

# African Multidisciplinary Journal of Development (AMJD)

## International Research and Development Conference (IRDeC) Special Issue

Pages: 37-63

### NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY (NTA) AND CHANNELS TELEVISION COVERAGE OF THE WAR AGAINST BOKO HARAM TERRORISM IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA

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#### 1.0 Background to the Study

Building on the motivation created by the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in the United States of America, terrorism has become a significant security and economic challenge globally. It has assumed worrisome scale and dimensions across the continents of the world despite the growing expertise of security intelligence and government leadership. From Asia, especially the Arabian nations, to Europe, America and Africa, terrorism has continued to dominate security discussions and planning among governments and, in particular, the United Nations. Its origin has been linked to both political and religious motivations and objectives.

One of the earliest documentations on the origin of terrorism is seen in the works of Mark Burgess. He traces terrorism to the Thugees, an Indian religious cult that ritually strangle its victims (usually travellers chosen at random) as an offering to *Kali*, the Hindu goddess of terror and destruction. Between the 7<sup>th</sup> and mid-19th centuries, the Thugees were reputed to be responsible for as many as one million murders. That was perhaps the last example of religion-inspired terrorism until the phenomenon re-emerged a little over 20 years ago. David Rapport notes that “before the 19th century, religion provided the only acceptable justifications for terror” (p. 7). However, this study will adapt a working definition of terrorism as stated by The United Nations General Assembly. According to the UN, terrorism refers to: “...criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes... whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other nature that may be invoked to justify them” (p. 3).

The United Nations, in the foregoing definition, places terrorism in a wide spectrum that captures anything that causes sustained acts capable of creating fear, death and destruction or

disruption of human life cycle. People feel terror when they experience a threat to their lives, faith, ethnicity, property or livelihood. Primarily, the specifications in the definition underpin the core interests of terrorists. By terror and fear, they advance their political, ethnic, racial, religious causes, etc, on the public, or a targeted group of people.

Television plays a very critical role in disseminating information in the most effective way. The audio-visual quality of transmission offered by the television gives it the edge above other means of mass communication. Since the invention of television in 1873 by a young telegraph operator, Joseph May of Ireland, the device has constantly undergone unprecedented transformation within its first one hundred years of invention and endeared itself to more users than predictable. Peter Olu, citing official figures from the International Telecommunication Union, noted that there were 600 million television sets, a higher figure than 565 million telephones in 1983 (p. 1). The attraction of the visual message the television transmits is powerful. It is very effective in modifying the social behaviours of viewers, a constant need by government, leaders and the business world.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Television is one of the most influential visual media which has been identified as one of the weapons used in the fight against terrorism globally. However, the way television approaches its reports on terrorism has evolved in the last decade. One school of thought says that terrorists have used TV as a conduit of terrorism tailoring their dramatic attacks to large television audiences. Another school of thought argues that the television medium is vulnerable to terrorists because of the need for profit and sensationalism. The third school of thought says that the television medium abides strictly by ethical codes in designing programmes in response to and coverage of terrorism in a manner that minimises public fear and empowers the public against the impact of terrorism.

This work therefore seeks to investigate which of the school of thoughts Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Channels Television have modelled, the roles they have played, and how effective they have been in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism in the Northeast of Nigeria. In exploring this problem, the study seeks to find out: What exclusive programmes NTA and Channels TV have designed in response to the Boko Haram terrorism. How did the programmes fare in compliance with ethical codes and how effective these programmes are, in curbing Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria.

### 1.2 Objectives of the Study

In order to assess the coverage of the war against Boko Haram Terrorism in the North Eastern Nigeria by Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Channels TV, the following objectives shall be met:

1. To find out what exclusive programmes and reports NTA and Channels TV stations have created in response to Boko Haram insurgency.
2. To examine the perception of NTA's and Channels TV's reports and programmes on Boko Haram terrorism by the people in the Nigerian Northeast.
3. To find out how effective NTA's and Channels TV's reports and programmes are in curbing Boko Haram terrorism in the Northeast, Nigeria.

## 2.0 Literature Review

Terrorism is, in the broadest sense, the use of intentional violence to achieve political or religious aims. It is used in this regard primarily to refer to violence during peacetime or in the context of war against non-combatants mostly civilians and neutral military personnel. The terms “terrorist” and “terrorism” originated during the French Revolution of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century but widely used internationally and gained worldwide attention in the 1970s during the conflicts of Northern Ireland, the Basque Separatist Movement in Spain and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

According to Curl Alexander, terrorism is threat and use of both psychological and physical force, by state, sub-state or non-state agencies/actors, for strategic and political goals (p. 46). Sambanis N., on the other hand, emphasized that terrorism is (and should be conceptualized as) a distinct form of political violence with separate causes, adding that, in most cases, it may not evolve into civil war except through the use of terrorism in the initial stages of an insurgency” (p. 58). While it is impossible to definitively ascertain when it was first used, what we today call terrorism traces its roots back to the early part of the first millennium. Today’s terrorism has in some respects come full circle, with many of its contemporary practitioners motivated by religious convictions – something which drove many of their earliest predecessors. It has also, in the generally accepted usage of the word, often possessed a political dimension. This has dominated much of the discourse surrounding terrorism, a phenomenon which inspired Kydd & Walter, to consider terrorism as “the most asymmetrical of all types of political violence” (p. 63).

Such religious killings usually took place in day light and in front of witnesses, with the perpetrators using such acts to send a message to the Roman authorities and those Jews who collaborated with them, a tactic that would also be used by subsequent generations of what would become known as terrorists.

The act of terrorism has been brought to a height in Nigeria by the Boko Haram sect. The group or sect vocalized their intentions openly as “people committed to the propagation of Prophet (Mohammed’s) teachings and Jihad”. However, the deadly activities of maiming, bombing, kidnapping and daily sporadic gunshots have jeopardized the economy of the nation especially the Northeast, as citizens are not able to go on with their daily businesses especially farmers, and that has led to famine and hunger in Nigeria. According to Mwangi Kimenyi et al, “conflict can disrupt the supply and distribution of inputs and outputs, create price shocks and cause massive displacement of labour” (p. 1). Sahara reporters in 2018 argued that Boko Haram has claimed the lives of 30,000 civilians and military officers. The figure has risen considerably as attacks are now carried out almost on a daily basis. This is why the Global Terrorism Index GTI in 2018 ranked Nigeria as the third most terrorized nation in the world.

Exponential research has been done on terrorism since the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre. Prior to this time, there had not been such catastrophic effect of terrorist attacks anywhere in the world. Joshua Tchantret, noted that “Most terrorism data sets extend back only to the 1970s, which inhibits the ability to quantitatively examine earlier waves of terrorism” (p. 59). In his article on Old Terrorism, Joshua identified 250 terrorist groups from 1860 – 1969. New terrorism has evolved from the old to be more sophisticated in its concepts, strategies and warfare. David Toker, has pointed out that:

Terrorists are now able and willing to develop networks and organizations for the same reason that businesses are. The information technology revolution, by lowering the cost of communication, allows the organizations to push functions outside a controlling hierarchical structure. Organizations can thus flatten out their pyramids of authority and control and approach a network, form a group of more or less autonomous, dispersed entities linked by advanced communications and perhaps nothing more than a common purpose (p. 58).

New terrorism demands more evident structural capacities that can approach the ideas of the organization using the functions of communication as a fast track means to achieving their means. Bruce Hoffman, has noted that “the idea of ‘new terrorism’ was often used as a slogan which signalled that things were different from the past but provided no real explanation of how and why things had changed” (p. 19). All historical variants of modern terrorism fall into one of two categories of disruptive activity. They are either based on claims to local authority and target only particular states, or on claims to personal and/or religious authority and reject the modern states system altogether. Groups labelled as terrorists can therefore be classified as system-affirming or system-threatening. The former is a contained problem, but the latter has followed a geographically broadening spread pattern throughout the international community.

Modern terrorism is media terrorism. The media are attracted by extreme terrorist acts not only because it is their duty to report on any major event but also because the dramatic and spectacular aspect of terrorism fascinates the public. Today’s terrorists exploit this and act in a way which will attract maximum attention around the world. In attempting to explain the above-mentioned symbiosis, it will be healthy to note that, without the media’s coverage, the impact of terrorist attacks will, arguably be insignificant and narrowly confined to the immediate victim(s) of the attack, rather than reaching the wider ‘target audience’ at whom the terrorists’ violence is actually aimed. Staci, Bennett, and Flickinger have similarly argued that terrorists are primarily interested in audience, not the victims, and emphasized that how the audience reacts is as important as the act itself (p. 13).

Accordingly, winning the attention of the media, national and foreign publics, and decision-makers in a government, is one of the primary goals of terrorists. To this end, terrorists carefully select the places where they carry out their attacks to provide the best media coverage. The obvious example of this is the 9/11 attacks in the US, where a wide variety of media covered the story immediately. Not only were the media able to capture this incredibly visual attack, the people who were in New York City, residents and tourists alike, were also able to document this event with pictures, videos and personal stories.

Terrorists’ means of communication greatly vary. Indeed, technological advancements and changing audience behaviour in the past decade enabled terrorist groups to utilize media tools with greater convenience especially television. Most times they pay huge amounts to the staff in different television stations to televise their activities and to create fear in the society like in Nigeria where the Boko Haram activities in the Northeast have become a bigger threat to livelihood. The new and emerging media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Telegram and Instagram have made it easier for terrorists to publicize their messages to the world via websites at their own discretion

and “new technologies have simply allowed the dissemination of terrorist messages to reach a broader audience with a more concise message” (Baran 2004).

Terrorists understand what sensational media requires and they know how important a news story needs to break and what it will mean for those who can first get a hold on such. They also know how to helm their next attack into a sync that will link to the previous they have spiralled in motion using the media in order to completely set their agenda in motion. This manipulative strategy tends to give the terrorist more grounds to capitalize maximally on mass media reportage.

Television contents have been described in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as hydra headed. This would mean that whatever content is televised is likely to make or mar, entertain or educate, provoke or set at ease, support or counter, ignite or quench various thoughts. The concept of this phenomenal sphere is the ability to catch the audience attention from a mile away. This effective longitudinal frequency has made it possible to be able to broadcast and rebroadcast content without a live audience. Media have shown such a high level of flexibility that it even tends to compete with the actual live theatre that requires one on one communication venue for it to function.

As apparent as the above statement is, the theatre is slowly incorporating the use of media in their production just for multi-media tricks and opportunity. Television is thus, one medium that has held audience down through the action that goes on in a box. So strong and compelling is the effect that children would line up in front of a salon just to watch which ever programme is showing. It has even turned out to become a basic need in any family, home setting and shop outlets.

Violence is a side attraction in news as it catches the interest of anyone who sets their eyes on the content. Jessica White says that:

The role of Mass Media in the advancement of terrorism objectives is quite controversial, even within academic literature, as it is difficult to draw direct lines of causation due to the diversity of factors contributing to terrorism and the process of radicalisation (p. 7).

The above statement would suggest a question of “Does Television Reportage of terrorism encourage or discourage the act? Media, being the 4<sup>th</sup> Estate of the Realm have tried to project certain social issues of concern to the public and, as Jessica White posits, “the media are only exposing the evil that should be buried and in doing so, the weak psychology of unpatriotic occupants would prove to be the societal menace. Not every person would be able to resist the urge of imitation” (p. 8).

## 2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Gerard Mimetic Theory and the Social Contagion Theory.

The French literary critic, religious scholar, anthropologist and philosopher René Girard propounded the Mimetic Theory. Girard saw the roots of violence growing from our desire for the desire of the other in the escalation of rivalry and competition over coveted “objects,” whether ideas, land, power, possessions, other persons, or consciousness. The power of the idea carries over into the ways that we discover who we are. As a phenomenon of imitating both the behaviours and the perceived interiority of others, mimesis is one of the processes through which



the transmission of all that we know about our culture happens. According to Patricia Mawusi, “The values, the patterns of acceptable behaviour all of this comes through our imitation of our parents, members of our community, our peers, leaders, and the media” (15). We not only imitate the behaviour of others, but we have a deep impulse to copy the interiority of others.

Girard believes that early in human evolution, we learned to control internal conflict by projecting our violence outside the community onto a scapegoat. It was so effective that we have continued to use scapegoating to control violence ever since. The successful use of a scapegoat depends on the community’s belief that they have found the cause and cure of their troubles in this “enemy”. Once the enemy is destroyed or expelled, a community does experience a sense of relief and calm is restored. However, the calm is temporary since the scapegoat was not really the cause or the cure of the conflict that led to his expulsion. When imitation leads once again to internal conflict which inevitably escalates into violence, human communities will find another scapegoat and repeat the process all over again.

It is important to note that the Rene Girard’s Mimetic theory has been adjudged as different from that of Aristotle - the ancient Greek philosopher (384–322 BCE), who regarded mimesis, or imitation, to be one of the distinctive aspects of human nature, and a way to understand the nature of art.

However, Girard's concept of mimesis deviates from the ‘imitation of nature’ as postulated by Aristotle. While Aristotelean mimesis focuses on perfection and imitation of nature, in Rene Girard’s Theory of Mimetics, mimesis refers to human desire, which Girard thought was not linear but the product of a mimetic process in which people imitate models who endow objects with value.

Mimesis and the concept of media are in tandem with the hypodermic needle theory, which suggests that media messages are injected directly into a passive audience. Media being the fourth estate of the realm has been a tool for cultural globalization; the idea of a person becoming what he is not as a result of the culture he has been shown and the acceptance he has allowed from within. Mimesis has a global tendency of influencing how people respond to a situation. The hypodermic needle theory of media effects is explained to be the situation of a syringe and the patient. When a syringe is inserted into a patient, the reaction is therefore expected according to the content. One’s behaviour is therefore expected to be in the form of force. The essence of the statement is to show that there is only a partial acceptance without truly understanding the post-action.

To further connect the theory of the study to the media, it is essential to look at a tangible communication theory which is the cultivation theory that argues that media shapes a person’s sense of reality because it may acquire information through mediated sources rather than direct experience with the subject.

### 2.1.1 Social Contagion Theory

The second theory which this work was modelled on is the Social Contagion Theory. Social Contagion Theory looks at the social events and conditions that make crowd behaviour possible. According to Clark Mcphail;

The theory is most closely associated with three writers: Gustave LeBon (1895), Robert Park, and Herbert Blumer. LeBon focused on the situational factors at work

in a crowd setting. The word contagion is rooted in the Latin word which means “From Touch”. It is a process of transmission by touch or contact. It is a social transmission, social cultural artefacts of states, emotional states or values (p. 59).

Social Contagion is the concept that proposes that individuals tend to follow the same ideas, sentiments and/or behaviour as those with whom they communicate in their social network. This theory assumes that people do not need to have the intention or awareness to affect others. The process happens involuntarily. In this sense, the relationships or ties are very important when studying Social Contagion, as it is through the connections that people are influenced in their attitudes. The assumption that Social Contagion is real in our daily lives led many scientists to research how it can be understood within a large range of fields, such as the spread of obesity, smoking, alcohol consumption, happiness, depression, divorce and new products diffusion.

This theory functions effectively in research in communication because it enables viewers of media content to understand situations. For instance, the recent discovery of the mirror neurons and the role they play in the brains also gave a bold and solid basis to the scientific claim that the human body has a biological mechanism that explains why humans cry when watching a drama or reading a novel, or why they reproduce violence when raised in a violent environment. These neurons are important for the imitation learning system. That is, humans can learn from imitating others, or from actions done by other individuals. Therefore, mirror neurons mechanisms provide the ground to model and validate scenarios of people interacting and exchanging emotions, opinions, information and letting themselves be affected by others.

### 3.0 Methodology

#### 3.1 Population of Study

The population of this research comprised respondents from four local government areas in Borno and Adamawa States (two for each state) namely; Maiduguri and Chibok Local Government Areas in Borno, while in Adamawa, Mubi and Numan were studied. The work targeted the media personnel, politicians, academia, security sector, students, religious leaders, youth and farmers within the area of study without any bias to sex or social status. These classes of citizens were targeted for responses in order to get reliable data because of their understanding of the role of the media and the dependent variable.

##### 3.1.1 Research Sampling Technique

This research used convenience sampling technique. It means that due to the war theatre of the Northeast region, the researchers simply sampled people that were available and accessible to ensure adequate representation of the entire population in the study area.

One thousand (1,000) copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents selected through convenience sampling procedure. The number of questionnaires given in each town depended on the population. Maiduguri had the highest number of questionnaires with 380 copies administered there. Chibok had the lowest, with 120 copies of questionnaire distributed. In Mubi and Numan, 250 copies of questionnaire were distributed in each Local Government Area.

A total of 977 copies of questionnaires were retrieved from the four LGAs as follows.

Maiduguri	-	374
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Chibok	-	113
Mubi	-	246
Numan	-	244

The study used the following research instruments: Questionnaire, In-Depth and Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussion. The Questionnaire was the major quantitative tool used. It was administered to the targeted population in the study area. Questions were created to measure opinion, experiences and behaviour of the study population concerning the subject of the role of TV in combating Boko Haram terrorism in the Northeast.

Before the population survey, a pilot study was done with thirty persons. This was to enable the researchers see the level of understanding of the respondents to the questionnaire items. It also allowed the researchers assess the level of accuracy of the items, whether they measured the researched objectives and constructs or not. The questionnaire had two sections, and used a mix style pattern, 1/10 of the items were open ended while 9/10 were close ended.

The second instrument was the key informant interview guide which was administered to targeted respondents such as media personnel, security agents and politicians in strategic organizations as well as the media houses in the study. The interview guide designed had 19 items. The questions aimed at uncovering the role of the media in tackling terrorism. A total of eight interviews were conducted in the two states with community leaders, politicians, journalists and security agents. This set of respondents was considered as resourceful with deeper information that is needed to enrich and triangulate the data gotten from questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion.

The third instrument was the focus group discussion guide which was used by the research assistant-facilitators to obtain qualitative responses. The guide was constructed in sections and the FGD was held over zoom platform. The virtual platform was preferred because the volatile security situation in the study area made people unwilling to participate in a gathering especially one that discusses security. The trust that a call for public gathering is not a set up for a possible attack is low among residents of the study area. The other section covered the research objectives of the study, while the final part was summary of key points and closure.

#### 4.0 Data presentation, Analysis, Interpretations and Discussions

Here, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in meeting the research objectives which stood at 0.05 level of significance. The major dependent variables of the study were combating Boko Haram Terrorism in Northeast, Nigeria, while the independent variables were Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Channels Television reportage of Boko Haram Terrorism activities in Northeast, Nigeria. For the qualitative study, a total of six interviews were conducted in the two States (1 for NTA, 1 Channels TV and 6 with community members). Similarly, two FGDs were conducted in the two States via Zoom application with 6 participants in attendance (1 FGD for Borno participants and 1 for Adamawa participants) using a purposive sampling technique.

#### 4.1 Findings and discussion of findings from Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses



This part shall present the findings of this research as well as present a detailed discussion of such findings.

### Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The result of part A of the questionnaire illustrates the socio-demographic data of all the respondents comprising sex, age, educational status, profession, religion and marital status. Considering sex, there were 901 or 92.2% of male respondents to 76 or 7.8% female respondents in the four LGAs where the study was carried out as shown in table 1 below:

**TABLE 1: Social Demographics information of respondents**

SN	BIO-DATA	VALUES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	SEX	Male	901	92.2
		Female	76	7.8
		<b>Total</b>	<b>977</b>	<b>100.0</b>
2	AGE	18-25 Years	374	38.3
		36-50 Years	225	23.0
		51 &Above	378	38.7
		<b>Total</b>	<b>977</b>	<b>100.0</b>
3	EDUCATIONAL STATUS	No formal education	154	15.8
		Secondary Education Completed	382	39.0
		University Degree	364	37.3
		Special/Religious Education (Islamic, Christian etc)	77	7.9
		<b>Total</b>	<b>977</b>	<b>100.0</b>
4	PROFESSION	Business	233	23.8
		Civil Servant	230	23.6
		Student	380	38.9
		Others	134	13.7
		<b>Total</b>	<b>977</b>	<b>100.0</b>
5	RELIGION	Christian	446	45.6
		Islam	531	54.4
		<b>Total</b>	<b>977</b>	<b>100.0</b>

6	MARITAL STATUS	Single	335	34.3
		Married	567	58.1
		Divorced	19	1.9
		Widow/Widower	56	5.7
		<b>Total</b>	<b>977</b>	<b>100.0</b>

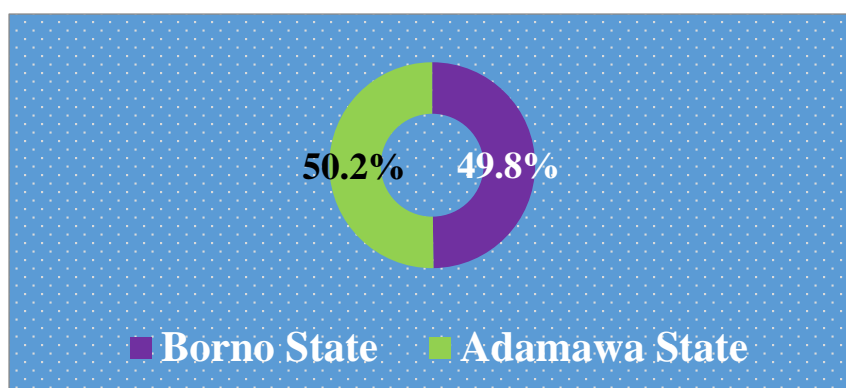


FIGURE 1: Respondents' State of Residents

### Respondents' Information source, access & frequency of watching programmes on NTA and Channels Television

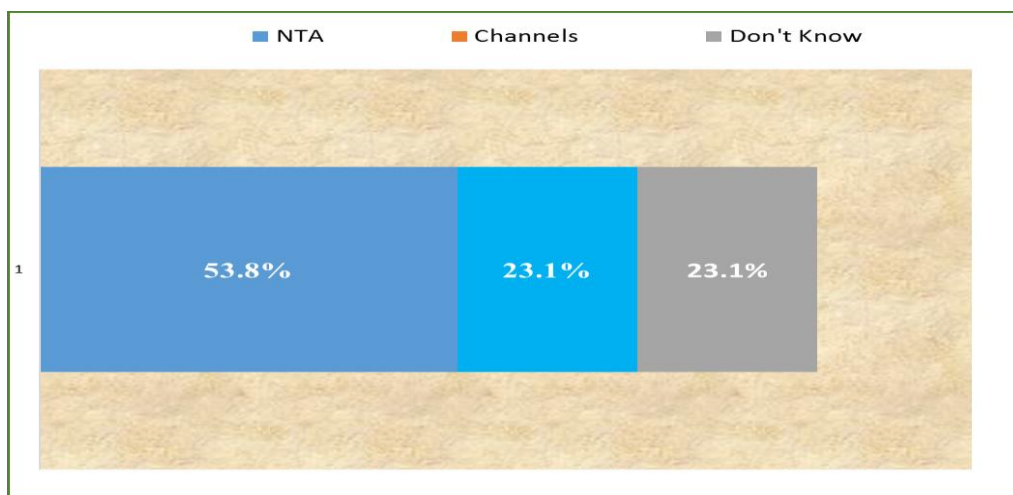
Source of information was necessary as the researchers were poised to establish the medium that respondents depend on to get their information concerning security and other related issues. Regarding the source of information as shown in table 2 below, it was evident that radio led the source of information with 28.9% as a major source of information while the least respondents representing 11% said they get their news from newspapers and other sources such as community announcer and email. The follow-up question sought to draw respondents' attention to the two television stations of interest. Findings of the study revealed that 758 of the respondents watch NTA programmes and news; whereas 219 said they watch Channels TV. The responses corroborate the information from the qualitative study where most of the respondents in Borno and Adamawa States said they watch more of NTA, branding Channels TV an elitist television with limited access to the masses who may not have the financial resources for monthly subscriptions and even when they have the resources, there is language barrier that makes NTA preferable to Channels TV even when NTA news and information is presumed inaccurate.

**TABLE 2:** Respondents' Information source, access & frequency of watching programmes on NTA and Channels television (N=977)

SN	VARIABLES	VALUES	N	%
1.	Information Source of happenings	Newspaper	382	11.0%
		Radio	996	28.9%

	Television	635	18.4%	
	Family and friends	766	22.2%	
	Social media (Facebook, twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc.)	402	11.7%	
	Others (Community announcer, email, religious bodies)	269	7.8	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,450</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
2.	<b>8. Do you watch NTA or Channels TV programmes?</b>	Do watch	758	77.6
	Don't Watch	219	22.4	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>977</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
3	<b>If "Yes" to Question 8, how often do you watch programmes on those stations?</b>	Regularly	216	28.5
	Sometimes	305	40.2	
	Hardly	143	18.9	
	Don't Know	94	12.4	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
4	<b>If "No" to Question 8, why?</b>	No access to TV	39	17.0
	No power supply	163	71.2	
	Don't like watching	27	11.8	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

FIGURE 2: The Station Frequently Watched by Respondents Between NTA and Channels Television



Respondents' views on watching NTA and Channels TV programmes from qualitative study was also in tandem with the result of the quantitative study. There are different reasons for watching television, some for news, some for music, some for movies and some for documentaries. This information can be gotten from several other TV channels and Video devices. While Television brings excitement to some, it may not be the case for others. The thematic area first of all was to establish the fact that targeted respondents watch programmes of the two television stations of interest and the frequency at which they did that. From the qualitative findings it was obvious that respondents do watch programmes on the said channels as affirmed by this participant "... Yes, I do watch Channels TV programmes like Sunrise Daily and Politics today; I also watch the Nigerian Television Authority, (Community member interviewed in Maiduguri). The findings revealed that the programmes were not watched once and for all, but more of the respondents were obsessed with some of the programmes shown on Channels TV which they find to be more exciting and trustworthy, although some preferred NTA due to their belief in their credibility. The fact that the respondents watch these two TV stations which they also believe have wider coverage within and outside Nigeria, as Channels TV is a Thirteen times Winner of the best TV Station Awards and NTA is a foremost Government-owned TV station that has been in existence over the years justifies their selection for this study.

### Research Objective One:

#### Exclusive programmes and Report NTA and Channels TV Have Created in Response to Curbing Boko Haram Terrorism

Considering exclusive programmes and news aired on the two television stations to counter the activities of Boko Haram in Borno and Adamawa States; 42.8% mentioned 'Breaking News'; this was followed by 35.7% that said NTA mostly played Jingles on Boko Haram Terrorism; 14.3% said NTA programmes that show Boko Haram activities are mostly special reports and 7.2% mentioned NTA exclusive. In the same vein, responding to exclusive programmes on Channels TV that focus on Boko Haram insurgency, more of the respondents 18.1% mentioned Breaking News; this was followed by 12.1% of the respondents that mentioned Channels TV Special Report and Channels TV Big Stories respectively. 3% said Sunrise Daily is an exclusive programme for Boko Haram Insurgency and 9.1% said they cannot remember the name of the programme. This report was in tandem with the qualitative study that reported that the two TV stations do not have exclusive programmes for Boko Haram but report the group's activities as it happens.

Though drama and Jingles were mentioned during the qualitative aspect as major medium through which NTA propagates their information about the Boko Haram Insurgency activities; however, documentaries and announcements were new as no group mentioned it during the discussions.

**TABLE 3: Exclusive NTA and Channel TV reports and Programmes on Boko Haram watched frequently by respondents**

Variable	N	Percentage
NTA Special Reports	153	14.3%
NTA Breaking News	459	42.8%
NTA Exclusive	77	7.2%

Others – Jingles	383	35.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,072</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Channels TV Programmes on Boko Haram watched by Respondents</b>		
Channels TV Special Reports	307	12.1%
Channels TV Big Stories	307	12.1%
Channels TV Breaking News	459	18.1%
Channels TV Sunrise Daily	154	3.0%
Can't remember	230	9.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2529</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>List of other programmes watched by respondents on NTA and Channels TV on Boko Haram activities</b>		
Documentary	186	25.1%
Drama	152	20.5%
Jingles	278	37.5%
Announcement	125	16.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>100</b>

\*Multiple responses

### Discussion for Research Objective One:

#### The Exclusive programmes and Report NTA and Channels TV Have Created in Response to Curbing Boko Haram Terrorism

The programmes presented on security issues were said not to be targeted as most of them were integrated in the News and some in jingles. Many of the respondents were of the opinion that NTA does not have exclusive programmes that are exclusively focused on curbing the activities of Boko Haram terrorism in the Northeast except jingles which always end with the phrase “If you see something, say something”. Sometimes, the television authority presents reports and news items which the respondents criticised as sometimes belated. However, the youth, especially students brought a different perspective to the discourse on NTA having programmes on terrorism by asserting that NTA is more accessible, local and reliable than Channels TV which they brand as television for the elites and available only by high monthly subscription which, considering the level of poverty of the people, is an unaffordable luxury for getting “mere news”. One of the participants said;

Although NTA does not have exclusive programmes on Terrorism, they play a vital role in curbing terrorism. For example, they cover local programmes. When we did a programme on spoken words to curb insurgency, NTA came and covered it and aired it for the people to learn. NTA also produces and airs drama in Hausa and



Kanuri languages to reach local people, unlike Channels that airs all their programmes in turanchi (English). **Male Participant during FGD**

The view held by the participant as stated above was confirmed by a former manager in one of the breweries that he watches Channels Television because its news is top-notch and right on time unlike NTA that brings its news very late and most time the news is half-truth, boring and made to favour the government in power. However, he observed that the Channels Television's programmes are not produced in local language which makes it senseless to those in the rural communities who do not understand English Language but will only be watching the pictures without getting the information being sent out. This, he said, makes the people tend to watch NTA or rely more on their local radio for programmes due to cut in electricity supply or if they do not have television sets.

On the other hand, respondents in the Interviews and FGDs were certain that Channels Television has at least two programmes - "Sunrise Daily" and "Politics Today". They believed that although they are not terrorism-exclusive programmes, once there is Boko Haram attack or any security challenges, the station brings in security experts on live television shows to discuss the issues as well as give television audience tips on how to avoid being victims of terrorism activities. This was supported by the journalists from the two television stations during the Key Informant Interviews who asserted that the stations do not run exclusive programmes but many programmes that speak on Boko Haram terrorism including Sunrise Daily, Flagship News, Politics Today and do air every address to the nation made by the president on security issues. The journalist in NTA revealed that although there are no exclusive programmes on Boko Haram terrorism in the Northeast, the station airs jingles on regular basis and drama in Hausa language to educate the general populace on Boko Haram terrorism. The community members confirmed this by stating that NTA does air spoken words and drama in local languages to enlighten and educate the masses on how to protect themselves from Boko Haram terrorism.

From the foregoing, it is important to state that given the parity in the programme design of the stations, television stations showing the dramatization of violence inadvertently motivate the replication of such violence in the society. By providing alternative contents with the goal of achieving imitation by viewers, television stations infuse the desired positive changes in the consciousness and sub consciousness of the viewers which resonates and reflect in their behaviour.

Characteristically, Boko Haram terrorist group, like every other such group, seeks to measure up their deadliness against other groups, especially ISIS and Al-Qaeda and even cherish the dream of outclassing them by the extent of the destruction and death they cause. Television stations give them the opportunity to imitate new ways of attacking when they see coverage of attacks by other groups. The coverage of their own attacks also gives them the parameters of measuring their deadliness against ones caused by other groups. By mimesis, the society continues to degenerate into deeper crises when contents of television programmes reflect the current crises instead of the envisioned order.

### **Research Objective Two:**

#### **Respondent's Perceptions of NTA and Channels Television Programmes Created in Response to Boko Haram Crisis**

The assessment of the respondents' perceptions of the news and programmes on Boko Haram terrorism showed that 62% of the respondents affirmed that news aired by NTA (in Borno and Adamawa States) and Channels Television help in creating awareness on Boko Haram insurgency. 15% argued that the reports, news and programmes do not contribute in anyway to creating awareness on the Boko Haram insurgency, while 23% could not say for sure. Similarly, 48% of the respondents' opinion was that other programmes on NTA Borno and Adamawa States do create awareness on Boko Haram insurgency, 12% think programmes and news on Boko Haram Insurgency do not create awareness on Boko Haram Insurgency and 40% could not say. When asked generally if NTA and Channels Television at all levels create awareness on Boko Haram activities, it was certain as affirmed by 63% respondents that news on the NTA and Channels television create awareness on Boko Haram terrorism. On this subject matter a contrary view was held by 13% of the respondents, whereas 24% could not say. Apart from the News item, it was reported by 54% of the respondents that NTA and Channels Television do air other programmes to show the activities of the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast.

### Discussion for Research Objective Two:

#### **What is the Perception of NTA and Channels TV'S Reports and Programmes on Boko Haram Terrorism by the People in Nigeria's northeast?**

First and foremost, NTA and Channels TV are media houses or agencies whose core responsibility is to inform, educate and entertain the populace in Nigeria on any subject matter. Consequently, the perception of NTA and Channels TV report and programmes on Boko Haram terrorism by the people in Northeast Nigeria is to enlighten the people on terrorism, conflict resolution and cohesion among others. The perception of people in Northeast Nigeria shows that both media houses have significantly similar contents of reports on Boko Haram terrorism even though Channels TV is owned by a privately and NTA is owned by the government. Some of the respondents are of the opinion that Channels TV practices investigative journalism that exposes Boko Haram activities and government failure unlike the NTA.

The majority also believe that Channels TV, as a private station, has a primary aim of making profit and so they sell their news by hyping their reports unlike NTA that has government funding and does not need to report negative news for the purpose of attracting patronage. Since 'he who pays the piper dictates the tune' NTA must report according to government dictates. According to the respondents, while both NTA's and Channels TV's reports and programmes tend to inform and enlighten the people of Northeast about the danger of Boko Haram activities and how to avoid them, they also expose the terrorists' housing sites and mode of incentives. For instance, one of the respondents maintained that Channels Television has, by their reportage, de-escalated the conflict given that the Channels Academy offers journalists training on how to avoid over-amplification and escalation of problems thereby instituting peace journalism.

Another respondent from NTA added to this perception that there are sponsored jingles and drama presentations done in Hausa, the local language, which narrate matters on Western education. Usually, religious scholars are brought to comment and validate western education. This is in line with a suggestion by another interview respondent:

Television stations should learn to use Muslim scholars to talk in their stations. These are the kinds of people a lot of these youths listen to. If you bring just

anybody to discuss on television programmes, it will not go far but the Islamic clerics and scholars have a way they deliver their messages. Even the issue of radicalization can be tackled by using men of God to preach messages of peace and coexistence.

Another jingle theme is on loving your neighbour and condemnation of the killing of people in the name of religion. Other jingles teach about IED and how to understand and identify these devices. Based on the above comments by respondents, both NTA and Channels Television seem to have informed, enlightened and educated the public on how to identify and avoid being casualties to Boko Haram bombings in Northeast Nigeria. More respondents believe that Channels TV’s news is more current and believable than NTA’s as Channels TV brings breaking news as it is happening while NTA, on the other hand, brings belated news after the incidents must have occurred and their reports are mostly false.

According to one of the respondents who watch both television stations’ coverage of the war against Boko Haram terrorism, when it is breaking news that has to do with bomb blast, Channels Television is usually the first to air while NTA Maiduguri links up afterwards. People’s perception on Channels TV, according to the respondent is what Jessica White called “radical journalism”.

Assessed in the light of the adopted theories of mimesis and contagion, Channels Television is culpable in terms of motivating similar attacks by covering and reporting such breaking news. Leaders of terrorist groups, by imitation, begin to plan similar attacks while their followers join the plans by contagion as communication and interactions take place between them. The role of television in curbing the spread of terrorism is easily subverted by the quest of television service providers to be the news breakers.

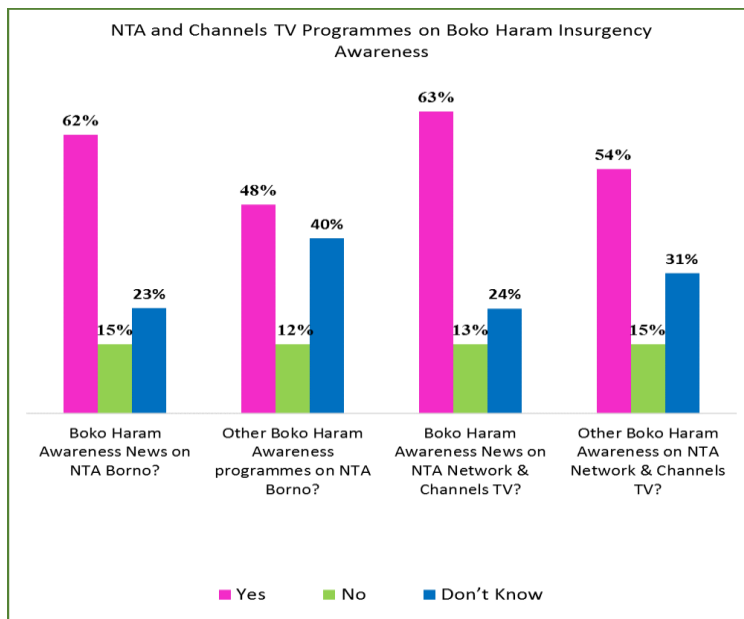


FIGURE 3: NTA and Channels TV Programmes on Boko Haram Insurgency Awareness

### Research Objective Three:

#### **Effectiveness of NTA and Channels TV Report and Programmes in Curbing and Reducing Boko Haram Terrorism in the Northeast of Nigeria**

The result shows that most of the respondents represented by 78.4% said most inhabitants of Borno and Adamawa States were aware of Boko Haram activities because of NTA and Channels TV programmes and news, 15.6% said the people of the two States were not aware of Boko Haram terrorism and 6% could not say. As a result of NTA and Channels Television reports and programmes, 38.9% respondents believed that, to an extent, Boko Haram activities are now being perceived by residents in the two States as dangerous to the society and no one is proud of being associated with such activities while, 31.3% do not perceive Boko Haram activities as being dangerous to the society. In the aspect of television programmes reducing the recruitment of young persons into the Boko Haram group, 152 or 15.6% were of the opinion that NTA and Channels Television programmes and reports have contributed to the reduction of people being recruited into the Boko Haram group; 612 or 62.6% think that NTA and Channels television have not contributed in the reduction of people being recruited into the Boko Haram terrorism and 213 or 21.8% could not say.

### Discussion for Research Objective Three:

#### **How Effective are NTA and Channels TV's Reports and Programmes in Curbing and Reducing Boko Haram Terrorism in the Northeast?**

Results collected from the respondents through the interview sessions show that although the two broadcast stations, Nigeria Television Authority and Channels TV, are doing well in creating awareness about the Boko Haram terrorism through their news and reports so that majority of the public now consider the activities of Boko Haram as dangerous, they have not done enough to curb and reduce Boko Haram terrorism in Northeast Nigeria. Their programmes, according to the respondents are not contributing to the reduction in recruitment into the group in the Northeast. They also argue that the recorded public support of the war against the terrorist group cannot be attributed to the television programmes as many Non-governmental Organisations, volunteer groups and individual stakeholders are doing a lot of community mobilization which they consider as more intensive and effective than the media campaign by NTA and Channels TV.

There are many indices that work against the television achieving a reduction of recruitment into Boko Haram group and increase in renunciation of membership of the group. Respondents have revealed that poverty has provided a strong leverage for the Boko Haram terrorists to recruit new members easily, thereby relying heavily on the power of mimesis.

Many of us have relations who have joined the Boko Haram group although some people will not openly admit it. Even myself, I have relations I have not seen for some time whom I have been told are with Boko Haram. Sometimes we ask ourselves why they join. But the reasons are clear. Some of them were recruited by their peers to join... Some of them are lured with things like Keke Napep (Tricycle), money and other goodies. They want to be like the people with power in the community (Interview, 2021).

Secondly, surveys, interviews, and focus groups conducted in Nigeria in 2013 suggest that poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and weak family structures contribute to making young men vulnerable to radicalization. Itinerant preachers capitalize on the situation by preaching an extreme version of religious teachings and conveying a narrative of the government as weak and corrupt. Armed groups such as Boko Haram can then recruit and train youth for activities ranging from errand running to suicide bombings (Onuoha, 2013).

Television needs to raise a stronger argument against the attractiveness of these incentives and peer influence which the terrorist group has been using, so as to curtail further recruitment of new members into the group. Moreover, journalists and security forces need the support of community members to effectively fight terrorism; in the Northeast of Nigeria, that support is far-fetched. The reluctance by the people of the region in sharing with the Nigerian government and its security agencies information about Boko Haram that can lead to the defeat of the group is deeply seated in the religious and cultural values of the people. Naturally, the cooperation needed from them (the community) is not received as demanded. A respondent said:

...it is heart breaking for a Muslim to report another Muslim when they say they are fighting for Allah. So, it is a difficult situation. How many Muslims will want to report fellow Muslims? They tell us they are fighting for our sakes. They use fear to terrorize villagers. When they come, they burn, they shoot – sometimes they will shoot for more than 3 hours nonstop. (Interview, 2021)

The unfortunate loyalty for the members of Boko Haram on the ground of their being counted as part of the people by the people makes matters even worse than the reluctance in sharing of information about them with the government or security agencies; anyone who does so ends up risking their lives gravely.

The asymmetric style of warfare adopted by Boko Haram and reinforced by poor cooperation with the security agencies by the people worst hit by the Boko Haram terrorism makes defeating the terrorists a herculean task. Awareness creation by the television stations on Boko Haram therefore only becomes an over-flogged noise on air because the people know who the Boko Haram terrorists are. To achieve a different result from the status quo, the television would have to address the basic dynamics including the motivators of this culture of non-cooperation with the government and security agencies by the very people they seek to protect. There is a clear understanding from the reactions of the majority of the respondents that both stations have contributed largely in creating awareness on the issues of Boko Haram in the country especially in the Northeast. Even though a majority of the respondents believe the two TV stations' programmes are not effective in curbing Boko Haram Terrorism, some of the respondents don't agree to that conclusion. One of the respondents from Borno, Emmanuel said that:

The programmes have really helped because before, people were not aware of the nature of attacks from these terrorists, but with time, people became more cautious and alert at everything that happened around them. Everyone became scared of everyone. Eventually, experts came in and talked about how to identify suicide bombers or someone who was carrying bombs.... (Interview, 2021).

The implication here is that amongst the two broadcast stations, the respondents believe that Channels TV is the station that has done better in trying to solve the Boko Haram crisis. This



finding agrees with the qualitative data generated and presented earlier in this work which affirms that Channels TV is helping more to curb and reduce the Boko Haram terrorism in Northeast Nigeria. This finding is also in consonance with the finding of Olu, in his study of broadcast media reportage of the Jos crisis. Olu found in that study that “Channels Television has made more efforts to resolve the crisis than NTA asserting that through adequate, balanced and objective reportage and the adoption of peace journalism, the media contribute to conflict resolution” (p. 23). The finding is also in line with the finding of Kariibi when he found that privately owned broadcast media (AIT and Raypower) did better than government owned broadcast media (NTA) in resolving the Niger Delta crisis. The interview sessions further validated this finding. When asked whether NTA has done enough to resolve the Boko Haram crisis, two NTA journalists interviewed affirmed that NTA has not truly done well in contributing to the resolution of the crisis, although, some of the respondents stated that NTA programmes are more effective in curbing Boko Haram terrorism than Channels TV's. So, there is a conflict of agreement amongst the respondents as some are of the view that NTA programmes are more effective in curbing or reducing Boko Haram activities while some are in support of the programmes of Channels TV being more effective.

#### 4.2 Conclusion

The war against Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast has continued for over a decade. The war would not have been successful without the aid of NTA and Channels Television that have consistently put the government, especially the Military and other security outfits, on their toes to find lasting solution to the insecurity that has continued in the Northeast. The Northeast States have been theatres of war with so many people displaced or killed and this study's intention is to dissect the contributions that NTA and Channels Television have made to the fight against insurgency through their reports and programmes and how this has reduced public fear and increased support of community stakeholders and members for the fight against Boko Haram in Borno and Adamawa States. Evidence from the field shows that if NTA and Channels Television stations follow the laid down ethical codes, guidelines and standards in their reportage and programmes as well as collaborate with the State when reporting on sensitive security issues, positive impact will be created in the society and the level of public fear will be reduced considerably. Social cohesion has been created also in the four Local Government Areas where the research was conducted due to exclusive programmes shown. Perceptions held by community members in terms of awareness creation by media reports of the two television stations are in tandem across the studies and proves the efficacy of using such strategy.

Secondly, the findings indicate that many of the respondents believe that public fear and anxiety have been greatly reduced as can be observed in community members' and students' reactions to bomb blasts and Boko Haram attacks in recent times which is different from what it used to be in the past. Some of the community members said when there is any attack or report that people die from Boko Haram attacks, they just pray for their souls and move on. More people are now security conscious and can protect themselves from becoming victims of Boko Haram attacks because of the reports and programmes presented on NTA and Channels Television. In addition, more stakeholders in the Northeast are doing their part in trying to reduce the level of fear and promote social cohesion so as to prevent losing potential or already existing investors and persons interested in working, living and doing business in the Northeast. The study explored community members' attitude towards media reportage in the fight against Boko Haram terrorism

since security is a complex situation that has caused a lot of losses, fear and social disintegration among the residents of the Northeast as can be observed in the continued rancour and distrust between the military/police and the media as well as between the media and the people in Northeast Nigeria. The journey toward positive change in media report and the fight against Boko Haram has begun and should take a new twist in a positive direction to alleviate the negative impact already created in the minds of the people of the Northeast Nigeria.

### 4.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed from multiple perspectives:

Journalists should become committed to defining responsible reporting guidelines for terrorism with the awareness that the way in which media reports are framed can have an impact on the level of public fear, the process of radicalization and the threat of imitation of the acts by viewers. Discourse and framing should be appropriate, accurate, balanced, devoid of sensational, and contextual. Overemphasising the spread and threat of terrorism amplifies its negative impact and may inadvertently advance terrorist objectives.

Television service providers and media practitioners should consider the importance of practising self-imposed codes of ethics and responsible reporting guidelines to mitigate the negative impact of reporting on terrorism. In agreement with some other researchers, terrorism experts should be included in the further development of these guidelines, as well as in training journalists and editors on terrorism and the potential impact of their reporting (White x).

The governments of the two states as well as other Northeast states should use media reports or information as part of their counter-terrorism strategy in developing evidence-based security prevention activities. Countries like Israel and United Kingdom (UK) have media that follow ethical reporting standards and guidelines in reporting terrorism activities.

The Federal Government of Nigeria should develop communication policies, ethical codes of practice and responsible reporting guidelines for reporting terrorism and related activities as part of the measure to mitigate the negative impact of reporting on Boko Haram terrorism in the Northeast. These guidelines should be flexible, informed and conscious of the challenges of reporting on terrorism, especially on topics that are unclear or undefined. Terrorism experts from military extraction and media experts should be included in the further development of these guidelines, as well as in training journalists, editors and Nigerian Broadcasting commission desk persons on security issues on terrorism and the potential impact of their reporting. Institutions such as Ministry of Defence, Police Force, Research institutions, community gatekeepers, religious leaders and other stakeholders that have expertise in designing counter-terrorism strategies are not left out here.

Finally, it is recommended that this study be replicated in other locations in the North-east as well as areas having security challenges across the country to determine the trend. A follow up study should be carried out considering the following areas: socio-economic features, the place of religious background in the fight against Boko Haram, youths, age of recruitment, buying-into Boko Haram ideology, and employment as moderating variables to determine the impact of television reportage and programmes on curbing Boko Haram terrorism in Northeast Nigeria.

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