

**NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS' COVERAGE OF CRIME AND THE
GRATIFICATION OF READERS' SAFETY INFORMATION
NEED 2010- 2014**

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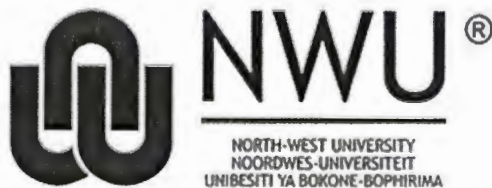
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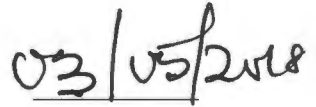
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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this research was undertaken by Olalekan Mustapha RUFAI (Student Number: 25502034), Department of Communication, Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, North- West University (Mafikeng Campus), South Africa, under my supervision.



Supervisor
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APPROVAL FORM

DECLARATION

I, Mustapha Olalekan RUFAl, hereby make a declaration that this doctoral thesis is my original work in design and execution. It has not been submitted to any other university for the purpose of a degree award. The information accessed from published and unpublished works of other authors has been acknowledged in- text and in the reference list.


Signature
M.O. Rufai

03/05/2018

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DEDICATION

To:

Almighty Allah for the gift of life and knowledge.

To all lovers and sponsors of Education!

And to the memory of my late father, Pa Taslim Olutunde Rufai Osinibosi

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BCS	British Crime Survey
CI	Crime Index
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CNN	Cable News Network
DV	Dependent Variable
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCT	Federal Capital Territory (Abuja)
FOI	Freedom of Information Bill
GO	Gratification Obtained
GS	Gratification Sought
ICVS	International Crime Victimization Survey
IGP	Inspector General of Police
IV	Independent Variable
LCDA	Local Council Development Area
LG	Local Government
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NCSI	National Crime Survey Ireland
NCVS	National Crime Victimization Survey
NPC	Nigerian Press Council
OPC	Oodua Peoples' Congress
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SRT	Social Responsibility Theory
UGT	Uses and Gratifications Theory
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USDJ	United States' Department of Justice

ABSTRACT

The prevalence of crime in Nigeria and its aftermath on the socio-economic status and the well-being of the people, appear to have defied all efforts at ensuring safety of lives and property in Nigeria. Previous studies on media coverage of crime have established the presence of crime and fear of crime in the audience. This study, adopting the Uses & Gratifications and the Social Responsibility theories, investigated Nigerian newspapers' coverage of crime and readers' information seeking behaviour to gratify their safety information need.

The study adopted mixed-methods research techniques in quantitative (survey and content analysis) and qualitative forms (content analysis, survey, and in-depth interviews) to create data. Using *constructed week sampling technique*, a total of 700 issues of the selected newspapers covering a five year period (2010-2014) were sampled for content analysis. For the survey, a self-administered questionnaire was adopted for data collection. Data from 361 usable questionnaire items were analysed from a sample of 384 drawn using simple random sampling techniques from a population of 55,000. Newspapers' crime stories were content analysed in qualitative (textual) form using Ruiz (2009) Sociological Discourse Analysis. In-depth interviews were also conducted among sampled Lagos State residents. Data were analysed at univariate, bivariate and multivariate levels using the SPSS software and also qualitatively.

Findings further showed that crimes such as, murder, kidnapping, and robbery were common in Lagos State. Stories on murder were 47.1%, kidnapping/abduction 21.5% and robbery at 14.5%. Kidnapping was on the rise Kidnapped victims paid a ransom to regain their freedom. Also, illegal possession of arms was common; policing was found to be ineffective. Findings also showed that the selected Nigerian newspapers reported crime stories mainly as straight news; adopted episodic reportage of crime

stories with ambiguous and often misleading headlines. Findings also revealed that newspapers were sources of crime information; published crime stories mainly on the inside pages; gave salience to the coverage of violent crime over property crime; and that crime coverage educated, gratified and influenced the safety information need of the readers. It was also revealed that readers' frequency of reading Nigerian newspapers' crime stories at $\chi^2 = 8.255$; $p = 0.041$, and direct experience of crime at $\chi^2 = 19.62$; $p = 0.020$, showed a significant relationship on the gratification obtained by the readers. Unlike in general information seeking, women were found to be more information seekers about crime than men. The readers' social demographics, gender ($\chi^2 (2) = 9.435$; $p < .05$); age ($\chi^2 (6) = 20.307$; $p < .05$); educational attainment ($\chi^2 (6) = 15.681$; $p < .05$); marital status ($\chi^2 (8) = 22.544$; $p < .05$); and monthly income ($\chi^2 (6) = 13.018$; $p < .05$) were found to be significant at, *low*, *moderate* or *high* gratification levels.

Contrary to the widely held views of uniform effect (fear of crime) in the audience, the study established that the social demographics of newspaper readers positively influenced their cognitive deployment of newspapers' crime stories to gratify their safety information need from becoming victims. It is not in every context, therefore, that media coverage of crime creates fear in the audience. Though, the positive influence of newspaper crime coverage on the behaviour of literate audience is being advanced, the study has implications on the influence of such coverage on non-literate audience and by other mass media in Nigeria.

Keywords: newspaper, crime coverage, safety information need, gratification, social demographics.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

This chapter provides the prelude and the purpose of the study. The chapter covers salient issues captured in the study and serves as the anchor for the other chapters by discussing such issues as crime situation and its reportage in Nigeria, the problem statement, research objectives, research questions, and the aim of the study. It also contains a brief description on each of the identified Nigerian newspapers analysed for crime stories during the study period, the evolution of newspaper in Nigeria and its importance to the study, the justifications for the selected newspapers and the five year study period, The chapter also contains significance of the study, limitations of the study as well as the operational definition of terms.

1.2 Crime Situation and Crime Reportage in Nigeria

In recent years, the spate of violent and property crime occurrences in Nigeria is very disturbing. Violent crime in the context of this study refers to one- on- one crime, that may involve loss of life or lives, and or physical or emotional injury on the victim(s). Property crime refers to the form of crime involving unlawfully disposing of their belonging. The prevalence of crime in Nigeria lately, appears to be unprecedented in the history of the country. Incidents of crime, most significantly, violent crimes, such as, homicide or murder, rape, robbery, and kidnaping are everyday occurrences in virtually all the nooks and crannies of the country (see Ajaegbu, 2012; Ajayi, 2007; Ayoola, Adeyemi, & Jabaru, 2015; Alemika & Chukwuma, 2005; Amzat, Abodunrin, & Okunola, 2007; Ngwama, 2014; Nseabasi, 2010; Odunlami & Soremekun, 2013; Ottuh & Aitufe, 2014; Soola, 2007; Thom-Otuya, 2010). This disturbing development was further buttressed by the then newly

appointed Acting Inspector General of Police (IGP), Ibrahim Idris, who, while unveiling his plans for the organisation (Nigerian Police) at a press conference, acknowledged that “violent criminality is gradually taking over our streets, neighbourhood and communities” (Yahaya, 2016: 42). In the preceding years of 2014 and 2015, Africa’s first Nobel Laureate, Prof. Wole Soyinka, and the then Vice President- Elect, Prof., Yemi Osinbajo, in separate press interviews, respectively, lamented the crime situation in Nigeria. At the height of insurgency in Nigeria, Prof. Wole Soyinka was reported to have said that:

The government of this nation (**Nigeria**) (emphasis mine) is in serious trouble. The person who has no excuse is the President of the Nation. I’m calling now not on the nation but on the international community to take action. This is a global problem and the foothold is being deeply entrenched in West Africa. (Famutimi, 2014:18).

Similarly, in an interview shortly after winning the 2015 general elections, the Vice President- elect, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, was reported to have lamented that the level of crime and criminality in Nigeria was so high that it became had apparent that there were no consequences for crime in Nigeria at the moment, and that the need had arisen to reinvent the Nigerian system. To stem the tide, he hinted on the intention of the then incoming administration of President Muhammad Buhari to consider local policing. Collaborating Osinbajo’s view on the debilitating state of crime and criminality in Nigeria, Soola, (2007:1) noted:

Nigeria’s socio-political and economic landscape has been blighted by the endemic twin evil of crime and violence of major, tragic and alarming proportions...Nigerian consumers of media products, like their counterparts in other cultures, are insatiably interested in, and are at times shocked and fascinated by crime and violence as covered in the media.

Similar to Soola's opinion, Alemika and Chukwuma (2005) reiterated the calamitous and the disturbing crime rate in Nigeria, and Lagos State in particular as follows:

Criminal victimization has serious consequences for the citizens and society. Individual and societal aspirations for democracy, development, human rights, high standard of living are undermined by high level of criminal victimization. Nigeria has witnessed high rates of crime and victimization that have defied the measures, introduced by successive regimes, for its management during the past two decades. The problem of crime is most widespread and endemic in Lagos. (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2005:6).

The problems associated with crime and victimization in Nigeria and Lagos State in particular; identified by Alemika and Chukwuma (2005) served as further motivation for this study. Crime, the malicious and unlawful offences against persons and property, has been a disturbing feature of man since creation. The first documented criminal act in history was the Biblical Cain (Kabil) and Abel (Habil)¹ murder story in the Bible (Barmash, 2005; Gen.4.1-8; Qur'an, 5:27-32). Ever since, crime, in any of its forms: murder², rape, robbery, car theft, fencing, kidnapping, embezzlement etc., has remained a recurring feature and a daily occurrence in the society. Both "crime and criminals", in the words of Brown, Esbensen and Geis (2013: 3) "capture the attention of nearly everyone".

Due to the widespread of crime and its devastating consequences on everyone (young, old, dead and the living), attention of scholars has been to media coverage of crime and related issues. Among scholars who have used crime as object of their studies are Altheide (2002; Bandura, 1965; Carrabine, 2008; Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Katz, 1987; Jewkes, 2015; Odunlami & Soremekun, 2013; Sacco, 1995; Soola, 2007; Surette, 1998), among others. Crime stories are said to be attractive to both the media

¹the first crime on earth

² Interchangeably used with homicide in the study.

organizations and the audience (Altheide, 2002; Soola, 2007). Also, media portrayal of crime has been found to create fear in the audience (Jewkes, 2015). Those studies presuppose a uniform effect of media portrayal as entirely negative and affecting the media audience uniformly. This dominant view is what this study contends.

The widespread of crime, which has made it, become a topic about which everyone across disciplines and interests hold an opinion. Thus, crime has become a complex phenomenon to explain. It is, however, an interesting, challenging and complex discourse among scholars of diverse backgrounds: Sociology, Law, Humanities, Psychology, Criminology and the Media (Jewkes, 2015). A part of its complexities is the fact that what constitutes crime is territorially or geographically labelled as such. Crime is a scourge that governments of all nations are battling to combat. There are many types of crime. They include: violent crime, property crime, economic crime, cyber-crime and public order crime (Beirne & Messerschmidt, 1991; Siegel, 2004). This study focussed on violent and property crime in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, the government and its agencies appear overwhelmed and overstretched by the level of crime and insecurity in the most populous black nation on earth (Ajayi, 2007; Odunlami & Soremekun, 2013; Ottuh & Aitufe, 2014; Soola, 2007). Since the beginning of the current democratic dispensation, the prevalence of crime in Nigeria is unprecedented. A very inhumane, embarrassing and scandalous dimension to criminal activities in Nigeria is the kidnapping and hostage taking for a ransom (Nseabasi, 2010; Ottuh & Aitufe 2014; Thom- Otuya, 2010). For example, The Chibok Secondary Girls abducted from their school hostel in April, 2014 are yet to be completely rescued, despite the unrelenting efforts of the social media movement *#BringBackourGirls* in mounting pressures on the Nigerian government on rescuing the girls. Global assistance, symbolized by the combined military efforts of

Niger, Cameroun, Chad and Nigeria; offer of training the Nigerian Military by the US government to rescue the girls and other abductees have not yielded total success on the rescue mission.

In 2015, over four hundred rescued women and children did not include the Chibok girls (Purefoy & Ellis, 2015). Recently, however, about twenty- one of the abductees were rescued by the Nigerian government. Scores of them are still being held hostage, three years after. There is hope that many of the remaining girls among other abductees may regain their freedom soon. In any event, even if the abductees were to return, a lot would have changed about them. They would require a great deal of rehabilitation initiatives to live normal lives again.

Several other people including top government functionaries, their wives, business executives, school children, men and women, old and young have been victims of kidnapping at one time or the other. Crime is wreaking a lot of havoc on the populace almost on daily basis. It has led to many people leaving their abodes for places considered safer. It has also led to many untimely deaths. Major cities and state capitals in Nigeria seem to provide a safe haven for criminal activities (Ajayi 2007; Soola, 2007). Another recent scourge of mass killings is the unprovoked, unwarranted and callous killings linked to the Fulani herdsmen against farmers and host communities. As at the time of conducting this study, kidnapping for ransom was fast becoming lucrative and boosting personal economy of the perpetrators in Nigeria, especially in the Southern part of the country, including Lagos State, the setting of this study. The rage is spreading across the length and breadth of Nigeria like a wild fire with no visible end in sight.

Expectedly, these vicarious and terrifying criminal activities portend grave consequences on Nigeria's security rating. Nigeria is ranked sixth in the world and

third in Africa, coming behind Venezuela, South Sudan, South Africa, and Papua New Guinea in crime rating (Crime Index, 2016). This rating makes Nigeria the highest ranked crime infested country in West Africa. Crime represents a society as it does not wish to be known or described. Hence, it is very important in our description of the society (Howwit, 1998). In other words, no society cherishes being described as crime-ridden.

Globally, the mass media through its pervasiveness and images have seemingly assumed an unassailable position of indispensability in the society. It has become a potent force crucial to our understanding of the dynamics and theatrics that characterise and shape public discourse and narratives in modern society. Similarly, crime, due to its ever-present nature in the society, has also become crucial in the discussion and understanding of the modern, shrinking and miniaturized world.

Mass media sources like the television and newspapers are audience main sources of information about crime and violence (Pollak & Kubrin, 2007; Surette, 1998). The media provide information and education on all social phenomena including crime. This, the media perform in line with the surveillance function of the press as the watchdog of the society. The way the media reports crime “heavily influences the audience’s understanding of crime in the society” (Pollak & Kubrin, 2007: 59). This is in accordance with the views of social constructionists who argue that “in modern societies, the media is a major factor in defining social conditions as well as influencing individuals perceptions of reality” (Callanan, 2012: 94). Crime and its reportage can thus be seen as intertwined and have an influential ability on the media audience.

More often than not, the reportage of crime informs the audience of the incident, the perpetrator and the victim. Studies (Altheide, 2003; Jewkes, 2015) have

noted that media portrayal of crime creates fear and moral panic in the audience. The current study contends this wholistic description and probes into how the audience could deploy newspapers' crime stories to gratify their safety information need.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Crime is a global problem. It is present in every society, and “poses an immediate threat to a great many persons” (Sykes, 1978: 23). It has defied all efforts at combatting it; hence, anyone could become a victim of crime. It can result in deaths, physical harm, loss of property and human dignity and emotional trauma to the victims and their relations. In severe cases, it could lead to migration from a crime infested community to a safer place. In Nigeria, the widespread of crime has affected the psychological, economic, social and political well-being of the country and her citizens. It has created doubt in the ability of the Nigerian government to provide the basic task of governance, that is, to protect the lives and property of her citizens.

Crimes such as kidnapping, murder, robbery, rape, burglary among others are everyday occurrence. The Nigerian police and other law enforcement agents seem to have been overstretched and becoming ineffective in fighting crime and criminality in Nigeria. The inability of government and the security organs of government to evidently reduce crime and criminality in Nigeria have been described as a failure of the Nigerian nation (Ajayi, 2007). Crime and criminality capture the attention of everyone (Brown, Esbensen, & Geis, 2014), and attractive to the media (Soola, 2007), hence, the media feast on crime stories (Howwit, 1998).

Media coverage of crime has been described as being more problematic than crime, because it creates fear of crime in the audience (Altheide, 2003; Amzat, Abodunrin & Okunola, 2007; Carrabine, 2008; Ferraro, 1995; Graber, 1980; Jewkes, 2015; Warr, 1994, 2000). Other nuances on the outcome of media coverage of crime

investigated focused on social responses to crime (Hawden, Rasnen, Oksanen & Vuori, 2014; Garofalo, 1981). Despite the basic importance of safety to human existence, how media coverage of crime affects the safety information need of the audience from becoming crime victims is yet to be investigated.

This study therefore arises from the need to determine the extent to which Nigerian newspapers gratify the safety information need of Nigerians in their reportage of crime. It specifically addresses itself to the question: To what extent, have the Nigerian newspapers' (*Nigerian Tribune, Punch, Vanguard, The Sun* and the *Daily Trust*) crime stories gratified the safety information need of the readers from 2010-2014?

1.4 Objectives

The following objectives are set for the study:

1. To establish the extent of the selected Nigerian newspapers' coverage of crime in terms of frequency and prominence during the study period.
2. To examine the extent to which the Nigerian newspapers' crime stories gratify the readers' safety information need.
3. To investigate the relationship between the readers' direct experience of crime and the gratification they obtain for their safety information need from the selected newspapers' crime stories.
4. To examine whether the readers' frequency of reading Nigerian newspapers' crime stories affect the gratification of their safety information need.
5. To find out whether the social demographics of the readers influence the gratification they obtain on their safety information need from the selected newspapers' crime stories.

1.5 Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions are designed for this study:

1. To what extent, if any, is the selected Nigerian newspapers' coverage of crime during the study period, in terms of frequency and prominence?
2. To what extent, if any, do the Nigerian newspapers' crime stories gratify the readers' safety information needs?
3. What relationship, if any, exists between the readers' direct experience of crime and the gratification they obtain on their safety information needs from the selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories?
4. To what extent, if any, does the readers' frequency of reading the selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories affect the gratification of their safety information needs?
5. To what extent, if any, do the readers' social demographics determine the gratification they obtain from the selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories?

1.6 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the coverage of crime (**violent and property crime**) and the gratifications, or otherwise, of readers' safety information needs by the selected Nigerian Newspapers crime stories from 2010-2014.

1.7. A Brief Profile of and the Justification for the Choice of Newspapers

One central theme of this study was the investigation of the selected Nigerian newspapers' coverage of crime (violent and property crime) within the study period, in terms of frequency and prominence. My choice of the newspapers was purposive. Since the heroic deed of Rev. Henry Townsend in establishing *Iwe fun awon ara Egba ati Omo Yoruba* (The newspaper for the Egba and Yoruba) in 1859 (Oso, 2012), many newspapers both privately and government owned, have existed and gone into

extinction in Nigeria ever since (See Daramola, 2006; Salawu, 2001; Ngoa, 2012; Oso, Odunlami & Adaja, 2011). Currently, Nigeria has about one hundred and fifty newspapers of local, regional and national outlook. In a recent web ranking of national newspapers in Nigeria, the five selected newspapers for this study were ranked thus: *Vanguard*, 1st, *Punch*, 2nd, *The Sun*, 7th, *Nigerian Tribune*, 12th and the *Daily Trust*, 14th (Nigerian Finder, 2016). In addition, three of the selected newspapers, *Vanguard*, *Punch*, and *The Sun*, are based in Lagos and were established in 1984, 1977 and 2003 respectively. The fourth newspaper used in the study, the *Nigerian Tribune*, is located in the city of Ibadan (both Lagos & Ibadan are located in South West, Nigeria). It is the only existing pre-independence newspaper in Nigeria, having been established in 1949. The fifth newspaper, the *Daily Trust*, began operation in 1998, and is located in the Northern part of the country, Abuja (the seat of the Nigerian government), to be precise. It is credited as the largest circulating newspaper in Northern Nigeria (Nigerian Finder, 2016). The five newspapers share some characteristics. They are listed among the top twenty newspapers in Nigeria having national spread and have existed for over a decade, going by their years of establishment (Nigeria Press Council, 2009). They are published in English, and English being the official language in Nigeria, makes them more acceptable to the readers than if the medium of expression had been in any other language.

Despite the dwindling economic fortunes of the newspapers, symbolised by low circulation of the newspapers (Oso, 2012), **in line with the economic downturn facing the country**, (additional information mine), the selected newspapers, according to the Nigerian Press Council (2009), are widely read newspapers; have national spread in Nigeria, hence, adequate for this study. The newspapers publish on various issues like politics, business, health, finance, crime, law, environment, tourism, sports

etc. and have been cited in scholarly articles and at different fora (Okidu, 2013). All the selected newspapers are available in hard copies and online versions. Most importantly, the Lagos State Civil Service does a daily subscription to these newspapers, thus, making them accessible and available to the civil servants, who constituted the population for the survey. The daily and the weekend issues of newspapers were sampled in the study.

1.8 Justification for the Period of the Study

The study covered a five year period, 2010-2014. The years were chosen because they Tseloni (2006) found a correlation between emerging democracies and violent crime. In effect, any of the years within the current democratic dispensation in Nigeria, could have served the same purpose in the study.

1.9 Significance of the Study

The study is of significant theoretically, methodologically and in practical terms. Theoretically, this study reinforced the social responsibility function of the media to report happenings within the environment in a useful and impactful manner on the audience. The study was able to establish that the selected newspapers reported crime stories. The study also elucidated the Uses and Gratification Theory which regards the audience as active participants in the communication process, rather than a docile, inactive receiver of mediated messages.

In terms of methods, the study adopts methodological triangulation involving the combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods (content analysis and survey) to investigate the phenomenon of crime. This was novel because, only quantitative content analysis method of media research was adopted for similar studies in the past (e.g. Armstrong, 2001; Pollak & Kubrin 2007; Odunlami & Soremekun, 2013 Thomson, et al., 2000). Content analytical study has been found to be inadequate

to measure the outcome of media content on audience behaviour (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). The adoption of a mixed- method approach assisted in revealing the respondents' views and nuances on the problem of crime in Lagos State, crime coverage by the selected newspapers and the levels of gratification obtained by the readers from the selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories.

Practically, the study would assist in raising an individual's consciousness on the informational value of newspapers' crime stories in meeting their safety information need. It is also hoped that the outcome of this study would be useful to the media in their coverage of crime in not only achieving the goal of the source, (episodic and sensational reportage) but to also assist the society to which they are socially responsible, by identifying with the society in crime reportage in a manner that would make crime stories useful to and impactful on the readers. Furthermore, the study would also be significant to the governments at the three-tiers of governance in Nigeria (Federal, State and Local- Local Governments) and relevant agencies such as Ministries of Information and Education on the need to further promote literacy among the citizenry in view of the fact that information seeking from the media would avail citizens of the tricks and operations of criminals, thereby enhancing their safety information need.

Finally, the study would be a contribution to scholarship on media coverage of crime by drawing attention of media scholars, especially in the Nigerian context, to this vast, seemingly inexhaustible, but sparsely explored research area.

1.10 Scope of the Study

The vehicles or channels of the mass media are numerous. Although, basically divided into print and electronic media, each of the two has several sub-varieties (Akhimien, 2007). It would therefore be impossible to study all media channels in a

single study; hence, this study is restricted to newspaper coverage of crime and its influence on the readers' safety information need. The population (readers) for the survey aspect of this study consisted of adults (between 18 and 59 years old) newspapers readers. To this end, the study used, Lagos State Civil servants because of their literacy level, access to newspapers, and above all, their perceived concerns for their personal safety and those of their relations and also because Lagos is a crime - prone state (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2005; Ajayi, 2007). In addition in-depth interviewees were conducted among Lagos – State covering the three Senatorial Districts in the State.

1.11 Limitations to the Study

Limitations of a study are the extraneous factors beyond the control of the researcher. In this sense, studies conducted within a given time, with defined objectives, within a particular locale, setting or context, among other constraining factors, expectedly, become limited in certain respects. This study was not an exception. Some of the limitations to the study are:

1. The study was limited to five of the top twenty newspapers in Nigeria, adjudged as having national spread. They are: *The Nigerian Tribune, The Punch, Vanguard, The Sun and Daily Trust* and covered five years (2010-2014).
2. The crime stories covered in the study were limited to violent and property crime. Terrorism induced killings and abductions, and also the several militant attacks on people, pipelines and oil installations, and other killings associated with various agitations were not investigated in the study. This was due to the fact that the researcher considered them as other forms of crime (terrorism, economic and public order crimes) which are outside the scope of this study.

3. The fact that newspapers are essentially a literate medium was also considered as a limitation, in that, the problem of crime affects everybody in a society irrespective of status. However, due to the fact that crime is a phenomenon that is freely discussed by people in the society, outside of class or status, raises the hope that information about crime gathered from newspapers by the literate readers can through word-of-mouth get to the educationally disadvantaged through informal channels such as, religious houses, social events, family meetings and other networking avenues. To this extent, the choice of newspapers for this study cannot be diminished by this.
4. Though the study adopted mixed- methods research technique, the fact that the study was limited to Nigerian newspapers coverage of crime within a particular period (2010-2014) and conducted among Lagos State Civil Servants, and a few sampled respondents through in-depth interviews, are limiting factors. The approaches reduced the generalisability of the findings in a heterogeneous country like Nigeria and also among the Nigerian newspaper readers, which is put at 26, 800, 200, equalling 20.22% of the Nigerian population (Dragomir &Thompson, 2012) and spread across the length and breadth of the country. Nonetheless, the study was able to achieve its modest objectives.

1.12 Operational Definition of Terms

Adult: A male or female who is literate and a newspaper reader, not below the age of 18 and not more than 59 years old and falls within the population for the study.

Crime: A breach of the criminal act; a deed capable of inflicting injury, loss of lives and property, emotional distress and a sense of loss of dignity by the victim. It shall include forms of violent crime like; murder, rape and kidnapping/abduction, and property crime such as; robbery, automobile theft, burglary, and fencing.

Gratification: The cognitive or information need about safety of a newspaper reader satisfied (gratified) by the selected newspapers crime stories.

Media: Channels of information delivery. The term, however, in this study refers to the newspaper as a source of information and as a variant of the mass (print) media.

Newspapers: Unbound daily publications of: *Nigerian Tribune, The Punch, The Vanguard, The Sun and Daily Trust newspapers* in Nigeria, selected for this study.

1.13 Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues are important in scientific research. The research focusses on eliciting information about some social phenomena and some personal information that could be interpreted differently according to an interpreter's orientation and idiosyncrasies. Consequently, it was necessary to seek the consent of the participants in the survey and in-depth interviews carried out in the study. Thus, ethical consideration becomes paramount. This was achieved through seeking ethical clearance from North- West University, Mafikeng, South Africa, through the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences before embarking on the research (Ethical clearance certificate attached as an appendix).

Furthermore, the researcher sought and obtained permission from the Lagos State Civil Service to administer the research questionnaire to Lagos State Civil servants who served as the population for the study. Also, the consent of the interviewees was sought before engaging them for the study. They were told in clear terms that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they reserved the right to decline their further participation in the study at any stage they considered it necessary. The researcher was able to gain the confidence of the respondents. The in-depth interviewees, however, did not consent to disclosing their names. This was respected. They were also informed that information provided would be treated

anonymously, and that the information they volunteered were strictly for academic purpose. The University research ethics policy (appendix v) was followed.

1.14 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is an eight chapter study, divided into two equal sections. The first four chapters (1-4) comprise write ups on the study. The remaining four chapters (5-8) comprise the methodology, analysis and the discussion of findings of the study, summary, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further studies. The content of each chapter is presented as follows:

Chapter one of the study provides the needed prologue and the background information to the study. It also comprises other salient headings in research such as, the statement of the problem investigated, research objectives, research questions, aims of the study and the rationale (significance) of the study, limitations of the study, operational definition and ethical consideration.

Chapter two explores the themes of crime, typologies of crime, crime coverage, and Nigerian newspapers' headlines of crime stories and consequences of crime.

Chapter three of the study dwells on the review of literature considered important and relevant to this study. The concepts treated include: communication and society, information seeking behaviour, fear of crime, causes of fear of crime, age and fear of crime, gender and fear of crime, feminism and fear of crime, fear and gender sensitivity, neighbourhood and fear of crime, income, age and education on fear of crime, and media and fear of crime. The chapter ends with the summary of the reviewed literature, theoretical framework and the identified gaps.

Chapter four focusses on the Theoretical Framework for the study. The study adopts both the Uses & Gratifications media theories and the Social Responsibility theories. The other half or section of the study consists of chapters on the methodology,

analysis, discussion/ interpretation of findings of the mixed- methods of content analysis (qualitative and quantitative), survey and in-depth interviews adopted for the study.

In specific term, **Chapter five** dwells on the methodology used in the study. The study adopted a mixed –method approach (quantitative & qualitative) to establish a triangulation for the study.

Chapter six has the findings and the analysis of the quantitative aspect of the study, (manifest) content analysis and survey.

Chapter seven presents the findings and analysis of the qualitative aspects of the study (latent content analysis and in-depth interviews). It also presents the themes of the qualitative findings and a triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative findings.

Chapter eight presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study and also suggests areas of further research.

1.15 Conclusion

This chapter served as the prologue and set the template driving the study. It emphasized the importance of the media and especially the newspapers, the importance of human communication and the near dependence of the media audience on the various media for information on their activities and preoccupations, including their safety information need. It also examined the problem of crime in the society and in Nigeria as a reference point. Furthermore, it raised the insecurity problem in Nigeria and the near helplessness of the government and the ‘hopelessness’ on the part of the people on the ability of the state and the police to tackle the problem of violent and property crime in the country. The chapter discussed the importance and the

undeniable role of newspapers as a *primus inter pares*³ among other variants of the mass media in disseminating crime stories, and as a reference material.

More importantly, the chapter pointed attention to fear of crime as an aftermath of crime, and contended the uniform description of the audience as being generally fearful of crime. It discussed the evolution of newspapers in Nigeria and readership. In addition it justified the choice of the selected newspapers and the years chosen for the study. It also indicated in clear terms, the foci of the study which are to investigate Nigerian newspapers coverage of crime and the gratification of readers' safety information need.

The chapter also discussed the topics of interest to the study and the salient issues in academic research, such as: the aims of the study, research objectives, statement of problem, and scope of the study among others.

³ First among equals or peers

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 CRIME: TYPOLOGIES, COVERAGE AND CONSEQUENCES

2.1 Introduction

The central themes of this study are the coverage of crime (violent and property crime) by *Nigerian Tribune*, *Punch*, *Vanguard*, *The Sun* and *Daily Trust* newspapers and the gratification of the readers' safety information need by the newspapers' crime stories. This chapter discusses the phenomenon of crime and its conceptualisation in the study under the sub-headings of: the socio-problematic nature, complexity and types of crime, perspectives, and sociological viewpoints on crime. It also dwells on newspaper readership in Nigeria, the characteristics of newspapers' headlines, crime coverage, and consequences of crime.

2.2 Conceptualising Crime

Crime is an act proscribed by law. It is as prescribed by the laws enacted by the state, and which the state administers and enforces (Briggs, 2009; Brown, Esbensen & Geis, 2013; James & Vander, 1990). The fact that law is territorially defined or bound makes what constitutes a crime very difficult to define beyond a country's stipulation of what constitutes crime. Many interpretations of what constitutes a crime exist. This implies that an act no matter the gravity, criminalized elsewhere, may be seen as normal in another country. Acts like assault, forcible rape, abortion and street fighting do not have universal interpretation. Brown, Esbensen and Geis (2013) noted that, while assault, which may not require more than a mere pushing between two people is criminalized and punishable, other more serious acts such as the failure to attend to accident victims without police clearance or refusing to attend to a pregnant woman without a medical insurance are not criminalized. These two acts could lead to the avoidable deaths of a human being and the unborn baby.

Also, while an offence of forcible rape can be instituted against the husband in favour of his wife in a country like the United States of America (USA), it is almost an unheard of piece in a country like Nigeria, where a woman is not considered to have the right to deny or decline her husband's sexual advances. Abortion and same sex marriage are considered as crimes in countries like Nigeria, they are not criminalized in South Africa. Furthermore, while street fighting is considered a public order crime, boxing, despite being a violent activity, is a sport with large followership, competed for by nations and is money spinning. Related to this is the criminalization of drug. Tobacco smoking, on the other hand, enjoys the tacit support of governments globally, despite the obvious and apparent danger in tobacco smoking to public health.

What is labelled or regarded as crime is spatial, temporal and territorial, hence, a social construct, because no universally acceptable definition of crime exists. Crime reflects the history, culture and the distinct features of a given society (van Dijk, 2008). The social constructions of crime, like media, are therefore, as defined by the society, which makes crime a vague and subjective concept requiring an acceptable definition. This has, however, remained elusive. In the context of the study, crime is regarded as a violation of a country's law. This involves carrying out physical harm on another being or infringing on someone's liberty; engaging in an act that reduces the dignity of another person (rape/sexual assault) or depriving someone of his or her property through force or deception.

In Nigeria, which is the setting of the study, the phenomenon of crime (as discussed in chapter one of the study) is widespread, has become a social malaise and an obstacle to development (Ajayi, 2007). Acts prohibited by law are criminalized in Nigeria, like in other countries. Among such unlawful acts are: murder or homicide, rape, kidnapping and assault, all of which are examples of violent crime investigated

in this study. Other types of crime present in Nigeria that are investigated in the study include: robbery, burglary, fencing and car theft. They are conceptualised in the study as examples of property crime.

2.3 Crime as a Social Problem

A social problem according to Lauer and Lauer (2008:4) “is one whose causes and solutions lie outside the individual and the immediate social environment”. A number of social ills like availability of alcohol and drugs, family disintegration, wrongful possession of arms and ammunitions, gangsterism, poverty, unemployment among others; have been identified as risk factors of crime. Crime, though perpetrated by individuals and groups, come about largely because of the inability of governments to provide social amenities such as: education, jobs, power, security and also the dysfunctional social institutions, such as the marriage, religious, legal, political, and even traditional institutions (National Crime Council, 2002). Crime is perceived by many people as a social problem demanding a solution, because, “crime poses an immediate threat to a great many persons” (Sykes, 1978: 23).

Globally, crime is an almost every minute occurrence. Some of these criminal incidents get reported to the police. Some receive the attention of the mass media and many go unreported, hence, not publicized. According to Allen (2013), crime affects individuals and societies mostly negatively. It can result in deaths, physical harm, loss of property and human dignity. Emotional trauma on the victims and their relations, displacements and even migration from crime infested communities are some of the hardships crime inflicts on the people. These hydra-headed problems posed by crime have led to many views and thoughts in describing the nature of this global scourge. These problems posed by crime to the society underscore the focus of the present study which is to investigate the coverage of crime by five Nigerian newspapers

(*Nigerian Tribune, Punch, Vanguard, The Sun & Daily Trust*) from 2010-2014, and how the newspapers' crime stories have gratified the safety information need of the readers within the study period.

2.4 Perspectives on the Study of Crime

Contributions to the discourse on media and crime cut across disciplines like: Sociology, Psychology, the Sciences, Criminology, Humanities, Law, and the Media (Jewkes, 2015). These interests have led to robust debates on crime as a phenomenon, its influence on behaviour and the importance of all forms of the media including photography in crime coverage (Carrabine, 2014). Criminologists have defined crime differently but along a pattern and a continuum (Bartol, 2002; Brown, Esbensen, & Geis, 2013). Their *legalistic definitions* are aptly captured by Tappan (1947:100) as follows:

Crime is an intentional act in violation of the criminal law (statutory and case law), committed without defence or excuse, and penalized by the state as a felony or misdemeanour. In studying the offender there can be no presumption that... persons are criminal unless they also are held guilty beyond a particular doubt of a particular offence. (Tappan, 1947:100).

This explains that a law has to exist before crime is committed and that the offender or perpetrator is aware of the law, but, in deviance chooses⁴ to violate the criminal code and for which lawful punishment is reserved. Put in another way, crime is committed by a distinct sociological group who violates certain legal norms and subjected to official sanction. In the legal parlance, however, an act of omission is not a crime, if a defendant is adjudged justified. Tappan's (1947) conceptualization of crime contains some legalistic elements whose origin according to Beirne & Messerschmidt (1991) is rooted in the English Common Law (Customary Law) of the 12th century. Central to this view is that a crime must be forbidden by the criminal

⁴ intentional act of violating the criminal code

law and for which there must be a stipulated punishment in the criminal law for the crime committed. This is a basic principle expressed in the English common law doctrine (*nullum crimen sine lege, nulla poena sine lege*) which means, (*no crime without law, no punishment without law*) (Beirne & Messerschmidt, 1991:12). The essence of the criminal law, therefore, is to protect the innocents from the offenders and to also in accordance with the law, punish violators.

In Nigeria, whereas the phenomena of crime and violence are widespread and threatening the social and economic fabrics of the country (Soola, 2007), ineffective policing has resulted in the failure of the state to protect the lives and property of the citizens (Ajayi, 2007). Despite the fact that everyone is a potential victim of crime, and would require justice in the event of being victimised, the administration of criminal justice in Nigeria is, unfortunately, fraught with a lot of technicalities and delays (Agbonika, 2014). The judiciary as the last hope of the common man for justice thus becomes incapacitated. This would obviously culminate in crime perpetration and a loss of confidence in the polity by the people.

Given that safety is a psychological need and basic to existence, information sourcing becomes an interesting and valuable option for the populace towards their personal and property safety, and those of their loved ones. The newspapers are veritable sources of information about crime (Sacco, 1995; Surette, 1998). Carrabine (2008) also noted that very few people experience crime first-hand; hence, many people rely on the media for crime stories. The present study, therefore, focuses on the influence of newspapers' crime stories and the gratification of the safety information need of the readers.

2.4.1 Sociological Viewpoints of Crime

In view of the varied interests in the study of crime, various criminological perspectives, especially from the sociological point of view, have been advanced. Criminologists have provided four sociological viewpoints of crime as: crime as a violation of conduct norms, crime as a social harm, crime as a violation of human rights, and crime as a form of deviance (Beirne & Messerschmidt, 1991). These are explained thus:

2.4.2 Crime as a Violation of Conduct Norms

Norms are rules that govern behaviour. The argument here is that in investigating causes of social phenomena, such as crime, objective facts should be studied by the researchers as they occur in their natural states, rather than as they are seen by the subjective concerns of the public, the governments, powerful social groups, and the criminal law (Sellin, 2003, originally, 1938). Sellin contended that the basic unit of study should not be the behaviour prohibited by the rules of the criminal law, but that the basic units of investigating crime should be norms of conduct which are universal and not a creation of one normative group. In other words, the violation of a group's norm should be criminalized.

While it may be difficult for criminologists to study the violations of all forms of conduct norms, Sellin's (1938) argument led to the inquiry of why some violations are criminalized and others are not. The labelling of what constitutes crime has been described as one of the complexities in the study of crime because “crime is a relative phenomenon, conveying different thoughts and meanings to different people” (Brown, Esbensen, & Geis, 2013:8). This background information is consistent with the widely held view that defining what constitutes a crime is the prerogative of those who have

the power to make the laws of a state. The typologies of crime investigated in the study are as prescribed by the laws of Nigeria.

2.4.3 Crime as a Social Harm

Sutherland (1949) argued that many white-collar crimes (crime committed by a person of a high social status in the course of his occupation) have the characteristics of criminal offences. These are harmful behaviours punishable by law, but which are undeservedly treated trivially. It is argued that any act that constitutes harm to the society should be criminalised irrespective of the social standing of the perpetrators of the acts and that the media should report fairly well on white-collar crime as they do on violent crime, notwithstanding the business people who own the media, who are alleged as the perpetrators of white-collar and other financial crimes. Levi (2006), however, contested the submission of Sutherland (1949) that the media are biased against reporting White – Collar crimes due to ownership factor and argued that rather, the media treat white-collar and other financial crimes of deception as “extensions of infotainment” (Levi, 2006:1037). This view could be taken as trivializing a type of crime that affects majority of people, though not physically, but at least, psychologically.

2.4.4 Crime as Violation of Human Rights

Human rights are individuals’ rights basically as human beings. They are universal rights guaranteed by existence as a human being (Donnelly, 2013). They are inalienable or undeniable rights. Such natural and inalienable rights include right to: life, liberty, happiness, freedom to associate which derive mainly from their status as human beings. However, there are instances such human rights are denied or trampled upon without any punishment for the offender(s). Examples are deaths or loss of property related to electioneering or other political reasons, communal clashes or mob

action. Rather than rebuking the perpetrators of these heinous crimes, to serve as deterrent to others towards an orderly society, such grave offences are often treated with sentiments and political considerations. This has a great impact and is consequential on the society. Political consideration for act of criminality can only breed criminals, leading to a lawless society, where jungle justice may be the outcome. Human rights activists, therefore, argue that rather than what is enshrined in the criminal law, any behaviour which violates an individual's human rights should be criminalized. In the study, crime (violent and property) proscribed by the laws in Nigeria are studied.

2.4.5 Crime as a Form of Deviance

Deviance, according to Beirne and Messerschmidt (1991), refers to the failure or refusal to conform with norms from the trivial to the tragic. It is regarded as any social behaviour or social characteristic that departs from the conventional norms and standards of a community or society and for which the deviant is sanctioned. Not all deviant behaviours are, however, harmful to the society. For example, a physicist who spends extra hours beyond others in the laboratory and comes with a theory to advance knowledge may have deviated by spending beyond the normal hours; the outcome of such sacrifice portends no harm for the society.

In sum, the sociological viewpoint of crime suggests that crime should be defined beyond the realm of what the ruling class terms as crime. It is the view of this school of thought that any behaviour antithetical and or detrimental to the collective good of a group and society should be criminalized. This study adopted the legal definition of crime- a social breach that compels reportage by the newspapers in the performance of their surveillance or information function.

2.5 Crime Typologies

Globally, crime exists in different forms. For instance, van Dijk (2008) identified ten common or frequently and globally occurring crimes to be: burglary, robbery, automobile theft, theft from car (larceny), theft of personal property, threat or assault and sexual offences, homicide, kidnapping and hate crime. Furthermore, these types of crime are also referred to as, *common*, *volume* or *conventional* crime and distinct from complex or nonconventional crimes, such as organized crime and other economic or financial crimes. On another hand, there exist other types of crime such as: white-collar crime, cybercrime and public order crimes (Siegel, 2004). This study, however, focused on two types of crime- **violent** (homicide or murder, rape, kidnapping/abduction and assault) and **property crime** (robbery, burglary, automobile theft and fencing), many of which are included in the identified ten common crimes across the globe.

2.5.1 Violent Crime

Describing what constitutes a violent act is a hard and complex task. It has been advanced earlier in this study that no single act is always and everywhere a crime. Examples of violent crime identified in this study are discussed as follows:

2.5.2 Homicide or Murder

Homicide refers to the unlawful killing of a “human being by another and for many people, the quintessential crime” (van Dijk: 2008:75). Bartol (2002) described homicidal violence as one of the interesting and attractive subjects in the western world, while “sex is the most marketable” (Bartol, 2002: 214). Homicide has four categories: murder, manslaughter, excusable homicide and justifiable homicide. Acts of homicide have two broad divisions. Those committed through interpersonal conflicts, often under the influence of alcohol, and those committed by gangs or

organized crime groups for instrumental purposes (van Dijk, 2008). The former is what was investigated in the study.

Murder is among the four categories of homicide premeditated and characterized by the intent to kill. Premeditation means the prior intention to kill even if the intent is momentary and antecedent to the act. The manifestation of the intentional act to kill a fellow being, “is malice aforethought” (Brown, Esbensen, Geis 2013:447). Most acts of homicide, especially, cases of murder are made known to the police; hence, murder represents reliable indices to measure insecurity, safety and criminal activity (Brown, Esbensen & Geis, 2013). This, however, does not suggest that all the cases of murder made known to the police are uncovered and the perpetrators found and brought to justice.

In a statistical report on homicide in the USA “some 14,778 persons were its victims in 2010” (Brown, Esbensen & Geis 2013: 450). Men are likely to be homicide victims on the street, while women are often killed at home and specifically in the bedroom. They also averred that men are mostly victims of fatal domestic attacks in the kitchen and killed with a kitchen knife. Alcohol was also found to be a factor in more than 50% of all homicide cases and that in about half of the cases; alcohol consumption was observable in the victim and the offender (Brown, Esbensen & Geis, 2013).

In Nigeria, Soola (2007) also posited that the availability of alcohol and drugs are risk factors to crime. Curiously, however, “the more, bizarre, senseless, or heinous the murder, the more extensive press coverage it receives” (Bartol, 2002:214). This suggests the exaggeration the media give homicide cases over other types of commonly occurring crimes, thereby, contrasting with official statistics on crime, and creating apprehension in the public about increase in crime wave, even when a drop in

crime is observable. Ditton, Chadee, Farrall, Gilchrist and Bannister, (2004:595) summed up as this:

Although generally bedevilled by the differing definitions of what constitutes crime and how it should be measured, it has been broadly established that crime constitutes a relatively constant, although not particularly large percentage of newspaper, television and radio news. It has been shown that the selection reported tend to be sensational rather than mundane.

This implies that crime stories are constant features in the media, but are often reported or framed with fanfare and sensationalism to suit the source.

2.5.3 Kidnapping

Like other forms of crime so far discussed in this study, defining kidnapping is also a hard and complex task given the evolution of the word, the contextual meanings and usage of the word. Online *Etymology Dictionary*, places the evolution of the word *kidnap* in the 1680s, and that it was derived from the combination of the noun *kid* a synonym of *child* and the word *nap* (a variant of *nab*) which means to *snatch away*. Similarly, *The New World Encyclopaedia* (online) gives the same explanation on the origin and the derivation of the word *kidnap*; it has come to mean illegal capture or detention of person or people against their will and that from 1768, the term *abduction* has come to be used in a similar sense. Van Dijk (2008) described kidnapping as follows:

Kidnapping, the unlawful act of detaining one or more persons against their will for the purpose of demanding for their liberation an economic gain or material benefits, or in order to oblige someone to do or abstain from doing something, has traumatic implications for victims and their families (van Dijk, 2008:66).

The central theme in these clarifications is that kidnapping in most cases satisfies the lust of the offender to the detriment and discomfort of both the victims and their families; creates a high sense of insecurity; dislocates victims' relations; a smear on

the image of the state; and an infringement on the right to existence and freedom of the victim, hence, a crime.

2.5.4 Origin of Kidnapping

Kidnapping, though, a global phenomenon (van Dijk, 2008) has assumed a worrying and terrifying dimension in Nigeria in the last one decade. The dimensions and the spate of incidents of kidnapping in Nigeria today are alarming. Thom- Otuya (2010) noted thus:

Kidnapping for ransom is a common occurrence in various parts of the world today such as: Baghdad, Mexico, Colombia, Haiti, Brazil, Philippines, parts of former Soviet Union, Sudan and South Africa. In Nigeria, kidnapping and hostage taking started in the Niger Delta region in 1999 (Thom Otuya, 2010:1).

Turner (1998) situated the origin of kidnapping to the 17th century England. Then, children were kidnapped and sold as slaves or agricultural workers to colonial farmers. Shiller (1985; & Gallagher, 1985) further established incidents of kidnapping in Rome in (AD 315), in parts of today's Philippines and in the USA. The trend of kidnapping has manifestly spread and considerably too, in the recent past and common in parts of the Middle East, Latin America, Asia and Africa (van Dijk: 2008). He said further that, an estimated number of 20,000 to 30,000 kidnappings occur yearly in countries most affected by the scourge. Kidnapping is thus a global phenomenon.

In the last ten years, precisely in 2006 when some expatriates were held hostage in Nigeria's Niger Delta area for ransom, kidnapping has since then spread in leaps and bounds to all the nooks and crannies of Nigeria and has become a "lucrative venture" (Ottuh & Aitufe, 2014:1). The spate of kidnapping continues unabated in Nigeria and a respecter of no one. Irrespective of status, anyone could be a victim. To say that the act of kidnapping is becoming an epidemic in Nigeria may be an

understatement in view of the daily media reports on incidents of kidnapping in Nigeria. While there have been a few studies (Ngwama, 2014; Nseabasi, 2010; Ottuh & Aitufe, 2014; Thom-Otuya, 2010) on kidnapping in Nigeria, empirical studies on newspapers' coverage of the phenomenon and the influence of the coverage on audience behaviour, is lacking in literature. These are some of the rationale for the present study.

2.5.5 Typologies of Kidnapping

Concannon (2008:4) has identified the following sub-types of kidnapping:

Domestic Kidnapping: This is explained as a form of kidnapping within the family for child custody kidnapping without legal right. Payment of a ransom is often absent. The objective is to take custody of the child permanently especially in cases of dispute between the parents and where they live apart.

Political Kidnapping: This is explained as a kidnapping conceived and executed to further a political course.

Predatory Kidnapping is defined as the kidnapping of a minor to satisfy the lust of the offender.

Profit Kidnapping is a kidnapping act for pecuniary gain. This is the type of kidnapping investigated in this study.

Revenge Kidnapping has as its goal, a kidnapping act carried out to avenge a perceived wrong.

Staged Kidnapping is said to be a kidnapping act feigned to distract from another crime or undisclosed situation.

The response of the society to curtailing kidnapping has recorded little or no success. With the exception of Columbia, "where kidnapping with extortion has assumed dramatic proportions over the past decade, success in countering the problem

are now being reported'' (van Dijk, 2008:67). The absence of accurate reporting has been a great hinderance to assessing the gravity and nature of the problem. He identified failure on the part of the victims to report their kidnapping for fear of retaliation or suspicious that local police are implicated, the fact that, a great number of cases of kidnapping are carried by organized- crime groups, hence not brought to the attention of authorities; and finally, in most situations, cases of kidnappings are resolved amicably through the payment of ransom with the understanding that the matter will not be reported to the police, as the bane of curtailing kidnappings.

In Nigeria, most cases of kidnappings are believed to have been resolved through the payment of ransom, by the victims and their relations. Virtually, all the reported cases of kidnapping have been resolved with ransom paid on behalf of the victims to regain their freedom. Though, police authorities have often claimed to have rescued victims, especially, of high profile kidnapping, free of paying any ransom. Such claims have often been refuted from the side of the victims. An example was the kidnapping of the former Secretary to the Federal Government of Nigeria, a politician and a former presidential candidate of the All Peoples' Party in Nigeria's 1999 Elections, Chief Olu Falae, allegedly kidnapped on his farm by Fulani herdsmen who demanded a ransom of ten million naira. The police claimed to have rescued him without paying any ransom, but a daughter of the victim debunked the claim of the police, and the police have not (at the time of this study) issued a rejoinder to the accusation or issued any counter statement to the effect. In addition, a major problem militating against curtailing the menace of kidnapping in Nigeria appears to be a lack of political will to prosecute and convict offenders. Since the outbreak of the scourge in Nigeria in 1996, hardly has any offender been convicted for this heinous crime.

In criminal law, all the variants of kidnapping enumerated above are criminal acts, as long as they are non-consensual and against the will of the person or persons held captive, hence, unlawful. In this study, however, *profit kidnapping or kidnapping for ransom* is the type of kidnapping investigated in this study.

2.6 Rape

Any attempt to give a single and acceptable definition of rape- now subsumed under a broader concept- (sexual violence or sexual assault) could be a superfluous and a futile effort. What is regarded as an offence of rape differs from one country to another. In this changing time, nothing is static. Issues continue to change in consonance with the popular aphorism that, *the only permanent thing is change*. Sexual violence against women, according to Custers and van den Bulck (2013) is widespread. It has existed for a long time in history and evident in every society. Mallicoat and Ireland (2014) described rape as one of the oldest crimes in the society and also one of the most feared, but underreported. In the view of Savino, Brent and Turvey (2005:1), an introspective look at the many and varied rape -related laws, publications and research shows “definitions and thresholds unique to each”. The more attempts at defining rape, the more complex and problematic the concept becomes, because rape means different things to different groups, interests, and people.

In some countries, like the USA, rape has been replaced by the term sexual assault. Accurate statistics on sexual offences are missing, because reporting by victims and enforcements differ across cultures. Women are also most likely to be victimized by someone they know, hence, are often not helped by the criminal justice system as charges are not always filed; or is reduced to plea bargains. In most cases offenders receive limited or no sanction(s) at all for the criminal act perpetrated.

Resultantly, many women have little faith in the criminal justice system (Custers, & van den Bulck, 2013). Rape, as a form of crime, is mostly suffered by women. Fear of crime by the womenfolk is characterized by concern about sexual assault as occurring during a violent crime event (Riggs & Cook, 2015) though; men are significantly more likely to be a victim of murder.

Historically, rape is one of the oldest crimes on earth, and is also the most feared (Fisher, & Sloan, 2003). Rape has been in public discourse across cultures from time immemorial, yet, the phenomenon of rape remains a monster in every society till today. Images of rape have been represented in historical artefacts (Ciofalo, 1995), in literature (Stockton, 2006), in television dramas and cinema (Jones-Brown, 2007), and in advertisements, magazines, and in the post- modern era (Ward, 2003). These are indications of the permeating nature of the images of crime, a fact of life that the society is contending with. Laws against rape have been in force for about four thousand years (Mallicoat, & Ireland 2014). One of the first laws against rape can be located in the code of Hammurabi from Babylon in 1900 BCE. The act of rape was also criminalized in the Ancient Greek, Roman and Judaic societies.

The laws identify two types of rape, rape of a married woman, and rape of an unmarried woman. The sanctions for these unlawful acts were dependent on the status of those who suffered the victimization (Ewoldt, Monson, & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2000). Others considered rape as property crime than as a violent sexual act, because women were considered then as the property of men, and the defilement of the woman reduced her worth (Burgess-Jackson, 1999). In common law, rape of an unmarried woman was seen as a property crime against her father, and could be corrected if the offender ended up marrying the rape victim. In a like term, the rape of

a married woman was regarded as a property crime against her husband, and attracted death penalty (Dodderidge, 1632).

History has it that, laws have not been effective in protecting women against crimes of sexual violence. In many cases of forcible rape, women were often reproached or rebuked for tempting offenders into committing such misdemeanours. Until the 20th century the Model Penal Code, 1955 definition of rape was in existence (Mallicoat, & Ireland, 2014). It goes thus:

2.7 Rape and Related Offences

According to the Model panel code (1955, section 213.1), it is a crime of rape if:

- A male has sexual intercourse with a female not his wife.
- He compels her to submit by force or by threat of imminent death, serious bodily injury, extreme pain or kidnapping, to be inflicted on any one; or
- He has substantially impaired her power to appraise or control her conduct by administering or employing without her knowledge drugs, intoxicants or other means for the purpose of preventing resistance; or
- The female is unconscious; or
- The female is less than 10 years old.

Mallicoat and Ireland (2014) faulted the definition on many grounds. First, the definition of rape is reduced to intercourse, taking away pre sex activities like, fondling, oral sex and sodomy. It also limits the offender- victim act to a male perpetrator and a female victim. Though, this is often the case, such a narrow scope fails to accommodate possible modern day cases of same -sex assaults and also cases where the woman is the offender and man, the victim. Additionally, the definition emphasizes the use of force or the threat of force before an act could be regarded as a

rape. The definition also forecloses rape in marital sex. Lastly, it fails to account for attempted rape. In response to spirited and sustained campaigns against the flaws in the definition of rape, the revised version of what could be regarded as a contemporary, reflective and modern definition of rape came in 2012.

The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Uniform Crime Reports came in 2012 in response to the clamouring and criticisms by women activists, scholars and law makers (Johnson, 2012). The new definition conceives of *rape* as *penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object or oral penetration by a sex organ of another, without the consent of the victim* (FBI, 2012b). In the revised and improved definition, the term *forcible rape* was replaced by *without the consent of the victim* which takes into account situations in which “the victim is incapable of consenting because of incapacitation by alcohol, other drugs, mental or physical impairment, or legal age” (Mallicoat, & Ireland, 2014: 72). The new definition is also gender sensitive.

Mallicoat and Ireland (2014) further noted that despite revising the law, a lack of understanding of the definitions of rape and sexual assault affect both the victims and the offenders as “many people who experience acts that are consistent with a legal definition of rape or sexual assault may not label their experience as such” (p.73). The victims do not see or consider themselves as victims, thus do not do a self-report to the police, nor do they seek counselling or mental health support. In a similar vein, the offenders who engage in actions and manifest behaviours that meet the requirements of the legal definitions of sexual assault or rape often do not interpret their own actions as such. Despite the update in the definition of rape by the FBI to be more consistent with modern definitions of rape in many countries, there exist no single definition of *rape* and *sexual assault*. “Legal definitions vary by jurisdiction, and these

change over time’’ (Mallicoat, & Ireland, 2014:73). In law, many investigators regard rape as a product of law and a legal term defined by the penal code with the assistance of the court.

In a broader term, Savino & Turvey (2005:2) identified three other headings, in addition to legal definitions under which rape can be categorized as: *Clinical*, *Moral and Political*.

2.7.1 Clinical Definition of Rape

Clinicians and therapists explain rape in “treatment- oriented terms --- helpful to the purpose of understanding the pathology of an offender, or seeing a victim through an emotional crisis’’ (Savino & Turvey, 2005:7). Similarly, Palmer and Thornhill (2000:1) noted that:

Rape is a copulation resisted to the best of the victim’s ability unless such resistance would probably result in death or serious injury to the victim or injury to individuals the victim commonly protects. Other sexual assaults, including oral or anal penetration of a man or woman under the same conditions also may be called rape under some circumstances.

It can be deduced from the above definitions that clinicians and therapists also agree that a resisted or non-consensual sexual intercourse is rape. In other words, a non- consensual sexual intercourse between an offender and a victim is rape. It is also observable that, none of the definitions is gender bias. This explains further the complexity of conceptualising rape and implies that rape could involve the opposite sex or same sex partners. Same sex marriage does not have universal appeal.

2.7.2 Political Definition of Rape

Political definitions of rape are hinged on the sentiments and selfish objectives of the agitators. “Rather than assisting justice or clinical treatment, they seek to advance the agenda of a particular group’’ (Savino & Turvey, 2005:8). Explanations of rape by the advocates for offenders and victims, political parties, movements,

religious bodies and **non-governmental organisations** (emphasis mine) are political explanations of crime (Savino & Turvey, 2005). The main argument here is that, unlike what many societies, other than the West uphold, women like men, should have the right, either to refuse, or initiate sex.

2.7.3 Moral Definition of Rape

Moral definitions of rape comes in to the equation when judgemental statements describing the desirability or otherwise of a rape incident are made. “They are a particular kind of political definition” (Savino & Turvey, 2005). They are often provided by victims, their advocates and the media. Rape in the opinion of moralists is an *act of cowardice*. They argue that no responsible, brave and courageous man would attempt raping a woman under any circumstances.

Notwithstanding the difficulty and the complexity in defining sexual victimization, the current study conceptualises rape as the forcible carnal knowledge of a female by a male without her consent. It excludes spousal rape or marital rape (the use of emotion or power by a husband to exert sexual favours from the wife), and same- sex sexual violence (forceful sexual advances, either between two men, or two women). It, however, includes statutory rape (sexual activity prohibited by law, which generally involves sexual activity with someone, who is legally unable to consent, due to age).

2.8 Prevalence of Rape

Rape is prevalent. It permeates the entire fabric of Nigerian society. Despite this, there is a paucity of reportage of rape cases. As a result of this, the victims and the society at large, suffer some certain and medical problems. The prevalence of rape and sexual assault in the society has been attributed to “rape myths” (Mallicoat & Ireland, 2014). Rape myth is defined as “attitudes and beliefs that are generally false

but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women” (Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1994:134). “The acceptance of rape myths by the society is a contributing factor in the practice of victim blaming--- and offenders use rape myths to excuse or justify their actions” (Mallicoat, & Ireland, 2014: 75; Bezuidenhout, 2012).

The high incidence of child rape in South Africa has been attributed partly to the **virgin rape myth** and the practice of **corrective rape** in the country (Mallicoat, & Ireland, 2014; Bezuidenhout, 2012). South Africa, according to Jewkes et al., (2009) ranked highly among the HIV afflicted countries in the world. There is high prevalence of HIV in South Africa (Shisana et al., (2014). In 2012, National HIV prevalence, incidence and behaviour survey was undertaken in South Africa by Shisana and colleagues. The study revealed that about 12.2 % of the population, representing (6.4 million people) was HIV positive in 2012 (Shisana, et al., 2014). Young women, in the submission of Fuller (2008) are of higher percentage of people living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa relative to their male folk. The rise in the *virgin rape myth* among South Africans (which suggests that raping of a virgin cures HIV/AIDS) has been attributed for the prevalence of HIV in South Africa (Mallicoat & Ireland, 2014) and has made child rape to be on the increase in South Africa. Another factor linked to the high rates of child rape in South Africa is the practice of *corrective rape* (Mallicoat & Ireland, 2014).

This is an example of *acquaintance rape* which involves minimal or subtle use of physical force by the perpetrator and entails a reduced degree of resistance by the victims than it is the case in instances of stranger sexual assaults (Littleton, Breitkopf, & Berenson, 2008). *Corrective rape* is the rape of a female by a (**known**) male (emphasis provided by me) to correct an anomaly or misbehaviour (Di Silvio, 2011).

It involves the rape of a girl by her father or male guardian as a disciplinary action or the rape of a lesbian by heterosexual males to cure her sexual orientation (Hawthorne, 2005). The child rape syndrome in South Africa has resulted in a monumental individual harm, including physical trauma of the victim(s) (Mallicoat & Ireland, 2014).

In addition to social stigma, physical and emotional troubles, rape victims' experience, studies have shown that sexual assaults impact negatively on women's mental health (Briere & Jordan, 2004; Kilpatrick, Amstadter, Resnik & Ruggiero, 2007). Rape according to them inflicts a huge trauma on the victims, leading to multiple long term outcomes. Furthermore, rape victims suffer from diseases such as: posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, fear and general anxiety and dependence on alcohol (Campbell, Dworkin & Cabral, 2012). These factors among others have made studies on the crime of rape worthy of academic inquiry.

In areas of political unrests and tension, rape is often a by-product. In South Africa, for instance, migrant workers were said to sometimes abduct local women from the townships for rape (Bezuidenhout, 2012). He also cited examples of the apartheid era, when women in border towns were incessantly attacked and raped. Conflicts that engulfed the former Yugoslavia in the 90s witnessed inhumane treatment of women including various forms of sexual assaults on the women perpetrated by soldiers, officials and even by men in authority. About 50,000 women were estimated to have been raped during the crisis. What is more disturbing than the number of women raped were the reports that mass rape was a part of the strategies for ethnic cleansing (Mallicoat, & Ireland, 2014). Many of the reports claimed that Croatians and Muslims were raped by Serbian men for the purpose of intentional impregnation. In some other cases, women were raped by multiple men in the



presence of witnesses. It is argued that these violent acts were intended to make the targeted victims- Croats- flee for ethnic cleansing of the region (de Brouwer, 2005; Human Rights Watch, 2011).

The spate of wars that broke out in African countries, which includes, the 1994 Rwandan genocide, Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, the activities of various rebel groups in Liberia, Uganda, Republic of Congo, among others led to a lot rape cases and concerns about reproductive and mental health. War rape which is typified by sexual assaults by rampaging male soldiers against women is a contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention (1949) as well as Protocol 1 relating to the protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (1977), assented to by 170 countries (Mallicoat, & Ireland, 2014).

Rape as a consequence of war is historical and dates back to human history (Lilly, 2007). In the World –War II, the Nazi’s and troops were reported to have raped Jewish and Japanese women respectively (Lilly, 2007). Other beliefs associated with rape identified by Bezuidenhout (2012) include: previous abusive sexual experiences, lower levels of religious commitment and dysfunctional school system. Furthermore, ten countries mostly industrialized economies, otherwise referred to as developed or advanced countries are identified as “countries with maximum rape crimes” (Khan, 2016:1). They are in order of ranking: South Africa, Sweden, USA, England and Wales, India, New Zealand, Canada, Australia, Zimbabwe and Denmark. The high rating of South Africa in the crime of rape index is consistent with previous research findings (Epstein, 2006; Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, & Dunkle, 2009) which rated South Africa as having one of the highest rates of child rape in the world. This indicates that majority of South African women run the risk of direct experience with rape than an indirect or media- mediated experience of rape.

In the context of this study, rape is defined as the forcible carnal knowledge of female without her consent. Victimization by sexual violence according to van Dijk (2008: 82) “is a gendered phenomenon” and that women are at a higher risk than men. It, however, excludes, *date rape* “which specifically refers to a sexual assault that occurs within the context of a dating relationship” (Bartol, 2002: 288). It also excludes war rape (sexual assault visited on women at war zones).

Cases and instances of rape in Nigeria, like other forms of violent crime, is a sad commentary. The feminine gender irrespective of age, ethnic background or level of education have either been victims of rape or heard of someone sexually abused. The avalanche of rape cases in Nigeria, often involve an elderly male adult defiling younger female, sometime a minor. While accurate and reliable statistics on cases of rape in Nigeria were unavailable during the period of this study, the avalanche of rape related cases reported by daily newspapers and as established in this study are proofs that cases of rape abound in Nigeria, and possibly underreported.

2.9 Assault

This is an example of interpersonal or contact crime where in most cases severe physical consequences are absent, or minor, but could have emotional impact on the victim, especially, if the use of weapon is involved (van Dijk, 2008). It is further explained as personal attacks or threats either by a stranger, a relation, an acquaintance or a friend with a lack of intention to steal. Threats include verbal threats which are regarded as less serious by the victims, and threats with the use of weapons, which are regarded as serious by the victims. Alemika and Chukwuma (2005) in a survey on crime in Lagos State, identified theft and assault as the commonest form of victimisation suffered by the respondents. The present study seeks to investigate the views of the respondents on this type of crime.

2.10 Property Crime

Individuals the world over are often pre-occupied in the race to enhance their self-worth by acquiring earthly things. Those who unlawfully and often forcefully, deprive others of their belongings for their selfish ends are committing a crime. Such crimes are called property crimes and “refers to all the types of crime that impact your property and which affect people most, than any other form of crime” (Briggs: 2009:77). Examples include: fraud, burglary, arson, larceny, fencing car theft, and robbery⁵.

2.10.1 Robbery

Robbery is any example of property crime, but it sometimes combines force to commit the act of theft, hence, attracts stiffer sanctions than other types of property crime like burglary or larceny. Others listed in this category include, theft of personal property, threat or assault, and sexual offences. Robbery is an example of a property crime that involves the use of violence. Many robbery incidents are perpetrated by groups (van Dijk, 2008: 64). In Africa, robbery risks are said to be comparatively high in urban areas in Africa. This view is consistent with those of Beirne and Messerschmidt (1991; Alemika & Chukwuma 2005) which classified crime as a major characteristic of the cities. The overall prevalence of robbery is lower in Africa than in Latin America. Robberies were carried out at gun points in Latin American countries, but in Africa⁶ half of robbery incidents are carried out at gun point. In North America, robbery rates are reportedly, twice as high in the United States (2.3%) as they are in Canada (1.0%). Twenty-five percent of the robberies in the United States are at gun point, in contrast with urban areas in Canada, put at thirteen percent. Differences in gun ownership are adduced as one of the factors responsible for these differences.

⁵A property crime associated with deploying violence.

⁶Exemplified by Johannesburg, South Africa, in the survey.

Robberies are a rare event in Europe, Asia and Oceania (van Dijk, 2008). The risk of being robbed in these continents according to van Dijk (2008) is lower than 2 percent per year.

Alemika and Chukwuma (2005:6) established the prevalence of robbery in Lagos metropolis and that “the problem of crime is most widespread and endemic in the city”. The crime of robbery, though classified by Dijk (2008) as a property crime, often comes with violence on the victims. It is a common occurrence globally and also enjoys appreciable media coverage, especially, if the victims have a high social status. Robbery is grouped as an example of property crime in the study.

2.10.2 Burglary

In a survey by the International Crime Victims Survey, (ICVS, 2000, cited in van Dijk, 2008), responses to a question as to whether any one got an unauthorized entry into their homes and stole anything indicated that households in urban Africa, Latin America and Oceania (New Zealand & Australia) were at most risk. The European, Asian and North American regions recorded low risks below the global average. The crime of house breaking or burglary occurs more frequently, but given very restricted or limited media coverage (Maguire, 2002). In Nigeria, studies on burglary as a form of crime are limited in literature, hence, the concern of the present study to contribute to knowledge on this front and fill a yearning gap.

2.10.3 Car Theft

Car owners’ victimization rate is expectedly higher than the general population’s victimization rates for automobile theft. Car theft or car snatching is a very serious crime, notable in Africa, and a hybrid of car theft and robbery. Alemika and Chukwuma (2005) established that apart from assault, car theft is the other most common crime that Lagos State residents contend with. Other related studies on crime

in Nigeria, for example, (Ajayi, 2007; Amzat, et al., 2007, Ngwama, 2014; Nseabasi, 2010; Odunlami & Soremekun, 2013; Ottuh & Aitufe, 2014; Soola, 2007; Thom-Otuya, 2010) emphasised on murder, kidnapping, and robbery. Limited research efforts have been carried out in Nigeria on automobile theft. The study also intend to contribute to literature by studying Nigerian newspapers' coverage of automobile theft in Nigeria from 2010-2014.

2.10.4 Fencing

Fencing refers to the act of trading in stolen goods. Alemika and Chukwuma (2005) established the prevalence of theft of automobile, theft of property from car, house breaking, and acts of robberies in Lagos metropolis. Such stolen items are allegedly sold to dealers in stolen goods. Official information and scholarly findings on this type of crime are very limited in literature (Maguire, 2002). The crimes of burglary, car theft and fencing are examples of property crime, which affect many people, and occur simultaneously, are less reported in the media.

2.11 Media Coverage of Crime

“We now live in a mediatized world” (Greer, 2009:143). Media, according to social constructionists is a major factor in modern societies in defining social conditions as problems as well as influencing individual's perception of reality (Callanan, 2012). Research on crime and media according to Greer (2009) covers three important areas of interest. They are: content, production, consumption and influence with each area having its peculiarities and distinct research methods and approaches. Newspaper content (crime stories), its consumption and influence (avoiding or reducing victimization and minimizing losses, thereby enhancing safety) are the two areas among the three identified by Greer (2009) that this study measured. Reiner (2007) also identified content, causes and consequences as the three factors

studies on the phenomenon of crime focus on. The study focusses on newspaper crime content, and consequences of crime.

As Kidd- Hewitt (1995: 1) noted, “media portrayals of crime and violence have become part of the spectacle of everyday life”. Through depictions of crime and the fact that crime often affects a proportion of the population at different times, whereby direct experience or first- hand experience of crime is limited, the media serve as a major source of crime news (Carrabine, 2008;; Roshier, 1981). The media, Greer (2009) further added, “--- are the key producers and purveyors of ‘knowledge’ about crime, disorder, and control. For this reason alone, media representations are worthy of in- depth investigation” (p. 143). Weitzer and Kubrin (2004) added that media portrayal or representation of crime influences people’s beliefs about fear of crime. The media is key to those who formulate, execute and interpret policies and laws about crime and criminality, or seek to review existing views and policies about criminal justice. The media, thus occupy a strategic and vantage position to feel the pulse of the populace about emerging policies about security and criminality in the society.

Salawu (2001) opined that a mutually beneficial relationship exists between the media and the society, in that the media is a creation of the society and that the society determines the content, the existence and the kind of media that exists. The media in turn reflects the society and affects the society; the institutions and also the people within which it exists. “The media play a substantial role in shaping beliefs and fear of crime” (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004). The media and society in today’s world thus appear *fused and inseparable* (emphasis mine).

Probably, an incontrovertible way of recognizing and appreciating the importance of the media in human lives is to imagine a day in one’s life without any

form or variant of the media in it. Imagine a day without newspaper vendors on the streets, radio and television stations shut, the internet not connecting etc. Such days are better imagined than experienced. Steinberg, (2012:2) probes further on this:

Have you ever thought about what your life would be if you were not able to share your thoughts about the day's events with your best friend, write a letter to a family member who lives far away, send an e-mail congratulating a friend on her birthday, put up your feet and watch your favourite television show, relax to soothing music on the radio or CD player, send a fax to a business associate, get onto the internet to look for information or for an assignment, or read a newspaper to find out what is going on (sic) the world?

The act of communication through verbal and non-verbal modes and especially through media messages or media content in this context helps to ease the needed human interaction for survival and behaviour modification. The content of any object or any material provides a window or avenue through which the object or material is accessed or perceived. As a corollary therefore, the content of any media apparatus "provides the most accessible evidence of how mass communication works" (McQuail, 2007:310). Media content, he noted, includes the message, the hidden meaning (semiology) and the traditional quantitative analysis (McQuail, 2007:340). This explains that apart from the manifest meaning in a communicated message, there also exists, hidden or latent meanings in such expressions capable of being interpreted differently by the media audience. This is designed to bring to the fore the contradiction in the ways people perceive the media and the different uses to which they put the media (O'shaughnessy & Stadler, 2010). Media content is neither good nor bad and could be positive, negative or neutral on behaviour. It depends on the perception, informed by the experience, background, among other factors, of the media user. In other words, the demographic characteristics of media users determine how media messages are interpreted and utilized. The study investigated the

background of the respondents on gratifications obtained from the newspapers crime stories.

The advent of the various forms of the media like film, radio and television was followed by a number of studies on the harmful effects of media content on the audience (McQuail, 2005). Generations of people according to Meade (2012) grew up getting used to different media beginning from the 1920s when the mainstream media such as, radio, newspapers, magazines and books entered the public sphere. Thirty years later, in the 1950s, children and those who lived during that era were confronted with the invention of a more visual world- the television. In the same vein, the generation of the 1980s grew up with cable television. Technological inventions have been on the rise between the middle of the 20th century and especially in the 21st century. Lots of technological breakthroughs have characterised this millennium with numerous innovations being invented, virtually at the turn of each decade (Rodman, 2010). The widespread and the deregulated usage of the media have been alleged to have some drawbacks. Jewkes (2015) noted that utilizing the media has some negatives and that the extent to which the media can cause negative effects in the audience falls under the mass society theory and behaviourism. She argued that the two approaches are compatible in their views of society and their beliefs that the unstable nature of human beings makes them respond to and likely to be influenced by their immediate environment. The mass society theorists according to McQuail (2005) classify the masses as a set of people who are characterized by individuals who are, uneducated, ignorant, potentially unruly and prone to violence. He went further to describe the mass society theory as more of a diagnosis of the times (the late 19th and early 20th centuries) than a fully coherent social theory because of its inadequacies.

In the context of this study, however, the importance of the mass theory is underscored by the fact that it led to a number of studies on the degree of the influence of the media on the audience. The behaviourism and positivism approaches to media influence were pioneered by J.B. Watson (Jewkes, 2015). It was derived from the positivist philosophy which came out of the natural sciences and regards the world as fixed and quantifiable, and challenges the more dominant perspective of psychoanalysis. Essentially, behaviourism shifts attention from individualism to the external environment “which forms stable and recognizable patterns of behaviour that could be publicly observed” (Jewkes, 2015:14).

On how crime is publicized, Sacco (1995: 141) noted that “the news media are a vital part of the process by which individual’s private troubles with crime either as perpetrators or victims is transformed into public issues”. He further linked the social construction of crime problems to the types of relationships that connect news agencies to their sources and the institutional considerations that apply to the process of assembling the news. He concluded that the mass media are, therefore, crucial and prominent in the interplay between the individual’s private troubles with crime and the social issue of crime. In the present study, attention is, however, shifted to how the “private troubles of others” publicized in the newspapers, enhance and gratify the safety information need of the surveyed sample, since only a few people experience crime first-hand.

Media effects, according to McQuail, (2005:465) “are the consequences of what the media do whether intended or unintended”. The media have influences on the audience with respect to the choices they make and their behavioural patterns (McQuail, 2005). While the influence of the media on the society is incontrovertible, the degree of such influence remains a debate. The contention has been between how

minimally or maximally the media influence the society. Reflections and contributions about media effects “are shaped by the circumstances of time and place” (McQuail, 2005:457). He submitted further that several environmental factors like interest of government and law makers, changing technology among others have influenced thoughts on how the media impact on the society. He identified the following four phases in the development of media effects theories: the all-powerful media era, the limited or minimal effects era, the powerful media rediscovered phase and the negotiated media influence phase.

According to McQuail (2005), the all-powerful media era engaged the attention of critics and researchers from the turn of the twentieth century to the 1930s. During this period, the media were credited with massive ability and power to shape opinion and belief; to change habits and to mould behaviour. This view, he noted, has no scientific proof, but based on observation of the popularity of the press and the media of film and radio that had ‘intruded’ many homes and lives. A communication theory that explains the maximum effects era is referred to as the magic bullet theory or the hypodermic needle theory (Baran, 2002). It likens the effect of communication to how people respond uniformly when injected with a syringe. The present study contends the impression of a uniform effect of media messages on the audience.

The second phase, limited or minimal effects phase challenged the all-powerful media effect concept. The society was at this stage embracing empirical inquiry which was missing in the maximum media effects concept. The foundation of this phase rests on the findings of Payne Fund Studies in the United States of America

Summarizing the findings of this phase, Klapper (1960:8) submitted that “mass communication does not ordinarily serve as a necessary or sufficient cause of audience effects, but rather functions through a nexus of mediating factors”. This does

not imply media impotence. It suggests that the effects or influence the media have on the audience cannot be directly linked most of the time, to stimulus-response or taken as the singular cause for a particular action by media audience, without taking cognizance of environmental factors, which could shape opinions, attitudes, the behaviour under study, the media choice, attention and responses of the audience (McQuail, 2005). The third phase (the powerful media rediscovered) was coined by Noelle-Neumann in 1973 to challenge the minimal effects theory (McQuail, 2005) and aligns with the all-powerful media effects concept, following the invention of the television. It is believed that the combination of audio and visuals of the television made it more appealing and preferred by the media audience to its predecessors (print and radio). This notion may have influenced the findings of the cultivation hypothesis of Gerbner and his colleagues which found a strong association between television viewing and aggressive behaviour in children. This view has been challenged by scholars and Gerbner himself. More details on this are discussed later in the chapter.

The fourth and present phase, according to McQuail (2005) is the negotiated media influence phase. It deals with media texts (news) and the meanings audience gives to it. The central theme of this phase is that, the media construct reality and systematically offer it to the audience who make their meanings out of such constructions based on personal attributes. McQuail, (2005:461) explains this phase as follows:

In essence, this involves a view of the media as having as their most significant effects by constructing meanings. These constructs are then offered in a systematic way to audiences, where they are incorporated (or not), on the basis of some form of negotiation, into personal meaning structures often shaped by prior collective identifications. Meanings (thus effects) are constructed by receivers themselves (McQuail, 2005:461).

The immediate social context of the media audience exerts a strong influence on what media content means to each receiver and the use to which it is put. The thinking of this present phase of media effects theory is similar to early “powerful media theory”. It also incorporates Gerbner’s Cultivation theory and Noelle-Neuman’s “Spiral of Silence Theory” (McQuail, 2005). This new paradigm of effects is on two fronts. First, the media bring about social reality and history by framing images of reality through fiction or news sequentially. Secondly, receivers of mediated messages construct for themselves their views of social reality and how it impacts on them (McQuail, 2005).

In summary, this approach recognizes the power of the media to construct reality and also the expansive ability of media users to select and use mediated messages as comprehended by them through a continuous interaction with the symbolic and constructed offerings from the media. This is one of the foci of this study, a measure of the outcome of an individual reader's information seeking behaviour from Nigerian newspapers’ crime stories interaction on the gratification of his or her safety information need.

2.12 Evolution of Newspaper in Nigeria and Its Importance to the Study

A discourse of how the newspaper evolved in Nigeria is of importance to this study, because the newspaper is the main thrust of this study, hence, a brief on the origin and the performance of the newspapers on the socio-economic and political spheres of the country would significantly enhance the study.

The evolution and emergence of newspaper in Nigeria predate both the colonial amalgamation of Nigeria of 1914 and the nationhood of Nigeria in 1960 (Oso, Odunlami & Adaja, 2011). Missionary activities were credited to have acted as the springboard for the development of newspapers in Nigeria, through Reverend

Father Henry Townsend of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). This is captured in the words of (Oso, 2012) as follows: “The origin of the Nigerian press is closely linked to the Christian missionary zeal to educate, evangelize and civilize the ‘natives’ of their new colonies” (p.13). These feats were aided by schools and the printing press. These two factors were products of missionary activities towards their evangelism mission. Rev. Hope Waddell of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland Mission was at that time in Calabar, and had established a printing press. Aided by these factors, Rev. Father Henry Townsend, on 3rd December, 1859, (Oso, 2012) rolled out Nigeria’s first newspaper, titled, *Iwe Irohin fun Awon Ara Egba ati Yoruba* (*Newspaper for the People of Egba⁷ and Yoruba*). This heroic deed sowed the seed of literacy and the act of information seeking from newspapers among Nigerians. Newspapers are regarded as informative and influential on behaviour (Altheide, 2003; Awake, 2005; Baran, 2001; Bello, 2015; Rufai, 2012; Sacco, 1995; Soola, 2007), are sources of crime stories (Crowther, 2007; Surette, 1998), and are depended upon as *elite* information repertoires during disasters (Sommerfeldt, 2015).

Newspapers, as a medium of communication, shape culture, play an important role in business and affect the daily lives of millions, inform the public of important affairs and provide information on which many readers form opinions (Awake, 2005). The newspaper⁸ enjoys primacy among other forms of the media and demands a considerable degree of literacy from its readers. It is a primordial mass medium and a major purveyor in carrying stories about crime (Crowther, 2007; Jewkes, 2015; Soola, 2007). It is an unbound regular publication containing a variety of stories (Anaeto & Tejumaiye, 2009). It serves as a source of information about the happenings around us

⁷The Egbas are settled in Abeokuta, in Ogun State, Nigeria. Highly literate communities consisting of highly influential people both in Nigeria’s and world affairs.

⁸the object of the study

and at a distance to its audience. It is a durable medium and its contents are storable as reference materials.

The relevance of the emergence and the sustenance of newspaper publication in Nigeria to this study are underscored by: the establishment of reading culture and the promotion of literacy among the people, dissemination of information, especially crime stories to the audience, and the information seeking behaviour of Nigerian newspaper audience from Nigerian newspapers' crime stories.

2.13 Newspaper Readership in Nigeria

The newspaper has been described as one of the oldest components of the modern era (Boczkowski, 2004) and also regarded as the primary model of information delivery (McQuail, 1994). The newspaper is crucial in opinion formation on domestic and foreign issues towards economic development and diplomacy (Olofin, 2012). In an attempt to satisfy information need- a basic physiological need for human existence- human beings turn to various media, for information, education, entertainment and national mobilization of the public for national and international integration (Olofin, 2012). The newspaper is a credible source of information on social phenomena and health related issues (Bello, 2015). The newspaper has also been globally acknowledged as a source of crime information (Altheide, 2003; Chermak, 1994; Sacco, 1995; Surette, 1998; Young, 2005). The advent of the internet and the presence of online newspapers have not diminished the importance of the print medium of newspapers as a news source (Hiebert, Ungurait, Bohn, 1988). The newspaper is literacy medium and central to governance in any country. It is a vehicle for information dissemination and service delivery from the government to the people. It also serves as a medium through which government policies get to the public domain, hence, a go-between the government and the public.

In Nigeria, the civil servants- government officials- in the public service either at the Federal (National), State and Local Governments levels, serve “as the engine room of (sic) government activities” (Olofin, 2012:4) and therefore require current and adequate information which are daily sourced from the newspapers to advise the government and for their individual information and well- being too. As a purely literacy medium, newspapers have been an important and crucial component of the Nigerian society, and very common among the elite. The newspaper has played a very significant role in the evolution of Nigeria and in the enlightenment of the citizenry.

In a study on newspaper readership among civil servants in Ekiti State, South West Nigeria, Olofin (2012) found that 93% of the sample answered to reading newspapers. It was also found that the respondents read newspapers for various gratifications. Twenty- seven (27%) said they read the newspapers to listen to news, 50% read the newspapers for general information, education and entertainment, 19% read the newspapers for leisure. The above statistics reveals the importance of the newspaper as a veritable source of general information about the society.

From the above submission, it is evident that the newspaper as a source of information is accessible to civil servants. It is against this backdrop that the present study seeks to investigate whether or not Nigerian newspapers’ crime stories gratify the safety information need of Nigerian newspaper readers, using Lagos State civil servants as the population for the study.

2.14 Selected Nigerian Newspapers’ Headlines of Crime Stories

Newspaper headlines (captions) provide an avenue through which busy readers can have a glimpse of major news headline of the day. Crime stories are primed for publication in the newspaper, in view of the fact that, crime stories are attractive to

both the media organisations and the audience (Soola, 2007). Newspapers' headlines of crime stories are of importance to the study.

2.14.1 The Power of Headlines

A Newspaper headline is the flagship of a news item. A newspaper headline is the most important message about the news and enjoys a strategic and pre-eminent position, mirrored by a unique layout and typography (White, 2010). In view of this, headlines offer what newspaper organizations consider as very significant information to serve the audience.

The media channels, especially the print media, serve as sources of information "and powerful modes of communication" (Cissel, 2012:67). The transfer of information from the media organizations (sources) to the recipients comes through various modes and is framed to satisfy the intention of the source. In news framing, certain linguistic elements that affect readers in forming opinions or interpretations are carefully presented. The seminal work by Goffman (1974) serves as the pioneering work upon which further contributions on media framing are based. According to (Entman, 1993:51), to frame is to communicate "text or message to promote certain facets of a 'perceived reality' and make them more salient in such a way that endorses a specific problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or a treatment recommendation". This linguistic classification directs the readers' interest to issues or stories given salience by newspapers through their headlines. Furthermore, (Entman, 1993:02) described framing as the "selection of some aspects of a preconceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and /or treatment recommendation for the item described". Iyengar (1991) identified episodic and thematic framing. Episodic framing concentrates on events. Thematic

framing on the other hand, focuses on the context bordering on causes, effects and related issues. Episodic framing stresses individualism or individual attribution of responsibility, rather than looking at the contexts or social responsibility. Thematic framing lessens individual's degree of blameworthiness and gives acknowledgement or attribution to institutions in place of individuals. Some of the sampled newspapers' crime stories were analysed for the framing type adopted, and the meaning such could have on the media audience inferred. Newspapers mainly serve salient social discourse through their headlines, because headlines, most time, are the only glimpse of a newspaper page seen by busy readers (Metila, 2013). This further confirms the fact that headlines serve as the window to newspaper content.

2.14.2 Why Headlines require Discourse Analysis

Headlines are meant to fulfill several functions, such as, grabbing reader's attention; deliver message in full; and draw a reader to a story. It also includes the presentation of true stories to the readers (Metila, 2013). Turner (2009) has, however, noted that headlines can mislead, misinform by being inaccurate, or ambiguous. MacRitchie and Seedat (2008) added that even with a single story or theme, the bias and framing of news organizations could vary along the dichotomy of participants' different world views and interests. On the basis of this, the study adopted Ruiz's (2009) three-level sociological discourse analysis to analyse the text, context and interpretation of some selected crime stories from the sampled newspaper. This is available in chapter seven of the study.

2.15 Consequences or the Aftermath of Crime

The increasing wave in crime, criminal activities and violent behaviour over the years has generated recurring discussions, policies and collaborative efforts around the world. According to Sykes (1978), crime is a social problem. He argued that the

interest in studying crime continues to increase because it is commonly perceived as a social problem requiring a solution, because crime poses a threat to a great number of persons. He said further:

The harm caused by crime seems clear enough, at first glance. There is the financial loss of the man or woman whose money is stolen, of the consumer who is swindled, of the householder who comes home to find the house looted and of the executive whose profits are diminished by the thievery of employees (Sykes, 1978:23).

To demonstrate that crime knows no bound, a national survey in the United Kingdom, (Moon, et al., 2011) in a British crime survey, found increase from 35% in 2009/2010 to 37% in 2010/2011 of people who reported a personal or household crime to the police in the preceding twelve months. The survey also revealed that since 2008, neighbourhood⁹ policing team is dedicated to every neighbourhood in England and Wales. This is a proactive effort to mitigate the negative effects of crime on individuals and the society at large.

Durkheim (2013/1933), however, argued that there are positives about crime. Crime according to him is advantageous to the society in the sense that due to the differences in human nature, we seek different means (both lawful and unlawful) to meet our needs. Durkheim (2013/1933) noted that:

Crime is normal because it is virtually impossible to imagine a society in which criminal behaviour is totally absent. Such a society would almost demand that all people be and act exactly alike. Crime is part of human nature because it has existed during periods of poverty and prosperity.

The existence of crime, Durkheim further noted, is useful and healthy for the society in that it ensures social change and flexibility in the social structure (Siegel, 2004). Another benefit of crime he pointed out is that, crime, calls the attention of the society to the ills in the society. This implies that occurrences of crime

⁹A form of response to crime (participation).

could engineer a social change and help bring about a variety of programmes and initiatives, among which is safety information sourcing and sharing, to address the perceived risk of victimization, and thereby reducing human suffering and improving peoples' welfare.

On the other hand, crime portends a great danger for any society both on the individual and on the community as a whole. Effects of crime on the society include: psychological, social, economic and even political. Crime results in material and immaterial (psychological, sociological and economic) costs to those who had been victims. Allen (2013) argued that individuals and communities generally dread crime and are thus fearful at the mere mention of it, even if the location is far away. He said further that, in most cases, the fear in a larger percentage of individuals is much higher than the chances of being a victim. Crime also reduces the commitment of individuals to the community and could lead to migration. The impact of crime on the lifestyles of individuals, he noted, is also negative, because people are usually afraid of going out at night or even being alone in their homes. Stressing this further, Beirne and Messerschmidt (1991:61) noted that, "fear of crime simply becomes for many American citizens fear of the streets as well as fears of being home alone and clearly alters our lifestyle". These facts suggest the widespread of crime and the vulnerability of a great number of people among the American population. The larger society also bears the effects of crime. The Netherlands was noted to have expended an estimated amount of 20.2 billion Euros in 2005 on crime prevention, detection, prosecution and punishment of criminals. While the British Home Office researchers, Brand and Price (2000) were reported to have estimated the costs of crime for the same purpose on England and Wales to be between 35 and 60 pounds per year (Securipedia, 2013).

Economic researchers on the effects of crime on the society have identified two main categorization of the economic impact of crime on the society; they are the primary and secondary impacts of crime, which is also referred to as direct and indirect economic effects (Securipedia, 2013). The primary or direct costs of crime are studied by economists through the individuals or groups who bear the effects, i.e. the victims, potential victims and the society. In breaking down the costs of crime relative to particular incidents, people incur costs on crime, in anticipation, as a consequence of, or as a victim, and in response to crime. Furthermore, apart from the personal financial or physical damage and prevention costs, crime also impact negatively on the local, regional and national economies through reduced economic growth, reduction in earnings and reduction in the competitiveness of companies and investments among others (Buttle & Rodgers, 2014).

Criminal activities excite the general public in an unprecedented and an unmatched fashion (Skogan & Maxfield, 1981). “Crime threatens citizen security, undermines democratic governance, corrupts state institutions, and discourages economic investments” (Krause, 2013:4). One major reason is that the media give prominence to various forms of crime in its coverage, either in films, television drama, fictional books and news bulletins (Carrabine, 2008). Even without this media amplification, “crimes are intrinsically interesting events” (Warr, 2000:452). He noted further:

As condensed and emblematic accounts of human conflict they (crimes) raise profound questions about the nature and sources of human motivation, the misfortune of fellow humans, the ability of the state to maintain social order, and ultimately the presence or absence of justice in human affairs (Warr, 2000: 452).

Also crucial to our understanding of why crime attracts so much public attention is the fact that crime at its most elementary level “a frightening event” (War,

2000:452) and indicates to us the danger and insecurity that pervades our world as a group and our lives as individuals. In early criminological studies and prior to the second half of the 20th century, public fear of crime was trivially regarded as a natural consequence of crime and that crime control measures, would also seamlessly, control fear of crime (Warr, 2000). While the dire consequences of criminal victimization has never been a doubt to criminologists, the telling effects of fear, especially, on indirect victims, has been grossly underplayed (Warr, 2000).

According to the *President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice' in the United States*, "the most damaging of the effects of violent crime is fear and that fear must not be belittled" (Warr, 2000:452). The statement according to Warr (2000) led to a paradigm shift in the thinking of criminologists about the consequences of fear of crime. To fully comprehend the debilitating effect of crime, therefore, it became evidently clear without any pall of pessimism that researching crime requires looking beyond those that are directly affected by crime or direct victims of crime. Considerable and due attention, should also be directed at those who suffer indirect victimization or indirect consequences of crime "the most egregious of which is fear of crime" (Warr, 2000:452).

Fear of crime like many social phenomena, does not enjoy a consensual conceptual clarification, or a universally acceptable definition of concept. There are many definitions and concepts as there are scholars who pick interest in clarifying the concept. An elaborate discussion and review of literature on fear of crime are treated in chapter three. For convenience and in the context of this study, fear of crime, which leads to societal responses, as an aftermath, is regarded as an emotional reaction **informed by perceived danger that could lead to physical harm, emotional imbalance or emotional dislocation and a sense of loss.** Also to qualify as fear of crime, the fear

has to be elicited by felt cues in the environment that could physically harm the person, lead to emotional disturbance or a sense of loss.

Garofalo (1981) identified two types of fear: actual and anticipated fear. He explained actual fear, as the real fear envisaged by a person (e.g. walking alone in the dark). Anticipated fear on the other hand is imaginary, e.g. expressing fear of being attacked in an interview or a discussion, for instance. Envisaging fears of a possible attack or harm naturally necessitates some responses against victimization by the individual, the society and even by governments. In their review of the literature on individuals reactions to crime, DuBow, McCabe, & Kaplan (1979) identified the following five categories, avoidance, protective behaviour, insurance behaviour and communicative behaviour as societal responses or reactions to crime. These are briefly described as follows:

i. Avoidance

This refers to actions taken by individuals to reduce exposure to crime by detaching oneself from locations or spots and contexts considered a high risk to being criminally victimized.

ii. Protective Behaviour

Protective behaviours are behavioural patterns aimed at increasing resistance to victimization. They include home protection. These are actions taken to safeguard the home with enhanced protection devices newly acquired or those in existence. The other one is personal protection, this include personal safety measures outside the home and excluding avoidance, to reduce the risk of being vulnerable when threatening situations loom.

iii. **Insurance Behaviour**

This seeks to reduce to the barest minimum or level the costs of victimization and which potentially alters the consequences of victimization.

iv. **Communicative Behaviour**

Communicative behaviour is about information sharing or emotions or discussing crime related experience(s) with others.

v. **Participation Behaviour**

Participation behaviour is when collaborative efforts occur with others motivated by a particular crime or relating to crime in general.

In a critique of these five responses adduced by DuBow and his colleagues (1979), Garofalo (1981:48) argued that “avoidance generally results” from anticipated fear, and that “escape is the comparable response to actual fear”. He proceeded to add a sixth category which he called *information seeking*. He identified two responses from information seeking behaviour of the media audience to fear of crime. Information seeking act arises when the individual actively looks for crime information in the media and also pose questions to other people for any useful **crime related** (emphasis mine) information. The second type of information seeking behaviour is what he refers to as ‘environmental scanning’. The information seeker increases the frequency and the rate at which he or she ‘scans’¹⁰ the environment’ in search of cues or situations that are considered inimical to safety. The sixth category, that is, Information seeking behaviour as a response to crime, is applicable to and very relevant to this study.

Findings from previous studies have been found to be prevalent on fear of crime than actual victimization of crime (Graber, 1980; Warr, 1994, 2000). Views on

¹⁰to specifically look for

the consequences of crime on the society have, however, been for and against. Durkheim (2013/1933), an advocate of the functionalist approach to the study of social phenomena, for instance, defers fundamentally and sharply from the convenient path of other criminologists who view crime as a pathological phenomenon and sought psychological causes of crime in the minds of the criminal. Rather, Durkheim (2013/1933) viewed crime as a normal thing and good for the society.

Despite these identified positives about crime, it portends more danger to the society. Crime has social, economic, psychological, emotional, and physical effects on individuals and the society. In New Zealand for instance, Buttle and Rodgers (2014) found that crime and disorder have jointly contributed to affect New Zealand's image as *peaceful paradise* due to crime incidents targeted at tourists.

Crime and violence have considerably affected the entire Nigerian system including her people, the economy, the socio-political setting, not sparing also, the spiritual lives of the people (Soola, 2007). Crime and violence, he further noted, have enveloped and penetrated virtually every facet of the Nigerian society, so much so, that there is palpable fear in the people as evident in: (1) prison-like high and heavy fencing, (2) tracking of cars with modern technology, either to prevent theft, or aid recoveries in case of theft, all at a cost to the vehicle owners. The situation is similar in South Africa. Zinn, (2010:1) noted:

Drive through any city in South Africa and you cannot help noticing the vast array of signs proclaiming alarm systems and armed patrols, together with rampart-like walls, the electrified fences and lights, and snarling dog signs- all attesting to a nation battling to cope with a very heavy rate of violent crime.

The terrible and deplorable conditions of Nigerian roads, according to Soola (2007) puts the users at a great risk and at the mercy of armed robbers, assassins, kidnappers, rapists, ritualists and other criminally minded individuals. Stevens

(1998:16) added that the consequences of a single crime incident often have multiplier effects on the society. He submitted that:

Each crime incident reverberates through the families of the perpetrator and the victim with long economic consequences (loss of job, loss of income, loss of home, medical bills, attorney bills and psychological consequences (sense of loss, fear, alienation, trial, welfare reduction and property values, business flight, and long term psychological consequence (feelings of fear for personal safety, mistrust of members of the community).

In a nutshell, crime often affects more people than the direct victims. Another dire consequence of crime on Nigeria is its negative effect on the country's image internationally. It affects the credibility and the psychology of travelling Nigerians who are often subjected to immigration hassles and treated suspiciously, both in the processing of visas and at the points of entry to their various destinations. Equally, it reduces the tourism potentials of the country as tourists would not want to risk visiting or holidaying in a crime infested country, thereby, reducing possible earnings through tourism.

2.16 Conclusion

In this chapter, the concepts of violent and property crime which are the central themes of the study were explained. It was stated in the chapter that the concepts of crime are not easy to define as crime is boundaries and contexts sensitive. The various aspects of violent and property crime that are germane to the study were explained. The rationale(s) for embarking on the study was explained, in addition to defining the concepts adopted in the study.

Crime, either viewed as a positive or a negative phenomenon, has implications for and consequences on the society. The media in the performance of its social responsibility functions report on crime. Contrary to the dictates of the social responsibility media theory, however, such reportage (episodic) focuses on achieving

the goal of the source. Some of the outcomes of newspapers' crime stories include, making the society at the individual, group and governmental levels to respond. At the individual level, various safety driven behaviours are deployed from being victimized. Prominent among this is the avoidance or escape behaviour and information seeking. Information seeking behaviour of the media audience as a response to crime is central to this study. At the group level, for fear of being victimized, there are responsive behaviours like, communicative and participation behaviour, where people exchange information about crime and also participate in communal anti- crime activities. In Nigeria, a neighbourhood watch group known as *Vigilante* is a community response initiative for individual safety and surveillance over their immediate community.

Another related organisation in response to crime in Nigeria is the *Oodua Peoples' Congress*' (Ajayi, 2007). While the latter is a household name, controversial and limited to the South Western part of Nigeria, the former is a common feature in most Nigerian communities and has proved a success in complementing the efforts of law enforcement agencies to reduce crime in Nigeria and encouraged by government, because it does not require direct financing by the government. At governmental levels, responses to crime include the enactment of criminal laws, the establishment of organisations and training of personnel to combat crime and the deployment of science and technology to fight crime.

The negative consequences of crime on the society include social, psychological, economic and emotional problems that often transcend the direct victims of crime to their families and relations, thus having a negative multiplier effects on the society. By and large, the costs and efforts often exerted at the individual, group and governmental levels are much and could have been better deployed for more productive and profitable ventures such as, hospitals, schools,

motor parks, airports, trains and railway lines, recreation centers, and other social infrastructure, provision of jobs, housing, among others, to enhance the living standard of the people. It has been argued that, the provision of these amenities and opportunities ensures stability of the society, which makes the society to be organized and functional. A dysfunctional or a disorganized society is a nest for criminals and their nefarious activities.

It came to the fore in this chapter that crime is indeed a global phenomenon, it is not totally negative. Although some crimes are dominant or more prevalent in one locale than the other, the bottom line, however, remains that acts of criminality abound across the universe, thus necessitating various societal responses on the parts of the government and the people to reduce victimization. Researchers have also contributed in no small measure to the discourse of crime. Researches have revealed protective behaviours of people to contend with crime.

Crime is a social problem which enjoys wide coverage by the print media (newspapers). The nagging issues that crime and its reportage generate provoke different responses from the society. The study aims to contribute to the discourse on the phenomenon of media coverage of crime by measuring Nigerian newspapers' coverage of crime and the gratification of reader's safety information need. Available literatures have indicated gaps in this area of research in Nigeria's media and criminological studies.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, findings of some relevant past studies relevant to this work are discussed to establish a framework for the present study and to place it in the body of existing literature on the subject matter of the study, which is, Nigerian newspapers' crime coverage and the gratification of readers' safety information need. In essence, the study comprises issues about functions of the media in the society and how information seeking by the audience gratifies their safety information need. Specifically, in this the chapter is reviewed relevant literature on: communication and society, information seeking behaviour, fear of crime, causes of fear of crime, age and fear of crime, gender and fear of crime, fear and gender sensitivity, neighbourhood and fear of crime, income, age and education on fear of crime, and the media and fear of crime. The chapter also contains the conceptual framework of the study and the identified gap the study aims to fill.

3.2. Communication and Society

Communication is vital in any human society and it is central to human existence. In fact, it comes only after the biological needs of man. Communication, without any doubt, could be said to be key to our ideas of an enjoyable existence and in fact a way to make the world a better and safer place (Seiler & Beall, 2008). It is therefore, logical to conclude that, no communication, no existence. Communication has also been described as being "consequential" (Pearson, Nelson, Titsworth & Harter 2006:4). Being consequential connotes that an understanding and application of the principles of communication is capable of bringing about significant differences in the user's life and also "the lives of people around the world" (Pearson, Nelson,

Titworth & Harter 2006:4). These assertions can be hardly contested in view of the numerous functions of communication in the society: communication informs, educates, persuades and entertains (Hiebert, Ungurait & Bohn, 1991).

In this mediatized era, communication has transcended the realm of a mere process. There is now an interface between communication and commerce. Communication in contemporary age, in addition to being a process, is also regarded as a product, because it involves the packaging of what is to be disseminated in a user-friendly manner. In addition, communication can also be seen as a market, where the market forces of demand, supply, product and price interplay. From word- of- mouth, to newspapers and forms of the print media, to listening to the radio and watching television programmes, human beings continue to seek information to modify existing behaviour, make new discoveries or relate with the outside world.

3.3 Information Seeking Behaviour

Information seeking is one of the reasons why the audience uses the mass media. It is a function of a person's personality (Ketterer, 2000), a demonstration of an individual's desire to increase awareness and knowledge about one's self, others, and the world (Shao, 2009), a habit people engage in to be politically informed (Levitan, & Wronski, 2014), and to satisfy information insufficiencies during disasters, crises and in an emergency (Sommerfeldt, 2015). In a study on Haiti earthquake of 2010, Sommerfeldt (2015) submitted that people seek information to meet information insufficiencies. He identified two distinct repertoires during the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. The first is the *traditional repertoire* which comprises: radio, television, church, and word of mouth. The second is the *elite* repertoire which includes: newspapers, the internet, short- message- service and the national police. The study found that demographic variables like education have a strong relationship

with information repertoires than living conditions. Men were also found to be more active information seekers than women.

Additionally, Levitan, & Wronski (2014) found that people seek political information and identified *attitudinally heterogeneous social networks* and *homogenous network members*. The former are said to be more active political information seekers and users than the latter group. Ketterer (2000) opined that the perception of the level of control people have over a particular situation determines whether people seek information to satisfy a need. Seeking information is also a function of the level of control the media permit information seekers access to the information they seek. In other words, the habit of information seeking by the people is a function of information sources, in this case the mass media, to make such information available and accessible. This is called *locus of control* (Ketterer, 2000). Locus of control is a construct that helps to explain individual differences in information seeking and the degree to which people hold the view that their efforts would lead to a reward (Ketterer, 2000). In other words, when behaviour gets reinforced, it begets a repeat behaviour. Rotter (1966) acknowledged the universal recognition of the crucial role of reinforcement, reward and gratification in knowledge acquisition. In the social media, information seeking has been described as the degree to which needs shared on social media platforms can get users updated with relevant and timely information (Ko, Cho, & Roberts, 2005; Luo, 2002). Earlier studies had established a relationship between the gratification of users information need and media consumption behaviour. Papacharissi and Rubin (2000; Luo, 2002) found that information seeking was a major factor (gratification) driving the use of the web. The next chapter contains more discussions on media use and gratifications.

3.4 Fear of Crime

In 1981, Garofalo submitted that, “research on fear of crime can continue indefinitely” (Garofalo, 1981: 839). Many decades after, numerous research activities have been undertaken on media and fear of crime (Altheide, 2003; Amzat, Abodunrin & Okunola, 2007; Callanan, 2012; Ditton, et al., 2004; Ferraro, 1995; Gunter, 1987; Hale, 1996; Heath, 1984; Heath & Petraitis, 1987; Hu, Lai, Shearer, & Cvek, 2016; Jewkes, 2015; LaGrange, Ferraro & Supancic, 1992; Odunlami & Soremekun, 2013; O’Keefe, & Reid- Nash, 1987; Riggs & Cook, 2015; Rountree & Land, 1996; Roshier, 1981; Snedker, 2015; Soola, 2007 Warr, 2000; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004) among numerous others. In the review of relevant literature for the study, much emphasis was placed on fear of crime.

The argument of the thesis is that media audiences are not likely to react uniformly to the same media message. This position is consistent with that of Altheide (2003) who argued that it is difficult to make people afraid. Ditton et al., (2004) also expressed the view that the important thing in crime stories is not the localness, sensationalism or randomness, but how media content is interpreted by the consumer. In this context, therefore, the study extensively deals with identifiable causes of fear of crime and the uniqueness of the media audience to variously react to the same media message. The study focuses on the gratification of the readers’ safety information need from the sampled newspapers’ crime stories.

3.5 Causes of Fear of Crime

Weitzer and Kubrin (2004) identified *objective factors* and the *mass media* as the causes of fear of crime. The objective factors of crime attribute fear of crime to audience social demographics (age, gender, education, monthly and marital status) and social/ environmental factors such as, ethnicity, incivility or disorder in the

neighbourhood. A major objective of the study is to investigate whether or not the social demographics of the audience influence the gratification of their safety information need from the selected newspapers crime stories.

Fear is a common emotional feeling among human beings irrespective of age, gender, race, social status, or neighbourhood. It could be constant or fleeting depending on the circumstances and the characteristics of the individuals involved (Marczak, 2008). It has become an important area of focus in criminology (Barrett, 2016). It may have negative outcome on health and well-being and is influenced by factors in the physical and social environments (Lorenc, Petticrew, Whitehead, Weary & Renton, 2013). The negative effects of fear of crime according to Queensland Police (2009) include restriction of lifestyle, poor quality of life, decreased confidence, and disempowerment, reduced natural surveillance and increased financial costs. Gray, Jackson, and Farrall, (2011) added that, peoples' anxiety and worry about their safety, lead to a loss of confidence in police activities and efficacy. Ferraro (1995) linked fear of crime to peoples' emotional responses and a sense of vulnerability, either social or physical vulnerability, in the face of threatening and dangerous conditions or the possibility of victimization and community social ties.

A lot of insights towards a better understanding of the multiple interpretations of fear of crime abound in literature (Ferraro, 1995; Warr, 2000). Walklate (1998) has compressed the history of the multiple interpretations of fear of crime around five major sub-headings: fear of crime as fear for the other, fear of crime as a measure of rationality, fear of crime as safety, fear of crime as the feeling of anxiety, and fear of crime as trust. The present study is related to *fear of crime as safety* by investigating Nigerian newspapers' crime stories on the gratification of readers' safety information need.

Fear could come from many sources, personal victimization, city or neighbourhood levels of crime, and mass media coverage of crime (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004). One major source of fear is fear of crime, which criminologists have not reached a consensus on its conceptualization. It is, however, generally regarded as being more dreaded than crime. It has to do with the perceived risk of being victimized or being vulnerable (an admission of erroneously believing that crime is always on the rise and widespread). Fear of crime could arise as a consequence of perceived risk or by an immediate or imminent danger.

Fear of crime is becoming more problematic than crime (Amzat, Abodunrin, & Okunola, 2007; Warr, 2000). Sacco (2005) expressed the view that the definition of fear of crime for analytical and academic purposes consists of three variables: *cognitive, affective and behavioural*. Cognitive explanation of fear of crime deals with an individual's belief about victimization and crime, while affective dimension is concerned with an individual's feelings about crime. Behavioural explanation aligns with how people respond to crime. These explanations of fear of crime can therefore be seen as welding the components of fear of crime together to account for the behaviour of people about the phenomenon of crime. The study incorporates the three viewpoints of fear of crime identified by Sacco (2005) by investigating respondents' awareness about crime, their feelings and their safety behaviour towards reducing victimization and dealing with personal and altruistic fear through safety information seeking behaviour from newspapers' crime stories.

There was an initial presumption among social scientists that fear of crime and actual victimization would be closely associated and that it was a symptom of crime that would vanish with crime control, hence, treated trivially (Perkin, & Taylor, 1996; Warr, 2000). This presumption soon fell flat on two fronts. First, fear is much

widespread than victimization. Secondly, the population or the demographic that are most fearful are least likely to experience victimization (Perkin & Taylor, 1996).

On the surface, fear could be seen to denote absolute negativity because it erodes confidence and leads to panicking. This has been contested. Warr (2000: 455) opined that fear is not totally bad and that it is when deployed disproportionately to “objective risk that it becomes dysfunctional”. Without fear he noted, “prey animals would walk amid predators, and humans would stroll across busy ways, knowingly ingest toxic substances, or leave their infants unprotected”. Fear can therefore, be regarded as an involuntary act common and natural with human beings. It could be positive or negative depending on the emotional balance of the individual.

Warr (2000; Snedker, 2015) distinguished between *personal fear and altruistic fear*¹¹. Fear for one’s personal safety occurs when an individual is faced with danger. Similarly, they may also exercise fear for the safety of others such as, spouse, partner, children, parents, etc. whose safety matters to them. This is referred to as altruistic fear. Fear of crime can be categorized in terms of intensity, terror, worry, alarm, apprehension, dread and prevalence, that is, the proportion and duration of crime among individuals and social units, e.g. families, town, communities, cities or nations, during which a fraction of the population experience fear during a particular period in history (Warr, 2000).

Custers and van den Bulck (2011) argued that despite the interchangeable usage of fear of crime and risk perception, there exists a difference between the two. They regarded fear of crime as an affective process, while risk perception is regarded as a cognitive process. The study further noted that fear of crime is not a one-dimensional concept and proceeded to identify situational and dispositional fear of

¹¹Fear for others e.g. family members

crime. Dispositional fear of crime means fear as a *trait*, while situational fear of crime is fear as a *state* (Gabriel & Greve, 2003). Dispositional fear of crime as viewed by Gabriel and Greve (2003) relates to an individual's tendency to experience fear. They posited further that people who score high on dispositional fear are more likely to experience fear in comparison to people with low dispositional fear. When the former group does experience fear, it is more intense than the fear experienced by those with low dispositional fear. Situational fear on the other hand, is a state, setting or context associated with a situation. Gabriel and Greve (2003) argued that both types of fear influence each other. People who experience many scary situations are more likely to develop higher levels of dispositional fear and that people with a high level of dispositional fear have the tendency to interpret every situation as frightening.

In a similar vein, media effects researchers have identified different types of fear of crime as well. Heath and Petraitis (1987) made a distinction between fear of becoming a victim of crime in the respondent's immediate neighbourhood and fear of crime in a distant urban setting. They found that the amount of television viewed was related to fear of distant urban settings but not to fear of the respondents' immediate neighbourhood. In media and communication research, three types of experience that might affect judgements about crime and risk have been identified (Tyler; 1980; Van den Bruck, 2013). Tyler (1980) defined the three types by making two distinctions. First, he made a distinction between an individual's direct experience and indirect experience of crime. Secondly, he further identified two types of indirect experience, the first being, informal social communications which occur when people learn about experiences of others through interpersonal or dyadic communication, and the second being the knowledge gained from exposure to the mass media.

Fear of crime has been a well-researched area (Ferraro, 1995). It has a vast, rich, robust and diverse literature. Some of the most researched variables with regard to fear of crime are: age, gender, socio- economic status, neighbourhood and race (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004).

3.6 Age and Fear of Crime

Age, considered as one of the most important demographics in social research, has generated a lot of research work (Erdonmez, 2009; Snedker, 2015). In criminal studies, views and stereotypes of weakness and vulnerability used to describe women's fear of crime is also extended to the elderly, especially the female (Perkin & Taylor, 1996). It is further argued that fear of crime is rooted in community disorder relating to social and physical cues external to crime (Perkin & Taylor, 1996).

Age limits the ability of the elderly to resist victimization or any physical defence in the face of any attack especially on cases relating to muggings or robbery. Unlike younger women, however, it does not support the elderly fear of sexual offences (Evans, 1995). Despite the limitation of self-defence and the least chance of being victimized compared to the fearless but more vulnerable younger people, older people are associated with one level of fear or the other. Weitzer & Kubrin (2004:498) referred to this as "paradoxical". Smolej (2011: 3-4; Riggs & Cook 2015) referred to this as "fear of crime paradox". This finding is consistent with others such as (Warr, 1984; Altheide, 2002 & Sampert, 2010).

In sum, older people, because of their frailty are fearful of crime. Conversely, they are less likely to be victimized compared to the fearless younger people.

3.7 Gender and Fear of Crime

Gender is the strongest overall predictor of fear of crime (Leiker, 2003) and the most important factor in relation to varying levels of crime (Pleysier & Cops, 2010). It

is reported that women are more fearful than men, have an irrational response to lower crime threat, more vulnerable to attack, less able to defend themselves or cope with victimization (Brunton- Smith, & Sturgis, 2011; Chiricos, Padgett, & Gertz, 2000; Drakulich, & Rose, 2013; Lane & Meeker, 2003; Snedker, 2015; Stanko, 1990; Warr, 1984). In a survey on neighbourhood and fear of crime in Britain, Brunton- Smith, and Sturgis (2011) found that fear is significantly higher in women. Snedker (2015) found that women reported more fear than men in both the neighbourhood and the city. Drakulich and Rose (2013), however, found that both men and women express different levels of fear. Women are said to have higher levels of fear than men, and men having higher levels of fear for their female partners. Interestingly, they also found that sexuality also has a relationship with perception of fear. Men with female partners express levels of fear similar to men in different-sex relationship, but fear for their male partners at a degree commensurate to those of women with male partners. In the same vein, women with female partners express personal fear similar to other women and fear for partners similar to others with female partners.

On altruistic fear, respondents were found to have expressed more fear for their partners and children than did for themselves. Expectedly, those without partners and children expressed more personal fear. On gender, females are at the risk of expressing more concern for their personal safety and female partners more likely to elicit more concerns than male partners. Also daughters elicit more concerns than sons. Mothers expressed a slightly higher level of concern for children than men. Both parents express personal and altruistic fear for the girl child than boys.

In a study on the determinants of women's choice of long-term partners, Synder, et al., (2011) conducted three internet based studies on US women on whether the level of a woman's self-reported perceived vulnerability to violent crime, strongly

determined her reported preferences for aggressive formidable men as long - term partners. It was found across the three studies that the sampled women's fear of crime predicted the extent to which they valued formidability in a male long-term mate. This is consistent with the view and belief that aggressive and formidable men offer greater potential protection to their partners. Though, at possible greater costs to the women, they gain by selecting such mates. The choice is perceived as more gratifying than paying the costs.

Riggs and Cook (2015) conducted a study on the effect of violent crime on respondents' fear of murder and fear of sexual assault. It was found that the samples (both gender) reported low levels of fear. Compared with fear of sexual assault and murder, the respondents had higher levels of fear for robbery, aggravated assault and home invasion. No difference was found between men and women in levels of victimization or vicarious victimization. Women were found to report significantly greater perceptions of risk than men. In the case of the impact of violent crime on murder, male respondents were found to report significantly higher levels of fear than they reported for sexual assault.

Conversely, women were found to have reported to be more fearful of sexual assault than they are for murder. This view is consistent with that of Mallicoat and Ireland (2014) that women suffer sexual offences than men. There were, however, varying responses along racial divide. Non- Whites indicated higher levels of fear than the Whites. Previous studies have portrayed women as being more vulnerable to violent crime offences and the attendant physical injury associated with crime (Cook & Fox, 2012; Lane & Meeker, 2003). Men are, however, more likely to be victims of murder (Brown, Esbensen & Geis, 2013), with the exception of sexual assault and intimate partner violence (Warr & Ellison, 2000). Some studies also indicated that

when sexual assault is controlled, men are more afraid of violent crimes such as, robbery, simple and aggravated assault than are women (Ferraro, 1996; Warr, 1984, 1985, 2000).

Though, women are regarded as being more fearful of crime than men, they are less likely to be victimized. Riggs and Cook (2015:2385) explained this as “the fear of crime paradox”, termed the “shadow of sexual assault” or “shadow” hypothesis. The shadow hypothesis, developed by Ferraro (1995, 1996) expanding on the earlier works of Warr, (1984; Gordon & Riger, 1989) argued that women’s fear of crime can be explained by their fear of sexual assault. Fear of other crimes is *shadowed* by the fear of core offence of sexual assault, “an assault that increases the level of fear of other types of victimization and is almost exclusively committed against women” (Riggs & Cook, 2015: 2385). By implication, sexual assault is feared by women because of the tendency by the victim to experience other types of crime in the process.

3.8 Feminism and Fear of crime

Criticisms, reviews and contributions into fear of crime have not escaped the scholarly attention of feminists. Gilchrist, Bannister, Ditton and Farrall (1998) contested the widely held view of *fearful women* and *fearless men*. Though, fear of crime has come to be regarded as a monstrous and a monumental social and political problem, some results according to Gilchrist et al., (1998:283) “are discovered with monotonous regularity”. Most research outcomes on the media and crime they argued, have predominantly found women, especially, the elderly appearing more fearful of crime, but are less likely to be victimized than young men, and these young men, who are most likely to be victimized, are not fearful at all.

Many explanations have been adduced for women's perceived higher level of fear of crime than men. *Irrational* response to an objectively lower crime threat has been ascribed to women. Women have also been considered to be more vulnerable or prone to attack than men; are unable to defend themselves; and have lesser ability to cope with victimization as men (Rigger et al., 1978). Smith (1989) on her part argued that apart from personal fear, women also suffer from altruistic fear. She contended that women's responsibility and concerns about their children add to their fear of crime. Furthermore, there is also the argument that women exercise lesser control over their personal and public spaces than men do, hence, they fear more (Pain, 1993).

Stanko (1990) observed that women regularly encounter the threats of physical and sexual violence, on the street, at work and at home. He argued further that the treatment of female victims of violence¹² and the advice given to women on how to avoid victimization reinforces the fear of attack (Stanko, 1990). The advice on how to dress, not to walk alone, or to always be in the company of known male faces indicate a sense of insecurity around the female folks, he further added. Though this body of literature¹³ rose to the challenge of "the assumed irrationality of the hysterically fearful female" (Gilchrist et al., 1998: 285), the underlying archetypal stereotype, that women are more fearful than men was not challenged.

In contrast, Gilchrist et al., (1998:283), expressed the view that fear is "neither great, nor is the gender difference that startling". This is to demystify the bravery associated to men, and to argue that fear is gender sensitive. Callanan (2012) supported this view. She found that fear of crime is higher in all the victims, including women, Blacks and Latinos.

¹² for which female victims are blamed

¹³The feminists scholars contributions to the discourse of media and fear of crime

3.9 Fear and Gender Sensitivity

To test the veracity of *fearful women and fearless men*, a study on the attitude of both men and women to four offences: house breaking (burglary) assault, vandalism and car crime, was conducted by Gilchrist et al., (1998). Findings established fear in the two genders, and also established fearless men and women about crimes like vandalism and car crime. The study found that men and women refer to similar factors when talking about worry and crime, but established high differences between low fear and high fear men, and great differences between high fear women and low fear women and between low fear men and low fear women. This finding is supported or corroborated by the earlier work of Newburn and Stanko (1994) which argued that men are reticent to disclose fears about crime. It also lends credence to a similar work by Stanko and Hobdell (1993) who reported confounding similarities between men's and women's experiences of and reactions to victimization. The study also established that both men and women exercise altruistic fear or referred worry about women and children respectively. Fear is therefore, not exclusively determined by gender. Rather, the context and the type of crime have relationships with whether fear will be exhibited across both genders.

3.10 Neighbourhood and Fear of Crime

Neighbourhood as an important determinant of how individuals perceive their risk of being criminally victimized has long drawn the attention of criminologists and still remains a debate. Weitzer and Kubrin (2004) identified racial composition of neighbourhood as influencing crime. Residents of minority communities are more likely to fear crime (Eschholz, Chiricos, & Gertz, 2003). In a related study on fear of crime in twelve American cities, Leiker (2003), using some of the basic premises of Chicago School as secondary data, found that racial heterogeneity impacted on fear of

crime but its influence depended on the race/ethnicity of the respondents. He found no evidence that fear of crime of whites differed from the fear of crime of Blacks and that Hispanics and individuals in the other category of race/ethnicity had slightly higher levels of fear of crime relative to Whites. Snedker (2015) found that married, non - Whites (Blacks, Asians and others) and Hispanics were associated, just like the older people, with one or two of the higher fear categories. Brunton- Smith and Sturgis (2011) found a relationship between incivility or observable signs of disorder, and social- structural characteristics of the neighbourhood and crime- related fear. They established that residents of neighbourhood with higher levels of recorded crime express higher levels of fear than residents with individual characteristics living in low crime rate neighbourhood.

Similarly, residents of neighbourhood with higher frequencies of obvious signs of disorder express higher levels of fear. In other words, neighbourhoods with weak social and organizational structures are pointers to fear of crime among the residents. Equally, people living in more ethnically diverse, socio- economically disadvantaged and urban neighbourhood entertain higher levels of crime. Furthermore, areas populated by younger neighbourhood in age classification, and more population mobility, pose fear in to the residents, though of weaker effects (Brunton- Smith & Sturgis, 2011).

In sum, environmental disorder, higher levels of recorded fear and neighbourhoods with feeble structures, have bearings with fear of crime.

3.11 Income, Age and Education on Fear of Crime

Income, age and education are less consistently related to fear of crime. Callanan (2012) found no correlation between education, age and income on fear of crime. This suggests that concern of being victimized was general among the

respondents in the study irrespective of the socio- economic variables of education, income and age. Similarly, Snedker (2015) found that education was associated with lower fear categories. In the same vein, Custers and van den Bulck (2013) found that the socio economic status of women watching *Flemish* TV crime drama and perceived risk was stronger in women with higher socio economic status, measured by education and income, than in women with lower socio economic status. Earlier studies by Baumer (1978; Clemente & Kleinman, 1977) agreed with this view. They claimed that fear of crime is conversely related to socio economic status.

In China, however, Liu (2007) found that the higher the education, the greater the fear of crime exhibited by highly educated individuals over their less educated counterparts. This is because, the higher the education, the higher the social status. This change in status makes individuals more susceptible to being victimized.

In a random- sample telephone survey of 1, 239 respondents in Houston, Texas, Lai, Ren, and Greenleaf (2016) investigated residence-based fear of crime in the routine activities of the people. The research effort sought to establish an individual's dwelling unit (as distinct from the general neighbourhood) on crime-specific fear. Specifically, the study examined the predictive validity of routine activity theory to account for burglary and invasion of one's residence. In other words, the study focused on the distinction between residence- based fear and neighbourhood- based fear. The results demonstrated that the respondents rated crime-specific fear at home higher than fear of crime in the neighbourhood. This suggests that the respondents are more particular about home related safety than neighbourhood safety. By implication, if every home in a neighbourhood is safe, chances are there that the neighbourhood could as well be safe.

The study also found that the residents' personal idiosyncrasies of perceived risk in the immediate neighbourhood, rather than manifest incidents of crime was significant in shaping their views on home based crime. An earlier study by Hipp (2013) confirmed this view. Hipp (2013) found that there exist discrepancies between resident's perception of crime and official crime rates due to factors like, the influence of mainstream and the social media. Also, mistaking disorder for crime, can distort people's perception of crime. This finding is in contrast to similar previous study (Brunton- Smith & Sturgis, 2011; Zhao, et. al, 2015) which reckoned that actual crime is associated with fear of crime among residents. The study agreed with the view of (Warr, 2000) that respondent's subjective assessment of motivated offenders is important in fear research because subjective assessment of perceived risk is a primary source of public fear of crime.

3.12 Race/ Ethnicity and Fear of Crime

Race/ethnicity, at varying degrees, also plays an important role in perceived vulnerability of being victimized at home (residence-based fear). Lai, Ren and Greenleaf (2016) found that African American respondents reported low levels of fear of crime, while their non- White Hispanic counterparts expressed a higher level of vulnerability at home. With respect to ways through which capable guardianship can predict crime-specific fear at home, which was measured by social integration and satisfaction with police, a negative effect was found. It supports the hypothesis theory, a sub-field of crime opportunity theory, which was developed by Cohen and Felson (1979) and focused on situations of crime. It argued that crime is inversely related to social causes such as poverty, inequality and unemployment.

The level of the respondents' educational attainment also had a negative relationship with residence-based fear. This finding, though, not as hypothesized by

Lai et al., (2016) is, however, supported by earlier recent studies (Zhao et al., 2015). The level of education claimed by the respondents was found to be significant with negative relationship to fear of crime. Miethe and Meier (1990) offer a somewhat logical explanation on this. It is argued that guardianship ability, being a function of income and educational attainment, relates to the protective behaviour taken to safeguard the home against burglary and home invasion. Put in another form, respondents with higher educational status are likely to be able to afford, and to be rationally convinced to deploy their economic resources to better secure their home as could be afforded.

In a shift from manifest emphasis of researches (as reviewed above) on issues of gender, fear and safety on urban settings, Little, Panelli and Kraack (2005) conducted a study on rural women in four rural communities in UK and New Zealand. The findings revealed that rural communities are friendly, safe and largely free of crime compared to urban locations. The rural women were, however, found to have growing concern on personal safety. About 96.6% of the New Zealand respondents and 86.6% of the respondents in the United Kingdom described village/community as *friendly* (Little, et al., 2005). The respondents also stressed the positive aspects of residing in the country side which include strong communal bonding, peace, a tranquil lifestyle and climate, all indicative of a safer haven compared to urban settings. Though most of the women questioned in the study expressed the view of a safer and friendly rural community, some of the women respondents held the view that their community was less safe than what it was half a decade ago. This indicates that, the *safe haven* tag on the rural communities may be tenuous after all. Rather than any change in the characteristics of the rural community, as being responsible for the

decreasing level of safety, a growing influence of the city on the rural community may be responsible for the drift towards a less safe rural community.

On safety within home and the community- a spatial pattern of women's fear- more women in New Zealand expressed more residence- based fear than open country side or outside fear. In contrast, the sampled women villagers expressed more village/ community based fear, than fear at home. On the impact of direct experience or involvement in a prior criminal or frightening incidents, Little, et al., (2005) found no causal link between past victimization or direct experience of crime and higher levels of fear amongst the rural women. "Been a victim of crime or witnessing scary incidents did not appear to correlate directly with levels of fear amongst the women questioned" (Little, et al., 2005). In the UK, however, both experience of crime and feelings of fear were found to be considerably high in the accessed village. In sum, fear appeared to be associated more to the general perceptions about the pressure of threats in the area rather to direct experience or past victimization.

These factors to fear of crime as reviewed are what Weitzer and Kubrin (2004) refer to as *objective conditions*. In this perspective, the media play little or no major role in fear of crime because, "media reports are typically far removed from the audience's everyday lives and often cover atypical, serious or spectacular crimes, whereas personal victimization and crime conditions are more immediate and salient" (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004: 498). This position is consistent with the views of Tyler (1984), but is inconsistent with the views of Altheide (2003; Callanan, 2012; Custers & van den Bulck, 2013; Reiner, 2007) who argued that a relationship exists between the mass media and fear of crime.

3.13 The Media and Fear of Crime

Apart from the objective factors that cause fear of crime, the mass media is also regarded as a major source of fear of crime (Sacco, 1995; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004). Much of mass media scholarships, according to Callanan (2012) argued that the high degree of violence and deviance in mass media heightens the public's fear of victimization. Reiner (2007) in an earlier study, also found that crime content features significantly in the mass media and does not reflect the reality of crime, because it disproportionately focus on random violent crime.

Crime journalism has transformed since the 1900s, when interests in media and crime started (Altheide, 2002; Weitzer & Kubrin 2004) and came to an all-time high in the 1990s (Young, 2005). The seminal work by Gerbner and his colleagues on the effects of media on fear of crime which was began in the 1970s crystalized into a lot of studies on cultivation theory.

Gerbner hypothesized that exposure to television brings about a world view and found that heavy television viewers were more likely to view the world as cruel, violent and crime- ridden. This will negatively affect their perception about life and the humanity at large. This view has, however, been contested by other critics including Gerbner himself (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004) on the ground that the theory is limited because it presupposes that media messages have a uniform effect on the audience. The current study aligns with this school of thought, that given the diverse background of the media audience, media messages are least likely to have a uniform effect on the audience (Hirsch, 1980, 1981). Hughes (1981) argued that given the same data used by Gerbner and his associates, the introduction of statistical variables like age, income and gender negated the causal claims of television viewing as solely responsible for aggressive behaviour. The empirical and theoretical validity of

Gerbner et al.'s claim was also contested by Chadee (2001; Doob & MacDonald, 1979; & Roberts, 2001). They queried the amount of association between media exposure and fearfulness that could withstand the introduction of other control variables like gender, race, place of residence and direct experience of crime.

Concerns about the harmful effects of media coverage of crime, establishing media induced fear of crime in the audience abound in literature (see Altheide, 2003; Amzat, Abodunrin & Okunola, 2007; Chiricos, Padgett, & Gertz, 2000; Evans, 1995; Greer, 2009; Gilchrist, Bannister, Ditton & Farrall, 1998; Lai, et al., 2016; Soola, 2007; Warr, 1984; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004). It has continued to generate more interests and concerns, because such fears adversely affect the well-being of a proportion of the population (Mirrlees-Black, Mayhew, & Percy, 1996). Available literature on media consumption and fear of crime came up with conflicting findings on the effects of media consumption, especially television viewing on fear of crime. Some for instance, found that television viewing of drama have a relationship with higher levels of fear (Custers & van den Bulck, 2013; Heath & Petraitis, 1987; Weaver & Wakshlag, 1986, Tamborini, Zillman, & Bryant, 1984). Others like Potter and Chang (1990; Slater & Elliot, 1982) came up with a result that found lower level of fear with TV drama viewing. Yet, there are those who found no significant relationship between drama viewing and fear of crime (O'Keefe & Reid-Nash, 1987).

The universal nature of crime and its inevitability in the society (Durkheim, 2013/1933) coupled with the indispensable nature of the media in the society, have consistently engaged the attention of scholars. Media effects theorists have espoused that audience exposure to media messages impact on behaviour and perception (Wanta, Golan & Lee, 2004). Thomson, Young and Burns (2000) noted that media presentations shape and influence many attitudes and beliefs about crime. Other

researchers in communication, psychology, sociology and other related social science disciplines have established a strong empirical support for the influence of media on behaviour. For example, Anderson and Bushman (2001) linked media use to aggressive behaviour. Similarly, Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli and Shanahan (2002) established a connection between media (television) exposure and fears about the social world, while Graber (1980; Sobowale, 2008) also established a connection between media exposure and political behaviour. The media, in the view of Sacco (1995), shape our reality of crime. Therefore, crime is a social construction of reality. According to Davies et al., (2007), crime is a socially constructed problem since less people have a direct first hand encounter with crime and victimization, we are left to rely on other sources of information, few of which are more prominent than the mass media. Media representation shape the people's opinion about crime and what crime means, by representing views of reality. No connection exists between what the media present and the reality. The issues of crime are projected and publicized mainly by the media (Davies et al., 2007: 9). They contended a thorough exploration of crime and victims would be elusive, if the media is excluded. Crime and the media according to Carrabine (2008:1) *have many and complex relationships*. This suggests an interface between crime and media and diverse viewpoints about crime and media.

The interface between crime and the media has for long been a matter of debate, since the advent of printing to the present day explosion of the media through the cyberspace. As matters of fact, contributions to the debate have been across diverse interests. Dominant contributions to the discourse of media and crime have been from the field of criminology. Two of the distinctive criminological approaches on the relationship between media and crime identified by Carrabine (2008) that are relevant to this study are that: whether the media's violent depiction of crime

influences criminal behaviour in the audience in real life situation. The second approach examined how the news media create moral panics leading to public fear of crime.

In reporting crime, the media embrace *episodic framing* rather than *thematic framing* (Amzat, Abodunrin & Okunola, 2007; Odunlami & Soremekun, 2013; Soola, 2007; Young, 2005). Episodic framing sensationlises crime stories by deliberately placing emphasis on serious but rarely occurring crimes like, murder, mugging or homicide, rape and robbery. Media emphasise exceedingly on the most serious examples of crime and victimization, neglecting images of violent and frequent sexual interpersonal crime (Marsh, 1991). In contrast, insignificant and non- proportional¹⁴ media attention are placed on more common, frequently occurring, but less serious crime, or low level property offences, such as, burglary, larceny and fencing, that make up the significant majority of recorded crime are given sparse attention or totally ignored by the media (Maguire, 2002). The implication of this is that, though, researchers do not insist or agree on a causal link between media accounts and public perceptions, findings suggest that “the media are most likely to report precisely those crimes that are least likely to occur” (Warr, 2000:467). As an aftermath, chances are that the public could get a blighted view or skewed perception of crime by “exaggerating the frequency of rare, serious crimes and underestimating the frequency of more common, less serious ones” (Warr, 2000:467). This scenario could make media audience to be wrongly apprehensive and avoidably fearful and which could be mentally disturbing leading to fear of crime in the media audience.

In a study hinged on cultivation theory on American Society (Schrum & Bischak, 2001) found that a correlation exists between heavy and light viewers of

¹⁴Crime reports relative to the population of an area.

television on perceived risk of victimization. They argued that heavy television news viewers are more susceptible to accessing more information than light television viewers, which partly explains the link between television and influences on judgments of societal crime risks. Similarly, O'Keefe and Reid-Nash (1987) in a study on the cultivation effects of watching crime news on television and reading crime stories in the newspapers, found that greater attention to television news on crime translates to increased fear, concern for crime and crime prevention activity, but could not provide a proof for a relationship between fear of crime and reading newspapers' crime stories. Actual evidence on media coverage and public fear, according to Carrabine (2008:44) "is a decidedly mixed, due to methodological discrepancies". This suggests that different media impact differently on the audience depending on the characteristics and the peculiarities of each medium and the social experience of the media user.

Fearful people according to Reiner (2007) are more dependent, easily manipulated and more susceptible to deceits both on the political and religious fronts. They could also suffer repression, if it promises a relief from their insecurities and other anxieties (Signorielli, 1990). Fear can also lead to a lot of prevention activities, missed oppourtunities and in fact a loss of the essence of being. For example, avoiding places considered as hot or risk spots due to fear of victimization, could prevent socialization and the needed human interaction.

Crawford (2007) however, noted that, an awkward relationship exists between fear and prevention of fear of crime. While fear encourages people to take precautions, "crime – preventive initiatives do not necessarily reduce fear and initiatives that fail to reduce crime may successfully impact upon reported level of fear" (Crawford, 2007: 899). Like other social sciences phenomena where there is no

absolutism or finality on any issue, there is no consensus of opinion on the “actual evidence on media coverage and public fear” (Carrabine, 2008:44). The disparity he noted is due to “methodological discrepancies” (ibid: 44). Sacco (1995:151) also agreed that a variation exists in the way exposure to crime news and fear of crime is conceptualised. “Considerable variation exists regarding the ways in which crime news, crime news exposure, and fear of crime have been operationalised in research literature” (Sacco 1995:151). The way different types of the media like: broadsheets, mid- market and tabloid newspapers, the television, reality crime programming and fictional crime, report crime are different and do not have the same effect on audience perception of crime (Carrabine 2008). While it would not be inappropriate (Sacco 1995) to attribute passive response by the audience to the warnings of danger by the media, it would be inappropriate to conclude that the media construction of crime news is solely responsible for fear of crime in the audience. Sacco (1995) further argued that audience members bring to the reading and viewing experiences their own predispositions.¹⁵ These predispositions, he concluded, “suggest the possibility that the correlation between media usage and fear of crime may be more indicative of selective exposure than media influence” (Sacco 1995:152).

Others like Coleman (1993; Heath and Petraitis, 1987; Tyler & Cook, 1984) found that a relationship exists between audience judgments of crime in distant places, but, not perceptions of the immediate neighbourhood. The nearer the occurrence of a serious crime to one, the more insecure and more fearful the people could become. Conversely, the farther a serious crime from one’s abode or location, the safer and more assured the people could become. “Coverage of crime in other cities makes people feel safe by comparison” (Liska & Baccaglini, 1990:372). Put differently,

¹⁵Personal experiences with crime or violence, perception of the credibility of the media source or the extent of prior concern about safety.

“news of distant, sensationalistic, random crime, allows people to reduce their anxiety about local crime by allowing them to compare themselves with others who are seen as worse off” (Surette, 1998:208). In a nutshell, exposure to local news about crime reduces the anxiety of the local audience about crime, when they compare their situation to those of others in the cities. Serious crimes like murder, for instance, though rarely occurs, when they do occur, they often occur in the cities and are blown disproportionately to the population by the media, hence, it gives the local population an assurance of comparative safety, though not suggestive of absolute safety from crime.

Incidents of crime have continuously captured the attention of the media and scholars and there appears no end in sight to this. The nature of crime, especially, homicide or murder, rape and robbery, examples of interpersonal or crime involving violence has been feasted on in journalism. These types of crime, which though serious; rarely happen, but are reportedly overblown or exaggerated in the media due to the social standing of the offender(s), victim(s) or the manner of execution (Sacco, 1995), the media, thereby making “ordinary things, extra- ordinary” (Jewkes, 2015:85). In most incidents of low but commonly occurring crimes, like burglary, car theft and larceny; some examples of property crime, are neglected Maguire, 2002).

The news media employ certain criteria and an in – house practice to determine the newsworthiness of certain issues. These criteria include; timeliness, proximity, human interest, celebrity involvement, novelty, conflict, scandal and the credo, *If it bleeds, it leads* (Cooper & Roter, 2000). The reportage and the manner of reportage are key elements in the analysis of media influence on the media audience. Media audiences are different, dissimilar and a product of history (Barber, 1997). Hierbert, Ungurait and Bohn (1991:111) noted that “media audiences are elusive and

anonymous and that the concept of audience implies a more defined group than public''. *Public* to the mass communicator is an abstraction and refers to a pool of people available, while, *audience* refers to that individual(s) who not only exist(s), but who participate(s), respond(s) and consume(s) what the media produce, either by listening, reading or viewing (Hiebert, Ungurait & Bohn, 1991). The influence of mediated message on them may not necessarily elicit the same response. It may, therefore, not add up to conclude that, an audience exposure to or reading newspapers' crime stories regularly would enhance the gratification of his/her safety information need if what the newspaper is reporting is strange to the audience. To examine what stories particular media outlets cover, an understanding of the environment and the prevailing operational conditions of the media houses becomes imperative. The images and the representation of crime news in the media are a product of the institutional and cultural factors of news media organizations.

Through the concept of gatekeeping¹⁶, the media outlets determine what stories to publish, the prominence such can attract in terms of placement, all geared towards balancing organizational objectives and the interests of the audience; hence, the news media shape the reality of our world view on social phenomena (Hiebert, Ungurait & Bohn, 1988). The attention devoted to crime news in the media manifests daily in the newspapers and other forms of the media (Altheide, 2003; Sacco, 1995; Young, 2005). Young (2005) noted that the adage, *if it bleeds, it leads*, shaped media discourse in Canada in 1998, when the country's largest daily newspaper, *The Toronto Star* 'deliberately turned to crime news as a way of bolstering its position in the market place during the newspaper war of the twentieth century in Canada between (sic), *The Star*, *National Post* and *The Globeand Mail* (Young, 2005:12). Cooper and

¹⁶the internal regulation of the media

Roter, (2000) added that local television station also use the axiom to disseminate health information to educate the viewers.

This thought is consistent with the submission of Vartanova and Smirnova (2012) that the media exercise a very important and visible impact on public world view and that this nexus has in the contemporary time become an issue in media coverage of crime related activities, because media house feast on crime news. According to Ditton, Chadee, Farrall, Gilchrist and Bannister (2004:595), “a connection between media reports and dramatizations of crime and peoples’ fear of crime is intuitively attractive’’. This view supports the submissions that crime news is attractive to both the media organizations and the audience, and that the media feast on crime news (Soola, 2007; Howwit, 1998). Crime is a “popular, significant and constant component of total news” due to its entertainment as well as **informational** values (Surette, 1992:62). Chermak (1994) noted that about one-fifth of all news stories in television and newspapers were crime-related and that crime was the fourth largest category of news presented in newspapers, after sports, business and general interest stories. These are suggestive of the fact that crime news is attractive to both the audience and media organizations (Soola, 2007). The avalanche of these crime stories directed at news consumers creates public fear of crime in the people (Warr, 2000; Weitzer & Kubrin 2004). This view is supported by Hale (1996:109), as follows:

Newspaper, radio and especially the television have a prominent role in many popular accounts of fear of crime. One tendency is to see this fear as having no grounding in reality but being merely the product of sensational and selective news coverage and lurid dramatizations. It is certainly the case that media crime reports inevitably focus on the most serious and sensational crimes (Hale, 1996:109).

This scenario is without prejudice to crime reduction or feeling of safety by the people. As Altheide, (2003) noted:

Crime and fear dominate most US newspapers and television reports. Objective indicators of risk and danger in American life suggests that most US citizens are healthier, safer and live more predictable lives than at any time in history Crime news has been a staple of journalism for decades (Altheide, 2003:10).

Weitzer and Kubrin (2004) also added that:

Many Americans report that they are fearful of crime. One frequently cited source of this fear of crime is the mass media. The media and local television news in particular, often report on incidents of crime, and do so in a selective and sometimes sensational manner (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004: 497).

Furthermore, Eschholz (1997) found that a meagre 27 percent of the studies conducted on newspaper consumption on fear of crime established a positive relationship, while 73 percent did not. She, however, cautioned that it would be premature to underplay or dismiss the role of the media in shaping people's views about crime. Heath and Petraitis (1987; O' Keefe & Reid- Nash, 1987) also expressed this view in previous studies. In agreement with previous findings, Morgan (1983; Warr, 2000) submitted that the dominant view about media portrayal of crime is that the media cause or create fear of crime in the media audience. It is clear from the above views that media coverage of crime is often linked to fear of crime by the media audience. This thesis contended the uniform effect description of fear of crime as the dominant outcome of audience engagement with crime stories. It argued that audience characteristics are factors in audience filtering of crime stories.

The audiences possess enormous ability to be judgemental and evaluative of the institutions with which they have regular interaction. This is in tandem and consistent with the submission of Weitzer and Kubrin (2004:493) that other factors including "people's personal victimization, city or neighbourhood levels of crime" influence fear of crime. According to Weitzer and Kubrin (2004), the media exert limited influence on behaviour based on audience characteristics, and identified the

approaches of *substitution* and *resonance* to justify audience differences. Substitution¹⁷ aligns with the audience and contextual differences. Substitution pre-supposes that heavy consumption of media portrayal of crime is consequential on the media audience with no direct experience of crime; they tend to substitute media images of crime for real world experience (Custers, & van den Bulck, 2013; Gunter; 1987; Surette, 1998). Custers and van den Bulck, (2013) for instance found an indirect relationship between television viewing and fear of sexual violence, but found that risk perception and perceived seriousness of an offence are positively related to fear of crime. The study also found a relationship among women who watch *Flemish* TV crime drama in Belgium, but had no direct experience with crime. The finding is in tandem with the substitution hypothesis which suggests that the influence of media messages about crime is much stronger when direct experience with crime is lacking.

The resonance thesis is the opposite of the substitution thesis and explains that when media images echoes what are consistent with real life experience, for example, criminal victimization, or residing in crime infested area “media and experience mutually reinforce citizen’s fear” (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004:500). The resonance school of thought holds that the combination of crime news in the media coupled with an individual’s perceived vulnerability or experience of neighbourhood crime heightens fear of crime (Chiricos, Padgett & Gertz, 2000; Eschholz, 1997). The present study investigated whether the newspaper readers’ direct or indirect experience with crime influenced the gratification of the readers’ safety information need.

Weitzer and Kubrin (2004) have identified one major problem existing in literature on media and fear of crime. It is their considered view that most studies examined the effects of only a medium. They amplified the views of Eschholz (1997;

¹⁷a variant of the cultivation approach

Heath & Gilbert, 1996) in this regard. They had suggested the need to disaggregate, unpack or unbundle the media and examine each medium separately and comparatively, so as to bring out the distinctive feature(s) of each medium and their influence on the audience, because each medium is not likely to exert the same influence from a dissimilar audience. According to Weitzer and Kubrin (2004:501) “some media appear to influence consumers’ perceptions, values and concerns, while other media do not”. Justifying the need to disaggregate the media to determine the effects of each on the media audience, Weitzer and Kubrin (2004) asserted that the mass media have different styles and contents. For example, television combines the qualities of sound and sight, over radio and the newspaper, hence, could, command a much stronger emotive impact that merely listening to it on radio or reading it up in the newspapers cannot guarantee.

Another difference in the various media they identified is the resources¹⁸ available to each medium, which they reasoned, go a long way, to determine the depth of investigation and how the news stories are packaged. Other areas of disparity among the various media that hold further implications to audience perception identified include, advertisements and pressure which applies more to television than newspapers, greater internal competition common with local television stations than newspapers, which leads to more crime coverage and more sensationalized coverage on television (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004).

Similarly, newspapers and internet users exercise considerable selectivity in what they read, whereas, television and radio news audiences are more passive and less selective in their reception of radio and television newscasts (Heath & Gilbert, 1996). Available literature suggests observable differences in the ability of audience

¹⁸Mass media organisations require huge financial outlay and manpower to operate optimally.

media perception on fear of crime. For example, Eschholz (1997) found a relationship between audience exposure to television crime dramas and fear. Findings from newspapers' crime stories on fear of crime are, however, mixed. While some established a relationship (Eschholz, 1997), others did not (Heath & Gilbert, 1996). There exists a variation in the quantum and quality of newspapers coverage of crime. According to Weitzer and Kubrin (2004) due to the sensationalism of tabloids in carrying crime stories, readers of tabloids are likely to exhibit fear of crime than readers of broadsheet newspapers. Such fears could make the fearful broadsheet readers to feel insecure and afraid of walking alone at night (Williams & Dickson, 1993).

Women are stereotyped as being more fearful of crime than men. This has been contested and findings asserted that fear of crime is not gender bias, rather, it is gender sensitive. In fact, both men and women have been found, not to be only concerned with fear for personal safety alone, but have been found to be also bordered by altruistic fear or fear for others. The various forms of the mass media have been credited with elaborate coverage of crime and each medium exerting certain influence on the audience. The need to disaggregate studies on the media coverage of crime to be able to establish a particular medium that would be more consequential on the influence it has on the audience was also stressed. This becomes highly instructive in this era of media explosion, whereby, media audience interact(s) with multiple media as sources of information on crime.

The isolated studying of single medium as revealed in literature impedes their ability to determine which medium is more consequential than others on the audience and fear of crime. The few available comparative studies according to Weitzer and Kubrin (2004:502) established a significant difference in audience effects by media

type. Some sources having greater effects on audience perception of crime than others. O'Keefe and Reid- Nash (1987) in a comparative study of newspaper and television news consumption found that fear of crime increases only with exposure to national television news.

The fact that television is an audio- visual medium, capable of evoking more emotions on the audience, than newspaper could be responsible for that discovery. Another study by Chiricos, Eschholz and Gertz (1997) found a relationship between frequent exposure to television and radio news and fear of crime, but not with newspapers. Yet, another study by Eschholz et al. (2003) found a positive association between fear of crime and frequent exposure to local news, crime dramas, tabloid shows and reality crime programmes. That these comparative studies assessed just the frequency of exposure to each medium, neglecting the salience – the medium most important to the respondent, drew the flak of Weitzer and Kubrin (2004). This appears *problematic* because, in a context where multi- media audiences, who watch both local and national news and read newspapers as well, but form their impressions about crime based largely on one medium. Studies on salience of a particular medium to the audience would assist to establish which medium is most consequential on the media audience.

This observed short coming notwithstanding, it is instructive to note that, in studying media and fear of crime, the need to disaggregate or unpack the media is crucial in order to properly situate which medium exert more influence on the audience when measuring fear of crime. Furthermore, Chiricos et al., (2000 & Eschholz et al., 2003) found an increase in fear of crime with exposure to local news. Gross and Aday (2003) is, however, an exception. They found no association with exposure to local and national television news on fear of crime. This finding is

consistent with the view of Barber (1997) that audiences are distinct and dissimilar. Although, the degree of media influence on audience behaviour is still a debate, the consensus is that the mass media do exert influence on public attitude and public perception about social phenomena if not wholly, at least partly. In view of the fact that the media audience in the post- modern era depend on the media for information about social phenomena (Ball- Rokeach & Defleur, 1976) and the permanent nature of crime in the society (Durkheim, 2013/ originally, 1933), media and crime would remain essential topics that would always be discussed in the public sphere and upon which both men and women may always exercise fear (Gilchrist, et. al., 1998).

Despite the growth in media and criminological studies in western culture, the same cannot be said of Nigeria. This justified the importance of the present study. Available literatures on the media and crime in Nigeria attest to sensationalism in media coverage of crime (Alemika & Chukwuma 2005; Amzat, Abodunrin, & Okunola, 2007; Odunlami, & Soremekun, 2013; Soola, 2007). This skewed episodic reportage of crime by the media has been argued to be even more problematic than crime itself. It has led to media induced fear of crime in the audience. It has also led to much costly and risky preventive behaviour as audience responses to the outbreak and widespread of crime. One of which is information seeking that the current study investigated.

As earlier advanced in the study, ascribing fear of crime as the only behavioural response by the media audience to the phenomenon of crime is an assumption of an absolute media effect on the audience. Studies, Klapper (1960; McQuail, 2005) have argued that the behaviour of the audience to social phenomena cannot be absolutely attributed to the media.

Against certain misconceptions, however, about the influence of media as the cause of crime and criminality in the audience, no empirical data suggest a causal effect of audience media exposure as cause of crime (Sacco, 1982; McQuail, 2005). These views were also supported by Sutherland (1949) in his *Differential Association Theory*, an example of the social process theories or symbolic interactionism in criminology, who argued that, the causes of crime are society bound and that criminal behaviour is learned like other skills through interaction and that it is not associated with traits or learned from impersonal communication¹⁹ but that, human beings are influenced by their interaction with the environment. Other identifiable risk factors of crime according to Soola (2007) include: proliferation of arms, military incursion in politics, availability of alcohol and drugs. In the coverage of crime and deviance, “the media- usually led by the press- will define describe a group or act as deviant and focus on it to the almost exclusion of almost everything else” (Jewkes, 2015:82). This development, she argued creates moral panics²⁰ among certain marked individuals or group. While some studies describe media content of crime as designed to sell newspapers (Soola, 2007), Young (2005) has contested this view. She found that the relationship between sensational crime content during the “newspaper war in Canada” was temporal or “tenuous at best” (p. ii). She said further that:

nature and amount of newspaper crime content during these periods had more to do with the masculinist cast to crime news making norms and practices than previously acknowledged in the criminological and media studies literatures, such that competition does not invariably lead to crime news or even to more spectacular crime coverage (Young, 2005: ii).

Though, mass media messages play a part in the socialisation process of the media audience, such interaction it has been argued, cannot wholly account for the

¹⁹ i.e. the mass media

²⁰ ‘public and political reactions to minority or marginalized individuals and groups who appear to be some threat to consensual values and interests’ (Jewkes, 2015:82).

every behaviour of an individual. The environment plays a more significant and crucial role towards the personality of any individual. It further came to light that though, the media remain important sources of crime news, the responses media users put as a result of crime are influenced by a lot of other environmental factors. This supports the existing views on the influence of the media on the society and extends the debate further.

The seminal work by McCombs and Shaw (1972) pioneered a number of studies on the effects of media on public opinion (Wanta, Golan & Lee, 2004). Many of these studies have supports for the widely held view that media coverage influences the perceived importance of social issues, such as crime, politics, education, health, etc. (Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004:367). This suggests that stories or issues that are emphasized in the media influence the perceived importance of those stories in the court of public opinion. In addition to its ascribed significant influence on the wider public, the media also exert influence on scholars and researchers as their first contacts, comprehensions and understandings of the various social phenomena which transform in to areas of their scholarly specialisations, are rooted in their interaction with the media (Marsh, 2014). The media have thus been described as the lens through which we perceive information and make a sense out of situations and contexts that could confront us; hence, the media in any of its variants²¹ play a significant role on how members of any given society get informed about issues and events that affect them, either directly or indirectly.

Our worldview is thus largely shaped by media construction and de-construction as it may be. This could be attributed to the technology- aided media explosion the world is experiencing. Hu, Lai, Shearer, & Cvek (2016) agreed with the

²¹Print or electronic media

view. They posited that the media is a common phenomenon in this contemporary time, and that both crime and the media are pervasive, hence, it has become necessary to research into media influence on behaviour.

In a content analytical study on whether the news media influence public perception of foreign nations on the agenda setting hypothesis of the United States of America (US), Wanta, Golan and Lee (2004) found that a relationship exists between media coverage of nations and the individual's perception of those nations. In other words, the more saliently a nation features in the news, the more the media influence on public opinion. While negative and neutral portrayals of nations correspondingly influenced public opinion, this was not the case with positive media portrayal in the study. The positive news stories a country got from the media did not translate to positive perception by the respondents.

This could be due to many factors, among which is the valence of the nations being polled in the eyes of the people. In any case, the study was able to establish the existing notion that the media influence public perception, if not maximally at least minimally. Robinson (2001) also posited that the news media play a significant role in policy creation. Media presentation of crises ridden countries like Somalia, he contended, ignited international interventions and supports for the afflicted countries and the affected individuals. Specifically, he revealed that watching hunger stricken, starved and mal-nourished Somalia children on television during the 1992 crisis in that country, President George Bush (Senior) was reported to have ordered the US troops to intervene in the war with a view to curtailing it. It is also argued that when opinions differ in respect of a policy issue among elites, the news media coverage reflects this debate by being critical of or supportive of an opinion.

When this happens, the news media expectedly begins to play an active and influential role in policy debate and formulation “because the possibility exists for news media coverage to actually take side in the debate” (Robinson, 2001:531). In a scenario like this, by promoting a view point or being supportive of a school of thought on policy issues in a debate, the news media have the potential and the capability to influence or cause a policy change (Robinson, 2001).

3.14 Summary of the Reviewed Literature and the Identified Gaps

Significantly, the works of the scholars reviewed, have identified the functions of media in the society, information seeking behaviour and other characteristics of the media audience. Also, the fact that the media is a major purveyor of crime information among other sources of fear of crime was emphasised. It was established that fear of crime has become widespread than crime and that the most fearful people are less likely to be victimized. Audience demographics were found to be major factors about fear of crime. It was revealed in the chapter that the media exert a certain degree of the influence of fear and perception of vulnerability in the audience, but not the direct cause of criminal behaviour.

Most of these literatures, however, are culture specific (about western culture) and by western authors, such as, Armstrong (2001; Bandura, 1965; Cantril, 1942; Carrabine, 2008; Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Jewkes, 2015; Katz, 1987; Roberts, 2001; Sacco, 1995; Surette, 1998) among many others. The studies also mostly dwell on violent crime, especially murder, robbery and rape. Homicide or murder is rated as a serious, but rarely occurring. Media coverage of crime was found to have neglected other less serious, but frequently occurring crimes like, burglary and theft.

The previous studies reviewed merely focussed on how the media affect us, in terms of regarding the media audience as being fearful of crime from their interaction

with media coverage of crime. In that context, the audience is regarded as passive, docile and who are at the receiving end of media messages about crime relayed to them. The studies placed much emphasis on the fear factor as a consequence of media coverage of crime by assuming that media audience perceive and receive media messages the same way. This view negates the peculiar characteristics of the individual media user, and the fact, interpreting media messages depends on the varied perception senses and the experience of the individual. The various submissions on perceptions about media and fear of crime as discussed in the chapter, hold the view of absolute, maximum, or better still, the magic bullet effect of media coverage of crime on the audience, which suggests passivity of the media audience.

This study investigated Nigerian newspapers' coverage of violent and property crime. Significantly, this study focused on audience deployment of the sampled Nigerian newspaper's crime stories by the readers to gratify their safety information need. The study aligned with the minimal effect perspective which regards the media audience as active. This study argued that media messages are not likely to be interpreted uniformly by the audience, hence, the unlikelihood that media messages would exert the same influence on the media audience, given the dynamics and the heterogeneity of media audience(s), as no two media audience are exactly the same. This concept is captured in figure 3.1.

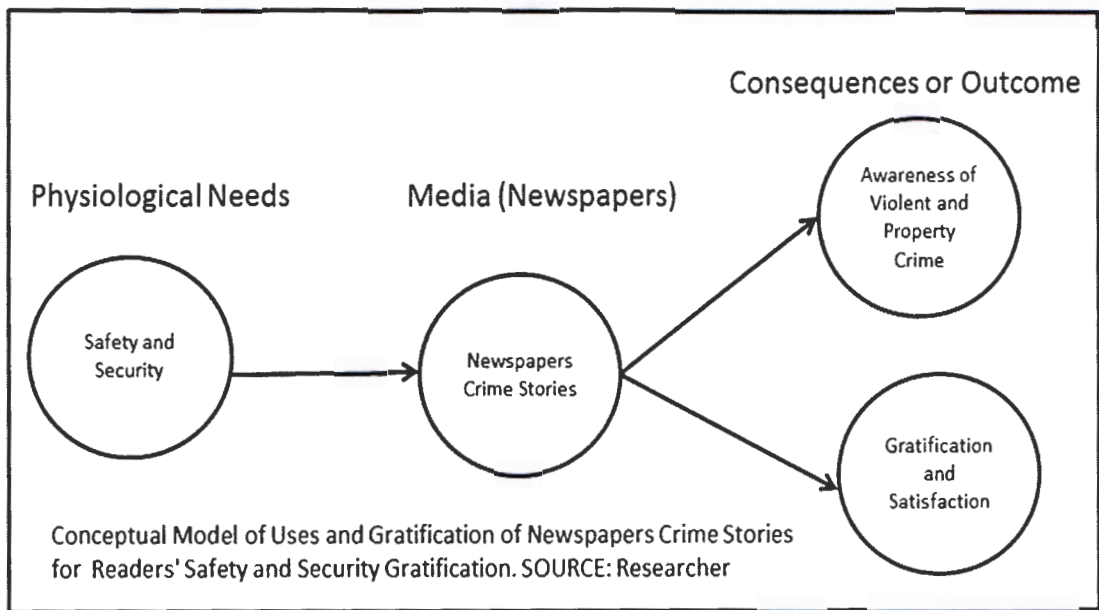


Figure3.1: Conceptual Framework

This study, as explained in figure 3.1, comprised key concepts such as: safety need as one of the basic human requirements for existence, newspaper readership, violent and property crime and gratification obtained from media exposure. In satisfying the physiological need of safety, readers interact with the media (newspapers) and get exposed to crime stories, mostly about crime victims and their losses, (lives and property), distant in most cases, from where majority of the readers are. The outcome or consequence(s) of the exposure to the newspapers crime stories could to lead to a gratification or need satisfied about the reader's safety information need.

Since an individual's personal experience about crime is limited and restricted, the media (newspaper) serve as source of information about crime. This model, therefore, proposes that the newspapers readers' exposure to crime stories in the newspapers could likely have an outcome or consequence that gratifies their safety information need.

Little or no attention has been accorded to media gratifications obtainable by newspapers readers from their exposure to and interaction with newspapers crime stories. There is, therefore, the need to investigate how media audience in other cultures, in this case, Nigeria, perceives media coverage or portrayal of crime. Related studies in Nigeria, such as, Alemika and Chukwuma (2005; Ajayi, 2007) looked at crime the prevalence of crime and the aftermath among Lagos State residents. Ajayi (2007) employed sociological viewpoint in the study and identified Police ineffectiveness and *state failure* as being responsible for the prevalence of crime and a lack of control of crime, in Lagos, Nigeria. Also, Soola (2007) examined style of crime reportage by the Nigerian media, and advocates for thematic framing rather than the popular and profit driven episodic framing of crime news. Furthermore, Odunlami and Soremekun (2013) also established sensational reporting of crime by the Nigerian media and also discussed ethical issues in crime reportage by the Nigerian media. Importantly too, the reviewed related studies on media and crime in the Nigerian context, are either journal articles, or short term studies which may not comprehensively reveal the audience and media dynamics in crime coverage and the gratification of readers' safety information need from the newspapers crime stories.

From the foregoing views, the study sought and conducted a five year study (2010-2014) on Nigerian newspapers coverage of crime (interpersonal or violent crime and property crime) to establish the magnitude of crime coverage and whether Nigerian newspapers readers obtain any gratification from the selected newspapers crime stories on their safety information needs during the period. Civil servants have been found to have access to and read both English and Yoruba newspapers (Olofin, 2012). This informed the utilization of Lagos State civil servants for the survey done in the study. The chapter also gives a trajectory of the development of newspapers in

Nigeria and also came up with a list of nationally rated and recognized newspapers, five of which (*Nigerian Tribune, The Punch, Vanguard, The Sun and the Daily Trust*) crime stories, between 2010 and 2014 were investigated in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the theories on which the study is anchored are discussed. They are, the Uses and Gratifications and the Social Responsibility media theories. The relationship between theory and research is symbiotic and mutually inclusive. This is consequent upon the fact that research rests on theory, while theory draws its validity and relevance to continuous supports from empirical findings. Theories can also be described as historical and metaphorical. Historically, theories are products of the time of their emergence. Theories are also said to be metaphorical, in the sense that, through language, theories suggest informed comparisons.

4.2. Uses and Gratifications Theory (U>)

The U & G approach in communication studies and mass media research has a long standing in history (Liu, 2015). The turn of the 20th century, to say the least, marked the beginning of research on information seeking behaviour on the part of the audience (Ketterer, 2000). Studies in this respect date back to the beginning of empirical mass communication research. The U & G has as its main theme an understanding of how and why the media audiences use the media in their daily routine. The advent of the various media has seen the U & G theory deployed to inquire into how the radio, newspapers, television, books, magazines and lately the various forms of the new media (e.g., phones, tablets, compact disks, computers), the internet and the social networking sites (SNS) are adopted by the user to shape and define their everyday activities. Despite the staunch criticism of a lack of theoretical cohesion of the uses and gratification, among others, by U&G critics, “any attempt to speculate on the future of communication research, must seriously include the uses

and gratifications approach'' (Ruggiero, 2000:3). This is an indication of the present and future relevance of U &G theory in communication studies.

The importance of the mass media as well as the gratification sought (GS) and gratifications obtained (GO) have attracted a lot of interests and several studies which date back to the beginning of World War II (McLeod & Becker, 1981). Similarities of individual's needs, tastes and interests which are social or psychological in nature, mostly account for the basis of audience formation (McQuail: 2005). Such needs are those for information, relaxation, companionship, diversion or "escape" (McQuail, 2005:423). At the advent of communications research attention was on finding out the gratifications that drew and sustained audience interests in the media and media content that met their social and psychological needs (Cantril, 1942). Wimmer and Dominick (2000) credited the beginning of uses and gratification approach to the 1940s when researches in mass communication focused on why media audience engaged in media acts such as listening to radio or reading newspapers. Other views argued that it was Schram's (1949) reward and delayed reward model of media gratifications that marked the beginning of uses and gratification (Dozier & Rice, 1984). Jensen and Rosengren (1990) reckoned that the origin or the chronology of the beginning of the uses and gratification approach as a mode of audience research began with the effects studies of radio and film on audience(s) behaviour between 1930 and 1950s, while Lin (1985) argued that the uses and gratifications approach became a prominent media research in the 70s.

By and large, while the 1940s can be effectively regarded as the beginning of the U&G approach in media and communication studies, it became popular in mass media research in the 70s, due largely to the seminal work of Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974). The uses and gratifications theory is a response and a challenge to

the minimal effects theory. It was proposed to contest the notion of audience docility. McQuail (2005: 403), noted that early communication researchers mainly focused on media effects on children and young people with an emphasis on potential harm and that early theorists on media influence, concentrated on the impact of audience exposure to the media on behaviour. The early U&G studies largely described and attempted a meaningful categorization of audience responses (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954; Merton, 1949). In the 1950s and 1960s, U&G researches centred on identifying and contextualizing the social and psychological variables that were assumed to have triggered and shaped the consumption pattern of audience gratification. They found that the determinants of children's use of television are individual mental ability and relationships with parents and peers, while Katz and Foulkes (1962) advanced *escape* as audience motive for mass media use. Mendelsohn (1964) on his part adduced the needs of information, companionship, participation and social interaction among others as the reasons why people listen to the radio. The uses and gratification studies of the 1950s and 1960s were characterised by gratifications sought (GS).

The 1970s marked the beginning of studies on gratifications obtained (GO). Previous researches on (U&G), some of which had been mentioned earlier, focused on gratifications sought (GS), leaving out the outcomes or the gratifications obtained (Ruggiero, 2000). Uses and gratifications researches of this age focused on audience motivations and the audience use of media messages to gratify social and psychological needs. The works of Katz, Gurevitch and Hass (1973; Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1979; Rosengren, 1974) are examples.

The uses and gratifications approach de-emphasizes, message-makers, message-making, message-sending, or even the messages themselves, but, places

much emphasis on the choice, uses, needs, perceived expectations and gratifications, and how the of audiences' respond. The approach considers media consumptions as logical and sequential processes of need- expectations and need-gratifications, wrapped in the warp and woof of the social-psychological environment of the media user. The research framework of the media uses and gratifications approach was proposed by Katz et al., (1974).

In this perspective, audience members are active rather than passive media users as they were categorized by the earlier media effects (hypodermic needle theory or the magic bullet) theory. Audience members are regarded as goal-oriented in their attempts to satisfy their media-related needs. They have expectations about the media and media content which lead them to different patterns of media uses, choices, and contents. As varied and diverse as media audiences are, so are the different degrees of gratifications they obtain from media exposure.

Critics have not spared the uses and gratifications theory. Part of the criticisms of (U&G) is that the approach had an insignificant theoretical coherence, behavioural, and individualistic in approach (McQuail, 2005). In response, Rubin (1984) argued that, the uses and gratification studies of the 1980s onward are directed at the criticisms. Examples include: Bantz (1982; Dobos, 1992; Eastman, 1979). Pointedly too, (U&G) studies of this era asserted the active participation of the media audience in the communication process (Ferguson & Perse, 1994; Windahl, 1981; Rubin, 1984, 1994). Ruggiero (2000:3) sees the uses and gratifications approach as a component part of the future of media research. He submitted that speculation on the future direction of mass communication theory “must seriously include the uses and gratifications approach”. The advent of the internet and the infectious acceptance and

the popularity of the social media among the young generation as media- content producers, has confirmed this view.

4.3. Media Use and Gratifications

Gratification is the reward or benefit accruing from an individual media user's engagement with the media. Gratification has been identified to come from two sources: content gratification and process gratification (Rubin, 1985). Process gratification pertains to the practice of using the media, excluding the media content. Such process gratification includes using the media for entertainment, distraction, or companionship. It relates to the act of using the medium itself. Content gratification on the other hand, relates to the message and the importance to the reader. It is about the message, and not the medium. Content gratification is crucial with respect to communication content and future correspondence. The newspaper is an important source of information and could shape readers' thoughts (Awake, 2005). The newspaper as a source of crime stories is central to this study.

Human beings as social animals, employ communication as a tool for need satisfaction. The need to share information, emotions and feelings and to conquer space and time faster than ever, has remained a challenge to man from time immemorial to this mediatized era where virtually, everybody has one form of contact or the other with the media either through the radio, television, newspapers or the internet, and there seems no stopping on this technological advancement voyage. To satisfy this communication need, the human society has transited from the stage of signs and symbols to the development of speech, writing, printing, mass communication and to the present age of information super highway, and still hopeful of more breakthroughs. These transitions took many centuries and at an immeasurable cost. The advent of printing technology credited to the German *change- agent-*

Gutenberg in the 15th century transformed the act of communication significantly and paved the way for the print medium starting with the Bible, the Newspaper and the Magazine. Other needs central to human motivation and existence are physiological needs, of which safety and security needs are components. The term “needs” according to Parumasur and Roberts- Lombard (2014:183) “refers to something that is either a physical or emotional requirement”. Every individual has needs. Needs could be innate or acquired needs. Innate needs are physiological or biogenic and critical to existence. Examples include food, water, air, clothing, shelter and sex. Acquired needs are needs that we learn in response to our culture or environment (Parumasur, and Roberts – Lombard, 2014). Acquired needs are purely psychological; hence, they are regarded as secondary needs, while innate needs are regarded as primary needs. Physiological needs are as crucial as the biological needs for human existence.

According to Maslow’s (1943) human needs are hierarchical. The safety and security needs of an individual must be satisfied before higher social needs could be attained. Safety needs are concerned with physical safety, order, stability, familiarity and control over one’s life and environment (Parumasur and Roberts- Lombard, 2014). An important need crucial to this study is cognitive need. Cognitive needs which is also referred to information/ surveillance need, is chiefly concerned with “seeking information about relevant events in immediate surroundings, society at large and the world” (Pitout, 2009: 392). Other aspects of cognitive needs include, “seeking advice to enhance decision making choices, learning about important topics and self – improvement and gaining a sense of security through knowledge in the media” (Pitout, 2009:393). The media therefore provide media users an avenue to enhance their safety information need as a response to the impediments to, and confounding challenges such as pervasive crime and insecurity to lives and property.

The media audiences according to Dominick (1993:49) “use media content as gratifications”. These are the needs of the audience satisfied by the media. He identified four media gratifications: cognition (information), diversion, social utility and withdrawal. He explained further that the cognitive use of the media is when the media is used as a source of information, while diversion is regarded as basic need of human beings, which can be realized by using the media for stimulation, relaxation or “escape from pressures or emotional release of pent up emotions and energy” (Dominick, 1993:49). He explained further that social utility use of the media is achieved when a media user fulfills the need to affiliate with others by using a form of the media.

Lastly, media users, especially the children employ the withdrawal use of the media by engaging with the media at a time when other activities were due for attention, or by using the media to “create a barrier between themselves and other people” (Dominick, 1993:49). The cognitive use of the media affords media users the opportunities of receiving and creating media messages which is amplified in the uses and gratification approach employed in the study. The uses and gratifications perspectives “is a sub-tradition of the media effects theory and explains audience reaction to media messages” (Hungbo, 2012:36). These views mark a paradigm shift from the earlier held views of audience passivity about media messages.

Arguably, however, some of the least researched areas of media and crime are (1) audience information seeking behaviour as a consequence of crime, and (2) the gratification of the safety information need of the media audience.²² Most contributions on media and crime have been on how the media crime stories affect us as media users in terms of leading to aggressive behaviour in children and creating

²² The gratification of media users’ psychological and social needs is the hallmark media use (Pitout, 2009).

fear, consternation and dread in the audience (Bandura, 1965; Kidd- Hewitt, 1995) and not the inherent communication, and the informational values in such crime stories. Communication, in this context means, the exchange of ideas and audience benefits from media involvement with crime stories

Media users as active media consumers interact with all forms of the media with the expectation that their media- related need would be gratified. Studies abound as to what use or multi-tasks that users subject media apparatus or audience/ media interactivity (Chung, 2008). The uses and gratifications theory has been applied to media studies including, radio, television, newspapers and recently the internet and social media networks where gratification has been measured through process, content, and social use (Zikka, 2014). Uses and gratifications theory assumes that an audience continues to repeat behaviour, if the desired need(s) are gratified or satisfied by a medium.

Seeking to establish whether Nigerian newspapers' crime stories gratify the safety information need of newspapers readers, this study adopted uses and gratifications, an audience-based approach to examine "why and how people use media" (Lee, 2013,: 301; Katz, 1959; Ruggiero, 2000). As such, audiences are explained as active, motivated and purposefully use the media in goal-oriented ways as "what people do with media, instead of what the media do to people" is the focus of U&G (Rubin, 2009,: 168; Klapper, 1963). Audiences' use of media is further theorized as motivated or driven by specific reasons and cognitive and/or affective needs, wants, and/or interests (Levy & Windahl, 1985; Rubin, 2009). For example, individuals use the media to pass time, to seek for information, for convenience and entertainment, and for interpersonal utility (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). By studying audience's motivations and media use, in the mediating contexts of other individual

differences and “structural determinants” (Lee, 2013,: 301), U&G research can then reasonably predict how motivations affect media use (Jeffres & Atkin, 1996; Lee, 2013; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Rubin & Step, 2000). The task of fulfilling an identified need, that is, gratification sought, (GS), leads an individual to choose a mass media channel to satisfy that need. In the study, the veracity of this logic, that the more the safety information need of a Nigerian newspaper reader is gratified by the newspapers crime stories, the more the likelihood of reading the newspapers crime stories was tested.

Early studies on gratifications research attempted to establish a relationship between gratifications sought (GS) and gratifications obtained (GO) (Lin, 1985; Zikka, 2014) in the use of the mass media. An active audience must first be aware of the benefits (gratifications) available from using the medium- gratifications sought- before evaluating the gratification obtained (GO) (Zikka, 2014). Subject to an accurate measurement of the outcome variables, the extent to which the GO reinforces the GS either increases or reduces the continued use of the medium (Stone, Singletary, & Richmond, 1992). If contrarily, the GO fails to match GS, individuals will seek an alternative mass media channel for gratification (Chen, 2011). McLeod, Bybee, & Durall (1982) refers to this as *drive/drive reduction model* whereby an individual is seen as having a well-defined set of needs that go with some of expectations regarding the ability of the media to satisfy the needs. This presupposes the level of matching or the *degree of fit* between the gratification sought and its level of perceived provision by the media.

As predicted by Ruggiero (2000; Liu, 2015), the 21st century has witnessed an exponential explosion in the application of the uses and gratifications theory in media studies, especially with the various forms of internet usage (Young & Anabel, 2010).

The advent of the internet has seen an explosion in online activities with and engagements with various Social Networking Sites, (SNSs), necessitating and motivating an avalanche of studies on audience gratifications.

Various studies on audience media gratifications have been conducted since the beginning of this millennium. Examples include, Huang (2008) who found that entertainment gratification is one of the important predictors of e-consumers' use intention. Guosong (2009) established a link between using the social media and interdependence in consuming, participating and producing as appeals for user generated media. Udende and Azeez (2010) established that students use the internet for academic purposes. Igboaka and Ha (2010) found that educated rural dwellers use the internet for economic activities. Morah (2012) found that journalists' use of the social media platforms like *Facebook* and *Twitter* enhances their practice. Similarly, Whitting and Williams (2013) identified ten uses and gratifications for audience use of the social media as: social interaction, information seeking, passing time, entertainment, relaxation, expression of opinions, communicatory utility, convenience utility, information sharing, surveillance/ knowledge about others. Katz and Blumler (1974) recognized five areas of media gratification to be: escape, social interaction, identification, information/ education and entertainment.

In a study on the influence of boredom, social networking, social anxiety, social relationships and social gratifications on an individual driver's decision to text while driving, White (2015) found that the discomfort from boredom will significantly increase a driver's self-reported texting. It was also found that drivers, who maintain social relationships while driving, will significantly decrease their social anxiety, just as drivers who maintain social relationships while driving, will significantly increase their social relationships, while a driver's discomfort from social anxiety will

significantly impact on a driver's self-reported texting. Lastly, the pleasure from social gratification will increase a driver's self-reported texting. Similar past studies, Tosun (2012) established that maintaining long distance relationships, account for why many people use *Facebook*. Yen, et al., (2012), in a study involving 2,348 college students, found that individuals with high social anxiety, who engage in online interaction, reduce the level of anxiety than in face-to-face interaction.

Similarly, Ketterer (2000) adopted the uses and gratifications approach to measure reader's perception and use of online newspapers' crime stories. Meade (2012) sought to know if the new media affect the ability to delay gratifications and found that group differences (high access vs. low access groups) accounted for academic delay of gratification. Earlier studies (Tobin, & Graziano, 2010) for instance, established that media users are surrounded by instant gratification, or obtaining beneficial results almost immediately and may have a great influence on an individual. Zikka (2014) found a relationship between, frequency, duration and functions (specific tasks) of a communication channel and the gratification obtained. Lin (1985) in a study on the relationship on perceived gratifications and subsequent news media choice found that both the compensatory and non-compensatory models predict audience members' tendencies to choose television for later use. The uses and gratifications theory is generally applicable to all forms of media use. It was found suitable for this study.

The media, in its surveillance function, continuously publish crime stories (Jewkes, 2015). Studies on media portrayal of crime have consistently established fear of crime in the audience (O'Keefe & Reid-Nash, 1987; Surrete, 1998). This trend portrays media audience as passive receivers of media messages. An example of what the media do to the audience. The audience according to the uses and gratifications

exponents also deploys the mass media for information, escape, entertainment and withdrawal (Lin, 1985; Zikka, 2014) to satisfy an identified need and that a gratified need by the media would engender a repeat behaviour from the audience.

The study argued that media audiences are active, unique and different (Barber, 1997), hence, are not likely to respond uniformly to a particular media message as many of the previous studies (Amzat, Abodunrin & Okunola, 2007; Warr, 2000; Weitzer, & Kubrin, 2004) on media and crime coverage had suggested. The study contested the widely held dominant view of a fearful audience about crime stories. The present study is an example of content gratification. It sought to investigate whether Nigerian newspapers' crime stories gratified the safety information need of the audience during the study period. It focussed on Nigerian newspapers readers' information seeking behaviour as one of behavioural responses to crime (Garofalo, 1981) to reduce and avoid criminal victimisation, in a bid to satisfy or gratify the basic need of safety.

In conclusion, the Uses and Gratifications theory seeks to differ from the widely held views that the media audience is a passive receiver of mediated messages. It emphasises that the media audience is actually active and can choose his/her media preference and content, and to also subject the information received to a particular use (gratification obtained). In this study, emphasis is on the media audience's interaction with newspapers crime stories and the gratification of their safety and information need. The theory can be classified as a significant theoretical foundation or framework through which the information need and the outcome of audience and media interaction can be investigated and has evidently been of a great significance in the 21st century media research. The uses and gratifications theory is very relevant to this study. In the first instance, the theory assumes that a media audience is active and not

passive. In this study, the conscious, deliberate and goal oriented information seeking behaviour by the Nigerian newspaper readers, in seeking newspapers' crime stories to gratify their safety information need, demonstrate activity on the part of the audience, thus, satisfying a major assumption of the theory.

The Uses and Gratifications theory serves to complement the Social Responsibility theory in this study by enabling the study to go beyond a mere description of the selected Nigerian newspapers' coverage of crime during the period of the study, to carrying out an analysis of audience behaviour towards gratifying their safety information need from the newspapers' crime stories. The uses & gratifications approach thrives on the use of produced media messages. In effect, media content has to be generated before it could be adopted or used by media users. Consequent upon this, the Social Responsibility theory, which compels media organisations to carry out surveillance/information function to the society, is adopted in the study to complement the Uses and Gratifications theory.

4.4 Social Responsibility Theory

Historically, the conception that media have a responsibility for a meaningful and impactful reporting of social events can be traced back to the 1947 Hutchins Commission of the press (Folarin; 1998; Severin & Tankard Jr. 2001). In the early 20th century America, it was observed that the press was failing in its duties "especially because of its sensationalism and commercialism, but also its political imbalance and monopoly (sic) tendencies" (McQuail, 2007: 170). In response, a private commission of inquiry was set up in 1942, headed by Robert Hutchins, Chancellor of Chicago University.

The aim of the commission was to:

examine areas and circumstances under which the press of the United States is succeeding or failing; to discover where free expression is or is not limited, whether by government censorship pressure from readers or advertisers or the unwisdom of its proprietors or the timidity of its management (McQuail, 2007:170).

The commission recorded a lot of milestones. Apart from being the first of many of such inquiries and reports initiated by the government to chart a future for the press to meet the needs of the society and for possible reforms, it was also the first of such commissions to look in to the ills of the press; it served as a precedence to other countries on press reforms and also set the pace for other countries to emulate. Lastly, the finding of the commission added substantially to the development of theories and to the practice of accountability (McQuail, 2007).

The findings of the commission, otherwise called (Hutchins, 1947 Report) revealed the failures and infirmity of the press and for being selective in the dissemination to information to the people. The powerful and the privileged minority were found to be dominating the press. The report coined the notion of social responsibility (from which the theory derived its nomenclature) and further identified the principles, tenets or journalistic standards that the press should seek and maintain. The report, while very critical of the sensationalism of the press and the mixing of news with editorial opinion, also emphasised a press that should:

- Provide a full, truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning.
- Serve as a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism and be a common carrier of the public expression.
- Give a representative picture of constituent groups in the society.
- Present and clarify the goals of the society (McQuail, 2007: 171).

In a nutshell, the Hutchins (1947) report specified and recommended a press that would reflect the totality of the social environment within which it operates. This ethical prescription would involve, fair, objective, factual and balanced reportage of social events. Moreover, the report envisioned a diverse, objective, informative, independent and self-regulated press (McQuail, 2007) whose stories should promote peace and tranquility in the society. The theory presupposes that the press has a responsibility to the society and that access to the press by all should not be hindered irrespective of the ownership and that “the ownership of the media is in public trust or stewardship rather than an unlimited private franchise” (McQuail, 2007:171).

This suggests that the press has the obligation to inform the society on the happenings in the society and defend social institutions for the overall good of the society. The need for the press, especially, in the Nigerian context, to stoutly and vigorously defend social institutions is greatly underscored by the moral decadence and other acts of brigandage evident in today’s Nigeria. Studies (Sutherland, 1949; National Crime Council, 2002; Soola, 2007) have identified: loss of moral values, family disintegration, unemployment, access to and the use of drugs, alcohol and arms, as some of the risk factors for deviant and criminal acts in the society.

In reporting crime and violence, Soola (2004: 134) urged the media to regard and treat crime and violence “as a public health problem”. The clarion call requires the treatment of crime as an epidemic, which requires not only the attention of the media through mere reportage of crime, but also requiring diagnosis and making prescriptions to stem the tide. By doing this, the media is helping to change the form and structure of the society that make it predisposed to and allowing crime to fester. Similarly, by bringing to the fore the predisposing factors to crime, the media is assisting in facilitating discussions on crime and possible solutions. At the same time,

the media is assisting and encouraging discussions on crime across the broad spectrum of the society, thus making crime deservedly to be perceived and treated as a social problem, rather than the narrow perception of crime as a personal problem.

A socially responsible press, therefore, can through adequate and constant information, criticisms, and commendation, where necessary, help fortify social institutions by drawing the attention of the government and the citizenry to the need for the sacrosanctity and the protection of societal values, and to also provide information and education on crime towards a safer and more secured environment. The major role expected of the media in line with the dictates of this theory is for the media “to raise conflict to the plane of discussion” (Soola, 2007:2). By this, it is meant that the press should give salience to issues that can negatively affect the well-being of the society, to engender discussions among the citizenry. Such social issues include crime.

Furthermore, the social responsibility theory is one of the popular four theories of the press propounded by Siebert et al. (1956). It belongs to the normative theories of the press whose main proposition according to McQuail (2005:176), is that ‘the press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates’. Normative theories explain the prescriptions for a media system so as to conform to or realize a set of ideal social values (Baran & Davis, 2000). The theory is somewhat a reaction to the excesses of the press occasioned by the freedom guaranteed in the Libertarian theory of the press (another example of the normative theory of the press, which grants the press liberty to publish).

The Social Responsibility Media Theory, in all intent and purpose, is supposed to be populist in orientation and in practice, by bringing every information to public glare without any interference, hindrance or obstacle and to be a direct opposite to the

Authoritarian media theory which ascribes monopoly of knowledge and wisdom to the ruling class (Stanley & Mojae, 2012). McQuail (2010:184) described it as “a public interest model”. It is a theory that values the media and audience responsibilities. In this context, the right to freedom to publish is bounded by obligation to the general good of the larger society. It places a moral burden on the media to be the mouthpiece of all of the people and not a select few. It also challenges media practitioners to evolve new ways of service to their communities; preserve democracy “in a world drifting inexorably toward totalitarianism---, even at the risk of reducing their profits or being critical of the influential in the society” (Baran & Davis, 2000:110). Apart from just reporting to inform the audience, therefore, SRT, also prescribes, investigative and interpretative functions for the press, for the press to be truly socially responsible.

Despite the strengths and the assumptions of a free and responsible press, SRT overlooks some salient things on the parts of the media and the society. For instance, the theory exhibits a seemingly limitless optimism on the willingness of the media to meet responsibility and also underestimates the power of profit and motivation. In the same vein, the theory expresses an overt optimism about individual responsibility (Baran & Davis, 2000). In spite of the few weaknesses of SRT, the theory is very relevant to this study both in theory and in methodology. Theoretically, reporting on social ills or social problems is cardinal in the surveillance/information function of the press (Hierbert, Ungurait & Bohn, 1991). Crime according to Sykes (1978) is a social problem. A social problem is one that is beyond the realm of an individual to solve. Hence, a social problem requires a societal solution, of which the press and its operators are a part of. Also, the media serve as a source of crime information to the public since only a few can experience crime first hand (Altheide; 2003; Crowther,

2007; Sacco, 1995; Surette, 1998; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004). This is ascribed to the ability of the press to diffuse information from near to a far distant.

On methodology, the Nigerian newspapers reportage of crime stories during the period of this study has enabled the study to carry out a description of the selected newspapers' coverage violent and property crime in terms of frequency and prominence (salience) accorded crime coverage during the period of the study, and also a thematic analysis of some crime stories. In view of these submissions, the social responsibility theory of the press is considered suitable, hence, its adoption as one of the media theories anchoring this study. The theory, however, cannot adequately cover the scope of this study. This study, in addition to its interest in Nigerian newspapers coverage of crime from 2010 to 2014, is also interested in the newspaper audience; consequently, the adoption of another relevant theory becomes inevitable. In that context, the Uses and Gratifications theory or approach to media, an audience- centred theory was considered and adopted as a complementary theory for the study. The important responsibility of the press which is to keep the media audience abreast about happenings in the society has been advanced in the chapter. This is what the social responsibility theory of the press advocates. This has, however, been a tough call for the press globally to achieve. Press freedom is determined by the policies of different governments and the in- house rules of press organisations which often suit the organizational policies of individual media houses. Technological advancement and the type of economy a country embraces are also factors in press freedom. In spite of these shortcomings, the press remains a central institution in information dissemination and especially crime stories to the media audience. In these contexts, the Social Responsibility theory was found suitable; hence, it was adopted in the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that was used to achieve the research objectives. The study adopted quantitative (deductive) and qualitative (inductive) research methods. The chapter also discusses the following sections: the research methods {content analysis (manifest & latent), survey & in-depth interviews}, study population, sample size and sampling technique, the analytical method and the statistical tools adopted for data analysis.

The study's central focus is to describe the coverage of crime and whether or not crime stories gratified the safety information need of the media audience during the study period. In the study, both the quantitative and qualitative research designs are adopted. To that extent, the study is descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory. In a descriptive study, observations are recorded. As it is done in field research, messages can also be observed and recorded (Wigston, 2009). A descriptive research gives a systematic description of or information about a situation or context, problem, phenomenon that exists at a particular moment (Bless, Higson- Smith, & Sithole, 2013; Kumar, 2005; Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Saratankos (2005:11) noted that explanatory research, "aims to explain social relations or events". An explanatory research is one "that seeks to identify causes and or effects of social phenomena" (Bachman, Russell, & Schutt, 2014: 10). Given (2008) added that an explanatory research suggests a guided investigation and steps designed to explain rationale (why & how) of things. An exploratory study, on the other hand, investigates problem or situation which provides more information to the researcher about the phenomenon

being investigated. It adopts methods such as interviews, group discussions, or trial studies, among others (Bachman, Russell, & Schutt, 2014).

Apart from the manifest and latent content analysis of the sampled Nigerian newspapers' coverage of crime, the study also analysed the readers' views on the influence newspapers' crime stories exert on their safety information need during the period of this study (2010-2014), through survey (quantitative) and in-depth interviews (qualitative), so as to achieve a triangulation in the study.

Triangulation, according to Richards & Morse (2007: 91) does not mean “three sorts of something”. Rather, it means, “gaining multiple perspectives through completed studies that have been conducted on the same study and that directly address each other’s findings”. In other words, a triangulated study must achieve corroboration. Each method must encounter another for *clarification*, *illumination* and *verification* (Richards & Morse, 2007: 91). In essence the study adopted both quantitative and qualitative (content analysis, survey and in-depth interviews) research methods to provide more in-sights into the study.

This is a deliberate effort to ensure that the research methods complement each other and that the disadvantage of each of the methods does not hinder the findings and the credibility of the study. This is consequent upon the fact that no single research method can adequately unearth a social phenomenon. While a quantitative research “requires that the variables under consideration be measured” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000: 452), qualitative research on the other hand, is a social science inquiry “based on field observation analysed without statistics” (Dooley, 1995:209), and are “aspects of the process in their natural contexts” (Baran, 2002:411). In other words, quantitative technique is a form of research that focuses on the frequency of the presence of a variable usually communicated in numbers.

The major distinction between quantitative and qualitative research data in social research as Babbie (1998:36) puts it “is the distinction between numerical and non-numerical data”. Qualitative researchers are, however, not opposed to numbers, counting, or even statistics; it is just that, “the meaningful worlds of everyday people are usually not through statistical analysis” (Singletary, 1994:268). Qualitative research demands that a qualitative researcher “gathers primarily verbal and visual data that are said to be “valid, real, deep, and thick” (Singletary, 1994:268). In essence, qualitative researchers embrace human insight to find order and pattern in the data they gather, instead of relying on statistical analysis of numbers, hence, qualitative data relies more on descriptive analysis, while quantitative data demand quantification. Both are adopted in the study.

Murder, kidnapping, rape, robbery, burglary, car theft and fencing are the dependent variables of the study. Dependent variables (DV) are those “variables subject to other causes so that their values are influenced by the values of other variables” (Bless, Higson-Smith, & Sithole, 2013:73). The independent variable is crime coverage by the selected newspapers during the study period. Independent variables (IV) are regarded as the determining variables that influence the values of other variables. Both (DV & IV) are the most essential variables (Bless, Higson-Smith, & Sithole, 2013).

5.2 Justification for Content Analysis (Quantitative)

Media content analysis is a “specialized sub-set of content analysis; a well-established research methodology, pioneered by Harold Lasswell in 1927” (Macnamara, 2005:1). Content analysis method of inquiry is an example of unobtrusive research. Unobtrusive research method is the investigation of the “evidence of social behaviour that people create or leave behind” (Newman,

2012:88). It seeks to remove the problem of **reactivity** associated with other known research methods which require that the inquirer has some contacts with the people being studied. These contacts “may influence the phenomena being studied” (Newman, 2012: 88). He listed other types of unobtrusive research to include: analysis of existing data (or secondary data), historical analysis and visual sociology. Of all the identified unobtrusive methods, this study adopted only the content analysis method “which is sometimes divided into quantitative and qualitative” (Boreus & Bergstrom, 2017:7).

Many definitions and explanations of content analysis (quantitative) exist; the underlying meaning remains intact. A few of the definitions are provided to guide this study. According to Macnamara (2005),

Content analysis is used to study a broad range of text from transcripts of interviews and discussions in clinical and social research to the narrative and forms of films, T.V programmes and the editorial and advertising content of newspapers and magazines (Macnamara, 2005:1).

Berelson (1952:18) defined quantitative content analysis “as the research method for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication”. Berger, (1991:25) defined it as “a research method based on measuring the amount of something (e.g. violence, negative portrayal of women or whatever) found in a representative of a mass mediated sample of a mass mediated popular art form”. Boreus and Bergstrom (2017) added that content analysis (quantitative) is basically “a method for counting or measuring something in texts” (p. 24). The central theme of these definitions is that of a research method “that focuses on the message, which is reduced to a set of categories representative of the research problem, in order to discover the meaning(s) contained in these messages in a systematic way” (Wigston, 2009:5).

Furthermore, Wigston (2009) highlighted the concepts that are germane, central to and observable in the definitions as: **systematic, objective and quantitative**. As such, being *systematic* requires the organization of the study by following exact rules and a set of procedure which is applied to the sample being analysed. *Objectivity* means that following the established procedure, the study should be easily carried out or reproduced by others and achieves the same results. In this case, the results are dependent on the procedure and not on the interpretation of the researcher. In a *quantitative* study, the analysis and results should be precise and accurate in numerical values.

These prescriptions or criteria were adopted in analysing the content categories and the other measured variables in this study. Moreover, quantitative content analysis has both descriptive and explanatory properties (Wigston, 2009). The method is appropriate to measure manifest media content and, therefore, adjudged suitable for the study.

5.3 Content Analysis (quantitative/manifest): Sample Size and Sampling

Technique

A sample size of 700 issues of the newspapers published during the period of study was content analysed. All the issues of the selected newspapers for the 60 - month period served as the population for the content analytical study. To arrive at the sample, the study adopted the probability sampling technique, which guarantees that each of the issues within the universe or the population for this study had equal chance of being included in the sample. The *constructed stratified sampling technique* was adopted for the study. This technique, studies have shown, is superior to simple random sampling or the systematic random sampling in analyzing media content, because it accommodates the variation and inconsistency in the nature of media

content which could result from advertisements among other considerations (Lacy, Riffe, Stoddard, Martin, & Chang 2001). This cyclic nature of the media, according to Lacy et al. (2001) renders simple random sampling ineffective, because it would necessitate more issues of the newspapers which could lead to either under sampling or over sampling. The solution to this problem according to Lacy et al., (2001:837) lies in stratified sampling that brings about “constructed weeks.”

They noted as follows:

Constructed weeks samples involve identifying all Mondays and randomly selecting one Monday, then identifying all Tuesdays and randomly selecting a Tuesday etc. to ‘construct’ a week that ensures that each source of cyclic variation-each day of the week- is represented equally.

This stratified sampling technique presumably controls for sources of systematic variation. A minimum of one constructed week, according to Lacy et al, (2001) is adequate for a six month publication of a daily newspaper. They recommended further that a constructed two weeks of daily newspaper publication works best for a six month publication. By this empirical information, this study from the total volume of 9,130 issues of five daily newspapers over a five-year period, *constructed two weeks* for each of the issues of the newspapers through random sampling from the population using computer generated random numbers. By this technique, two weeks issues of each of the daily issues of the newspapers were constructed. This yielded seventy issues for the first six months and one hundred and forty per year for the five newspapers over the five- year period. This means that seven hundred (700) issues of the sampled newspapers were *constructed* and used as the sample for the study. The sampled issues of the newspapers picked through computer generated random numbers, content analysed for the study, covered each of the calendar months in a

year, each week of a month and each day of the week. A table showing the details of the sampled newspapers is attached as an appendix to the study.

5.3.1 Unit of Analysis

A unit of analysis is what is measured in a study. The unit of analysis measured in this included: news stories, features, editorials, opinion articles or columns, letters to the editor about crime (violent and property crime). Variables content analysed included: story content, frequency and prominence accorded crime stories in the selected newspapers during the study period. These variables are detailed in the coding guide (see appendix i).

5.3.2 Content Categories

The content categories for this study were the dependent variables studied. They were violent and property crime.

- (i) **Violent or Interpersonal Crime:** Also known as one-on-one or person-to-person crimes because one individual inflicts violence on the other. They include offences which involve force or threat of force (FBI, 2010). Examples includes: murder or non-negligent manslaughter forcible rape and kidnapping/abduction.
- (ii) **Property Crime:** The unlawful damage to, or taking of the property of another, regardless of whether the threat of or actual use of violence occurs. Examples include: burglary, fencing (dealing in stolen goods, robbery and auto mobile theft).

5.4 Study Population (Survey)

Wimmer and Dominick (2011:87) defined a study population as “the group or class of subjects, variables, concepts or phenomena”. In his own contribution, Babbie (2001:110) also noted that “the population for a study is that group (usually people) about whom you want to draw conclusion”. In other words, a study population refers to a group of people or the objects of interest to the researcher.

Based on the brief background information on this study, the populations for the study comprised people (newspaper readers and Lagos State residents) and documents (newspapers). The study investigated newspaper coverage for the period 2010 to 2014. Previous studies (Amzat, Abodunrin, & Okunola, 2009; Odunlami, & Soremekun, 2013) that investigated crime coverage by Nigerian newspapers covered a shorter period and thus failed to account for the issues that this present study investigated, for example, incidents of kidnapping. Cases of kidnapping at the time of those studies were not as rampant, frequent and topical as they are now.

The entire issues of the five selected newspapers for the five year period (2010-2014) formed the population for the quantitative content analytical study from which a sample was drawn. The justification for the duration is that, previous efforts on content analytical study of newspapers coverage of crime in Nigeria were few and covered a short period. The length of time this study covered would engender broader perspectives in newspaper coverage of crime.

In a period of five years, there were a static total number of newspapers amounting to 9,130 issues as an aggregate from the selected five newspapers. These issues of the selected newspapers constituted the population for the content analysis. It is not, however, in all cases that the entire population is examined. When the population is large, as it is in this case, sampling of the population becomes imperative. Sampling is the process of selecting elements with shared characteristics of the population. A sample is “a subset of the population and having the characteristics of the population” (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:87). A sample thus possesses the qualities of the population.

5.5 Survey Research Design and Justification

Apart from content analysing newspapers crime stories, this study is also interested in how the sampled newspapers readers get gratified for their safety information need from the selected newspapers crime stories during the study period. One of the limitations of content analysis method of research is the fact that it cannot be used to measure respondents' views, perceptions or attitudes (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011; Du Plooy, 2009) hence, the adoption of survey research method for the survey aspect of the study that deals with the gratification(s) of respondents safety information need from the selected newspapers' crime stories. Survey research method as a form of quantitative research design relies on positivism and deduction in explaining social phenomena.

Given the fact that the study investigated the association and the relationship between newspapers' crime stories and the impact on the gratification of the safety information need of newspapers readers, the study is therefore an influence or effects research. The study investigated the probable outcomes of readers' interaction with newspapers crime stories on crime awareness, safety information seeking, acquisition and use among the Nigerian newspapers readers. The choice of survey research method, therefore, becomes appropriate and inevitable for the study.

Survey research design is considered appropriate for this aspect of the study, because survey, according to Babbie (2001:238), "may be used for descriptive, explanatory and exploratory purposes". Surveys are thus the appropriate research designs for individual studies as subject of measurement or unit of analysis. It could also be used as units of analysis for groups with some people serving as respondents. A social researcher interested in collecting data from a large population too massive to be observed directly would find survey research most suitable.

Using structured questionnaire as the instrument, the study adopted the quantitative research design to measure the views of the respondents on the gratification of their safety information need by the newspapers crime stories.

5.6 Survey Design: Study Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The survey population was drawn from newspapers readers working for government in Lagos State of Nigeria. This was considered appropriate, scientific and strategic, because of the unwieldy nature (for a time bound study as this) of Nigerian newspapers readers estimated at 26, 488,200, about 20.22% of the Nigerian population (Dragomir & Thompson, 2012). The Lagos State civil service has an enrolment of 55, 000 members of staff (*Oracle*, 2016). *Oracle* is the software adopted by the Lagos State Government, through its Ministry of Finance to pay staff salary. Majority of the civil servants by orientation and job designation (Olofin, 2012) are exposed to the reading of newspapers on a daily basis. Apart from the individual ability of the civil servants to buy daily newspapers, they also have access to the daily newspapers subscribed to by the government because of the importance of daily newspapers in governance. From the total enrolment of staff, which formed the population for the study, a total of 384 samples were drawn from a total population of 55,000 using Dierckx (2013) sampling technique, an example of a software package that can be used to prepare *a model of sample size table*, which can be used by researchers to determine sample sizes. The model is presented in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: A Model of Determining Sample Size

	Confidence level = 95%			Confidence level = 99%		
	Margin of error			Margin of error		
Population size	5%	2,5%	1%	5%	2,5%	1%
100	80	94	99	87	96	99
500	217	377	475	285	421	485
1.000	278	606	906	399	727	943
10.000	370	1.332	4.899	622	2.098	6.239
100.000	383	1.513	8.762	659	2.585	14.227
500.000	384	1.532	9.423	663	2.640	16.055
1.000.000	384	1.534	9.512	663	2.647	16.317

(Source:<https://www.checkmarket.com/2013/02/how-to-estimate-your-population-and-survey-sample-size/>).



For the survey, the study used a questionnaire to capture information from the study respondents. The questionnaire was divided into sections, each section containing relevant items for which responses were politely sought from the respondents (see Appendix II) for detail).

A total of 384 copies of the questionnaire were distributed by the researcher, assisted by two research assistants. Employees of the Lagos State Civil Service constituted the population for the study. Some of my former school mates and some former students who worked in the establishment, but did not necessarily fell within the sample, assisted to make the administration and retrieval of copies of the questionnaire easier. A total of 361 copies of the administered questionnaire representing (94.01%), which is a good response rate, were retrieved and analysed for the study.

5.7. Qualitative Study

5.7.1 Content Analysis (qualitative/latent)

Qualitative inquiry according to Richards and Morse (2007:192) is:

The researcher's ability to think qualitatively. This is an exhausting process of being constantly aware and constantly asking analytical questions of data, which, in turn, constantly address the question asked. Qualitative inquiry constantly challenges assumptions; constantly challenges the obvious; reveals the hidden and the overt, the implicit; and the taken for granted; and shows these in a new light.

Qualitative content analysis according to Boreus and Bergstrom (2017) "sometimes refers to textual analysis where nothing is counted or measured" (p.24). There is, however, a lack of specific guideline for qualitative text analysis (Macnamara, 2005). Nonetheless, Hijams (1996) identified: text analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, interpretative analysis and semiotic analysis, among other techniques used in literary studies, as the approaches applicable to the qualitative analysis of media content.

The study adopted Ruiz's (2009) *Sociological Discourse Analysis* to contextually draw inferences from the audience interpretation of the selected newspapers' crime stories. Discourse, text or textual deixis, according to Huang (2007: 280), is "the use of linguistic expression within some utterance to point to the current, preceding, or following utterances in the same spoken or written discourse". Discourse analysis on the other hand, though, defies a generally acceptable definition (Dairo & Onadeko, 2008) include aspects of *social- linguistics*, *psycholinguistics*, *philosophical linguistics* and *computational linguistics* (Brown & Yule, 1983:1). Sociological Discourse Analysis presents an interface among socio- linguistics, pragmatics and discourse analysis. Socio- linguistics involves the use of language in a social and cultural context. Pragmatics, according to Huang (2007:3) "is the systematic study of meaning by virtue of, or dependent on, the use of language". The

central topics of inquiry of pragmatics include implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and deixis (Huang, 2007:3). Discourse analysis refers to language use above and beyond the sentence in text and context (Dairo & Onadeko, 2008). Ruiz's (2009) model is a three-level sociological discourse analysis of *text, context and interpretation*. The selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories provided the *textual* basis, in terms of the breaking down of *text* into important units, ground theory (the identification of hidden meaning in the text), and semiotic analysis (examining how linguistic elements inform meaning). For the *contextual* analysis, the details about the reportage were explored in consonance with the elements of news worthiness or values- *timeliness, prominence of those involved, proximity of the event to the audience, bizarreness, amount of conflict and currency* (De Fleur & Dennis, 1994:634). *Interpretation* provides explanation for the discourse (crime coverage) in respect of social issues.

5.8 In- Depth Interview

Scholars (Bachman & Schutt, 2014; Baran, 2002) have argued that inductive reasoning is best at explaining social phenomena from the perspectives of the respondents in a natural setting. To this end, this study also adopted in-depth interviews to further explore the phenomenon of crime and its coverage by the selected Nigerian newspapers and the gratification of readers' safety information need from the selected newspapers' crime stories during the study period. This was done in order to gain further insights into the perception of crime, its coverage by the selected newspapers and the gratification of readers' safety information need during the period. The in-depth interviews were conducted among Lagos State residents to achieve defined objectives of the study as a supplement to survey.

In conducting the in-depth interviews, the researcher adopted a semi-structured interview to probe into the interviewees' perception of the phenomenon of crime, its coverage and the gratification of readers' safety information need. A semi-structured interview is a form of in-depth interview. It can be referred to as a purposeful conversation and provides a context or setting in which the interviewer and the interviewees are equal partners or collaborators. The in-depth interview research tool is a qualitative research instrument entailing the conduct of intensive interviews with a few respondents to reveal their perception of an issue, idea, programme or situation (Boyce & Neale, 2006). The in-depth interview has been credited as a useful qualitative instrument of inquiry for some reasons. These include: needs assessment, programme refinement, issue identification, strategic planning and problem solving (Rubin & Rubin, 2004). Thus, the in-depth interview is a suitable research instrument to disclose the general feelings of respondents about their perceptions of the menace of crime in Nigeria, Nigerian newspapers' coverage of crime and the gratification of the safety information need of the readers from the selected Nigerian newspapers' coverage during the study period.

5.9 Population, Sample and Sampling Technique (In- depth Interview)

The population for the in-depth interviews consisted of Lagos State residents. Selecting a sample for an in-depth interview is one fraught with controversy and still an ongoing debate (Baker & Edwards, 2012). In general terms, there is, however, a consensus of opinion among scholars that the sample size required for an in-depth interview research is smaller compared to that required in quantitative research methods (Dworkin, 2012). The rationale is that, in-depth interviews are designed to uncover and explore the how and why of a given phenomenon in its natural context, by focusing on the respondents understanding and interpretations of the phenomena

under study (Dworkin, 2012). Furthermore, the nature of the problem under investigation, the context, population size, research period and available resources are important factors in selecting sample in an-depth research (Morse, 2000).

There have been a lot of suggestions, contributions and recommendations on sample size selection for in-depth interview. An adequate sample size for in-depth interview according to Cresswell (1998) should comprise between five (5) and fifty (50) interviewees. Morse (1994) suggested between five (5) and twenty-five (25) respondents. On the other hand, (Lee, Woo, & Mackenzie, 2002) suggested that studies that adopt more than one method could validly use fewer participants for in-depth interviews. This study adopted a purposive and snowball sampling technique to arrive at twelve (12) Lagos State residents as the sample for the qualitative study and who took part in the interviews conducted. A purposive sampling is an example of non-probability sampling technique. It is widely used in social science research based on the researcher's judgement, hinged on a well spelt out criteria. These criteria include, but not limited to specialisations and the nature of the study (Oliver, 2006).

From the foregoing, the researcher selected twelve (12) Lagos residents {cutting across the three (3) Senatorial Districts in Lagos State (four respondents per Senatorial District)}. The entire twenty Local Governments (20) and thirty- seven (37) Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs) are divided into the Senatorial Districts for social, economic and political purposes. The Lagos State residents interviewed was principally based on these criteria:

- (i) Residing and working in Lagos State. The minimum period of leaving in the state required for the study was five years
- (ii) The social demographics of the interviewees

To further get the required sample for the purposeful conversation that the in-depth interview was designed to achieve; the study also adopted the snowball research technique. “Snowball sampling is a method of sampling in which sample elements are selected as they are identified by successive informants or interviewees” (Bachman & Schutt, 2014:120). It is a sampling method in which identifying and speaking to a member of the population, leads to the identification of more participants as samples for the study. The method was adopted in the study because it assisted in getting participants for the in-depth interview that possessed the criteria (listed above) to participate in the study. Most of the participants were met at designated places picked by them. Some in distance places to the researcher, for example; those from Lagos West Senatorial District were reached on phone. The cost was borne by the researcher. The demographics of the participants in the in-depth interviews are provided in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Selected Participants' Demographic Information

Participants	Age	Gender	Marital/ Status	Educational attainment	Years of residing in Lagos	Occupation	Monthly income range	LG/ LCDA	Senatorial Districts
A	49	F	M	Degree	since birth	Poultry farming	Not disclosed	Lagos Island	Lagos Central
B	52	M	M	Degree	since birth	Media Practice	Not fixed	Kosofe	Lagos East
C	50	M	M	Post - Secondary	since birth	Banking	N120- N150:000	Agbado/ Oke-Odo	Lagos West
D	35	F	M	Degree	since birth	Physician	Not fixed	Ikorodu	Lagos East
E	59	F	W	Higher Degree	since birth	School Principal	N150- N180:000	Ibeju/Lekki	Lagos East
F	48	M	M	H.N.D	since birth	Public servant	N120- N180:000	AmuwoOdoFin	Lagos West
G	25	F	S	School Certificate	10	Schooling	_____	Badagry	Lagos West
H	21	F	S	School certificate.	6	Artisan	Not fixed	Eti-Osa	Lagos Central
I	32	M	M	Post - Secondary	12	Teaching	N80:000- N120:000	Ojo	Lagos West
J	55	F	M	Degree	30	Trading	Not fixed	Osodi/Isolo	Lagos East
K	19	M	S	School cert	7	Apprentice	_____	Iru/ Victoria Island	Lagos Central
L	20	M	S	Post- secondary	Since birth	Attendant	N50:000- N80-000	Epe	Lagos East

Appropriate research questions were drawn to satisfy the research objectives. Table 5.2 presents the research questions for this study, and the applicable and appropriate research designs to answer each of the research questions set for the study

Table 5.2: *Research Questions, Designs and Research Methods*

S/N	Research Questions	Research Design	Research Method
1.	To what extent is the selected Nigerian newspapers' coverage of crime during the study period, in terms of frequency and prominence?	Content Analysis	Quantitative/ Qualitative
2.	To what extent do the Nigerian newspapers' crime stories gratify the readers' safety information need?	Survey	Quantitative/ Qualitative
3.	What relationship exists between the readers' direct experience of crime and the gratification they obtain on their safety information need from the selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories?	Survey	Quantitative
4.	To what extent does the readers' frequency of reading the selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories affect the gratification of their safety information needs?	Survey	Quantitative
5.	To what extent do the readers' social demographics determine the gratification they obtain from the selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories?	Survey	Quantitative/ Qualitative

5.10. Data Collection (quantitative content analysis)

The data gathering for the content analysis was done by the researcher and a research assistant. It required the examination of the issues of the selected newspapers sampled for the study. As indicated earlier, the study adopted both quantitative and qualitative and content analysis. The processes involved in collecting data for quantitative content analysis are explained here. A coding guide was designed and used to conduct the content analysis technique. In this approach, violent and property crime stories in the selected five nationally recognized newspapers were measured. Only three issues (one each from: *Punch*, *Vanguard* and *The Sun* newspapers) were

missing from the sample of seven hundred newspapers earmarked for the study. The missing issues were substituted with the following day's publications of the affected newspapers. The huge success in being able to access the sampled issues of the newspapers was due largely to the availability of bound past issues of four (*Nigerian Tribune, The Punch, Vanguard and The Sun newspapers*) of the selected newspapers in the Library of *Nigerian Tribune*, the oldest newspaper in Nigeria today based in Ibadan. The fifth newspaper, *Daily Trust*, an Abuja based newspaper, was purposively selected for the study for balancing, and had no case of any missing issue. *Daily Trust* newspaper was specifically selected for the study, being an Abuja (the seat of Government in Nigeria) based newspaper. Newspaper organisations in Nigeria operate from both the Southern (Lagos & Ibadan) and the Northern parts (Abuja) of the country. The other four newspapers used for the study are based in the Southern part of Nigeria. The researcher was assisted by the Lagos office of the publishers of *Daily Trust* newspaper to get the issues of the newspaper required issues for the study burnt into five compact disks, which were electronically used for the study, instead of expending energy and resources to proceed to Abuja to access the hard copies. The initiative proved very useful, helpful and innovative.

Study themes were identified in relation to the subject under investigation such as crime, murder, rape, kidnapping, robbery, car theft and fencing. Relevant crime stories on the identified variables were collected using the coding guide to capture the unit of analysis and content categories. A total of 1,778 crime stories were coded for frequency and prominence. The crime stories coded excluded terrorism related or induced violent crime. The study was restricted to violent or interpersonal crime and property crime as defined in the study. This study considered terrorism as

another type of crime based on certain ideologies, or a lack of it on the part of the actors that fell outside the scope of this study.

Going by this explanation, the study excluded the activities of *Boko Haram*, which incidentally were vociferous and ravaged the North Eastern part of Nigeria at the period of the study. The results are provided in tables in chapter six in the study.

5.11 Validity and Reliability of Instruments (Quantitative and Qualitative Instruments)

According to Jaiyeoba and Salami (2006) validity determines the adequacy or inadequacy of a research design. Validity is achieved “when a measure measures what it is presumed to measure” (Bachman & Schutt, 2014:85). Validity therefore, implies the usefulness, meaningfulness and the appropriateness of specific inferences made from the instruments. Based on the foregoing facts, and being a descriptive content analysis, the researcher consciously ensured that the research instruments had both face and content validities so that the study could achieve its aim and objectives. Face validity refers to “that quality of an indicator that makes it seem a reasonable measure of some variable” (Babbie, 2010:153). According to Wimmer and Dominick (2006:170-171), face validity:

is a validation technique that assumes that an instrument adequately measures what it purports to measure if the categories are rigidly and satisfactorily defined and if the procedures of the analysis have been adequately conducted.

In essence, the face validity of a measuring instrument requires that the measuring instrument should not only contain the variables under investigation, it should also be adjudged as capable of being able to measure what it sets out to measure. Content validity is linked to face validity, in that; it refers to ‘how much a measure covers the range of meanings included within a concept’ (Babbie, 2010:155). In this sense, the measuring instrument (coding guide) adopted in the study covered

the range of crimes related to the concepts of violent and property crimes as established in the study. Additionally, the measuring instrument also covered the range of newspaper segments of publishing news and other stories.

The concept of reliability, on the other hand, refers to score consistency (Adesoji, 2006). Reliability is achieved when a measure consistently yields scores or observations of a given phenomenon on each occasion and is a pre-condition for measurement validity (Bachman & Schutt, 2014). In other words, reliability refers to the consistency of a measuring instrument to measure what it sets out to measure. The researcher took a lot of guided steps to ensure the validity and the reliability of the measures.

First and foremost, the contents of the research instruments, the coding guide and the questionnaire, were properly evaluated and edited for clarity and to avoid ambiguity. They were later subjected to a close, professional scrutiny and expertise of the thesis supervisor. Moreover, the researcher employed the service of one research assistant (a Higher National Diploma holder in Mass Communication from The Polytechnic, Ibadan, Nigeria) who was trained in coding the newspapers' crime stories. This was done to ensure inter coder or inter rater reliability/ agreement, which is a condition in content analytical study. Content analytical study requires the researcher to control for subjectivity. This is ensured through inter coder rating or inter coder reliability. It is geared towards agreement in the coding.

Krippendorff (2004:215) summed it up thus:

The degree to which a process can be replicated by different analysts, working under varying conditions, at different locations, or using but functionally equivalent instruments. To be clear, agreement is what we measure, reliability is what we wish to infer from it. In content analysis, reproducibility is arguably the most important interpretation of reliability.

In essence, inter coder or inter rater agreement is aimed at reducing subjectivity. Crime stories on murder, kidnapping, rape, robbery, burglary, car theft and fencing that appeared in the selected newspapers during the study period either as news, features, editorials, columns and letters to the editor, were coded for frequency and prominence in the study.

The study adopted Cohen Kappa’s method to calculate the inter coder reliability. This is because, of all the methods for intercoder reliability test, it is only Cohen Kappa’s(τ) method that can be calculated by the SPSS software (Lombard, Synder-Duch & Bracken 2004). Below is the formula:

$$kappa(\tau) = \frac{\% \text{ observed agreement} - \% \text{ expected agreement}}{N \times M - \% \text{ expected agreement}}$$

Where N is the total number of objects coded and M is the number of coders (Cohen,1960; Fleiss, 1971).

Kappa is calculated or computed thus:

$$K = \frac{P_A - P_C}{1 - P_C}$$

Where:

P_A = proportion of units on which the raters agree

P_C = the proportion of units for which agreement is expected by chance.

In determining what constitutes a good agreement between coders, Kvalseth (1989) suggested that a kappa coefficient of 0.61 implies a reasonably good agreement (good reliability). Landis and Koch (1977) provided a comprehensive benchmark for interpreting kappa coefficient values. The benchmark is stated in the table below.

Table: 5.3: *Kappa statistic and its strength of agreement*

Kappa Statistics	Strength of Agreement
< 0.00	Poor
0.00 - 0.20	Slight
0.21 – 0.40	Fair
0.41-0.60	Moderate
0.61-0.80	Substantial
0.81-1.00	Almost Perfect

The choice of Cohen Kappa’s method to calculate the intercoder reliability was further informed by the facts that it accounts for agreement that is anticipated to occur by chance. Also, it is specifically designed to measure the agreement between two coders (Murphy & Ciszewska-carr, 2005). Before embarking on the coding exercise, the researcher had a pre-designed coding scheme and coding instruction. These were used to train the research assistant who, experience later showed, was conversant with content analysis coding procedure, having assisted other researchers in prior similar exercises. Training her in the coding exercise for this study was, therefore, less tedious, took lesser time and was largely successful, as her experience came in handy.

In a pilot study preceding the actual coding exercise for the study, 70 crime stories from the 2013 issues of the selected newspapers, representing 10% of the newspapers’ crime stories to be coded for content analysis for the study, were coded by the researcher and the research assistant, to remove bias and subjectivity, and to ensure inter coder agreement between the two coders. The research assistant asked some questions on some grey areas, which the researcher answered to clear any ambiguity and to her satisfaction. After establishing that both the researcher and the research assistant had achieved an understanding of the coding assignment, the coding proper for the study began. All the issues of the selected newspapers for the five- year period of the study were coded for violent and property crime stories mainly. Crimes

such as pipeline vandalism, cybercrime and other forms of economic crimes were coded as *others* in the study. The intention was to indicate the presence of other forms of crime in Nigeria apart from those this study investigated. They were not used for analysis in the study. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), as earlier indicated, was adopted to calculate kappa coefficient for intercoder reliability. The kappa coefficient value of 0.876 was established. This indicates an almost perfect agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977) between the researcher and the research assistant in the coding of the variables.

Table: 5.4: Reliability Coefficient for all Coding Categories

	Cronbach’s Alpha	Number of Cases
Reliability	0.876	4
Number of content analysis		70

In table below, the reliability coefficient of the content category is shown:

Table 5.5: Reliability coefficient for each Content

Category	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Story Length Paragraph	6.5143	.797
Type of Story	6.2857	.632
Position of Story	3.7286	.734
Depth of Story	6.5714	.899

5.12. Reliability and Validity

For the survey design, a trial testing was carried out on a population that had the similar characteristics as the population for the study, but who were not a part of the eventual sample for the study. This was considered necessary because it was a self- administered questionnaire. In designing the questionnaire, the researcher

avoided some questionnaire pit-falls that could be mis-interpreted by the respondents. The questionnaire was therefore designed in simple, routine and plain language that could be easily understood by the respondents to elicit the expected responses. The researcher also avoided asking double-barrel questions that is, asking two questions at once. The questions were also arranged in sequence and in sections (see Appendix II).

A trial testing was also conducted to pre-test the instrument, by administering the questionnaire to 38 people, 10% of the sample size, who share the same characteristics with the sample for the study. In the pre-testing, respondents were politely requested to complete the questionnaire as may be required of them were they to be involved in a survey study. As a follow-up, the researcher engaged 10 of them in a question and answer session to ascertain what their experiences were while completing the questionnaire.

Specifically, the researcher sought to know from them the clarity of the instructions, how they found the wordings of the questions, any unpleasant question, whether the questionnaire was friendly and the ease or difficulty encountered in answering the questions. Findings from this engagement were factored into the design of the final version of the questionnaire adopted for the study. These efforts made the self-administration of the questionnaire a lot easier, and also helped to reduce measurement and response errors.

Unlike in quantitative study where objectivity and detachment are essential requirements, “since results must be independent of the researcher” (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2014:236), in qualitative research, “detachment and objectivity are neither possible nor desirable” (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2014:236). This presupposes that the researcher is the primary instrument in qualitative research. The

skills and the dexterity of the researcher determine the depth and quality of a qualitative research. To ensure that the findings and analysis of a qualitative research study are trustworthy, credible and transferable (external validation), Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2014:238), identified some tools for increasing trustworthiness of a qualitative research study. These are: adequate description of the sample, concurrent data collection and analysis, triangulation, methodical verification, ensuring data saturation, respondent validation, member checking or informant feedback and a use of verbatim quotations. These were ensured in the study to give validation to the qualitative inquiry of the study.

5.13 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a component part of, and very crucial in research, especially in providing answers to the research questions. This study adopted both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. For the quantitative analysis, descriptive and inferential data analyses are adopted for both the content analysis and survey. Firstly, univariate (descriptive) analysis was used to explain each variable using total observations, percentages, in which, graphs and charts were used to present the findings. Numerals were assigned to the raw data from the issues of the selected newspapers sampled for the study along the lines of content categories; violent and property crime. These included: murder, rape, and kidnapping/abduction; robbery, car theft, and fencing. The sub categories measured were: types of story, (to measure frequency), prominence, (measured by position of story). Frequencies of the content categories and sub- categories and other variables were measured using univariate statistics: simple percentage, and charts. The results are presented in tables and figures.

Secondly, a bivariate (inferential statistics) analysis was used to measure association between independent and dependent outcomes or variables using

Pearson's Chi Square test, (X^2). The study also adopted the chi –square test or *goodness of fit* (X^2) to test for any significant difference or a lack of it between the observed and expected frequencies of bivariate observations. For example, the study examined whether newspaper readers' frequency of reading the selected newspapers' crime stories had any bearing on the gratification they obtained from the selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories. This was measured at 0.05 level of significance through a cross tabulation of the measured variables to determine the existence of any relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

For the multivariate (inferential statistics) analysis, the researcher adopted the multinomial logistic regression analysis to measure the effects of the independent variables (age, sex, education, monthly income and marital status) on the dependent variable (gratification). The multinomial logistic regression is an extension of binary logistic regression. It becomes applicable when the dependent variable is nominal with more than two levels. A nominal variable is equivalent to a categorical variable. This suggests that the variable falls into a set of categories which cannot be ordered in any meaningful way (Osborne, 2015).

Multinomial logistic regression is applicable when predicting a nominal dependent variable when one or more independent variables are given. It is an extension of binary or binominal logistic regression which does not allow for more than two dependent variables or outcomes. Multinomial logistic regression, like other types of regression, is a predictive analysis. It permits nominal and or continuous independent variable; can interact with independent variables to predict outcomes. This statistical tool is applicable in this study because the independent variables comprised both nominal and categorical variables (sex and marital status) and continuous variables (age, education and monthly income). Also, the dependent

variable (gratification) had more than two levels. The responses can take on three possible outcomes:

$$Y = \{\text{low, moderate and high gratification}\}$$

Independent variables are readers' social demographics or personal characteristics.

Sex has been aggregated to two categories: male (1); female (2)

Age has been aggregated to four categories; 18-30 years (1), 31-43 years (2), 44-56 years (3), 57 years or more (4).

Educational attainment was grouped into four categories: WASC "O" Level/NECO (1), Post-Secondary School (2), BA/B.Ed./B.Sc./HND (3), PGD/Higher Degrees (4)

Marital Status has been aggregated to five categories; Married (1), Single (2), Widowed (3), Separated (4), Divorced (5)

Monthly Income was aggregated into four categories: Less than ₦30, 000 (1), ₦31, 000 - ₦60, 000 (2), ₦61, 000 - ₦100, 000 (3), ₦100, 000 and above (4)

The baseline (reference) category was set to be [High gratification]. The study used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyse the data gathered for the quantitative part of the study.

The qualitative (in-depth interview) aspect of the study was analysed using (Bryman, 2012) model. The model requires: (1) a careful reading of the manuscript; (2) labelling, coding or indexing parts considered important in the data and developing themes; (3) determining the most important codes and creating categories; (4) labelling categories and deciding the most relevant ones and the connections; (5) decide whether or not hierarchy could be created in the categories; (6) presentation, interpretation and discussion of results.

In the qualitative or latent content analysis, crime stories from the selected newspapers were selected, coded and interpreted to discover whether the selected

newspapers prioritized crime stories over accuracy and whether the headlines heightened or downplayed the fear associated with newspapers' crime on audience behaviour. The contextual analysis and the possible interpretations and implications for meaning from the audience perception of the framing of the selected crime stories are also provided. The qualitative findings assisted to partly answer Research Questions 1 and 2 and 5.

5.14 Ethical Considerations

Conducting researches in the social sciences has the ethics and conducts guiding it, which anybody interested in or involved in social science research has to subscribe to. Before conducting this study, ethical clearance was sought and obtained from the North- West University, Mafikeng. The ethical clearance certificate is attached as an appendix to the study. Specifically, the following ethical issues were followed in conducting the study:

5.14.1 Voluntary Participation

The researcher ensured that the participants' involvement in the study was voluntary and borne out of their free will. No any form of coercion, threat, intimidation, or blackmail, or victimization was visited on respondent, irrespective of gender, age, height or any other demographics. The willingness to participate in the data gathering aspect of the study was absolutely that of each participant.

5.14.2 No Harm to Participants

Being a social science research, the instrument for data collection poses no risk or threat to the participants. The instruments, (questionnaire, and newspapers) experience has proved to be user- friendly. If no harm from the research materials is envisaged and guaranteed, the researcher also ensured that no physical harm or bodily injury traceable to an individual's participation in the research occurred.

5.14.3 Anonymity/Confidentiality

Responses to the questionnaire required no intimate information about the respondents' characteristics. Information about name, address and phone numbers of the potential respondents was not required at all. The information sought from them was solely and strictly for research purpose. They were appropriately informed of this. The information so obtained was treated in absolute confidentiality, by ensuring that, no any unauthorized person i.e. anybody not directly involved with the research had access to the data collected and the analysis that followed.

5.13.4 Avoidance of Deception

The researcher did not promise the respondents any financial reward, where there was no provision for such. They were told clearly and politely that their involvement in the study was their contribution to the success of the study and for knowledge advancement.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

This study adopted a mixed- method research to describe, explain and analyse the variables of crime reportage by the selected Nigerian Newspapers and the gratification of readers' safety information need from 2010- 2014. This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the quantitative (manifest) content analysis of newspapers' crime stories and the survey on readers' gratification. The chapter answers the research questions formulated for the study. In answering Research Questions 1, 2 and 5 the findings from the quantitative data are further reinforced by the findings from the qualitative data discussed in the next chapter.

Research Question 1: To What Extent is the Selected Nigerian Newspapers' Coverage of Crime during the Study Period, in Terms of Frequency and Prominence?

Table 6.1: The Frequency of Crime Stories in the Selected Nigerian newspapers 2010-2014

<i>N = 1778</i>								
Category	Type of Story							
Variables	Rape	Murder	Kidnapping/ Abduction	Burglary	Robbery	Car Theft	Fencing	Others
Straight News	118 (83.7)	748 (89.3)	345 (90.1)	12 (100.0)	237 (91.)	36 (92.3)	2 (100.0)	89 (84.8)
Features	16 (11.3)	56 (6.7)	22 (5.7)	-	18 (7.0)	3		15 (14.3)
Editorials	3 (2.1)	11 (1.3)	6 (1.6)	-	-	-		
Opinions/ Comments	3 (2.1)	15 (1.8)	7 (1.8)	-	2 (.8)	-		1 (1.0)
Letter to Editors	1 (.7)	8 (1.0)	3 (.8)	-	1 (.4)	-		
Total =N	141	838	383	12	258	39	2	105
%	(7.9)	(47.1)	(21.5)	(0.7)	(14.5)	(2.2)	(0.18)	(5.9)

From the table, it is indicative that a total of 1,778 crime stories comprising violent crime: murder, rape, and abduction/kidnapping and property crime: burglary, robbery, fencing and car theft were reported by the sampled newspapers and content analysed for this study. The table reveals a reflection of the selected newspapers reportage of crime incidents in Nigeria during the period of the study. Reported mainly as straight news, stories on murder account for 89.3% while, feature, editorial matter, opinions/comments and letters to the Editor are 6.7%, 1.3%, 1.8% and 1.0%) respectively.

The pattern of reportage for other content categories measured as shown in the table reveals that the selected newspapers treated crime stories as straight news items. For example, 83.7% of the crime stories on rape in the selected newspapers was also reported as straight news, 11.3% as feature stories, 2.1% as editorial opinion, 2.1% as opinions/comments and 0.7% represent letters to the editor. The trend is not different in respect of kidnapping/abduction. Three hundred and forty- five (345) or 90.1% of the reported cases of abduction/ kidnapping by the sampled newspapers during the period was reported as straight news. The reason may be attributable to previous findings (Odunlami & Soremekun, 2013; Soola 2007; Surette, 1998). In their submissions, they explained that newspapers as global commercial enterprises, sensationally feast on crime stories, especially, violent or interpersonal crime like murder, rape and most recently kidnapping/abduction to make profits.

From the table also, the reportage of property crime; burglary, robbery, fencing, and car theft was also reported as straight news. In contrast, however, while incidents of violent crime have remained a staple of journalism for years, the same cannot be said of property crime. Though, incidents of property crime often claim more victims, they have often been less reported by the media. This is further

confirmed in this study. Out of the 1,778 cases of crime content analysed, only 311 cases, representing a meagre 17.6% were incidents of property crime, whereas, incidents of violent crime content - analysed totalled 1,362 representing, 77.12%. Other crime cases like pipeline vandalism, stealing, cybercrime etc., amount to 105 cases, representing (6%).

Table 6.2: The Extent of the Selected Nigerian Newspapers' Coverage of Crime in Terms of Prominence (Position of Story) (2010-2014)

Category		Position of story					
Variables	Rape	Murder	Kidnapping/ Abduction	Burglary	Robbery	Car Theft	Fencing
Lead Story	2 (1.4)	39 (4.7)	8 (2.1)	-	3 (1.2)	2 (5.1)	2 (100)
Other Front Page	13 (9.2)	94 (11.2)	24 (6.3)	-	18 (7.0)	37 (94.9)	
Back Page	-	1 (.1)	-	-	-	-	
Inside Page	123 (87.2)	698 (83.3)	350 (91.4)	12 (100)	237 (91.9)		
Centre Spread	3 (2.1)	6 (.7)	1 (.3)	-	-		
Total =N (%)	141 (100)	838 (100)	383 (100)	12 (100)	248 (100)	39 (100)	2 (100)

This study was also interested in the prominence accorded violent and property crime stories by the selected newspapers in terms of position of story and length of stories accorded crime stories by the selected Nigerian newspapers during the study period. In terms of placement or position of story, most of the crime cases were reported inside pages by the selected newspapers. For example, only 4.7% of murder cases during the period were reported as lead stories, 11.2% were on the other front page 83.3% were on the inside pages, while 0.7% of murder cases appeared in the centre spread. For cases of rape, 1.4% was lead story, 9.2% were on the other front page and 87.2% were on the inside pages, while 2.1% were in the centre spread.

For kidnapping and abduction, 2.1% were lead stories, 6.3% were on the front page, 91. 4% were inside page, while 0.3% appeared on the centre spread. This may not connote an under reporting or a lack of prominent attention to crime stories by the selected Nigerian newspapers.

6.2 Demographic Variables of the Survey Respondents

Demographic variables of respondents or demographic data are important in research because they assist the researcher to: describe the study sample’s background characteristics; determine how close the sample is to the study population; identify the features that can impact on the opinion of the respondents and shape their (respondents) views, feelings, attitude or behaviour (Stoutenborough, 2008). Examples of demographics in this study are: age, gender, level of education, socio-economic status, and marital status of the respondents.

6.2.1 Distribution of the Gender of the Respondents

In this study the gender distribution of the respondents (Table 6.3) indicates that female respondents at 57.1% were more than their male counterparts at 42.9%.

Table 6.3: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	155	42.9
Female	206	57.1
Total	361	100.0

Table 6.4: Cross Tabulation of the Extent of Readership of Crime Related Stories in the Selected Newspapers by Gender

Gender		To what extent do you read crime related stories in the newspaper				Total
		Great		Little		
		Extent	Some Extent	Extent	No Extent	
Male	Count	44	82	26	3	155
	% within Gender	28.4%	52.9%	16.8%	1.9%	100.0%
	% of Total	12.2%	22.7%	7.2%	0.8%	42.9%
Female	Count	33	120	40	13	206
	% within Gender	16.0%	58.3%	19.4%	6.3%	100.0%
	% of Total	9.1%	33.2%	11.1%	3.6%	57.1%
Total	Count	77	202	66	16	361
	% within Gender	21.3%	56.0%	18.3%	4.4%	100.0%
	% of Total	21.3%	56.0%	18.3%	4.4%	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 10.953$; df = 3; $p = .012$

$\chi^2 = 10.953$; $df = 3$; $p = .012$

Out of the 361 readers, the majority are female 206 (57.1%), while 155 (42.9%) are male. Of the 206 female readers of the selected newspapers crime stories, 33 constituting 9.1% of the total respondents answered that they read crime stories at *great extent*, whereas, 120 (33.2%) answered *to some extent*. However, of the 155 male readers of crime stories, 44 (12.2%) indicated *great extent* while, 82 (22.7%) said *to some extent*. The result reveals a significant difference in the readership of crimes stories by female and male respondents ($\chi^2 = 10.953$; $df = 3$; $p = .012$). In effect, female respondents were found to read crime related stories than their male counterparts.

6.2.2 Age Range of Respondents

In the study, age (Fig.6.1) is an important demographic variable in describing the study sample. Respondents between the age group of 31 and 43 years (143) constituted about 39.6%, the highest frequency in the study. This group was followed by their counterparts within the age group of 44 and 56 years (113) and constituted 32.1% of the total respondents. Those within the age range of 18 and 30 years (89) were ranked third and represented 24.7%. The respondents from age 57 (13), who

were nearing the retirement age of 60, and who constituted the oldest age group in the study, polled a meagre 3.6%.

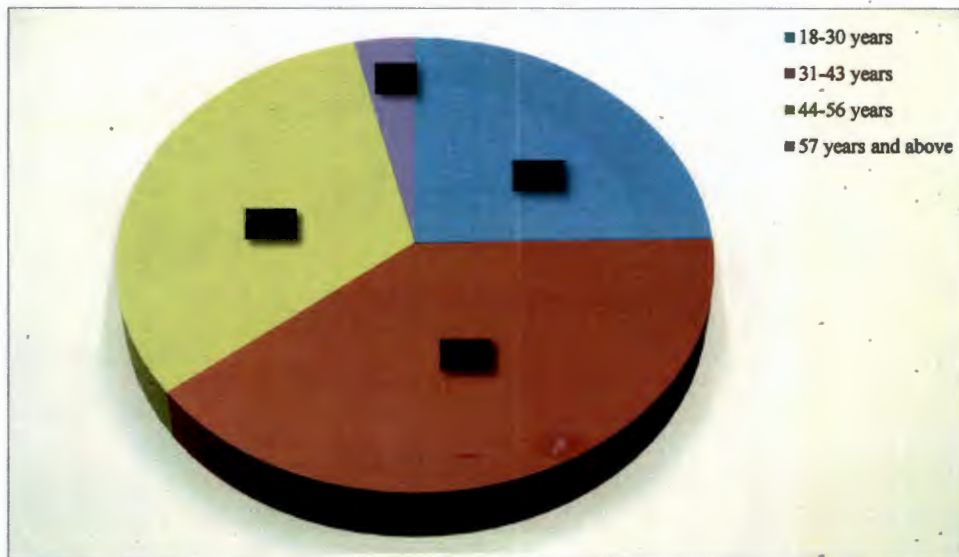


Figure 6.1: *Pie Chart Showing the Age Range of the Respondents*

6.2.3 Educational Attainment of Respondents

The educational attainments of the respondents (Table 6.5) also reveal some salient features about the respondents. Holders of Bachelor degrees and equivalent were found to be the largest group among the respondents. A total of 228 of the 361 respondents, amounting to 63.2% of the sample, who were university first degree holders or equivalent constituted the majority of the respondents. This finding, apart from lending credence to newspapers as being primarily literacy medium, also indicated that holders of university first degrees or equivalent were more in distribution in the Lagos State Civil service, than holders of other, lower, or higher certificates.

The frequency of higher degrees holders, that is, those who acquired additional certificates after their first university degrees or equivalent, amounted to 71 (19.7%) of the respondents. Next in line were the Post- Secondary School Certificate holders, with a total respondents of 34; representing (9.4%) in the study. Holders of Ordinary

Level (Secondary School) Certificate, or equivalent, with a total of 28 respondents, equalling (7.8%) in the study, were ranked fourth in the survey.

Table 6.5: *The Educational Attainment of the Respondents*

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percent
WASC "O" Level/NECO	28	7.8
Post-Secondary School	34	9.4
BA/B.Ed/B.Sc/HND	228	63.2
PGD/Higher Degrees	71	19.7
Total	361	100.0

6.2.4 Marital Status of the respondents

A total of 251 of the 361 respondents, (see Table 6.6) constituting the majority of the respondents and representing (69.5%) of the respondents were married. Ninety three or (25.8) were single. The widowed totaled 3 at (0.8%) separated 6 (1.7%) and divorced totalled 8 (2.2%).

Table 6.6: *The Marital Status of the Respondents*

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	251	69.5
Single	93	25.8
Widowed	3	.8
Separated	6	1.7
Divorced	8	2.2
Total	361	100.0

6.2.5 Monthly Income

A total of 128 respondents, out of the total of 361 respondents, (Table 6.7) representing (35.5%) of the sample, earned a monthly income ranging from ₦61, 000 - ₦100, 000.00, while 54 (15.0%) earned lesser than ₦ 30,000.00. Others, 111

(30.7%) earned a monthly income ranging from ₦31, 000.00 to ₦60, 000.00; while 68 (18.8%) earned more than ₦100, 000 per month.

Table 6.7: *The Monthly Income of the Respondents*

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
Less than N 30, 000	54	15.0
N31,000-N60,000	111	30.7
N61,000-N100,000	128	35.5
N100,000 and Above	68	18.8
Total	361	100.0

Research Question 2: To What Extent do the Nigerian Newspapers’ crime Stories Gratify the Readers’ Safety Information Need?

Table 6.8: *Selected Newspapers Coverage of Crime is Informative, Educates and Gratifies Safety Information Need, Influenced Decision on Personal and Property Safety and Safety Decision on Immediate Family Members*

Respondents views on question 10, section C of the questionnaire (see appendix II), which has four options drawn on a 4- point Likert Scale were used to answer the research question. The findings are as presented in Table 6.8

	<i>N=361</i>			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Informative	14(3.9)	8(2.2)	218(60.4)	121(33.5)
Educates and gratifies	16(4.4)	11(3.0)	214(59.3)	120(33.2)
Influenced decision on personal and property safety	29(8.0)	12(3.3)	198(54.8)	122(33.8)
Influenced safety decision on immediate family members	28(7.8)	22(6.1)	207(57.3)	104(28.8)

Note: Response percentages are included in parentheses

The table above presents the responses of newspapers readers sampled for the study on whether selected newspapers’ coverage of crime was informative, educative and gratifying on their safety information need; whether it influenced their personal and property safety decisions; and their safety decisions on their immediate family

members. Findings showed that 14(3.9%) strongly disagree, 8(2.2%) disagree and 218(60.4%) agree, while 121(33.5%) indicated strongly agree. Looking at the trend in the responses of the sampled newspaper readers, one could deduce that there is enough evidence to show that selected newspaper coverage of crime is informative. This further strengthens the fact that newspapers are important news source.

Results also show readers' distribution on whether the selected newspapers crime stories educate and gratify their safety information need or not. From the results, it is depicted that 16 (4.4%) strongly disagree, 11 (3.0%) disagree and 214 (59.3%) agree while 120 (33.3%) strongly agree. The result presented above shows without any doubt that selected newspapers crime stories educate, and gratify the safety information need of the sampled newspaper readers. This finding further attests to the informational and educative values of newspapers.

Table 6.8 also indicates that majority of the respondents (89%) of the newspapers readers sampled for the study either agreed (54.8%), or strongly agreed (33.8%) that their reading of the selected newspapers' crime stories during the study period has influenced their decisions on their personal safety and the safety of their property. The remaining 31 or 11% of the respondents answered negatively to their personal and property safety being influenced by newspapers crime stories during the study period. It could be deduced from the results that majority of the newspapers readers sampled for the study were gratified by the newspapers crime stories. It could be implied that their behaviour on safety measures against victimization became modified as an outcome of their reading the selected newspapers' crime stories during the study period.

The question on whether the selected newspapers' crime coverage influenced readers' safety decisions on their immediate family members was asked as a corollary

to the preceding one on the influence of the selected newspapers crime stories on the gratification of readers safety information need for personal and property safety. From the table, 28(7.8%) strongly disagree, 22(6.1%) disagree, while, 207(57.3%) agree, 104 (28.9%) strongly agree. The finding revealed that the sampled newspaper readers' gratification from the selected newspapers' crime stories during the period of this study influenced their decisions on both their personal and property safety, and also their safety decisions on their immediate family members.

Research Question 3: What is the Relationship between the Readers' Direct Experience of Crime and the Gratification they obtain on their Safety Information need from the Selected Nigerian Newspapers' Crime Stories?

Table 6.9: Relationship between Selected Newspaper Readers' Direct Experience of Crime and the Gratification they obtained from the Newspapers Crime Stories for their Safety Information Need.

	Have you ever been a victim of any of the above listed crimes?		Total
	Yes	No	
Strongly Disagree	3	13	16
Disagree	2	9	11
Agree	85	129	214
Strongly Agree	33	87	120
Total	123	238	361
$\chi^2 = 8.255; p = 0.041$			

As depicted in Table 6.9 above, a chi-square (χ^2) test indicates that there is a relationship between the readers' direct experience of crime and the gratification they obtained on their safety information need from the selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories. The table indicates a chi-square (χ^2) value of 8.255 whose probability is close to zero percent and shows that there is statistical evidence to conclude that there is a relationship between the readers' direct experience of crime and the gratification

they obtain on their safety information need from the selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories.

Research Question 4: To What Extent does the Readers' Frequency of Reading the selected Nigerian Newspapers' Crime Stories affect the Gratification of their Safety Information Need?

Table 6.10: How frequently do you Read Nigerian Daily Newspaper?

Reading	Frequency	Percent
Daily	160	44.3
Every other day	90	24.9
At weekends	35	9.7
Occasionally	76	21.1
Total	361	100.0

The table above presents the distribution of respondents on how frequently they read Nigerian daily newspapers. From the result in the table above, 160 respondents (44.3%) indicated that they read newspapers on daily basis, 90 respondents, representing (24.9%) indicated every other day, while 35 newspapers readers amounting to (9.7%) of the samples for the study said they read newspapers during weekends. Seventy six (76) respondents representing (21.1%) indicated that they only read newspapers occasionally. The implication is that majority of the respondents read Nigerian newspapers.

Table 6.11: A Cross tabulation showing the extents at which readers' frequency of reading the selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories affect the gratification of their safety information need.

	Selected newspapers crime stories educate, and gratify your safety information need				Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Daily	4	3	85	68	160
Every other day	4	3	64	19	90
At weekends	3	1	17	14	35
Occasionally	5	4	48	19	76
Total	16	11	214	120	361
$\chi^2 = 19.62; p = 0.020$					

The result presented above shows the extent at which the readers' frequency of reading the selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories affects the gratification of their safety information need. The result of the chi-square value of 19.62 whose probability is close to zero percent indicates a significant outcome. This means that at 0.05 level of significance, readers' frequency of reading the selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories affect the safety information need of the respondents.

Research Question 5: To what extent do the readers' social demographics determine the gratification they obtain from the selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories?

6.2.6 Distribution of the respondents by Gender and gratification obtained

The social demographics of the respondents such as gender, age, educational attainment, marital status and monthly income, were cross-tabulated against gratification obtained. Findings showed that the readers' social demographics account for the difference in the varying levels (*low, moderate, high*) of gratification obtained from the selected newspapers' crime stories by the respondents. These are presented in Tables 6.12 to 6.16.

Table 6.12: Chi-Square (χ^2) test on the respondents' sex on gratification

Gender	Gratification			Total	p-value
	Low n = 191	Moderate n = 99	High n = 71		
Male	66 (42.6%)	56 (36.1%)	33 (21.3%)	155	$\chi^2 = 13.346$; df= 2; $p = .001$
Female	125 (60.7%)	43 (20.9%)	38 (18.4%)	206	

Note: Percentage within rows is included in parentheses

Out of the 361 readers, the majority are female 206 (57.06%) and 155 (42.94%) are males. Out of the 206 female readers, 125 (60.7%) received low gratification from reading crimes stories while 43 (20.9%) and 38 (18.4%) received moderate and high gratification respectively. However, out of the 155 male readers, 66 (42.6%) received low gratification whereas 56 (36.1%) and 33 (21.3%) received

moderate and high gratification respectively. Thus, based on Chi-square test result ($\chi^2 = 13.346$; $df = 2$; $p = .001$), which implies significance of the test, hence there is significant relationship between sex and level of gratification. The proportion of male readers who received low gratification (34.5%) was greater than the predicted/expected proportion (50%), whereas female readers (34.5%) who received low gratification were approximately the same as the expected proportion. Also, the proportion of male readers who received moderate gratification (56.6%) was greater than the expected proportion (50%), whereas female readers (43.4%) who received moderate gratification were approximately the same as the expected proportion. Again, the proportion of female readers who received high gratification (53.5%) was greater than the expected proportion (50%), whereas male readers (46.5%) who received high gratification were approximately the same as the expected proportion.

The results suggest that there is a relationship between receiving gratification from the reading of crime stories by sex. It appeared that females received lower gratification in reading crime stories than male readers.

6.2.7. Distribution of the Respondents by Age and Gratification Obtained

Table 6.13: *Chi – Square (χ^2) test on the respondents' age on gratification*

Age Range	Gratification			Total	p-value
	Low n = 191	Moderate n = 99	High n = 71		
18-30	53 (59.6%)	25 (28.1%)	11 (12.4%)	89	$\chi^2 = 12.690$; $df = 6$; $p = .048$
31-43	74 (51.7%)	33 (23.1%)	36 (25.2%)	143	
44-56	61 (52.6%)	36 (31.0%)	19 (16.4%)	116	
57 years or More	3 (23.1%)	5 (38.5%)	5 (38.5%)	13	

Note: Percentage within rows is included in parentheses

Out of the 361 readers, the majority who fell within the age range of 31-43 years, numbered 143 (39.6%), while 116 (32.1%) were between 44-56 years. Eighty nine (24.7%) were within 18-30 years, while 13 (3.6%) were 57 years and above.

From the 143 readers who were 31 – 43 years, 74 (51.7%) received low gratification from reading crimes stories while 33 (23.1%) and 36 (25.2%) received moderate and high gratification respectively. Out of the 116 readers who were 44-56 years, 61 (52.6%) received low gratification from reading crimes stories, while 36 (31.0%) and 19 (16.4%) received moderate and high gratification respectively.

However, out of the 89 readers who were 18-30 years, 53 (59.6%) received low gratification from reading crimes stories, while 25 (28.1%) and 11 (12.4%) received moderate and high gratification respectively. Again, out of the 13 readers who were 57 years and above 3 (23.1%) received low gratification from reading crimes stories while 5 (38.5%) and 5 (38.5%) received moderate and high gratification respectively. The result ($\chi^2 = 12.690$; $df = 6$; $p = .048$) implied that age was significant in the gratification received by the readers from the newspapers' crime stories.

The proportion of readers who are within the age range of 31-43 years who received low gratification (38.7%) was greater than the predicted proportion (25%), whereas readers who are within the age range of 18-30 years received low gratification (27.7%) were approximately the same as the expected proportion. Readers who are within the age range of 44-56 years who received low gratification (31.9%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion. Also readers who are 57 years received low gratification (1.7%) were approximately the same as the expected proportion.

Also, the proportion of readers who are within the age range of 44-56 years who received moderate gratification (36.4%) was greater than the predicted proportion

(25%), whereas readers who are within the age range of 18-30 years received moderate gratification (25.3%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion. Readers who are within the age range of 31-43 years and obtained moderate gratification (33.3%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion. Also readers who are 57 years, who obtained moderate gratification were (5%) approximately the same as the expected proportion.

Again, the proportion of readers who are within the age range of 31-43 years who received high gratification (50.7%) was greater than the expected proportion (25%), whereas readers who are within the age range of 18-30 years who received high gratification were (15.5%) approximately the same as the expected proportion. Readers who are within the age range of 44-56 years, who obtained high gratification (26.8%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion. Also readers who are 57 years received high gratification (7.0%) were approximately the same as the expected proportion.

The results suggest that there is a relationship between receiving gratification from the reading of crimes stories by age range. It appeared that readers who were 31-43 years in the study received low gratification in reading crime stories than other readers.

6.2.8 Educational Attainment of the Respondents and Gratification Obtained

Table 6.14: *Chi – Square (χ^2) test on the Respondents' Educational Attainment on Gratification*

Educational Attainment	Gratification			Total	p-value
	Low n = 191	Moderate n = 99	High n = 71		
WASC	13	13	2	28	$\chi^2 = 16.255$; df = 6; <i>p</i> = .012
"O" Level/NECO	(46.4%)	(46.4%)	(7.1%)		
Post-Secondary	26	6	2	34	
School	(76.5%)	(17.6%)	(5.9%)		
BA/B.Ed/B.Sc/HN	113	63	52	228	
D	(49.6%)	(27.6%)	(22.8%)		
PGD/Higher	39	17	15	71	
Degrees	(54.9%)	(23.9%)	(21.1%)		

Note: Percentage within rows is included in parentheses

Out of the 361 readers, the majority are holders of BA/B.Ed/B.Sc/HND, 228 (63.2%) and 28 (7.8%) are holders of WASC "O" Level/NECO. Others are Post-Secondary School 34 (9.4%) and holders of PGD/Higher Degrees 71 (19.6%) respectively. Out of the 28 holders of WASC "O" Level/NECO 13 (46.4%) received low gratification from reading crimes stories while 13 (46.4%) and 2 (7.1%) received moderate and high gratification respectively. Of the 34 readers who are holders of Post-Secondary School, 26(76.5%) received low gratification from reading crimes stories while 6 (17.6%) and 2(5.9%) received moderate and high gratification respectively. Among the 228 holders of BA/B.Ed./B.Sc./HND, 113(49.6%) obtained low gratification from reading crimes stories while 63(27.6%) and 52 (22.8%) obtained moderate and high gratification respectively.

However, out of the 71 holders of PGD/Higher Degrees 39 (54.9%) received low gratification from reading crimes stories while 17 (23.9%) and 15 (21.1%)

received moderate and high gratification respectively. The result was found to be significant ($\chi^2 = 16.255$; $df = 6$; $p = .012$).

The proportion of readers with BA/B.Ed./B.Sc./HND who received low gratification were (59.2%) and was greater than the expected proportion (25%), whereas readers who possess WASC "O" Level/NECO certificate who received low gratification (6.8%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion. Readers who hold Post-Secondary School Certificate or Ordinary National Diploma who obtained low gratification (13.6%) were also approximately the same as the predicted proportion. Also readers with PGD/Higher Degrees who received low gratification (20.4%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion.

The proportion of readers with BA/B.Ed./B.Sc./HND who received moderate gratification were (63.6%) and was greater than the predicted proportion (25%), whereas readers who possess WASC "O" Level/NECO certificate who received moderate gratification (13.1%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion. Readers who hold Post-Secondary School Certificate or Ordinary National Diploma obtained moderate gratification (6.1%) were also approximately the same as the predicted proportion. Also readers with PGD/Higher Degrees obtained moderate gratification (17.2%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion.

The proportion of readers with BA/B.Ed./B.Sc./HND who obtained high gratification were (73.2%), greater than the predicted proportion (25%), whereas readers who possess WASC "O" Level/NECO certificate who received high gratification (2.8%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion. Readers who hold Post-Secondary School Certificate or Ordinary National Diploma who received high gratification (2.8%) were also approximately the same as the predicted

proportion. Also readers with PGD/Higher Degrees obtained high gratification (21.2%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion.

The results suggest that there is a relationship between obtaining gratification from the reading of newspapers’ crimes stories by educational attainment. It appeared that readers with BA/B.Ed/B.Sc/HND will receive low gratification in reading crime stories than other readers with different educational attainment.

6.2.9 Marital Status of the Respondents

Table 6.15: Chi-Square (χ^2) Test on the Respondents’ Marital Status on Gratification

Marital Status	Gratification			Total	p-value
	Low n = 191	Moderate n = 99	High n = 71		
Married	129 (51.4%)	64 (25.5%)	58 (23.1%)	251	χ^2 = 17.265; df = 8; p =.027
Single	52 (55.9%)	31 (33.3%)	10 (10.8%)	93	
Widowed	1 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (66.7%)	3	
Separated	5 (83.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (16.7%)	6	

Note: Percentage within rows is included in parentheses

Out of the 361 readers, the majority 251, (69.5%) are married, and 93 (25.8%) are single. Others are 3 (0.8%), widowed, 6 (1.7%) separated, and 8 (2.2%) divorced respectively. Out of the 251 married readers, 129 (51.4%) obtained low gratification from reading Nigerian newspapers’ crimes stories while, 64 (25.5%) and 58 (23.1%) obtained moderate and high gratifications respectively.

Of the 93 readers who are single, 52 (55.9%) obtained low gratification from reading Nigerian newspapers’ crimes stories while, 31 (33.3%) and 10 (10.8%) received moderate and high gratification respectively.

Among the 3 widowed readers, 1 (33.3%) obtained low gratification from reading the selected newspapers' crimes stories, while 0 (0.0%) and 2 (66.7%) received moderate and high gratification respectively.

However, out of the 6 readers who are separated, 5 (83.3%) obtained low gratification from reading crimes stories while 0 (0.0%) and 1 (16.7%) obtained moderate and high gratification respectively.

Finally, out of the 8 readers who are divorced, 4 (50.0%) obtained low gratification from reading crimes stories while 4 (50.0%) and 0 (0.0%) obtained moderate and high gratification respectively. The result was found to be significant ($\chi^2 = 17.265$; $df = 8$; $p = .027$).

The proportion of readers who are married but received low gratification (67.5%) was greater than the predicted proportion (20%), whereas readers who are single who received low gratification (27.2%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion. Widowed readers who obtained low gratification (0.5%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion. Also readers who are separated who obtained low gratification (2.6%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion. Divorced readers who obtained low gratification (2.1%) were approximately the same as the expected proportion.

The proportion of readers who are married but obtained moderate gratification (64.6%) was greater than the expected proportion (20%), whereas readers who are single who obtained moderate gratification (31.3%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion. Widowed readers who obtained moderate gratification (0.0%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion. Also readers who were separated who obtained moderate gratification (0.0%) were approximately the

same as the predicted proportion. Divorced readers who obtained moderate gratification (4.1%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion.

The proportion of readers who are married but obtained high gratification (81.7%) was greater than the expected proportion (20%), whereas readers who are single who obtained high gratification (14.1%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion. Widowed readers who obtained high gratification (2.8%) were approximately the same as the expected proportion. Also readers who are separated who received high gratification (1.4%) were approximately the same as the expected proportion. Divorced readers who received high gratification (0.0%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion.

The results suggest that there is a relationship between receiving gratification from the reading of crimes stories by marital status. It appeared that readers who were married received lower gratification in reading crime stories than other readers.

6.2.10 Monthly income of the respondents on gratification

Table 6.16: Chi-Square (χ^2) Test on the Respondents' Monthly Income on Gratification

Monthly Income	Gratification			Total	p-value
	Low n = 191	Moderate n = 99	High n = 71		
Less than N 30, 000	27 (50.0%)	22 (40.7%)	5 (9.3%)	54	$\chi^2 = 11.465$; df = 6; p = .027
N31,000-N60,000	55 (49.5%)	34 (30.6%)	22 (19.8%)	111	
N61,000-N100,000	73 (57.0%)	29 (22.7%)	26 (20.3%)	128	
N100,000 and Above	36 (52.9%)	14 (20.6%)	18 (26.5%)	68	

Note: Percentage within rows is included in parentheses

Out of the 361 readers, the majority 128 (35.5%) earn monthly income of N61, 000 - N 100,000, while 54 (15.0%) are earn less than N30, 000. Others 111 (30.7%) earn between N 31,000 - N60, 000, whereas 68 (18.8%) earn N100, 000 and above.

Out of the 54 who earn less than ₦30, 000, 27 (50.0%) received low gratification from reading crimes stories while, 22 (40.7%) and 5 (9.3%) received moderate and high gratification respectively.

Of the 111 readers who earn between ₦31, 000 - ₦60, 000, 55 (49.5%) obtained low gratification from reading Nigerian newspapers' crimes stories while, 34 (30.6%) and 22 (19.8%) obtained moderate and high gratification respectively.

Among the 128 earners of between ₦61, 000—~~₦~~ 100,000 monthly income, 73 (57.0%) obtained low gratification from reading the selected newspapers' crimes stories while 29 (22.7%) and 26 (20.3%) obtained moderate and high gratification respectively.

However, out of the 68 earners of ₦100, 000 and above, 36 (52.9%) obtained low gratification from reading newspapers' crimes stories, while 14 (20.6%) and 18 (26.5%) obtained moderate and high gratification respectively. The result at ($\chi^2 = 11.465$; $df = 6$; $p = .027$) implies a significant relationship between the readers' monthly income and the gratification they obtain from the selected newspapers' crime stories.

The proportion of readers who earned between ₦61, 000 and ₦100, 000 who obtained low gratification (38.2%) was greater than the predicted proportion (25%) whereas, readers who earn less than ₦30, 000 who obtained low gratification (14.1%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion. Readers with monthly income of between ₦31, 000 - ₦ 60,000 who obtained low gratification (28.8%) were approximately the same as the predicted proportion. Also readers who earned ₦100, 000 and above as monthly income, who received low gratification (18.8%) were approximately the same as the expected proportion.

The proportion of readers who earned between ₦ 31,000 - ₦ 60,000 who obtained moderate gratification (25%) was greater than the expected proportion (34.3%) whereas, readers who earned between less than ₦30, 000 who received moderate gratification (22.2%) were approximately the same as the expected proportion. Readers with monthly income of between ₦61, 000 and ₦100, 000 who obtained moderate gratification (29.3%) were approximately the same as the expected proportion. Also readers who earned ₦100, 000 and above as monthly income, who obtained moderate gratification (14.2%) were approximately the same as the expected proportion.

The proportion of readers who earned between ₦ 61,000 and ₦100, 000 who obtained high gratification (36.6%) was greater than the expected proportion (25%), whereas readers who earn less than ₦30, 000 who obtained high gratification (7.0%) were approximately the same as the expected proportion. Readers with monthly income of between ₦31, 000 - ₦ 60,000 who obtained high gratification (31.0%) were approximately the same as the expected proportion. Also readers who earned ₦100, 000 and above as monthly income, who obtained high gratification (25.4%) were approximately the same as the expected proportion.

The results suggest that there is a relationship between receiving gratification from the reading of Nigerian newspapers' crimes stories by monthly income. It appeared that readers who earned between ₦ 61,000 and ₦100, 000 obtained lower gratification in reading crime stories than other readers.

6.3 Overall test of Relationship

The first thing in Multinomial Logistic Regression for any risk analysis is to describe the overall test of relationship between the dependent variable (gratification of safety information need) and independent variables (social demographics of the

readers: gender, age, educational attainment, marital status and monthly income). Model fitting information presented in Table 6.17 indicates the relationship between the dependent and independent variables and reveals that the probability of the model chi-square (76.717) was highly significant.

Table 6.17: Model Fitting Information of Different Levels of Gratification

Model	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	408.698			
Final	331.981	76.717	28	.000

df means degree of freedom

For a good model fit, the -2 Log Likelihood (-2LL) value should be lower for the full model than it is for the null model with intercept only. Results in Table 6.17 indicate a good model fit. The initial log likelihood value obtained for the model with no independent variables (intercept only model) is 408.698.The final log likelihood value obtained for the model by considering all independent variables is 331.981. Moreover, the model fit is significant ($\chi^2 = 76.717$; $df = 28$; $p < .05$) which means that the full model is outperforming the null one in predictive power. Since the chi-square value obtained is 76.717 and the p-value obtained is below 0.05, it can be established that the final model is better than the intercept only model.

6.4. Strength of Multinomial Logistic Regression Relationship

Results in Table 6.18 present the strength of multinomial logistic regression relationship to estimate the strength of relationship (pseudo R square measures, such as Nagelkerke’s R). The Cox and Snell R Square and the Nagelkerke R square value, provide an indication of the amount of variation in the dependent variable. These are described as *pseudo R square*. Results show a Cox and Snell R value of .191 and Nagelkerke R square value of .221 which suggest that 19.1% to 22.1% of the

variability is explained by these variables (gender, age, educational attainment, marital status and monthly income) used in the model.

Table 6.18: *Showing Pseudo R-Square*

Statistic	Coefficient
Cox and Snell	.191
Nagelkerke	.221
McFadden	.105

6.5 Evaluating utility of logistic models

Classification accuracy is also a more useful measure to assess the utility of multinomial logistic regression, which compares predicted group membership based on the logistic model to the actual, known group membership, which is value for the dependent variable. In order to characterize the model as useful, the overall classification accuracy in the prediction is presented in Table 6.19.

Table 6.19: *Showing Overall Classification Accuracy Prediction*

Observed	Predicted			Percent Correct
	Low	Moderate	High	
Low	165	24	2	86.4%
Moderate	70	29	0	29.3%
High	64	5	2	2.8%
Overall				
Percentage	82.8%	16.1%	1.1%	54.3%

Results in Table 6.19 indicate the overall predictive accuracy for the present model is 54.3%, suggesting that the model was useful.

6.6 Relationship between Independent and Dependent Variables

There are two types of tests to identify the significance of individual independent variables. They are the Likelihood ratio test and the Wald test. The likelihood ratio test evaluates the overall relationship between an independent variable and dependent variable. The Wald test evaluates whether or not the independent variable is statistically significant in differentiating between groups in each embedded binary logistic comparisons.

Table 6.20: *Showing Likelihood Ratio Tests*

Effect	Model Fitting Criteria -2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
		Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Intercept	331.981 ^a	.000	0	
Sex	341.416	9.435	2	.009
Age	352.289	20.307	6	.002
Educational Attainment	347.663	15.681	6	.016
Marital Status	354.526	22.544	8	.004
Monthly Income	345.000	13.018	6	.043

The chi-square statistic is the difference in -2 log-likelihoods between the final model and a reduced model. The reduced model is formed by omitting an effect from the final model. The assumption is that all parameters of that effect are 0. This reduced model is equivalent to the final model because omitting the effect does not increase the degrees of freedom. Results from Table 6.20 indicate that each of the predictors contributes meaningfully to the full model. Likelihood ratio tests show the contribution of each variable to the model. It was observed that all independent variables; sex ($\chi^2 (2) = 9.435; p < .05$); age ($\chi^2 (6) = 20.307; p < .05$); educational attainment ($\chi^2 (6) = 15.681; p < .05$); marital status ($\chi^2 (8) = 22.544; p < .05$); and monthly income ($\chi^2 (6) = 13.018; p < .05$) are significant independent variables related to gratification received from reading crime stories.

Table 6.21: Multinomial Logistic Regression in the Final Model Showing Significant Effects of Readers' Social Demographics on Gratification

	Gratification ^a	B	p(Sig.)	Exp(B)
Low	Sex			
	Male	-.413	.170	.662
	Female	0 ^b	.	.
	Age (years)			
	18-30	1.970	.072	7.171
	31-43	1.179	.251	3.252
	44-56	1.702	.097	5.484
	57 and above	0 ^b	.	.
	Educational Attainment			
	WASC "O" Level/NECO	.582	.521	1.789
	Post-Secondary School	1.427	.096	4.165
	B.A/B.Ed./B.Sc./HND	-.404	.297	.668
	PGD/Higher Degrees	0 ^b	.	.
	Marital Status			
	Married	-17.476	.000	2.573E-008
	Single	-16.906	.000	4.550E-008
	Widowed	-17.961	.000	1.584E-008
	Separated	-15.978	.000	1.151E-007
	Divorced	0 ^b	.	.
	Monthly Income			
	Less than N30,000	.381	.562	1.464
	N31,000-N60,000	.340	.441	1.405
	N61,000-N100,000	.661	.127	1.937
	N100,000 and above	0 ^b	.	.
Moderate		16.768	.000	
	Intercept			
	Sex			
	Male	.403	.234	1.497
	Female	0 ^b	.	.
	Age (years)			
	18-30	-1.397	.167	.247
	31-43	-1.675	.064	.187
	44-56	-.419	.639	.658
	57 and above	0 ^b	.	.
	Educational Attainment			
	WASC "O" Level/NECO	.935	.324	2.546
	Post-Secondary School	.293	.760	1.340
	B.A/B.Ed./B.Sc./HND	-.081	.861	.922
	PGD/Higher Degrees	0 ^b	.	.
	Marital Status			
	Married	-18.276	.000	1.155E-008
	Single	-17.023	.	4.046E-008
	Widowed	-38.666	.996	1.612E-017
	Separated	-35.866	.993	2.651E-016
	Divorced	0	.	.
	Monthly Income			
	Less than N30,000	1.560 ^b	.030	4.758
	N31,000-N60,000	1.274	.015	3.575
	N61,000-N100,000	.693	.184	2.000
	N100,000 and above	0	.	.
	Intercept	18.369	.000	

Results in Table 6.21, presents the estimated log-odds for receiving low gratification versus high gratification and receiving moderate gratification versus high gratification. The unit of analysis which is Exp (B) represents the change in the odds ratio associated with a one unit change in the predictor variable. If the value of Exp (B) is greater than 1, then it indicates that as the predictor increases the odds of the outcome occurring also increase. The other way around, if the Exp (B) is less than 1, as the predictor increases the odds of the outcome occurring decreases. The first part of Table 6.21, describes the risk factors associated with receiving low gratification while the second part describes the risk factors associated with receiving moderate gratification.

Readers are less likely to receive low gratification when they are married than when they are single, widowed, separated or divorced relative to receiving high gratification. They are less likely to receive low gratification when they are single than when they are married, widowed, separated or divorced relative to receiving high gratification. Also, readers are less likely to receive low gratification when they are widowed than when they are married, single, separated or divorced relative to receiving high gratification. Again readers are less likely to receive low gratification when they are separated than when they are married, single, widowed, or divorced relative to receiving high gratification

Readers are less likely to receive moderate gratification when they are married than when they are single, widowed, separated or divorced relative to receiving high gratification. They are more likely to receive moderate gratification when they earn less than ₦30,000.00 as monthly income than when they earn monthly income of ₦31,000.00 - ₦60,000.00, ₦61,000 - ₦100,000.00, or ₦100,000 and above are married than when they are single, widowed, separated or divorced relative to

receiving high gratification. Readers are more likely to receive moderate gratification when they earn between ₦31,000.00 - ₦60,000.00 as monthly income than when they earn monthly income of less than ₦ 30,000.00, ₦ 61,000 - ₦ 100,000.00, or ₦100,000 and above are married than when they are single, widowed, separated or divorced relative to receiving high gratification. Chi-square tests were conducted to assess whether readers would receive gratification by their personal characteristics.

The intercept (the value of the dependent variable when independent variables are assumed to be zero) for the results in the upper panel is 16.768, and this is significant. In other words, it is the multinomial logit estimate for receiving low gratification versus high gratification when all other variables are kept constant. For receiving moderate gratification versus high gratification, the intercept is 18.369.

6.7. Discussion of Findings and their Implications

In this sub- section the findings from the quantitative method and their implications are discussed in relation to the five research questions formulated for the study.

6.7.1. Selected newspapers' coverage of crime

Results on the selected newspapers' coverage of crime revealed the prevalence of crime in the Nigerian society and that the selected newspapers coverage of violent and property crime tilted more towards violent crime: murder, kidnapping/ abduction and rape, than property crime: robbery, burglary, car theft and fencing. Statistically, out of the 1,673 cases of the violent and property crime reported by the selected newspapers during the period, violent crime had 1, 362 or 80%, while the cases of property crime reported by the selected newspapers was 311 representing 20%.

The implication of this finding becomes more explicit in the light of the finding of Howwit (1998:29) that a consistent trend in newspaper crime reporting

exists worldwide and that “disproportionate emphasis is placed on rape and murder, and violent crimes against the person in general”. This could be attributable to the fact that crime stories are selected and are often considered newsworthy from the human angle or human interest point of view, as opposed to its “criminal- justice implications” (Howwit, 1998:29). For instance, examples of property crimes like, burglary and fencing (dealing in stolen goods) may be of a profound interest to the police and criminal justice systems, “such an anonymous crime may not even deserve a passing reference in the media” (Howwit, 1998: 29). It has been argued that the social status of the villain or crime victim as a celebrity, the sophisticated nature of the incident and the prevailing circumstances, make violent crimes juicy for newspapers to feast on. Crime stories are attractive to both newspaper organizations and newspaper readers (Soola, 2007). The profile of either the offender or the victim as a celebrity, the sophisticated nature of the incident and the prevailing circumstances, make crime violent crime juicy for newspapers to feast on and an important content of all mass media (Amzat, Abodunrin, & Okunola, 2007; Sacco, 1995; Soola, 2007).

From the in-depth interviews conducted, it was revealed that, crime is like a ‘carnival’ in Lagos State and that all the types of crime investigated in the study are present in Lagos State and that the sampled newspapers report the crime stories in a manner best understood by the media organisations, with no appreciable consideration to the interest of the audience. The study revealed a particular framing (episodic) style by the sampled newspapers. Episodic framing emphasises the incident rather than the context, to achieve the goal of the source, rather than in public interest. The framing style adopted by the sampled newspaper as revealed in the study presents crime stories to the audience inaccurately and in an ambiguous manner capable of much

panicky behaviour on the part of the audience. The study also found that the public is culpable in festering crime in Lagos State. The breakdown in moral values also account for the seeming intractable nature of crime in Lagos State.

These findings negate the assumption of the social responsibility theory, which recommends a socially responsible press that does not stop at describing social events but should also investigate and interpret social phenomena, in addition to advocacy roles. The social responsibility of the press includes supports to social institutions and to deepen democracy.

The selected newspapers' headlines of crime stories were found to be sensational, ambiguous and often misleading. Moreover, the selected newspapers reported the crime stories as straight news or 'hard news'. This finding agrees with a similar study on newspaper coverage of crime in Vancouver, Canada, by Sacco and Fair (1998) and found that, 80% of the crime stories could be classified as 'hard' news, with 'soft' crime news such as features, letters to the editor and editorials making up the remaining 20%. Most crime stories were reported on the inside pages of the newspapers.

6.7.2. Newspapers crime stories and the gratification of readers' safety information need (2010-2014).

On the information capability of newspapers crime stories towards the gratification of the safety information need of the readers, 93.9% along the strongly agree and agree dichotomy, were of the view that newspapers as a news medium is informative, while the remaining 6.1% responded negatively along the strongly disagree and disagree divide. This further strengthens and lends more credence to the widely held view that newspapers are credible, authoritative and more detailed news source and that information sourcing, is one of the uses to which readers put

newspapers (Baran, 2001; Bello, 2015; Daramola, 2003; ; Rufai, 2012; Soola, 2003). This view was also corroborated in the in-depth interviews. Majority of the respondents attested to have had their safety information need gratified by the selected newspapers' crime stories. Similarly, majority of the respondents 239 or 92.5% agreed that newspaper crime stories educate and gratify their safety information need. A meagre 22 or 7.4% of the respondents answered in the negative to whether the selected newspapers' crime stories gratified their safety information need.

The informative and educative functions of the newspapers crime stories on the gratification of the readers' safety information need is further buttressed by the overwhelming affirmative responses of the respondents as to how their reading of the Nigerian newspapers' crime stories has influenced, not only their decision on their personal safety, but also their safety decisions about their immediate families. This is another of the contributions of the study to the society about the phenomenon of crime in the Nigerian setting, by investigating how the respondents' cope with altruistic fear (fear for others). Most studies on crime deal with personal fear of crime (O'Keefe & Reid- Nash, 1987; Surette, 1998; Warr, 2000). Of the 361 respondents sampled for the study, 320 respondents, representing 88% of the sample, agreed that the selected newspapers crime stories have influenced their decisions on their personal safety. The remaining 41 representing 18% of the respondents disagreed. Similarly, a total of 311 respondents, representing 86.14% of the sample also agreed that their interaction with (reading of) the selected newspapers crime stories have also influenced their decisions on the safety of members of their immediate family.

These findings corroborate the widely held views of the influential ability of the media on audience behaviour. The degree of media influence on behaviour, either

wholly or partly and which could be positive or negative, however, remains a raging debate. McQuail (2005: 456) summed this up thus:

There is a widespread belief, nearing on certainty, that the mass media are a powerful instrument of influence on opinion and of effects on behaviour. At the same time, there is great difficulty in predicting effects or in proving that they have happened, after the event.

In other words, despite the many theories propounded, and abundant examples, convincing facts are yet to emerge that, a causal relationship can be reliably established between specific media content and particular effects.

6.7.3. Readers' frequency of reading the selected newspapers' crime stories and the gratification obtained on their safety information needs.

Responses to four questions from the questionnaire were used to answer this research question. The researcher used the respondents' answers to section b '*Access and Attention to Newspapers Crime Stories*' (see appendix ii). The frequency of newspaper readership among the respondents was divided into, **daily, every other day, weekend** and **occasional reading**. A significant proportion, 160 of the respondents representing (44.3%) of the respondents indicated being daily readers of Nigerian newspapers, 90 or (24.9%) of the respondents were regular (every other day) readers, 35 representing (9.7%) of the respondents were weekend readers of the newspapers, while the remaining 76 amounting to (21.1%) of the respondents, indicated being occasional newspapers readers. On the significance of the selected newspapers' crime stories on their daily safety concerns, a total of 17.1 % of the respondents answered *less significantly* and *no significance*, while the remaining 82.8% answered affirmatively that their reading of the selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories is *very significant* and *significant* on their daily safety concerns.

In a cross tabulation on the extent at which the sampled readers' frequency of reading the selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories affect the gratification of their

safety information need, the results showed a chi square value of 19.62 whose probability is closer to zero at 0.05 level of significance which implied a significant relationship between reading Nigerian newspapers' crime stories and the gratification obtained by the readers. In other words, frequent readers of the Nigerian newspapers crime stories obtained more gratification on their safety information need.

6.7.4. Readers' direct experience of crime and the gratification of readers' safety information need from the selected Nigerian newspapers crime stories.

Answers provided by the respondents to questions 10 and 11, in the questionnaire, were analysed using chi- square statistics. At ($\chi^2 = 8.255$; $p = 0.041$), respondents direct experience of crime or past victimization was found to be significant on gratification obtained by the readers from the selected newspapers crime stories. This finding is consistent with the resonance thesis which says that "media and experience mutually reinforce citizen's fear about crime" (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004: 500). It is believed that media image resonates life experience including victimization. In other words, crime news as portrayed in the media, coupled with an individual's experience of crime, heightens fear of crime (Chiricos, Padgett & Gertz, 2000; Eschholz, 1997).

The implication of this finding to literature is that, an individual, once victimized is not likely to wish to experience further victimization, hence, newspapers' crime stories that gratify a reader's safety information need against victimization would engender a repeat behaviour, especially, if the individual media user's safety information need is often gratified by the newspapers' crime stories.

In the context of this study, therefore, respondents with direct experience of crime or past victimization familiarized themselves with the selected newspapers' crime stories, and got gratified, which has engendered a repeat behaviour, in reading Nigerian newspapers' crime stories.

6.7.5. Readers' social demographics as determinants of the gratification they obtained for their safety information need from the selected newspapers crime stories.

In the study, it was found that female respondents were more than their male counterparts. Both gender responded to newspapers as being a source of information about crime. It was also revealed in the study that a significant difference ($\chi^2 = 10.953$; $df = 3$; $p = .012$) exists in the readership of the selected newspapers' crime stories between male and female respondents. Female were found to read more crime stories than their male counterparts. In view of the fact that this study was conducted on Nigerian literates who read daily newspapers, this finding has brought a new perspective into the literacy level between male and female in Nigeria, in view of earlier findings on national literacy level between male and female in Nigeria. The National Bureau of statistics in Nigeria (NBS) (2010), and the United Nations Education Scientific Organisation (UNESCO) (2012) gave the literacy level of male and female as 65.1% and 34.9% respectively.

Similarly, Bello (2015) also found that in Nigeria, male newspaper readers of newspapers' health stories were more than female readers. The finding of this study, which differs from the existing finding on literacy levels between male and female in Nigeria, is a significant finding of this study. This is underscored by the fact that gender has been found to be a major predictor of fear of crime (Leiker, 2003). Previous studies (Brunton- Smith, & Sturgis, 2011; Pleysier, & Cops, 2010; Drakulich, & Rose, 2013; Ferraro, 1995; Mallicoat, & Ireland, 2014, Riggs, & Cook, 2015; Snedker, 2015; Warr, 2000) found women as being fearful of crime than men. It then follows that a correlation is possible between being fearful and seeking information to gratify safety information need. Therefore, the finding of this study

that female newspaper readers in Nigeria read more crime stories in Nigerian newspapers than their male counterparts could be interpreted as seeking more information about the menace of crime in the Nigerian context to gratify their (women) safety information need from the Nigerian newspapers crime stories.

The readers' social demographics characterised by age, marital status, educational attainment and monthly income as independent variables, were further regressed using the multinomial logistic regression against the dependent variable (gratification) to measure how these independent variables affect or cause the gratification the readers obtain from the selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories during the study period. It was discovered that the independent variables (readers' social demographics) affect the readers' level of gratification, ranging from *low*, *moderate* and *high* gratification. These findings are consistent with previous similar studies (Sampert, 2010; Smolej, 2011) who found a relationship between age and fear of crime. Similarly, Custers and van den Bulck (2013; Liu, 2007; Snedker, 2015) found an association between socio-economic status and respondents levels of fear. Higher socio economic status was associated with higher levels of fear.

These findings imply that the gratification of the respondents' safety information need from the Nigerian newspapers' crime stories are affected by the varying and dissimilar backgrounds of the respondents and further contributing to the limited effects theory of mediated messages on behaviour, and the debate on how media content affect behaviour.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.0 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

7.1 Introduction

This study adopted a mixed research method of quantitative and qualitative research techniques. The analysis of the quantitative data and discussion of the findings were done in the previous chapter. This chapter contains the presentation, analysis and the findings from the qualitative data. The qualitative method comprised discourse analysis of newspapers crime stories and in- depth interviews. The discourse analysis focused on the analysis of newspapers' crime stories for themes and inferences. The in-depth interviews focused on crime coverage by the selected newspapers and the gratification of readers' safety information need from the selected newspapers' crime stories. The qualitative approaches partly answer research questions 1, 2 and 5. The analysis of the qualitative data is presented separately from the quantitative data. Afterwards, the findings from the two designs are linked to have a broader view of crime coverage by the selected Nigerian newspapers and the gratification of the safety information need of the readers.

The chapter is also discussed along the following sub- themes:

- (i) An overview of the nature of crime reportage by the newspapers.
- (ii) The selected newspapers' source of crime stories.
- (iii) Why crime has remained intractable in the Nigerian society.
- (iv) The impact of the selected newspapers' crime stories on the safety information need of the respondents.

7.2. Analysis of Selected Newspaper Headlines and Crime Stories

Headline 1

Gunmen kill female petrol attendant in Anambra (Nigerian Tribune, 9th August, 2012, p.11)

In this headline, the choice of the plural nominal “Gunmen” invokes the thought of an invasion by gun carrying men and this may create extreme fear in the media audience. By emphasising (placing the word as the subject of the sentence and the lead word), the word “gunmen” in this headline strengthens the impact value of the story. While the loss or the death of one person was bad enough, that only one life was lost “in the gunmen attack” gives an impression of exaggeration and negates the semantic value of the word (gunmen). The lexical choice of “gunmen” emphasises the incident as something terrible which contradicts the content of the story. The headline thus hints on episodic and sensational reportage of crime stories by emphasising the event, rather than the context. Considering the incessant nature of crime in the country however, amplifying the story relating to it can be justifiable and can be revolutionary as well.

The reference to Anambra State, the scene of the event, suggests that illegal possession of arms was evident in the State during the study period. The illegal possession of arms as revealed in the headline buttresses the insecurity and criminality that pervade the Nigerian society. Soola (2007) and Ajayi (2007) acknowledged this.

Relating the headline to the crime story, the headline is inaccurate and inappropriately used in the story. It runs contrary to the details of the incident which partly reads as follows:

---*Nigerian Tribune* gathered that the gunmen, who were identified as kidnappers, stopped a man they wanted to kidnap and ordered him into their own car. But on sighting a team of policemen, the alleged kidnapped person reportedly escaped in the process, but a stray bullet hit a female petrol attendant and killed her on the spot (*Nigerian Tribune*, 9th August, 2012, p.11)

The headline and the body of the story are at variance. While the headline suggests a possible and preconceived intension to rob, the story reads differently, hence capable of evoking unintended reactions by the writer from the audience. Captions such as “Stray bullet kills petrol attendant in Anambra”. Or, “Stray bullet from fleeing kidnappers, kills petrol attendant in Anambra”, could have achieved the same purpose of informing the newspaper audience of the incident in a clear, accurate and unambiguous manner.

Headline 2:

10 killed in renewed attack in Bauchi (Saturday Tribune, 9th April 2011, p.9.)

The use of numeral adjective (10) to give the account of the number of deaths in this headline brings a human interest angle into the story and a leaning towards an evidence-based reportage. It also brings to focus the seriousness of the incident. The deployment of the adjective “renewed” suggests that such an attack is a recurrent incidence in Bauchi State. That such a dastardly activity is resuming implicitly reflects the level of insecurity in the State. It gives a picture of a renewed hostility in a volatile community (Bogoro Local Government Area of Bauchi State). The State is located in the North Eastern part of the country, which incorporates other States such as, Adamawa, Bornu, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe (Bello, 2015). The North East zone of Nigeria has witnessed numerous cases of criminal activities in the country lately. It is the zone where the activities of Boko Haram have been most visible. The zone has been worst hit by insurgency and other forms of crime. “Renewed attack” as captioned in the headline, therefore, suggests that the perpetrators, after a moment of

ceasefire, resumed hostilities. This reminder, though factual, can affect the safety concern of the people.

The social implication of “renewed attack” further explains the insecurity in the land and the incompetence of the government and relevant agencies to deal decisively with the problem. It also calls to question the intelligence gathering capability of the Police and other security agencies. Intelligence gathering as a proactive measure in combatting crime should be a routine activity by the Police in such a volatile area, and other trouble spots, rather than waiting for crisis to break out with the attendant loss of lives and damage to property before making arrests and quelling riots, being the consequences. Such interventions have never brought back lost souls. Had intelligence gathering been effective, the resurgence that led to the “renewed attack” could have been averted.

The inability of the police to provide the needed intelligence gathering can be blamed on the Police recruitment policy in Nigeria. The truth is that, unlike in developed countries where experienced linguists, criminologists, psychologists etc. are recruited as Policemen, in Nigeria, many of the Police officials in Nigeria are rarely exposed to adequate and continuous training, and are often ill-equipped.

Headline 3:

One Killed, 28 arrested over Ebonyi market crisis (Vanguard, Monday, 13th May, 2013, p.6).

The headline of a piece of newspaper story is supposed to be a succinct and concise description of the event. One of the concerns of this study focuses on the accuracy or otherwise of a newspaper headline on crime to the content. Reference to headline 1 of this study, the inaccuracy of the headline to the content was pointed out. Headline 3 is similar. The following extract from the content of the story states that:

One person was feared dead, weekend, following the crisis that erupted at Abakpa market along Gunning Road in Abakaliki, Ebonyi State capital, where 28 suspects were said to have been arrested in connection with the incident--- ((*Vanguard*, Monday, 13th May, 2013, p.6).

The theme of the above extract focuses on “a person feared dead” in a crisis situation. It is inconsistent with the caption “one killed”. “Feared dead” and “killed” denote different things. They comprise different semantic property; capable of evoking dissimilar reactions in the audience on the fate suffered by the victim in the crisis. While “feared dead” could be taken as a critical state, but not totally a hopeless condition, “killed” on the other hand suggests a state of finality. While in the former, some level of caution and restraints may be exercised by the sympathisers (a period that could allow for appropriate security decisions and actions to maintain law and order), “killed” on the other hand, is capable of generating a spontaneous mob action capable of a devastating consequence. Lexical frames and choice of words, therefore, could affect audience perception of events and the interpretation or the responses they give.

In context, episodic framing of the newspapers’ crime stories follows the sequence of crime reportage in Nigeria. Earlier studies (Odunlami & Soremekun, 2013; Soola, 2007) established that fact. The episodic framing of the headlines by the selected newspapers could be regarded as the in-house style of the newspapers and a sustained strategy to arrest the attention of the audience to read the stories. In effect, such strategy could create a further problem, in this case, fear of crime than the information on the crime incident. In the in-depth interviewees carried in the study, it was revealed that the reporting style of the newspapers of crime create panic in the audience.

Headline 4:

Kidnappers still insist on N150m for abducted sisters (Punch, 16th June 2014, p. 4-5).

Kidnapping has become a brisk business in Nigeria (Ngwama, 2014). This finding is well demonstrated in the headline. More curiously, however, the headline suggests a weak policing system, the sophistication of the kidnappers in their art, and the fact that negotiation on the appropriate ransom to be paid for the victims' release was ongoing despite the fact that the Police authority could have been aware of the incident.

In the story, an apparent lack of trust and confidence in the Police is aptly demonstrated. The agonising family of the victims appeared to have lost hope in the ability of the Police to help secure the release of the abducted sisters, hence seeking spiritual interventions from Nigerians. The following extract buttresses that:

They (the kidnappers) are still insisting on the N150m ransom. Unfortunately, they do not allow us to talk to the girls. ---. He called on Nigerians to intensify prayers. "I use this opportunity to appeal to all Nigerians to help us with prayer. What we need is constant prayer for the safe release of our sisters" (Punch, 16th June 2014, p. 4-5).

That a distressed family in agony and anguish would have to resort to plea for prayer over a criminal case bordering on abduction for about one week, instead of calling on the Police and other security agencies, depicts a country failing in its basic responsibility of securing lives and property. Ajayi (2007) in a similar study described the inability of the police to combat crime in Lagos State as an indication of failure of the state. The distress call for prayers further demonstrates the apparent weak policing in Nigeria and the ill- preparedness of the organisation to contend with the wave of crime in the country. Despite the fact that the Police have often refuted the payment of ransom by kidnapped victims to regain their freedom, indications are high that a ransom is paid before the captors released their captives. In the in-depth interviewees

of this study, it was revealed that the payment of ransom for kidnapped victims to regain their freedom was real.

Situations like this can only compound the fear of the media audience about their safety in the face of crime, criminality, and the apparent insecurity pervading the Nigerian landscape. It also brings to the fore the culpability and the complicity of the police in crime perpetration in Nigeria, its poor image before the citizenry, and its inability to combat the scourge of kidnapping in Nigeria. In the in-depth interviewees of this study, the Nigerian Police was mentioned as an accomplice in crime perpetration in Nigeria.

Headline 5:

Robbers break into Delta Government House (Vanguard, 7th September, 2011, p.11).

The headline and the story are a further confirmation of the deplorable condition of Nigeria's security system. Armed robbers breaking into a Government house, where security is expected to be very tight and effective indicates the sophistication of the perpetrators and a possible security compromise by the security staff attached to the Government house. In the Nigerian context, it suggests a possible connivance, collaboration and an act of sabotage for the armed robbers, who could have acted on a tip-off, to successfully break into the Government House. And to have 'thoroughly ransacked all the drawers' (p. 11) unchallenged, paints a picture of security compromise at such a high level. Opinions are held that (as buttressed in the in-depth interviewees conducted in the study) some personnel in the Nigerian Police aid and abet crime. This is further buttressed in the story thus:

Suspected armed robbers defied the tight security at Delta State Government House Complex, Asaba, when they broke into the Accounts Department. ---It was suspected that the robbery attempt may be an insider job (*Vanguard, 7th September, 2011, p.11*).

From the foregoing, it has been revealed that on one hand, Government officials keep ill-gotten money in government house. This is an irony, because one of the monetary policies of the government of Nigeria is to run a ‘‘cashless economy’’. It is expected that government officials would be at the vanguard of the cashless policy. On the other hand, there could be many unprofessional personnel in the Nigerian Police system whose manner of appointment and competence on the job need further scrutiny. A nation’s security is her strength and it determines to a great extent the confidence the citizens and the outside world would have in such a country. If unaddressed, another social implication could be anarchy where everyone takes to self-defence.

Headline 6:

Tailor faces trial for raping 15- year- old girl (Punch, May 13, 2013, p. 5).

The headline symbolizes the pattern and type of rape prevalent in Nigeria. It is usually a case of male adult sexually abusing younger girls, often- time minors (below 18) as presented in the extract below:

A 27- year- old tailor, Sulaimon Jelili, has been arraigned before an Osogbo Magistrate’s Court for allegedly raping a 15- year- old girl.---. He was caught by members of a vigilance group. ---. The accused person entered the victim’s room through the ceiling and forcefully had carnal knowledge of her without her consent (*Punch*, May 13, 2013, p. 5).

The extract reveals the involvement of the Vigilance group in crime fighting and in apprehending perpetrators. The development demonstrates the resolve of the people to look beyond the Police and having confidence in the Vigilance group for protection and watch over their environment. While the time of the incident is not indicated in the story, some communities organise the Vigilance group on day and night basis, to further demonstrate their lack of confidence in the Police.

Also, for a 27- year –old male adult to climb the ceiling in an attempt to derive sexual satisfaction by raping a 15-year-old girl shows the desperation of the accused to carry out the act of rape, for a reason that may be beyond the ordinary. It can, however be assumed in the light of contemporary happenings in Nigeria, that the motive behind the raping attempt may go beyond satisfying a sexual urge. It may be to forcefully deflower a maiden for a possible ritual purpose, because people engage in crime in Nigeria for various reasons.

Headline 7:

3 NDLEA men killed in ambush (Daily Sun, 16th June 2014, p.5).

NDLEA is an acronym for *Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency*. It is a para- military organization. In the story, three of its officers were killed in an ambush by drug traffickers. The headline further brings to the fore the sophistication associated with crime in Nigeria and the worrisome, and the apparent ill preparedness of the security agencies to stem the tide. In this example, there is a glaring case of poor intelligence gathering on the part of the organization. The loss of three personnel in one operation could dampen the morale of other officers. Conversely, the criminal elements in the society could get more emboldened to continue with their illicit business. In this context, the concern by media audience for their personal and altruistic fear can only get further heightened.

Headline 8:

Police go spiritual to ward off criminals (Punch, 7th February, 2010, p. 70).

The headline further confirms the appalling state of policing in Nigeria and the deep- rootedness of criminal activities in Nigeria. Ajayi (2007) adduced ineffective policing and state failure as the reasons for increased criminality in Lagos. In the story, however, the main gist is that the police were recruiting Chaplains and Imams, to among others, “offer spiritual guidance to all police officers irrespective of their

ranks'' (p. 70). 'Warding off criminals' as suggested in the headline was not the motive behind the policy. This is another example of inaccurate headline in relation to the content. Nonetheless, the headline further reflects the widespread religious dogma in Nigeria. Many warehouses have been turned to worshipping centres. Religious activities have taken over the whole place. The sporadic rise in religious centres has, however, not translated into a saner society; where crime and criminality are reduced. Things that require pragmatic changes and rational thoughts are approached spiritually. This trend has enveloped the Nigerian system. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons why Nigeria's growth remains stagnated despite her huge potentials, and her security apparatus seemingly compromised. The security of the country and her citizens are threatened daily from within and outside the shores of the country.

In conclusion, it is evident from the analysis that the Nigerian newspapers embrace episodic framing of crime news to principally achieve the goal of the source, which could be for economic (to increase circulation) or political reasons (ownership factor). This negates the dictates of a socially responsible press. A socially responsible press would report a social phenomenon in a manner that would satisfy the larger interest of the society, persuade rather than just informing, and would put such reportage into contexts, rather than merely stressing the event. In another vein, the press demonstrated social responsibility in its coverage of crime during the period of study through its reportage of some crime events that exposed the inadequacy of an important organ of government such as the police in combatting crime; and the possible culpability and complicity of the Police in allowing crime to fester in Nigeria; characterised by poor intelligence gathering and a lack of appropriate equipment. The newspapers' crime stories also revealed the importance of Vigilance group in crime fighting in Nigeria.

7.3.1 Demographic Information of the Interviewees

The age of the interviewees (see Table 5.1, p.135), ranged between 19 and 59 years. Four of the respondents, fell within the age bracket of 19-25. Participants I and D were within the age brackets of 26-32 and 33- 39 years respectively. Participants G, H, K, and L, fell within 19-25 years age bracket. Also, Participants A, B, C, and F were within 47 and 53 years. Only two of the interviewees were 54 years and above. The ages correspond with those of the survey respondents. The gender distribution of the interviewees was equal, six each. On educational qualification, all the interviewees possessed the minimum educational requirement for the study, which was Secondary School Certificate. In terms of years of residing in Lagos, all the interviews had lived in Lagos State beyond the limit of five years set for the study. In actual fact, seven (7) of the participants had lived all their years of existence in Lagos State. This is healthy for the study, in that it afforded the interviewees, a good background for the study. In terms of occupation, with the exception of Participants G (a student) and K (an apprentice), all the remaining participants were employed, or in private practice. This was related to the income of the interviewees. Five of the interviewees were on fixed income, another five (in private practice) on either undisclosed or flexible income. Two of the interviewees were not earning income. The distribution of the respondents cuts across the three Senatorial Districts in the State. This assisted in presenting the experience of the interviewees on the phenomenon of crime in Lagos State and the gratification of their safety information need, as crime is a concern for all.

7.4 An Examination of Respondents' Perceptions of Crime in Lagos State and the Coverage by the Selected Newspapers

Crime is a normal feature in every society, especially in cities (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2005; Beirne & Messerschmidt, 1991; Durkheim, 2013/1933). This view is corroborated by the findings of this study. According to the participants, Lagos state is prone to crime. This is attributable to its population and economic activities. By the 2006 National census figures (the most recent), Lagos State is the second most populated state in Nigeria, behind Kano State (National Census, 2006). According to the respondents, crime has remained recurrent in Lagos State despite the spirited efforts of the state government. The participants were unanimous in their verdict that "every type of crime manifests in Lagos". Participant C spoke of a wave in crime. He said, "when one form of crime goes down in Lagos State, another is on the rise". All the interviewees were unanimous on the presence of crime in Lagos State, according to the interviewees, the early part of the study period (2010 -2013) was a period in which cases of robbery was high. In 2014 and 2015, cases of kidnappings were on the increase.

On the causes of crime, majority of the respondents answered that crime is mainly caused by the unemployed youths; aided by self- serving political office seekers, who in a bid to secure electoral victory at all cost, buy and distribute guns to the youths. Such guns were not often surrendered after elections by the recipients. The holders deploy the guns to fend for themselves by committing various crimes. The Police were also said to be culpable. Specifically, Participant A said that:

About crime, I think our politicians brought us to this situation. Nigeria used to be a moderately safe country. It is our politicians that bought guns for the youths who are unemployed, but find it difficult to get the back the guns after the election. The police are also a part of the problem of crime. How can they fight crime when they are a part of it?

Participant C, agreed with the view that the unemployed youths were willing tools in the quest by politicians to attain power at all cost for the sake of themselves and their families. He, however, added that other social factors, such as loss of moral values, lust for money, and the youths being their partners in crime, could be adduced for the state of crime and criminality in Nigeria. He said that:

We should not forget that as a people, we have lost our moral values and decency. We now worship money no matter how it is come by. Most times we read from the newspapers and hear from people that the sources of this ill-gotten wealth are evil and through corrupt means. Except we retrace our steps, the fight against crime and criminality can become worse. I hope the government and the newspapers can help us out of this mess.

Participant L corroborated the view. She said that the moral decadence in the society and the influence of negative aspects of foreign culture have led to various alien acts in our culture. She mentioned indecent dressing on the parts of male and female which often results in the ladies being sexually harassed by youths and some elderly ones. She also said further that many homes are broken due to the harsh economic situation in the country and that this development has led to a loss of bonding and the spirit of togetherness that was common in families and in communities in the olden days.

Participant E mentioned the problem in the judiciary. He said that:

Our courts are no longer for the masses. It is now *cash and carry* (suggesting a miscarriage of justice due to inducement). The courts give judgement in favour of the highest bidder. There is no hope for the common man. The police too do not help matters. People now lack confidence in the police. That is why people now think twice to give the police any security information. We heard a story of how the police revealed the identity of their informants to the criminals, who are later attacked or even killed. The situation is that bad.

The culpability of the police in combating crime, moral decadence in the society, coupled with the involvement of political office holders in recruiting and equipping youths for crime, as it were, could be partly responsible for the alarming

rate of crime and the associated sophistication in crime perpetuation in Lagos State. Equally related is the apparent intractable nature of crime in Nigeria as at the time of the study. Of a fact, the Police and the Law Enforcement Agencies in Nigeria do not currently appear to be winning the war against crime and criminality in Nigeria.

In addition, it came to the fore at the interview sessions that: murder, kidnapping, robbery, car snatching and burglary were common occurrences in Lagos during the period of the study, but kidnapping was on the rise. The origin of modern day kidnapping in Nigeria was traced to the Niger Delta area and dates back to the advent of the current democratic experience. This finding is corroborated by (Ngwama, 2014: 134.) He said that:

The first act of kidnapping in Nigeria started in 2006 when the militants of the Niger Delta took total hostage to protest the inequality in the region. According to the militants, Nigeria is built at the expense of the region which serves as the cash cow for the whole country.

Ever since, kidnapping has been on the increase and defying every attempt by the government to combat it. The crime of kidnapping has since spread to other parts of Nigeria, especially in the creeks in South west Nigeria, of which Lagos State is prominent. The crime of kidnapping as expressed by one of the respondents is on the high in Lagos, especially, along Ikorodu and Epe axis. Ikorodu and Epe are aquatic communities in Lagos State and are surrounded by creeks. It is a widely held view that people from Niger Delta area, because of their aquatic nature, are the ones perpetrating the crime of kidnapping, especially, across the creeks to escape arrests. One of the aftermaths of the crime of kidnapping is economic loss (Pshisva & Suarez, 2010). This fact also came to light in one of the interview sessions. Participant A answered that she has had to close down her poultry farm and declined to restock for fear of attack by the kidnappers. She did say that poultry and vegetable farmers were

often kidnapped along Epe, Sala, Igboodu and Lekki axes of Lagos State. She added that she had contributed levies (ransom) three times to free some kidnapped farmers.

Apart from economic loss, the spate of kidnappings from the findings from the in-depth interviews, has affected the psyche and the social lives of the respondents. It has led to fear of strangers and the neighbourhood and also altered movements, especially, commuting at night. This fact about paying ransom to rescue kidnapped victims negates the official position often held by the Nigerian police which claim that no ransom is paid to free kidnapped victims.

7.5 The Selected Nigerian Newspapers Source(s) of Crime Stories

In the in-depth interviews, some of the respondents (Participants, A, B, E F H & I) held the views that in covering crime in Nigeria, the media rely on eye witness accounts; report wrongly either by exaggerating, underreporting or by carrying misleading and inaccurate headlines. These views are captured in the words of Participant E, as follows:

Unlike, the practice by CNN and Al Jazeera, Nigerian Newspapers often depend on other news media sources, especially foreign media and the posts by others to serve crime stories to the audience. In the process, facts are distorted and misrepresented, leading to ambiguities and different interpretations by the audience.

This finding is supported by Soola (2007:7) who observed the “inadequacy and inefficiency with which crime and violence are being reported in the **Nigerian** (emphasis mine) media”. On how the sampled newspapers can improve on crime reportage in view of what have been said, Participant E said that the newspapers can only help when they are ready to reduce their profits, because:

It is those politicians and the criminals who call themselves business men to deceive people that advertise in the newspapers. So the press-men would not want to go after them, if investigation links any of their patrons to crime.

This is an indictment on the press in carrying out its social responsibility function of providing factual, objective, fair and balanced reportage. Furthermore, Participant I said that the newspapers can improve crime reportage to benefit the society by visiting crime scenes as much as possible, investigate crime cases further and advise government on how to reduce crime in the society. He said that:

Journalists should do more on crime coverage. They should stop relying on the posts by others, or news by foreign media before they can publish crime news. As a matter of fact, they should investigate crime cases further and see that offenders are punished. They should do this in the interest of the people and even the journalists themselves. We have heard on many occasions that some journalists were murdered and the killers remain unidentified. If they help the society to report on crime appropriately, they are also helping themselves.

On whether newspapers' crime stories enhance or gratify their safety information need, Participant C said that his exposure to newspapers' crime stories and his accumulated experience as a resident in Lagos State, has led to a change in behaviour safeguarding himself, his property and his loved ones when driving, especially, in the gridlock that often characterise traffic in Lagos State. In his submission, he has had to be applying central locking device, wind up his car glasses, and also hide such personal effects like phones, computers, as well as cash, among other easily attractive valuables from prying eyes.

In the same vein, Participant D said that she used to be a nocturnal person, who enjoyed night journeys. She has had to alter that aspect of her life, in view of the calamities and victimization that befell others that she read about in the selected newspapers, which occurred mostly at nights. Similarly, Participant E said she had fear of sexual assault on her girls. To this end, she finds it difficult leaving them behind with people, because she had learnt to do this based on the experience of others she read in the papers and heard from informal discussions that known and

familiar faces are those who rape innocent girls. For fear of being kidnapped, Participant A said that she closed down her poultry business situated around the hot-bed of kidnapping activities.

In conclusion, from the selected newspapers crime stories analysed in the chapter, crime stories were reported along a regular pattern of the crime incident, the offender and the victim. The headlines symbolised a particular framing style (episodic) that sensationalised and exaggerated crime reportage, thereby leaving different interpretations in the audience, different from the incisive, accurate and contextualized depiction of the incident that the audience would have preferred.

In the in-depth interviews, some of the characteristics of qualitative research which assume that human behaviour is based on interpretation of human experience of things encountered and that meaning are cardinal and a key concept (Singletary, 1994) were established. From the researcher's interaction with the participants, they expressed the view that newspaper coverage of crime in Nigeria is often characterised by misleading, fearful and inaccurate headlines and stories. The spread, the nature and the sophistication of crime in Nigeria and Lagos State in particular; loss of moral values, and the corruption in the judiciary, was revealed. The participants also explained that the culpability of the police in crime has made the long battle by the state to combat or reduce the incidents of crime to the barest minimum, seemingly, unattainable. The participants further suggested ways the newspaper can improve on crime coverage.

7.6 Summary of Qualitative Findings

From the analysis, the following themes and sub-themes which would add to the existing body of knowledge (theory and methods) on media coverage of crime and the impact on the audience are discernible:

Themes

- The Nigerian nation, especially Lagos State was prone to crime.
- Murder, kidnapping, robbery, car snatching and burglary were common occurrences in Lagos during the period of the study, but kidnapping was on the rise. A ransom was paid to secure the release of kidnapped victims.
- There was proliferation and illegal possession of arms, mainly by the unemployed youths in Nigeria.
- The newspapers feasted on crime stories, but embraced episodic frame in crime reportage.
- Despite the fact that the selected Nigerian newspapers' sensationalised crime reportage through their often misleading headlines, crime stories still enhanced and gratified the safety information need of readers.
- The social demographics of the interviewees impacted on the gratification of their safety information need.

Sub- themes

- The selected newspapers' crime headlines often misinform and dramatized crime stories.
- The selected newspapers relied on secondary sources for crime reportage.
- Insecurity and palpable fear pervaded the country.
- The police, judiciary and the political class were found culpable in crime festering in Nigeria.
- Crime stories were educative and enhanced the safety decisions of the sampled respondents.

7.7 A Consolidation of the Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

In the study, a mixed –method approach (quantitative and qualitative) was adopted. The quantitative method was achieved through the use of quantitative content analysis and survey. The qualitative method was executed through the adoption of Ruiz (2009) Sociological discourse analysis and in-depth interviews. In this section, the findings from the approaches (quantitative & qualitative) adopted in the study are juxtaposed with a view to establishing a triangulation in the study.

7.7.1 Demographic Information

Section A of the instruments (questionnaire & in- depth interviews) were adopted to elicit information on the demographics of the sampled respondents. In the instruments, the demographic information obtained from the respondents consisted of age, gender, educational attainment, marital status, years of residing in Lagos, occupation, monthly income and residential area. These factors are important determinants of the perceptions of the Nigerian newspaper reader of crime stories of the selected newspapers.

Age is regarded as a major demographic variable in social research and has generated a lot of research work (Erdozmez, 2009; Snedker, 2015). The age range of the respondents in the quantitative study was between 18 and 59 years. In the in-depth interviewees, the age of the sampled respondents ranged between 20 and 59 years. While the ages were grouped in the questionnaire, it was individualized in the in-depth interviews. In the study, the age of the respondents was found to be significant on their perception of Nigerian newspapers coverage of crime and the gratification of their safety information need. Earlier studies (Sampert, 2010 & Smolej, 2011) also found a relationship between age and fear of crime.

On gender, the number of male and female sampled in the in-depth interviews was equal at 50%. This ensured gender balance. Crime is perceived as affecting and a concern for both genders. Both male and female interviewees were given a fair chance of expressing their views on the Nigerian newspapers' coverage of crime, in a face-to-face interview session. In the quantitative findings, the number of female was a little higher than male respondents. In literature (Cook & Fox, 2012; Lane & Meeker, 2003; Riggs & Cook, 2015), female are perceived as being more fearful of crime than male. Against this backdrop, more female (57.1%) were drawn in the sample. As much as gender balancing is important in a crucial social issue that borders on crime perception and safety information seeking, the percentage of the female respondents sampled quantitatively, was higher for the reason adduced and as established in literature.

Education is an important consideration in human endeavour and on social issues. It is a source of knowledge acquisition and exhibition. Education is an important demographic variable in crime perception and information seeking about crime. All the respondents in both the questionnaire in-depth interviewees attested to having acquired a minimum of secondary education. This quality is important in this study because newspaper readership requires an appreciable level of literacy.

In terms of residence all the sampled respondents in the survey were perceived as residents of Lagos State, because they were on a government job that required their presence every working day and atimes during the weekends. Similarly, in the qualitative finding, all the interviewees were Lagos State residents, and had lived in the State for upward of five years prior to the conduct of the study. In fact majority, seven out of the twelve interviewees, amounting to 58% of the respondents, answered to having resided in Lagos State since birth. In literature, neighbourhood, residence

and the environment have been identified as important factors in crime perception (Eschholz, Chiricos, & Gertz, 2003; Leiker, 2003; Snedker, 2015). This information assisted in contextualizing the perception of crime in Lagos State, crime reportage and the gratification obtained by the interviewees from their reading of the selected newspapers' crime stories within the period of the study.

Monthly income is one of the indices of determining respondents' socio-economic status. Combined with education and age as socio-economic variables, Callanan (2012) found a relationship between respondents' socio-economic status and fear of crime. Conversely, Custers and Van den Bulck (2013) established that a relationship exists between women with higher economic status watching *Flemish* TV crime drama than women with lower economic status. In this study, the sampled respondents' monthly income was found to have a relationship with their gratification from the newspapers' crime stories. The higher the income, the higher the gratification obtained. This is further buttressed by the fact that, crime, especially violent crimes such as kidnapping, murder and property crime like robbery often claim victims of higher social standing or having monetary value in terms of the ransom to be paid, if abducted or kidnapped. The finding from the in-depth interviews further corroborated this. The finding from the in-depth interviews revealed that the respondents who were self-employed attested to the incessant cases of kidnapping of poultry farmers and the payment of ransom to secure their release from captivity. It was also revealed in the in-depth interviews that the frequency of kidnapping and cases of robbery had forced some the respondents to alter some aspects of their life style, including closing down their businesses and not moving at night.

Similarly, in the newspaper headlines of some sampled newspapers' crime stories, it was revealed that the violent crimes (murder and kidnapping), property

crime (robbery) occurred more at the period. Stories on murder were 47.1%, kidnapping/abduction 21.5% and robbery at 14.5%. These statistics indicate that violent crimes occurred more in Nigeria and the crimes of kidnapping and murder occurred more during the study period. It was also revealed that payment of ransom was associated to releasing kidnapped victims.

7.7.2 Selected Newspapers coverage of crime

In the quantitative, it was revealed that much newspaper coverage was given to the coverage of violent crimes such as murder and kidnapping at 47.1% and 21.5% respectively. For property crime, robbery had the highest coverage at 14.5%. In the in-depth interviews, kidnapping was regarded as the most occurring and dreaded crime. It was followed by robbery and murder. The crimes of burglary and rape were also mentioned as occurring in Lagos State. These findings attest to the prevalence of crime in Nigeria during the study period, and the fact that the reportage of crime by the selected Nigerian newspapers followed the existing global reportage of placing much emphasis on violent crime than property crime.

One major finding of the study was the discovery that kidnapped victims pay a ransom before they were released from captivity. The Nigerian Police have often denied the payment of ransom for freedom by the victims of kidnapping. Contrary to the view expressed by the Police, the qualitative findings of the study (newspaper headline and in-depth interviews), the fact was revealed that victims of kidnapping pay a ransom to their captors before they regain their freedom.

7.7.3 Newspapers' crime Stories on gratification of safety information need

In the survey, majority of the respondents at 93.9% agreed that newspapers were sources. Similarly, a high percentage (92.5%) answered that the selected newspapers' crime stories gratified their safety information need. This view was in

tandem with those expressed in the in-depth interviews. The interviewees attested that the selected newspapers were not only sources of information about crime; they also gratified their safety information need. This was evident in the modified behaviour of some of the respondents. For example, in the in-depth interviewees, Participant D responded that her reading of newspapers' crime stories led to her stopping night journeys, while Participant C mentioned that he has had to ensure his cars doors are locked while in traffic and to hide from prying eyes, personal things such as computers, phones etc. Participant A answered that she had to fold-up her poultry farming business due to the frequency of kidnapping poultry farmers.

7.7.4 Readers' direct experience of crime and gratification of their safety information need

Responses to the survey questionnaire showed a significant relationship between readers' direct experience of crime and gratification of their safety information need. In the in-depth interviews, none of the interviewees responded to having experienced crime first-hand. This could be due to the fewness of the sample (12) compared to three hundred and sixty-one (361) questionnaire respondents whose views were analysed in the study. However, Participant A, though not a direct victim of kidnapping, answered that she had to fold up her poultry farming business due to the incessant cases of kidnapping of co- poultry farmers, for whose release she had made contributions for the ransom demanded by their captors for their release. The closeness of her farm location to the high –risk areas of kidnapping and the possibility of her being a victim of kidnapping made her to take a decision to ensure her safety.

7.7.5 Social demographics as determinants of the gratification of readers' safety information need

The social demographics of the respondents impacted on their safety information need. In the study, the variables of age, marital status and educational attainment were adopted as the social demographics indices of the respondents.

In the survey, it was found that the readers' social demographics affected the level of the gratification of the reader's safety information need. In the questionnaire, the age range of the sample was between 18 and 59. This was found to impact on the gratification of the safety information need of the sampled respondents. The higher the age, the higher the gratification obtained. In the in-depth interviews, the age range of the interviewees was similar to the survey sample (20-59 years). Age was also found to impact on the gratification of safety information need. Though, all the respondents attested to their safety information need being met by the selected newspapers' crime stories, those who were advanced in age were found to have taken more definite and pragmatic decisions on their safety. Also the monthly income of the respondents impacted on the gratification of their safety information need. Higher income earners were found to have derived higher gratification of their safety information need than low income earners.

In conclusion, the findings of the qualitative design were presented, analysed and discussed. The style of reportage of crime by the selected newspapers was revealed. It was revealed that the selected newspapers embraced episodic reportage in presenting crime stories. The possible interpretations the newspaper readers could give to the framed crime stories were discussed. Also the perception of the spread of crime in Lagos State was stated. It was also revealed in the chapter that the crime of

kidnapping was on the rise and that victims were often subjected to paying a ransom to regain their freedom.

The informational and educational values of the selected newspapers crime stories were clearly spelt out. It was revealed that the selected newspapers crime stories educated and gratified the safety information need of the interviewees. Also, an attempt was made in the chapter to corroborate the findings of the quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to achieve the research objectives and particularly to address research questions 1, 2 and 5. It was found that crime is prevalent in Nigeria and particularly in Lagos State. Basically, the selected newspapers widely reported crime stories. It was also established in both findings that the selected newspapers' coverage of crime gratified the safety information need of the respondents and that the social demographics of the survey and in-depth interviewees impacted on the levels of the gratification of their safety information need from the selected newspapers' crime stories.

CHAPTER EIGHT

8.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Introduction

In chapter six, the data for the quantitative method were presented, analysed, and findings discussed. In chapter seven, the data for the qualitative method were presented and analysed, findings were discussed and themes established. Also, a corroboration of the findings from the quantitative and the qualitative designs was carried out. This chapter concludes the study. The chapter contains the summary of the findings of the study, stresses the uniqueness of the study and its distinct contributions to the gamut of existing literature on media and crime coverage, especially, in the Nigerian context. The chapter ends with some recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

8.2 Summary of findings

- i. Crime is present in virtually all the nooks and crannies of Lagos State and is reported by the sampled newspapers. This is corroborated by the views of the interviewees. The reportage follows a particular framing style (episodic) which serves the interest of the media organisations rather than public interest as socially demanded of the press, in line with their social responsibility.
- ii. Newspapers headlines of crime and stories were found to be inaccurate with the crime stories often misleading and exaggerated.
- iii. The episodic framing style mostly embraced by the sample newspapers in portraying crime stories potentially instills fear of crime, rather than the problem of crime, in the audience. These were revealed in the discourse analysis of newspapers' crime stories and from the in-depth interviews.



- iv. Despite the problems of misleading headlines and fear of crime, the sampled audience (from both survey and in-depth interviews) expressed that their safety information need was gratified by the selected newspapers' crime stories.
- v. The selected newspapers gave salience to the coverage of murder, kidnapping and rape. In the category of property crime, however, robbery had more coverage than car theft, burglary and fencing. In total, the coverage of violent crime in the study amounted to 1,362 stories or (80%), while property crime coverage was 311 stories representing (20%).
- vi. The selected newspapers reported crime stories mainly as straight news. For violent crime, 118 cases of rape or (83.7 %) were reported as straight news. It was 748 cases or (89.3 %) for murder; kidnapping/ abduction had 345(90.1 %) cases reported as straight news. For property crime, 12 (100%) cases of burglary were reported as straight news. Robbery had 237 (91%), car theft 36 (92.3%), while fencing had 2 (100%) cases reported as straight news.
- vii. Despite the elaborate coverage given to murder and other forms of violent crime, for example, kidnapping, most crime stories were published on the inside pages of the newspapers. Very few, especially, politically motivated murder, and the killing of a prominent person(s) or some forms of bizarre killings attracted the headline or other front page in the newspapers during the study period.
- viii. Newspaper readers seek crime information from the sampled Nigerian newspapers. Majority of the sampled respondents 334 (92.5%) attested to the fact that the sampled Nigerian newspapers' crime stories do gratify their safety information need.
- ix. It was established in the study that a significant difference ($\chi^2 = 19.62$; $p = 0.020$) exists between readers' frequency of reading the selected newspapers crime

stories and the gratification obtained on their safety information need. Additionally, direct experience with crime by the readers were found to be significant ($\chi^2 = 8.255$; $p = 0.041$) on the gratification of the selected newspaper readers' safety information need.

The findings of this study align with the minimal or limited effects of the media on behaviour. In that context, the study contends the age-long explanation that the newspapers as a form of the mass media have absolute or maximum effects of mediated message on people's behaviour. The study contends that media audiences are dynamic, have different orientations, perceptions and social demographics or personal characteristics that make the audience capable of filtering media messages differently.

In specific terms, this study differs substantially from other previous studies on media and crime coverage in the Nigerian context, both in the theories and methods adopted. Alemika and Chukwuma (2005; Amzat, Abodunrin & Okunola, 2007; Odunlami & Soremekun, 2013; Soola, 2007) all established the presence of crime in Nigeria and further identified fear of crime as a byproduct of media coverage of crime. The study is distinct from past studies in approach (method and theory). The study embraces both methodological (quantitative & qualitative) and theoretical (Social Responsibility and uses & Gratifications theories) triangulation, which are novel. The present study achieves these by: (1) attempting a discourse analysis of some crime stories from the sampled Nigerian newspapers; (2) conducting in-depth interviews with Lagos State residents on the scourge of crime in the State and their perceptions of the sampled newspapers' coverage of crime within the study period; (3) examining the cognitive relevance of the sampled Nigerian newspapers' crime stories on the safety information need of the readers during the study period. The

discourse analysis of the selected newspapers' crime stories for contextual meanings and inferences, coupled with a bit of ethnographic approach of engaging with newspaper readers through in-depth interviews on their perceptions of crime coverage on the gratification of their safety information need, distinguish this study from previous studies. The mixed – method approach helps provide deeper in-sights into the problems of crime, crime coverage and the cognitive relevance of audience engagement with the selected newspapers' crime stories and the gratification of their safety information need. These are major contributions of the study to knowledge.

In this regard, the study reflects and further confirms the presence of crime in Nigeria. It also establishes that the sampled Nigerian newspaper readers were informed and educated by the selected newspaper's crime stories. Specifically, the study establishes that beyond fear of crime, the safety information need of the readers was gratified by selected Nigerian newspapers' crime stories. In this connection, the study has further lends credence to the potential of the media to modify people's behaviour to a certain degree or an extent.

8.3 Conclusion

Arising from the summary of the findings, it may be deduced that newspapers remain an important source of crime stories. This is a further confirmation of the important role and the resourcefulness of newspapers in information dissemination since its emergence in the 17th century (Tom, 2012). The advent and the explosion in information technology have not displaced the bound, surface or hard core newspaper from the news-stand, and from its pre-eminent role as an important and indispensable purveyor of news and information on social issues.

From the findings of the study, it has been established that newspapers, as good sources of crime stories, gratify the safety information need of the sampled

Nigerian newspaper readers. In view of this, it may be safe to conclude that, in spite of whatever future media technological breakthroughs or the attendant threats that may arise therefrom, the newspaper (hard copy), could remain a veritable source of information about crime to people, and provide gratification from newspapers' crime stories to the readers.

8.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made to the government, media and the public:

Government

Government should grant the press more enabling environment to report crime stories contextually. This can be achieved if the press engages more in investigative journalism, which requires adequate security that only the government can provide. This, however, should not be to the detriment of the regulatory function of the government over the press, as required of a socially responsible press.

The Media

Newspapers in reporting crime stories should strive to balance their profit motives with public interest by being socially responsible. Social responsibility of the media places a moral burden on the media not only to describe social phenomena, but to investigate and interpret social phenomena in public interest, even if it is at cost to the media. This could be attained if newspapers in framing crime stories de-emphasize episodic and sensational reportage, which dwell more and elaborately too, about crime incidents, which leads to fear of crime in the audience; described as being more problematic and widespread than crime (Warr, 2000), rather than the contexts of crime. Crime stories are better reported thematically and in public interest. The

sampled newspapers did not demonstrate this in the reportage of crime during the study period.

Crime should be treated by the media as a disease requiring diagnosis. In this respect, identifying the symptoms, causes and other risk factors of crime, would lead to an effective treatment of the scourge, increase people's awareness and enhance the information seeking habit of the public towards reducing victimisation. The existing global practice of sensational and episodic reportage, which dramatize crime incidents for profits, creates a further problem fear of crime, which has been described as more problematic and widespread than crime (Warr, 2000).

The urge by newspaper organizations as commercial enterprises out to make profit, should not lead to jettisoning their primary responsibility of providing information. Striking a balance between profit-making and contextual crime reportage is strongly canvassed for the Nigerian press.

A comparatively safe and secured environment is a boost to a nation's development in terms of an all-round development of the people. The Nigerian press in view of the economic downturn facing the country, among myriads of problems confronting the country, can through its editorials and other relevant sections of the newspaper help re-build and resuscitate the country's social institutions. They can help galvanize the populace to embrace peaceful co-existence and thereby help restore Nigeria's institutions to serving the interest of the society rather than the interest of a few privileged individuals. The media should also be at the vanguard of the restoration of our value system and the collective-will associated with African societies. Such an effort can help reduce sponsored killings, kidnappings, cultism and vandalisation of government installations meant for the good of the people. Crucially too, it can also help proffer solutions to the problem of crime; enrich readers'

knowledge about the trends and patterns of crime and criminality, thorough news stories, features.

The Public

An informed citizenry is an asset to a nation. Also an information-rich and information seeking individual is not only a pride to him or herself, but also to the society at large. He or she would also be kept abreast of trends in the society, especially on crime, criminals and their tricks. In the process, accessing valuable information that can help to further safeguard lives and property, and also help reduce criminal victimization. The public, through the family and other social systems should join hands in resuscitating the neglected value systems, of honesty, integrity, hard work and decency.

8.5 Suggestions for further studies

In the Western world, especially in the United States of America, research and studies on mass media coverage of crime are in abundance. Compared to Nigeria, however, studies on media and crime are very few. Despite the daily occurrence of crime in Nigeria, ranging from white-collar, or occupational crime, to economic crimes, like pipeline vandalisation erroneously referred to as *militancy*, hate crime, often erroneously regarded as religious, political, communal or ethnic clashes, very few research efforts have been carried out on crime and related issues.

Studying readers' gratification from Nigerian newspapers' crime stories is novel and topical with this study being a pioneering research effort in that area. The population of the study was, however, restricted to Lagos State Civil Servants and to newspaper readers. To obtain a more generalisable result, a nationwide study among the various ethnic groups in the various states of the federation, and among other professionals is recommended. Additionally, given the exponential increase in the use

of the internet among adults and youths, the social media constitutes a veritable medium for studies on media and crime and the attendant behavioural impact on the audience. This is a rich research area yet to be explored.

Future researchers are encouraged to treat each mass medium separately by disaggregating each medium so that the uniqueness and peculiarities of each medium are distinctly measured by appropriate research methods. A combination of research methods, as carried out in this study, is also suggested, so that the weakness of one research method is compensated for by the strength of the other. For example, survey research method, either in quantitative or qualitative form, or both, can be adopted to strengthen the content analysis method of research which does not measure feelings, opinions and attitudes, but which are the major strengths of survey research methods.

In the same vein, it is being advocated that the media audience could also be disaggregated to bring about the uniqueness of each audience member. Barber (1997) has suggested differences in the audience. In this respect, replicating this study on non-literate audience with other media such as radio and television, which, unlike the newspaper are non-literate media, could bring out some interesting findings and extend the frontiers of knowledge on public perception of media coverage of crime.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

Coding Guide for Content Analytical Study on Nigerian Newspapers' Coverage of Crime (2010 -2014)

- (1) Types of crime- Violent (1) Property (2)
- (2) Murder (1)
 - Rape (2)
 - Kidnapping/ Abduction (3)
 - Burglary (4)
 - Robbery (5)
 - Auto mobile theft (6)
 - Others (7)
- (3) Types of story
 - Straight news (1)
 - Features (2)
 - Editorials (3)
 - Opinions/comments (4)
 - Letters to Editors (5)
- (4) Prominence
 - Front page (1)
 - Other front page (2)
 - Inside page (3)
 - Centre spread (4)
 - Back page (5)
- (5) Years for study

2010	(1)
2011	(2)
2012	(3)
2013	(4)
2014	(5)

Appendix II
Department of Communication, North West University,
Mmabatho, Mafikeng, South Africa.

**Newspapers Crime Stories and Readers' Safety Information Need Gratification
Questionnaire**

Dear Respondent,

I am **Rufai**, Mustapha Olalekan, a doctoral student in the above mentioned institution. I am seeking from you through this questionnaire information on 'Nigerian Newspapers coverage of crime and the Gratification of Readers' Safety Information Need'. The information you provide in this regard is strictly for this research purpose. I also assure you that the information so supplied will be treated with absolute confidentiality.

While participation is voluntary, I request your honest response should you wish to participate in the survey.

For any enquiry, I could be reached via: lamilekanrufai@yahoo.com or **Prof. A. Salawu** at abiiodun.salawu@nwu.ac.za

Thank you.

'Lekan Rufai

Instruction: Please indicate as applicable in the box provided.

SECTION A

Demographic (Personal) Information

1. Sex: Male () Female ()
2. Please indicate your age range
 1. 18-30 () 2. 31-43 ()
 3. 44-56 () 4. 57 and above ()
3. **Educational Attainment** (Kindly indicate your highest educational qualification)
 - a. WASC 'O' Level/NECO () b. Post-secondary School ()
 - c. B.A./B.Ed./B.SC/HND () d. PGD/Higher Degrees ()
4. **Marital Status**
 - (a) Married () (b) Single () (c) Widowed ()
 - (d) Separated () (e) Divorced ().
5. Which of the following describes average monthly income?
 - (a) Less than N30, 000 () (b) N31, 000 –N60, 000 ()
 - (c) N61, 000 -N100, 000 () (d) N10000 and above ()

SECTION B

Access and Attention to Newspapers Crime Stories

6. How frequently do you read Nigerian daily newspapers?
 - (a) Daily () (b) Every other day ()
 - (c) At weekends () (d) Occasionally ()

7. To what extent are you familiar with any of the following Nigerian newspapers?

Nigerian Tribune, The Punch, Vanguard, The Sun, and Daily Trust

Newspapers

- (a) Great Extent ()
- (b) Some Extent ()
- (c) Little Extent ()
- (d) No Extent ().

8. To what extent do you read crime related stories in the newspapers?

- (a) Great extent ()
- (b) Some extent ()
- (c) Little extent ()
- (d) No extent ().

9. How significantly have your exposures to crime stories in the newspapers influence your safety and security concerns on your daily activities?

- (a) Very significantly ()
- (b) Significantly ()
- (c) Less significantly ()
- (d) No Significance ().

SECTION C

Selected Newspapers Crime Coverage and the Gratification of Readers' Safety Information Need

10. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a.	Selected newspapers coverage of crime is informative.				
b.	Selected newspapers crime stories educate, and gratify your safety/ security information needs.				
c.	Selected newspapers information about crime has influenced my decisions on personal and property safety in the last five years.				
d.	Selected newspapers information on crime stories has influenced my decisions on the personal safety of my immediate family members in the last five years.				

SECTION D

Selected Newspapers' Crime Reportage and Readers' safety and security information

11. Please indicate which of the following types of crime, in your view, is mostly covered in the selected newspapers.
- (a) Murder () (b) Rape () (c) Kidnapping/Abduction ()
- (d) Assault () (e) Robbery () (f) Burglary ()
- (g) Fencing () (h) Auto mobile theft ().
12. Have you ever been a victim of any of the above listed crime?
- (a) Yes () (b) No ()
13. Please indicate the type of crime you experienced from any of those listed in (11) above. _____
14. If yes (in 12 above), between the time(s) of the incident(s) and now, has your exposure to newspaper crime stories assisted your safety and security consciousness?
- (a) Yes () (b) No ().
15. If yes, would you attribute your exposure to newspaper crime stories as being significantly responsible for your enhanced safety and security consciousness and for being safe from these crimes?
- (a) Yes () (b) No ().
16. How much likely are you to sustain seeking crime information from newspapers?
- (a) Very likely () (b) Likely ()
- (c) Least likely () (d) Not likely ().

17. To what extent are you likely to be influenced in future on safety and security consciousness by newspapers crime stories?

- (a) Great extent () (b) Some extent ()
(c) Little extent () (d) No extent ().

18. Would you say you consider newspapers crime stories so informative and gratifying on safety information need that you can recommend reading them to others?

- (a) Yes () (b) No ().

Thank you for participating in this survey.

Appendix III

Sampled Nigerian Newspapers for Content Analysis on Crime Stories (2010-2014)

Year- 2010

	Ja n	Fe b	Marc h	Apri l	Ma y	Jun e	Jul y	Au g	Se p	Oc t	No v	De c	Tota l
Sun		7				13		15		3			4
Mon	11				3			2		4			4
Tue	12			20					7	19			4
Wed			31		5			25		27			4
Thur s	21				20				16			16	4
Fri	29				28			27		29			4
Sat			20		29		31				13		4
Tota l													28

140 issues (28 x 5)

Year-2011

	Ja n	Fe b	Marc h	Apri l	Ma y	Jun e	Jul y	Au g	Se p	Oc t	No v	De c	Tota l
Sun	2					26	24					11	4
Mon		14				20			12		14		4
Tue			15			28			13		22		4
Wed			30	6				17		26			4
Thur s			10			16		18				8	4
Fri			4	15				26		28			4
Sat		19		9					10	22			4
Tota l													28

140 issues (28x5)

Year- 2012

	Ja n	Fe b	Marc h	Apri l	Ma y	Jun e	Jul y	Au g	Se p	Oc t	No v	De c	Tota l
Sun		19		15					2			2	4
Mon			12		21			6			5		4
Tue	31				1		17			23			4
Wed	4				2		11				7		4
Thurs s			15	5				9				13	4
Fri	20				11		27				2		4
Sat		11				16		11		13			4
Tota l													28

140 issues (28x5)

Year-2013

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Sun	20			28			14					1	4
Mon		4			20			19				9	4
Tue		5		9			30					17	4
Wed	23				8				25			4	4
Thurs	31				9				26			5	4
Fri	4				31				20			27	4
Sat		9				1	13				16		4
Total													28

140 issues (28x5)

Year-2014

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Sun			16		11		6			12			4
Mon		17				16	21					29	4
Tue		4		22			8			14			4
Wed		19			7		2					3	4
Thurs				17	1			14				11	4
Fri	10					27		22		31			4
Sat		22			10				27			6	4
Total													28

140 issues (28x5)

Grand Total = 140 x 5 = 700 Newspapers

Appendix IV

IMAGES OF NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS



A



B



C



D

Appendix V



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NGORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

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Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee

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Email: Ethics@nwu.ac.za

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE OF PROJECT

Based on approval by the Human Resource Research Ethics Committee, Mafikeng Campus, the North-West University Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-IRERC) hereby approves your project as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-IRERC grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the project may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Project title: Nigerian newspapers' coverage of crime and the gratification of readers safety information needs (2010-2014).	
Project Leader:	Prof A Salawu
Student:	MO Rufai
Ethics number:	NWU-00395-15-A9
Approval date: 2015-08-20	Expiry date: 2018-08-20
Category: N/A	

Special conditions of the approval (if any): None

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-IRERC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project,
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the NWU-IRERC. Would there be deviation from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the NWU-IRERC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-IRERC retains the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project;
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected,
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the NWU-IRERC or that information has been false or misrepresented,
 - the required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.

The IRERC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the IRERC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Linda du
Plessis

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