



Television Webcast Framing of Banditry in Nigeria

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Abstract. How mass media discuss contemporary issues of insecurity has been of concern in media studies. Consequently, this study analysed the television webcast framing of banditry in Nigeria over four years (2019-2022) from the YouTube webcast channels of *Channels Television*, *Television Continental*, and *Arise News*. This study was anchored on agenda-setting and framing theories. The study used a content analysis research method, 200 banditry-related videos were systematically sampled and analysed using a validated coding sheet. Data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that the presentation of banditry issues on *Channels and TVC* was brief compared to *Arise News*. It also revealed that bandit attacks and Government security agencies' efforts were the dominant issues, and conflict and human-interest frames were the prominent news frames used to present banditry issues across the three selected stations. Consequently, findings support tenets of agenda-setting and framing theories. It is recommended that television stations increase the patterns and depth of their coverage, as well as the news frames used to present banditry issues.

Keywords: Television webcasting, framing, and banditry

1. Introduction

In recent years, banditry has emerged as a critical challenge for West Africa, resulting in instability and posing a risk to regional cohesion. Initially rooted in resource-based disputes, it has now evolved into a multifaceted regional conflict characterised by farmer-herder conflicts, village raids, incidents of rape,

kidnapping and murder. Tragically, empirical evidence shows that countless individuals have had to endure displacement and loss of property as a result of this scourge (Abdullahi, 2019).

Nigeria, like many other countries, is facing various forms of security challenges. Several media scholars (Abba et. al, 2021; Adegoke, 2020; Ezegwu et al., 2021; Gever & Essien, 2019; Odiegwu-Enwerem et al., 2021) have conducted studies and gathered empirical data indicating that Nigeria is struggling with pockets of crises and insecurity within its borders. Ojo (2017) has reported that Nigerian states have been dealing with numerous security challenges, including the Boko Haram jihadist insurgency, Fulani militancy, and an ongoing terror campaign by bandits.

In addition, Adegoke (2020) opines that banditry has become a prevalent issue in Nigeria, taking various forms, such as armed robbery, kidnapping, suicide attacks, bombings, insurgencies, and self-suicide. These bandits are criminal groups that terrorise local people or travellers by robbing them of valuables like cash, goods, livestock, sheep, and camels, among other things. According to Lucas and Okiyi (2022) banditry is a type of organised crime that includes kidnapping, rape, murder, armed robbery, cattle rustling, and resources exploitation. The authors note that to free their abducted victims, bandit organisations frequently demand hefty ransoms, and that failure to comply with these demands can result in the victims' deaths.

Bandits engage in criminal activities within and around rural boundaries with the aid of local accomplices, in some instances. State agents are

deployed to ensure the safety and security of the populace violence (Abdullahi, 2019). The author observes that banditry is motivated by personal gain and is a type of organised crime that frequently entails. A participant in banditry is commonly known as a bandit. Generally, a bandit engages in illicit actions like robbery, murder, and extortion, either by themselves or in gangs (Ezegwu et al., 2021). Therefore, the illegal actions carried out by bandit gangs can be characterised as banditry. As such, banditry involved in various criminal actions such as kidnapping, raping, killing, and demanding ransom from captive victims is called a bandit group. The most common crimes committed by bandits include kidnapping and holding victims as hostages in order to demand a ransom or face execution.

Beyond the terrorist actions of Boko Haram, banditry is Nigeria's greatest security danger, producing more violence and disruption and accounting for over half of all violent deaths in 2019 as reported by *The Punch* newspaper (Odeniyi, 2023). A recent article published on September 4, 2023, in *The Punch*, quoted security expert Timothy Avele, who said "Boko Haram was concentrated in particular zones but banditry is spreading nationwide and it's a big business. The government through the security agencies must double their efforts now before it's too late. We are already out of time" (Odeniyi, 2023, para. 13). This has resulted in what might be called the largest humanitarian disaster to hit the nation in decades.

Banditry activities in Nigeria present a significant threat to national security, peace, and overall development. Given these security challenges, it is incumbent upon the mass media to report on banditry with varying patterns and depth of coverage, utilising media frames to report on various issues related to banditry. In this regard, the media must recognize their social responsibility in the dissemination of information and reporting on banditry incidents, which can significantly influence public perception, policy, and decisions related to these security challenges. Media reports use different media patterns of coverage to inform, educate and sensitise society about the intricacies of banditry. As the watchdog of society, the media is relied upon by society to perform surveillance functions by gathering, reporting, and enlightening the public about newsworthy events. Olomjobi and Ajilore (2018) noted that this role of surveillance is particularly critical during times of security challenges. Reporting on banditry is expected of the media because it is a matter of great importance and poses a significant threat to national security, invoking key news values such as frequency, negativity, and conflict.

The evolution of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has led to the emergence of webcasting, which combines broadcasting and Internet-based technologies to reach a broader and more heterogeneous audience. TV delivery has evolved beyond traditional methods to include internet-based transmission (Atakiti, et al., 2017). This fusion of broadcasting and Internet-based technologies has given rise to webcasting, which allows media to reach audiences without geographic limitations. Chioma and Ojomo (2015) define webcasting as a streaming technology that distributes media content to heterogeneous online listeners or viewers, allowing for a more diverse audience to be reached through television broadcasting. This implies that webcasting can be regarded as an online streaming platform through which audio or audio-visual content is disseminated to multiple online listeners or viewers without boundaries. This paradigm shift has widened the reach of media content by extending beyond the traditional terrestrial format and cable/satellite transmission to include internet-based transmission.

Television stations have harnessed the advancements in streaming technology to extend the reach of their programs by making them accessible online (Atakiti, et al., 2017). This simply means that television webcasting is the dissemination of television programmes via online streaming to the large, scattered and heterogeneous online audience without geographical boundaries. These television programmes can be disseminated either through live streaming (audience watch programmes in real-time) or on-demand streaming (audience stream programmes at their own convenience time).

Media outlets, whether traditional or online, often use media framing. Ardevol-Abreu (2015) defines media framing as the way a news topic or event is described and the interpretive framework used to understand it. The effectiveness of framing can be evaluated by its ability to produce interpretive frameworks that can be applied to different situations. Similarly, according to Chioma and Ojomo (2015) findings, media framing revolves around presenting specific issues. In alignment with media scholars' perspectives, it is accurate to describe media framing as how news topics or events are described and interpreted. It can be assessed by its capacity to generate interpretive frameworks applicable to various situations. Framing is centred on the presentation of specific issues. Media framing entails highlighting crucial details of a particular reality to make them more prominent within a news story. This process of selection can significantly impact public perception of the issue.

Consequently, the frame of news reporting and the conveyed information play a pivotal role in determining how the target audience perceives and feels about a particular issue, ultimately shaping their attitudes towards it (Silas et al., 2021).

Empirical evidence indicates that media practitioners have been accused of employing different news frames to shape how people interpret or deduce the meaning of news reports. This underscores the media's ability to influence the audience's understanding of a news report based on how it has framed the story. Numerous empirical studies on media framing and audience perception of different issues, events or happenings have provided empirical facts that validate the postulation that mass media set an agenda of what the audience to think about and what to think about the issues which aligned with framing theory assumption which states that how mass media present the news creates a frame for that information and significantly influences audiences' perception, interpretation and understanding of the phenomenon.

It has been observed through empirical facts (Adelaku, 2017; Christian & Okro, 2021; Igboeli & Ejimnkeonye, 2021; Mutoro, 2021, Nwakpu et al., 2020; Oriola et al., 2017; Ugochkwu & Nwolo, 2021) that media practitioners have been accused of utilizing various news frames to report alarming issues like banditry. These media frames adopted for the reportage of such issues as banditry largely affect how society will interpret or deduce the meaning of banditry. This means that the media has the powerful media capacity to shape society's comprehension of the issue of banditry in Nigeria through how they have framed and presented the issue of banditry. This validates the postulation that mass media set an agenda of what the audience to think about and what to think about the issues by presenting the issue with certain frames. Framing theory posits that how mass media portray the news creates a frame for that information and significantly impacts the audience's perception, interpretation and understanding of the phenomenon.

Significantly, previous media studies on the media framing of security challenges in Nigeria have concentrated more on print media, neglecting television. This shows a gap in media research, requiring an extensive content analysis of security challenge coverage by television webcast media. Also, while substantial literature exists on media framing of various security challenges in Nigeria and worldwide, there is a dearth of research on banditry in Nigeria, particularly regarding how the media frames this group and its activities. This is very imperative to identify if television stations via their webcast

platforms have framed the issue of banditry in Nigeria. Knowing the influence of media framing on issues like banditry, it is crucial to investigate if there is television webcast framing of banditry in Nigeria, with encompass from the angle of pattern and depth of coverage, dominant banditry issue reported and news frames adopted for the presentation of banditry issues in Nigeria. Hence, the major question this study seeks to address is: how did the selected television webcast media frame banditry?

1.1 Research objectives

The general objective of this study is to analyze how banditry in Nigeria is framed on the television webcasts, specifically focusing on *Channels Television* (Channels TV), *Television Continental* (TVC), and *Arise News* (Arise TV) on their respective YouTube platforms.

The specific objectives are to:

- identify the prominent patterns of coverage through which banditry is presented on the YouTube platforms of *Channels*, *Television Continental* and *Arise News* television stations.
- ascertain the dominant banditry issues in the framing of banditry on the YouTube platforms of the selected television stations.
- assess the depth of coverage dedicated to the reporting of banditry on the YouTube platforms of the selected television stations.
- determine the prominent news frames used in reporting banditry on the YouTube platforms of the selected television stations.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Television Reportage of Insecurity

Television reporting is a distinct type of journalism that relies heavily on visual aids to communicate news stories efficiently. Television journalism stands out from print journalism due to its immediacy and real-time delivery of information. As a result of broadcasting's time constraints, news stories must be presented concisely, with reporters delivering critical information efficiently. Furthermore, the use of on-screen presenters and reporters adds a personal touch to news delivery, making it more engaging and relatable for the audience. The audio-visual components of television reporting create a more immersive experience, enabling viewers to observe events as they unfold and hear first-hand accounts, which enhances the overall impact of the news presentation.

The field of television journalism is highly regarded for its ability to provide prompt updates and captivating visual narratives, thereby deeply engaging the audience in the coverage of unfolding events. As noted by Anderson (2013), the primary objective of television news reporting is to disseminate up-to-date information to an interested viewership promptly. The integration of audio and visual elements in television journalism further intensifies the immediacy and importance of news, making it a powerful medium for conveying critical information during times of crisis. Moreover, the emotive and pressing nature of television journalism can evoke strong emotions and a sense of urgency in viewers. Television coverage of insecurity typically employs audio-visual appeal to communicate information to the audience, sometimes through live reporting. This advantage enables the audience to have greater confidence in the news story.

Also, Carvalho (2018) delves into the use of emotional storytelling techniques in television news to capture the audience's attention, with a particular focus on human interest stories and humanitarian crises. By highlighting personal narratives and human experiences, television news aims to evoke empathy and emotionally engage the viewers. This practice reveals the use of framing in television media, which can significantly influence the audience's perception of the report. Consequently, television reporting on banditry may impact the audience's perception of this issue, given the emotional storytelling techniques employed by television media to frame its reportage. Should television reporting focus only on the episodic frame of banditry, as opposed to presenting different aspects of this issue through a thematic frame, it may influence society's perception of banditry.

Television is a powerful medium that can influence people's beliefs and attitudes, making it an essential tool for societal surveillance. It provides interpretation and analysis of events that may cause unrest in society and helps to bring attention to the impact of such events. To fulfil its role in media surveillance, television broadcasting keeps a close eye on social, economic, and political developments, as well as any potential threats to national stability, public welfare, environmental health, and various scandals. The coverage of banditry issues on television can provide the latest information on the topic, and help maintain national security. Therefore, it can be concluded that media surveillance, with the help of television, plays a crucial role in maintaining national security.

2.2 Significance of Television Webcasting

The proliferation of Information Communication and Technology has led to the dissemination of broadcast media content through the Internet. Hence, television reportage of banditry issues can be done either through the mainstream or online. The convergence of television, telecommunication, and the internet has resulted in significant advancements in print and broadcast media, which have taken advantage of cyberspace. Additionally, it has facilitated the emergence of a diverse media landscape that enables individuals from different parts of the world to enjoy television programming at their convenience. This shift has eradicated the limitations of traditional television viewing by allowing people to access missed content without waiting for a repeat broadcast. According to Chioma and Ojomo (2015), the Internet has the ability to break down barriers created by media and connect people in urban areas. Media organizations are increasingly utilizing online platforms to deliver news and content, often through more user-friendly and passive home pages on the World Wide Web (WWW). This has made the internet a significant force in shaping the news industry in the 21st century.

Furt et al. (2019) have defined webcasting as the real-time and digital transmission of audio and video content to the general public. It is also commonly known as Internet broadcasting or net-casting. This technology has revolutionized the way content is delivered to users as it offers automated and personalized viewing experiences. When audio, video, or animation is webcast, the viewer receives the content immediately but is not able to store a copy of it. Webcasting services operate on a "pull technology" basis, which means that users receive the content only upon request. The emergence of television webcasting has elevated the distribution of audio-visual content and has blended the power of traditional TV broadcasting with the vast potential of the Internet. This novel trend is a direct consequence of impressive technological advancement and societal changes that have transpired in recent times. TV webcasting lets viewers stream programs on web-connected devices. This is possible due to high-speed internet and efficient video compression. TV and internet technologies have converged, allowing broadcasting and online streaming. This shift has freed audiences from traditional broadcasting schedules. According to Furt et al. (2019) the rise of TV webcasting is due to changes in consumer preferences towards easy and flexible content consumption.

Broadcasting of audio or audio-visual content delivers streaming data for webcasts, whereby the audience selects programmes and watches via the Internet (Gotoh & Kimura, 2015). Webcasting has made television content more flexible, interactive, and globally accessible. With various screens, such as smartphones, tablets, and smart TVs, users have a seamless viewing experience. Moreover, webcasting platforms offer interactive features such as live chats and social media integration, making the viewing experience more engaging. In essence, television webcasting has revolutionized the production, delivery, and consumption of TV content by leveraging technological advancements, changing consumer tastes, and innovative business models.

The advent of television webcasting has revolutionized the way television stations make their media content available to their audiences. By leveraging the online platform, viewers are now able to stream television programs at their convenience. This has created a significant advantage for viewers, who can now watch live programs, replay them later, and share their opinions in the comment section of specific programs. Furthermore, audiences can watch specific media content an unlimited number of times, as long as the television stations have not deleted the content. Television stations typically upload their content to their verified online platforms, and in some cases, they also offer live streaming of programs for their online audiences. Television media coverage of issues such as banditry and other forms of insecurity is readily available on the verified online platforms that these stations maintain.

In this study, we focus on YouTube channels as the selected television webcast platform. Channels such as *Channels TV*, *TVC*, and *Arise News* maintain a strong online presence on YouTube, where they make their media content available to their audiences. This has created a new paradigm shift in the way television stations disseminate their media content, and it has opened up new opportunities for viewers to engage with their favourite program

3. Framing by the Mass Media

The techniques utilized by media outlets to direct public attention to specific topics and shape the public agenda are known as framing in media studies. This process involves more than just selecting news items, it entails constructing a lens or frame that will influence how the audience interprets and perceives the information. Framing suggests that the media holds the power to highlight particular events and present them within a specific context.

Framing theory posits that news items are often presented within specific contextual boundaries, leading to the creation of a framework. These frameworks can aid comprehension or function as a cognitive shortcut for linking stories to a broader narrative. Essentially, frames are used as organizing principles or themes that enable the connection of stories across time and space, thereby constructing a cohesive narrative. The concept of framing is akin to the "agenda of attribute," which represents the second level of agenda-setting theory. The second level of agenda-setting theory focuses on the relative importance of issue attributes, while the first level, traditionally, examines the issues themselves.

"Framing" is a field of study that explores how media discourses are created and how they impact people's views. Social theory defines a 'frame' as a collection of anecdotes, stereotypes, and schema that individuals use to interpret and respond to events (Cissel, 2012). In the words of Entman (1993): "To frame is to select some aspect of a perceived reality and to make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation moral evolution, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (p. 52). Framing as a form of communication was first explored by Goffman, who defined it as a "schemata of interpretation" that helps individuals identify and label life experiences (Goffman, 1974). A more modern definition was given by Robert Entman, who stated that framing a message involves promoting certain facets of a "perceived reality" in a way that endorses a specific problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation (Entman, 1993).

Framing is an essential concept in media and communication that involves a critical analysis of how news information is presented to the public. It is a deliberate strategy employed by news media to highlight specific aspects of a news story that they consider significant. The media's agenda on a particular issue is conceptualized, packaged, and delivered to the audience in a way that best suits their intended message. Framing is a media function that recognizes, defines, selects, and organizes news in a way that is deemed appropriate for the intended audiences. Thus, framing plays a crucial role in shaping mass opinion as it guides readers to understand news media coverage. (Cissel, 2012; Chioma & Ojomo, 2013).

Media framing, which refers to the presentation of information to audiences, plays a crucial role in shaping how people view the world around them. The

way news is presented can greatly impact how it is perceived and interpreted, as well as the decisions people make as a result. Mass media creates a social reality by presenting images in a consistent and structured manner, and the way an issue is presented can affect the audience's perception of it. During insecurity crises such as banditry, the media's portrayal of banditry can significantly impact the public's attitudes in society. Media framing can greatly influence public perceptions of safety during insecurity crises.

3.1 Types of News Frames

This study aims to examine how Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) types of new frames: the human interest, conflict, morality, responsibility and economic consequence frames are used to frame banditry in Nigeria. In understanding the concept of Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) types of new frames, Olsson and Ihlen, (2018) explain the five types of news frames:

Attribution of responsibility frame is used to attribute responsibility to an individual or group when presenting or reporting an issue. This frame is defined as "a way of attributing responsibility for cause or solution to either the government or to an individual or group" (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, p. 96). This frame can be classified into three sub-frames: diagnostic frames (identifying the issue and its root cause), prognostic frames (offering guidance on the appropriate course of action), and motivation frames (proposing potential solutions).

The conflict frame is a theoretical construct which emphasizes the presence of conflicts among individuals, groups, or institutions to elicit audience interest.

The use of the human-interest frame in news reporting often adds an emotional angle to issues, making them more relatable to audiences. During crisis reporting, the framing of the situation can impact people's emotional states, potentially leading to a more negative outlook on the crisis. The human-interest angle of a story has been shown to affect how individuals emotionally respond.

The economic consequence frame, on the other hand, focuses on the economic impact of events on specific individuals, groups, institutions, regions, or countries. This frame explains the economic consequences of an event, problem, or issue on individuals, groups, organizations, or countries.

The morality frame places issues in a moral context, highlighting what is considered right and wrong. The morality frame is used to contextualize an event, problem, or issue within the boundaries of social norms, religious beliefs, and moral values. According to Neuman et al. (1992), journalists tend to use this frame indirectly through quotations or inferences because of the journalistic principle of objectivity.

4. Banditry in Nigeria

The word "banditry," which comes from the term "bandit," denotes an unlawful armed group that terrorizes people and takes their property. It is also used to describe the development of gangs that attack citizens using small and light weapons (Abubakar, 2019). Banditry in this context, refers to the organization and carrying out of illegal activities for one's gain. Owing to the complexity of rural banditry, Egwu (2016) defined it as the act of robbing farmers of their cattle or taking animals and livestock from herders. When the word "banditry" is used in rural areas, however, it describes a group of outlaws from those areas that commit crimes including robbing villages, kidnapping people, and stealing cattle to acquire rudimentary money. According to Okoli and Okpaleke (2014) research, violent crimes such as armed robberies, kidnappings, livestock rustling, and raids on villages or markets are all considered banditry. This horrible practice entails using force, or even just the fear of using it, to force people or groups to rob, rape, or even kill. Ojo (2020) opines that banditry is commonly perceived as an organized crime with a substantial financial incentive.

Nigeria is currently dealing with serious issues, as seen by the persistent criminal activity and armed conflict that are taking place throughout the nation, especially in the north (Okoli & Ugwu, 2019). After more than ten years of Boko Haram insurgency, Northern Nigeria is currently experiencing a surge in armed banditry, mostly in the same area. With armed banditry on the rise since the 2011 general election, Northern Nigeria is grappling with a serious challenge. Violence has erupted between the Fulanis and their foreign and domestic friends, farmers, and even local inhabitants (Nadama, 2019; Olayoku, 2014). Also, Researchers like Ikechukwu-Ilomuanya et al. (2022) Obodo et al. (2022), and Ugwulor-Onyinyechi et al. (2021) agree that banditry has continued to pose a severe security threat to the Nigeria nation, particularly reference to Northern Nigeria.

The terrifying reality of armed bandits is something that people in several Northern Nigerian states, including Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina, Kaduna, North-

Central, and Kebbi States, always have to deal with. The attacks by these bandits on defenceless civilians have intensified, resulting in property destruction and repeated kidnappings of pupils from classrooms and boarding places. For many people in these areas, life has become intolerable due to the rise in bandit activity. More than a thousand pupils have been snatched against their will from their schools since December 2020, and many of them have only been freed after large ransoms were paid. In Nigeria, people who are referred to as "bandits" are responsible for these kidnappings; they intimidate towns by robbing defenceless residents of their belongings and causing property damage (Alphonsus et al., 2022). Different hues of banditry can be seen (Global Center for Responsibility to Protect, 2022). Among them are social, suburban, rural-urban frontier, guerilla, coordinated, marine piracy, and small-scale banditry. Banditry frequently has predecessors in the form of relative impoverishment, social inequalities, disillusion, and protests (International Crisis Group Report, 2017).

5. Theoretical Framework

5.1 Agenda-setting theory

The theory of agenda-setting is a significant communication theory that falls under the umbrella of media effect theories in communication studies. It has been widely used by media scholars to assess the impact of the media on different audiences. Two journalism professors, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, introduced this theory in 1972. According to the theory, the mass media deliberately disseminates news on relevant societal issues to attract the attention of their audience. This theory assumes that media dictate to the public the most prominent issues of the day. According to Anaeto et al. (2008), the media's emphasis on certain issues is directly related to the amount of attention these issues receive in the media. This simply means that the media has the power to influence the public on what to think about through their media coverage and reporting of news events which become an agenda for discussion to the public. Uwom (2015) posits that media coverage holds the potential to bestow importance on a range of topics, individuals, locations, happenings, and concepts. This implies that the audience tends to perceive subjects that garner greater media coverage as being more significant, whereas those that are less accentuated or overlooked altogether are perceived as being less crucial. Baran and Davis (2009) contend that the media wields a substantial influence over individuals' prioritization of public issues, highlighting a strong interconnection between the two.

McCombs et al. (2009, as cited in Uwom, 2015) submit that agenda-setting operates at two distinct levels, namely the agenda of object and attribute. The first level which is the agenda of the object as described by the author explains that the media can influence an issue to be perceived as important or salience while the agenda of attribute refers to how media report what to think about the object or issue (Uwom, 2015). This implies that the media set an agenda of what to think (agenda of the object) and how to think about the issues (agenda of the issue).

This theory is relevant to this study because it ascribes to the media the power to dictate what issue is salience in society and what exactly to think about the issue. The amount of attention given to the reportage of banditry on the selected television stations can make the issue of banditry salience. Also, the dominant patterns of coverage adopted by the selected media stations can affect how people think about banditry. This can be determined through the dominant depth and pattern of coverage accorded for the presentation of the issue. This theory is pertinent to this study because the study intends to investigate how television webcast media report the issues of banditry. The study aims to test the postulation of the theory that says media set agenda by the frequency of reporting an issue. Therefore, the study intends to investigate if the selected television station has influenced the issue of banditry to be perceived as important or salient in society (agenda of object). Also, to determine the prominent banditry issues that have become more salient (agenda of object) in the society through the television reporting of the banditry in Nigeria.

5.2 Framing Theory

This theory was propounded by Erving Goffman in 1974. The theory suggests that the mass media directs attention towards specific issues and subsequently frames them within a context of meaning through their journalistic expertise. This framework of meaning has the potential to impact or sway the perceptions and actions of the general public by aligning with the particular interpretation or significance of the issues as presented by the mass media.

This study was grounded in the Framing theory of mass communication effect, which has its roots in the agenda-setting theory. Essentially, this theory outlines how the media can influence public opinion on various events and issues through a process known as framing. This means that frames help to make certain information in the media content to be more profound, memorable and meaningful to the audience. This invariably creates specific interpretations and

meanings (frames) for the audience. Framing is one of the ways that the media elites use to define and give meaning to issues and shape messages by selecting and highlighting certain facts while excluding other information, thereby creating frames that can have a powerful impact on public opinions and audience interpretations of issues and events (Olaseinde, 2021).

Framing theory is highly relevant in this research study because the study wants to identify the dominant news frames employed for the presentation of banditry issues in Nigeria. This will help to predict how these dominant news frames have influenced the interpretation, and comprehension of banditry in the mind of the people in the society. For example, if the dominant news frame is attribution of responsibility, it might be possible that the audience might attribute responsibility to specific groups, or individuals for the operation of banditry in Nigeria.

6. Empirical Review

Ezegwu et al. (2022) adopted a content analysis research method to study the framing of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) clashes with security forces in select Nigeria Mainstream newspapers (The Guardian and Punch). The reports of the study revealed that the selected newspapers reported the clashes. The study findings indicated that the religious frame was the dominant frame used to report the issue.

Alphonsus et al. (2022) sampled two newspapers and two television stations to examine Nigerian mass media coverage of banditry activities in Northern Nigeria. The study revealed that the media agenda-getting on banditry in Nigeria is generally poor because it is characterized by a low frequency of stories, low volume of stories, lack of detailed stories, as well as less focus on solutions related to banditry. Also, the media coverage of banditry in Nigeria significantly differs based on media genre with newspapers performing better than TV stations.

Odiegwu-Enwerem et al. (2021) conducted a study on media perspectives of Herdsmen-Farmers' conflict in Benue State, North-central and Enugu State, Southeast Nigeria. The researchers' findings exposed that 159 stories by the selected newspapers during the period studied, reports focused themes on public condemnation/protests and government/public intervention while Peace Journalism and the economic/social implications of the conflicts received minimal attention. Also, the study indicated that correspondents and herdsmen agents were the news sources of information for the selected media.

Okoro and Odeomelam (2013) had the primary objective to identify the pattern of frames adopted by Nigerian newspapers in the coverage of the Boko Haram insurgency. The researchers selected four Nigerian national newspapers namely- The Guardian, Daily Sun, the Vanguard, and This Day that were published from January to December 2012. From the study findings, it was established that Nigerian newspapers reported government interventions in positive terms. Although the researchers recommend the optimization of positive frames to promote peace media initiatives.

Another research was conducted by Gever and Essien (2019) within media coverage and insecurity study, it investigated newspaper coverage of the herdsmen-farmer conflict in central Tiv land, Benue State, Nigeria. Daily Sun and Daily Trust were content analysed for 12 months and the survey method used email and telephone interviews as instruments to elicit information. Results showed, among others, that the text format for both newspapers was mostly straight news (64.5%), the newspapers only covered the conflict as it happened but little attention was paid to victims of the conflict in newspaper reportage.

Olomjobi and Ajilore (2018) used the content analysis research method with the sole objective to investigate the coverage patterns of the herders-farmers conflicts by three Nigerian national newspapers – The Punch, The Guardian, and Vanguard between January 1, 2015, and August 31st 2016. The findings revealed that the selected three Nigerian national newspapers framed their reportages which indicated the herders as the principal perpetrators of the violence between herder-farmer conflicts.

Abdulbaqi and Ariemu (2017) examined some selected Nigerian newspapers' framing of herdsmen-farmers conflicts in Nigeria and its implication on peace-oriented journalism. The selected Nigerian newspapers; The Punch, Vanguard, Daily Trust, and Leadership newspapers were content analysed while focusing attention on the dominant frames used in the conflict and its implications on peace-oriented journalism. The findings exposed that the dominant frames used in the selected newspapers for Herdsmen-farmers' conflicts reports are more violent.

Chioma and Ojomo (2015) researched television webcasting framing of the Nigerian government's response to Boko Haram insecurity in North-East, Nigeria within the period of 2012-2014. The study submitted that all three international televisions gave prominence to the government's response to Boko Haram insurgency through its Security Agency

Operations at 46% on Aljazeera, 36.5% on Channels, and 48.4% on CNN, while the analysis of the yearly trend in their framing presented a significant difference.

7. Methodology

This study employed the content analysis research method. Content analysis is considered the most suitable approach as it enables the systematic examination of various media contents, including printed and audio-visual materials, and this research focuses on the analysis of media content from selected television stations (Luo, 2023). 200 banditry-related videos were systematically selected from a population

of 636 banditry-related videos were retrieved from the YouTube channels of the *Channels TV* <https://www.youtube.com/@ChannelsTelevision/videos>, *TVC News Nigeria* <https://www.youtube.com/@tvcnewsnigeria/videos> and *Arise TV* <https://www.youtube.com/@AriseNewsChannel/videos>, respectively from January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2022. The coding sheet research instrument was used to analyse the videos. The Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) formally known as the Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to process the data and the results presented using statistical tools of charts for clarity.

8. Results and Discussion

Research Question One: What are the prominent patterns of coverage through which banditry issues are presented on the YouTube platforms of *Channels TV*, *Television Continental (TVC)* and *Arise News* television stations?

Table 1: Pattern of Coverage of Banditry Issues

Pattern of coverage	Channels TV		Arise News		TVC	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
News Report	26	33	2	3.8	25	37.3
Interview	10	13	23	43.4	10	14.9
Narrative	37	46	7	13.2	16	23.9
News Analysis	2	3	7	13.2	5	7.5
News Commentary	1	1	14	26.4	11	16.4
Vox Pop	1	1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Discussion	3	4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	80	100	53	100.0	67	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 1 shows that the prominent pattern of coverage used for the presentation of banditry, *Channels TV* used Narrative and News reports (46% and 33%), *Arise News* used Interview and News commentary reports (43.4% and 26.4%), and *TVC* used News and Narrative reports at (37.3% and 23.9%).

This reveals that *Arise News* dedicated more time to the presentation of banditry, while *Channels TV* and *TVC* did not allow sufficient time for the presentation of the banditry and hence this affected the prominent patterns of coverage adopted for the presentation of the issue from the stations.

Research Question Two: What are the dominant banditry issues in the framing of banditry on the YouTube platforms of the selected television stations?

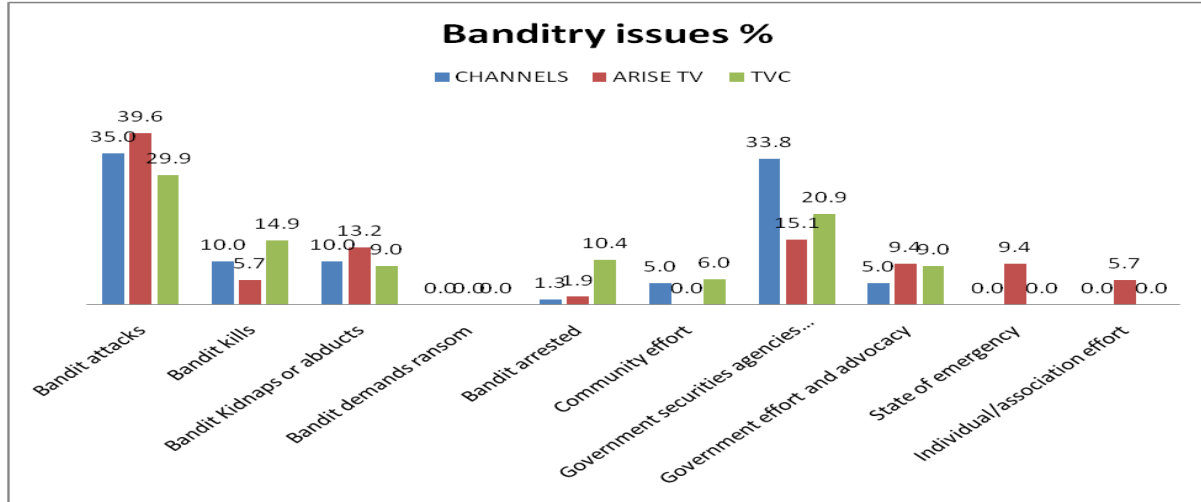


Figure 1: Dominant Banditry Issues

Source: Field Survey (2024)

From Figure 1, the dominant banditry issues across the three stations was *Bandit attacks* on *Arise News* (39.6%), *Channels TV* (35%), and *TVC* (29.9%). Also, *Government security agencies effort* issue was presented most on *Channels TV* (33.8%), *TVC* (20.9%) and *Arise News* (15.1%). This denotes that bandit attacks and government security were the most discussed issues by all three TV stations. These issues were the most salient topics used to set an agenda for the audience. Bandit's demands for ransom were not discussed at all.

Research Question Three: What is the depth of coverage dedicated to the reporting of banditry on the YouTube platforms of the selected television stations?

Table 2: Depth of Coverage

Depth of coverage	Channels TV		Arise News		TVC	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
0:01- 5 minutes	58	72.5	5	9.4	36	53.7
5:01- 10 minutes	6	7.5	11	20.8	6	9.0
10:01- 20 minutes	8	10	17	32.1	13	19.4
20:1- 30 minutes	4	5	14	26.4	5	7.5
Above 30 minutes	4	5	6	11.3	7	10.4
Total	80	100	53	100.0	67	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 2 shows that the depth of coverage of banditry issues on *Channels TV* and *TVC* stations is similar, with the majority of their presentation not more than 5 minutes. *Arise News*, on the other hand, had 10–20-minute reports as the major depth of coverage. This suggests that reports on *Channels TV* and *TVC* were relatively brief, possibly due to limited information or insufficient research by their reporters. If the reports were more in-depth programmes, the coverage would likely be longer.

Research Question Four: What are the prominent news frames used in reporting banditry on the YouTube platforms of the selected television stations?

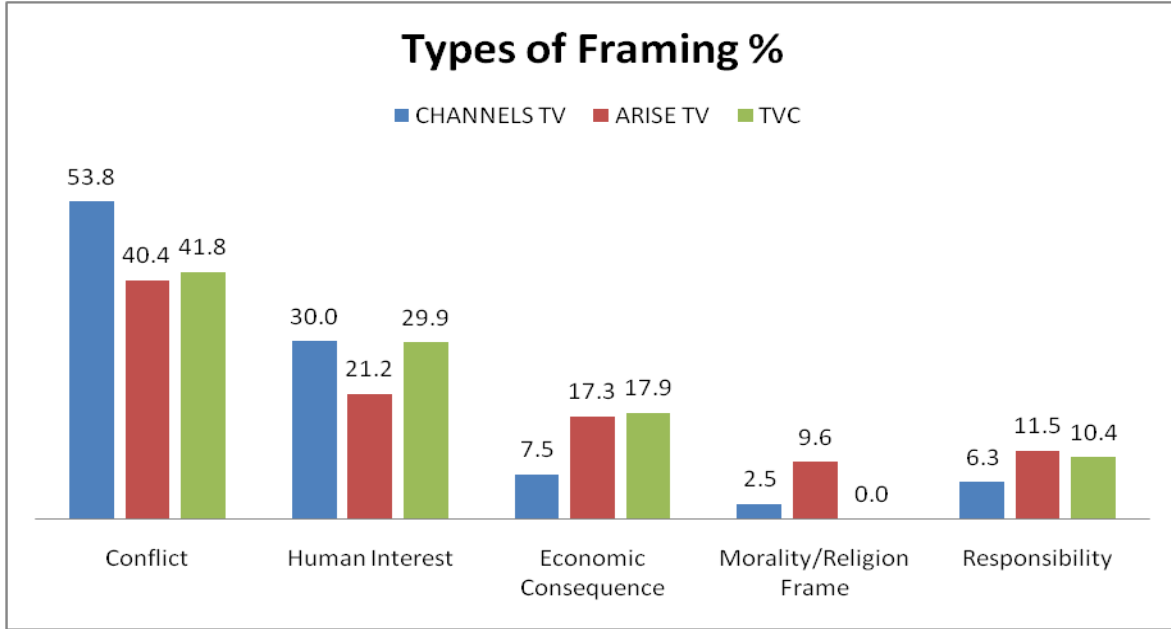


Figure 2: Types of News framing
Source: Field Survey (2024)

From Figure 2, the prominent news frame adopted by the selected three stations was the conflict frame (*Channels TV* 53.8%, *TVC* 41.8%, and *Arise News* 40.4%) respectively. Followed by human interest framing in which *Channels TV* had 30%, *TVC* 29.9% and *Arise News* 21.2%. The selected TV stations mainly used conflict and human-interest frames to report on the issue of banditry in Nigeria. These frames were adopted because bandit attacks and government security efforts were the dominant issues reported.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it concluded that Out of the three selected stations sampled, there was a similarity in the dominant patterns of coverage adopted by *Channels TV* and *TVC*. They both used News and Narrative reports which did not give sufficient coverage of the issue. However, *Arise News* employed Interview and News commentary reports. It was also discovered that the major depth of coverage for the presentation of banditry issue on *Channels TV* and *TVC* television stations was not more than 5 minutes report and this is brief compared to *Arise News* which had 10-20 minutes a major depth of coverage accorded to the presentation of discourse. Therefore, this study concluded that *Channels and TVC* did not give sufficient coverage to banditry issues while *Arise News* did the opposite to the issue.

Also, the most emphasised banditry issues significantly presented across the three stations were

Bandit attacks and *Government security agencies' efforts*. The three selected television stations create more salience attention to bandit attacks and government security agencies' efforts. Hence, this revalidates the assumption of agenda-setting theory. In addition, the study concluded that the banditry issues were reported more using conflict and human-interest frames.

This study has arrived at a significant conclusion regarding the portrayal of banditry issues by selected television webcast platforms. It has been found that the media has primarily focused on presenting Bandit attacks and Government security agencies' efforts as the prominent agendas for public discussion. In this regard, the media has employed conflict and human-interest news frames as the framing techniques to enable the public to comprehend and interpret the meaning of banditry in Nigeria. This finding has noteworthy implications for understanding the role of media in shaping public perception and discourse on critical social issues such as banditry.

The following recommendations have been made based on the findings of this study.

- The selected TV stations should aim for a balanced coverage of banditry issues in Nigeria, using a mix of news, reports and other forms of coverage. However, news and reports alone cannot provide comprehensive

knowledge, as their focus is mainly on creating awareness.

- The three selected television stations should expand their discourse on various aspects of banditry issues. This includes discourse such as the role of the judiciary in addressing banditry, the rehabilitation of repentant bandits, community-led initiatives, government-led skills acquisition programs, and other related issues.
- Media reporting on banditry issues should encompass all aspects of the issue rather than relying solely on human interest and conflict framing

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