2012).

In April 2012, criminals kidnapped a US national in Imo State and a Spanish citizen in Enugu State in separate incidents. In May 2012, criminals kidnapped an Italian national in Kwara State. On May 7, a Lebanese national was kidnapped in Kaduna State and his Lebanese colleague was mercilessly killed during the abduction. It was also reported that two engineers – one British and one Italian – were killed by their captors in March 2012 when Nigerian security forces, with support from Britain, attempted to rescue them. They had been held by elements of the Islamic fundamentalist group *Boko Haram* for ten months (Catlin Group, 2012). Kidnappings of western nationals for ransom have also been attributed to *Boko Haram*. Some cases include the kidnapping of a French priest, Georges Vandebeusch, in November 2013 as well as that of a seven-member French family, which is believed to have produced a ransom of USD 3 million. Both of these kidnappings took place in Cameroon (Barna, 2014). It has also attacked schools and universities: the massacre of sleeping students in dormitories in February 2014 (Barna, 2014).

On 14th April, 2014 the sect kidnapped 250 female students from Government Girl's Secondary School Chibok Borno State (Shuaibu, Salleh, & Shehu, 2015). Another associated group, Ansaru, has also targeted Western nationals, Christians and the government. It is active in

the northern states, primarily Kano, Katsina, Yobe, Bauchi and Borno. The existence of tactics similar to those of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has led some to suggest that another potential leader of the organisation is Khalid al-Barnawi, who was a member of AQIM and trained in Algeria and might be the link between the two organisations (Barna, 2014). In the Catlin Group's (2012) report, military-led rescue attempts can end in the deaths of hostages.

2.5 Causes of Kidnapping in Nigeria

Kidnapping as a violent criminal offence is a rather complex phenomenon. It takes place in various contexts and for various reasons. Its causes and consequences are also many. Hazen and Horner (2007) observe that hostages have been taken for two primary reasons: political bargaining and economic gain. This broad classification of kidnapping is very important for understanding the underlying factors for the problem, especially kidnapping for ransom. But beyond these broad typologies, persons are kidnapped and abducted by criminals for various reasons and intentions, such as for adoption, begging, camel racing, illicit intercourse, marriage, prostitution, ransom, revenge, sale, selling body parts, slavery, unlawful activity, murder and for other purposes (NCRB, 2014).

Considering the influence of globalization on the expansion on the increase in crimes as transcending national borders, termed as trans-border crimes like commercial sex by under-age and human trafficking (Ibrahim & Mukhtar, 2016), today physical movement across the borders by illegal organized syndicates has become commonplace.

In Nigeria and many other developing countries of Africa and Asia, political factors, poverty, lack of legal/available employment opportunity among the youths are also playing fundamental role in the rise of kidnapping. In line with the above, Tepperman (as cited in Ibrahim & Mukhtar, 2016) observe that Nigeria has a large number of adolescents living and

making a living on the streets. This has been attributed to economic factors and exposure to all forms of risks.

Closely related to Hazen and Horner's typology is that given by Zannoni (2003) who mentioned that motivations and mode of operation vary but generally there are two main kinds of kidnapping for ransom. These can be roughly categorized as "criminal kidnapping", where the main motive is to obtain a ransom from the family or business of the victim. This category includes instances where criminals take hostages as a shield to help them escape from the scene of a crime, or use them to obtain money or valuables, or the keys or secret codes needed to access areas where these are stored Zannoni (2003).

The other type of kidnapping, according to Zannoni (2003), is "political kidnapping", where the foremost objective is to further the political aims of a particular political group or movement. In this case, a ransom is usually demanded to obtain money for the group to fund their activities. This made the dividing line between economic and political kidnappings so blurred. In addition, religious and other political extremists use kidnapping as political weapons and as a means of financing their activities (Catlin Group, 2012).

Economic deprivation and a sense of desperation have planted the seeds of kidnapping as a way of getting money in poor communities. It can then become a way of life, even when legal options become available (Catlin Group, 2012). The disparity between the rich and the poor is growing, and thanks to the internet and global media, everyone can see how the rich are living. It fuels resentment and a desire for a bigger share (Catlin Group, 2012).

Umoh, (2010) posits that the political consequence of kidnapping activity has had a spill-over influence on the jobless youths and criminals who take it as a new substitute or complement to robbery and pick pocketing. Such a group of kidnappers target not only prominent and well-

off individuals but also ordinary citizens who possess little wealth. The common target includes every perceived person with prospects of high and lucrative ransom, including teenagers, children and adults alike.

2.6 Effect of Kidnapping on the Victims

Irrespective of the type of kidnapping and the motive for its perpetration, the psychological and financial impact of the problem can be quite devastating, both for the victims and (Kaylor, 2015). Victims of kidnapping differ in age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, level of education and country of origin. Although anyone can become a victim of trafficking, certain populations are especially vulnerable to this form of victimization (Kaylor, 2015).

Not only does forceful removal of a child from his/her family traumatises the victim, it also complicates the lives of his/her parents, family, and community (Orset, 2008). One common effect of the abduction which seemed memorably traumatic for those concerned and which was raised many times was the lack of contact for many parents with their children during the period that they were away. This was often because the left-behind parent did not know the children's whereabouts (Freeman, 2006). Child sexual abuse as a result of kidnapping also exposes, child to the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

Another guised form of sexual molestation of kidnapped children is that the abducted under age victims are often subjected to forced marriage with older husbands. As reported by Clark (2004), the child brides are married to older, more sexually experienced men with whom it is difficult to negotiate safe sexual behaviours, especially when under pressure to bear children. A study conducted in Kenya and Zambia in 2004 found that married girls aged 15-19 were 75

percent more likely to contract HIV than sexually active, unmarried girls of the same age. Similar figures were found in 29 countries across Africa and Latin America (Clark, 2004)

Apart from psychological trauma on the victim and the victim's family, as well as physiological implications, kidnapping is also accompanied with huge economic or financial implications. According to Catlin Group (2012), one estimate suggests that globally, ransom payments could be worth US$500 million annually, but an authoritative figure simply is not possible when the total number of incidents is open to great uncertainty. The vast majority of kidnaps, perhaps 70 per cent, go unreported for fear of reprisals or a lack of confidence in the police (Catlin Group, 2012).

In some interviews, Freeman (2006) also mentions that some left-behind parents disclosed having thoughts of extreme violence at that time as well as finding solace through religious faith. Others talked of their inability to pay ransom while knowing that their children were somewhere else and of feeling constantly depressed and ill. Examples of this were given when these parents spoke of: losing their hair, physical sickness, becoming dependent on pills and alcohol, feeling suicidal, being unable to function properly, the feeling of helplessness, feeling "in limbo", as if waiting for a medical diagnosis, and the fear of having lost their children forever (Freeman, 2006).

2.7 Previous Statistics of Kidnapping in Nigeria

Statistics appear to support the views of analyst. In December 2009, Police Affairs Minister, disclosed that 512 cases of kidnapping had been recorded from January 2008 to June 2009 against 353 recorded in 2008 (Ngwama, 2014). Rundown of the statistics indicates that Abia State led the pack with a total of 110 kidnapping incidents Imo 58,109 arrests, 41 prosecution and one dead Delta recorded 44 kidnap cases, 43 releases, 27 arrests, 31 prosecuted and one death, and Akwa Ibom recorded 40 kidnap cases, 418 arrests and 11 prosecutions (Ngwama, 2014).

The report added that between July/September 2008 and July 2009, over ₦ 600 million was lost to kidnappers. But beyond statistics available, it is a known fact the most kidnap cases are never reported to the police for the fear of murder of victims, hence most families prefer to pay ransom to losing one of its own (Ngwama, 2014).

For instance, in Kano, N80 million ransom was allegedly paid to kidnappers for the release of a Kano -based multi- millionaire businessman, without a recourse to the police authorities; an industrialist in Nnewi paid ₦ 70 million to regain his freedom from his captors; another multi-millionaire businessman was kidnapped and released after he allegedly paid a ransom without recourse to the police (Umejei, 2010).

On Sunday, July 11, 2010 four journalists and a driver travelling in a convoy of buses from a conference in Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State, were kidnapped in Abia State on their way back to Lagos. From their hideout, the abductors demanded a ransom of N250 million, and later reduced it to N30 million (Ngwama, 2014). A torrent of protests, condemnations and threats, greeted the action of the kidnappers and they were forced to let go of their victims. However, the police did not make a clear statement whether ransom was paid or not (Ngwama, 2014).

In Idah, Kogi Stage, the mother of the former President of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), was also abducted. In Kano, a businessman was forcibly abducted in the presence of his family. The criminals were apparently looking for dollars; not finding it, they shot and injured his three children and still made off with him (Ngwama, 2014).

In Akwa-Ibom State where as many as ten medical doctors were kidnapped, staff at the University Teaching Hospital went on an indefinite strike following the failure of kidnappers to release their latest victim, a consultant pediatric surgeon. As a consequence, medical services at

the specialist hospital were paralysed and patients were stranded. Also 26 UK nationals were kidnapped in Nigeria between 2006 and 2007 (Ngwama, 2014).

The oil-rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria has seen an explosion in the number of foreigners kidnapped for financial or political gain. Seven foreigners were reported kidnapped in Nigeria in 2005. That figure increased to 72 in 2006 and 223 in 2007. This exponential increase has been largely the result of activity by the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and other armed militant groups. It was reported that 26 of the hostages were UK nationals (Ngwama, 2014).

Out of the 295 foreigners kidnapped in 2006 and 2007, five died as a result of injuries sustained during their abduction - including a Briton killed when the kidnappers' boat was attacked by the Nigerian Navy. One Syrian hostage died of illness very shortly after his release (Ngwama, 2014).

2.8 Vanguard Newspaper

Vanguard Newspaper was established in 1984 by Mr. Sam Amuka (a renowned, veteran journalist and columnist of the Sad Sam Fame (Vanguard Media Limited, 2023). Sam Amuka was editor of Sunday Times and the First Managing Director of the Punch Newspaper.) He is from Itsekiri land in the present Delta State of Nigeria. The maiden copy of VANGUARD hit the newsstands as a weekly on Sunday June 3rd, 1984 with the motto: Towards a better life for the People. It went daily on July 15, 1984. It aims to serve the people through unflinching commitment to free enterprise, the rule of law and good governance (Vanguard Media Limited, 2023)

Between 1988 and 1995, it published among others, Mr. & Mrs. Magazine (a compilation of the popular comic cartoons on the front page of the paper), Lagos Mirror (an evening paper),

Vanguard Yellow Pages (a directory), Lagos Law Directory and Sports Now (a weekly publication devoted entirely to sports) (Vanguard Media Limited, 2023)

As at today, the paper has on its stable, the Daily Vanguard, Saturday Vanguard and Sunday Vanguard. It has since added other titles taken care of specialised interests. These include: Financial Vanguard, Allure, Sweet Crude, Hitech, Sports Vanguard and Cyber life (Vanguard Media Limited, 2023). These titles are so-product specific that no serious policy maker, businessman, Politician, student and/or interests' groups would ignore. Major among Vanguard's features include: Sports, Advertising, Management and marketing, Maritime, Energy, Hi-tech and Computer, Aviation, Business and Banking, Tourism, Health, Labour, Human Angle and Women affairs, Politics, Education and Insurance (Vanguard Media Limited, 2023).

In addition, the paper also features respected columnists like Kola Animasuan, Dele Sobowale, Pini Jason, Tony Momoh, Bisi Lawrence, Ocherome Nnanna, Les Leba, Helen Ovbiagele, Bunmi Sofola, Treena Kwenta, Obi Nwakanma, and many others and also until recently, Aig-Imoukhuede who passed on 23 January,2007. These names make *VANGUARD* a compelling read for discerning minds (Vanguard Media Limited, 2023).

2.9 Review of Some Empirical Studies

In a study by Nwadiora & Nkwocha (2011) to examine the prevalence of kidnapping as an urban pandemic in Imo State. The population of the study consists of people selected from the urban centres and rural areas in Imo State. Structured questionnaire were distributed to 100 respondents randomly selected from the target population after which 90 were filled and returned. The data collected were carefully analyzed by the use of simple percentages and chi-square statistical method was used to test the hypotheses. Findings show that urbanization process has a

lot to do with the pervasion of kidnap cases in Imo State; it is as well obvious from the study that the ineffectiveness of the police has negatively affected the fight against kidnapping. The findings also indicated that unemployment and leadership failure ranked among the major causative factors of kidnapping for ransom (Nwadiora & Nkwocha, 2011).

Also, Onyefusi (2008) carried out a research to find out the factors that determine the involvement of young adults at the Niger Delta to rebel groups? To investigate this, Onyefusi conducted a survey among 1,337 individual youths, questioning them about various factors likely to be relevant for such a choice. Onyefusi focused on three states in the Niger Delta region: Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers. These states account for the bulk of Nigeria's oil production. The incidences of violent conflict have also been especially concentrated in these areas in the last six to eight years. Bayelsa and Rivers states have especially, become notorious for kidnapping and other oil-related violence. Findings shows that oil availability appear to have a corrupting influence on the disposition of civil peace. But, contrary to the popular assumption, grievance, though pervasive, does not seem to have any statistical significant effect. Some of the factors that determine personal grievance, such as income and infrastructure, tend to explain the probability of having a disposition towards rebel participation through opportunity rather than through grievance. Also, unemployment does not appear to statistically influence grievance level nor determine the probability of observing a willingness to participate in rebellion. However, this may be due to the definition of unemployment assumed in this study and/or failure to account for the duration of unemployment (Onyefusi, 2008).

Ekpenyong, Ukommi & Agha (2010) carried out a research design to examine poverty as a potent conflict escalator in Eleme Local government area of River State, a Niger Delta community. The quantitative research design, which made use of survey method, was employed

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to accomplish the purpose of the study. A structured questionnaire was used to obtain data for the study from 516 respondents drawn from multi-stage sampling procedures. Results obtained revealed that multiple factors are responsible for poverty in Niger Delta: neglect (90%), inadequate social amenities (80%), environmental degradation through oil exploration (68%), and mass unemployment (62%). Furthermore, the results showed that poverty is a major cause of (87%) conflict in the region and that conflict, in turn, has severe consequences on Niger Delta. These consequences include wanton destruction of lives and property (88%), impoverishment of the people or poverty (75%), investment – unfriendliness (75%), disruption or halting of oil exploration (71%), and kidnapping or killing of expatriates and top oil company workers (82%). The findings of this study support the argument that poverty is both a cause and a consequence of conflict. While poverty causes conflict, conflict further perpetuates poverty. Thus, the relationship between poverty and conflict is in two-way (Ekpenyong, Ukommi and Agha, 2010).

2.10 Theoretical Framework

The Project will be anchored on Agenda Setting Theory and Social Responsibility theory

Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda-setting theory describes the "ability [of the news media] to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda" (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002). With agenda setting being a social science theory, it also attempts to make predictions. That is, if a news item is covered frequently and prominently, the audience will regard the issue as more important (McCombs & Reynolds, 2002).

Agenda-setting theory was formally developed by Max McCombs and Donald Shaw in a study on the 1968 American presidential election. In the 1968 "Chapel Hill study", McCombs and

Shaw demonstrated a strong correlation coefficient (r > .9) between what 100 residents of Chapel Hill, North Carolina thought was the most important election issue and what the local and national news media reported was the most important issue (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

By comparing the salience of issues in news content with the public's perceptions of the most important election issue, McCombs and Shaw were able to determine the degree to which the media determines public opinion. Since the 1968 study, published in a 1972 edition of Public Opinion Quarterly, more than 400 studies have been published on the agenda-setting function of the mass media, and the theory continues to be regarded as relevant (McCombs, 2005).

Agenda setting occurs through a cognitive process known as "accessibility" (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Iyengar, 1990). Accessibility implies that the more frequently and prominently the news media cover an issue, the more instances of that issue become accessible in audience's memories. When respondents are asked what the most important problem facing the country is, they answer with the most accessible news issue in memory, which is typically the issue the news media focused on the most (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Iyengar, 1990).

The agenda-setting effect is not the result of receiving one or a few messages but is due to the aggregate impact of a very large number of messages, each of which a different content has but all of which deal with the same general issue (Dearing & Rogers, 1988).

Mass-media coverage in general and agenda-setting in particular also has a powerful impact on what individuals think that other people are thinking, (Dearing & Rogers, 1988; Lippmann, 1922) and hence they tend to allocate more importance to issues that have been extensively covered by mass media. This is also called schemata theory. In psychology and

cognitive science, a schema (plural schemata or schemas) describes a pattern of thought or behavior that organizes categories of information and the relationships among them.

In the views of Folarin (2005:95), the elements involved in agenda-setting include:

1. The quantity or frequency of reporting;

2. Prominence given to the reports – through headline display, pictures and layout in newspapers, magazines, film, graphics, or timing on radio and television.

3. The degree of conflict generated in the reports; and

4. Cumulative media-specific effects overtime.

However, agenda setting to this study help us understand that the media (Vanguardnewspaper) set agenda by reporting cases of kidnapping and ritual killings in Nigeria. The paper make excessive report of the issue and it became public issues which the Government later have interest in it by taking necessary step to curb such act in the country.

CHAPTER THREE

REASEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research design for this study is the Content Analysis. Popoola (2014) describes content analysis as one which seeks to indicate objective, measurable and verifiable account of the manifest content of communication. According to Berelson (1950) the method used as a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of the communication. Content Analysis is one of mass communication's vital contributions to social inquiry (Popoola, 2014).

3.2 Population of the study

Population refers to all the persons or things that fall under the umbrella of the research study or that can be examined to address the research problems or meet research objectives. The newspaper considered for this study is Vanguard newspaper. The newspaper was purposively selected in view of its circulation, scope and availability. All the issues of the newspapers constitute the population for this study. However, this study covered January to June 2023.

3.3 Sample Size

Sample size is the act of choosing the number of observation or replicates to include in a statistical sample (Smith, 2013). He sample size for this study is 273 contents of Vanguard newspaper.

3.4 Sampling Technique

The collection of components of the sample that will give a demonstrative interpretation of the whole is known as sampling technique. Oloyede (2012) conceptualizes sampling procedures as

the methods and procedures used in choosing the sample of a given population. The study will employ a systematic sampling technique to select editions of the newspaper. Every third edition in a month will be randomly selected and in all 60 editions will be drawn out from January to June 2023.

3.5 Data Collection Instrument and Procedure

The instrument for data collection is the coding sheet. A coding sheet could be described as a document where the process of classifying and categorizing text data segments into a set of codes (concepts), categories (constructs) and relationships are done (Bhattacherjee, 2012). This study will generate coding categories of editorials for the content analysis. According to Gibbs (2007), coding is a process of identifying a passage in the text or other data items.

3.6 Unit of Analysis

Measurement or Unit of Analysis, though the smallest element of a content analysis, is one of the most significant. It could take the form of a single word/symbol, a single assertion about a subject (theme), or a complete story or article in written content (Igbinoba, 2008).

3.6.1 Nature of Story

1. News story: This can be defined news and straightforward items of information/facts about current/recent events or happenings, ideas or opinions that interest or affect a target audience, especially as reported by the Nigerian Mass Media. In this case it refers to news on kidnapping.

2. Feature story: A regular article that is inclusive and that gives insight to the issues at stake without any identified bias on kidnapping.

3. Opinion article: These are articles that stem out of personal, subjective judgment of media audiences regarding kidnapping.

4. Editorial: An expression of the view point of the publisher/editor of a media publication to offer or seek clarification on issues particularly on kidnapping and ritual killing.

3.6.2 Frequency of Reportage:

This means the number of times the stories carried by the selected samples appear in a single newspaper. The researcher would take the count of every headline on every report relating to kidnapping with the scope of the sample size so as to know the frequency.

3.6.3 Position of Stories

Importance the newspaper attached to stories on kidnapping will be measured by their placement on front pages, inside pages and back pages.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

Data from the study will be analyzed with the aid of SPSS version, while the findings will be presented, using descriptive statistics frequency distribution and simple percentages

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and analyzes data which relates to the three research questions. The first question focuses on the pattern coverage of kidnapping and ritual killing by Vanguard Newspaper. The second question is to determine the frequency of coverage of kidnapping and ritual killing by Vanguard Newspaper, the third question attempt to find out the level of prominence of the coverage of kidnapping by Vanguard Newspaper.

Thus, the results of this study are presented through the use of simple table and percentages that show different frequency of occurrence for the different research questions relating to the study.

Table 4.2: Categories in which Vanguard Newspaper report and kidnapping in Nigeria

Variables	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
News	197	72%
Features	52	19%
Editorial	20	7%
Comment	4	2%
Total	**273**	**100%**

The above table shows the result of Vanguard newspaper in categorizing and kidnapping stories. Result showed that Vanguard newspaper publish 72% stories representing n=197 of ritual killing and kidnapping as news stories. Also, 19% stories representing n=52 are publish as features, editorial content of and kidnapping are 7% stories representing n=20 while the comment section of the newspaper covers 2% stories representing n=4 of ritual killing and kidnapping in Nigeria. This means that Vanguard newspaper publish ritual killing and kidnapping stories as news stories.

Table 4.3: Level of frequency in which Vanguard Newspaper gives kidnapping in Nigeria

Variables	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
0-5	57	21%
6-10	206	75%
11 and above	10	4%
Total	**273**	**100%**

The table above represent the frequency in which Vanguard newspaper give ritual killing and kidnapping in Nigeria. It showed Vanguard newspaper has 21% representing n=57 reportage of kidnapping stories with 0-5paragraph. Also, 6-10 paragraphs of reportage have 75% representing n=206 while 11 and above frequency of reportage has 4% representing n=10 in the table. This

means that Vanguard newspaper frequently reports kidnapping as the level of their frequency is range between 6-10 paragraphs.

Table 4.4: Level of prominence in which Vanguard Newspaper gives kidnapping in Nigeria

Variables	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Front Page	56	21%
Middle Page	217	79%
Back Page	-	-
Total	**273**	**100%**

The table above shows the prominence given to kidnapping stories by Vanguard newspaper, in determine the prominence given, the total number of ritual killing and kidnapping stories that appeared in the front page, middle page, and the back page of the newspaper will be considered. Result showed that 21% stories are published in the front page representing n=56 while 79% stories are published in the middle page representing n=217. This simple means that Vanguard newspaper publishes most kidnapping in the middle of the page.

Table 4.5: Content Categories of kidnapping in Vanguard Newspaper

Variables	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Ritual Killings	63	23%
Kidnapping	169	62%
Abduction	41	15%
Total	**273**	**100%**

The above table showed that shows the categories in a Vanguard newspaper give to kidnapping stories. The result showed that 23% stories representing n=63 are categorised as ritual killings, 62% of the published stories representing n=169 are kidnapping stories. Also, 15% stories representing n=41 are categorised as abduction Therefore, Vanguard newspaper categorised major of the reported stories as kidnapping.

Table 4.6: Direction of the Stories in Vanguard Newspaper gives kidnapping in Nigeria

Variables	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Positive	208	76%
Negative	65	24%
Neutral	-	-
Total	**273**	**100%**

The above table showed the direction of Vanguard newspaper on the reportage of kidnapping. This means whether Vanguard newspaper portrays the report as a bad action or is being reported in a light pattern.

The result for the above table showed that 76% representing n=208 of the stories were positive while 24% representing n=65 are negative. This means that Vanguard newspaper direction towards kidnapping is positive.

4.7 Discussion of Findings

Research Question One: What is the pattern of coverage of kidnapping in Nigeria by Vanguard Newspaper?

In the quantitative analysis, the pattern majorly uses by Vanguard newspaper in reporting kidnapping is news. The newspaper covers the issue and reports it in news section of the paper giving more attention to it for the readers.

Table 4.2 revealed Vanguard newspaper publish 72% stories representing n=197 of kidnapping as news stories compare to 19% stories representing n=52 which are publish as features and editorial content of and kidnapping which are 7% stories representing n=20 inside Vanguard newspaper.

Research Question Two: How frequent are issues on kidnapping are reported by Vanguard Newspaper?

It was gathered from the data analysis that Vanguard news doesn't frequently report any story that has to do with kidnapping as the result in table 4.3 showed Vanguard newspaper has 21% representing n=57 reportage of kidnapping stories at 1-5 paragraphs compare to 6-10 paragphas of reportage that has 75% representing n=206 also, 11 and above frequency of reportage has 4% representing n=10 in the table. This means Vanguard newspaper reportage kidnapping is very low as the frequency of their reportage is between 1-5 paragraphs.

Research Question Three: What is the level of prominence of the coverage of kidnapping by Vanguard Newspaper?

Vanguard newspaper doesn't give enough prominence to kidnapping in their publication because most kidnapping related stories are found in the middle page of the newspaper.

Table 4.4 revealed that 21% stories are published in the front page representing n=56 compare to 79% stories which are published in the middle page representing n=217. This simple means that Vanguard newspaper publishes most kidnapping in the middle of the page.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATTION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discus the summary of findings, conclusion to the study, limitation to the study faced by the researcher, recommendation and suggestion for further house and

5.2 Summary of Findings

This research focuses on the coverage of kidnapping in Vanguard newspaper. The study found out that Vanguard newspaper as a daily and national newspaper covers issues relating to kidnapping in Nigeria frequently as a result showed that Vanguard newspaper has 21% representing n=57 reportage of kidnapping stories at 1-5 paragraphs compare to 6-10 paragraphs of reportage that has 75% representing n=206 also, 11 and above frequency of reportage which has 4% representing n=10 in the table.

Also, the study finds out that kidnapping stories are majorly found in the middle of the newspapers. This means that the level of kidnapping is not too prominence because related stories are found in the middle page of the newspaper as the result showed that 21% stories are published in the front page representing n=56 while 79% stories are published in the middle page of Vanguard newspaper representing n=217.

More so, kidnapping issue majorly report as news and there is not enough comment published by the newspaper relating to the story though there are features stories and few editorials. Reference to the result showed that Vanguard newspaper publish 72% stories representing n=197 of ritual killing and kidnapping as news stories. 19% stories representing n=52 are publish as features,

editorial content of and kidnapping are 7% stories representing n=20 while the comment section of the newspaper covers only 2% stories representing n=4 of ritual killing and kidnapping in Nigeria.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, newspaper is a platform to disseminate information and it publishes news, features, editorial, comments, entertainment, and announcement among others. The paper publishes news relating to kidnapping but there are no enough stories written especially on the features and editorial of the news content.

Therefore, the end conclusion to this study is that Vanguard newspaper should place kidnapping stories in the first page for people to read such story because research showed that most kidnapping related stories are placed in the middle page. Also, more prominent should be given to kidnapping stories to bring such issue to government hearing so as to make necessary action towards it and also to find a lasting solution to the dilemma.

5.4 Limitation to the Study

This focuses mainly on the coverage of kidnapping in Vanguard newspaper. The study covers 6 months from 1st of January to 3oth of June 2023.

5.5 Recommendation

From the findings the following are the recommendation

1. Vanguard newspaper should entertain the habit of putting and kidnapping in the front page of the paper to call people attention to what is happening in the country.

2. Vanguard newspaper should embrace the act of feature stories that has to do with kidnapping.

5.7 Suggestion for further Studies

Who ever want to further research on this stud should do more findings on the coverage of Vanguard newspaper on assault in Nigeria.

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Appendix 1

<div align="center">

CODING BOOK

</div>

Introduction

This coding book is specifically designed for the content analysis method part of the research

titled: The research is being carried out by. Department of Mass Communication, Kwara State

Polytechnic.

The study main objectives are; to ascertain the extent of coverage on gender violence report in Vanguard newspapers; to examine the prominence of gender violence report in Vanguard newspapers; to find out the direction of gender violence report in Vanguard newspapers.

Instructions

➤ All the coders must study and understand this coding book very well before the coding of the articles selected for this study

➤ All coders must strictly follow the operationalised concepts and meanings of variables contained in this book

➤ All coders are urged to always refer to this book for clarification and general guide.

➤ After a story, the coder is expected to read through it meticulously to identify unit of the story that answers the category, then record it by ticking either yes or no in the coding sheet as applicable.

➤ Please use on code sheet for each article

Variables/Categories Operationalisation

V. ID	Variables	Operationalisation
4.	Article No	The article number is determined in order of analysis within the coding worksheet assigned to each other
5.	Date	Record the date of publication for each of the article being coded; thus month/day/year
6.	Date of coding	Indicate the date when data extraction and coding take

		place
7.	The story that has length of paragraph on ritual killing and kidnapping	If story has between 0-5 paragraphs record it as 3, between 6-10 paragraphs record it as 2. If the story has 11 and above of paragraph, record it as 1.
7.	The story that condemns the kidnapping and ritual killings	If story neither praises nor blames any of the part, record it as 3, otherwise, record it as 2. If the story condemns the act, record it as 1.
8.	The story that place on either the front, back or inside pages	Code as 1 any story on ritual killings and kidnapping that is placed in the inside page, 2 for the back page and 3 for the front page
8.	The story that is written either ion news, feature, editorial or column on ritual killing and kidnapping	Code as 1 if ritual killings and kidnapping is published in news format, 2 for feature story, 3 for editorial and 4 for column.

Appendix 2

CODING SHEET

S/N	Year	Frequency	Direction	Category	Prominence