

CRISIS COMMUNICATION FRAMES IN AL JAZEERA AND SELECT NIGERIAN TELEVISION STATIONS

EZE, GEORGE OGAZI MANI (PhD)

(ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-6765-6123>);

george.eze@iaue.ng

ONYESO, PRINCE IKEOKWU NWAOKUGHA (PhD)

(ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-90194-2>);

prince.onyeo@iaue.edu.ng

OKEH AZUBUIKE (PhD)

Department of Mass Communication,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education,
Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

(ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-9201-155x>);

azubuike.okeh@iaue.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

This study explored crisis communication frames, how they were created, negotiated, and shared by Al Jazeera and a select Nigerian television stations when covering significant national and international crises. Grounded in framing theory and critical media studies, the paper explored the narrative structures, word choices, visual elements, and ideological foundations that shaped crisis reporting in these two media landscapes. Through qualitative content analysis, the research examined broadcast segments on political unrest, security issues, and humanitarian crises, paying special attention to how frames of responsibility, conflict, human interest, and solutions were utilised. Al Jazeera's global perspective was evaluated in terms of its focus on worldwide power dynamics, underlying structural causes, and storytelling that centers on human experiences, while Nigerian television stations were analysed for their context-specific framing practices, institutional limitations, and political biases. This comparative approach revealed differences in editorial independence, patterns of crisis attribution, and the relationship between state interests and journalistic standards. The findings suggest that Al Jazeera often

highlights explanatory and accountability frames, while Nigerian stations tend to lean on reactive, elite-driven, and episodic narratives influenced by political sensitivities and resource constraints. This study adds to the body of knowledge on crisis communication in the Global South and sheds light on how media systems shape public understanding, affect risk perception, and influence crisis responses. It was concluded by emphasising the importance of building capacity in Nigerian broadcast journalism to improve evidence-based, ethically sound, and audience-focused crisis reporting.

Keywords: *Al Jazeera, Broadcast Journalism, Crisis Communication, Media Framing, Nigerian Television*

INTRODUCTION

Crises whether they're political, security-related, environmental, or humanitarian bring about moments of intense uncertainty where the media plays a crucial role in shaping how the public understands the situation, perceives risks, and influences government responses. Research on crisis communication highlights how important media framing is in constructing our reality during these disruptions. News organisations tend to spotlight certain aspects of a crisis while leaving others in the shadows (Entman, 1993). In today's global media landscape, transnational broadcasters like Al Jazeera have emerged as key players, often sharing crisis narratives that cross national borders and cultural divides, thus impacting international agenda-setting (Seib, 2012). On the flip side, national broadcasters, especially in transitional democracies, face a web of political and institutional challenges that significantly influence how they report on crises (Voltmer, 2013).

In Nigeria, television stations hold a vital yet contentious role in crisis communication. Scholars have pointed out that the Nigerian media landscape is marked by political parallelism, ownership influences, and varying levels of professional capacity, all of which shape how crises are framed (Uche, 1989; Oso, 2012). Research shows that local broadcasters often focus on episodic and event-driven coverage, giving more weight to elite voices and government viewpoints (Adams, 2020). This stands in contrast to global networks like Al Jazeera, which typically weave in thematic frames, structural explanations, and human-centered stories, offering a richer interpretive context during crises (Figenschou, 2014).

Comparing Al Jazeera with Nigerian television stations is crucial for grasping how different media systems handle crises and what that means for public trust, democratic accountability, and social stability. This kind of comparative analysis really sheds light on how journalistic standards, institutional pressures, and

sociopolitical contexts interact, ultimately pushing forward the conversation about crisis communication in the Global South. This study adds to that growing body of work by examining the framing strategies used by media organisations during specific crisis events.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Crisis reporting is one of the toughest challenges in modern journalism, yet it carries immense weight. In many situations, the way crises are presented can either calm public fears or heighten tensions, shaping how people perceive events and how authorities react (Coombs, 2014). Even though there's been an increase in research on crisis communication, we still lack a solid comparative understanding of how global news networks and national broadcasters in the Global South create crisis narratives. There are notable gaps in analysing how Al Jazeera, a transnational broadcaster with a worldwide audience, and Nigerian television stations, which operate in a politically charged and resource-limited environment, frame similar crisis situations.

Research on Nigerian media shows ongoing challenges like political interference, ownership influence, limited investigative capabilities, and a heavy reliance on official sources. These issues often result in superficial, episodic, and event-focused crisis reporting (Oso, 2012; Adeyemi, 2021). Such systemic constraints make it difficult for Nigerian broadcasters to adopt the interpretive, accountability-driven, and human-interest frames that are crucial for effective crisis communication. On the other hand, studies on Al Jazeera point out its focus on structural causes, power dynamics, and contextual depth when reporting on global crises, although it too has faced criticism regarding its ideological stance and geopolitical influence (Figenschou, 2014; Zayani, 2018).

As a result, there's a lack of empirical evidence on how the framing strategies of the way these two media systems differ and what those differences mean for public understanding, national security discussions, and democratic communication is quite significant. This study aims to fill that gap by carefully examining the crisis communication strategies used by Al Jazeera and Nigerian television stations. In doing so, it offers valuable insights into how media performs and manages crises in different communication settings.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the crisis communication frames employed by Al Jazeera and selected Nigerian television stations in reporting major national and transnational crises.
2. To compare the narrative structures, visual cues, and lexical choices used by both media systems in framing crisis events.

3. To analyse the ideological, institutional and contextual factors influencing crisis reportage across Al Jazeera and Nigerian television stations.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What crisis communication frames are predominantly used by Al Jazeera and Nigerian television stations in their reporting of major crisis events?
2. How do the narrative styles, visual elements and linguistic choices differ between Al Jazeera and Nigerian television stations in framing crises?
3. What institutional, political and contextual dynamics shape the crisis reporting practices of Al Jazeera and Nigerian television stations?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Framing Theory: Entman (1993), suggests that the media don't just report on events; they actively construct reality by highlighting specific aspects of an issue, making them more prominent in their narratives. Frames can spotlight problems, identify causes, make moral judgments, and propose solutions. This is particularly important in crisis situations, where audiences rely heavily on media narratives to make sense of uncertainty and risk (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Al Jazeera, with its global editorial approach, is known for using thematic, interpretive, and accountability frames, while Nigerian television stations often depend on episodic, official-source-driven frames due to institutional limitations (Oso, 2012; Figenschou, 2014).

Thus, Framing Theory serves as a valuable analytical tool for exploring how different media systems emphasize conflict, responsibility, human interest, or solutions in crisis reporting, and how these emphases reveal deeper ideological, political, and organizational influences.

Crisis Communication Theory: Crisis Communication Theory, especially the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) developed by Coombs (2007), posits that the narratives surrounding crises shape public perceptions of responsibility, organizational reputation, and the legitimacy of responses. The media play a crucial role in crafting these narratives, acting as a bridge between those involved in the crisis and the public. Researchers argue that effective crisis communication should aim to provide clarity, alleviate uncertainty, and build trust (Seeger, 2006).

In the context of Nigerian media, crises are frequently framed through the lens of political elites and government agencies, which can significantly impact public trust and shape interpretations of responsibility (Adeyemi, 2021). Al Jazeera's framing strategies, on the other hand, frequently contextualise crises within broader geopolitical or structural drivers, influencing global opinion and diplomatic

discourse (Zayani, 2018).

By weaving together Framing Theory and Crisis Communication Theory, this study delves into not just the frames that are employed, but also how these frames impact the larger communicative landscape of crisis interpretation across both transnational and national media systems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Framing and Media Construction of Crisis

Framing theory serves as the essential toolkit for grasping how media influences public perceptions of crises. Entman's (1993) pivotal idea suggests that frames work by highlighting specific aspects of reality, making them more prominent, which helps define problems, assign blame, offer moral judgments, and propose solutions. Building on this, Iyengar (1991) differentiates between episodic and thematic frames: episodic frames focus on individual events and actors, while thematic frames place these events within a broader structural or historical context. This distinction is crucial in crisis situations because episodic coverage often leads to a focus on individual responsibility and quick fixes, while thematic coverage promotes a deeper, systemic analysis and encourages long-term policy solutions (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

The situational and normative aspects of framing in crisis communication are also well recognised. Coombs' Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) emphasises how the content of messages can shape perceptions of responsibility and affect reputational outcomes during crises (Coombs, 2007). Seeger (2006) and others highlight that effective crisis communication, whether from media or organisations utilising media should aim to reduce uncertainty, provide actionable insights, and build trust. Research shows that frames that signal accountability and highlight structural factors tend to generate a stronger public demand for institutional solutions with frames that foreground accident or misfortune (Chong & Druckman, 2007; Coombs, 2014).

TRANSNATIONAL BROADCASTERS AND GLOBAL FRAMING PRACTICES

Transnational news organisations play a unique role in the media landscape: they connect local crises to global audiences and often reinterpret national events using international standards and language (Seib, 2012). Al Jazeera, in particular, has drawn significant scholarly interest due to its editorial stance, storytelling techniques, and geopolitical context. Researchers have observed that Al Jazeera often uses thematic and human-interest angles, tying local crises to broader regional

power dynamics and underlying structural issues (Figenschou, 2014; Zayani, 2018). However, it's important to note that these transnational outlets aren't ideologically neutral; their editorial decisions reflect their institutional goals, funding sources, and strategic geopolitical considerations, which ultimately shape the frames they choose (Zayani, 2018).

NATIONAL BROADCASTERS IN TRANSITIONAL DEMOCRACIES: THE NIGERIAN CASE

Research on Nigerian broadcasting highlights persistent structural challenges that influence news content and crisis reporting. The media landscape in Nigeria is characterised by political alignment, ownership ties to elite interests, and varying levels of professional capacity, which often lead to a reliance on official sources, sporadic reporting, and limited investigative journalism (Uche, 1989; Oso, 2012). Recent analyses indicate that political sensitivities, regulatory pressures, and economic instability further encourage cautious journalism, especially when covering issues related to security or governance crises (Voltmer, 2013; Adeyemi, 2021). Studies on Nigerian television coverage have revealed a tendency towards narratives driven by elites and event-centered frames that prioritise government voices over those of affected communities (Adams, 2020).

VISUAL AND MULTIMODAL FRAMING IN BROADCAST JOURNALISM

Broadcast journalism merges spoken language with visual elements, music, and editing styles, making framing in television inherently multimodal. Visual framing explores how shot selection, camera angles, graphic design, and survivor imagery can really enhance specific interpretive frames (Messaris, 1997; Bell, 1991). In times of crisis, the visual choices we make, like opting for close-ups of victims instead of wide shots of chaos can significantly influence empathy, the perceived severity of the situation, and even spur calls for action. Research focusing on television news in the Global South highlights that various constraints be they technical, financial, or editorial often limits the depth of visual storytelling, even when the editorial intent leans towards more interpretive reporting (Plaisance & Skewes, 2017).

When it comes to agenda-setting, public perception, and trust, the research delves into how the prioritisation of media influences what issues resonate with the public (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). During crises, the effects of agenda-setting become even more pronounced: what the media chooses to highlight often dictates policy importance and public concern. Trust in media institutions plays a crucial role here; audiences in environments where broadcasters are seen as aligned with political elites might dismiss media frames or turn to alternative sources, like social media and diaspora outlets (Norris, 2000; Tandoc & Johnson, 2016). Studies on crisis

communication stress the need for media to strike a balance between speed and accuracy while providing context that fosters civic resilience (Seeger, 2006).

The emergence of social media has added layers of complexity to traditional broadcast dominance in crisis communication. Social platforms serve as both resources for broadcasters and as competing channels where official narratives can be challenged in real time (Hermida, 2012). For Nigerian television broadcasters, social media offers a double-edged sword: it provides user-generated content and eyewitness footage, but also brings the challenges of misinformation and mobilised publics, which require new gatekeeping strategies and verification efforts (Allan & Thorsen, 2009).

While the existing literature thoroughly examines framing processes in both transnational and national media, comparative analysis is still needed to fully understand these dynamics clear that there's a scarcity of comparative empirical studies that directly compare how Al Jazeera frames events versus Nigerian television stations during similar crisis situations. Additionally, we really need to weave in recent local research that digs into governance discussions and the behaviour of elites as part of the media framing landscape. For instance, Eze's recent critical analysis of governance discourses provides some valuable insights. In his 2025 work, Eze explores the shift from “kakistocracy” to Afrocentric governance, shedding light on how political narratives shape public conversations and the legitimacy of institutions. By incorporating such studies, we can better grasp how media frames are intertwined with larger sociopolitical narratives and visions of governance.

Empirical reviews on ongoing scholarly discussions about media imperialism and postcolonial communication continue to influence how crisis narratives are perceived in both global and national media landscapes. The media imperialism theory posits that transnational news organisations often reflect the political, cultural, and ideological biases of their home countries, which in turn affects how crises in the Global South are portrayed and understood. Even platforms like Al Jazeera, which aim to challenge dominant narratives, still function within global information hierarchies where narrative power is unevenly distributed. This disparity often shows up in how certain crises are prioritised over others, the choice of when we look at African conflicts through geopolitical lenses, it's clear that the way Global South actors are portrayed is heavily influenced by the overarching narratives shaped by global politics.

Postcolonial communication scholars argue that the way crises are discussed in the media is deeply rooted in the legacies of imperialism, global governance, and the dominance of certain ways of knowing (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1990). Framing, in this

context, goes beyond just journalism; it's part of a larger battle over which voices are heard, amplified, or silenced. The lingering effects of imperial discourse continue to influence how African crises are reported in global media, which is why local broadcasters often resort to defensive, state-focused, or legitimacy-seeking frames (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986; Wasserman, 2018).

In Nigeria, these historical imperial influences blend with current political and media landscapes, creating a mixed communication environment where local narratives might push back against, adapt to, or even embrace global discursive trends. This mix is crucial for understanding the differences between how Al Jazeera frames issues compared to Nigerian television stations.

Eze's (2025) exploration of Political Pulpitry discourse provides a valuable perspective for examining how political leadership, rhetoric, and moral authority shape media narratives during crises. In his study of communication in Nigerian governance, Eze points out that political figures often take on a pulpit-like role, what he calls "political pulpitism" to assert their moral authority, justify government actions, and influence public opinion (Eze, 2025). This Pulpitry communication frequently intersects with media framing, as broadcasters either echo, reinterpret, or challenge these political narratives in their coverage of crises.

On the flip side, Al Jazeera's distance from Nigerian political structures allows it to step outside this typical communication style, giving it the freedom to adopt more critical or structural perspectives. However, as Eze points out, these pulpit-like rhetorical strategies aren't just a Nigerian phenomenon; they appear in global political communication as well, albeit in different cultural and institutional contexts.

Moreso, Eze's work (2025) on Media narratives, image crisis and the de-marketing Rivers State in context of political instability is essential for understanding why Nigerian broadcasters might frame crises through the lens of elite moral authority and nationalistic rhetoric, while Al Jazeera tends to focus on human-interest stories, geopolitical analysis, or institutional accountability. The critique of imperial media and again Eze's theory of political pulpitism shed light on how crisis communication functions at the crossroads of global power dynamics, national political culture, and institutional limitations. They emphasise that the way crises are framed is neither neutral nor coincidental; instead, it reflects deeper ideological and historical influences that shape how both transnational and national broadcasters convey meaning during crises.

Research consistently shows that media framing has a significant impact on public perception, trust, and behaviour during crises. Coombs and Holladay (2012) illustrate that crisis coverage assigning responsibility to organisations or

governments can shape how audiences perceive the situation and influence reputational outcomes. Similarly, Kim and Liu (2012) found that thematic frames in crisis reporting, those that provide context, structural explanations, and human-interest angles encourage audiences to think about systemic solutions rather than placing blame on individuals. In contrast, episodic frames often lead to a shallow understanding and reinforce quick, reactionary interpretations (Iyengar, 1991).

In a cross-national context, Figenschou (2014) carried out a content analysis of Al Jazeera English's reporting on crises in the Middle East. He found that the network often highlights human-interest frames, structural explanations, and narratives of accountability, which stand in stark contrast to the state-aligned or event-driven coverage that's common in many local newsrooms. This indicates that editorial independence and the institutional orientation play a significant role in shaping how crises are framed.

Empirical studies focusing on Nigerian broadcast journalism reveal ongoing structural and political challenges that impact crisis coverage. Oso and Omotayo (2012) looked into how political violence is reported on Nigerian television and discovered a tendency towards episodic, government-centric frames that often push citizen voices and structural issues to the sidelines. Similarly, Adams (2020) pointed out that Nigerian stations frequently give priority to elite viewpoints and reactive reporting, especially during politically charged crises. In security situations, like the Boko Haram attacks, Adeyemi (2021) noted that local broadcasters often concentrate on immediate events and official statements, which limits deeper contextual analysis and audience involvement.

Research also indicates that the relationship between political ties and media ownership influences frame selection. Ugwu (2018) emphasised that government influence and commercial pressures shape broadcast content, often leading to conservative frames that preserve legitimacy and reduce scrutiny of official responses. This aligns with Eze's (2025) idea of political pulpitory, where media reflect the performative authority of political elites in shaping public discourse.

There are few studies that have directly compared transnational and national media in crisis situations. A comparative content analysis by Tandoc and Maitra (2018) on natural disaster coverage in Asia revealed that international outlets tended to focus on thematic and explanatory frames, while domestic media often opted for episodic and localised reporting. This trend aligns with findings in African media studies. For instance, Figenschou and Maralack (2018) noted that Al Jazeera's coverage of African crises consistently offered a broader geopolitical and structural context, in contrast to local media that frequently echoed official government narratives.

Research also highlights the significance of visual and multimodal elements in crisis

reporting. Bell (1991) and Messaris (1997) contend that visual framing encompassing imagery, graphics, and editing has a profound impact on how audiences interpret information. In Nigeria, Plaisance and Skewes (2017) showed that visual limitations, such as restricted camera access and limited coverage of crisis sites, often hinder broadcasters from providing nuanced framing, which in turn reinforces event-focused, episodic narratives.

While previous studies have documented framing practices in both transnational and Nigerian media, there's still a lack of comparative research, especially studies that systematically analyse Al Jazeera and Nigerian television during the same crisis events. Additionally, there's a scarcity of recent Nigerian scholarship that delves into the political, cultural, and public dimensions influencing frame selection (Eze, 2025). This study aims to fill those gaps by examining both verbal and visual framing strategies across selected crises, shedding light on their implications for public understanding, trust, and crisis governance.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative, explanatory research design to explore how crisis communication frames were constructed by Al Jazeera and select Nigerian television stations. The explanatory approach was fitting because the research aimed not just to describe framing practices but also to analyse the institutional, political, and contextual factors that shaped these practices (Yin, 2014). The study used purposive sampling to select broadcast that focused on major national and transnational crises that occurred between 2022 and 2025. We selected Al Jazeera English along with three prominent Nigerian television stations such as NTA, Channels TV, and TVC News, because of their extensive audience reach, strong editorial presence, and significance in crisis reporting. Our data sources include video recordings of news bulletins, online archives, and broadcast transcripts, which provide a rich mix of verbal and visual content for our analysis.

We analysed the data using qualitative content analysis, paying special attention to framing structures such as how problems were defined, who was held responsible, moral evaluations, and suggested solutions (Entman, 1993). Both verbal and visual frames were scrutinised to capture the multimodal essence of television reporting. The analysis involved coding for the main types of frames-episodic, thematic, human-interest, conflict, and accountability and identifying patterns across the two media systems.

Moreover, we conducted a comparative analysis to highlight the differences and similarities between Al Jazeera and Nigerian broadcasters, considering factors such as political proximity, institutional constraints, and editorial slant. This explanatory approach helped us connect the observed framing patterns to broader structural, ideological, and cultural influences, aligning with Eze's (2025) notion of political

pulpitary and the discussions surrounding media imperialism and national broadcasting contexts. To ensure the credibility of our findings, we cross-checked coding decisions among multiple researchers and validated our results with secondary literature and official media statements. We adhered to ethical guidelines by using publicly accessible content and striving for objectivity in our interpretations.

DATA PRESENTATION

Table 1: Crisis Coverage by Al Jazeera (2022–2025)

Date	Programme / Report Title	Crisis Focus	Dominant Frame	Brief Description
8 April 2023	Armed groups kill dozens in Nigeria's Benue state	Communal violence / insecurity	Thematic / Accountability	Contextualised analysis linking violence to structural security failures.
14 June 2025	At least 100 people killed in gunmen attack in Nigeria's Benue	Mass killing / humanitarian crisis	Human-interest / Thematic	Emphasis on civilian casualties, displacement, and governance implications.

Table 2: Crisis Coverage by Channels Television (2022–2025)

Date	Programme / Report Title	Crisis Focus	Dominant Frame	Brief Description
11 August 2025	Broadcasters raise alarm over attacks on media practitioners	Press freedom crisis	Conflict / Episodic	Focus on institutional response and immediate professional concerns.
2024	Voices of Peace Campaign Coverage	Conflict resolution initiative	Thematic / Peace Journalism	Highlights peacebuilding efforts and national dialogue.

Table 3: Crisis Coverage by NTA (2022–2025)

Date	Programme / Report Title	Crisis Focus	Dominant Frame	Brief Description
2022–2025	National News Bulletins (Security Reports)	National security / elections / communal clashes	Episodic / Elite-driven	Primarily event-based reporting with official government sources.

Table 4: Crisis Coverage by TVC News (2022–2025)

Date	Programme / Report Title	Crisis Focus	Dominant Frame	Brief Description
2022–2025	Prime Time News – Security and Humanitarian Reports	Security challenges / displacement	Conflict / Episodic	Studio-based reports emphasising political and security dimensions.

Table 5: Crisis Communication Frames in Al Jazeera Coverage

Frame Type	Frequency	Illustrative Description
Thematic	High	Contextualises crises within political, historical and structural factors
Human-interest	Moderate	Focus on victims, displaced persons and humanitarian consequences
Accountability	Moderate	Interrogation of institutional failures and governance responses
Conflict	Moderate	Highlights power struggles and political tensions
Episodic	Low	Brief event-focused reporting without depth

Table 6: Crisis Communication Frames in Nigerian Television Stations

Frame Type	Frequency	Illustrative Description
Episodic	High	Reports crises as isolated incidents with emphasis on immediacy.
Conflict	Moderate	Elite disagreements and political disputes foregrounded.
Human-interest	Low	Limited victim-centred storytelling.
Thematic	Low	Occasional linkage to policy or governance issues.
Accountability	Low	Minimal scrutiny of official actions.

Table 7: A comparative summary of crisis communication framing of Al Jazeera and select Nigerian television stations.

Analytical Dimension	Al Jazeera	Nigerian Television Stations	Interpretive Implication
Dominant Frame Type	Thematic, human-interest and accountability frames dominate	Episodic and elite-driven frames dominate	Indicates deeper contextualisation in Al Jazeera and surface-level reporting in Nigerian TV
Responsibility Attribution	Attributes crises to systemic and institutional failures	Often attributes crises to immediate events or actors	Shapes public perception of accountability and governance
Narrative Depth	High narrative depth with historical and geopolitical context	Limited narrative depth due to political and institutional constraints	Affects audience understanding and critical engagement
Use of Human-interest Frames	Victim-centred storytelling and humanitarian emphasis	Minimal inclusion of victims' perspectives	Influences empathy and public emotional response
Visual Framing	Extensive use of visuals, graphics and field reporting	Reliance on studio reports and official briefings	Determines clarity, engagement and credibility
Accountability Orientation	Critical interrogation of institutions and leadership	Cautious or absent critique of political actors	Reflects differences in editorial autonomy
Institutional Influence	Relatively autonomous transnational editorial structure	Strong influence of political proximity and ownership	Explains divergence in framing Strategies.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The examination of crisis communication frames in Al Jazeera compared to selected Nigerian television stations reveals some striking differences in how they frame issues, the depth of their narratives, the way they visually present information, and their ideological stances. These variations shed light on how different media systems influence public perception during times of uncertainty and crisis.

Nigerian broadcasters predominantly leaned towards episodic framing, portraying crises as standalone events rather than symptoms of deeper, systemic issues. This observation aligns with previous research highlighting the Nigerian media's reliance on official sources and government statements (Oso, 2012; Udom-Isong, 2021). Such a focus on episodic framing tends to limit the depth of interpretation, often hindering the public's understanding of the underlying causes or the broader context of these crises. Additionally, this episodic approach reflects institutional limitations, including a lack of investigative resources, political sensitivities, and the influence of media ownership.

On the other hand, Al Jazeera consistently utilized thematic and human-interest frames, placing crises within wider socio-political and historical contexts. This approach resonates with Figenschou's (2014) insight that Al Jazeera aims to provide alternative narratives to those typically found in Western media. By emphasising the experiences of victims and offering structural explanations, Al Jazeera appears to adopt a deliberate editorial strategy designed to foster global empathy and encourage critical thinking. The inclusion of interviews, eyewitness accounts, and high-quality visuals enriched the narrative, making the crises more understandable beyond just the immediate events.

Al Jazeera also showed a stronger commitment to accountability frames, scrutinizing government actions, institutional shortcomings, and political mismanagement. In contrast, Nigerian stations seldom employed such accountability frames, often echoing official narratives without any critical examination. This difference underscores the explanatory model outlined in the methodology: Nigerian media function within a political landscape where openly criticising state actors could jeopardise their access to the text discusses how censorship pressures can influence media narratives (Eze, 2025; Adesina, 2020). As a result, the way accountability is framed in Nigerian broadcasts often becomes diluted, indirect, or even completely absent.

Both media systems utilised conflict framing, but they had different objectives. Nigerian broadcasters primarily used conflict frames to spotlight political disagreements or disputes among elites, frequently favoring government perspectives. In contrast, Al Jazeera employed conflict frames to shed light on larger power struggles, structural injustices, and geopolitical dynamics. This distinction aligns with Eze's (2025) argument about political pulpitary, which posits that

national media often serve as platforms for elite self-legitimation, influencing public perception in ways that benefit those in power.

The visual strategies further emphasised these framing differences. Al Jazeera's incorporation of graphics, maps, aerial shots, and on-the-ground reporting crafted immersive narratives that bolstered thematic framing. Meanwhile, Nigerian television stations tended to rely more on studio-based reporting, press conferences, and short soundbites, which reflected both resource constraints and established institutional practices. The earlier comparative chart highlights these differences, showing that Al Jazeera frequently employed a wider variety of interpretive frame types.

The findings reveal how institutional, political, and editorial contexts influence crisis framing practices: Al Jazeera enjoys a transnational editorial mandate, greater independence, and a mission to challenge conventional power structures. On the other hand, Nigerian television stations operate under localised constraints, including state influence, ownership pressures, and financial limitations, which restrict their ability to interpret crises broadly.

These trends resonate with larger themes in media theory, such as media imperialism, center-periphery dynamics, and the impact of political communication cultures. In conclusion, the findings clearly illustrate a significant divergence in crisis communication framing between Al Jazeera and Nigerian broadcasters. While Al Jazeera provides some significant differences in how Al Jazeera and Nigerian television stations approach crisis communication. To really grasp these differences, we need to look at the way the data is presented, the research goals, and the theoretical frameworks guiding the analysis specifically, Framing Theory (Entman, 1993) and Crisis Communication Theory (Coombs, 2007). These frameworks help us understand the current discussions around media systems and the cultures of political communication.

From the data, it's clear that Al Jazeera tends to use thematic, human-interest, and accountability frames, while Nigerian broadcasters often stick to episodic and elite-focused narratives. This finding strongly supports Framing Theory, which suggests that media outlets choose specific aspects of a crisis to emphasise, influencing how audiences perceive causes, responsibilities, and moral judgments (Entman, 1993).

Al Jazeera's thematic approach aligns with Figenschou's (2014) observations that the network aims to challenge prevailing global narratives by placing crises within a wider context of structural issues. On the other hand, the reliance of Nigerian stations on episodic framing reflects the work of Oso (2012) and Udom-Isong (2021), who point out that national broadcasters frequently face political, financial, and organisational pressures that restrict their ability to investigate deeply and maintain interpretive independence.

It's also important to consider the institutional contexts in which these broadcasters

operate. Nigerian television stations showed a limited use of accountability frames, and the data indicated a heavy reliance on official sources, briefings, and narratives linked to the state. This trend resonates with Eze's (2025) idea of political pulpity, which suggests that the media often serves the interests of those in power rather than the public. The visual strategies employed really highlighted the differences in framing. Al Jazeera's use of graphics, maps, aerial shots, and on-the-ground reporting crafted immersive stories that enhanced thematic framing of crisis in Nigeria. In contrast, Nigerian television stations leaned more towards studio-based reporting, press conferences, and quick sound bites, which reflect their resource constraints and established routines. The earlier comparative chart backs this up, showing that Al Jazeera had a higher frequency of interpretive frame types.

These findings shed light on how institutional, political, and editorial contexts influence crisis framing practices. Al Jazeera enjoys a transnational editorial mandate, more autonomy, and a mission to challenge traditional power structures. On the other hand, Nigerian television stations operate under localised constraints, including state influence, ownership pressures, and financial limitations, which restrict their ability to interpret crises broadly.

These trends resonate with larger themes in media theory, such as media imperialism, center-periphery dynamics, and the impact of political communication cultures. In summary, the findings reveal a distinct difference in how Al Jazeera and Nigerian broadcasters frame crisis communication. Al Jazeera tends to provide more interpretive, human-centered, and accountability-focused coverage, while Nigerian stations often stick to episodic, official, and elite-protective narratives. These disparities have significant implications for public understanding, democratic engagement, and crisis governance.

DISCUSSION

This study's findings highlight the notable differences in how Al Jazeera and Nigerian television stations construct their crisis communication frames. To fully grasp these differences, it's essential to integrate the data presentation, research objectives, and the guiding theoretical frameworks of Framing Theory (Entman, 1993) and Crisis Communication Theory (Coombs, 2007), all while placing them within the context of current scholarly discussions on media systems and political communication cultures. The data presentation revealed the way we frame and emphasise the systemic drivers behind crises really helps in making sense of those crises, reducing uncertainty, and giving audiences the contextual knowledge they need (Seeger, 2006). However, Nigerian broadcasters tend to offer limited evaluative content because of their episodic framing. This approach makes crises seem like isolated incidents rather than the result of governance failures or institutional weaknesses. Such a perspective can skew public perceptions of accountability, which aligns with Adeyemi's (2021) critique of how Nigerian media

often leans too heavily on state narratives during politically charged times.

The bar chart and frame distribution revealed that Al Jazeera's coverage is dominated by thematic and human-interest frames, while Nigerian reporting is more episodic. These trends highlight how resource availability, editorial philosophy, and newsroom culture influence the narratives around crises. For instance: Al Jazeera enhances its thematic depth through the use of aerial shots, maps, eyewitness interviews, and analytical graphics.

In contrast, Nigerian broadcasters often rely on studio-based reports, press conferences, and official briefings, which reinforce an episodic approach and limit the framing of accountability.

This comparative data resonates with global discussions about media structures, where transnational networks typically enjoy more autonomy and technological advancement than national broadcasters in developing nations (Boyd-Barrett, 2015).

Looking back at the research objectives, the discussion shows that: Al Jazeera and Nigerian TV stations adopt markedly different crisis frames, influenced by structural and organisational factors. The narrative structures and visual strategies are quite distinct, with Al Jazeera showcasing interpretive richness while Nigerian stations focus on event-driven reporting.

The political, institutional, and ideological contexts outlined in Eze's (2025) theory of political pulpitory help explain why Nigerian stations rarely use accountability or thematic frames. The integration of theory, the empirical data and comparative analysis provide a comprehensive view of how crisis communication practices differ between the two media systems.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore and contrast the crisis communication frames used by Al Jazeera and certain Nigerian television stations. The results show significant differences in how crises are portrayed, contextualised, and visually represented across these media platforms. Al Jazeera consistently employed thematic, human-interest, and accountability frames, framing crises as events deeply rooted in structural issues that require institutional and systemic evaluation. In contrast, Nigerian television stations primarily relied on episodic and elite-driven framing, often emphasising official narratives while limiting critical examination.

These trends highlight a key point of Framing Theory (Entman, 1993): media not only shape public understanding by choosing which issues to cover but also by influencing how those issues are perceived. Al Jazeera's transnational editorial approach allowed for a broader context and more thorough scrutiny of institutional actors, while the political and institutional constraints faced by Nigerian

broadcasters limited their ability to engage in critical discussions about crises. Crisis Communication Theory further illustrates that these framing differences can significantly impact public understanding, trust, and perceptions of accountability.

The comparative analysis reveals that media systems are deeply influenced by the political cultures, ownership structures, technological capabilities, and ideological commitments in which they operate. Ultimately, the differences identified in this study emphasise the need for greater editorial independence, enhanced media capabilities, and more ethical crisis reporting practices within national broadcasting environments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is a pressing need for policies that bolster the independence of newsrooms from political interference. Regulators and media owners need to establish safeguards that empower journalists to question official narratives without the worry of facing penalties or losing access.
2. Nigerian television stations should focus on investing in training and resources that promote more in-depth thematic and accountability reporting. Collaborating with international media organisations and journalism schools can enhance skills in crisis reporting.
3. In Nigeria, broadcasters should strike a balance between episodic reporting and human-interest stories, as well as solutions-oriented coverage. This approach helps audiences grasp crises in a more comprehensive way, fostering empathy and civic engagement.
4. Utilising graphics, maps, digital reconstructions, and on-the-ground reporting can significantly enrich the narrative quality of crisis coverage in Nigeria. This practice aligns with global best standards and enhances public understanding.
5. Drawing from Crisis Communication Theory, media organizations should emphasize accuracy, transparency, and public reassurance during crises. Ethical guidelines ought to discourage sensationalism and promote constructive, fact-based communication.
6. Broadcasters should team up with universities, think tanks, and media research institutes to weave scholarly insights and empirical evidence into their newsroom practices. Such partnerships can refine framing strategies and elevate the standards of crisis communication.
7. Regular training in framing analysis, crisis communication, media ethics, and conflict-sensitive journalism will equip reporters and editors with the essential tools for delivering high-quality crisis coverage.

REFERENCES

- Abbass, I. M. (2012). No retreat, no surrender: Conflict for survival between Fulani pastoralists and farmers in Northern Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal*, 8(1), 331–346.
- Adams, O. (2020). Political crisis reporting on Nigerian television: An analysis of news framing. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 12(3), 215–232.
- Adesina, O. S. (2020). Media power, politics, and democratic accountability in Nigeria. *Journal of Communication and Media Research*, 12(2), 45–59.
- Adeyemi, A. (2021). Media trust and political communication in Nigeria: Rethinking public confidence in broadcast journalism. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 13(4), 589–605.
- Adeyemi, S. (2021). Security crisis coverage in Nigeria: Framing Boko Haram on broadcast news. *African Journalism Studies*, 42(1), 45–62.
- Al Jazeera. (2023, April 8). Armed groups kill dozens in Nigeria's Benue state. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/4/8/armed-groups-kill-dozens-in-nigerias-benue-state>
- Al Jazeera. (2025, June 14). At least 100 people killed in gunmen attack in Nigeria's Benue: Rights group. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/6/14/at-least-100-people-killed-in-gunmen-attack-in-nigeria-rights-group>
- Bell, A. (1991). *The language of news media*. Oxford University Press.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. (2015). *Media imperialism*. SAGE.
- Channels Television. (2025, August 11). Broadcasters raise alarm over attacks on media practitioners. <https://www.channelstv.com/2025/08/11/broadcasters-raise-alarm-over-attacks-on-media-practitioners/>
- Chong, D., & Druckman, J. N. (2007). Framing theory. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10(1), 103–126.
- Coombs, W. T. (2007). Protecting organisation reputations during a crisis: The development and application of situational crisis communication theory. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 10(3), 163–176.
- Coombs, W. T., & Holladay, S. J. (2012). *The handbook of crisis communication*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51–58.
- Eze, G. M. (2025). Kakistocracy to Afrocentric Governance. Evaluating Lumuba's Critique of African Leadership Failures. *Journal of Exceptional Multidisciplinary Research*. 2(2), 92-100
- Eze, G. M. (2025). Media narratives, image crisis and the de-marketing Rivers State in context of political instability. *SIAR-Global Journal of Arts and Humanities*. 1(2), 16–28.
- Eze, G. M., Onyeso, P.I.N, Onyebuenyi, S., & Obi, P.A (2025). Political Pulpitary in Campaigns: An Analysis of APC Promissory Historiography (2015-2023).

- SSR Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(12), 42–52.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman.
- Figenschou, T. U. (2014). *Al Jazeera and journalism in the Middle East*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Figenschou, T. U. (2014). *Al Jazeera and the global media landscape: The South is talking back*. Routledge.
- Figenschou, T. U., & Maralack, N. (2018). African crises and transnational media: Comparative framing analysis. *Media, Culture & Society*, 40(7), 1012–1030.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings*. Harvester Press.
- Hermida, A. (2012). Social media and the newsroom: *Collaboration and conflict*. *Journalism Practice*, 6(3), 305–315.
- Homer-Dixon, T. (1999). *Environment, scarcity, and violence*. Princeton University Press.
- Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is anyone responsible? How television frames political issues*. University of Chicago Press.
- McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176–187.
- Messaris, P. (1997). *Visual persuasion: The role of images in advertising*. Sage.
- Nigerian Television Authority. (2022–2025). National news bulletins on security and governance crises (Archival broadcasts).
- Norris, P. (2000). *A virtuous circle: Political communications in postindustrial societies*. Sage.
- Olayoku, P. A. (2014). Trends and patterns of cattle grazing and rural violence in Nigeria (2006–2014). *IFRA-Nigeria Working Papers*, 38, 1–23.
- Oso, L. (2012). *Broadcasting practice in Nigeria: Constraints and prospects*. Sage.
- Oso, L. (2012). Press and politics in Nigeria: On whose side? *Lagos Papers in English Studies*, 2(1), 12–22.
- Oso, L., & Omotayo, D. (2012). Political violence and television news framing in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Communication*, 10(2), 77–95.
- Plaisance, P. L., & Skewes, E. A. (2017). Visual journalism in Africa: Opportunities and constraints. *Journalism Studies*, 18(4), 480–497.
- Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. Pantheon.
- Schiller, H. I. (1976). *Communication and cultural domination*. M.E. Sharpe.
- Seeger, M. W. (2006). Best practices in crisis communication: An expert panel process. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 34(3), 232–244.
- Seeger, M. W. (2006). Crisis communication and the public health. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, 8(2), 215–224.
- Spivak, G. C. (1990). *The post-colonial critic: Interviews, strategies, dialogues*. Routledge.

- Tandoc, E. C., & Maitra, J. (2018). Comparative framing of disasters: *International vs local media. Journalism, 19*(5), 667–683.
- Thussu, D. K. (2006). *International communication: Continuity and change*. Hodder Arnold.
- TVC News. (2022–2025). Prime Time News: Security and humanitarian crisis coverage (Archival broadcasts).
- Udom-Isong, M. E. (2021). Media, conflict and peacebuilding in Nigeria: Rethinking newsroom practices. *International Journal of Communication and Social Research, 9*(1), 77–92.
- Ugwu, C. (2018). Media ownership and crisis reporting in Nigeria. *African Media Research, 11*(1), 34–50.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1997). *Discourse as social interaction*. SAGE.
- Voltmer, K. (2013). *The media in transitional democracies*. SAGE.
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). SAGE.
- Zayani, M. (2018). *Al Jazeera, the Arab Spring and beyond: Media, war and revolution*.