EXPOSURE TO XENOPHOBIC NEWS ON NEWS TICKERS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON PERCEPTION OF SOUTH AFRICA BY TELEVISION VIEWERS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the frames adopted by television stations in Nigeria and South African in reporting of xenophobic news through news tickers. Four television stations were selected: The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Channels Television, South Africa Broadcasting Cooperation (SABC) and eNews Channel Africa (ENCA), were analysed to find out the framing patterns of xenophobic news content of news tickers. The study also examined whether exposure to xenophobic news content on news tickers influence viewers' perception of South Africa. The content analysis and Focus Group Discussion methods were used for this study, 326 news tickers were analysed for three months, while 24 participants were purposively selected from three senatorial zones in Anambra State for the Focus Group Discussion. Finding revealed that television stations in Nigeria (NTA and Channels TV) reported xenophobic attacks more than South African television stations. Solution frame was predominantly used in framing xenophobic news, on news tickers in the studied television stations. Findings also indicated that most of television audience in Anambra State were exposed to xenophobic news in news tickers and this exposure to news tickers influenced them to have negative perception about South African people. The study recommends that television audience need to watch more stations in other to have balanced exposure and assessment of xenophobic news issues.

Keywords: Frame, News, Television, Tickers Xenophobia.

Introduction

Xenophobia is the fear and distrust of that which is perceived to be foreign or strange. It can manifest itself in many ways involving the relations and perceptions of an in-group towards an out group, including a fear of losing identity, suspicion of its presence to secure a presumed purity (Bolaffi, 2003). Xenophobic violence in particular has become a long standing feature in post-apartheid South Africa. Since 1994, tens of thousands of people have been harassed, attacked, or killed because of their status as outsiders or foreign nationals (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2015). The situation has however become alarming enough that the African Peer Review Mechanism's country report on South Africa warned that "xenophobia against other Africans is currently on the rise and must be nipped in the bud (Johwa, 2008). Xenophobic violence was most intense and widely scrutinised in May 2008 when attacks across the country left at least, 62 dead, 670 wounded, dozens raped, more than 100,000 displaced. Millions of Rands (South African currency) worth of property was also looted, destroyed or appropriated by local residents in just over two weeks (Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa, 2011).

In April 2015, there was an upsurge in xenophobic attacks throughout the country. The attacks started in Durban and spread to Johannesburg. Zulu king Goodwill Zwelithi were accused of fueling the attacks by saying that foreigners should "go back to their countries" (BBC news, 2015). It was reported that more than 300 shops and homes were looted and in some cases, destroyed altogether. In these attacks Muslims were specifically targeted (O'Halloran, 2016). Also, from 20-23 June 2016, a wave of riots hit the city of Tshwane. Although the riots were sparked by political discontent within the African National Congress (ANC), Somali, Pakistani and other foreign owned shops and micro enterprises were targeted for looting and a number of foreigners were attacked (www.dailymaverick.co.za).

On Friday, 24th February 2017 anti-immigrant protest was organized and held in the Pretoria. Protesters accused immigrants of taking jobs from South Africans, causing crime and complained that they are arrogant and they do not know how to talk to people, especially Nigerians (Associated Press, 2017). The general public, which make up the audience of mass media are very critical component in the analysis of media contents. Framing refers to the way events and issues are organized and made sense of, especially by the media, media professionals, and their audiences (Reese, 2001). Framing can positively or negatively affect the perception of particular news item by the audience. According to Ezegwu, Ezeonyejiaku and Asodike (2018), one way through which media shape events or issue is through framing. The media also provides linkages and enables readers/audiences to make connections among issues.

Thus, this study examined exposure to xenophobic news on news tickers and its influence on perception of South Africa by television viewers in Anambra State. This study is important because Nigerians are also victims of these attacks.

Statement of the Problem

Some time ago, South Africa became the focus of international media attention and global condemnation when African migrants, viewed as foreigners, were violently attacked in various parts of the country. These incidents revealed that, despite the transition to democracy, post-apartheid South African society has not managed to rid itself of all discriminatory attitudes and practices. According to Valji (2003), their persistence is demonstrated by xenophobia and the increase in violence directed against black 'foreigners'. In South Africa, xenophobic attacks are believed to have

their roots in the continuous influx of foreign nationals into the country. During these attacks, which are often very violent, foreign nationals with specific reference to African nationals are killed or severely injured along with South African citizens. A large number of them have their shops and property looted or burnt leaving them displaced and financially distraught.

One influential means that the media may shape public opinion is by framing events and issues in particular ways. Framing involves a communication source presenting and defining an issue. The notion of framing has gained momentum in the communication disciplines, giving guidance to both investigations of media content and to studies of the relationship between media and public opinion (Druckman, 2001). Framing effects are perceptual. The manner of framing of issues by the media is largely believed to have a corresponding effect on general public. This therefore, constitutes a challenge to the researchers as there exist paucity of studies to ascertain the volume of news ticker frames and reaction of viewers on news innovation in television news presentation. Whether television audience are exposed to this novelty. Hence, the need to generate empirical evidence on framing patterns of xenophobic news on news tickers and television viewers' reactions is critical. This study, thus examines xenophobic news on news tickers and its influence on perception of South Africa by television viewers in Anambra State.

Research Questions

1. What is the volume of xenophobic news in news tickers in the select television stations in Nigeria and South Africa?
2. What is the framing pattern of xenophobic news in ticker of select television stations in Nigeria and South Africa?
3. Are audience of television stations exposed to xenophobic news in news tickers?
4. Does the exposure to xenophobic news tickers influence audience perception of South Africa?

Literature Review

The Concept of Xenophobia and Immigrants Issue in South African

In spite of the ever-increasing cases of xenophobia in South African and worldwide, its definition remains elusive. Xenophobia is described as a dislike for foreigners or that which is foreign. The term xenophobia is, from the linguistic and morphological point of view, the combination of two words: *'xeno'* and *'phobia'*. Phobia is an "extreme or irrational fear or dislike of a specified thing." According to South African Concise Oxford Dictionary, 'xeno' means "relating to a foreigner or foreigners" (2009, p.1358). Xenophobia is the deep dislike of non-nationals of a recipient state. Xenophobia, in the psychological sense, is an irrational and debilitating anxiety induced by fear of strangers, foreign things and places. Like other phobias, it afflicts individuals and can be treated or cured by therapist (Shepherd and Robins, 2008). Nationality and ethnicity are both social constructions and people from other African countries are often seen as 'outsiders.' This is highly problematic, especially since they are Africans in Africa. South African nationals can be understood as South African citizens.

Bihr (2005) also asserts that xenophobia literally refers to the fear/hatred of the stranger. He further stressed that xenophobia is a system that is necessary for the symbolic economy of historical societies as it enables the reconstitution of social unity by exporting internal divisions and conflicts, hiding the internal origin of the latter for which exogenous figures are held solely responsible. This means that every xenophobic attacks are targeted at people other than the original occupants or

indigenes of a given community or state. An examination into the historical origin and reasons for xenophobia can be traced to the apartheid era. The previous government developed strong anti-immigration policies which were aimed primarily at people from other parts of the African continent entering South Africa.

Crush and McDonald (2001) refer to the Immigration Act of 1913 and to the Aliens Act of 1991, which defined blacks from the rest of Africa as migrants. They were allowed to stay temporarily as long as they were a source of cheap labour. If not, they were considered to be illegal aliens who posed a threat to the country's security and economy. Legislation and government policy in South Africa is to a certain extent designed to allow in the country only those who are seen to be potentially valuable and useful members of the South African nation or those who will be suitable members of the South African society. The immigration policy in contemporary South Africa seems to be, to a certain level, a continuity and change of the past apartheid immigration policy. As Peverdy (2009, p.3) points out, "the immigration policy of the post-apartheid South African State and the language used to justify it at times seem to contradict its stated and apparent commitment to democracy, inclusivity and human rights, and raises questions about continuity and change with the past."

The Concept News Crawler/News Ticker and its Relevance in Television News

A news ticker (sometimes called a "crawler", "crawl" or "slide") is a primarily horizontal, text-based display either in the form of a graphic that typically resides in the lower third of the screen space on a television station or network (usually during news programming) or as a long, thin scoreboard-style display seen around the facades of some offices or public buildings dedicated to presenting headlines or minor pieces of news (Kevin, 2004). News tickers have been used in European countries such as United Kingdom, Germany and Ireland for some years; they are also used in several Asian countries and Australia. In the United States, tickers were long used on a special event basis by broadcast television stations to disseminate weather warnings, school closings, and election results. Sports telecasts occasionally used a ticker to update other contests in progress before the expansion of cable news networks and the internet for news content. News tickers have become regular features on television screens of both local and international stations. The popularity of this innovation is premised on the assumption that it would help improve viewing with the ability to process multiple simultaneous streams of information for audience consumption (Nwabueze, 2012).

In addition, some ticker displays are used to relay continuous stock quotes (usually with a delay of as much as 15 minutes) during trading hours of major stock market exchanges (Poniewozik, 2010). One purpose of the news crawl is to feed additional information to the viewer that is not in the on-screen story. News crawls have become a common element in local television newscasts.

Empirical Reviews

Xenophobia is not specific to South Africa. Xenophobia is a global issue. Olijo (2015) investigated public perception of Nigerian newspaper coverage of xenophobic attacks in South Africa with specific emphasis on portrayal of Nigerian victims, perpetrators and the South African Government. The researcher adopted survey research method. Result revealed that respondents perceived Nigerian newspaper portrayal of Nigerian victims of xenophobia as positive while the perpetrators were found to be portrayed in the negative light. Result also revealed that the South African Government was perceived to be portrayed as incompetent. This study is relevant to the current one because it

investigated media coverage of xenophobic attacks. However, the issue of xenophobia news on news tickers was not addressed.

Mohammed (2011) in a study on "Xenophobia and media: An exploratory study on the public perception of the Nelson Mandela Bay Community" was reviewed. The main purpose of the study was to explore the public perception pertaining to foreign nationals establishing whether their representation by the press is indeed reflected in public perception. The result showed that 60% of the respondents reported that they get most of their information on foreign nationals from the media. However, 40% of the responses bolster belief that the media misrepresents foreign nationals, while 50% of respondents think the media do not only misrepresent the non-nationals, but that the media directly contributes to anti-migrant sentiments. Also, 35% of the respondents reported that the media have negatively influenced their perception towards the foreign nationals in the country. This study is related to the current study, because it investigates media coverage of foreigners in South Africa and how the coverage can propel xenophobia. The study was conducted in South Africa and qualitative approach was used. The current study was conducted in Nigeria and mixed method were used.

Ezegwu, Udoyo and Chime-Nganya (2019) examined framing of Islamic movement of Nigeria clashes with security forces in select Nigerian mainstream newspapers: *The Guardian* and *The Punch*. Content analysis was adopted as research design. The findings revealed that the sampled newspapers reported the clashes, but an abysmal number of 57 stories were published out of 192 editions of the newspapers studied, while a total of 6 frames were used by the select newspapers. The findings further showed that religious frame was the dominant frame used to report the issue.

Smith (2008) conducted a study on the media's coverage of xenophobia and the xenophobic violence prior to and including May 2008. The researcher adopted a Meta design which entails reviewing previous empirical studies. The result showed as follows: The media are anti-immigration, or at least make negative references to migrants and immigrants, of an un-analytical/ simplistic approach, with little in-depth analysis; persist in using certain labels when referring to migrants such as 'illegal immigrants'; and perpetuate negative stereotypes about migrants using such terms as 'job stealers', 'criminals', and 'illegals.' This study is related to the current one because it investigated media coverage of xenophobic attacks. One thing that is missing across all the studies so far reviewed is the inability of the researchers to examine xenophobia news on news tickers and its influence on perception of South Africa by television viewers in Anambra State. The current study will fill this gap.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on framing theory. Framing theory has to do with how the media are able to shape or pattern reports towards members of the public and in carrying this out, some basic tools are employed by journalists. These tools are identified as "frames." Framing theory, according to McQuail (2005), is philosophical postulation that explains the way in which news content is typically shaped and contextualised by journalists. Framing is more interested in presenting the media contents especially news in a particular way to influence the thinking of the audience (readers, viewers and listeners). According to De Vreese (2005), framing theory is one of the media effects theories, largely used to analyze how the mass-media filters information and, thus, influences the public's reactions to a whole range of external stimuli. In relation to this study, the framing theory helps to provide platform in identifying the patterns in which xenophobic news is presented in news tickers by the select broadcast stations and the attributes used in the presentation, could influence the perception of the audience about South Africa.

Methodology

The study adopted mixed methods approach, which consists of using more than one method in analysis. The researchers used content analysis and Focus Group Discussion methods. The reasons for these methods, was to ascertain the volume of news stick frame pattern of xenophobic reports and to also know the influence this have on the television audience. Apart from content analysis, Focus Group Discussion was considered appropriate in this study, because it provided for the researchers to study the audience views/opinion of news tickers frames exposure to xenophobic news and its influence on perception of South Africa by television viewers in Anambra State.

The study has two segments of population: The first population was sourced from Digital Satellite Television (DSTV) platform, which is a sub-Saharan African direct broadcast satellite service owned by MultiChoice. The period of study were three months between February 1, 2017 and April 30, 2017 (peak of 2017 xenophobic attacks in South Africa). The television stations are government owned and private owned in both South Africa and in Nigeria. The select television stations and their news hours are: Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) and Channels Television (for Nigeria stations), South Africa Broadcasting Cooperation (SABC) and ENCA also referred to as eNews Channel Africa. The hours of their network news are: NTA-9 o'clock in the night, Channels read theirs at 10 o'clock. SABC read theirs at 7 o'clock, ENCA – 6 o'clock in the evening (although, it is 24 hours news channel). The television stations were purposively selected. The researchers studied two government-owned television stations, that was NTA and SABC and two private-owned stations which are Channels and ENCA. It is hoped that the researchers' choice of television stations would have a balanced and equal outlook, void of bias and sentiment. This is because the (SABC and NTA) being television station of the South African government and the Federal government of Nigeria would frame their news to tilt towards their nationalities.

The choice of the months was because, it was the climax of the xenophobic violence and attacks in South Africa, especially in 2017. The second population which was the Focus Group Discussion, three sessions were conducted with the sample population drawn from the television viewers from three senatorial zones in Anambra State through the purposive sampling technique. A total number of 24 television viewers participated in the Focus Group Discussion. They cut across different occupations such as: Civil servants, traders, students and farmers.

Frames for Analysis

The following frames were used for the qualitative content analysis aspect of this study;

i. **Blame Frame:** This is the news story that emanated from both Nigeria government South Africa government, blaming each other for the continual xenophobic attacks.
ii. **Economic Frame:** This refers to stories that highlighted the economic implication of the xenophobic attacks.
iii. **Fear Frame:** This meant any news story that placed emphasis on the negative side for the attacks, thereby inculcating fear or any stories that talks about reprisal attacks etc.
iv. **Solution frame:** This refers to news stories that seeks for solution, in other to calm the people and give them hope that something is being done to stop the attacks.
v. **Nationality/Ethnic Frame:** This refers to the news story that emanate from either South Africans or Nigeria and other nationalities about the xenophobic attacks in South Africa.

vi. **Human Interest Frame:** This are news story that talks about how individuals and groups are affected.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question One

What is the volume of xenophobic news in news tickers in the select television stations in Nigeria and South Africa?

The research question sought to find out the frequency of news tickers of xenophobic news during the three months selected for this study. The table below indicates the analysis of the news tickers of xenophobic news tickers by the select televisions from February, March and April, 2017.

Table 1: Summary of TV stations news tickers in three months.

Months	NTA	SABC	Channels	ENCA	Frequency	Percentage
February	36	25	39	27	127	39
March	31	22	34	24	111	34
April	25	18	23	22	88	27
Total	**92**	**65**	**96**	**73**	**326**	**100**
%	28.2	20	29.4	22.4		

The implications of the above table one is that television stations in Nigeria (NTA and Channels TV) reported xenophobic attacks more than South African television stations and private owned TV station (Channels) had more reports on the xenophobic violence than government broadcast stations.

Research Question Two

What is the framing pattern of xenophobic news in ticker of select television stations in Nigeria and South Africa?

Table 2: Dominant frame used in news ticker by the select Television stations

Broadcast Media	Fear frame	Blame frame	Economic frame	Nationality frame	Solution frame	Human interest frame	Total
NTA	10	14	18	12	22	16	92
Channels	12	15	19	11	25	14	96
SABC	7	13	10	12	15	8	65
ENCA	5	11	13	15	19	10	73
Total	**34 (10.4)**	**53 (16.3%)**	**60 (18%)**	**50 (15.3%)**	**81 (25%)**	**48 (15)**	**326 (100)**

The table two above revealed that six kinds of frames were observed from the studied broadcast stations. The study was dominated by solution frame and economic frame as reported by Channels television. The solution frames aimed at making effort to tackle and prevent the xenophobic attacks. For instance such frame as reported by Channels TV were: xenophobic attacks: Nigeria Unions Consul General meet xenophobic victims (see appendixes). Xenophobic attacks: Nigeria asks South Africa to stop action (see appendixes). Also, solution frame by NTA reports: Xenophobic attack: Senate to visit South African parliament. Economic frame reports by NTA: Nigeria Senate to expel DSTV, MTN, Shoprite over xenophobic issues (see appendixes).

Research Question Three

Are audience of television stations exposed to xenophobic news in news tickers?

 The researcher conducted three sessions of focus group discussion with each session having 8 participants. Most (19) of the participants in the three FGDs conducted agreed that they were exposed to news tickers on the studied television stations at different times of the day. Majority of the participants that spoke with the researchers were civil servants and traders who noted that they were exposed to xenophobic news when they watch the news tickers that scroll across the television screen. Two of the participants from Anambra South Senatorial zone, told the researchers that they always look out for news tickers in TV because the stories are punchy and straight to the point.

Another participant from Ogidi in Anambra Central Senatorial zone told the researchers that he looks out for news tickers but not on xenophobic news, stating that news tickers breaks the news faster and it is easily understandable. He observed that while reading other stories, as they scroll, he also reads the xenophobic news reports which he noted are short and more objective than the main screen news. On the contrary 5 young participants in their twenties and from Anambra North Senatorial zone, said they are not exposed to news tickers and xenophobic news in tickers because it disturb them from watching the news bulletin and lack of resources to recharge their cable television pose challenges to watching of television. According to one of the participants "*to be honest with you, I have not recharged my DSTV for a while, I don't have money. Things are difficult*". Thus, the observation indicated that most of the participants said they are exposed to xenophobic news report in news tickers.

Research Question four

Does the exposure to xenophobic news tickers influence audience perception about South Africa?

The researchers wanted to ascertain if the xenophobic news in news tickers influence audience perception about South African people. Most of the participants noted that they were exposed to news tickers and xenophobic news, the exposure influenced them to an extent. They noted that South Africans are unfriendly people, who attacks foreign nationals with in a slightest provocations. One of the participants, a surveyor who leaves at Onitsha said, *"My younger brother was a victim of 2015 xenophobic attacks. They dealt with him, looted his shop. He managed to escape. My brother later relocated to Angola where he has settled."* Another participant from Orumba in Anambra South Senatorial zone, noted that her cousins staying in the rainbow nation was affected in the xenophobic violence. According to her "*they have forgotten how Nigeria assisted them (South Africa) during the apartheid days only to pay us back with other nationals in this manner. God will judge them*." Some

of the participants maintained that, they will not encourage any of their relations to relocate to South Africa.

Three participants from Ihiala and Nnewi in Anambra South Senatorial zone who pleaded for anonymity, told the researchers that the exposure to xenophobic news did not influence them to think negatively of South Africa. According to them the media only frame these things to raise tension. They noted that some Nigerians and other nationals at times engage in drug related business and this is not permitted in South Africa. Hence, majority of the participants are exposed to xenophobic news in news tickers and the exposure influenced them to have negative perception about South African people.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study showed that television stations in Nigeria (NTA and Channels TV) reported xenophobic attacks more than South African television stations and private owned TV stations (Channels TV) had more reports on the xenophobic violence than government broadcast stations. It was revealed that solution frame was dominantly used in framing xenophobic news on news tickers studied. The solution frame was predominant in news tickers carried on Channels television and Nigeria Television Authority which is Nigeria government owned television station. While ENCA news channel led with the solution frame in South African stations. It was also followed by economic frame.

The results from the Focus Group Discussion revealed television audience members view on the innovation of news tickers in TV broadcasting. The study found that most of the participants were exposed to xenophobic news report in news tickers. This study is in agreement the findings of other studies that television audience are exposed to news tickers on the screen. Nwabueze, Okafor and Obiakor (2017) found that majority of TV audiences are exposed to economic news through the news tickers. Brenchman, Robinson, Treleaven-Hassad, and Varan, (2015) found that viewers spend more time reading an updating tickers.

The study showed that exposure to news tickers influenced television audience to have negative perception about South African as unfriendly people. They noted that a number of news items tickers on xenophobic violence attacks justified their perception of South African as unfriendly people. This findings laid credence to the application of framing theory in the study. Framing is more interested in presenting the media contents especially news in a particular way to influence the thinking of the audience (readers, viewers and listeners). Also, Olijo (2015) assert that the perpetrators of xenophobic attacks were found to be portrayed in the negative light.

Conclusion

The findings of this study showed that television stations in Nigeria (NTA and Channels TV) reported xenophobic attacks more than South African broadcast stations. The findings of the study revealed that solution frame dominated the frame pattern of xenophobic news on television stations examined. This solution frame was projected more on tickers of Channels television (private owned station) than others. Data collected from the Focus Group Discussion indicated that most of the participants were exposed to xenophobic news report in news tickers. They observed that tickers break the news faster than full screen news and their exposure to news tickers influenced them to have negative views about South Africa as unfriendly people.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the study recommends that:

1. Government owned television stations should be in fore front of covering issues especially things like the xenophobic violence attacks which have been a regular future in South Africa.
2. Media organisations should frame words in such a way that it will not escalate conflict, rather it should bring peace and harmony.
3. Television audience need to watch more stations in other to have balanced exposure and assessment of xenophobic news issues.
4. Television audience should not allow the frame pattern of the xenophobic news and continuous attacks on foreign nationals by South Africans to have negative perception about the country. There are still some good people in that country.

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76