

## Comedy of tragedies in Nigerian popular culture

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### ABSTRACT

The intrinsic consequences of political actions on society become more obvious in a developing state like Nigeria, where consequences of governmental actions or inactions over the years had become tragedies causing severe emotional, mental, and material distress for its citizens, one of which is insecurity. Nigerians have consequently turned to comedy for relief as the country's comedy content is largely centered on ridiculing politics and inefficiencies of the government. This study, therefore, attempted to ascertain the utility of comedy using as a politically-induced social problem; insecurity as a paradigm. Three (3) politically-induced contemporary comedy shows on YouTube were analyzed using Sentiment Analysis in Nvivo and a search on 'insecurity' and/or 'security' was initiated. The analysis showed a predominance of neutral comments (53%) followed by negative sentiments (29%) suggesting that most Nigerians remain unperturbed about their tragedies as Comedy remains a tool for comic relief rather than for social change.

### KEYWORDS

Comedy; socio-political tragedies; insecurity; popular culture; social media; Nigeria

## Introduction

Tragedies in Nigeria can be exemplified by the various prevalent social problems that cause both emotional and material distress in the country. Conceptualizing the word, Etzien (1980) argued that social problems are either '*societally induced conditions*', such as poverty and unemployment, or the '*act and condition*' that contradicts norms or standards of society (; for instance, drug abuse by adolescents or youths, examination malpractices by students, vote-buying by politicians, and corruption by government officials among others. Social issues in society are politically induced as most political problems have social consequences. According to social constructionists, conceptualizing social problems must begin as a process initiated by claim-makers who raise concerns about some conditions that need to be addressed. These concerns soon infiltrate a larger group (the general public, the media, policymakers, the social-problems workers) who then reconstruct such claims. In general, the process is complex: some

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issues lead to immediate responses from the larger community, while others find it difficult to reach an audience (Best 2019).

Nigeria has witnessed an overwhelming amount of these tragedies both in earlier and recent times (Dark 2017; Radda 2010). Many of them have been reflected in popular culture in both print and electronic media; ranging from newspaper articles and magazine pieces to feature-length films, television mini-series, shows, news, music, arts, documentaries, and even comic routines (Martin 2011). Popular culture is usually associated with either mass culture or folk culture which are differentiated from high culture and various institutional cultures or systems (Kidd 2017). Thus, the mass or folk culture could exist as a form of nonalignment or resistance to the high or institutional cultures and vice-versa. In Nigeria, the earliest claim makers like the late maverick Afrobeat musician, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti; Lemi Ghariokwu, the illustrator and designer; professor, and critic Chinua Achebe; Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka, have all raised concerns on many social conditions. Most of the time, these claims do not receive the claim makers' desired responses.

For instance, with music; Fela Anikulapo-Kuti in his 1978 album, '*Shuffling and Shmiling*', sang about '*societally induced conditions*' and expressed his concern about how the Nigerian people have come to accept them. According to Afolayan (2013), Fela's *Shuffling and Shmiling* was presented in such a serious manner that it was expected to ignite a *revolution*, on the contrary, the Nigerian people, are complacent, only hoping that '*one day, e go better*' (there will be a better deal in the hereafter). A study by Eesuola (2015) revealed that '*Shuffling and Shmiling*' is a protest song that reflected the Nigerian tragedy with utmost seriousness, however, the song could only make Nigerians ponder on social problems but never take any serious action. It appears that Nigerians are aware of their tragedies and they just want to be entertained by them.

Amongst the many social problems in the country, Insecurity is prevalent. Obarisiagbon & Akintoye (2019) observed that insecurity in the country has recently assumed an alarming rate affecting every facet of Nigerian life with no end in sight. Despite this problem and others alike, Nigeria is ranked the 85<sup>th</sup> happiest country in the world (Helliwell, Layard, and Sachs 2019). Nigerians always find a way to remain happy; they usually rely on comic relief from tragedies which are mostly reflected in popular culture, especially through comedy (Obadare 2009; Osae-Brown 2015). Rather than being bewildered by social problems, Nigerians could turn them into entertainment. According to Mendiburo-Seguel, Vargas, and Rubio (2017), comedy could be grouped into two types; political and non-political. Although Nigerians joke about different social issues, one major theme in the country's comedy has to do with disparaging Nigerian politics, government, and its various consequences (Afolayan 2013; Obadare 2009). This is to say that the country's comedy is largely centered around ridiculing politics outflow from the corruption and insensitivity of the government. This could explain the rise of many content creators, who use comedy to address grievous political-related issues in the country. For instance, 'The Other News', 'Dr. Damages' and 'Keeping it Real' are all comic shows that comment on social and political-related issues in Nigeria. Popular stand-up comedians in the country like 'Bovi, Ay, Basketmouth, and Gordons' among others have also presented similar issues with their comic performances.

### **Problem statement**

Within the overall context, studies that use comicality to approach the subject of social problems barely exist, despite an upsurge, constant and enormous productions from popular culture in the country. Nigerians love to be entertained amid their tragedies, consequently, they turn to comic relief (Osae-Brown 2015). Essentially, comedy provides entertainment, however, its utility has evolved (Friedman 2014). According to Adetunji (2013), comedy must serve the multiple functions of control and censure. Comedy also provides insights into the nature of people's relationships with other people and institutions. They are usually tailored to specific social experiences (Uwanamodo 2019; Tavory 2014). This approach to social problems, such as insecurity, is crucial because Nigerians love to be entertained and can, in effect, serve as a viable means of disseminating knowledge, particularly when institution sources, especially government or political ones, cannot be trusted because of experiences in the past or cause people more distress. The foregoing has over time led to a hoary inquiry over the utility of disparaging politics and the government in Nigeria. With the above in mind, it is therefore pertinent to gain a qualitative understanding of Insecurity as a politically-induced social problem in Nigeria and thus ascertain whether comedy is simply a comic-relief tool for Nigerians or can be a catalytic agent for social change.

### **Method**

This article presents an analysis of three contemporary comedy shows on YouTube that focus on political and social issues in Nigeria; '*Dr. Damages*', '*Keeping it Real*' and '*The Other News*'. For this study, a specific focus was placed on videos highlighting Nigeria's security challenges since President Buhari assumed power in 2015. On each channel, a search on 'insecurity' and/or 'security' was initiated, which returned a crop of videos. From this harvest of videos obtained, some videos that failed to address the issue of insecurity in line with this study were ignored. Thereafter, the search was narrowed down to 2 videos for each of the 3 YouTube channels. Two criteria were used as the basis of the selection of these six (6) videos; reading the video title descriptions and thereafter checking for the most viewed videos on each channel. The most suitable and desirable videos were then viewed and summarised. Relevant comments from the date of posts till the 10<sup>th</sup> of April, 2020 (asides from greetings and emojis) were analyzed using the Sentiment Analysis technique available on Nvivo. The analysis examines the conduct of people (positive, negative, neutral, or mixed sentiments) on political satire videos. Microsoft Excel was used to present the data in tables and charts.

### **Theoretical framework**

Zillmann in 1983 developed the *Disparagement Humor* (DH) model which refers to commentaries or narratives made amusingly to disparage, belittle, degrade or ridicule a given target; individuals, social groups, and political entities enabling the expression and satisfaction of belligerent impulses in a socially acceptable way (Ferguson and

Ford 2008). The concept of DH is often strongly related to subjectivity or prejudice, given that the joke is not intended to be evaluated seriously. It is usually seen as burlesque; laughter for laughter's sake (The Other News CTV 2017). When a target is disparaged, spectators are only likely to find it amusing and less likely to be critical of the content. Consequently, they might adopt the attitudes implicit in the message (Nabi, Moyer-Gusé, and Byrne 2007). This could explain the unperturbed attitude of Nigerians towards the *revolutionary* music, 'Shuffling and Shmiling', as submitted by Esuola (2015). This principle can also be applied to the political terrain, considering that when a political administration is disparaged, the administered will be in a good disposition to accept the negative descriptions attributed to such polity (Mendiburo-Seguel, Vargas, and Rubio 2017).

Although DH has its roots in psychoanalytic theories, it can and has been analyzed within social identity theory (Tajfel & Billig, 1974). Inferred from Uwanamodo's (2019) argument, this becomes possible as comedy categorizes people with similar experiences into a group while the disparaged entity automatically falls into the other group thereby creating a 'we' and 'them' situation. People construct their social identity, morale, and cohesion through the comparison and positive distinctiveness of the groups they belong to; in-groups, with the out-groups to 'sustain the morale and cohesion of groups (Mendiburo-Seguel, Vargas, and Rubio 2017; Tavory 2014; Fine 1984). DH can, therefore, be used as a way to obtain a separate positive identity, especially when the out-group has been linked with some negativity.

In this context, both the comedian and the spectators assume the in-group identity, while the government and politicians are seen as the out-group as theorized by the disposition theory of humor and mirth which postulated that; the more intense the negative disposition toward a disparaged agent (in this case, the politicians), the greater the magnitude of humor; the more intense the positive disposition toward the disparaged agent, the smaller the magnitude of humor; and the more intense the negative disposition toward the disparaging agent (comedian), the smaller the magnitude of humor (Zillmann & Cantor, 1972, 1976).

The burlesque element of DH suggests that comedy is neither harmless to the disparaged entity nor does it call for social change. It is simply humor for laughter's sake. This negates an aspect of Bergson's (1911) theory of humor, where humor does not only serve as means of escaping the rigors of the social world (Obadare 2009) but could serve as a tool for control, censure, and/or change simply by comparing a target with a socially accepted negativity (for instance, a deviant) (Adetunji 2013; Cameron 1993). Going further, disparaging an entity may be intended for amusement only, however, from the theory of manifest and latent functions, unintended functions cannot be overlooked. Robert K. Merton in his 1949 book '*Social Theory and Social Structure*' argued that latent functions are neither conscious nor deliberate but also produce benefits.

### **Comedy transition in Nigeria**

Comedy exists in all established world cultures and is as old as society itself (Gbinije 2005; Taiwo 2017). In Nigeria, comedy has thrived so much that it has metamorphosed

into the third biggest entertainment industry, after '*Nollywood*' and music (Osae-Brown 2015). According to Taiwo (2017), the history of Nigerian comedy can be essentially grouped into three categories, focusing on the comedians. They include the pioneer class, the second, and third generations.

**The pioneer class** represents the earliest crops of comedians, particularly in pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria. This character involves village spoke-persons found to be very hilarious. They are often invited to infuse humor into village social events. Names that readily come to bear includes; Sunday Omobolanle (PapiLuwe/Aluwe), Ayo Ogunshina (Papa Lolo), Moses Olaiya (Baba Sala), Usman Baba Pategi (Samanja), James Iroha (Gringory), Afolabi Afolayan (Jagua), Chika Okpala (Zebrudaya), Kayode Olaiya (Aderupoko), and Tajudeen Gbadamosi (Jacob) among others (Ijalana 2010; Olonilua 2011; Dede 2014; Haynes 1994; Ezebuiro, 1994).

This generation of comedians continued until the 1990s. They engaged mostly in theater comedy and there was little financial reward for their comic performances. It became necessary for most of them to engage in other vocations such as playing host to a variety of events, including political campaigns; a situation that will later usher in stand-up comedy. Although these personalities were applauded for providing the much-needed comic relief and distraction from serious daily endeavors and tragedies, their comic characters also constituted metaphors for reprimanding deviant behaviors in society. This aligns with an aspect of Bergson's theory of humor, where humor is considered to be a tool for restoring the deviant simply by mocking their peculiarities (Cameron 1993). During this era, even though comedy had both tendencies to serve as relief from social problems, and a tool for social change, the target was not necessarily politics.

The **second-generation** comedians surpassed the previous generation in terms of numbers. They include personalities such as Babatunde Omidina (Baba Suwe), Sam Loco Efe, Mazi Mpeperempe, Gbenga Adeboye (Mr. Funwantan), Atunyota Akpobome (Ali Baba), Francis Agoda (I Go Die), Julius Agwu, Nkem Owoh (Osofia), Bolaji Amusan (Mr. Latin), Okechukwu Onyegbule (Okey Bakassi), Bright Okpocha (Basket Mouth), Ayo Makun (AY), Godwin Komone (Gordons) among many others.

This generation is a fusion of both theatre comedy and stand-up comedy, however, stand-up comedy had already become a mainstream genre by 1993. Comedians were purposely allowed to regale the public in the expectation that their performance would inject a casual slant to otherwise serious programs. This gave birth to popular television talks-shows like the '*Charly Boy Show, Friday Night Life, and Night Train*', among others (Adetunji 2013). In 1995, the first edition of *Night of a Thousand Laugh*, a dedicated live event strictly involving only stand-up comedy was witnessed. Several comedians have since then hosted their comedy shows. Some of them include AY Live, *Basket Mouth Uncensored*, *Lord of the Ribs*, and many more. It is worth mentioning that the content of the performance of the second-generation comic culture has a variety of targets. Ridicule or disparagement is a significant theme in this era (Olonilua 2011).

The **third-generation** boasts of prominent personalities considered to have been mentored by the preceding generation. They include; Seyi Law, Omo Baba, Gondoki, I Go Save, Aboki4Christ, Princess, Lolo, Lepacious Bose, Helen Paul, and Akpororo among others. With the influence of the internet, this genre of comedy emerged, and

as a consequence, the third-generation comedians (and second-generation comedians who want to remain relevant) have to move most of their activities online.

This generation led to another generation, *an emerging generation* or a fourth. This **fourth generation** is unique in that it accommodates almost every Nigerian who has an online presence with regular comic activities. For instance, a young girl called Emmanuela, became very popular for uploading comedy skits online. Internet comedy has become a familiar genre in the country probably because of its independence, originality, and simplicity. Many Nigerians have become ad hoc or full-time comedians as a result. Names that readily come to bear are; Samuel Perry (Broda Shaggi), Michael Sani Amanesi (Barrister Mike), Chukwuebuka Amuzie (Brainjotter), Bukunmi Adeaga Ilori (Kie Kie) Ereme Abraham (Twyse Ereme), Emmanuel Chukwuemeka Ejekwu (Sabinus), Chinedu Ani Emmanuel (Nedu), Oluwatoyin Bayegun (Wole Arole), Ayo Ajewole (Wole Agba), Gloria Oloruntobi (Maraji), Nosa Afolabi (Lasisi Elenu), Debo Adedayo (Mr. Macaroni), Egere Sydney (Sydney talker), MC Tagwaye (Obinna Simon), among many others.

### *Insecurity as a tragedy in Nigeria (2015–2019)*

After enduring several decades of maladministration, the Nigerian electorate got tired of the pervasive leadership bankruptcy of its ruling elites and decided to give Buhari a shot at Aso Villa by electing him as the Fourth President of the Nigerian Fourth Republic. Buhari assumed the office of the presidency at one of the most difficult times in Nigeria's history with his pre-election campaign promises standing on a tripod stance of Economic development, tackling Corruption, and ending Insecurity (Welsh 2015; Dembele 2016). The 2015 general election in Nigeria brought about a new dimension into Nigerian politics as it was the first time that an opposition party would defeat the ruling party at the polls (Olowojolu 2017). However, four years down the line, Nigerians cannot but ask pertinent questions as to the state of the nation in line with promises made during the presidential campaigns.

Supporters of President Buhari are keen to espouse all the steps taken by his government in these 3 key areas in proving his forthrightness. Specifically, on security, Buhari visited Niger Republic, Cameroon, Benin Republic, Chad, G-7 meeting in Berlin and the United States a few days after assuming office as President and also ordered the relocation of military command to Maiduguri, a step aimed at taking the fight against terrorism closer to the epicenter of the Boko Haram insurgency. Buhari also championed the creation of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), which is composed of 8,700 standing army officers pulled from member countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (Vanguard, 2015). Similarly, 103 out of the 276 Chibok girls that were kidnapped by Boko Haram on April 14, 2014, have been released. The release of the kidnapped girls was done with the help of the Swiss government, the International Red Cross, and the Nigerian government (Vanguard, 2017).

The success or otherwise of the Buhari administration's efforts can only be correctly assessed when the promises made during the electioneering period are compared with the prevailing situation on the ground over 4 years after the assumption of office. Nigerians know better, as they feel the impact of the performance or otherwise of the administration when juxtaposed with the campaign promises. While it can be

agreed that the MNJTF coupled with the Civilian Joint Task Force yielded some early positive results in the fight against terrorism coupled with the release of 103 out of the 276 kidnapped Chibok girls, the abduction of over 100 girls by BokoHaram from the Government Girls Science School in Dapchi, Yobe State completely erased any gains recorded thus far by this administration in this area. Nigerians were confused as to how a 'defeated' Boko Haram could drive its convoy of vehicles into the town of Dapchi and abduct so many of our girls and drive away without any resistance from our security forces.

Asides from the Boko Haram insurgency, another security challenge that has worsened under the Buhari administration is the deadly Fulani herdsmen attacks that have continued to terrorize several parts of the country, killing harmless farmers, destroying farmlands, sacking villages, and rendering many homeless while the government seems not ready to take any concrete steps to stop these tragedies. The North-western region is not spared either from the pervasive insecurity currently besetting Nigeria with armed bandits who invade villages, leaving scores of people dead and homes destroyed. In other parts of the country, kidnapping for ransom has become a normal trade, particularly in the South-south, southeast, and southwest. Ritual killings have also spiked in many towns as Nigerians feel quite unsafe in a country where the government seems to have failed in its primary responsibility of protecting the lives and properties of its citizens.

### ***Analysis***

The 3 contemporary comedy shows under study are 'Dr. Damages', 'Keeping it Real', and 'The Other News'. Comments on each show were analyzed using sentiment analysis.

**Dr. Damages**, real name **Rudolf Okonkwo** is a political satirist and a veteran of the Nigerian media. Before leaving Nigeria for the United States where he has since been based, he wrote for *Classic Magazine* and *Nigeria Daily Mail* newspaper. Dr. Damages believes in 'holding people in authority accountable' and has been airing his show weekly since 2011 (Dr. Damages, n.d.).

#### ***Video 1: 'RUGA, shiite, etc. VP Osinbajo as buhari's enabler***

Synopsis: This video posted on July 31, 2019 comments on varying issues such as the failure of the government of President Buhari to deal with insecurity in Nigeria as it relates to the herdsmen and farmers' conflicts that have resulted in the deaths of several Nigerians. The video criticized the 'RUGA' solution proffered by the Presidential Committee. The video ended by criticizing Vice President Yemi Osinbajo for keeping quiet as a Law Professor while extra-judicial killings by Nigerian security forces and disobedience of court orders take place (Figure 1 and Table 1). (Dr. Damages, 2015, 15:51)

#### ***Video 2: 'with Buhari it is incompetence in bed with incompetence'***

Synopsis: This video posted on Febrary 7, 2020, speaks to the perceived competency of the Nigerian government of President Buhari to end the scourge of insecurity in



Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020

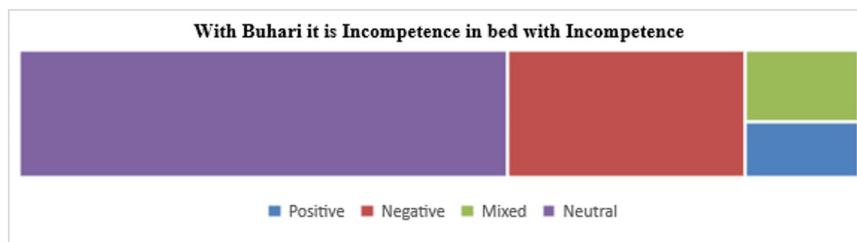
**Figure 1.** Sentiment chart of Video 1.

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020.

**Table 1.** Tabular representation showing viewers' sentiments of Video 1.

Nodes	Number of coding references	Percentage	Number of items coded
Total Analysed	214	100%	1
Comments			
Positive	40	19%	1
Negative	29	14%	1
Mixed	4	2%	1
Neutral	141	66%	1

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020.



Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020

**Figure 2.** Sentiment chart of Video 2.

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020.

the country. The video expressed shock that despite the poor performance of the various security agencies in the country as seen in the pervasive insecurity being experienced in the country, the Service Chiefs of the Nigerian Army, Navy, and Air Force are still in Office even though they have also all put in the mandatory 35 years in service and should have been retired (Dr. Damages 2020, 0:54) (Figure 2 and Table 2).

**'Keeping it Real'** is hosted by Adeola Fayehun, a Nigerian satirist and journalist who specializes in discussing current geopolitical, social, and economic issues that affect the daily lives of Africans living on the continent (Adeola Fayehun, n.d.).

### **Video 3: 'security: Buhari has failed...'**

Synopsis: This video posted on February 7, 2020, speaks to the perceived competency of the Nigerian government of President Buhari to end the scourge of insecurity in

**Table 2.** Tabular representation showing viewers' sentiments of Video 2.

Nodes	Number of coding references	Percentage	Number of items coded
Total Analysed Comments	67	100%	1
Positive	4	6%	1
Negative	19	19%	1
Mixed	5	7%	1
Neutral	39	58%	1

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020.



Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020

**Figure 3.** Sentiment chart of Video 3.

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020.

**Table 3.** Tabular representation showing viewers' sentiments of Video 3.

Nodes	Number of coding references	Percentage	Number of items coded
Total Analysed Comments	569	100%	1
Positive	34	6%	1
Negative	187	33%	1
Mixed	70	12%	1
Neutral	278	49%	1

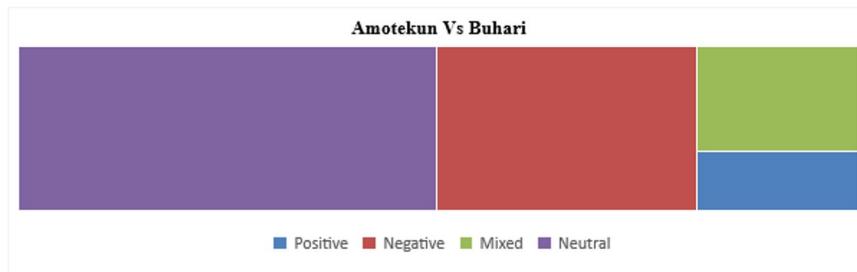
Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020.

the country. According to the video, the government has failed especially when it comes to security as kidnapping, banditry, and ritual (Adeola Fayehun, 2019, 2:33) (Figure 3 and Table 3).

#### *Video 4: 'Amotekun vs. Buhari...'*

**Synopsis:** This video posted on January 21, 2020, speaks to the newly inaugurated South-West Security Network codenamed Operation Amotekun. It is a security outfit launched by the six (6) states of South Western, Nigeria as a response to the perceived failure of the federal government-owned security architecture of the country. According to the video, Operation 'Amotekun' came as a result of the failure of the federal government to ensure the safety in security of its people and wondered why the federal government of Nigeria led by President Buhari was against this set-up (Adeola Fayehun, 2019, 0:59) (Figure 4 and Table 4).

**C. The Other News** is a Political Satire TV Show that takes a reality-based look at news, trends, politics, breaking events, etc. with another angle from seriousness hosted by Okechukwu Anthony Onyegbule also known as Okey Bakassi. The show which



Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020

**Figure 4.** Sentiment analysis of Video 4.

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020.

**Table 4.** Tabular representation showing viewers' sentiments of Video 4.

Nodes	Number of coding references	Percentage	Number of items coded
Total Analysed Comments	533	100%	1
Positive	37	7%	1
Negative	165	31%	1
Mixed	66	12%	1
Neutral	265	50%	1

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020.



Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020

**Figure 5.** Sentiment chart of Video 5.

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020.

records remote pieces and guests in the studio discusses important news happenings with a lighter side to it (The Other News CTV, n.d.).

#### *Video 5: 'Boko Haram returns Dapchi girls...'*

**Synopsis:** This video posted on March 23, 2018, comments on the celebration of the return of the abducted schoolgirls in the northeastern town of Dapchi, Bauchi State. The schoolgirls were earlier abducted by the Boko Haram terrorist group amidst the insecurity in the North-east region of Nigeria (The Other News CTV, 2018, 0:01) (Figure 5 and Table 5).

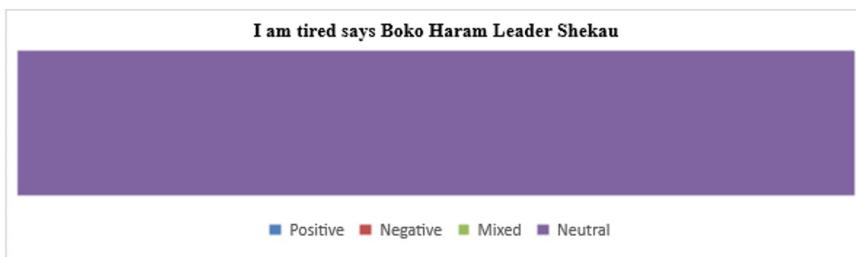
#### *Video 6: 'I am tired says Boko Haram leader shekau'*

**Synopsis:** This video posted February 15, 2018, speaks about the fight against terrorism in the North-east of Nigeria (The Other News CTV, 2018, 0:29) (Figure 6 and Table 6).

**Table 5.** Tabular representation showing viewers' sentiments of Video 5.

Nodes	Number of coding references	Percentage	Number of items coded
Total Analysed Comments	7	100%	1
Positive	0	0%	0
Negative	0	0%	0
Mixed	0	0%	0
Neutral	7	100%	1

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020.



Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020

**Figure 6.** Sentiment chart of video 6.

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020.

**Table 6.** Tabular representation showing viewers' sentiments of Video 6.

Nodes	Number of coding references	Percentage	Number of items coded
Total Analysed Comments	9	100%	1
Positive	0	0	0
Negative	0	0	0
Mixed	0	0	0
Neutral	9	100%	1

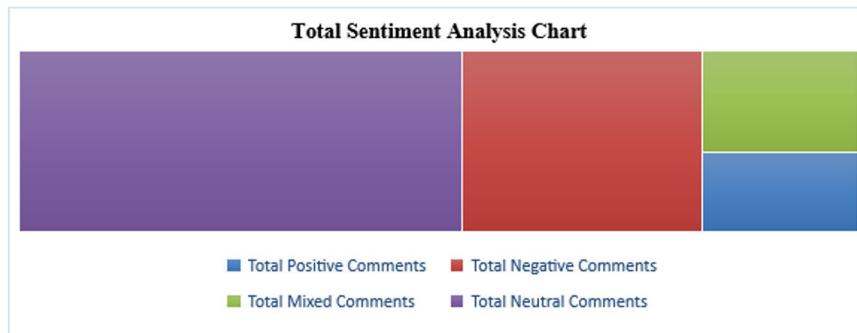
Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020.

## Discussion

Sentiment analysis evaluates the actions of a speaker or author about a specific subject or the conceptual polarity of a document as a whole (Jagdale, Shirsat, and Deshmukh 2016; Mittal and Patidar 2019). The analysis deals with detecting polarity rather than discrete emotions, which could be measured as positive, negative, neutral, or mixed (Chaturvedi et al. 2018; Bae and Lee 2012; Koppel and Schler 2006), and they are adjudged based on specific words or phrase mentioned by the author or writer. For instance; 'happy, confidence, excellent' are regarded as positive sentiments, while 'bad, failure, sadness' are regarded negative (HaCohen-Kerner and Badash 2016; Alexander Pak 2016). Neutral sentiments express no opinion on the subject matter (Zhang et al. 2011). They contain words or phrases like view, baby, quick, touch, etc (Chaturvedi et al. 2018). Mixed sentiments allow for complex linguistic constructions. patterns like both excited and anxious or neither happy nor sad represent a challenge for automatic sentiment analysis systems (Dzogang et al. 2010), thus, mixed sentiment is adopted.

Table 7 and Figure 7 below present the sum of the Sentiment Analysis of the comments used in this study.

Of the total 1,399 analyzed comments, 53% are neutral, 8% positive 29% negative, and 10% mixed. The analysis of the sentiments showed that in all reactions to the videos, the majority showed no sentiment (neutral). However, within the category of



Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020

**Figure 7.** Sentiment chart of Video 7.

Source: Authors' Compilation, 2020.

**Table 7.** Tabular representation showing viewers' sentiments of all videos.

Nodes	Number of coding references	Percentage	Number of items coded
Total Analysed Comments	1399	100%	6
Total Positive Comments	115	8%	6
Total Negative Comments	400	29%	4
Total Mixed Comments	145	10%	4
Total Neutral Comments	739	53%	6

**Table 8.** Showing the negative sentiments from Videos 1–4.

A: Very negative	B: Moderately negative	C: Moderately positive	D: Very positive
4374	3573	2871	2211
345	295	532	188
5148	3420	3114	1958
683	447	765	50

those who showed sentiments, the highest percentage was negative sentiments which were significantly higher than that of positive sentiments (see Figure 7), confirming previous studies that Nigerians remain unperturbed about their many tragedies (Eesuola 2015) since neutrality has been interpreted as no sentiments (Zhang et al. 2011). Although the negative sentiment is relatively lower than neutral at 29%, it has the highest count that conveys messages of dissatisfaction with the country's security challenge. Table 8 as highlighted below depicts the negative word counts derived from the comments. Words such as 'corruption', 'protests', 'poverty', 'useless', and 'failure', etc came out prominent only second to the neutral comments.

Furthermore, 10% of the total sentiments account for mixed sentiments, meaning that this category of viewers who commented on the videos expressed both positive and negative sentiments. Positive sentiment is extremely low at 8%. It can be concluded comedy in Nigeria is best at its manifest function of comic relief and not a tool for social change.

## Conclusion

Nigerians have enormous claim-makers who raise concerns about harsh social conditions induced by political and policy decisions and demand urgent attention. For

social change to occur, particularly in the aspect of insecurity in Nigeria, it will take more than conceptualizing and commentating on the social problem. Nigerians are generally resilient in nature and they often boast of their ability to survive severe social conditions. As confirmed by this study, it is obvious that the population of the unperturbed (neutral) is significantly greater than that of the disturbed (negative sentiment). This will inevitably contribute to the maintenance of the status quo, thereby allowing for continuous negligence of the government and its agencies from their constitutional responsibilities of providing adequate security of lives and properties.

A very vital area requiring further research arising from the outcome of this study is an investigation into viable reasons that account for the complacency and nonchalance of Nigerians regarding their present tragedy as seen in their socio-political conditions characterized by abject poverty, pervasive insecurity, massive public corruption, etc. Furthermore, it is pertinent to probe into other factors asides from conceptualizing and commentating on social problems that could instigate social change in Nigeria thereby placing a demand of responsibility on the country's political leaders.

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## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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