



‘War against our Children’: Stance and evaluation in #BringBackOurGirls campaign discourse on Twitter and Facebook

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Abstract

The #BringBackOurGirls social media campaign on Twitter and Facebook was not only a global campaign for the release of the Nigerian schoolgirls kidnapped by *Boko Haram*, but also a campaign for the rights of female children and girls to formal education. This article applies the appraisal framework and (critical) discourse analysis to examine the discursive features of this campaign and the role of affective stance in the evaluation of social actors in the campaign discourse. Findings reveal that #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>) campaign exhibits a great deal of affect at the level of vocabulary reflecting moods, feelings and emotional language in the representations of persons, groups and governments. Most of the evaluations reflect negative valence, which is often typical of public reactions to (social) media reports of crisis, or national disasters. The article argues that social media campaigns and activism can be fruitful if they are followed up by practical offline actions; otherwise, they will end up as mere *slacktivism*. Some of the campaigners themselves argued that the campaign could not have been successful if the girls were not rescued.

Keywords

#BringBackOurGirls, affect, Boko Haram, campaign, discourse, education, evaluation, ideology, judgement, kidnapped, Nigeria, representation, schoolgirls, stance, terrorist

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Introduction

On 14 April 2014, Boko Haram (BH) – an Islamist terrorist group in Nigeria – kidnapped about 276 girls at a government school in Chibok in Borno state, northeast of Nigeria and burnt down the school. A total of 43 of the kidnapped girls escaped, leaving over 200 girls still missing. Earlier the same day, the terrorist group had bombed a bus station at Nyanya in the Nigerian federal capital (Abuja), killing 75 people and injuring over 200 others. This was among the series of attacks carried out by the Islamists in recent times in which they had targeted churches, the army and police, prisons and foreign interests. These include the bombing of the United Nations (UN) building at Abuja in August 2011 in which over 20 people were killed. According to the US National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), only the Taliban are ahead of BH on the list of global terror. Hence, the US Department of State, on 13 November 2013, announced the designation of BH and Ansaru as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs), following their link with Al-Qaeda and their activities in global terrorism. According to Dowd (2013), Nigeria has the highest number of documented cases of violence involving Muslim-identified militias in Africa between 1997 and 2012.

By the kidnap of the Chibok schoolgirls, BH again demonstrated commitment to their philosophy of non-tolerance to western culture and influence, especially education for women and girls. The Nigerian military initially claimed they had found the girls only later to admit that over 200 were still being held by BH. This resulted in a global outcry not only for the kidnapped schoolgirls but also for systems that promote violence against children and denial of formal education for girls. Following their generally assumed lethargy in finding the kidnapped girls (who were later reported to have been sold to slavery or married off to terrorists), various individuals including parents and relations of the missing schoolgirls as well as social and activist groups in Nigeria carried out demonstrations at Abuja calling on the Nigerian government and the armed forces to find the girls. A former Nigerian minister of education, and World Bank vice president, Oby Ezekwesili also led a group of protesters to Abuja demanding that the Nigerian military ‘bring back our girls’. Not long AFTER, ‘#BringBackOurGirls’ with a hashtag became trendy on *Twitter* and became a ‘rallying cry for the kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirls’ (Litoff, 2014). A Nigerian lawyer, Ibrahim Abdullahi, was the first to tweet the very words on 23 April 2014, re-echoing the words of the former minister (see *ABC News*, 4 May 2014).

#BringBackOurGirls social media campaign with accompanying photographs of protesters and graphic images of children and schoolgirls on *Twitter* and *Facebook* was no longer a local Nigerian affair; it became a global campaign for the release of the kidnapped girls as well as girls’ rights to formal education. Initially, as a demand addressed to the Nigerian government and the armed forces, ‘bring back our girls’ later became an appeal to BH, and the entire world, including the UN. Having been tweeted thousands of times, the campaign also drew thousands of *likes* on *Facebook*, and attracted sympathizers from around the world, including celebrities and social activists, some who not only tweeted or commented on *Facebook* but also joined in offline protests. Civil rights groups, students and girls’ rights campaigners in the United States, England, France, Canada, Malaysia, South Africa and so on joined the campaign. The social media slogan also attracted the likes of the US First Lady, *Michelle Obama*, and the British Prime

Minister, David Cameron, calling for more to be done to free the missing schoolgirls. Also, Malala Yousafzai – the girl education campaigner from Pakistan – was among hundreds of people who tweeted and included a photo of themselves with a sign reading #BringBackOurGirls to show their support (see Appendix 1). Evidently, the campaigners actually believed that the general social media condemnation of BH such as those represented by the #BringBackOurGirls (<https://www.facebook.com/bringbackourgirls>) had the potential to achieve positive results. This optimism is clearly illustrated in the following excerpt from *The Independent* of 13 May 2014:

Boko Haram must be quaking in their boots ... These 'Islamic' militants have razed entire villages to the ground, hacked men to death and killed children as they slept, but now the West has a hashtag campaign ... Despite being simplistic and at times hypocritical, hashtag activism can work. The media watches Facebook and Twitter to see what issues people care about. Politicians read newspapers: they also want to get votes. If they see a course of action is popular they'll try and own that issue. France's president offered to host a summit on Boko Haram. Goodluck Jonathan is now willing to accept Western help, and hashtag activism has gone a long way into pressurising him into that decision ... It's not just politicians and the media watching social media. Boko Haram might be militants, but that doesn't mean they aren't on Twitter ...

Interestingly, *The Independent* newspaper of 2 May 2014 described #BringBackOurGirls as an 'explosion' across social media, 'powered by a desire to reunite 200 kidnapped Nigerian girls with their parents with a strong sense of outrage', but importantly also that *Facebook* and *Twitter* protests and complaints were not only against BH, but also against what was seen as the mainstream media's 'wilful ignorance' of the girls' kidnap. Already, a 'volley of tweets [had] argued that if these children were White European girls, countries would do something'. For instance, 'if 200 girls had gone missing in Spain, whether white or black, there would have been far more coverage' (Morse, 2014: 1); hence, the social media intervention was a welcome and timely development. According to Litoff (2014),

the chorus ('bring back our girls') would continue to grow. The phrase has now been used on *Twitter* more than 800,000 times, including [tweets] by celebrities Kerry Washington and Chris Brown ... Hillary Clinton also tweeted, 'access to education is a basic right and an unconscionable reason to target innocent girls. We must stand up to terrorism'. (#BringBackOurGirls)

Against this background of global terror and conflict discourse of fear, frustration, anger and helplessness, some general patterns of language use on *Twitter* and *Facebook* about the events are prone to convey intense emotions. Ellsworth and Scherer (2003) citing Arnold (1960) argue that '... certain ways of interpreting one's environment are inherently emotional, [because] few thoughts are entirely free of feelings, and emotions influence thinking ...' (p. 527). Unfortunately, this also often puts commonsense at risk, because very often emotional language tends to exaggerate reality and misrepresent facts. We argue in this article that while emotional reactions and attitudes in discourse may reflect genuine general response to social realities, they are also in danger of negatively evaluating people and situations unjustly; discourses produced in a situation of global terror, especially reacting to some perceived 'war' or violence on children or a

global campaign on security and children's rights to education in Africa such as *#BringBackOurGirls*, are most likely to ideologically (mis)represent facts, governments or institutions. Emotional ideological evaluations of social actors and situations alone may achieve practically nothing, leaving the main problems of insecurity unsolved. In other words, they may end up as mere *slacktivism*. 'Slacktivism' (i.e. slacker and activism) is the low-risk, low-cost activity via social media whose purpose is to raise awareness, or grant some emotional satisfaction to the persons engaged in the activity (Lee and Hsieh, 2013), such as clicking 'like' to show support for a group on *Facebook*, signing online petitions, or forwarding letters or videos about an issue. According to Morozov (2009), slacktivism is based on the assumption that, given enough awareness, all problems are solvable, when in actual fact they only make the participants feel good and very useful and important, but the efforts themselves have zero social impact. Morse (2014) further observes that 'the problem with hashtag activism is that information spreads very fast on social media and an inaccurate image or tweet goes twice around the world before the truth has time to put on his tie' (p. 1).

However, some linguistic studies of computer-mediated communication (CMC) have identified some important features and functions of micro-blogging in political communication. For instance, Draucker (2013) shows that individuals 'hide behind the twitter screen' to speak for their political groups by applying linguistic forms such as deictic references to promote organizational voice (p. 11). Zappavigna (2011) also observes that tweets perform both ideational and interpersonal functions. Within the context of interpersonal meaning is 'evaluation', where 'language is used to build power and solidarity by adopting stances and referring to other texts' (p. 794). Honeycutt and Herring (2009) highlight the conversationality of *Twitter* and show how it supports user-to-user exchanges and is used as a tool for collaboration. Applying a discourse analysis method, Stumpel (2010) also argues that *Facebook* 'enacts a recurrent pattern of discursive framing and agenda-setting to support the immediate changes it makes to the platform' (p. 2). Like *Facebook*, *Twitter* is viewed as an 'open, transparent and low-threshold exchange of information and ideas ...' and it 'shows great promise for a reconfiguration of the structure of political discourses towards a broadening of public debate by facilitating social connectivity' (Maireder and Ausserhofer, 2014). Similarly, Wojcieszak and Mutz (2009) observe that online forums promote political conversations, especially those that expose participants with dissimilar political views; this would generally benefit people in re-evaluating their own preconceived opinions.

Moreover, much has been written about the impact of social media in organizing and implementing social protests and its success in achieving sociopolitical revolutions, especially in the Arab world (e.g. Breuer et al., 2012; Chaudhry, 2014; Garrett, 2006; Smith and Brecher, 2010). But like those who argue that slacktivism actually hinders activism (Lee and Hsieh, 2013), some scholars have argued that the 'success' of social media campaigns and activism cannot really be verified, and the question has been whether social media can indeed achieve a lasting social change (see Florian, 2013). Shirky (2011), for example, argues that repressive governments are becoming better users of electronic tools to suppress dissents. Morozov (2011) further argues that the assumed emancipator potential of new media technologies in social protests actually strengthens the surveillance capabilities of repressive regimes and that 'cyber utopia'

(i.e. the assumption that the Internet is liberator of the masses) is erroneous or a 'net delusion'. We argue in this article that a social media campaigns can be highly successful if they are followed up simultaneously with offline actions like those of Tunisia, Egypt or Libya (see also Christensen, 2011).

Our aim in this article therefore is to contribute to discourse stance literature by (1) showing how stance in social media discourse aids the spread of online protests and civil campaigns, (2) analysing how affective stance in this campaign exhibits ideological evaluations of social actors or governments and (3) revealing how affect expressed in this way can provide a cover for mere social media campaign 'supports', without practical efforts to solve the problems of insecurity and lack of freedom in Africa.

Stance in discourse

In any communication encounter, speakers or writers not only communicate information in words, they also convey their attitudes, emotions, feelings, moods or dispositions. Non-referential information, such as mood and feeling, is as important as referential information, because altogether they enable the hearer or reader to properly interpret the message, that is, the intention of the speaker/writer, and to evaluate the position and proposition conveyed in the message (Ihara, 2006). Biber and Finnegan (1989) define stance as 'the lexical and grammatical expression of attitudes, feelings, judgements, or commitment concerning the propositional content of a message' (p. 124). These are expressed as *epistemic* and *affective* stances. Epistemic stance is a 'socially recognised disposition' while affective stance is a 'socially recognized feeling, attitude, mood or degree of emotional intensity' (Ochs, 1990: 2). According to Hyland (2005), stance expresses 'a textual "voice" or community recognized personality ...' and includes attitudinal features that reflect how 'writers present themselves and convey their judgements, opinions and commitments'. Thus, stance 'positions' the writer and enables him or her to 'stamp their personal authority onto their arguments or step back and disguise their involvement' (p. 176). As a theoretical concept, *stance* has been described as *evaluation* (Bednarek, 2006; Hunston and Thompson, 2000), *appraisal* (Martin, 2000; Martin and White, 2005) or *attitude* (Halliday, 1994).

We adopt the appraisal framework and focus on writers' *affect* and *judgment* which are reflected in the attitude of those who tweeted the #BringBackOurGirls campaign or posted comments on *Facebook*. The appraisal framework is adopted from Systemic Function Linguistics (SFL) and focuses on the social function of language expressed in texts, not only as a means through which speaker/writer express their feelings and take stance, but also 'engage with socially-determined value positions and thereby align or dis-align themselves with the social subjects who hold to these positions' (White, 2011: 14). SFL views language in terms of its social functions. These functions are of three types, namely, the ideational (represents the world of experience), interpersonal (constructs social roles, relationships and identities) and interpersonal roles (constructs language as coherent texts in relation to their social contexts) (see Halliday, 1994). Within the interpersonal function, the appraisal framework shows how writers construct for themselves particular identities in relationship to other members of the society or social groups. And appraisal is defined as '... the semantic resources used to negotiate

emotions, judgement and evaluations, alongside resources for amplifying and engaging with these evaluations' (Martin, 2000: 145). The appraisal framework proposes three systems – *attitude*, *engagement* and *graduation*. Attitude refers to feelings, including emotional reactions, judgments of behaviour and evaluation of things (Martin and White, 2005) and is divided into three categories, namely, *affect*, *judgement* and *appreciation*. Affect is the 'resources for expressing feelings', while judgement is the 'resources for judging character'. Appreciation refers to 'resources for valuing the worth of things' (Martin and Rose, 2003: 24).

All appraisal resources can be expressed as (or divided into) *inscribed* or *invoked* evaluations. Inscribed appraisal refers to evaluation which 'has been directly inscribed in discourse through the use of attitudinal lexis ...' while invoked appraisal is the 'selection of ideational meanings ... enough to invoke evaluation, even in the absence of lexis that tells us directly how to feel' (Martin and White, 2005: 61, 62). Both invoked and inscribed attitudes are employed to express the writer's or a third party's evaluation of the phenomenon being evaluated and can increase the chance of sharing the main argument being advocated (Sano, 2008):

On the one hand, the inscribed attitude explicitly states the ideological position of the writer with which he wants the reader to share ... On the other hand, the invoked attitude prepares the reader to synchronize with the position expressed by the *inscribed* attitude. (p. 108)

For example, describing BH as 'barbaric animals' is an explicit inscribed (negative) judgment of the writer, but at the same time, it implicitly invites the reader to share in that evaluation. This inscribed evaluation does not direct the reader, but it does invite him or her to also evaluate the target (or social actors) negatively by implication. In other words, the invoked attitude draws readers towards the writer's position, which is explicitly expressed by the inscribed attitude (Sano, 2008: 108; see also Tilakaratna and Mahboob, 2013).

Du Bois (2007) views stance as a public act, where stance takers simultaneously evaluate an object (in our case, an event or social situation), position a subject (the self/members of the public communicating on social media) and align with other subjects (other contributors to the discussion or the campaigners) (p. 163; additional explanations are ours). Thus, Du Bois' stance 'triangle' shows that the structure of interactive discourse is shaped by individual contributors and the relations between them, with every contribution influencing the next, so that both communicating parties contribute with their positioning to the topic of discussion. Similarly, Precht (2003), viewing stance as the expression of attitude, emotion, certainty and doubt (p. 16), argues that stance taking is tied to social and cultural context and the expression of stance is essentially an interpersonal experience. Hence, the expression of an individual's point of view or affect to a large extent is influenced by how other members of the contributing group express themselves (Chindamo et al., 2012). This position is relevant to our current study.

Stance viewed as a 'linguistically articulated form of social action' (Du Bois, 2007) is expressed lexically, grammatically and paralinguistically (Biber et al., 1999; Jung-ran, 2007). Affective stance revealing some different levels of emotional involvement can be positive or negative such as sympathy, anger, sadness, love or hate. It falls within Bednarek's (2008) category of attitudinal stance, or Hyland's (2005) attitude markers,

usually expressed as *nouns* (e.g. terrorist, Islamist, coward), *adjectives* (e.g. foolish, wicked, loving), *verbs* (kill, kidnap, accuse etc.) or *adverbs* (e.g. unfortunately, absolutely, radically) (see Biber et al., 1999). Words from our data such as ‘disgusted’, ‘devastating’, ‘torture’ and so on essentially express negative affect.

Some interesting studies have been carried out on affect (in Internet discourse) showing how people’s expression of affect in online texts and interactions plays significant roles in social processes. For instance, Skowron et al. (2013) show some evidence that collective emotions expressed on the Internet have the potential to influence the process of creation, formation and breaking of online communities. Jung-ran (2007) also reports that participants in online chats employed contractions of linguistic forms, prosodic features and typographical conventions to express interpersonal and affective stances in communication. Similarly, Parkins (2012) shows that Australian men and women communicating on *Twitter* and *Facebook* applied prosodic and paralinguistic markers to express emotions such as extensive use of punctuation marks, capitalizations, and emoticons. In the study of narratives, Ihara (2006) shows that affect can be expressed through discourse markers in novels. The study compares affect in English and Japanese novels and concludes that the latter have more expressions of affect than those in English.

Some other interesting studies have attempted to show that emotional discourses in the media or politics have greater influence on hearers/readers. For example, Van de Steeg (2010) opines that a discourse that is highly emotional is more likely to reach people’s heart and lead to political action than the usual technical and consensual one. She concludes that

media discourse that generates sufficient arousal to attract the citizens’ attention and interest and that invokes the identity of an imagined community in relation to a sense of agency and injustice is most likely to mobilize European citizens, even on an EU issue. (p. 1)

Similarly, Jamtoy (2012), investigating the role of emotion and cognition in politics, acknowledged the position of some critics that emotions should be reduced and excluded from final judgements on political matters, but still maintains that public opinion is largely shaped by the moods, feelings and emotions of citizens (see also Marcus, 2000). Jones et al. (2013) examine the effect that emotions expressed by candidates through the Internet can have on civic participation and argue that, contrary to the views that the use of emotions by political elites will agitate the least knowledgeable citizens, it is indeed the most politically engaged citizens who are mobilized by such appeals.

Further research has also shown that during national disasters and crises, people generally go online for information, making the Internet the most preferred medium for information on disasters and crises. According to Fraustino et al. (2012), the public usually become more active users of social media for timely and up-to-date information in times of crises. For instance, after the 2011 Japanese tsunami, there were more than 5500 tweets per second about the disaster; and also, during the 2005 Hurricane Katrina in southeast Louisiana, about 75% of New Orleans residents visited online sites specific to their neighbourhoods. Some participants use the social media to determine the magnitude of the disasters/crises and to mobilize themselves; some use it to maintain a sense of community or to seek emotional support (Fraustino et al., 2012: 4, 12). On whether news

about corporate crisis generates emotions, Kim and Cameron (2011: 1) show that news about crisis (corporate or social) is usually emotional and that emotional news frames (anger-inducing vs. sadness-inducing) affect people's emotional response to a corporate crisis ... 'The distinct emotions induced by different news frames influenced individuals' information processing ... and the evaluation of the company differently. Participants exposed to anger-inducing crisis news have more negative attitudes toward the company than those exposed to sadness-inducing news'.

In the current study, we examine the expressions of affect more at the level of vocabulary, involving the use of lexical items that negatively evaluate the terrorist group as well as other social actors that are viewed as contributing to the social problems expressed in '#BringBackOurGirls' campaign. In the analysis, however, we examined other important grammatical expressions that convey emotions that are significant to the study. *Inscribed* attitude is coded as affect or judgement (and possibly appreciation) and will not include some more specific classifications prescribed by Martin and White (2005). *Invoked* attitude is identified as positive or negative with respect to attitudes expressed towards BH and other social actors in the discourse. Martin (2003) agrees that analyzing invoked attitude is a rather challenging task (see also Caldwell, 2009).

Methodology

Our data are derived from a corpus of 2500 tweets and 2500 *Facebook* posts comprising 24,983 words. A keyword analysis of the corpus was carried out using Wordsmith to determine the key lexical components of the corpus, especially key lexical items that express evaluation and affective stance (see Appendix 2). In compiling the keywords, the Nairaland corpus (compiled from the Cyber-Creole Project of the University of Freiburg) was used as a reference corpus. We examined the linguistic contexts within which key (evaluative) words occurred. Since it was difficult to draw examples of affect and judgement expressed in the data electronically following our method of analysis, we utilized only a qualitative method by analyzing samples from the raw data. The quantitative keyword analysis only gave us an idea of the kind of lexical items that are available in the corpus. Thus, our analysis is essentially qualitative since interpretive (critical) discourse analysis of the data is carried out in relation to the context. Appendix 2 shows the keywords and their frequencies in the data, many of which are evaluative and reflect affect and in most cases express negative valence. Non-English words and all grammatical words were deleted from the list of keywords. Moreover, some of the words and expressions analysed from the data did not appear as 'keywords', but they appeared in the Wordlist. They are included in the analysis because of their relevance to this study. We observed that languages other than English, such as German, French and Spanish, were also used in the campaign, but we used only the English data.

We consider a discourse analytical methodology appropriate to this study, since we view 'tweets' on *Twitter* and 'posts' on *Facebook* as 'discourse' being samples of actual language use in practical communication, not only in the micro-context of CMC, but also in the macro-context of Nigeria and the participating members of the global community.

According to Herring (2001), computer-mediated discourse (CMD) is the study of language and language use in computer networked environments, and is distinguished from the broader field of CMC by its use of methods of discourse analysis to address its focus. The critical analytical dimension identifies ideological features of language use in the online campaign with their emotional properties.

Analysis and discussion

Qualitative analysis of data examines how affective stance in the keywords constructs or frames the entire crisis, how BH is generally represented, how Nigerian government and security agents are constructed, and how the girls as the victims are represented. We also analyse the discursive structure of the campaign (e.g. the types of discursive functions/acts the campaign discourse perform as they are expressed in the social media). Because of the limited space of this article only a few samples are reproduced in the analysis. **FBP** stands for 'facebook post', while **TWT** stands for 'tweet'.

Constructing the crisis

We refer to the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls as 'crisis'. Since affect is an emotional reaction to behaviour, process or phenomena (Martin and White, 2005), it is natural that the *act* of kidnapping of the girls is generally constructed with negative emotions expressed in words such as 'despicable', 'shameful', 'disgusting', 'cowardly', 'outrage', 'brutality' and so on. The negative evaluations of the activities of BH reflected in the above words are instances of inscribed attitude and are used to explicitly express the writers' judgement, which also has the invoked attitude potential to influence the readers' evaluation of the crisis. As a matter of fact, these negative evaluations are mutually shared by all the campaigners given the context and situation of the crisis. The samples below show that negative evaluations of the situation are reactions to what has been read in the (social) media or heard people say about the crisis and not necessarily from what individuals already knew about the events in the country or their individual commitments to the events. Thus, the general condemnation of the kidnap could then be regarded as a collective action motivated by the emotional response of the members of the campaign community. In other words, the discourse structure of the campaign is shaped by the imagined community, and the general attitude expressed is to a large extent determined by the participating members (see Du Bois, 2007; Precht, 2003). Even those who least understood the complexity of the Nigerian situation joined in the *Twitter* campaign. For example, many of the tweeters were ignorant of the problems associated with ethnic divides; the serious problem of the power struggle and political supremacy between the north and south; the problem of unity and the fact that not only BH, but some other ethnic groups (e.g. the Igbos) still agitate for political independence (see Chiluwa, 2012), and the complexity of security itself. BH, for instance, is reported to have access to more superior weapons than the Nigerian military, and this appears to be the reason why it has been difficult to defeat them. Besides, the questions of BH's arms supplies and sponsors are yet to be resolved. The campaign, however, shows that a global collective response is possible in a situation such

as the Nigerian case, especially in this era of rapid information and communication technology:

- FBP1.** Susan Scritchfield. *Shameful*, such *thievery* and *brutality* to try to *steal* the future from these beautiful young lives and their loved ones. *Cowardly* to *repress* human potential.
- FBP2.** Anne Bodaly. Guard I think this is just *sickening*. ... and it has to stop!!
- FBP3.** In the last few weeks we have seen a *horrific onslaught of violence* against women.
- FBP4.** Grace Sim Auta. This is just *crazy* and *unacceptable!*
- FBP5.** Kim Spellmon. Bring back our girls please and stop the *foolishness* of wicked men. This type of *sickness* among men is *despicable*. The very beautiful thing that you have *stolen* in the name of your sharia law is the Law of Life.

While participants in the discourse clearly express affect through lexical items like ‘sickening’ or ‘crazy’, they are at the same time evaluating the situation in a particular way. And they not only portray what they feel, they also create, invoke and provoke emotions from other participants through the different forms of evaluative meanings (Bednarek, 2008). Therefore, affect must be seen as ‘an important building block in framing (or representation), a resource that allows participants to construct frames that have specific grounding in identifiable social meaning’ (Park, 2011: 266). In the context of this crisis, the different evaluations of the Chibok girls’ abduction by the campaigners are viewed as a function of emotional reactions, and the negative judgments of BH’s actions are understandably sequel to what is globally adjudged to constitute brazen violation of the right of female children to formal education. ‘Judgement’ according to the appraisal framework is ‘judging character’ against some established social or cultural standards. Therefore, words and phrases that express negative judgement of the crisis (e.g. ‘onslaught of violence’, ‘shameful’, ‘crazy’ or ‘wicked’) express hate, anger and disgust towards BH’s unethical behaviour and activities.

Discursive structure of the campaign

First, the data show that the campaign is discursively structured as a pragmatic call for social action, which is expressed in what Searle (1969) refers to as ‘directive acts’, that is, acts that are framed as commands, requests and invitations to BH, and the Nigerian government; they are also considered as a call to the UN and the Western world to do something about the crisis. However, most of the examples from the data below are the acts addressed to the campaign participants, urging them to get more involved in the campaign:

- FBP6.** Four simple actions that will make a difference for the 300 Nigerian schoolgirls that were kidnapped: *Write/call* your government leaders, *demand* they help Nigeria
Share this news with your friends and family
Organize a rally; *march* or *vigil* and *spread* the news in your community. *Repeat ...*
- TWT1.** *Let the world know* that the #nigerianschoolgirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/nigerianschoolgirls?src=hash>) have not been forgotten. RT this and spread the message: #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>)

- FBP7.** Today is the 72nd day since 273 Nigerian school girls were kidnapped. We *ask* that all of you, from whatever city/country you live, *to continue to march* and *hold* rallies. *Continue* to *call* your government leaders and *tell* your friends. We will not be silenced.
- FBP8.** Jason Jayology. *Help* us eradicate the notion that we can fight systematic violence against women with retroactive justice. It is time that we fight for proactive justice ...
- TWT2.** @emelisande (<https://twitter.com/emelisande>): What kind a world ... Such sadness. *Raise* your voice! #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>) [pic.twitter.com/GnnOMvrYr4](http://t.co/GnnOMvrYr4) (<http://t.co/GnnOMvrYr4>)
- TWT3.** To all who are still in doubt. ... All we are saying #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>) NOW & ALIVE. Kawa.

As highlighted in the literature above, affect is not only conveyed through words but also longer grammatical structures as well as paralinguistic information. In other words, affects expressed in the campaign discourse go beyond lexical items to include phrases and whole text samples, reflecting the general mood of the campaign/crisis. For instance, the verbs (or acts) such as *write*, *share*, *organize*, *raise* and so on express the general sense of urgency, anxiety and desperation in the tone of the entire samples. The pragmatic acts of *inviting* and *requesting* in the data are also constructed as an emotional appeal to the reader and to the campaigners as well as reveal the writers' stances and position in relation to the crisis.

Second, typical of the discourse of desperation is *prayer* for divine intervention, which generally conveys the feeling of helplessness. Prayer itself is a type of pragmatic act. The failure of the Nigerian government and the slowness of foreign intervention as well as subsequent events in Nigeria following the kidnap of the schoolgirls simply suggested (going by the attitudes expressed in the campaign) that the Nigerian problem had gone beyond human efforts. For instance, BH continued their bombing and kidnapping activities in the north and central Nigeria. For example, on 21 May 2014, the Islamic militants in two separate bomb attacks killed 118 people at a market place in Jos (central Nigeria); several others were wounded. Also, a suicide bomber (riding a tricycle taxi) detonated a bomb at an outdoor World Cup viewing centre at Damaturu (Yobe state, northern Nigeria) killing 14 people and injuring 26 others. This was similar to the bombing of two World Cup viewing centres in Kampala (Uganda) in 2010 in which 74 people were killed; Al-Shabaab of Somalia (another Islamist terrorist group) claimed responsibility. On 25 June 2014, another explosion occurred at a shopping mall at Abuja, killing 21 people and injuring 21 others (*Associated Press*, 25 June 2014). A day earlier, BH had again abducted 91 people, comprising 60 girls and 31 boys, including toddlers, at a village near Maiduguri (Borno state). The Nigerian government claimed the report was fabricated in order to embarrass the government, but local witnesses confirmed the report (*Associated Press*, 24 June 2014). When all hope in the Nigerian security system was lost, the #BringBackOurGirls campaigners resorted to prayer, as in the following examples:

- FBP9.** DEAR GOD, our *trust* is in YOU. Those that *trust* in GOD shall never be ashamed. *Please help* us *rescue* our girls.
- FBP10.** Dear God, *Help* our Leaders to make *prompt* decisions & sensible judgement on issues of Child Safety

FBP11. *Dear Lord, You're GOD & nothing is impossible for you.*

Let there be a revelation concerning our girls' location

FBP12. Leigh Ann Phillips. Lord *please send* the right person, group of people or power and *help them find* these innocent little girls. Please bring them back.

TWT4. My *prayers* are with the missing Nigerian girls and their families. Time to #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>) #FreeOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/FreeOurGirls?src=hash>). [pic.twitter.com/phOovHz1kb](http://t.co/phOovHz1kb) (<http://t.co/phOovHz1kb>)

TWT5. #BringbackourGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringbackourGirls?src=hash>). May Almighty Allah *touch* the *hearts* of those in authority and *bring back* these girls alive [pic.twitter.com/UXpazmnI4y](http://t.co/UXpazmnI4y) (<http://t.co/UXpazmnI4y>).

FBP13. issa Tyler Renaud we are *praying* in Oakland, California, *our hearts are breaking* with yours until the girls are home and safe.

The prayers comprise words of appeal that express emotions, such as 'please', 'help', 'send', 'touch', repeated several times. The word 'please' alone occurred 40 times in the corpus. Most importantly, these discourses were not only produced by Nigerians, who were said to represent the most religious population in the world (Chiluba, 2008), but by participants across the world, Christians and Muslims alike. We argue that these prayers also provided a hiding place for people who probably could have done something more practically possible in the circumstance. This kind of response from Western powers almost appears like a mockery and would qualify for what the Bible refers to as 'faith without works' (James 1.7), which in itself is hypocritical and amounts to nothing. In the prayers, there is the general emotional tone of anxiety and despondency. The campaigners take the position of religious 'seekers' and construct for themselves an identity of 'God's people', some of whom probably have not stepped into a church for a long time. While they pray, they shift the responsibility to God, with words like 'send', 'help' or 'bring'. Some critics have, however, argued that the BH menace is actually man-made, that is, the failure of the government to be accountable to its people. Adenrele (2012), for instance, attributes the BH insurgency to poverty and political alienation; therefore, (we) should take God out of it. However, it appears generally that discourses associated with conflict, violence, disaster or crisis are characteristic of negative affect and prayers for divine intervention.

Representing BH

In the appraisal of BH and their actions, certain evaluations are explicitly stated, for instance, referring to them as 'terrorists', 'kidnappers', 'rapists' or 'murderers', which are based on the general knowledge of the Islamist group and their activities. Some of the evaluations are implicit, again reflecting an invoked evaluation. For instance **FBP16** says: '*real* men respect women everywhere in the world'. By implication, BH are not the 'real men' of a cultured society in terms of their handling of women. This invoked attitude is indirectly inviting a negative evaluation of BH from the reader according to the writer's judgment. Other evaluations are encoded in rhetorical devices such as metaphor (e.g. referring to BH as '*orphans* of cultured learning'). In all the representations (e.g. below), negative affect is clearly expressed in the words used in the samples, most of

which express sadness, anger and disapproval. For instance, in **FBP5** above, they are referred to as ‘wicked men’. The noun phrase ‘wicked men’ referring to BH is a negative judgement but also a clear example of an inscribed evaluation, which presupposes how the reader should evaluate them. There is also an invoked attitude here, which the inscribed evaluation is implicitly inviting the reader to share. The same goes for all the negative evaluations of BH in the samples. Of course, all evaluations (negative or positive) reflect affect. For example, the adjective ‘wicked’ describing a subject is an evaluative judgement but at the same time implies negative emotion (e.g. anger, disgust or sadness):

FBP14. ... these *kidnappers/terrorists* must be caught and brought to justice ... and I don’t mean jail ... jail is too good for what they deserve ... I pray that all these young people are recovered safe and sound.

FBP15. 70 days with *rapists* and *murderers*; i am getting the impression that some people are enjoying this. Pls help #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>) now & alive

FBP16. Ted Clarke. *REAL men* respect women, anywhere and everywhere in the world!

FBP17. (<https://www.facebook.com/onwu.blaise?fref=ufi>) Onwu Blaise. Boko haram are *fools*. Come to east now.

Fools u re. Pls sisters in the north come to Imo, Abia etc. and reside pls in USA nothing like, let me stay in my state etc. Goodluck if u don’t bring them back pls live the seat ok.

TWT6. #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>) BOKO HARAM: *orphans of cultured learning*. May these very sentiments of global brotherhood showered <http://ireport.cnn.com/people/obioraobieze> ...

While many of the words and expressions in the data rightly represent BH according to their actions, some of the evaluations are equally highly ideological and historically untrue. For instance, the writer of **FBP17** above describes BH as *fools*; we disagree. It must be clearly pointed out here that the systematic attacks carried out by BH in Nigeria in the last couple of years show that they are not fools. Their attacks have been consistent and highly coordinated, and their membership comprises some of the finest minds around the world. According to Agbiboa (2013), membership of the sect includes university lecturers, bankers, political elites and so on from northern Nigeria, Niger and Chad. They have also been referred to as ‘orphans of cultured learning’, or described as not ‘real men’, in terms of their position on women’s sociocultural rights, but certainly not in terms of their belief and religious ideology in relation to Sharia laws. They are conscientiously pursuing their political and religious agenda of creating an Islamic state in northern Nigeria (see Agbiboa, 2013; Chiluwa and Adetunji, 2013). And it is also believed that the sect has enjoyed support and possibly funding from members of the current Jonathan government. Little wonder their activities have been highly successful, often defying government efforts. The Nigerian president in a recent media chat clarified his earlier statement that his cabinet had been infiltrated by BH. According to him,

I never said Boko Haram has infiltrated my Cabinet. What is said was that it has infiltrated the government. You will agree with me that during the period, a serving senator was arrested. A

judge was sacked and some security personnel are being investigated for their alleged involvement with Boko Haram. I never said Boko Haram infiltrated my cabinet. And the government is made up of the Executive, the legislature and the Judiciary. (*The Vanguard*, 4 May 2014)

For a group that has the sympathy of some people in government, their activities and intentions must be rightly evaluated in order to fully assess their potential. They must be seen as a highly complex group and their methods as extremist, brutal and goal-oriented. Again, the writer of **FBP17** called on women living in the north to return to the east of Nigeria (e.g. Abia and Imo states), which implies that the southeast of Nigeria is more peaceful and they support/encourage women education. But in terms of being peaceful, he or she was wrong because recent developments have shown that bomb attacks by BH are possible in eastern Nigeria. For instance, on 15 June 2014, six people suspected to be members of BH were arrested by security agents planting explosive devices at the premises of Winners Chapel Church in Owerri (Imo state) (Uneze, 2014). What the writer probably forgot was that Nigeria needs a holistic solution to BH's terrorism and not to invite certain ethnic groups to flee to certain 'peaceful' parts of the country. The threats issued by the sect were to destroy the entire country, beginning from the north, in order to create a purely Muslim state.

Representing the Nigerian government

Most of the representations of the Nigerian government involve the use of highly emotional evaluative words, many of them depicting disdain, anger and hate. Some of the negative evaluations were reacting to the general perception that the Nigerian government was not doing enough to rescue the girls; some campaigners attributed their ineffectiveness to indolence and incompetence. Some criticized them for being non-proactive to the BH's threats. According to the *Daily Telegraph* (26 May 2014), the Nigerian military (through its Chief of Defence Staff, Air Marshal Felix Badeh) claimed that they had discovered where the 200 kidnapped girls were being held but would not apply force to rescue them. Moreover, the Nigerian government on 29 May 2014 banned all 'bring back our girls' demonstrations at Abuja, claiming that the protests posed a security threat to citizens (see *Time.com*, 2 June 2014). They also called off the deal with BH to release the girls in exchange for the release of imprisoned BH members (see *The Week*, 7 July 2014). The United States had also earlier claimed that the Nigerian government was not willing to utilize the intelligence report provided to them by the US security service (Pomerleau, 2014). All these allegations and assumptions provided a highly volatile background that enable highly negative representation of the government to flourish. Unfortunately also, the Ekiti state governorship election was held within the period (June 2014), in which the People's Democratic Party (PDP) candidate won (PDP is the ruling party). The election victory was celebrated by the party members including the President; some campaigners saw this as a total lack of commitment to the problem of the kidnapped girls. Also, the participation of Nigeria in the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup in Brazil, which Nigeria qualified for even before the girls were kidnapped, was condemned and viewed by some campaigners as a sign of non-seriousness on the part of government. In fact, one of the tweeters argues that the Super Eagles (the Nigerian

football team) should have been kidnapped instead of the girls. Below are some examples from the data expressing negative judgement of the Nigerian government and their actions:

- FBP18.** Ernest Brown. *Damn fools!!!!* Spend that money on finding the girls, or on plane tickets so real men can come and help!
- TWT7.** #BokoHaram (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BokoHaram?src=hash>) will end up kidnapping or killing all Nigerians bcos the *government doesn't care!* #Bringbackourgirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/Bringbackourgirls?src=hash>)
- TWT8.** He has *forgotten* about such 'trivial distraction' he is *celebrating* Ekiti '@stpyp3r (<https://twitter.com/stpyp3r>): pls remind GEJ we still need #BringBackOurGirls' (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>)
- FBP19.** They are *celebrating* Ekiti, good for them. But #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>) they can't. *Give* us light, they can't & *idiots* are gloating in suffering.
- TWT9.** You'd wish Nigeria's president was as dedicated to #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>) as he is *to usurping power* in Ekiti today #EkitiDecides (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/EkitiDecides?src=hash>)
- TWT10.** It is 70 days & sadly like I predicted, other issues like winning election is what matter to our rulers. #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>) is now *forgotten*.
- TWT11.** With over 200 school girls still in captivity, GEJ *celebrates* Ekiti victory with champagne #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>) [pic.twitter.com/BVzdn9q2ZJ](http://t.co/BVzdn9q2ZJ) (<http://t.co/BVzdn9q2ZJ>)
- FBP20.** Alexandra Wakefield. It's *absolutely disgusting*; those girls should be home by now!

The few samples above show that the Nigerian government is explicitly referred to as 'damn fools' or 'idiots', and constructed negatively as non-caring – more committed to winning elections than the welfare of the citizens; their actions are also described as 'absolutely disgusting'. Again, these are all instances of inscribed evaluation that the writers want the readers to share. **FBP18** was reacting to the report that the Nigerian government had awarded a N195 million (\$1.2 million) contract to a US public relations and lobby firm (i.e. Levick) to give a more positive report of their efforts at rescuing the kidnapped schoolgirls (Ibekwe, 2014). The *Facebook* post tells the government to rather 'spend that money on finding the girls or on plane tickets so that *real men* can come and help'. Again, notice the cultural implication of the term 'real men' generally associated with brave decisions and actions. The Jonathan administration is implicitly constructed as a weak government, incapable of brave deeds. They are also said to have *forgotten* the kidnapped girls; 'forgotten' in this context is an invoked evaluation that evokes a negative judgement of the government by the reader. Both the inscribed and invoked evaluations in these instances increase the chances of securing the readers' negative judgement of the Nigerian government's handling of the crisis. Reacting to many of the negative representations of the government in the media and social media campaigns, the Nigerian Ambassador to the United States was quoted as arguing that the rescue of the girls had always been a top priority of the Jonathan administration, which had taken 'aggressive action' from the first day of the incident. He viewed the government's efforts to rescue

the girls as part of larger efforts to win the war against terrorism. He also said the government was willing to welcome foreign allies to fight and defeat BH (Adefuye, 2014).

Representing the kidnapped girls as victims

One of the components of attitude according to the appraisal framework is appreciation, which is ‘assessments made of semiotic and natural phenomena by reference to their value in a given field ... most typically by reference to their aesthetic qualities’ (White, 2011: 17). This can be activated in texts by explicit or implied attitudinal terms which may carry positive or negative meaning. In the data, words and expressions that reflect appreciation are those that acknowledge the potentials of the kidnapped girls or to implicitly identify or align with their present suffering. Thus, there are expressions that reflect positive affect such as ‘beautiful things’ (showing admiration) and the use of rhetorical devices (e.g. metaphor), for example, describing them as the ‘law of life’ in **FBP5** above. This description probably alludes to their natural potential as wife and mother. In many African traditional contexts, women are viewed as the custodian of life because of their power to bear children; hence, anything that threatens them, threatens life. The feeling of sadness and sympathy is also expressed in words such as ‘abandoned’ or ‘forgotten’ in **TWT12** below. Although little or nothing was known about these girls before they were kidnapped, they were described as ‘beautiful things’ or ‘beautiful young lives’ in **FBP1** and **FBP5** above. They are also generally (and rightly so) constructed as the victim or the ‘innocent’, and this kind of evaluation is prompted in order to construct the gravity of (and possibly exaggerate) the criminal activities of BH. Referring to them as ‘innocent’ is a positive judgement, while the kidnapping itself is described as wickedness or ‘sickness’ in **FBP5**. The examples below show evaluations that reflect appreciation, sympathy, worry and anxiety over the welfare of the victims:

FBP5. Kim Spellmon. Bring back our girls please and stop the foolishness of wicked men. This type of sickness among men is despicable. The *very beautiful things* that you have stolen in the name of your sharia law is the *Law of Life*

TWT12. What a sad reality. *Abandoned. Forgotten.* Because Ekiti election is greater than those *little girls*. #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>) #BringBackOurGirls (constructing the victim) (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>)

TWT13. Oh. To look at them. How *helpless* they must be feeling by now. #BringBackOurGirls [pic.twitter.com/IrGw47z2wB](http://t.co/IrGw47z2wB) (<http://t.co/IrGw47z2wB>)

TWT14. Sister, I imagine the horrors they put u through; I cry & pray. I know u r in pain but hope u know u didn’t deserve this. #BringBackOurGirls. (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>)

TWT15. #UNSecGen (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/UNSecGen?src=hash>): political will is growing. Enough is enough.

The bodies of *innocent* should never be battleground. #timetoact (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/timetoact?src=hash>) #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>)

TWT16. #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>): When will women be seen as humans & not objects? Sinothando

The same expressions of pity and worry prompt the reference to them as ‘little girls’; it also connotes appreciation (i.e. invoking affect). But of course, we know that they are not ‘little girls’ in the real sense; they are teenagers (between age 14 and 18 years), and many of them are already women. Some of them even took the risk of escaping, and they succeeded. But this kind of evaluation is expected in a time of crisis or tragedy. Worry over their emotional conditions is also reflected in the tweets – the fact that they are forced into some ‘horror’ or emotional trauma (e.g. **TWT13** and **TWT14**). Their helplessness is depicted in expressions such as ‘poor girls’, ‘helpless’ or ‘abandoned’. **TWT16** re-echoes the feminist question of general perceived victimization of women. The writer views the kidnap of the victims not only as a crime arising from a purely Nigerian sectarian conflict but a sociocultural problem of gender inequality in many parts of the world. For instance, in many world societies, women are still subjugated under some religious or cultural ideologies or conditions that are unfair and uncivilized. Like the tweet rightly implied: women are still very much treated as ‘objects’ rather than ‘humans’. According to Waters (2013), under the Muslim Sharia, for example, men are empowered to beat their wives and women are not allowed to work outside their homes. When a Muslim man refused to take orders from his female boss at a five-star hotel in Italy, he was probably responding to his religious belief that a woman should not usurp authority over a man, even when (in this case) the woman has earned the respect.

Representing the world

Since the BH problem was now viewed as a global ‘tragedy’, which is beyond what Nigeria alone can handle, the campaigners began to expect some decisive interventions by nations of the world regardless of some diplomatic or legal implications. Besides, the lukewarm attitude of world leaders who expected a formal invitation from Nigeria for assistance was criticized and generally viewed as irresponsible. As highlighted above, some campaigners interpreted Western inaction from a racial point of view, arguing that the world would have intervened if the crisis had happened in Europe or America. Thus, the world is generally constructed as a selfish and uncaring place to live in, especially because the kind of action expected of the entire world after three months of the girls’ kidnap was not forthcoming. Affective stance, in the samples below, express disappointment, sadness, bitterness and anger expressed not only in individual words and phrases, but also in the general tone of the whole text samples. Interestingly, while the writer of **FBP21** thought he or she was defending racial equality, he or she was unaware that Nigeria is implicitly being insulted. According to the writer, if the schoolgirls were to be kidnapped in ‘any civilised society’ the world would have done something. He or she implies that Nigeria or Africa is indeed not civilized. This is certainly unfair: the writer probably meant ‘developed’. Often, speakers/writers are not aware of the discursive implications of what they say or write. In the samples below, the response of the world is negatively constructed:

FBP21. Lorelei YolandaBcool Scott. *That’s outrageous!* Can u imagine 200 schoolgirls being kidnapped in the UK? Or America? Or any civilised society? That would never be left until

they were found! I hope those girls in the future somehow find their own way back to their families. Nigerian government, hang your heads in utter and disgraceful shame.

TWT17. The Nigerian schoolgirl hostages the world *has forgotten* <http://dailym.ai/1m51cOt> via @MailOnline (<https://twitter.com/MailOnline>) #bringbackourgirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/bringbackourgirls?src=hash>) (this was tweeted and retweeted several times)

TWT18. These girls are still kidnapped and we *just go on* and *move on with our lives*. Are we not humans anymore? #BringbackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringbackOurGirls?src=hash>)

TWT19. How the World *Quickly Stopped Caring* about the Kidnapped Nigerian Girls. <http://news.naij.com/68498.html> #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>) [pic.twitter.com/r03Na2gmtZ](http://t.co/r03Na2gmtZ) (<http://t.co/r03Na2gmtZ>)

TWT20. Why were women's groups excluded from meeting on Nigerian security? | Maria Butler <http://gu.com/p/3q987/tw> via @guardian (<https://twitter.com/guardian>) #bringbackourgirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/bringbackourgirls?src=hash>)

FBP22. Everyone has *suddenly forgotten* about#Bringbackourgirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/Bringbackourgirls?src=hash>), meanwhile they're still missing.

The general impression the reader gets from the lexical and grammatical representations of the world and the general mood/tone of the above samples is that the world was unwilling to rescue the Nigerian girls and that people simply mind their business. Again notice an invoked attitude in expressions such as 'the world has forgotten', 'stopped caring', 'we just go on and move on with our lives', which not only evoke emotional responses from the reader, but also negative judgement of the global community. There is the constant question of why the 'bring back our girls campaign' had suddenly declined in its tempo. It was as if it was all over after the few months of the incident. In the samples below, the writers begin to assess the usefulness and relevance of all the social media campaign noise after all, and conclude that it was simply 'another day in twittersphere'. Notice the attitude of disbelief in 'H'm Michelle?' (**TWT21**):

TWT21. Am I to take it that #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>) was a success, since it's gone from the news? H'm, Michelle?

TWT22. I guess we now agree that #twitter (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/twitter?src=hash>) won't #bringbackourgirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/bringbackourgirls?src=hash>). #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/gbengasesan>) @gbengasesan 22. Juni (<https://twitter.com/gbengasesan/status/480634816724213760>)

FBP23. So the world *stops tweeting* about #bringbackourgirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/bringbackourgirls?src=hash>). 219 girls *still missing* and this is *just another day* in twittersphere.

This brings us to our original research question. Is the social media campaign of #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>) surely 'another day in twittersphere?' Is it indeed another type of 'slacktivism?' David Cameron was criticized in the media for simply holding up a poster with CNN's Christiane Amanpour with the text: #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>), because the campaigners believed there was more he could do than mere social media alignment. According to Morse (2014):

Hashtag activism is a new phenomenon and campaigning in this way has its faults. It can be a brilliant way to bring a campaign to people's attention, but presumably those using the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls want to do more than just spread awareness – they want those girls brought home. Getting people like Michelle Obama and David Cameron to hold up a slogan and pull a concerned face is not mission accomplished. We, the people, use a hashtag because we don't have the power that these leaders have. I want influential people to act, not update their status.

And as some of the campaigners rightly observed, the campaign has died down while the problem remains. Unfortunately, direct foreign military intervention in Nigeria was not as easy as most of the campaigners had imagined. US Senator John McCain argued in an interview that he would order US troops to rescue the girls if he was the president (and knew where the girls were kept) without waiting for any permission from Goodluck Jonathan. After all (according to him), the UN charter authorized military intervention on behalf of the girls because their abduction rose to the level of crimes against humanity (Mataconis, 2014). Also significant is the classification of BH as an international problem, naming the sect as a global terrorist organization and as part of Al-Qaeda. And the issue of Western intervention in Nigeria follows a familiar argument about the responsibility of the West to protect vulnerable women and girls from violence and oppression by radical Muslims (Ricceri, 2014). However, political commentators and Nigerians themselves had feared that (without proper consultation and permission) direct foreign intervention would undermine Nigeria's sovereignty as a nation. Also, some local Nigerian journalists had argued that #BringBackOurGirls campaign 'is merely a façade of activism to place over justification for a stronger US and Western presence in West Africa' (Ricceri, 2014: 4), but the United States had also argued that military intervention in Nigeria could be disastrous as it was in Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, it was argued that careless military interventions could endanger the safety of the kidnapped girls as BH might use them as human shields.

However, having secured the Nigerian president's invitation, the United States, Britain, France, China and Israel sent their teams of counter-terrorism officials and other specialists to Abuja. An Australian online newspaper (*The Australian West*) of 3 June 2014 also reported that Australia was willing to send specialist troops to Nigeria as well as provide counter-terrorist and intelligence support if requested. The United States was reported to have deployed a drone in Chad to do surveillance over the forest where the girls were thought to be held. China had also offered the use of its satellites with Canada also offering to help. However, Nigeria's response to assistance was said not to be 'coherent', but Nigeria insisted that it welcomed foreign assistance (Probyn, 2014). As at the time of this research, the girls were still missing after 80 days and the #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>) campaign appeared to have ended. More worrying was that the girls must have been separated.

Conclusion

Social media campaigns spread very fast and reach many people around the world at the same time. They have also recorded impressive successes with the Arab spring, where

Twitter and *Facebook* were used to mobilize protesters who took part in physical offline protests. In this study, we have argued that unless social media campaigns like *#BringBackOurGirls* (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>) are followed up with the implementation of strategic action plans, the whole process will simply turn out to be mere slacktivism. But with the recent greater involvements of Western powers in the rescue efforts, the campaign may not be fruitless after all. This study shows that language use in the *#BringBackOurGirls* (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>) campaign exhibits affect, judgement and appreciation reflecting moods, feelings and emotional language in the representations of persons, groups and governments. Most of the evaluations reflect negative valence, which is often typical of reactions to (social) media reports of crisis, or national disasters. Also, the writers of tweets and (*Facebook*) posts of the campaign apply both the inscribed and invoked evaluations in order to secure the readers' judgement to align with their own position, especially on BH and the Nigerian government. Despite the complexity of the processes involved in securing the release of the kidnapped girls, many of the campaigners still argue that the *#BringBackOurGirls* (<https://twitter.com/hashtag/BringBackOurGirls?src=hash>) campaign could not have been considered successful until the girls were rescued.

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Appendix I

BringBackOurGirls @BringGirlsBack (<https://twitter.com/BringGirlsBack>) 3. Mai (<https://twitter.com/BringGirlsBack/status/462526291422363648>)



'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere'. Martin Luther King <http://en.minguo.info/wiki/forgotten> #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23BringBackOurGirls&src=hash>) pic.twitter.com/CQ8YUIHdfh (<http://t.co/CQ8YUIHdfh>)



BringBackOurGirls @BringGirlsBack (<https://twitter.com/BringGirlsBack>).4 Std.

Poster: 'For the Universal Women's Right to education, to freedom and to life' @Lubtis (<https://twitter.com/Lubtis>) pic.twitter.com/UAZGW7NSoi (<http://t.co/UAZGW7NSoi>)



BringBackOurGirls @BringGirlsBack (<https://twitter.com/BringGirlsBack>)



BringBackOurGirls @BringGirlsBack (<https://twitter.com/BringGirlsBack>) 22 Std. (<https://twitter.com/BringGirlsBack/status/463092213291819008>)

#BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23BringBackOurGirls&src=hash>) – It's time for the droplets to coalesce into a big river: http://en.minguo.info/blogs/augustin/bringback-ourgirls_its_time_for_the_droplets_to_



BringBackOurGirls @BringGirlsBack (<https://twitter.com/BringGirlsBack>) 4. Mai (<https://twitter.com/BringGirlsBack/status/463016140503937025>)

UK petition needs 100,000 signatures so it can be debated in UK Parliament! <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/64170> #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23BringBackOurGirls&src=hash>) pic.twitter.com/dUzA6pebsk (<http://t.co/dUzA6pebsk>)



BringBackOurGirls @BringGirlsBack (<https://twitter.com/BringGirlsBack>) 4. Mai (<https://twitter.com/BringGirlsBack/status/462912407786901504>)





BringBackOurGirls @BringGirlsBack (<https://twitter.com/BringGirlsBack>) 4. Mai (<https://twitter.com/BringGirlsBack/status/462862304057389056>)



BringBackOurGirls @BringGirlsBack (<https://twitter.com/BringGirlsBack>) 3. Mai (<https://twitter.com/BringGirlsBack/status/462526291422363648>)

At 1PM #London (<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23London&src=hash>) Time for the Vigil at the #NigerianEmbassy (<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23NigerianEmbassy&src=hash>), let's all sing together the #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23BringBackOurGirls&src=hash>) song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySYF96Yt6C8>



TODAY: #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23BringBackOurGirls&src=hash>) in #USA (<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23USA&src=hash>) #Washington (<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23Washington&src=hash>) #Atlanta (<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23Atlanta&src=hash>) #New York (<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23NewYork&src=hash>) #Oakland (<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23Oakland&src=hash>) #Philadelphia (<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23Philadelphia&src=hash>) See:



BringBackOurGirls @BringGirlsBack (<https://twitter.com/BringGirlsBack>) 4. Mai

UK petition needs 100000 signatures so it can be debated in UK Parliament! <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/64170> #BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23BringBackOurGirls&src=hash>) pic.twitter.com/dUzA6pebsk (<http://t.co/dUzA6pebsk>)



#BringBackOurGirls (<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23BringBackOurGirls&src=hash>) demonstrations worldwide: check your country and city here: <http://en.minguo.info/wiki/forgotten/schoolgirls/demonstrations> pic.twitter.com/A0WLwJ5r47 (<http://t.co/A0WLwJ5r47>)



Appendix 2.

Keyword	Frequency	%	RC.	RC. %	Keyness	p	Lemmas Set
			freq.				
BRINGBACKOURGIRLS	883	3.088276	0		11046.25	5.99E-22	
GIRLS	410	1.433968	717		3647.293	1.7E-20	
CHIBOK	73	0.255316	29		789.4651	1.86E-18	
BRING	122	0.426693	3511	0.024005	468.6451	9.74E-18	
SCHOOLGIRLS	35	0.122412	1		427.6646	1.31E-17	
KIDNAPPED	72	0.251819	726		417.7983	1.42E-17	
MISSING	63	0.220341	503		392.9217	1.73E-17	
CHIBOKGIRLS	29	0.101427	0		361.9137	2.27E-17	
WORLD	131	0.45817	10,054	0.06874	273.5046	5.82E-17	
ABDUCTED	37	0.129407	268		237.3945	9.51E-17	
ABDUCTION	23	0.080442	92		172.2967	3.02E-16	
CAMPAIGN	49	0.171377	2022	0.013825	155.6882	4.44E-16	
MARCH	38	0.132904	1030		150.0972	5.11E-16	
SCHOOL	58	0.202854	4052	0.027704	130.2601	8.97E-16	
RESCUEOURGIRLS	10	0.034975	0		124.7912	1.07E-15	
DAY	80	0.279799	9627	0.065821	108.9237	1.9E-15	
FORGOTTEN	25	0.087437	600		104.4024	2.29E-15	
SILENCED	13	0.045467	47		99.6946	2.82E-15	
NIGERIAN	119	0.4162	21,405	0.146349	94.37077	3.64E-15	
RESCUE	23	0.080442	597		92.68979	3.96E-15	
EQUALITYNOW	5	0.017487	0		62.39472	3.49E-14	
FORGET	26	0.090935	1754	0.011992	59.93227	4.59E-14	
ALIVE	24	0.08394	1464	0.01001	59.51108	4.82E-14	
DAYS	38	0.132904	4108	0.028087	58.0037	5.78E-14	
PLEASE	40	0.139899	4965	0.033946	52.55121	1.25E-13	
GOVT	37	0.129407	4340	0.029673	51.79136	1.42E-13	
MICHELLE	6	0.020985	14		50.49397	1.78E-13	
NIGERIANSCHOOLGIRLS	4	0.01399	0		49.91563	1.98E-13	
WOMEN	33	0.115417	3640	0.024887	49.3288	2.22E-13	
FEAT	9	0.031477	110		48.9656	2.39E-13	
EKITI	14	0.048965	485		48.94024	2.4E-13	
AWARENESS	10	0.034975	173		47.88534	2.99E-13	
SHOW	31	0.108422	3432	0.023465	46.15991	4.45E-13	
JOIN	25	0.087437	2241	0.015322	45.66931	5.03E-13	
CLASSMATES	5	0.017487	10		43.33835	9.82E-13	
HOURS	21	0.073447	1698	0.011609	41.94595	1.59E-12	
GIRLRISING	3	0.010492	0		37.43662	1.97E-11	
NOWANDALIVE	3	0.010492	0		37.43662	1.97E-11	
DAUGHTERS	9	0.031477	231		36.45409	5.41E-11	
HOSTAGES	10	0.034975	325		36.13079	8.27E-11	
FAMILIES	18	0.062955	1456		35.94052	1.09E-10	
WOMEN'S	5	0.017487	26		35.10445	5.94E-10	
RAISE	12	0.04197	587		34.43562	1.48E-09	
BOKOHARAM	16	0.05596	1210		33.75714	3.32E-09	
NIGERIA	191	0.668019	62,411	0.426712	33.31724	4.9E-09	
TRIBUTE	6	0.020985	74		32.54134	8.74E-09	

(Continued)

Appendix 2. (Continued)

Keyword	Frequency	%	RC.	RC. %	Keyness	p	Lemmas Set
NIGERIA'S	22	0.076945	2560	0.017503	31.05797	2.21E-08	
EVENT	13	0.45467	854		30.55772	2.95E-08	
KIDNAPPING	17	0.059457	1552	0.010611	30.54341	2.97E-08	
WOMENS	3	0.010492	3		29.13057	6.47E-08	
CONTINUE	32	0.111919	5408	0.036975	27.95739	1.21E-07	
DEMAND	14	0.048965	1161		27.37078	1.65E-07	
HEROES	7	0.024482	194		27.3538	1.67E-07	
CULPABLE	6	0.020985	122		26.9128	2.1E-07	
SAFELY	6	0.020985	130		26.19948	3.05E-07	
PETITION	7	0.024482	214		26.08133	3.24E-07	
UNSERIOUS	4	0.01399	29		25.65291	4.06E-07	
ORGANIZE	6	0.020985	137		25.6112	4.15E-07	
DEMANDING	8	0.02798	352		24.47942	7.48E-07	
CONCLUDES	4	0.01399	34		24.47474	7.5E-07	
HOME	28	0.097929	4732	0.032353	24.46096	7.55E-07	
RESCUED	6	0.020985	153		24.37494	7.9E-07	
BRUTAL	9	0.031477	483		24.34082	8.04E-07	
THINK	3	0.010492	12,519	0.085594	-30.3316	3.35E-08	
MUSLIMS	4	0.01399	14,372	0.098263	-32.5762	8.54E-09	
MEMBERS	4	0.01399	14,719	0.100636	-33.7419	3.37E-09	
COUNTRY	17	0.059457	28,574	0.195364	-37.2703	2.29E-11	
NORTHERN	3	0.010492	15,437	0.105545	-40.4818	2.94E-12	
PEOPLE	34	0.118914	50,320	0.344044	-56.56	6.97E-14	
NORTH	5	0.017487	25,334	0.173212	-66.1102	2.42E-14	
STATE	13	0.045467	39,797	0.272097	-83.1191	6.75E-15	
HARAM	80	0.279799	107,169	0.732727	-105.403	2.2E-15	
BOKO	86	0.300783	113,434	0.775562	-109.064	1.89E-15	

Note. RC: Keywords and their frequencies.