Online Newspaper Readers' Comments on Senator Elisha Abbo's Assault of a Female Sales Representative in Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract
This study was initiated to analyse the online newspaper readers' comments on the Facebook pages of three select newspapers on Senator Elisha Abbo's assault of a female sales representative in Abuja, Nigeria. In conducting this study, the Convergent Mixed Design was adopted. Quantitative content analysis and critical discourse analysis were used to generate quantitative and qualitative data for the study. Three hundred and ninety (390) comments were proportionately drawn for an equal distribution across the three select Facebook pages: *Premium Times, Daily Trust and Punch newspapers*. After the analysis, the findings revealed that the highest likes (59%) on stories of Senator Elisha Abbo's assault were from *Punch Newspaper* because they had a more interactive audience. The result equally showed that the tone of comments used by the online newspaper readers were the praise, attack, disapproval, ethnic, religious, gender-based, political and neutral tones. It was further identified that the dominant tone of comments used was the attack tone (49%) followed by the disapproval tone (26%). The least used tone was the neutral tone (2%). The hypothesis tested revealed that there is no significant relationship between the gender of the online newspaper readers and their tone of comments on the *Premium Times, Daily Trust and Punch* Facebook pages. It was also found that males constitute more of the online newspaper readers of the select newspaper Facebook pages. Based on these findings, it was recommended that there should be laws against gender-based assaults perpetuated by politicians and there should an awareness to enlighten women that they can also air their views on social media platforms.

Keywords: Online Newspaper, Facebook Comments, Elisha Abbo and VGW