

Media Re-victimization of Rape Victims in a Shame Culture? Exploring the Framing and Representation of Rape Cases in Nigerian Dailies

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Abstract

This is a content analysis of three Nigerian Dailies – Daily Sun, Vanguard and Guardian newspapers to examine the framing and representation of rape cases in the newspapers. Among the objectives of the study are to find out the frequency of stories on rape reported in the Nigerian newspapers, to find out the sources of rape cases as reported in the Nigerian Newspapers, and to find out the dominant frame used in the stories on rape reported in the Nigerian newspapers. It was found that the dominant frame of rape stories in the newspapers was innocence frame which portrayed victims of rape as innocent of the crime rather than re-victimisation frame which portrayed victims as responsible for the incident.

Key words: Framing, Representation, Re-victimisation, Rape.

Introduction

A cursory look at the series of unfolding events and developments the world over indicates that the globe is fast degenerating into crimes and crime-related offences. One of such crimes is that of men sexually abusing women and, in fact, forcefully having carnal knowledge of girls and women without their consent. For instance, India as a country has in recent time, continued to have its doses of not just rape cases but “gang raping” of powerless, defenseless and innocent women and girls by rapists and “the situation has become more or less chronic

and satanic” (Ogbu 2014, p.2). In Nigeria, the same ugly scenario floods the nation and the Nigerian media, particularly the print media, are daily becoming awash with catalogue of incidents and stories of girls and women being not just sexually molested and abused but most wickedly descended on and raped without scruples leaving this poor victims wallowing in both physical and psychological trauma without urgent remedies even in the face of apparent enabling laws against such dastardly and inhuman crimes. These mindless cases of rape as have been reported in the Nigerian media, particularly newspapers, are legion. For instance, it was reported by one Mrs. Ngozi Ugwu that her seven year old niece was raped by three men, namely, Kazeem Mohammed (40 years old), Tobi Daramola (19 years old) and James Anieskin (19 years old) (Daily Sun Newspaper, Thursday 19th December 2013, p. 27). Equally, seventeen year old school girl was abducted in Benin, Edo State while returning from school by a gang of three men who confined her to their room and took turns of raping her (Daily Sun Newspaper, 10th January 2014, p.12). A pastor, Emmanuel Mathew, aged 50, who is the General Overseer of the Choice Bible Church was alleged to have raped three pupils, one was aged nine while the other two were both seven years (Vanguard Newspaper, Friday 25th October 2013, p.7). Worrisomely too, a virgin school girl at Ikorodu Lagos was lured into a room forcefully stripped naked and raped to coma by a gang of three (Daily Sun Newspaper, Thursday 31st October 2013, p.25). A police corporal, Anthony Onoja was dismissed from the Nigerian police force for raping a two-year-old girl (Daily Sun Newspaper, Wednesday, November 6th 2011, p.14). Again, a twenty-nine-year-old man, Masonter Iyange of Akwabo street, Zaki-Biam, Benue State was arraigned before a Makurdi chief magistrate court over charges of armed robbery and rape (The Guardian Newspaper, 6th June 2013, p.12). The above incidents are as pathetic as they are tear-evoking the situation, most worrisomely, is increasing by the day and lamenting (rape has renamed a recurring decided across the country) (Guardian Newspaper editorial, Thursday 6th June, 2004, p.12). The question here is do rape victims face another form of victimization, this time, re-victimisation, in media reports based on choice of words used in framing the rape incidents? Revictimisation of rape victims leads to violation which often occurs when the disregard for the victim can closely mimic the victim’s experience at the hands of her assailant (Campbell & Raja, 1999, p.142). The victim may feel that this treatment “hurts as much as therape itself” (Campbell *et al.*, 1999:847-858). Sexual re-victimisation refers to a pattern in which the sexual assault victim has an increased risk of subsequent victimisation relative to an individual who was never victimized (Lurie, Boaz, & Golan, 2013). How do the media in Nigeria, particularly the newspapers, frame rape incidents? Are the choice of words used in writing stories on rape revictimise the victims? Is there a relationship between fear of revictimisation and unwillingness of rape victims to report such incidents to

the police and other legal authorities? These, among others, form the nucleus of this research work “exploring media framing and representation of rape cases in Nigerian Newspapers”.

Statement of the problem

Over the years, there has been an upsurge in the number of rape related cases in the Nigerian society (Agaba 2013, p.3) and situation appears to be increasing in astronomical proportion as days roll by (Okunzua 2014, p.6). This has created palpable worries in the minds of many. Some of these sexual assaults and rapes are according to Ifeacho (2012, p.4) either reported or intentionally “buried” by the victims or their parents or relations for fear of stigmatization while some few others are reported by the media. There is this growing fear that rape victims are sometimes re-victimised by the media as being responsible for the sexual assaults and carnal knowledge inflicted on them by their assailants. Although there exists substantial research on physical revictimisation of rape victims (Campbell & Raja, 1999; Classen, Palesh, and Aggarwal, 2005; Steyn, 2005), less is known about media revictimisation through choice of words and framing. The quest to fill these gaps informed this study.

Objectives of the study

The following constitute the objectives of this study:

1. To find out the frequency of stories on rape reported in the Nigerian newspapers
2. To find out the dominant story type on rape cases in the Nigerian newspapers.
3. To find out the sources of rape cases as reported in the Nigerian Newspapers.
4. To find out the dominant frame used in the stories on rape reported in the Nigerian newspapers.

Theoretical framework

This research work is anchored on the social responsibility theory as well as the agenda setting theory of the press.

Social responsibility theory

The social responsibility theory of the press posits that the press, as it were, has roles, obligations and responsibilities which it owes the society in order that such a society would develop in the process of the press freely doing its duties. Expanded by Peterson, Siebert and Schramm in 1956, the social responsibility theory is an extension of the libertarian theory in that the press recognizes that it has a responsibility to society to carry out its essential functions (Hasan, 2013, p.170). Affirming this (Uwakwe, 2012, p.94) asserts that “the theory as a legal extension of the press implies all vestiges of social responsibility”. Agbanu (2013, p.161-162) says concerning the emergence of the social responsibility theory of the press

thus: Because of the need for regulation which arises due to the abuse of libertarian theory, the American government in 1947 inaugurated the Hutchins commission to study the situation and offer recommendation. This commission after its assignment suggested that freedom has to go with responsibility. This recommendation gave rise to the social responsibility theory the social responsibility theory highlights the obligation and responsibilities the media owe the society. Aligning himself with the above position, Asemah (2011, p.146) laments that it was amply as a result of the failure and abuse of the libertarian theory of the press that the social responsibility theory came into existence. According to him:

The theory emerged because the press abused the freedom which they enjoyed as a result of the free press. The press engaged in sensationalism, invasion of privacy, defamation of character and other negative activities that fell short of the idealistic libertarian goals. As the press grew large in the 20th century, it became an object of criticism. As a result of the negative activities of the press due to press freedom, the Hutchins commission was set up in 1947 to look into the criticisms made it clear that freedom and responsibility go hand in hand and that the press should be periodically reminded of its responsibilities. The relevance of social responsibility theory to this study is that since it is genuinely the responsibility and/or duty of the press to freely inform the members of the society, it is then part and parcel of this responsibility or obligation of the press or the media to bring to the public cases of rape in the society with a view to exposing those perpetrating the act. This will go a long way in not only sanitizing the system but also making the society a better place. Without proper framing, representation and, indeed, reportage of rape cases, rape as a crime would continue to bestride the society and this would no doubt be seen as an indictment against the press for non-performance.

Agenda setting theory

The main gist of the agenda setting theory is that “the mass media determine what the public discuss and think about” (Nwabueze, 2014, p.44). This is in line with earlier assertions by many communication scholars who argue that the hallmark of the agenda setting theory is that “the media do not tell us what to think but what to think about and that the media are responsible for most of the pictures we hold in our hands. The agenda setting theory argues that “when the media emphasize an issue by frequently reporting it and also giving it prominence, the people use it as an agenda for discussion” (Nwabueze, 2014, p. 44). It “refers to media audiences’ acceptance as important those issues, events and people because the media have made them so for people to think and take about” (Ngoa 2012, p. 4). Ekeanyanwu (2015, p.115) in his view contends that “agenda setting is where the mass is accredited with the power to set the agenda of the topics for discussion”. This means that it is what the media want us to think about that they project to the public as an important issue and at the end of the day, it appears important in the eyes of the public (Ozuru & Ekeanyanwu 2013, p. 109).

The agenda setting theory is apt in this research because it is the degree of prominence or importance attached to a story or event such as rape by the media (whether print or electronic) that would determine greatly how the public would see or value such event, story or situation.

Media, Media framing and Representation

The ideas of media framing and media representation are fast becoming Siamese twins as both are seemingly inseparable. Framing involves giving an angle to an event with a view that the audience or readers would perceive the story from the perspective of the media reporting same. This view is supported by Entman (2002, p. 291) who sees framing as “the selection of some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communication text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described”. To Entman, therefore, framing can simply be summarized as involving “selection and salience”. Media framing and representation, therefore, refers to the art and act of the media, whether print, electronic or even the social media, giving prominence to an issue or personality by selecting and giving more prominence and emphasis on such issue or personality thus drawing and focusing the attention of the people in the direction of the issue or personality. This position is given vent to by Iyengar and Kinder (1987, p.114) when they argued that by “by lavishing news coverage on an issue while ignoring others, the media draw attention to certain aspects of political life at the expense of the others”. Thus, he further argued that “issues highlighted in the media become the standard by which media audiences judge politicians and elective office seekers” for “if it is crime that dominates the media agenda, not only does crime become public enemy number one, crime also becomes the principal yardstick for evaluating president’s or congress’s performance” (Iyengar & Reeves, 1997, p.213). Viewing framing from the angle of “issue framing”, Dearing & Rogers (1992, p.63) explain that “issues framing are the subtle selection of certain aspects of an issue by making the media to make them more important and thus, emphasize a particular cause of some phenomenon”. Flowing from the above, therefore, is that the degree of coverage and salience given to events, issued or phenomena by the media would go a long way in determining people knowledge, exposures, views, opinions and/or suggestions about such event, issue or phenomenon. Thus, the degree or amount of prominence or coverage or placement of cases of rape in the newspaper would determine what people or the Nigerian society feel about rape and its attendant consequences.

Exploring the concept of Revictimisation of rape victims

Revictimisation, also called secondary victimization, happens when providers subjugate the needs and psychological boundaries of rape victims to organisational needs, which leaves the victim feeling violated (Steyn, 2005). Revictimization is associated with higher distress and certain psychiatric disorders. People who were revictimized show difficulty in interpersonal relationships, coping, self-representations, and affect regulation and exhibit greater self-blame and shame (Classen, Palesh, and Aggarwal, 2005). This could possibly, in the medium term, lead to disordered eating, sleep problems, depression and difficulties in establishing trusting relationships with important others (Steyn, 2005). In the long term serious psychological disorders could develop such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Rape Trauma Syndrome (RTS), General Anxiety Disorder, panic attacks and phobias (Steyn, 2005).

Media revictimisation therefore refers to the use of words and frames to create an impression that a rape victim brought the incident of rape upon herself through indecent dressing or being in the wrong place at wrong time. Reporting a rape incident from this angle consists of revictimising the victim. Such reports could possibly lead to revictimisation problems highlighted by Classen, Palesh, and Aggarwal, (2005) such as difficulty in interpersonal relationships, coping, self-representations, and affect regulation and exhibit greater self-blame and shame. Gqola (2006) writes the media re-victimize women who have been raped through the choice of words used in telling the stories. According to Gqola, the idea that the woman should not have been wearing a kind of provocative dressing or should not have been walking alone at a particular time and place is often used to justify some of the media's bias in terms of representations of women who have been victims of gender-based violence.

Rape and the Shame Culture

A shame culture is one in which conformity to behavior is basically achieved to the fear of being shamed (Oxford Dictionaries: Language Matters, 2004). People adhere to rules and accepted behavior because they feel that if caught going against the law or societal norms, they could be put to public riddle and made suffer shame in the process. Shame and guilt are often referred to as 'moral' emotions (Tangney & Stuewig, 2004). People experience shame and guilt when they have done something bad in their own eyes or in the eyes of others (Wong & Tsai, 2007). Shame has also been described as an inner torment or a sickness of the soul (Tomkins, Sedgwick & Frank, 1995). Shame can be a very strong indicator of an individual's role in society; for instance, a can feel shame for failing to meet a minimal standard of social acceptability, over fear of exclusion from a particular social group, or at being perceived as an outcast (Lewis, 1992; Rao, 2014). Among a wide range of culture-specific reasons why a woman might feel ashamed or guilt-ridden, the violation of the body ranks as one of the most common (Benedict, 1992; Thapan, 1997). This places rape as a factor which triggers off feeling of shame among victims of such incidents in any society. The

existence of fear of shame among rape victims is prevalent in Nigerian and other African societies. Nigeria as a society that has a shame culture that covertly tolerates rape is reflected in the comments of Okafor-Vanni (2013) who observes that daily in the society, decisions are consciously or unconsciously made which perpetrate the culture of rape, that is, a culture where rape and sexual violence are common and in which prevalent attitudes, norms, societal practices and even the media normalises, excuses or tolerates rape. Okafor-Vanni further observes that numerous cases of rape and gang rape in Nigeria go unreported while the few that get reported to the authorities are either not pursued by the police or the victim is advised to keep silent lest she disgraces her family. Kalu (2004) writes that in many parts of Africa, violence against women is a common phenomenon, occurring in various forms and often engraved in the psyche of women as an inevitable part of womanhood. Shame and rape culture are prevalent in most African societies.

Incidents of Rape in Nigeria: An Overview

The rate at which incidents of rape occur in our society today is becoming not only alarming but outrageous. Statistics have it that in Lagos alone, 678 cases of rape were reported in 2012, which is an average of two cases per day (Musbau, 2013, p. 53). No fewer than 100 cases of rape were equally recorded in Kano courts in 2013 alone out of which only 40 offenders were convicted. In Anambra, some NGOs working on sexual violence recorded 115 incidents and complaints on rape but only 12 cases taken up with the police while none of them was successfully prosecuted (Guardian Newspaper, Friday February 7, 2014, page 20). Perhaps, the most goose-pimple raising incident of rape was the recent incestuous rape of a 60 year old mother at the Ajabamidele area of Ado Ekiti by her own 21 year old son, Akintumde Omotehinde. One is the most likely to ask at this juncture, why are the cases of rape on the increase in the Nigerian society today. Oduah (2014, p. 10) gives the following as factors that bring about increased cases of rape in Nigeria; gaps in the country's laws and stringent burden of proof placed on victims and prosecutors; Stigmatization; Unnecessary delays in the judicial system; Corruption in the judiciary; Family ties (where cases of child rape and/or rape are committed against victims by their close relatives following which the family members more often than not decide not to report these crimes to the police for prosecution owing to consanguinity or family ties); Intimidation and fear of attacks (where victims of rape are more often than not afraid of reporting the rapists for fear of attacks by some of these rapists who sometimes are deadly and fiendish); and Indecent dressing by girls and carelessness on the part of parents. It is important to note that failure to prove any of the above ingredient of rape means that the accused will be exculpated even when the crime was, in fact committed. This is disheartening. Musbau (2013, p. 53) satirically regrets the situation thus:

Rape culprits are having a field day because the onus of proof lies only with the victims. The victim is the one that must provide the bed sheet used to rape her. She must provide her pant and not wash herself before going to the police station and the hospital even when it is sure that there would be delay in getting and presenting the report of medical tests because of the nature of our health facilities.

Research method

The content analysis and interview methods were adopted for this study. Content analysis as a research method was found apt and suitable for this study because the method involves the assessment and evaluation of newspaper coverage of rape cases in Nigeria.

The population of interest for this study consists of editions of *The Guardian*, *Daily Sun* and *Vanguard* newspapers published between June 2013 and May 2014 which covers one year. To arrive at the population of this study, the number of days/editions of newspapers that make up one year are multiplied into three to cover the three newspapers used for this study. Hence the population of this study was 1095 editions. In order to determine the sample size for this study, the Taro Yarmane's formula was adopted. The Taro Yarmane's formula was adopted in order to obtain the sample size since the population of this study is already.

The Taro Yarmane's formula for the determination of the sample size where the population is known is as follows:

$$S = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where S = Sample size

N = Given population

e = Margin of error

I = Constant

Using the above formula, a sample size of editions of the three newspapers was arrived at.

Apart from the above, the systematic sampling was equally adopted in selecting the samples of the newspapers studied. Applying the staggering list order, the months of the year were listed and the six(6) months were systematically selected using an interval of every two months commencing from June 2013 and purposively three days in a weeks – Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursday were selected.

Units of analysis and the corresponding content categories

The units of analysis and the manifest content of the selected newspapers which this study examined are:

1. Frequency/regularity of rape cases in the Nigerian newspaper
2. Form of coverage
3. Direction of coverage/slant
4. Story source

1. Frequency: This refers to number of times stories on rape incidents appeared in the selected newspapers.

2. Form of coverage: The form of coverage refers to the way the story was reported or presented. Forms of coverage were categorized into Straight news story, Editorials, Feature stories, Opinion articles/columns, Letters, Advertorials/supplements, Cartoons, Photo news, Public enlightenment campaigns.

3. Story source: By story source, it meant the person from whom the story was obtained. Thus, in this study, story source refers to the person from whom the rape story or news came to be known to the public. Hence, the story sources in this work were categorized as:

- a) The rape victims themselves
- b) Family members of the rape victims – father, mother, relations etc.
- c) The police
- d) Courts
- e) Eye witnesses
- f) Groups – FIDA, NGOs etc.

4. Story Frame: This refers to the way words were used to create a perception or understanding of the stories on rape read by the audience. The following frames were used in analyzing the reports on rape in the selected newspapers: innocence frame: reports indicating that the rape victim was innocent of the crime; neutral frame: a report which simply reported the crime without using words suggestive of the victim being innocent or indirectly responsible for attracting the crime to herself; intimidation frame: reports which used words indicating that the police or law enforcement agents intimidated the rape victim in anyway by asking her questions that may have made her feel that reporting the incident was a bad idea; and responsibility/blame frame: stories using words suggesting that the rape victim was directly or indirectly responsible for attracting the rape incident to herself, where for instance, sources are quoted in the report accusing the rape victim of wearing an indecent cloth or being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Frames have been used to study media coverage of rape incidents. Steeves (1992) studied framing patterns supportive of patriarchal or feminist ideologies of rape in selected Kenyan publications.

Inter-coder reliability

In inter-coder reliability, where there exists 75% similarity in their independent coding, it means that the coding as done and obtained can be relied upon. However, where there is below 45% similarity, the coding guide is assumed to be unreliable and therefore cannot be conveniently or reliably used or depended upon. Hence, the inter-coder reliability for this study was calculated using Holstis formula.

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N_1 + N_2}$$

Where

M = Number of coding decisions on which two coders agree

$N_1 + N_2$ = Total number of coding decisions by first and second coder respectively.

The inter-coder reliability yielded .75 coefficient showing that the instrument had internal consistency.

Result

The data as gathered or generated from content analyzing the three newspapers, Guardian, Vanguard and the Daily Sun are presented and analyzed in this section.

Table 1: The frequency at which Nigerian newspapers report rape cases as presented by the Guardian, Vanguard and Daily Sun newspapers from June 2013 – May 2014

Newspaper	June	Aug	Oct	Dec	Feb	April	Total
Guardian	2	0	1	2	1	2	8
Vanguard	4	3	4	2	1	2	16
Daily Sun	4	5	8	8	3	5	33
Total	10	8	13	12	5	9	57

Table 1 above shows the rate at which the Nigerian newspapers report rape cases as depicted by the three Nigerian newspapers, namely, the Guardian, Vanguard and the Sun newspapers.

The table shows that from June 2013 to April 2014, the three selected newspapers reported rape cases fifty-seven(57) times. In June 2013, a total of ten(10) reported cases of rape were contained in the three selected Nigerian newspapers in June 2013. In August 2013, a total of eight (8) reported cases of rape were contained in the three selected Nigerian newspapers in August 2013. In October 2013, a total of thirteen (13) reported cases of rape were contained in the three selected Nigerian newspapers in October 2013. In December 2013, the three selected Nigerian newspapers reported rape cases twelve (12) times in December 2013. In February

2013, a total of five(5) reported cases of rape were contained in the three selected Nigerian newspapers. Finally in April 2013, a total of nine (9) reported cases of rape were contained in the three selected Nigerian newspapers in April 2013. This means that the Daily Sun newspaper reported rape cases most than the other selected newspapers within the period under study while the Guardian was least in reportage of rape cases within the period under study.

Table 2: Form of coverage of rape cases in the Nigerian newspapers as presented by the Guardian, Vanguard and Daily Sun newspapers from June 2013 – May 2014

Newspaper	Straight	Editorials	Features	Opinion Article	Cartoons	Others	Total
Guardian	3	1	2	1	0	1	8
Vanguard	11	1	2	2	0	1	16
Daily Sun	23	2	3	3	1	1	33
Total	37	4	7	6	1	3	57

Table 2 above shows the form of coverage of rape cases in Nigerian newspapers from June 2013 – May 2014. It shows that out of the fifty-seven (57) cases of reported cases of rape, thirty seven (37) of them were reported to the people in the straight news forms. Out of this thirty seven(37) reported cases of rape in straight news forms, the Guardian, Vanguard and Daily Sun newspapers had three(3), eleven(11) and twenty three(23) respectively. Again, a total of four (4) cases of rape were reported by the three selected Nigerian newspapers in editorial form. The Guardian, Vanguard and the Daily Sun respectively had the ratio as one (1), one(1) and two(2). Feature stories relating to rape as reported by the three Nigerian newspapers within the period under review were seven (7). Both the Guardian and the Vanguard newspapers each reported rape cases using feature form twice while the Daily Sun reported rape cases in feature form three(3) times. Equally, the table above shows that within the period under review, rape related stories that came in form of opinion articles were respectively one(1), two(2) and three(3) for the Guardian, Vanguard and the Daily Sun newspapers making it a total of six(6) rape related cases expressed through opinion articles. For cartoons, only one case of rape related case appeared in the Daily Sun newspaper within the period under review. The result presented above shows that most rape cases as reported by the Nigerian newspapers as depicted by the three Nigerian newspapers of Guardian, Vanguard and Daily Sun appear in straight news forms. On the contrary, the result presented above shows that the least or seldom used form of reporting rape cases by the Nigerian newspapers are cartoon.

Table 3: Story source of reported cases of rape in the Nigerian newspapers as presented by the Guardian, Vanguard and Daily Sun newspapers from June 2013 – May 2014

Newspaper	Victim	Family Members	Police	Eye Witness	Court	NGO's	Total
Guardian	2	4	1	0	1	0	8
Vanguard	5	8	1	0	1	1	16
Daily Sun	6	20	2	0	3	2	33
Total	13	32	4	0	5	3	57

Table 3 above shows the sources of reported cases of rape in the Nigerian newspapers from June 2013 – May 2014. In other words, the table shows those who brought the rape cases to the knowledge of the public. The study shows that out of the fifty-seven(57) reported cases of rape from June 2013 – May 2014, thirteen(13) were reported or made known to the public by the victims themselves while thirty-two(32) of the cases were reported by family members of the victims. Other sources of stories on rape as revealed from the study are police(4), eyewitnesses(0), court(5), Non-Governmental Organizations(3). It follows, therefore, that most cases of rape reported by the Nigerian newspapers have their origin or source from the relations of victims, which include victims' parents, aunts, uncles etc.

Table 4: Framing of rape stories/cases as reported in the three Nigerian newspapers, the Guardian, Vanguard and Daily Sun newspapers from June 2013 – May 2014

Newspaper	Responsibility /Blame Frame	Innocence Frame	Neutral Frame	Avoidance Frame	Intimidation Frame	Total
Guardian	0	3	2	1	2	8
Vanguard	1	9	2	2	2	16
Daily Sun	2	20	5	3	3	33
Total	3	32	9	6	7	57

In the table above, from a total of fifty-seven(57) reported cases of rape, most of the newspapers used in this study adopted the innocence frame as thirty-two(32) stories were written using the innocence frame. This is followed by the neutral frame which has nine(9) out of fifty-seven(57) reported rape cases. Others include intimidation frame(7), avoidance frame (6) and the least being the responsibility/blame frame(3). In summary, therefore, the innocence frame form of reportage of rape cases forms the most used form of frame by the

Nigerian newspapers as exemplified by *The Guardian*, *Vanguard* and *Daily Sun* newspapers. On the contrary, the responsibility frame form or angle of reportage of rape cases is the least used by Nigerian newspapers.

Result from Interview with rape victims

Eleven rape victims in Anambra state (one of the Southeastern states in Nigeria) were interviewed for this study. This was basically done with a view to confirming whether the victims reported their cases to the police or whether they avoided making the matter known the police or other authorities due to fear of physical or media revictimisation. Eleven rape victims were interviewed for this study. Ten of the victims were between 8 and 16 years old while one victim was a 21-year-old university undergraduate. All the cases were reported by the relations of the victims. The rape incidents which the victims were involved in took place between January to August 2014. Only three of the eleven cases were not reported to the police. The interview with rape victims was conducted by persons who had worked with the rape victims in seeking justice. This was because the rape victims were unwilling to speak with the researchers or any other person on the incidents and preferred to keep the cases confidential. The people who assisted the researchers in conducting the interviews are a journalist with Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), Awka, Anambra State who spoke with four rape victims she investigated their cases, a lawyer who spoke with two victims he assisted in settling their cases out of court, a police officer who spoke with four victims he investigated their cases, and a lady who spoke with a victim she reported her incident to security personnel. These interviewers spoke with the victims at their homes, each interview not lasting more than 30 minutes. The victims and their relations told the researchers that they were unwilling to go to the court or to the press to report the incidents basically because of the stigma attached to victims of such incidents by the society. The victims, according to the interviews, avoided going public with the cases because of fear of stigma and social discrimination in the society, not fear of physical or media revictimisation. The relations of the victims told the researchers that reporting the matter to the police gave the victims' families enough assurance of protection from physical revictimisation.

Discussion of findings

The present study explored media framing and representation of rape cases in Nigeria in selected Nigerian newspapers – *The Guardian*, *Vanguard* and *Daily Sun*. The study was hinged on the social responsibility and agenda setting theories. Six research questions were raised and the results obtained from the analysis are discussed thus: On research question one which is on the frequency at which Nigerian newspapers report cases of rape, it was found out that most Nigerian newspapers seldom report rape cases. The *Daily Sun* newspaper, however,

tops the list of Nigerian newspapers in the reportage of rape cases as the newspaper reported rape cases thirty-three (33) times out of the total number of fifty-seven (57) reported cases of rape during the period under study. This affirms the study of Musbau (2013) which found out that an average of two rape cases occur per day in Lagos, Nigeria alone. Thus, if an average of two rape cases occur daily in Lagos, Nigeria alone and only fifty-seven(57) are reported in one year which the study covers, it deductively shows low reportage of rape cases by Nigerian newspapers. However, this may be as a result of the unwillingness of rape victims to report such cases to security personnel or the press, as confirmed in the interviews with rape victims carried out as part of this study. According to Okafo-Vanni (2013), there are numerous cases of rape and gang rape in Nigeria, yet many go unreported; the few that get reported to the authorities are either not pursued by the police or the victim is advised to keep silent lest she disgraces her family. The interview aspect of this study revealed that most rape cases are reported to the police by the victims' relations. These victims' relations were even unwilling to do so but had to go to the police because of the need to protect the victims from possible physical victimization. Stigma and social discrimination in the society accounted for the unwillingness to make rape cases a press affair, according to the interviews with rape victims. On research question two, which is on the dominant story or form of coverage of rape cases in Nigeria, the study found out that most Nigerian newspapers report cases of rape in straight news form. The implication of this is that investigative and explanatory stories on rape incidents presented in feature story format are lacking in these newspapers. This gives reports on rape a predictable pattern. According to Joseph (2008, p. 262): Mainstream media coverage of rape over the past quarter of a century has generally conformed to a predictable pattern: long spells of routine reports regularly, if randomly, culled from police handouts, broken by brief periods of intensive and extensive coverage catalyzed by one or more cases that happen to grab the imagination of the media and the public—usually in that order. (p. 262) Feature story stories would provide opportunity for indepth coverage of rape cases, with details presentation of facts, how the victims were attacked, the news behind the news, interpretation of such incidents, and what law enforcement agents are doing. The provides platform for informative story contents beyond the skeletal straight news presentation of rape cases. On the Nigerian newspaper placement of rape cases, the study found out that considering the front, back and inside pages of Nigerian newspapers, most Nigerian newspapers as typified by the three selected Nigerian newspapers – *The Guardian*, *Vanguard* and *Daily Sun* newspapers, place most of their rape related cases or report inside the pages of their newspapers, thus, denying them prominence. This agrees with the position of Agaba (2013) who posit that the increase in the rate of rape cases in Nigeria may not be unconnected with the culture of “brotherliness, spirit of forgiveness and non-placement of priority and prominence” in the reportage of rape cases. On the research question pertaining to the source

of rape cases as reported in the Nigerian newspapers, this study found out that most cases of rape as reported by the Nigerian newspapers have their origin or source from the relations of victims which include victim's parents, aunts, uncles etc. This was confirmed by both the content analysis and interview aspects of this study. Thus, many victims of rape do not report or divulge these rape incidents committed against them. This observation was supported by results from interview with rape victims which revealed that most of the victims' cases were reported to the police by the victims' relations. This no doubt confirms the findings of Ifeacho (2012) who stated that victims of rape would rather wish to nurse their wounds alone instead of reporting their ordeals and end up being stigmatized by the same society that ought to come to their rescue. This also confirms similar finding after a study on violence against women in Nepal which revealed that women who had been sexually assaulted were the least likely to seek help (Government of Nepal, 2012). The unwillingness of rape victims to report such incidents buttresses the existence of a shame culture which stigmatizes these victims in most societies across the globe. Culture-specific reasons could explain why a woman might feel ashamed or guilt-ridden, but the violation of the body ranks as one of the most common (Benedict, 1992; Thapan, 1997). Lastly on the framings used by the Nigerian newspapers in their reportage of rape cases in Nigeria, this study found that in most of the cases of rape as reported by the Nigerian newspapers, the innocence frame is the most predominantly used form of reportage of rape cases in Nigeria as the rape victims are portrayed as innocent of the crime committed against them. This study also found that in some cases, though rare, the victims of rape are re-victimized by the Nigerian newspapers in their reportage of rape cases as these victims are painted as being responsible for their ordeals by being in the wrong place at the wrong time or wearing what they shouldn't wear. Though the revictimisation frame was rare (only 3 stories out of 57 studied), the existence of such reports supports the postulation by Gqola (2006) that the idea that a woman should not have been wearing a kind of provocative dressing or should not have been walking alone at a particular time and place is often used to by the media to revictimise rape victims. Rao (2014) after a study of journalists in India revealed that the journalists interviewed were consistent in stating that the television news media both countered and perpetuated the portrayal of rape victim as a shamed woman. While some journalists vocally critiqued the persistent victim shaming in perpetrated by politicians, religious leaders, and bureaucrats in India, others stated that the news media continued to bring shame to the victim by focusing on her rather than the perpetrators. With specific reference to Nigeria, Okafor-Vanni (2013) observes that everyday people make decisions consciously or unconsciously that perpetrate the culture of rape, that is, a culture where rape and sexual violence are common and in which prevalent attitudes, norms, societal practices and even the media normalises, excuses or tolerates rape.

Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that cases that bothered on rape are reported by Nigerian newspapers but the degree of coverage by the three selected Nigerian newspapers is minimal especially the Guardian newspaper coverage of rape cases. While most of the reported cases in the three selected newspapers appeared in straight news report, very few editorials on rape were run; again, the three newspapers “the Guardian, Vanguard and the Daily Sun” placed most of their news stories on rape inside their newspapers than at the front or back pages. In some cases, the newspapers end up re-victimizing the rape victims by ascribing or making them appear responsible for their trauma. The study also revealed that most rape victims do not report these cases for fear of societal stigmatization, and it is the relations of these victims of rape that most often are the sources that bring the crime to the knowledge of the society.

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