

Review of: "“We Only Came Home to Find His Body Dangling”: Voices and Practs in Selected Nigerian Newspapers Reportage on Suicide"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

REVIEWER FORM

1. TOPIC AND TITLE: The topic is quite interesting because there are no many papers related to news about the suicide.

In the introduction a definition of suicide is provided but without stating the source: “A harmful attempt committed with the motive of ending one’s life is regarded as suicide.”. Suicide is not an attempt, is a successful act. The Merriam Webster online dictionary define it as: “the act or an instance of taking one’s own life voluntarily and intentionally”. The second phrase in the introduction is also controversial due to the fact that, again, is stated that there was an “spate”, but where is the source for that?

2. NOVELTY: The topic is quite new but it is not well addressing, from the methodological point of view.

3. STRUCTURE: The structure of this “paper” itself is right. However, sometimes, the title of each part does not correspond precisely to the name is it. For instance, the part named “Previous Studies and Problem Statement” is almost quite right, except for the problem statement itself, because of the next statement: “Although the findings of the study locate suicide as reported in some Nigerian newspapers as a crime and mental problem, they do not account for the major types of suicide in the selected Nigerian dallies, nor the voices featured or the linguistic roles of the voices in Nigerian newspapers’ reportage.”. It is not correct talk about findings of the “study” because it is not stated yet which was the methodology used for this research. It could be possible to refer to the findings to the state of the art, however, stated the criteria followed to studied the different sources is mandatory. This situation generates a misunderstanding and misconception of what part is each one. In conclusion you are not able to talk about “findings of the study” before the methodology used is stated clearly, and of course, the “Previous Studies and Problem Statement” is not the right place to do so.

4. METHODOLOGY: There is not a clear methodology and in sort parts of the text, is stated one way, quite different than in another. For instance, in the “3. Theoretical framework” the “The pragmatic acts theory” is stated as a reference, and explained in depth. This is quite confusing because the author is analyzing Newspapers, but this is not a media theory, but a language theory instead. So, all the “theoretical framework” goes around the language used in a context, but is not specifically related to the mass media. So, this is a methodological decision not to use a mass media theory to analyses

the suicide news in the newspapers. This decision is so important that should be stated in the title, however the title refers only to voices and practices: ““We Only Came Home to Find His Body Dangling”: Voices and Practices in Selected Nigerian Newspapers Reportage on Suicide”. In the mass media analysis we have to talk about sources, agenda setting or any kind of process related to the field as news production. However, in this particular case a theory related to language analysis is taken as a reference without stating so in the title. This is definitely a big mistake.

Another big mistake starts when the author chooses another language analysis theory as a theoretical framework, such as the “theory of polyphony”. All these methodological decisions should be stated in the title on this way: “Newspapers Reportage on Suicide analysis through the lens of “the pragmatic acts theory and the theory of polyphony”. Each discipline has its own theories so, any time that another area’s theory would be used to analyse it should be stated and justified so. The mass media text is not another kind of text, but one with its own particular function, use and meaning. It is mandatory to show this sort of respect to the mass media studies on two ways: Using its own theories or justifying why it’s a need not to. Voices are called sources in journalism and mass media studies, and practices are called news production, journalist decision, editorial decisions, facts or proven facts.

There is not a clear motivation that justifies the Nigerian newspapers selection, the time lapse or even the news type (reportage). The category “voices” is not really clear, because in journalism and mass communication sciences we talk about sources, not “voices”. A source is where the knowledge about something came from. In literature studies “voice” could be. The findings are not related to the methodology, at least the one stated in the abstract: “...no significant linguistic correlation exists between gender and suicide as reported by Nigerian newspapers”.

Only 15 suicide reports were selected to conduct this research and there is no single line dedicated to justify how a scientific paper could be built analyzing just this low number of news. 15 is never a significant sample. In this case, the author does not provide even the method used to select these reports and no others. It was stated just: “The data source adopted for this study is the electronic version of Nigerian newspaper reportage on suicide. Out of over twenty newspapers’ reportage on suicide declared within 2020-2022 including attempted suicide cases, fifteen Nigerian newspapers’ reportage that consist of committed suicide and homicide-suicide cases were used for this study.”. A justification of this sort of decision is a need.

5. COHERENCE: There is not coherence due to the not justified decisions of using another discipline theories to analyse newspapers when journalism is an area with its own theories, logic and ways of understanding reality.

There is not a single line during the “Methodology” dedicated to justify the use of a “qualitative descriptive analytical approach” to study the suicide news of the Nigerian newspapers. This situation is related to the fact that is not a research problem identified during the whole text. So, how could be studied some situation in a scientific way without identifying the problem, as a starting point?

6. REFERENCES: Perfectly valid references but the framework references and theories are not sufficiently justified

7. ETHICS: When an academic paper is written all the decisions made prior to the writing process should be stated as methodological. There is not this sort of statements on this text. Each knowledge area has its own way to study and

analysis the text.

8. SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTION: Interesting approach but pretty bad justified. There is not contribution to journalism studies or mass media communication studies, all time that the “framework theories” chosen are not related to the area. It is like we want to analyses a math problem using a physics theory as a starting point. At least, this should be stated and justified sufficiently.