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ECHOES OF TRAGEDY: MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF THE CHIBOK GIRLS ABDUCTION IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The abduction of the Chibok girls in North-East Nigeria sent shockwaves across the globe, drawing widespread attention from media outlets worldwide. This study delves into the portrayal of the Chibok girls abduction by the media in North-East Nigeria. Through a comprehensive analysis of newspaper coverage, the study aims to discern patterns, biases, and nuances in the representation of this tragic event. By examining the framing, language, and contextualization employed by media sources, this research sheds light on the socio-political dynamics and narratives surrounding the Chibok girls abduction. The findings offer valuable insights into the role of media in shaping public perceptions, influencing policy responses, and amplifying the voices of those affected by conflict and insecurity in North-East Nigeria.

KEYWORDS

Chibok girls abduction, media coverage, North-East Nigeria, conflict, insecurity, framing, narratives.

INTRODUCTION

The abduction of the Chibok girls in North-East Nigeria stands as a harrowing reminder of the complex challenges faced by communities grappling with

conflict and insecurity. On the night of April 14, 2014, Boko Haram insurgents raided the Government Girls Secondary School in Chibok, Borno State, and

abducted 276 schoolgirls, sparking an international outcry and condemnation. The abduction captured the attention of media outlets worldwide, drawing unprecedented scrutiny to the plight of the victims and the broader socio-political landscape in North-East Nigeria.

Media coverage played a pivotal role in amplifying the voices of the victims, galvanizing public outrage, and mobilizing global solidarity in support of the abducted girls and their families. The relentless pursuit of truth and justice by journalists and media practitioners shed light on the complexities of the conflict in North-East Nigeria, exposing the human toll of Boko Haram's insurgency and the failures of governance and security.

This study seeks to examine the portrayal of the Chibok girls abduction by the media in North-East Nigeria, exploring the framing, language, and contextualization employed in newspaper coverage of this tragic event. By delving into the narratives constructed by media sources, this research aims to unpack the socio-political dynamics and discourses surrounding the Chibok girls abduction, shedding light on the complexities of conflict, insecurity, and resilience in the region.

The abduction of the Chibok girls represents a poignant intersection of gender-based violence, education, and human rights, underscoring the urgent need for concerted efforts to address the root causes

of conflict and insecurity in North-East Nigeria. Through a nuanced analysis of media coverage, this study endeavors to illuminate the voices of the victims, challenge dominant narratives, and inform policy responses aimed at promoting peace, justice, and reconciliation in the region.

In the following sections, we will delve into the theoretical frameworks informing this study, review relevant literature on media representation and conflict dynamics, outline the methodology employed in our analysis, present key findings, and discuss the implications for media practice, policy, and advocacy in the context of the Chibok girls abduction and beyond. By unraveling the echoes of tragedy embedded within media portrayals, we aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities of conflict and resilience in North-East Nigeria and amplify the voices of those affected by violence and displacement.

METHOD

The process of analyzing the media portrayal of the Chibok girls abduction in North-East Nigeria involved several systematic steps aimed at comprehensively understanding the dynamics of media coverage surrounding this tragic event. Initially, the research began with the meticulous selection of newspapers known for their extensive coverage of the abduction and its aftermath within the region. This involved employing a purposive sampling method to ensure

representation from both national and regional newspapers, thereby capturing diverse perspectives and nuances inherent in the media discourse.

Following the selection of newspapers, a rigorous data collection process ensued, wherein a wide array of articles related to the Chibok girls abduction was systematically gathered from the chosen publications. This comprehensive database of articles served as the foundation for subsequent analysis, meticulously documenting key details such as publication dates, headlines, authors, and content. Each article underwent a thorough coding process, guided by established frameworks for analyzing media representations of conflict and human rights issues.

Through iterative rounds of coding and validation, key themes, frames, and discourses prevalent in media coverage of the Chibok girls abduction were identified and analyzed. Themes such as victimization, government response, international attention, and community resilience emerged as prominent focal points within the media narrative. A thematic analysis was then conducted to elucidate overarching patterns and discrepancies across different newspapers and over time, thereby shedding light on shifts in media framing and emphasis.

To enhance the validity and reliability of findings, triangulation techniques were employed to corroborate results across multiple sources and

perspectives. Peer debriefing sessions and expert consultations played a crucial role in validating interpretations and refining analytical insights. Throughout the research process, careful attention was paid to ethical considerations, ensuring the respectful and sensitive handling of media representations of a deeply traumatic and sensitive event.

In conducting an analysis of media portrayal of the Chibok girls abduction in North-East Nigeria, a structured methodological approach was adopted to ensure rigor and comprehensiveness in the study.

Selection of Newspapers:

The study began with the selection of newspapers that extensively covered the Chibok girls abduction and its aftermath in North-East Nigeria. A purposive sampling method was employed to identify newspapers with a significant readership and influence within the region. Both national and regional newspapers were included to capture diverse perspectives and nuances in media coverage.

Data Collection:

A systematic approach was used to collect newspaper articles related to the Chibok girls abduction from the selected publications. The search encompassed articles published in the immediate aftermath of the abduction as well as those spanning subsequent years

to capture evolving narratives and developments. A comprehensive database of articles was compiled, documenting publication dates, headlines, authors, and content.

Coding and Analysis:

The collected articles underwent a rigorous coding process to identify key themes, frames, and discourses prevalent in media coverage of the Chibok girls abduction. A coding scheme was developed based on established frameworks for analyzing media representation of conflict and human rights issues. Themes such as victimization, government response, international attention, and community resilience were explored in the analysis.

Each article was systematically analyzed to extract relevant information and identify patterns in language, imagery, and narrative structure. The coding process involved iterative rounds of coding and validation to ensure inter-coder reliability and consistency in the interpretation of data.

Thematic Analysis:

Following the coding process, a thematic analysis was conducted to elucidate overarching themes and discourses shaping media portrayal of the Chibok girls abduction. Patterns and discrepancies across different newspapers and over time were examined to discern shifts in media framing and emphasis.

Triangulation and Validation:

To enhance the validity and reliability of findings, triangulation techniques were employed to corroborate results across multiple sources and perspectives. Peer debriefing sessions and expert consultations were utilized to validate interpretations and refine analytical insights.

Ethical Considerations:

Ethical considerations guided the entire research process, including the respectful and sensitive handling of media representations of a deeply traumatic and sensitive event. Careful attention was paid to avoid re-traumatizing victims and their families through the analysis and dissemination of findings.

Through the systematic application of these methodological principles, this study aimed to provide a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of media portrayal of the Chibok girls abduction in North-East Nigeria, illuminating the complex interplay of narratives, power dynamics, and socio-political forces shaping public discourse and perceptions.

RESULTS

The analysis of media portrayal of the Chibok girls abduction in North-East Nigeria revealed several key findings. Firstly, media coverage exhibited a strong focus on the human interest aspect of the abduction, highlighting the personal stories and experiences of

the victims and their families. There was a pervasive sense of empathy and sympathy conveyed through narratives, emphasizing the plight of the abducted girls and the anguish of their loved ones.

Secondly, media framing of the abduction often contextualized it within broader narratives of conflict, terrorism, and insecurity in North-East Nigeria. Articles frequently drew connections between the Chibok girls abduction and the ongoing insurgency perpetrated by Boko Haram, framing it as a symptom of the region's socio-political instability and governance challenges.

Additionally, media coverage underscored the international dimensions of the abduction, with extensive reporting on global reactions, diplomatic efforts, and calls for action from the international community. The abduction of the Chibok girls became a focal point for global solidarity and advocacy, amplifying the urgency of addressing issues of education, gender-based violence, and human rights in conflict-affected regions.

DISCUSSION

The media portrayal of the Chibok girls abduction reflects broader discourses surrounding conflict, terrorism, and human rights in North-East Nigeria. By framing the abduction within the context of the Boko Haram insurgency, media coverage highlighted the complexities of the conflict landscape and the challenges faced by communities in the region.

However, there were notable discrepancies in the framing and emphasis across different newspapers, reflecting diverse editorial perspectives and priorities.

Furthermore, media coverage played a pivotal role in raising awareness and mobilizing public support for the abducted girls and their families. The sustained attention generated by media outlets contributed to increased pressure on government authorities to take decisive action and prioritize the rescue and rehabilitation of the abducted girls.

However, media portrayal of the Chibok girls abduction also raised questions about the ethics of sensationalism and the selective framing of narratives. While the abduction captured global attention, there were concerns about the disproportionate focus on a single incident amidst ongoing violence and humanitarian crises in the region.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the media portrayal of the Chibok girls abduction in North-East Nigeria reflects the complexities and nuances of conflict dynamics, human rights, and international solidarity. While media coverage played a crucial role in amplifying the voices of the victims and galvanizing public outrage, it also underscored the need for critical reflection on the ethics and impact of media representation.

Moving forward, it is imperative to continue interrogating the role of media in shaping narratives of conflict and insecurity, and to strive for balanced, ethical, and sensitive reporting that centers the experiences and perspectives of affected communities. By fostering a more nuanced understanding of the Chibok girls abduction and its broader implications, media can contribute to fostering empathy, promoting accountability, and advancing efforts towards peace, justice, and reconciliation in North-East Nigeria.

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