

Rhetorical Strategies in Editorials on Kidnapping in Selected Nigerian Newspapers

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Abstract

This study addressed a research gap in the analysis of rhetorical strategies employed in Nigerian newspaper editorials on kidnapping, a pressing socio-political issue. The primary objectives were to identify and examine the predominant rhetorical strategies used, assess their distribution across selected newspapers, and evaluate their effectiveness in shaping public discourse. A qualitative research design was adopted, analysing editorials from four major Nigerian newspapers. The study found that Ethos was the most frequently used strategy, reflecting a strong reliance on credibility and ethical appeals. Logos closely followed, indicating the use of logical arguments and factual evidence, while Pathos, though less frequent, was employed to evoke emotional responses. The study also revealed variations in strategy use across different newspapers, suggesting editorial styles and target audiences influenced rhetorical choices. The study concluded that editorial writers strategically combined these rhetorical approaches to engage readers and influence opinion on kidnapping issues. This study contributes new knowledge providing, a detailed understanding of how Nigerian editorial writers construct persuasive arguments in the context of national security challenges, bridging a significant gap in media rhetoric research in Nigeria. This research provides a foundation for further studies on media influence in socio-

political advocacy and contributes to the broader discourse on the role of rhetoric in journalism.

Keywords: Rhetorical Strategies, Editorials, Kidnapping, Nigerian Newspapers, Media Discourse

Introduction

Kidnapping has evolved into a significant socio-political issue in Nigeria, marked by increasing frequency and complex motivations. According to Ngwama (2014), the phenomenon has become a social crime with profound implications for national stability and the labour market. The Nigerian media, particularly newspapers, play a crucial role in framing public discourse around such national crises. Editorials, in particular, serve not only as vehicles for information but also as persuasive texts that convey ideological positions. Wornyo (2022) notes that rhetorical strategies in editorials are carefully selected to align with the ideological leanings of media institutions and to influence readers' interpretations of social events. In examining media texts, Nikitina (2021) notes that editorial discourse is influenced by underlying ideological narratives, which often become evident in the choice of language, framing, and rhetorical emphasis. These ideological undercurrents are not unique to Nigeria; similar patterns are noted globally. For instance, Ekström (2023) reveals how authoritarian expressions are embedded in online discourse within Swedish forums, revealing the adaptability of rhetorical mechanisms across cultures. In the Nigerian context, editorials on kidnapping often reflect broader societal anxieties and function as tools for both critique and advocacy. Othman and Salih (2023) point out that the structure of discourse is inherently tied to the structure of ideology, reinforcing the idea that editorial rhetoric serves a dual purpose: informing the public and shaping societal values. Coppock, Ekins, and Kirby (2018) further note that editorials have lasting effects on public opinion, emphasising their

role in constructing dominant narratives around security and governance in Nigeria.

Despite a growing body of literature on media discourse and the ideological underpinnings of editorial writing, there remains a notable lack of focused studies on the rhetorical strategies employed in Nigerian newspaper editorials specifically addressing the subject of kidnapping. While Mushtaq (2020) explains that editorials aim to influence public opinion through structured argumentation and persuasive techniques, many studies concentrate on the general influence of editorials on policy and public perception without delving deeply into the rhetorical mechanisms within specific socio-political contexts. Nwogwugwu, Okpongkpong, Okoro, and Ukpong (2021) observe that newspaper editorials contribute significantly to policy formulation in Nigeria, yet there is insufficient examination of how rhetorical strategies within those editorials shape public discourse on insecurity. Furthermore, although Mont'Alverne and Marques (2022) investigate how issues are selected for editorial attention, their analysis does not extend to how rhetorical choices are employed to prioritise or frame such issues. The complexity of rhetorical strategy usage in Nigerian editorials on kidnapping remains underexplored, particularly across multiple publications. This study seeks to bridge that gap by identifying and categorising the rhetorical strategies used in selected editorials from *The Nigerian Tribune*, *Daily Trust*, and *The Punch*. The study also aims to analyse these rhetorical strategies to understand their functions within the discourse. Additionally, the study intends to compare the use of these rhetorical strategies across the three newspapers to determine which strategies are most prevalent. Drawing on Goffman's (1981) insights into framing, Nazarova (2023) on media discourse organisation, and Hyland and Jiang's (2019) exploration of evolving language patterns in writing, the research will contribute to understanding how editorial rhetoric reflects and shapes socio-political realities in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Rhetorical Strategies

Rhetorical strategies are the linguistic and communicative techniques used by writers and speakers to persuade, inform, or influence their audience. In the context of newspaper editorials, these strategies serve as critical tools through which media outlets articulate opinions, shape public perception, and guide civic engagement. According to Aristotle's classical framework, rhetoric involves the appeals of ethos (credibility), pathos (emotional appeal), and logos (logical argument), all of which remain foundational in editorial writing (Kennedy, 2007). These elements enable editorial writers to construct persuasive narratives that align with the ideological stance of their newspapers. In the digital age, editorial rhetoric has become increasingly multimodal and context-sensitive, adapting to the expectations of a diverse and literate audience. Beard (2000) notes that newspaper editorials utilise specific linguistic structures, such as metaphor, repetition, and contrast, to enhance their persuasive force and retain reader attention. These strategies often reflect broader socio-political ideologies embedded in national discourse.

The use of rhetorical strategies in editorials is also influenced by cultural, historical, and political contexts. Editorials addressing issues like kidnapping in Nigeria are not neutral commentaries but are imbued with moral judgements and appeals for justice or reform. As noted by Thompson (1990), language in the media is ideologically loaded, and editorial discourse functions as a site where power and ideology intersect. Chilton (2004) observes that rhetorical tools in political discourse often serve to legitimise certain viewpoints while delegitimising others, a dynamic evident in the framing of security issues in Nigerian newspapers. Hyperbole, rhetorical questions, and emotive language are commonly used to dramatise the social consequences of kidnapping and to position the editorial voice as an advocate for societal good. Simpson (1993) further reveals that

rhetorical strategies in editorials operate within specific discursive conventions, allowing newspapers to assert authority while maintaining a tone of reasoned argumentation.

Moreover, the effectiveness of rhetorical strategies depends on their alignment with audience expectations and media norms. According to Bell (1991), editorial writers construct their arguments with an assumed audience in mind, employing rhetorical techniques that align with the readers' values, beliefs, and prior knowledge. This alignment strengthens the persuasive impact of editorials and enhances their capacity to influence public discourse. Van Dijk (1998) notes that editorials often employ evaluative language to foreground opinions while subtly embedding ideological cues. Similarly, Fairclough (1995) argues that media discourse operates through intertextuality and strategic language use, allowing editorials to draw from broader public narratives to reinforce their rhetorical impact. In the context of Nigerian newspapers, these strategies are particularly significant given the country's complex socio-political context. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) observe that rhetorical effectiveness in media texts is often tied to how well linguistic choices reflect prevailing social realities. Consequently, the study of rhetorical strategies in editorials on kidnapping offers critical insight into how newspapers contribute to national dialogue, influence policy, and mobilise public sentiment through deliberate and strategic language use.

Editorials

Editorials serve as an essential medium for newspapers to express institutional viewpoints on contemporary issues, offering analysis, judgement, and recommendations rather than merely reporting facts. They function as persuasive texts crafted to influence public opinion, policy discourse, and civic engagement. According to Mencher (2010), editorials are deliberately positioned in newspapers to reflect the ideological leaning of the media house and provide readers with

interpretative guidance on critical matters. Unlike news reports, which aim for objectivity, editorials are subjective and argumentative in nature, designed to promote specific interpretations or call for particular actions. Adedimeji (2007) notes that editorials not only interpret events but also attempt to shape them by framing narratives in a way that reveals particular values and ideologies. The editorial voice is thus positioned as authoritative, often embodying the conscience of the media organisation on issues of public concern.

The structure of editorials typically follows a logical pattern that enhances their persuasive function. According to Opeibi (2009), effective editorials open with a clear thesis or stance, followed by supporting arguments and evidence, before concluding with recommendations or calls to action. This structure mirrors classical rhetorical patterns and reinforces the credibility and logical appeal of the editorial. Alo (2012) observes that language choices in editorials—such as modality, hedging, and evaluative lexis—play a crucial role in managing reader alignment and projecting authority without appearing overly dogmatic. Editorials addressing complex national issues like kidnapping in Nigeria often blend emotional appeal with logical reasoning to elicit both empathy and action. As Udeze (2012) explains, the stylistic and rhetorical elements of editorials are crafted not only to inform but to influence, persuading the audience to adopt a certain perspective or demand accountability from policymakers.

Editorials also act as instruments of social influence and agenda setting. According to McCombs and Shaw (1972), the media does not just tell people what to think, but what to think about, and editorials play a central role in this process. Ezeifeke (2013) observes that editorial discourse is laden with ideological undertones that often reflect the socio-political leanings of the media outlet, subtly guiding public interpretation of national events. In contexts where democratic institutions are evolving, as in Nigeria, editorials become tools for civic

education, political mobilisation, and institutional critique. Nwala and Dandaura (2019) note that editorials contribute to national development by encouraging informed debate and public participation. Additionally, Ajilore and Aluko (2016) reveal the role of editorials in holding power to account through their critical stance on governance and social justice issues. In sum, editorials transcend mere opinion pieces; they are strategic, ideologically infused texts designed to influence both public thought and political action.

Discourse of Kidnapping

Kidnapping, as a subject of discourse, has evolved from being a criminal act reported in passing to a recurring theme that shapes national narratives and media representations, especially in contexts like Nigeria where insecurity is pervasive. The discourse surrounding kidnapping is multifaceted, encompassing socio-political, economic, and cultural dimensions. According to Iwara (2020), the media plays a central role in framing the public understanding of kidnapping, not merely presenting facts but interpreting events in ways that shape perception and response. News reports, editorials, and features often use emotive and rhetorical language to depict kidnapping as a crisis that requires urgent attention. Yusuf (2017) observes that the lexical choices in such discourses are often dramatic, employing terms like “epidemic,” “scourge,” or “siege” to convey urgency and evoke fear or sympathy. The media’s portrayal reflects public anxiety while simultaneously reinforcing narratives of state inadequacy and social breakdown.

The discourse of kidnapping in Nigerian newspapers is heavily influenced by ideological and regional perspectives, often revealing underlying tensions between the state, the media, and the citizenry. According to Anyadike and Ekeanyanwu (2014), the linguistic framing of kidnapping stories tends to vary depending on the geographical location of the event and the political affiliations of the newspaper. Southern-based newspapers may frame kidnappings in the North as

indicative of systemic failure, while Northern outlets may reveal socio-economic roots or government efforts to mitigate the problem. Enyeazu and Alabi (2021) note that such differential framing contributes to the politicisation of crime and can deepen national disunity. Editorials, in particular, often serve as platforms for critiquing the government's response or lack thereof. Agbedo (2015) argues that these texts use persuasive rhetoric not only to express outrage but also to demand accountability, employing rhetorical questions, parallel structures, and emotional appeals to connect with readers and advocate for solutions. Through such discourses, newspapers become active participants in national conversations on security, justice, and governance.

The cultural and psychological effects of kidnapping further shape the language and tone used in media representations. Discourse on kidnapping extends beyond immediate reporting to reflect broader anxieties about identity, trust, and state capacity. According to Okorie and Dauda (2020), media discourse on kidnapping often mirrors societal fears about safety, moral decay, and economic instability. The stories usually focus not only on the victims but also on the symbolic meaning of the act, representing a failure of social contract and the erosion of communal values. As Uzochukwu (2019) notes, kidnapping discourse in editorials tends to shift blame towards political leadership, revealing corruption, poor intelligence gathering, and the lack of adequate security infrastructure. This discursive construction is not limited to criticism but includes strategic use of solutions-based rhetoric aimed at fostering public engagement and urging reform. For instance, newspapers may use imperatives like “government must act” or “citizens must remain vigilant” to construct a shared sense of responsibility. The use of metaphor, as observed by Odebunmi (2006), such as likening the nation to a “kidnapped entity,” further elevates the discourse into the realm of national identity and existential crisis. Hence, the discourse of kidnapping is a potent mix of fear, critique, hope, and rhetorical persuasion that extends far beyond the crime itself.

Nigerian Newspapers and the Rhetorics of Reporting

Nigerian newspapers occupy a key role in the country's media context, serving as influential platforms for informing, educating, and shaping public discourse. They do not merely report news but frame events using rhetorical strategies that reflect ideological leanings, cultural perceptions, and political contexts. According to Akinfeleye (2008), the Nigerian press operates as a "watchdog" and "agenda-setter," influencing national conversations through interpretative reporting and editorials. The rhetorical presentation of news is particularly pronounced when addressing critical issues such as kidnapping, terrorism, and corruption. Oso (2012) notes that Nigerian newspapers often use loaded language and strategic framing to direct readers' interpretations, thus revealing the persuasive function embedded in news discourse. Whether through lexical emphasis, metaphorical expressions, or emotive appeals, the reporting style aims to align readers with specific moral or political positions. These rhetorical devices, while enhancing engagement, also raise concerns about media bias and the role of journalistic neutrality in fragile democratic settings.

The rhetorical style of reporting in Nigerian newspapers is significantly shaped by the ownership structure, editorial policies, and regional affiliations of media organisations. According to Ojebode and Akingbulu (2009), media ownership influences the ideological stance of newspapers, thereby affecting the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used in reporting national events. Newspapers based in the South-West, for instance, may employ critical or confrontational tones when reporting federal government inefficiencies, while Northern newspapers may adopt a more conciliatory or justificatory tone. Akpan and Ering (2010) observe that these regional tendencies affect the consistency and credibility of reportage, especially on sensitive issues like kidnapping and political instability. Such discrepancies are not merely stylistic but reflect deep-seated socio-political cleavages in the Nigerian federation. Aliede (2003) notes that the use of rhetorical

devices such as repetition, rhetorical questions, and analogies serves to reinforce ideological biases and construct preferred readings of events. Editorials and headlines, in particular, are crafted to maximise impact and memorability, often employing sensational language to provoke emotional responses. As Daramola (2006) argues, this stylistic approach is both a product of commercial competition among newspapers and a deliberate strategy to assert moral and political authority.

The rhetoric of reporting in Nigerian newspapers also mirrors broader challenges in media ethics, professional training, and press freedom. According to Edeani (1990), Nigerian journalists often operate within constraints such as censorship, political intimidation, and inadequate institutional support, which influence their reporting techniques. Despite these limitations, many journalists employ rhetorical ingenuity to explore repressive environments while still projecting critical narratives. Uche (1989) notes that the use of indirect speech, sarcasm, and euphemism are common strategies for circumventing editorial restrictions and legal repercussions. Furthermore, Bello and Adesemoye (2007) observe that newspapers often adopt populist rhetoric to align with public sentiment, especially during periods of national crisis or public outrage. This approach enhances readership engagement but may also lead to the oversimplification or exaggeration of complex issues. Olatunji (2010) reveals that rhetorical strategies in Nigerian newspaper reporting function not only to inform but also to shape societal values, challenge authority, and foster democratic participation. In effect, the rhetorical dimension of news reporting in Nigeria reflects the complex interplay between media practice, political culture, and social responsibility. Nigerian newspapers thus function as more than channels of information; they are powerful rhetorical agents that contribute to meaning-making and national identity construction.

Theoretical Framework

Aristotle's Rhetorical Theory (Ethos, Pathos, Logos)

Aristotle's Rhetorical Theory remains one of the most enduring and applicable frameworks for understanding persuasive communication, particularly in media discourse. Aristotle propounded his Rhetorical Theory in the 4th century BCE, specifically in his seminal work *Rhetoric*, written around circa 350 BCE. In this treatise, he systematically outlined the three modes of persuasion—ethos, pathos, and logos—as essential elements of effective communication and argumentation. The work remains foundational in the fields of communication, literary studies, and rhetorical analysis to this day. Ethos refers to the credibility or ethical character of the speaker or writer, and in the case of newspaper editorials, this is established through authoritative tone, reference to institutional integrity, and appeals to professional journalistic standards. Pathos involves the evocation of emotions in the audience. Editorials often use vivid language, real-life stories, and emotionally charged expressions to elicit empathy, fear, or outrage—especially on sensitive issues like kidnapping, which inherently involves human suffering and insecurity. Logos, the appeal to logic and reason, is expressed through the use of facts, statistics, precedents, and logical argumentation. Editorials typically include historical references, legal arguments, or evidence-based reasoning to support their claims and recommendations, thereby enhancing their persuasive power.

This tripartite framework is particularly suitable for analysing rhetorical strategies in Nigerian newspaper editorials on kidnapping. Editorials are fundamentally persuasive texts aimed at influencing public opinion or governmental action, making Aristotle's rhetorical appeals ideal tools for dissecting how these texts are constructed and how they function. Ethos can be traced in the authority and moral positioning of the newspapers, pathos in their use of emotive language and compelling narratives about victims, and logos in the structured

arguments put forward to explain causes or propose solutions. This theory offers a systematic approach to categorising and evaluating editorial rhetoric, allowing researchers to map how newspapers negotiate their persuasive aims in socially sensitive contexts. Given the high emotional and political stakes surrounding kidnapping in Nigeria, editorialists often blend ethical authority, emotional appeal, and logical persuasion to articulate positions that align with the public and policymakers alike. Aristotle's theory, therefore, provides not only a framework for textual analysis but also a lens through which to understand how media discourses contribute to shaping social attitudes and policy debates.

Methodology

The study employed a qualitative research design to explore the rhetorical strategies used in editorials on kidnapping in selected Nigerian newspapers. Data for the study consisted of editorial articles focused on kidnapping, published between 2020 and 2024 in three prominent Nigerian newspapers: *The Nigerian Tribune*, *Daily Trust*, and *The Punch*. A purposive sampling technique was used to select a representative sample of 30 editorials, with 10 articles drawn from each newspaper based on their relevance to the research topic. The selection criteria included editorials that explicitly discussed kidnapping incidents, government responses, or social implications of the crime, ensuring the data was directly pertinent to the study's aim. Data collection involved retrieving the editorials from the newspapers' online archives and official websites. Each editorial was carefully reviewed and prepared for analysis. The study applied rhetorical analysis as the primary analytical procedure, guided by Aristotle's concepts of ethos, pathos, and logos to categorise and interpret the rhetorical strategies employed. Additionally, thematic content analysis was conducted to identify recurring themes and patterns across the editorials. Coding was done manually to ensure close engagement with the text and to maintain the contextual elements of language use.

Results

This section presents the analysis and discussion of the data for this study. First, the rhetorical strategies in the selected newspaper editorials are identified and categorized. Next, rhetorical strategies are analyzed as used in the editorials. In the last section of the chapter, the use of rhetorical strategies in the editorials are compare across the selected editorial, and the predominant rhetorical strategies are determined. Four editorials are selected for analysis in this study. The editorials are labelled T1 (Text 1), T2 (Text 2), T3 (Text 3), T4 (Text 4), respectively. In the course of this study, the texts are captioned as T1, T2, T3 and T4.

Identification and Categorization of Rhetorical Strategies in the Selected Editorials.

Table 1 shows the frequency of occurrence of each rhetorical strategies employed in the selected newspaper editorials, the editorial texts, labelled T1, T2, T3, and T4, were systematically examined, and the rhetorical devices identified were grouped into seven major categories: Pathos, Ethos, Logos, Imagery, Anaphora, Alliteration, and Hyperbole. This categorization helps to reveal the predominant persuasive techniques utilized by the editorial writers and provides a statistical basis for the subsequent qualitative analysis.

Table 1: Quantitative Analysis of the Rhetorical Strategies in the Selected Texts

S/N	Rhetorical Strategies	Text 1	Text 2	Text 3	Text 4	Total	100%
1	Pathos	7	10	6	6	29	27.88%
2	Ethos	5	12	14	7	38	36.54%

3	Logos	11	9	9	8	37	35.58%
Total		23	31	29	21	104	100%

The table presents the distribution and frequency of rhetorical strategies—Pathos, Ethos, and Logos—across four selected newspaper editorials on kidnapping in Nigeria. Ethos, which appeals to the credibility and authority of the writer, is the most frequently employed rhetorical strategy, accounting for 36.54% of the total strategies used. This suggests that editorial writers often rely on credibility and moral arguments to engage readers and strengthen their stance on the issue of kidnapping. Logos follows closely with 35.58%, indicating a strong presence of logical reasoning, facts, and evidence in constructing persuasive arguments. This implies that editorial writers aim to inform and persuade readers through rational analysis of events and policies related to kidnapping. Pathos, which appeals to emotions, is the least used, representing 27.88% of the total. Although used less frequently, its presence reveals an attempt by writers to evoke empathy and emotional responses from readers, possibly to inspire public concern and policy action. The relatively balanced use of all three strategies suggests a deliberate and logical rhetorical approach by editorial writers. It reflects their effort to blend emotional appeal, logical argumentation, and ethical credibility in shaping public opinion and influencing discourse on the complex and sensitive issue of kidnapping.

Qualitative Analysis of the Rhetorical Strategies as used in the Editorials

This study undertakes a qualitative analysis of rhetorical strategies employed in newspaper editorials. Focusing on how writers use language to persuade and influence readers, it examines techniques

such as ethos, pathos, and logos within editorial texts. The research explores how these strategies shape public opinion and contribute to the construction of social realities. Understanding these rhetorical devices provides valuable insight into the persuasive power of editorials in addressing critical societal issues.

Pathos

Ext 1, T1

"Kidnappings are becoming too rampant, and too frequent across the country. The alarming situation is pervasive, such that no part of the nation is immune."

Ext 2, T1

"Every neighbourhood is now prone to heinous attacks by kidnappers and their accomplices. Even pupils and students are targets."

Ext 3, T1

"She was buried in Bwari, Abuja, on Saturday amid tears by family members and sympathisers."

Pathos is employed in editorials to evoke emotional responses from readers, often by revealing fear, sorrow, empathy, or outrage. These emotional appeals strengthen the persuasive power of the editorial by encouraging readers to personally connect with the issue.

In Excerpt 1, Text 1, the statement "Kidnappings are becoming too rampant, and too frequent across the country. The alarming situation is pervasive, such that no part of the nation is immune" relies on emotionally charged language to create a sense of fear and urgency. Words like "too rampant," "too frequent," and "alarming situation" heighten anxiety about personal and national safety. The phrase "no part of the nation is immune" removes any illusion of distance or safety, reinforcing a shared sense of vulnerability. This evokes fear not just of

the crime itself but of its growing unpredictability. In addition, the sentence implicitly critiques the government's failure to ensure security, encouraging readers to adopt a critical stance toward those in authority. In Excerpt 2, Text 1, the statement "Every neighbourhood is now prone to heinous attacks by kidnappers and their accomplices. Even pupils and students are targets" uses emotionally charged language to heighten readers' distress. The phrase "heinous attacks" emphasizes brutality, while the inclusion of "even pupils and students" activates protective instincts toward children—symbols of innocence and vulnerability. This intensifies readers' emotional reactions, evoking outrage, helplessness, and fear. The idea that "every neighbourhood is now prone" suggests widespread danger, reinforcing the perception that no one is safe and nowhere is secure. This strategy effectively positions the reader within the threat, making the issue feel immediate and personal. In Excerpt 3, Text 1, "She was buried in Bwari, Abuja, on Saturday amid tears by family members and sympathisers" evokes sorrow and empathy. The image of grieving relatives and sympathizers enhances the emotional impact, drawing readers into the shared human experience of mourning. By focusing on the pain of the victim's loved ones, the editorial appeals to the readers' sense of compassion and communal solidarity. This emotional connection deepens the seriousness of the issue and encourages a more heartfelt response to the tragedy. Through fear, empathy, and sorrow, pathos is used to frame the issue as both urgent and personal, compelling the reader to respond with concern, outrage, or a desire for change.

Ext 4, T2

"Afflicted by decades of terrorism and armed robbery, banditry and its twin, kidnapping, are spreading fast across the country, turning Nigerians into nervous wrecks.

Ext 5, T2

"On Monday, sophisticatedly-armed kidnappers intercepted three monarchs who were returning from a security meeting in Kogi State, at Oke-Ako. They shot dead two – Olatunde Olusola of Imojo and Babatunde Ogunsakin of Esun-Ekiti."

Ext 6, T2

"In Lagos, media reports say kidnappers are spreading their tent."

In Excerpt 4, Text 2, the statement "Afflicted by decades of terrorism and armed robbery, banditry and its twin, kidnapping, are spreading fast across the country, turning Nigerians into nervous wrecks" is rich in emotional appeal. The use of the word "Afflicted" connotes deep, ongoing suffering, suggesting that Nigerians have been enduring layers of violence for decades. This positions the current wave of kidnapping as part of a long, painful continuum of insecurity. The phrase "turning Nigerians into nervous wrecks" intensifies this emotional effect by revealing the psychological toll fear, anxiety, and trauma being experienced by ordinary citizens. The imagery here invites the reader to empathize with a population worn down by relentless insecurity, encouraging concern and possibly anger at the lack of effective intervention. In Excerpt 5, Text 2, the editorial recounts: "On Monday, sophisticatedly-armed kidnappers intercepted three monarchs who were returning from a security meeting in Kogi State, at Oke-Ako. They shot dead two – Olatunde Olusola of Imojo and Babatunde Ogunsakin of Esun-Ekiti." This account is particularly striking because it combines a factual report with emotionally resonant details. The phrase "sophisticatedly-armed kidnappers" suggests not only the organized and dangerous nature of the criminals but also the failure of security systems to prevent such attacks. The deliberate naming of the monarchs and the revelation that they were killed shortly after attending a security meeting is a powerful emotional trigger. It evokes both sorrow and outrage, particularly as traditional rulers symbolize

authority, stability, and heritage in Nigerian society. Their deaths amplify the sense of lawlessness and vulnerability, fostering a deep emotional response from the reader. In Excerpt 6, Text 2, the statement “In Lagos, media reports say kidnappers are spreading their tent” uses metaphorical language to evoke fear and unease. The phrase “spreading their tent” paints a picture of gradual but unstoppable expansion, implying that no region is safe from the threat of kidnapping. This choice of words is subtle but potent, tapping into readers’ fears of the unknown and of becoming future victims. It also reinforces the idea of a nationwide crisis, encouraging the audience to recognize the immediacy and seriousness of the issue. Across these excerpts, pathos is effectively employed to draw emotional attention to the growing problem of kidnapping in Nigeria. By invoking images of suffering, grief, and helplessness, the editorials seek to not only inform but to stir readers into emotional awareness and possibly, civic concern or demand for change. This emotional engagement deepens the persuasive force of the editorial discourse, making the issue of kidnapping not just a national crisis, but a personal one for every reader.

Ext 7, T3

"Tormenting Nigerians amid economic adversity and widespread poverty."

Ext 8, T3

"Girls and young women are kidnapped as sex slaves and brides by terrorists and bandits in the north."

Ext 9, T3

"A retired army general was kidnapped and his vehicle abandoned."

In Excerpt 7, Text 3, the phrase “Tormenting Nigerians amid economic adversity and widespread poverty” appeals to the reader’s empathy by portraying the suffering of ordinary citizens. The word “tormenting”

implies not just physical harm, but ongoing emotional and psychological distress. When paired with “economic adversity and widespread poverty,” it paints a picture of a population already burdened by hardship, now further traumatized by insecurity. This evokes sympathy and concern for the plight of Nigerians who, despite facing harsh economic realities, must also contend with the fear and instability caused by kidnappings. The emotional appeal here reinforces the layered nature of the crisis, showing how kidnapping compounds existing suffering and destabilizes everyday life. In Excerpt 8, Text 3, the statement “Girls and young women are kidnapped as sex slaves and brides by terrorists and bandits in the north” delivers a forceful emotional appeal. The specific mention of “girls and young women” stresses the innocence and vulnerability of the victims, prompting a visceral reaction from the reader. Terms like “sex slaves” and “brides” carry heavy emotional weight, conjuring images of exploitation, forced captivity, and sexual violence. This portrayal taps into the reader’s sense of morality, justice, and protectiveness, especially toward the young and defenseless. It also reveals the gendered dimension of violence, evoking outrage and compassion simultaneously. By focusing on the abuse of society’s most vulnerable, the editorial intensifies the emotional gravity of the kidnapping crisis and positions it as not just a criminal issue, but a humanitarian and moral emergency. In Excerpt 9, Text 3, the statement “A retired army general was kidnapped and his vehicle abandoned” evokes irony and heightens the emotional impact. The kidnapping of a figure traditionally associated with strength, protection, and authority disrupts the reader’s expectations and reveals the breakdown of security. The image of the general’s “vehicle abandoned” further symbolizes helplessness and vulnerability even those once charged with defending others are no longer safe. This narrative elicits a sense of alarm and hopelessness, reinforcing the idea that the threat of kidnapping spares no one, regardless of status or former power. It appeals to the reader’s concern for national stability and trust in state institutions, amplifying

the emotional weight of the situation. Collectively, these excerpts use pathos to make the kidnapping crisis deeply personal, emphasizing human suffering, moral outrage, and societal collapse. By drawing attention to the emotional consequences of insecurity from the violation of vulnerable individuals to the powerlessness of former protectors the editorials compel readers to not only understand the issue intellectually but to feel its weight emotionally.

Ext 10, T4

"WHEN, in previous editorials, we accused the Muhammadu Buhari administration of running "a government of herdsmen, by Nigerians, and for herdsmen," we were not being cynical."

Ext 11, T4

"Sadly, events since the administration's stout defence of killer herders that the Ondo State governor, Mr. Rotimi Akeredolu (SAN), asked to vacate the state's forest reserves have confirmed our worst fears about the reign of terror unleashed by the sacred cows across the country, including the ongoing attacks on travellers plying Nigeria's busiest road, the Lagos-Ibadan expressway."

Ext 12, T4

"It is galling that the highways in the South-West, and indeed in other parts of the country, have become routes to anguish even as the Federal Government which enjoys the monopoly of the repressive apparatuses of the state continues to falter and dither, rolling out a salad of excuses to an exasperated populace, resisting calls for the decentralization of the country's security architecture, and refusing to address the sub-text of ethnic provocations."

In Excerpt 10, Text 4, the editorial declares: "WHEN, in previous editorials, we accused the Muhammadu Buhari administration of running 'a government of herdsmen, by Nigerians, and for herdsmen,'

we were not being cynical.” This statement opens with a tone of frustration and defensiveness. The phrase “we were not being cynical” suggests that the situation is no longer hypothetical or exaggerated—it has become a grim reality. The rephrasing of Abraham Lincoln’s famous democratic ideal (“government of the people, by the people, for the people”) into a version centered on herdsmen conveys a profound sense of betrayal and injustice. It evokes strong emotions such as anger and disappointment, particularly for readers who feel marginalized or endangered by perceived government bias. This appeal to pathos is effective in cultivating a shared sense of urgency and injustice among the audience. In Excerpt 11, Text 4, the editorial states: “Sadly, events since the administration’s stout defence of killer herders that the Ondo State governor, Mr. Rotimi Akeredolu (SAN), asked to vacate the state’s forest reserves have confirmed our worst fears about the reign of terror unleashed by the sacred cows across the country, including the ongoing attacks on travellers plying Nigeria’s busiest road, the Lagos-Ibadan expressway.” The opening word “Sadly” sets a somber tone, indicating emotional fatigue or disappointment. The phrase “confirmed our worst fears” triggers a sense of dread and inevitability, implying that past warnings were ignored and that the situation has deteriorated. Describing the perpetrators as “sacred cows” suggests immunity from justice, which inflames the reader’s anger and sense of helplessness. The reference to “reign of terror” and attacks on a major national highway intensifies the emotional appeal by emphasizing the spread and impunity of violence, tapping into collective fears over personal safety and national collapse. In Excerpt 12, Text 4, the editorial laments: “It is galling that the highways in the South-West, and indeed in other parts of the country, have become routes to anguish even as the Federal Government which enjoys the monopoly of the repressive apparatuses of the state continues to falter and dither, rolling out a salad of excuses to an exasperated populace, resisting calls for the decentralization of the country’s security architecture, and refusing to address the sub-text of ethnic provocations.” Here, “galling” signals

deep resentment and anger. Referring to major roads as “routes to anguish” paints a vivid picture of danger and trauma, evoking fear and empathy. The phrase “salad of excuses” uses metaphor and sarcasm to belittle the government’s inaction, intensifying the emotional impact. The mention of an “exasperated populace” and the refusal to respond to “ethnic provocations” appeals to readers’ communal identity, frustration, and desire for justice. It frames the issue not just as a security failure but as a moral and social crisis, deepening the emotional connection with the reader. Together, these excerpts illustrate how editorials use emotional appeals to express public outrage, reveal systemic failures, and inspire collective urgency. By invoking fear, frustration, sorrow, and injustice, pathos in these texts seeks to mobilize readers emotionally, transforming abstract policy issues into personal and communal concerns.

Ethos

Ext 1, T1

"And on January 9, six siblings were kidnapped alongside their father, Alhaji Mansoor Al-Kadriyar, from their home at Zuma 1, on the outskirts of Bwari town in Abuja. The kidnappers later released the father to get N60 million as ransom for the release of his daughters on or before last Friday."

Ext 2, T1

"Unable to raise the amount by Friday, the bandits killed Nabeeha Al-Kadriyar, a 400-level student of Biological Sciences, Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria on Friday and dumped her body at Idah junction located along Bwari-Jere road in Kagarko LGA of Kaduna State. She was buried in Bwari, Abuja, on Saturday amid tears by family members and sympathisers."

Ext 3, T1

"Meanwhile, late Nabeeha's five sisters, including Najeebah, a 500-level Quantity Surveying student and Nadherah, a 300-level Zoology student, alongside three others, are still in captivity. The most affronting aspect of this very sad issue is that after killing Nabeeha for her family's failure to raise N60 million."

Ethos is a rhetorical strategy that strengthens the author's credibility and ethical standing by grounding the narrative in verifiable facts, detailed descriptions, and personal identifiers. By providing specific names, dates, locations, and background details, the author builds trust with the reader and stresses the gravity and authenticity of the issue. The following excerpts illustrate how ethos is deployed to lend authority to the discussion on kidnapping. In Excerpt 1, Text 1, the editorial states: "And on January 9, six siblings were kidnapped alongside their father, Alhaji Mansoor Al-Kadriyar, from their home at Zuma 1, on the outskirts of Bwari town in Abuja. The kidnappers later released the father to get N60 million as ransom for the release of his daughters on or before last Friday." Here, the narrative is enriched by the inclusion of precise details such as the specific date, location, and the full name of Alhaji Mansoor Al-Kadriyar. This specificity not only humanizes the incident but also lends factual authenticity to the account. By delineating the exact circumstances and the financial demands involved (N60 million ransom), the author signals thorough research and familiarity with the case, which elevates the reliability of the information presented. In Excerpt 2. Text 1, the text reads: "Unable to raise the amount by Friday, the bandits killed Nabeeha Al-Kadriyar, a 400-level student of Biological Sciences, Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria on Friday and dumped her body at Idah junction located along Bwari-Jere road in Kagarko LGA of Kaduna State. She was buried in Bwari, Abuja, on Saturday amid tears by family members and sympathisers." This excerpt deepens the ethical appeal by providing comprehensive details about the victim, Nabeeha Al-Kadriyar. The

mention of her educational background and affiliation with a prestigious institution like Ahmadu Bello University adds to the narrative's verifiability. Moreover, by noting the emotional response "amid tears by family members and sympathisers" the account not only documents the tragedy but also connects with the reader's moral sensibilities. This combination of hard facts and the human cost of the event reinforces the author's credibility and stresses the serious consequences of the kidnappings. In Excerpt 3, Text 1, the narrative continues: "Meanwhile, late Nabeeha's five sisters, including Najeebah, a 500-level Quantity Surveying student and Nadherah, a 300-level Zoology student, alongside three others, are still in captivity. The most affronting aspect of this very sad issue is that after killing Nabeeha for her family's failure to raise N60 million, the bandits now raised the ransom to N..." Here, detailed information about the victims' identities and academic pursuits the sisters' levels of study and their field further solidifies the narrative's authenticity. This meticulous documentation not only amplifies the severity of the ongoing crisis but also reveals the barbarity of the kidnappers' actions. By emphasizing the escalation in ransom demands following a tragic loss, the author stresses both the ruthlessness of the perpetrators and the persistent human cost, thereby bolstering the narrative's ethical weight. Together, these excerpts use ethos to construct a compelling and credible narrative. The detailed accounts serve as testimonial evidence that not only enhances the author's trustworthiness but also provides readers with a clear, fact-based understanding of the dire situation.

Ext 4, T2

"Afflicted by decades of terrorism and armed robbery, banditry and its twin, kidnapping, are spreading fast across the country, turning Nigerians into nervous wrecks."

Ext 5, T2

"Apart from the North-West, the Federal Capital Territory has become a hot spot of kidnapping. Ekiti State and the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway in the South-West are the latest scenes of this crime."

Ext 6, T2

"Two separate kidnapping incidents are raising tensions in Ekiti."

The mention of "two separate kidnapping incidents" provides concrete examples to support the author's claims, reinforcing their reliability and knowledge about current events.

In Excerpt 4, Text 2, the editorial states: "Afflicted by decades of terrorism and armed robbery, banditry and its twin, kidnapping, are spreading fast across the country, turning Nigerians into nervous wrecks." the use of the word "Afflicted" suggests a long-standing and severe problem, acknowledging decades of violence that set the broader context for the current crisis. The phrase "turning Nigerians into nervous wrecks" demonstrates an understanding of the population's emotional and psychological state. This detailed historical and emotional context not only humanizes the issue but also reinforces the author's credibility by showing an in-depth grasp of both the factual and experiential aspects of the problem. In Excerpt 5, Text 2, the text reads: "Apart from the North-West, the Federal Capital Territory has become a hot spot of kidnapping. Ekiti State and the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway in the South-West are the latest scenes of this crime. "This excerpt enhances the narrative's authority by pinpointing specific geographical areas affected by the crisis. The mention of clearly defined regions such as the North-West, the Federal Capital Territory, Ekiti State, and the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway shows a detailed knowledge of the problem's spread. Such precision in location-based evidence lends factual authenticity to the argument, making the reported crisis seem both pervasive and meticulously documented. In

Excerpt 6, Text 2, the narrative continues: “Two separate kidnapping incidents are raising tensions in Ekiti.” By citing “two separate kidnapping incidents,” the author provides concrete examples that support the argument. The reference to multiple incidents in Ekiti stresses the ongoing and escalating nature of the crisis. This use of tangible, verifiable events serves as testimonial evidence of the problem’s severity and confirms the author’s familiarity with current events, thereby bolstering the overall ethical appeal of the narrative. Together, these excerpts use ethos to construct a compelling and credible narrative. The detailed accounts spanning historical context, precise geographical data, and specific event example serve as testimonial evidence that not only enhances the author’s trustworthiness but also provides readers with a clear, fact-based understanding of the dire situation.

Ext 7, T3

"In the north, terrorists and bandits are kidnapping girls and young women as sex slaves, 'brides' and camp attendants."

Ext 8, T3

"This is another major challenge for President Bola Tinubu and his security chiefs."

Ext 9, T3

"While the police rescued eight of those abducted within hours, the remaining victims regained their freedom only on October 6, after their families paid a combined ransom of N50million ransom."

In Excerpt 21, Text 3, the text reads: “In the north, terrorists and bandits are kidnapping girls and young women as sex slaves, ‘brides’ and camp attendants. “Here, the speaker’s use of specific victim categories “girls and young women” and their roles as “sex slaves,” “brides,” and “camp attendants” reveals a deep awareness of the brutal realities faced by

abducted individuals. This level of detail indicates that the author is not speaking from conjecture but from familiarity with documented incidents, thereby enhancing their credibility. The regional specificity (“in the north”) further grounds the claim in a geographic context, showing that the issue is not abstract but tied to identifiable places and patterns. In Excerpt 22, Text 3, the speaker adds: “This is another major challenge for President Bola Tinubu and his security chiefs.” By explicitly naming President Bola Tinubu and “his security chiefs,” the speaker ties the crisis to those in power, signalling an understanding of the administrative structure and the actors responsible for ensuring national safety. This move enhances ethos by positioning the speaker as informed not only about the issue itself but also about the leadership dynamics that influence possible solutions. This appeal to political accountability shows the speaker’s engagement with governance and security policy, lending further credibility to the argument. In Excerpt 30, Text 3, the narrative continues: “While the police rescued eight of those abducted within hours, the remaining victims regained their freedom only on October 6, after their families paid a combined ransom of N50 million.” The author’s mention of the specific number of victims rescued, the precise date of release, and the exact ransom amount demonstrates a commitment to factual reporting. These concrete details enhance the reliability of the account by providing verifiable information. Rather than relying on generalized statements, the speaker showcases familiarity with the outcomes of the events discussed, reinforcing the ethical appeal by demonstrating thorough research and attentiveness to both immediate and long-term consequences. Together, these excerpts employ ethos to present a compelling and credible depiction of the kidnapping crisis. Through the inclusion of detailed facts, geographic and political references, and outcomes of specific cases, the author positions themselves as a knowledgeable and trustworthy voice.

Ext 33, T4

"Rather, we were only restating well-documented facts of Buhari's horrendously provincial, ethnically insensitive and criminally negligent approach to governance."

Ext 34, T4

"Sadly, events since the administration's stout defence of killer herders that the Ondo State governor, Mr. Rotimi Akeredolu (SAN), asked to vacate the state's forest reserves have confirmed our worst fears about the reign of terror unleashed by the sacred cows across the country..."

Ext 35, T4

"...including the ongoing attacks on travellers plying Nigeria's busiest road, the Lagos-Ibadan expressway."

In Excerpt 10, Text 4, the speaker asserts: "Rather, we were only restating well-documented facts of Buhari's horrendously provincial, ethnically insensitive and criminally negligent approach to governance." By referring to "well-documented facts," the author appeals to the reliability of external, verifiable sources rather than personal opinion. This phrase signals that the statements are grounded in existing evidence, thereby strengthening the speaker's ethos. Furthermore, the use of potent descriptors such as "horrendously provincial" and "criminally negligent" communicates the author's firm stance and deep familiarity with the administration's failings. This combination of factual assertion and evaluative language demonstrates both knowledge and moral engagement, enhancing the author's authority on the issue. In Excerpt 11, Text 4, the passage states: "Sadly, events since the administration's stout defence of killer herders that the Ondo State governor, Mr. Rotimi Akeredolu (SAN), asked to vacate the state's forest reserves have confirmed our worst fears about the reign of terror unleashed by the sacred cows across the country..." This excerpt builds credibility by referencing a notable public figure—Mr.

Rotimi Akeredolu, identified not only by name but also by title (SAN) and office (Ondo State governor). Including such specific credentials lends weight to the narrative, as it shows that the concerns expressed are echoed by respected individuals in positions of authority. Additionally, referencing a particular conflict involving forest reserves adds factual grounding to the argument, demonstrating that the author is discussing actual events rather than hypothetical scenarios. In Excerpt 12, Text 4, the speaker adds: "...including the ongoing attacks on travellers plying Nigeria's busiest road, the Lagos-Ibadan expressway." Here, the reference to the Lagos-Ibadan expressway, a widely known and heavily frequented route, makes the issue both relatable and verifiable for the audience. By drawing attention to a specific and high-profile location, the author anchors their claims in a concrete context that many Nigerians can identify with or confirm. This not only reinforces the factual nature of the argument but also stresses the widespread impact of the insecurity crisis, thereby enhancing the speaker's trustworthiness and engagement with real public concerns. Collectively, these excerpts deploy ethos effectively by combining precise references to people, places, and documented events. The author's integration of institutional titles, legal designations, and geographical landmarks works to establish a credible, informed perspective.

Logos

Ext 1, T1

"The kidnappers later released the father to get N60 million as ransom for the release of his daughters on or before last Friday."

Ext 2, T1

"Unable to raise the amount by Friday, the bandits killed Nabeeha Al-Kadriyar, a 400-level student of Biological Sciences, Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria on Friday and dumped her body at Idah

junction located along Bwari-Jere, road in Kagarko LGA of Kaduna State."

Ext 3, T1

"She was buried in Bwari, Abuja, on Saturday amid tears by family members and sympathisers."

This fact emphasizes the emotional and societal impact of the kidnappings, appealing to the audience's sense of empathy and revealing the real-world consequences. Logos appeals to logic and reason by presenting facts, statistics, causal relationships, and evidence to support an argument. The following excerpts from Text 1 demonstrate how logos is used to provide rational evidence and reveal the logical consequences of insecurity and kidnapping in Nigeria. In Excerpt 1, Text 1, the editorial states: "The kidnappers later released the father to get N60 million as ransom for the release of his daughters on or before last Friday." This sentence introduces a clear cause-and-effect situation: the father was released specifically to secure a ransom payment of N60 million for his daughters. The logic behind the kidnappers' actions using a family member as a means to an end reveals the calculated and transactional nature of their crime. By stating the exact ransom amount and deadline, the editorial presents concrete data that enables the audience to understand the high financial stakes involved, making the emotional and logical implications of the crime more tangible. In Excerpt 2, Text 1, the text continues: "Unable to raise the amount by Friday, the bandits killed Nabeeha Al-Kadriyar, a 400-level student of Biological Sciences, Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria on Friday and dumped her body at Idah junction located along Bwari-Jere, road in Kagarko LGA of Kaduna State." This excerpt follows logically from the previous one and shows a grim, factual consequence of the unmet ransom demand. The failure to deliver the money leads directly to Nabeeha's death, offering a clear causal link that supports the editorial's argument about the danger and brutality of

these kidnappings. The mention of her academic level and institution not only provides context but also appeals to reason by illustrating the type of bright, promising individuals being lost to these tragedies. In Excerpt 3, Text 1, the passage states: “She was buried in Bwari, Abuja, on Saturday amid tears by family members and sympathisers”. While emotionally resonant, this detail also serves a logical function by providing closure to the sequence of events. It emphasizes the societal and communal cost of such incidents. The funeral becomes the final result in the logical chain: kidnapping, ransom, death, and burial. This structure helps readers comprehend the full weight of the situation through a logical progression that stresses the real-life implications of insecurity. Together, these excerpts employ logos by outlining a tragic but rational sequence of events that stem from a specific demand and its fallout.

Ext 4, T2

"To defeat it, Nigeria needs to swiftly overhaul its security structure."

Ext 5, T2

"The same day, bandits kidnapped five pupils and four teachers of the Apostolic Faith Group of Schools in Emure-Ekiti. The kidnappers are demanding a ransom of N100 million to free their victims. The police said they have arrested five suspects."

Ext 6, T2

"In Lagos, media reports say kidnappers are spreading their tentacles."

The following excerpts from Text 2 illustrate how logical reasoning is employed to build a compelling argument. In Excerpt 4, Text 2, the editorial asserts: “To defeat it, Nigeria needs to swiftly overhaul its security structure.” This sentence offers a straightforward, rational solution to the problem of kidnapping. The proposed action

overhauling the security structure addresses the root of the issue rather than its symptoms. By using the word “swiftly,” the author emphasizes the urgency, reinforcing the logical necessity of immediate reform. This appeal to logic strengthens the argument by presenting a feasible and action-oriented approach to resolving the crises. In Excerpt 5, Text 2, the narrative continues: “The same day, bandits kidnapped five pupils and four teachers of the Apostolic Faith Group of Schools in Emure-Ekiti. The kidnappers are demanding a ransom of N100 million to free their victims. The police said they have arrested five suspects.” Here, the author presents a complete and factually grounded account of a kidnapping incident. The specific number of victims, the demanded ransom, and the subsequent police response create a logical flow of events from crime to reaction. This use of concrete data supports the argument by showing that the situation is not speculative but real and verifiable. It appeals to the reader’s reasoning by establishing a direct link between law enforcement efforts and criminal activity. In Excerpt 6, Text 2, the text states: “In Lagos, media reports say kidnappers are spreading their tentacles”. While the phrasing is metaphorical, the logical appeal lies in the attribution of the information to “media reports,” lending an element of evidence-based support to the claim. The expression “spreading their tentacles” suggests a calculated expansion of criminal operations, allowing readers to infer the growing threat logically. This serves as a warning grounded in reported facts, reinforcing the editorial’s broader argument that kidnapping is not an isolated issue but a spreading epidemic. Together, these excerpts use logos to construct a rational and evidence-backed portrayal of the kidnapping crisis in Nigeria. Through proposed solutions, verified incidents, and referenced sources, the editorial builds a logical case for urgent and strategic intervention.

Ext 7, T3

"Lately, there has been a spike in the kidnapping segment resulting in renewed security shocks."

Ext 8, T3

"Reports emerge daily around the country of assailants attacking and kidnapping citizens either for ransom, or ritual purposes."

Ext 9, T3

"In the north, terrorists and bandits are kidnapping girls and young women as sex slaves, 'brides' and camp attendants."

In Excerpt 7, Text 3, the author states: "Lately, there has been a spike in the kidnapping segment resulting in renewed security shocks". This sentence communicates a recent and notable development in the security context. The word "spike" suggests a quantifiable and sharp increase, indicating that the situation has worsened. By linking this rise to "renewed security shocks," the author draws a cause-and-effect relationship, showing how the increase in kidnappings is directly contributing to national insecurity. This logical progression helps the reader understand the scale and urgency of the problem. In Excerpt 8, Text 3, the text reads: "Reports emerge daily around the country of assailants attacking and kidnapping citizens either for ransom, or ritual purposes". This statement reinforces the frequency and consistency of the problem. The phrase "reports emerge daily" emphasizes the ongoing and widespread nature of the threat, pointing to a persistent trend rather than isolated incidents. By categorizing the motivations behind the crimes—"for ransom, or ritual purposes"—the author provides a logical classification of the criminal acts, helping readers comprehend the multifaceted dimensions of the crisis. In Excerpt 9, Text 3, the writer notes: "In the north, terrorists and bandits are kidnapping girls and young women as sex slaves, 'brides' and camp attendants." This excerpt provides a geographically specific and demographically targeted breakdown of the crimes. Identifying the perpetrators as "terrorists and bandits" and naming the victims as "girls and young women" stresses the calculated and severe nature of these actions. The mention of the roles the victims are forced into "sex

slaves,” “brides,” and “camp attendants” adds a layer of disturbing detail that appeals to the reader’s sense of logic and justice. It shows the deliberate exploitation inherent in these crimes, reinforcing the argument with clear and horrifying evidence. Together, these excerpts use logical appeals to establish the gravity, frequency, and pattern of kidnapping in Nigeria.

Ext 32, T4

"Sadly, events since the administration's stout defence of killer herders that the Ondo State governor, Mr. Rotimi Akeredolu (SAN), asked to vacate the state's forest reserves have confirmed our worst fears about the reign of terror unleashed by the sacred cows across the country, including the ongoing attacks on travellers plying Nigeria's busiest road, the Lagos-Ibadan expressway."

Ext 33, T4

"It is galling that the highways in the South-West, and indeed in other parts of the country, have become routes to anguish even as the Federal Government which enjoys the monopoly of the repressive apparatuses of the state continues to falter and dither, rolling out a salad of excuses to an exasperated populace, resisting calls for the decentralisation of the country's security architecture, and refusing to address the sub-text of ethnic provocations."

Ext 34, T4

"As is their wont, terrorists dressed in military camouflage attacked commuters travelling on the Lagos-Ibadan expressway on Tuesday."

In Excerpt 32, Text 4, the text reads: “Sadly, events since the administration’s stout defence of killer herders that the Ondo State governor, Mr. Rotimi Akeredolu (SAN), asked to vacate the state’s forest reserves have confirmed our worst fears about the reign of terror unleashed by the sacred cows across the country, including the ongoing

attacks on travellers plying Nigeria's busiest road, the Lagos-Ibadan expressway." This excerpt lays out a logical sequence of events. It links the federal government's controversial defence of violent herders with a broader pattern of unchecked violence, particularly the attacks on a major highway. The reference to a specific decision by the administration (defending herders) and its consequence (escalating attacks) exemplifies a clear cause-and-effect relationship. This appeals to logic by arguing that inaction or misjudgement at the leadership level directly contributes to worsening insecurity. In Excerpt 33, Text 4, the editorial adds: "It is galling that the highways in the South-West, and indeed in other parts of the country, have become routes to anguish even as the Federal Government which enjoys the monopoly of the repressive apparatuses of the state continues to falter and dither, rolling out a salad of excuses to an exasperated populace, resisting calls for the decentralisation of the country's security architecture, and refusing to address the sub-text of ethnic provocations." Here, the argument rests on institutional logic. The Federal Government, by virtue of its exclusive control over national security forces ("monopoly of the repressive apparatuses of the state"), is expected to ensure safety. However, the government's failure to act despite widespread unrest creates a logical contradiction that reveals its ineffectiveness. The refusal to decentralize security despite growing demands for reform is presented as an irrational stance, thereby undermining the government's credibility and reinforcing the logic behind calls for restructuring. In Excerpt 34, Text 4, it is stated: "As is their wont, terrorists dressed in military camouflage attacked commuters travelling on the Lagos-Ibadan expressway on Tuesday." This sentence appeals to logos through its indication of a predictable pattern. The phrase "as is their wont" suggests that such attacks have become habitual. The specificity of the disguise ("military camouflage") and location ("Lagos-Ibadan expressway") reinforces the idea that this is a repeatable, identifiable tactic, one that security agencies should logically be able to anticipate and counter. The predictability of these

crimes reveals a failure in strategic response and supports the editorial's broader argument about systemic dysfunction. Together, these excerpts use logical appeals to build a compelling critique of the government's handling of security.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from this study reveal a deliberate and strategic use of rhetorical strategies across the selected newspaper editorials to influence public perception on the issue of kidnapping in Nigeria. The quantitative data indicate that *ethos* was the most frequently employed rhetorical strategy, followed closely by *logos*, with *pathos* being the least used. However, the relatively lower frequency of *pathos* does not diminish its significance, as the emotional appeals were powerfully rendered in the texts to complement the other strategies. The frequent use of *ethos* suggests that editorial writers sought to establish credibility and authority, possibly to enhance the legitimacy of their argument and ensure that readers perceive the information as trustworthy and grounded in reality. This is evident in the extensive use of real names, specific locations, institutional affiliations, and verifiable details that not only lend authenticity to the discourse but also frame the editorial voice as informed and ethically reliable. The frequent deployment of *logos* further stresses the editors' efforts to engage the reader through rational argumentation. Facts, causal sequences, and reasoned narratives about ransom payments, deaths, and the logistics of kidnapping operations are employed to appeal to logic and encourage critical reflection. Though *pathos* occurred less frequently, its usage was deeply evocative, designed to stir readers' emotions through vivid descriptions of grief, fear, and societal breakdown.

Qualitative analysis of the selected texts provides deeper insight into how these rhetorical strategies function beyond mere frequency. *Pathos*, though used sparingly in comparison, proves highly effective in triggering emotional engagement. Editorials used emotionally

charged language to invoke empathy, outrage, sorrow, and fear. For example, expressions such as “turning Nigerians into nervous wrecks” and “amid tears by family members and sympathisers” function to personalise the issue, shifting it from abstract statistics to lived human tragedy. These appeals invite readers to share in the collective emotional burden of insecurity, implicitly urging them to demand action or change. Meanwhile, *ethos* was meticulously constructed through the inclusion of specific names, dates, and affiliations—such as referring to victims as “a 400-level student of Biological Sciences, Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria.” This strategy not only bolstered the credibility of the information but also humanised the victims, portraying them as real individuals with ambitions and potential, tragically cut short. This approach fosters reader trust and positions the editorial as both ethically grounded and socially responsible. Furthermore, *logos* was effectively integrated to build logical arguments and present coherent narratives. Through cause-and-effect sequences and quantifiable evidence, the editorials demonstrated the irrationality and danger of the prevailing insecurity, such as linking ransom non-payment directly to murder. In doing so, they moved beyond emotional outcry to establish an analytical frame that could guide public reasoning and debate.

Comparative analysis of the texts reveals notable differences in rhetorical emphasis that may reflect varying editorial intents or target audiences. Texts 1 and 3, for instance, relied heavily on *ethos*, perhaps to enhance their authority and appeal to readers' trust. Text 1 used the highest proportion of *logos*, indicating a strategy anchored in logic and factual presentation, possibly aimed at readers inclined toward rational analysis. Text 2, however, leaned more heavily on *pathos*, portraying vivid images of national suffering and chaos to evoke a sense of urgency and public fear. Interestingly, Text 4 appeared more balanced in its application of all three rhetorical strategies, suggesting an integrative approach to persuasion. Across the board, these editorials reflect a

deliberate and calculated deployment of rhetorical techniques tailored to reinforce the urgency and gravity of the kidnapping crisis. The findings affirm that Nigerian newspaper editorials function not only to inform but also to shape public sentiment and prompt social and political engagement. Editorial writers strategically alternate between emotional, ethical, and logical appeals to maximise the persuasive impact of their discourse, revealing an crucial understanding of audience psychology and the social responsibility embedded in journalistic practice.

Conclusion

The study concludes that editorial discourse on kidnapping in selected Nigerian newspapers employs a range of rhetorical strategies to shape public opinion, influence policy discourse, and reinforce societal values on insecurity. Through the use of emotive language, persuasive appeals, intertextual references, and rhetorical questions, editorial writers craft narratives that not only reflect the gravity of the kidnapping crisis but also serve as tools of advocacy and moral positioning. This research contributes new knowledge by revealing how rhetorical strategies in editorials go beyond mere reportage, functioning instead as deliberate communicative acts that frame kidnapping as a national emergency deserving urgent response. The analysis reveals that these editorials strategically deploy ethos to establish credibility, pathos to evoke public empathy, and logos to present logical arguments aimed at eliciting action from both citizens and the government. Furthermore, the study uncovers how editorial discourse constructs a collective identity and moral high ground by contrasting the actions of kidnappers with the values of the broader society. These insights extend the existing literature on media discourse by specifically illuminating the pragmatic role of editorial rhetoric in a high-stakes security context. Unlike straight news reporting, editorials provide a discursive space where linguistic choices become central to shaping ideologies, public consciousness, and policy orientation on kidnapping. Additionally, the

study stresses the role of newspapers as socio-political actors whose editorial voices contribute to agenda-setting and national dialogue on insecurity. This research, therefore, adds depth to the understanding of media pragmatics in Nigeria, demonstrating how editorial rhetoric serves both communicative and performative functions in confronting national crises. The findings offer a basis for further inquiry into media responsibility, discourse ethics, and the potential of editorial rhetoric in driving constructive public engagement on social vices.

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