

Pictorial Portrayal of the Humanitarian Crises in North East Nigeria by Daily Trust and Thisday Newspapers

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Abstract: The humanitarian crises in north east Nigeria has gained prominence across the globe and the media are awashed with disturbing reports, particularly on the activities of Boko Haram. Therefore, this research examines pictorial portrayal of humanitarian crisis in north east Nigeria by Daily Trust and Thisday newspapers. The objectives of the study are to identify issues of humanitarian crises, portrayed in the Daily Trust and Thisday newspapers; identify types of pictures newspapers used in portraying humanitarian crises in Northeast Nigeria; examine the ways Daily Trust and Thisday newspapers used photographs to portray humanitarian crises in North East Nigeria; examine the kind of pictorial frames used by Daily Trust and Thisday newspapers in the coverage of the humanitarian issues in north east. Findings of the study revealed that although various pictures were used by diverse media reports, both Daily Trust and Thisday newspapers were able to present different angles to the story namely (mild, resolved, commodification) but predominantly focused on the grievous, dehumanized and physically traumatized angle to the story thereby showcasing more of a situation that is yet to be resolved. The study concludes that Daily Trust and Thisday newspapers pictorially portrayed the crises as grievous, dehumanizing and physically traumatizing thus downplaying the mild perspective of the situation in pictures.

Keywords: Pictorial, Framing, Humanitarian Crises, North east.

1. Introduction

Conflict is central to human existence. From time immemorial, humans have battled with misunderstanding and unresolved differences that often result to violent conflicts. A side the civil war that erupted in 1967, Nigeria has been a peaceful place not until the emergence of Boko Haram in the north east. Since the outbreak of the violence, the region has experienced perpetual chaos and insecurity. With consistent attacks carried out by Boko Haram, many lives and properties have been destroyed, while many have been forced to flee their homes to settle as internally displaced persons and refugees in neighboring countries such as Cameroon, Chad and Niger. [Dahiru et al. \(2019\)](#) note that the persistent violence witnessed in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) states, has led to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis.

The quality of life has been negatively impacted especially in many communities such as Gamboru-Ngala, Gwoza, Baga, Dikwa of Borno state, Madagali, Minchika, Mubi of Adamawa state and Geidam, Jakusko, Yunusari of Yobe state. [Awojobi \(2014\)](#) posit that these communities live in perpetual fear of attacks that could maim them. With the level of lawlessness in the aforementioned communities, victims suffered human right violations such as murder, abduction, sexual violence, forced labor, and forced conscription of children. Amidst hardship and insecurity, both state and non-state actors have been working endlessly to ensure that the immediate needs of the affected population are met and that peace is restored through security and humanitarian strategies ([Salleh et al., 2018](#)).

Hence, media is central to addressing or worsening humanitarian crises across the globe. The media is often referred to as the watch dog of the society; this is basically as a result of the surveillance function of the media through information sourcing, processing and dissemination to the public. [Gever \(2014\)](#) assert that without the media, information cannot be shared, and that members of the public cannot be aware of the happenings around them. In the process of being the watch dog of the society, information gathering, processing and dissemination is often done strategically using the different channels of communication.

Pictures are important media content that can be used to portray different issues in the society including humanitarian issues. This newspaper content is a staple newspaper element that can be

dependent of a textual story, or just an independent picture that do not need textual aspect of a story to communicate because it is already an action picture. Photographs are processed by the print media to frame and portray events and issues differently. Because of that, pictures are used to narrate, illustrate and complement text in the print and indeed broadcast media. Cited in Wilson and Abubakar (2018), Trivundza (2015) pointed out that the increased investment into the use of photographic images in press evident from the quantity of space given to photographs on front and other pages of daily newspapers or the number of photographs published in online news platforms, exhibit press photography's role in the pictorial portrayal of news.

While a news story's textual content (most obviously, its headlines and captions) often informs the interpretation of photographs, visual elements may also generate autonomous framing effects (O'Donnell, 2013). Parry (2011) note that "the highly selective use of press photographs, along with their brief captions, may present a strong, forceful idea about a distant conflict" Wilson and Abubakar (2018) noted that pictures are very essential components of newspapers. This is because they add credibility to the news and take the readers to the scenes so reported. For pictures to make better meaning to the readers, they must be in sync with written words to be able to tell the required story comprehensively.

The development of terrorism in Nigeria has also reflected in most Nigerian media (Dahiru et al., 2019). Citizens since inception of the Boko Haram crisis have always depended on the media for information in order to stay current. According to Gever (2014) the attention given to the humanitarian crises by the media in north east Nigeria is evident based on the kind of headlines casted in newspapers, radio, television and new media. Examples of such headlines are: 'suicide Bomber kills three in Borno,' 'Again, Boko Haram attacks Yobe Village,' 'One Army, four civilians died as Boko Haram attacks Maiduguri mosque,' among others dominate the front pages. These headlines clearly showcase the extent of the humanitarian crises facing north east Nigeria.

Onakpa (2014) posit that one important feature of media coverage of the Boko Haram insurgency, is pictorial representations. The print media use pictures to portray stories with the aid of text. Being a burning issue, and *Thisday* newspapers have over the years covered the Boko Haram insurgency using text and pictures *Daily Trust*. According to Trivundza (2015) pictures are very essential in newspaper stories. This is because; they take the readers to the event being reported. Newspaper photos are the most salient hooks which draw a reader into a story; their captions anchor these photos in relation to a story. Photo captions feed a reader with information on people, time and places, tantalizing snippets of detail which make a reader wants to read more. Caption transforms a photo into a news photo. Furthermore, they place a particular interpretation on the image, shaping the readers understanding of that image.

The above gives credence to the place of pictures in newspaper news. It goes to show that in the coverage of the Boko Haram insurgency, pictures have been used to communicate information to readers. Considering the power of pictures, they can be effectively portrayed to tell stories in a particular way. For example, for every event that takes place, there are many scenes which can be portrayed in different ways (Trivundza, 2015).

Considering the impact of the violent terror of Boko Haram and the attention attached to its coverage both by national and international media organizations, different frames and as well as method of portrayal have been used in the coverage of the humanitarian situation caused by Boko Haram in the north east. Most media organization portray the events and stories based on their disposition (O'Donnell, 2013).

Like other news media in Nigeria, the, *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* newspapers as national dailies have also covered and are still covering the humanitarian crises in north east Nigeria (Gever, 2015; Okechuwu, 2012; Okoro and Odoemelam, 2013). Numerous stories on IDPs destroyed infrastructures; hunger and other problem that arose as result of the crises have been published. To better understand print media reportage of the crises, it is imperative to examine how pictures have been portrayed by the two national dailies. *Daily Trust* has been at the forefront of reporting the Boko Haram and the humanitarian crises it has created, likewise *Thisday* newspaper. Considering the efforts in reporting humanitarian crises and the significant role of these newspapers using pictures to tell the stories as they unfold makes this study crucial. Using framing as a theoretical framework, this paper aims to examine how *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* newspapers used photographs to portray the humanitarian crises in North East Nigeria.

2. Statement of the Problem

The ongoing humanitarian crises in North East Nigeria have been quite alarming. The rate at which lives and properties have been destroyed necessitated the emergence humanitarian assistance by state and non-state actors. The humanitarian crisis in the north east is one of the most prominent crises

across the globe, which is why it has made headlines in both print and broadcast media. Pictures have been identified to be a fundamental element in news stories that complement text. Quite a lot of studies have been conducted on pictorial framing of the Boko Haram insurgency. Scholars (such as [Gever, 2015](#); [Okechuwu, 2012](#); [Okoro and Odoemelam, 2013](#)) have particularly investigated areas like newspaper coverage, newspaper framing, public perception of newspaper coverage, broadcast media coverage and public perception of broadcast of Boko Haram insurgency. But it appears nothing has been done on pictorial portrayal of the humanitarian crises in north east Nigeria. In order to fill the gap in knowledge, this study will examine the pictorial portrayal of the humanitarian crisis in north east Nigeria by *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* newspapers.

2.1. Objectives of the Study

This paper has the following objectives, to:

- (i) identify issues of humanitarian crises, portrayed in the *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* newspapers.
- (ii) identify types of pictures newspapers used in portraying humanitarian crises in Northeast Nigeria
- (iii) examine the ways *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* newspapers used photographs to portray humanitarian crises in North East Nigeria.
- (iv) examine the kind of pictorial frames used by the *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* newspapers in the coverage of the humanitarian issues in the north east.

2.2. Research Questions

This study will provide answers to the following research questions in order to achieve the set objectives.

- (i) What are the issues of humanitarian crises portrayed in the *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* newspapers?
- (ii) What are types of pictures newspapers used in portraying humanitarian crises in Northeast Nigeria?
- (iii) What are the ways *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* newspapers used photographs to portray humanitarian crises in North East Nigeria?
- (iv) What are the types of pictorial frames used by the *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* newspapers in the coverage of the humanitarian issues in the north east?

2.3. Operational Definitions

As words may mean differently in different context, the following definitions are given as words used intended to be understood for the purpose of this study.

Pictorial: In this study pictorial stands for illustration or expression of the humanitarian crises in north east Nigeria in news stories using pictures

Media: are the communication outlets (print media, publishing, the news media, photography, cinema, broadcasting, digital media, and advertising) used to store and deliver information or data.

Newspapers: is a serial publication which contains news in forms of text and pictures on current events of special or general interest. In this study, newspaper stands for *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* Newspapers

Boko Haram: officially known as Jamā'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihād, is a terrorist organization based in north-eastern Nigeria,

Portrayal: Stands for the act of using pictures to describe the north east Nigeria humanitarian crises in news stories.

Humanitarian Crises: is defined as a singular event or a series of events that are threatening in terms of health, safety or well-being of a community or large group of people. It may be an internal or external conflict and usually occurs throughout a large land area.

3. Literature Review

This chapter looks at relevant literature on the Pictorial Portrayal of Humanitarian Crises in North East Nigeria by *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* Newspapers. This chapter reviews conceptual, empirical and theoretical work to provide different paradigms and research gaps from the different studies related to this work.

3.1. Conceptual Review

3.1.1. Pictorial framing

One important feature of the media is pictorial illustration, apart from radio, television, newspapers and magazines do accompany pictures with their reports. In some instances, only the pictures are presented. These clearly indicate the relevance of pictures in news contents. [Okechuwu \(2012\)](#) write that “Whether it is about events, places or people, in fact, whatever it is, the picture tells it loud and clear. Corroboratively, [Onakpa \(2014\)](#). Posit that, newspaper photos are the most salient hooks which draw the reader into the story; their captions anchor these photos in relation to the story. Captions feed the reader with information on people, time and places, tantalizing snippets of detail which make the reader want to read more. Caption transforms a photo into a news photo. Furthermore, they place a particular interpretation on the image, shaping the readers understanding of that image.

Framing is an important element of news coverage. Whether text or pictures, framing is applied to shape and modify meaning ([Onakpa, 2014](#)). Picture is an essential aspect of the print media, a side adding aesthetics to newspaper; it complements text and aid swift comprehension. A survey piloted by [Garcia and Stark \(1991\)](#) revealed that images and design are the focal points in reading newspaper. Corroboratively studied the colour Vs greyscale effect for photos in four manipulated newspaper pages, which 32 subjects were allowed to look at for 10 seconds per page. The findings indicated that the position of the photo on the page is more important than the colour/greyscale factor.

[Holmqvist and Wartenberg \(2005\)](#) conducted a study to examine the effect of local design influences on reader’s visual behaviour. It was documented that areas in the newspaper with pictures attracted more readership than those with less pictures. Their result also showed that large pictures are looked at significantly earlier than medium and small pictures. The survey also pointed out that the type of picture used and how it is framed also affects readers’ fascination. In the same survey, the researchers alienated pictures into information graphs, maps, drawings and photos. All but photos were found to contribute to early fixations. Whatever is the case, pictures and how they are framed influence readership and the meanings attached the story.

3.1.2. The Media

Ever since the insurgency in north east Nigeria started, the media have kept the populace in the loop of all that have been happening through consistent coverage. However, coverage varies, but the common element in the print and broadcast as well as the new media is framing. Nigerian newspapers have reflected Boko Haram in their coverage. A study conducted by [Okoro and Odoemelam \(2013\)](#) shows the pattern of frames adopted by Nigerian newspapers in the coverage of Boko Haram insurgency with focus on The Guardian, Daily Sun, the Vanguard and *Thisday*. The researchers adopted content analysis. Findings from the research indicated that Nigerian newspapers reported the Boko Haram insurgency in a predominantly policy response frame. The same style was adopted and used by The Guardian, *Thisday* and Vanguard newspapers. However, the aforementioned result did not corroborate with the pattern identified in the Daily Sun newspaper, which underscored ethnic and religious frames. Conclusions also showed that there was 60% prevalence out of the 10 frame categories used in the study. However, the researchers were silent on the pictures on Boko Haram especially with regards to themes ‘information’ and ‘clarity.’

A comparative analysis was carried out by [Gever \(2014\)](#). The analysis focused on private and public broadcast media coverage of the Boko Haram insurgency. The trust of the study was to define broadcast media contribution in the fight against the Boko Haram insurgency. The research examined broadcast programme contents. The unit of analysis was broadly classified into broadcast news, audience participatory, discussion and others. Multi-stage sampling was applied to this study. The stations studied were the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), The African Independent Television (AIT), The Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) and The Dream FM, Enugu. The study period was three months beginning from 1st March to 30 May, 2014. Findings of the research showed that public broadcast had higher frequency (60%) of coverage of Boko Haram issues than the private (40%) ones.

The same percentages were applicable to prominence given to the insurgency by both media groups. Further outcome revealed that public broadcast media contributed more (65%) in the fight against the insurgency in Nigeria than their private counterpart. The study is related to this research because it examined media coverage of Boko Haram. Likewise, a study on Pictorial Framing of the Boko Haram Insurgency by the *Daily Trust* and the Nation Newspapers found that pictures on Boko Haram insurgency from the *Daily Trust* and The Nation newspaper were mostly gory, and could not effectively communicate without words. It is also the conclusion of the researchers that most of the pictures on Boko Haram from

Daily Trust and the *Nation* newspapers lacked life. However, unlike this research, both studies did not examine pictorial portrayal of the Boko Haram insurgency.

3.1.3. Boko Haram

Current discussions on Nigeria is almost unavoidably replete with issues surrounding insecurity, militancy, insurgency, and terrorism due to the linkages with economic, social, political and governance activities, with spiraling effects on regional and international relations (Okechuwu, 2012). Since 1999, when the country returned to democratic rule, there has been an upsurge in violent activities in Nigeria with Boko Haram insurgency being at the forefront.

The Boko Haram sect has become a threat as the north east region of Nigeria is currently undergoing humanitarian crises. With consistent violent attacks on security forces, civilians, churches, mosques, farms, media houses, schools as well as international bodies such as the United Nations in 2011, it has further compounded several challenges already faced by the nation.

According to Dahiru *et al.* (2019), since the insurgency began, there has been over 12,000 deaths and 8000 persons maimed. Food insecurity has further worsened as farmers have fled their farms in fear of being attacked especially in the northern region which is the country's main food-growing region.

3.1.4. Empirical Review

Adeyemo and Obaje (2020) conducted a study on newspaper coverage of internally displaced person in Nigeria from to July 2018. The objective of their work is to examine the extents to which some national newspapers in Nigeria reported the issue of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country. While the agenda setting theory was used to provide a better theoretical explanation on the research problem, six Nigerian national newspapers were content analysed: *Daily Sun*, *Daily Times*, *Leadership*, *The Nation*, *Punch* and *Vanguard* for a period of 3 months: May 1, 2018 to July 31, 2018. 552 newspaper editions were coded within the study period. The findings from the study revealed that these national newspapers gave low prominence to the issue of IDPs through its page placement of stories on IDPs. The major issue revealed from the study indicated that 'vulnerability' of the IDPs was the agenda in these newspapers. The study also revealed that North-East gained the highest coverage, while the South-West had no coverage on IDPs situation. Although the study stressed that a mixed method was used in the methodology; descriptive and inferential statistic, the study did not indicate how the interview samples and size were selected and which inferential data analysis tool was used to analyse the data from samples. It would have been better if the study clearly indicated a methodology for the inferential statistic stated in the study.

In a similar study conducted by Okunade and Ogunnubi (2020) on the humanitarian crisis in Nigeria's Northeast: Responses and sustainable solutions adopted qualitative research model through the use of phenomenological case study approach. Purposive sampling technique was used by the researchers. The database for this study was drawn from a sample that was part of a larger study carried out by the researchers between November 2017 and January 2018. The sample consisted of 336 participants. 56 participants were selected from two modestly populated border communities in each state, including Gamboru-Ngala and Baga townships in Borno State, Michika and Mubi communities in Adamawa State and Yusufari and Kanamma communities in Yobe State. Finding from the study revealed that the neglect of the inhabitants of border communities and the poor state of IDPs in the various camps as a direct result of the uncoordinated stakeholders' responses, and the Nigerian government's inability to fulfill its role as the main actor responsible for providing relief support and coordinating the needed humanitarian solutions in the Boko Haram caused crisis in the Northeast. Although state fragility theory which stresses the fundamental failure of a state to perform the functions necessary to meet citizens' basic needs and expectations the study did not indicated which tales – qualitative data analysis method that was employed. One would have expected that the study used realist tale.

Sabo and Salisu (2020) conducted a study on the pictorial framing of the Boko Haram Insurgency by the *Daily Trust* and the *Nation* Newspapers. Framing theory was used to provide a better understating of the research problem. a descriptive and quantitative content analysis was used in the study. The researchers further used multi-stage sampling technique to sample pictures on Boko Haram from the two newspapers within the period of January 1st, 2011 and December 30, 2014 (four years). A total 367 pictures on Boko Haram were generated from the 288 issues selected within timeframe of the study. Finding from the study revealed that the 'horrible themes' constitute most pictures on Boko Haram. Findings from the study further revealed that most of the pictures from the *Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers lacked life; most could not communicate meaning to the readers without word. Although the

researchers were able state categorically that the study was anchored on the content analysis, one of the findings of the study as stated on page 85: 'It was also found that most of the pictures could not communicate meanings to the readers without words' is questionable because the study did not talk about effect study – what methodology and data analysis method was used to arrive at the inability of the pictures in the study to communicate to the readers without words? It would have been better if the study explained the how the inter-coder reliability test was carried on the two newspapers.

Wilson and Abubakar (2018) carried out a study on the pictorial framing of Migrant Slavery in Libya by *Daily Trust* Newspaper, Nigeria. The study purposively chose *Daily Trust* Newspaper among the universe of national newspapers in Nigeria because of an already established efforts by this this newspaper in a previous investigation in 2017 – the Kano transit route used by Nigerian migrant heading to Europe through the Sahara Desert and another investigation that followed the movement of African migrants to Agadez, a town in Niger Republic bordering the Libyan desert, on their journey to perceive promised land, Europe. A quantitative contents analysis and the framing theory were used as better research method and theoretical framework. During the eight months of the study that is from; November 14, 2017 to July 2018, a total of 36 pictures were found through google key words search within the study period. Finding from the study revealed that in spite the horrifying reports and footages about the issue of the migrant slavery in Libya, *Daily Trust* newspaper framed it as mild and as a resolved/rescued situation, thus downplaying the horrifying the situation in picture.

Nnadiukwu and Anih (2019) also did a related study on the pictorial communication in digital era: Challenges and prospects. The study is a review of the challenges and prospects of pictorial communication in a digital era with the aim of fostering better utility of newsy pictures. Literature relevant to the study was consulted and gaps identified. The study was anchored on the agenda setting theory of the media. From the review, the researchers were able to unravel how pictorial communication in the media can be better appreciated and utilized in this era of multimedia. Photos, videos, Graphics and Films are strong mass communication tools and great care must be taken on how to make greater good use of them and as well preserve one's culture and democracy. Although most of the literature consulted were relevant to the study, the study should have been specific in the identification of the gaps from the literature consulted or provide a summary of the literature consulted with the main gaps.

Cope *et al.* (2014) conducted a study on the Image impact in print media: a study of how pictures influence news consumers. The researchers examined the impact of images from the Iraq war on an individual's levels of involvement, emotion, and attitude toward the war and tested whether an inoculation application could limit the impact of these images. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods to select stories from the *Washington Post* or *Newsweek*. The study further randomly selected participants from introductory communication classes at a Midwestern University. A total of 272 research participants completed both phases of the study (a retention rate from Phase 1 of 91.8 %). Participant involvement with the issue (e.g. low, medium, and high) was used to randomly place participants in one of three event categories and into either an inoculation treatment or control group. The study featured a 3 x 3 Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) to examine hypotheses 1-3, and a 2 x 2 MANCOVA to examine hypothesis 4. Finding from the study revealed that caption exert greater impact on involvement levels than text alone and that images elicit greater affect than images with text. In addition, females' affect levels showed more drastic changes while males were more consistent. Although the study adopted inferential statistic, it would have been better if the reliability of Cronbach's coefficient alpha of the pilot test was stated. Furthermore, the instrument of data collection was not clearly stated.

3.1.5. Summary of Literature Review

The review of relevant literature indicates a gap that warranted the pictorial portrayal of humanitarian crises in North East Nigeria. Although similar studies have been carried out by: Adeyemo and Obaje (2020); Okunade and Ogunnubi (2020); Sabo and Salisu (2020); Wilson and Abubakar (2018); Nnadiukwu and Anih (2019) and Cope *et al.* (2014) specific gaps have been found the methodologies adopted in the reviews of some of the empirical works. Gaps were also found in the scope and theoretical framework that guided some of these studies. Hence gave this study an empirical opportunity to bring the issues of the Pictorial Portrayal of Humanitarian Crises in North East Nigeria by *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* Newspapers to academic limelight.

3.1.6. Theoretical Framework

The Pictorial Portrayal of Humanitarian Crises in North East Nigeria by *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* Newspapers is anchored on framing theory. Framing theory is an extension on the agenda setting theory

of the mass media. The while extension theories such as the agenda-setting theory, the gatekeeping theory and priming theory could also be used to provide theoretical explanations on this study, the framing theory is more relevant to this study because, regardless of the situation, newspaper illustration cannot write itself. Journalists are the illustrator of cartoons found on newspapers. They must choose the graphical elements in a situation that best convey pictorial stories, or problems before sharing them to the audience. Framing theory provide a better justification for this study; the theory provides justification on the types of frames, differences in frames, the dominant frames and the tones of frames used by the *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* in their pictorial portrayal of humanitarian crises in the northeast Nigeria.

Wakawa (2021) noted that Entman is regarded as the father of the framing theory. The theory which is a sprout of the agenda setting theory can be traced to the works of Robert Entman. Entman (1993) defined media framing as a process by which the media “select some aspect of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in a way that promote certain definition, interpretation, moral evaluation or treat recommendation. Baran and David (2009) added that framing “centres on how the press focus attention on certain issues and then place meanings to such issues” through different frames. These frames are capable of shaping individual existing ideas and knowledge; by this, the media gives a setting on how media audience should think about the political communication they disseminate. Scheufele (1999) identified two; frame-building and frame-setting. While frame-building refers to the development of the various frames and their inclusion in newspaper contents such as news stories cartoons etc., frame-setting describes the media audience consumption of pictorial newspaper contents with frames and members’ consequent adoption of these frames as ways to understand graphics representation to the humanitarian crisis in the Northeast Nigeria.

According to Cappella and Jamieson in Okoro and Odoemelam (2013), that these “frames must have identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics and be commonly observed in journalistic practice.” These in turn could have implications on the pictorial portrayal of the humanitarian crisis in the northeast. While the news media has the power to fit political stories into different frames, these frames are usually unique during humanitarian crises – that is, the pictorial frames used in the portraying the humanitarian in a given region by a specific newspaper may not be the same. Tuchman 1978 cited in Druckman (2007) added that media framing aid in “shaping the news which are provided by newspapers. The basic assumptions of framing theory are:

- i. The media select the information they will present and decide how they will be presented.
- ii. Frames are reinforced every time they are evoked, whether positively or negatively.

Daily Trust and *Thisday* Newspapers achieved these by focusing on certain media contents in a universe of communication stimuli. Using newspaper illustrations to portray the humanitarian crisis by journalists give the print media the ability to not only serve as gatekeepers, but to choose from many – that striking pictorial patterns, styles and format and sometimes combined with words, sentences, image or phrase to communicate the perceive essence of the humanitarian crisis in the northeast to its audience. The constant reinforcement of these frames in the minds of the audience could align with pre-existing positive or negative beliefs the audiences have on a crisis situation on the northeast. Like every other theory, the framing theory of media which has the power to influence public opinion through its style and manner of presentation of events or issues, some of the weaknesses of the of the framing theory according to Borah (2011); Wakawa (2021) and Mu’azu and Moses (2021) that:

- i. Each media audience already has its different pictorial mind frames on the humanitarian crisis in the northeast;
- ii. The effect of particular pictorial illustration on the humanitarian crisis in the northeast has negative or positive impact on the only the media audience that expose themselves to these pictorial frames.

4. Research Method

The study used content analysis as the research method. Content analysis is the study of documents and communication artefacts, which might be text or various formats, pictures, audios or videos. Social scientists used contents analysis to examine patterns in communication in a replicable and systematic manner. One of the key advantages of using contents analysis to analyze social phenomena, it non-invasive nature, in contrast to stimulating social experiences or collecting survey answers. In this study, content analysis enabled the researcher to carefully examine the content of *Daily Trust* and *Thisday*

newspapers coverage on the issue of humanitarian crisis in north east. It also helped in determine how the issue is being framed.

4.1. Universe of the Study

The universe represents the entire group of units which is the focus of the study. Thus, the universe consists of all the pictures in *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* Newspapers. The researcher identified contents published from March – May 2015 by *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* Newspapers in various forms of specialized editions

The Universe of the study is all the pictures showing (complementing textual stories or independent pictures) that relate to humanitarian crisis in north east Nigeria and have been used by *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* newspapers from March 1st 2015 to May 2015.

4.2. Sampling Technique

Sampling is a technique of selecting individual members or a subset of the population to make a statistical inference from them and estimate characteristic of the whole population. Firstly, purposive sampling technique was used to select *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* newspapers. They were purposefully selected for the study; this is because of the attention both newspapers have given to Boko Haram insurgency in terms of coverage.

Secondly, a census method was used. Thus, a google search and websites search of *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* Newspapers were used to search for available pictures used by the newspapers during the period under study. Keywords of Boko haram insurgency + *Daily Trust*, and Boko Haram insurgency + *Thisday* newspaper will be used to guide the search.

4.3. Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this study is pictures that could be accompanied or independent. This means that text and stories are not considered as elements of analysis for this study.

4.4. Content Categories

One of the basic elements in a research order is the contents category where data are grouped and fixed into a given category for accuracy, precision and validity of findings. In this study, the contents are categorized according to the nature of the data. [Sobowale \(2008\)](#) states that content categories are defined for classifying message contents, and the content of the sample is coded according to objectives and rules. [Asemah et al. \(2012\)](#) observes that content categories must be mutually exclusive and exhaustive. Mutually exclusive categories exist when no unit falls between two data points and each unit is represented by only one data point.

4.5. Conceptualization of Categories

The categories are derived from literature with modification to capture the purpose and objectives of this study. There are also some categories that emerged from observation of the media content. These categories are:

1. Accompanied pictures: have supporting stories/text
2. Unaccompanied pictures: do not have supporting stories/text
3. Mild Pictures of Humanitarian crisis (MPH) (not severe, serious, or harsh picture of people that have been affected by Boko Haram crisis. They should be looking indifferent, fairly ok, look badly dressed, no injuries.
4. Grievous Pictures of Humanitarian crisis (GPH): These are pictures that portray very severe or serious, horrifying scenes of people affected by Boko Haram crisis. The victims are torture, physical unstable and are crying based on the picture.
5. Dehumanized Pictures of Humanitarian crisis (DPH): these are picture that are horrifying in which the people affected by the crisis are camped in unhealthy facilities or insecure open location.
6. Physically traumatized Pictures of Humanitarian crisis PPH): these are pictures that show visible marks of injuries as a result of the Boko Haram Crisis. The affected people are looking starved and emaciated.

7. Chronic conditions Pictures of Humanitarian crisis (CPH): These are pictures that show people living in a personal or host communities with their houses burnt, dirty environment, half naked or dressed in dirty old cloths).
8. Commodification Pictures of Humanitarian crisis (CPH): these are pictures that depict people affected by Boko Haram Crisis on queues to collect food and other means of livelihood.
9. Resolved/rescued Pictures of Humanitarian (RPH) crisis: these are pictures that show how people affected by the crisis are repatriated, resettled with hand luggage boarding plane, in queue being led by relevant agencies, getting medical attention, world leaders' invention on the issue, street protest condemning the act and/or symbols in condemnation of the migrant slavery).
10. Others: These are pictures that do not fall under the conceptualized categories above.

4.6. Research Instrument

A research instrument is a tool used to obtain; measure and analyze data from subjects around the research topic. A researcher needs to decide the instrument to be use based on the type of study, which could be qualitative, quantitative or mixed method. The study adopted and used designed content category to elicit data.

4.7. Methods of Data Analysis

One key technique that is often adopted for data analysis is frequency tables. Quantitative analysis was also employed by the researcher to item-by-item count the different variables that appear in each of the content category as mentioned above; the coding units were counted and their percentage taken. Analysis of data is the process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming and modelling data, with the goal of highlighting useful information, suggesting conclusion and supporting decision-making ([Sobowale, 2008](#)). He added that tables greatly facilitate data presentation. A table can summarize information that a thousand words may not adequately explain. Unless a table is properly arranged, it cannot be interpreted correctly. Therefore, knowing which of the variable to the presented in the independent and which is the dependent understanding the nature of the variable is perhaps the most crucial factor in using table as a medium of data presentation.

5. Results and Discussions

Plate 1. Unaccompanied picture



Source: Daily Trust, March 2015

Plate 2. Unaccompanied picture



Source; Thisday newspaper, March 2015

Based on the search conducted to elicit data, it was noticed that, *Daily Trust* used certain photographs that supported news stories likewise *Thisday* newspaper. In some incidences, some photographs were used without stories. Some photographs were used numerous in different stories. For example, a picture of bomb blast was used for four different stories. [Plate 1](#) is an example of one of the pictures that were used at various points in time by *Daily Trust* to complement stories. It was also noticed that *Thisday newspaper* used some repeatedly. One of such pictures is that of [Plate 2](#). Also, both newspapers used pictures of the insurgents to complement stories. For example, pictures in [Plate 2](#), [Plate 3](#) and others were used together with text to describe the humanitarian crisis. This is better explained in [table 1](#) below as it provides percentage in relation to the subject matters.

Plate 3. Dehumanized Pictures of Humanitarian Crises (DPH) (Photo used by *Daily Trust* in one its report)



Source: Daily Trust, May 2015

Plate 4. Dehumanized picture of Humanitarian Crises (DPH) (Photo used by *Thisday* newspaper in one of its report)



Source: Thisday newspaper, April 2015

The pictures above were used by *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* newspapers in their reports. While sourcing for data, both pictures fall under the dehumanized content category, both photographs reveal situation in which the people affected by the crisis are camped in unhealthy facilities or insecure open location. [Table 2](#) below provides detailed information in relation to the coverage by *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* newspapers.

Plate 5. Grievous Pictures of Humanitarian crisis (GPH) (Photo used by *Thisday* newspaper in one of its report)



Source: Daily Trust, April 2015

The picture above was found during data collection; it was used by *Daily Trust* newspaper in the month March 2015 to portray the humanitarian crises in north east Nigeria. The picture falls under the grievous content category as stated above. It shows scenes of people affected by Boko Haram crisis. The victims are torture, physically unstable and crying. The picture corroborates [table 1](#) below which provides more details.

Plate 6. Physically traumatized picture of Humanitarian Crisis (PTPH) (Photo used by *Daily Trust* newspaper in one of its report)



Source: Thisday newspaper, May 2015

This picture was used by *Thisday* newspaper in one of its reports, the picture suites the physically traumatized content category that shows bad living condition, physical stress and the affected people are looking starved and emaciated as a result of the crises. In [table 2](#) detailed information as regards the content category was captured.

Plate 7. Chronic picture of humanitarian crises CHPC (Photo used by *Daily Trust* newspaper in one of its report)



Source; Thisday Newspaper, May 2015

This picture is one of the photographs that was used by *Thisday newspaper* during the period of the study; May 2015. As explained in the content category, it shows people living in host communities with their houses burnt down and the environment dirty while dressed in dirty old cloths. This shows the chronic portrayal of the humanitarian crisis. However, [Table 2](#) provides more detail in relation to the level of coverage by both newspapers.

Plate 8. Commodification picture of humanitarian crises CPH (Photo used by *Daily Trust* newspaper in one of its report)



Source: Daily Trust Newspaper, May 2015

The picture above depicts humanitarian assistance given to victims of the crises. The was used by *Daily Trust* and was found be fit for the commodification content category, it shows people affected by Boko Haram Crisis on queues collecting food and other means of livelihood. This illustration corresponds with data on table three.

The tables below show the data collected and analysed based on the methodology for the research. The tables directly relate or correspond with the pictures above based on the content categories designed.

Table 1. Accompanied pictures, unaccompanied pictures, Mild and grievous portrayal of the humanitarian crises.

Frame categories	Newspapers				Percentage
	<i>Daily Trust</i>	Percentage	<i>Thisday</i>	Percentage	
Accompanied	28	93%	25	96%	
Unaccompanied	2	7%	1	4%	3/ 11%
Mild pictures of humanitarian crises	1	3%	2	8%	3/ 11%
Grievous Pictures of Humanitarian crises	5	17%	9	35%	14/ 52%
Total	30	54%	26	46%	56 / 100%

Source: Content analysis, 2022

Table one shows accompanied, unaccompanied pictures, mild and grievous portrayal of the humanitarian crisis by the two newspapers; *Daily Trust* and *Thisday*. 93% of the pictures used during the period of the study by *Daily Trust* were accompanied with stories while 96% were used by *Thisday* newspaper. The table also shows that 7% of the pictures used by *Daily Trust newspaper* were unaccompanied or without stories while *Thisday* newspaper had 4%. This shows that *Daily Trust* used more accompanied and unaccompanied pictures in the portrayal of the humanitarian crisis than *Thisday*. Table one further shows the mild and grievous pictorial portrayal of the humanitarian crisis. 3% of the photographs used by *Daily Trust* portrayed the humanitarian crisis as mild while 8% was used by *Thisday* which elaborates that, *Thisday newspaper* portrayed the humanitarian crisis as mild more than *Daily Trust*. 35% of the pictures found, that were used by *Thisday* portrayed the humanitarian crisis as grievous while 17% was used by *Daily Trust*. This goes to show that, although *Daily Trust* portrayed the grievous angle to the horrifying event, predominantly, *Thisday newspaper* had more coverage and portrayal.

Table 2. Dehumanizing, physically traumatized, chronic conditions and commodification portrayal of the humanitarian crisis.

Frame categories	Newspapers				Percentage
	<i>Daily Trust</i>	Percentage	<i>Thisday</i>	Percentage	
Dehumanized pictures of humanitarian crises	6	20%	4	15%	10/ 35%
Physically traumatized pictures of humanitarian crises	8	27%	3	12%	11/ 39%
Chronic conditions pictures of humanitarian crises	3	10%	4	15%	7/ 25%
Commodification Pictures of Humanitarian crises	2	7%	1	4%	3/ 11%
Total	30	54%	26	46%	56/ 100%

Source: Content analysis 2022

Table two shows that the humanitarian crisis was predominantly portrayed by *Daily Trust Newspaper* as physically traumatizing represented by 27% while *Thisday* had 12%. Dehumanized frame had 20% while *Thisday* newspaper had 15%. Chronic conditions had 10% while *Thisday* had 15%. Commodification had 7% while *Thisday newspaper* had 4%. This shows that both newspapers used more photographs that portrayed the events as traumatizing and dehumanizing even though *Daily Trust* had more coverage.

Table 3. Resolved/ rescued portrayal of the humanitarian crisis and others.

Frame categories	Newspapers				Percentage
	<i>Daily Trust</i>	Percentage	<i>Thisday</i>	Percentage	
Resolved/rescued Pictures of Humanitarian Crises	0	0%	1	4%	1/ 4%
Others	1	3%	0	0%	1/ 3%
Total	30	54%	26	46%	100%

Source: Content analysis 2022

Table 3 shows that the humanitarian crisis was not portrayed as resolved or rescued as it had 0% pictorial representation by *Daily Trust newspaper*. However, *Thisday newspaper* had 4% which shows that, the event was portrayed as resolved or rescue but not to a large extent. *Daily Trust* also had 3% of portrayal using other photographs that does not belong to the content category while *Thisday* had none 0%. This elaborates that, in the period of the study, *Thisday newspaper* did not use other photographs outside the content categories designed for this research.

6. Discussion of Findings

Picture is a significant component in news production procedure because it helps in bringing out salience of episodes and issues. The humanitarian crisis in North east Nigeria is a horrifying event that has over the years capture the attention of both national and international media organizations. Most often news media captured key moments in such occurrence to mold or shape people's opinion in the society. In doing that, frames and photographs remain fundamental in illustrating or portraying issues while providing visual evidence to support textual and audio contents.

Portrayal of news stories using photographs provide expedient backdrop for analyzing and rationalizing events. While it is true that media organizations adopt different frames for reporting, it is also factual to note that, there is a motive behind the use of each frame. A study conducted by Wilson and Abubakar (2018) on pictorial framing of migrant slavery in Libya revealed that, even though the event was horrifying, *Daily Trust newspaper* framed the event as mild. However, what lied outside the frame showed that, *Daily Trust* pictorial framing has tilted more towards shaping public opinion towards the less serious angle of the horrifying slavery issue.

In this study, grievous (52%), physically traumatized (39%) and dehumanized (35%) frames were predominantly used by *Daily Trust* and *Thisday newspapers* to portray the humanitarian crisis in north east Nigeria. The aforementioned frames were not the only ones used as other frames such as mild, commodification, chronic conditions and resolved or rescued were also used. However, it would not be

out place to posit that, grievous, physically traumatized and dehumanized portrayal of the humanitarian crisis by the two newspapers focused on shaping public opinion towards the serious angle of the horrifying humanitarian issues.

This finding corroborates with the position of [Boykoff and Laschever \(2011\)](#) which states that the mass media through their journalists place figurative photograph frames around issues, events and actions, thus focusing audience attention on particular issues, ideas, and individuals while obscuring what lies outside the frame.

The portrayal of the humanitarian crisis in grievous (52%), physically traumatized (39%) and dehumanized (35%) manner is reflection of the frames. Pictures used by *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* predominantly tilted towards an issue that has not been resolved with pictures showcasing victims crying and infrastructures destroyed. This finding relates slightly to the position of [Hoskins and O'Loughlin \(2010\)](#) that modern conflicts are characterized by the efforts of parties to shape public perceptions of events in ways that favour their disposition. However, in this case it is about moulding public opinion towards the impact of the crises and efforts made to resolve it.

7. Conclusion

The findings above pinpoints that, *Daily Trust* and *Thisday newspaper* used accompanied pictures or photographs in the coverage of the portrayal of the humanitarian crises. The study also indicates that, although various pictures were used by diverse media reports, both *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* newspapers were able to present different angles to the story namely (mild, resolved, commodification) but predominantly focused on the grievous, dehumanized and physically traumatized angle to the story showcasing more of a situation that is yet to be resolved. Focusing only on the frames, audience are likely to form opinion that the situation is grievous, dehumanizing and physically traumatizing rather than the mild perspective. In spite of the mild reports and footages about the issue, *Daily Trust* and *Thisday* newspapers pictorially portrayed it as grievous, dehumanizing and physically traumatizing thus downplaying the mild perspective of the situation in pictures.

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