Chapter 8

Channels Television on YouTube: Shaping the African Discourse on Migration

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ABSTRACT

The migration of people in large numbers from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, and South Sudan, to receiving countries such as South Korea, America, Canada, Russia, and Germany among others remains a challenge because of its attendant violence and conflicts. This study, using descriptive content analysis, examined the comments of Channels Television’s YouTube channel commenters, as it relates to migration stories reported online. A total number of 30 YouTube videos on migration were selected based on their recency. Comments under the YouTube videos from January 2018 until April 2019, were examined using

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describe analysis to extract themes from these comments. The theories adopted for this study were the Framing and Priming theories. The analysis of public comments was to understand public discussions on migration and observe future implication of this discourse on inter-national relationships. Results revealed a possible future cultural divide among nations affected by migration if necessary actions are taken globally. The authors fear that such outcome could further promote disunity across nations and deprive individuals of their search for the greener pastures. The prevalent perceptions of the audience on the issue of migration which are advanced by these online comments can lure audience who read these comments but not involved in the discussions to believe and act it out.

INTRODUCTION

Migration has gradually become an imperative and intensely sensitive issue of controversy all over the world. The issue of how migrants are brutalised globally is correspondingly a related dispute for public discourse (Moore, 2015, p. 1). Insights, public views and opinions of people regarding migrants is another distinct subject (Dempster & Hargrave, 2017, p. 8). Therefore, it is important to determine what the term ‘migrant’ really means. In an attempt to give an agreeable and current definition of the term ‘migrants’, the International Organisation for Migration (2018) concludes that migrants are people who are travelling or who have travelled through a multinational perimeter or inside a state, different from their typical places of abode, irrespective of their legitimate status, whether the cause of travel is willingly or reluctantly, what the travel reasons are, and how long they are staying at their travel destination. These criteria given by IOM above are pertinent to the appropriate definition of migration in all contexts globally. Although, the definition of a ‘migrant’ according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2019), states that a migrant is a person who goes from one place to the other, especially to find work. For example, in the world today, people are migrating massively from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, and South Sudan, to receiving countries such as South Korea, America, Canada, Russia, and Germany among other countries. According to Shade, Kornfield, & Oliver (2015), migration is motivated by different needs, including entertainment, escape, enlightenment, and more content-congruent exposure. Finally, amidst various predictors, the need for content-congruent exposure emerged as a strong predictor of migration.

It is also essential to note that out of all the various mainstream media present online, television stations who have online presence, have been involved in setting agenda on the subject matter on migration, by posting live or pre-recorded programmes on YouTube, where the issue of migration is being discussed with allowance for comments from people of different walks of life.

There is a form of communal interaction that exists online because traditional mainstream media are beginning to stream their media reports on pressing issues such as immigration, on their online channels. This in turn has opened a form of online interaction between media contents and the public, thereby creating awareness of people’s opinion about the problem of immigration to international organisations, political system and individuals.

These individual comments online are useful in the place of research to further inform countries affected and government organisations on the necessary steps to take and the development of policies.

For the purpose of this study, the term ‘mainstream media’ must be accurately conceptualized. As opined by Newton (2018), ‘mainstream media outlets are found on television, radio, online and in newspapers and other publications. They include Television networks, as well as national news channels.