Ideological Positioning of Africa in Print Media: An Exploration of the Daily Graphic's Inside Africa Stories

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Abstract: **Research into ideological positioning and media discourse has gained momentum over the past decade in the humanities and the social sciences. Print media, one of the leading voices of the mainstream media, has been a tool for determining the political and social ideologies of institutions and societies. This paper adopts van Langenhove & Harre's (1999) Positioning model as a framework to explore how ideology is constructed through discourse and how such discourse influences text and talk. The ideological construction of the African experience in the print media occupied the centre stage of this analysis. The study used a descriptive research approach for a qualitative analysis of the data. Twenty-four stories from the December 2020 Edition of the Daily Graphic's *Inside Africa* column were purposively selected as data for the study. The study revealed that foreign media organisations such as the BBC, AFP, Aljazeera and France24 ideologically position Africa in prominently stereotyped and negative perspective, and this creates a very gloomy and murky identity for her. The negative identity created impacts on the cultural, political and socio-economic life of the people of Africa. The study concludes that foreign media organisations are stereotypical in their coverage of the African experience, hence a call for circumspection in their reportage on Africa. The study has implications for further studies on ideological positioning and identity construction of the African experience in the media on one hand, and the strive for positive representation of Africa in the western media on the other.**

Keywords; **Ideological positioning, Print media, Daily Graphic, Inside Africa, identity construction.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is not simply the ability to use words; it refers to the complex array of interlocking, which forms the basis of communication and social interaction (Thompson, 2003). This statement is supported by Montgomery's (1995) assertion that language informs the way we think, the way we experience, and the way we interact with each other. This means that language is the vehicle by which discourse is initiated and ideology instantiated. It is, thus, a vital instrument that aids the communicative ability of the members of any given society or geographical territory (Odebode & Dabi, 2015, p.17). Humans worldwide use both verbal and non-verbal means to accomplish everyday social life, including the enactment of identity and ideology. Wodak (1999) points out that language is not an isolated phenomenon; it is deeply social, interwoven with social structures and interactions.

Hall (1997) posits that "…language is the privileged medium in which we 'make sense' of things in which meaning is produced and exchanged" (p.1). This implies that our thoughts, ideas and feelings within our cultural settings and our general conceptualization of the world are construed through language; hence, language becomes a pivotal component in the meaning production process through ideological positioning and identity creation. The print media initiate and maintain discourse through language, and in such social intercourse, viewpoints are articulated based on the ideology of the speaker. In such discourse, language is used as a tool to determine the political and social ideologies of institutions and societies. It can, therefore, be said that ideology resides in language and that the linguistic structures, including the words we used, are ideologically conditioned to reflect the legitimacy and the interest of the speakers. Language and ideology in the media circle are inseparable since media discourse is initiated and shaped by the ideological perspective of media practitioners.

There has been heightened interest and growing application of the Positioning Theory in the field of literacy and language (McVee, Brock, & Glazier, 2011). The theory which focuses on the appropriate expression with which to talk about the discursive production of a diversity of selves (Harré & Davies, 1990) is now gaining momentum in other research disciplines. The model argues that "a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, story lines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned" (Harré & Davies, 1990, p. 46). This postulation is relevant in the analysis of ideological loadings in media discourse.

The ideological construction of the African experience in the print media has not received much research attention though it is very vital in the uncovering of the hidden ideological stance and viewpoints of media practitioners, political actors and other speakers of the world. Works like Michira (2002) and Kunihira (2007) have focused on the images of Africa in the western media and how Africa is represented in the American

media respectively. While Michira's work fails to single out the specific western media hubs used for the study, Kunihira's study uses America's *Newsweek* Magazine to examine the coverage given to African news in the American media. The existing works in the literature seem not to have focused on the *Inside Africa* stories of the *Daily Graphic* as data for the exploration of ideological positioning and identity construction of the African experience. The *Inside Africa* stories are narrations of the African experience, and this experience is captured in the *Daily Graphic*, a giant print media organization in Ghana, as news to readers. Paradoxically, the African experience is narrated to the reader by external sources such as AFP, Aljazeera, BBC, CNN, France 24 and Reuters. These internationally acclaimed media hubs are based outside Africa, yet they chronicle the African people's experiences to the world, and their narratology may be characterized by biases, misrepresentations, and ideological implicatures. Exploring how these external sources recount the African experience to their readers and the ideological positioning and identity construction that emerge from this external narration of the African experience will be very intriguing and revealing as it will contribute to the growing debate on the representation of Africa in the media. It will also contribute to the scholarly works on language and ideology and how the concepts merge to forge an identity for Africa and her people.

It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to fill the identified gap by exploring how ideology is constructed in the narration of the African experience in the print media, specifically the AFP, Aljazeera, BBC, CNN, France24 and Reuters. This study is premised on the assumption that "positioning permits us to think of ourselves as a choosing subject, locating ourselves in conversations according to those narrative forms with which we are familiar and bringing to those narratives our own subjective lived histories through which we have learnt metaphors, characters and plot" (Davies and Harré (1990, p.52). The study hopes to contribute significantly to the growing research on the exploration of the interface between ideological positioning and language and how these two concepts shape discourse and viewpoint.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The concept of ideology has been studied from sociological, political and other dimensions since the 18th century, and because of its relevance, scholars still explore this concept to uncover other areas that impact our everyday life. From the 18th century to date, different scholars and researchers have studied the concept of ideology from different perspectives (Marx & Engels, 1974; Althusser, 1976; Thompson, 1984; Eagleton, 1991; Van Dijk, 1998; Hawkes, 2003 et cetera).

Burak (2018) refers to ideology as "behaviours, sets of beliefs, and values with reference to political, social, cultural and financial life, which influence the individual's perception and world view" (p.54). His definition is in sync with Thompson (1984), which perceives ideology as "ways in which meaning (or signification) serves to sustain relations of domination" (p.

146). According to Eagleton (1991, p.5), this definition is "probably the single most widely accepted definition of ideology. Burak's definition corroborates with Hall's (1997) assertion that meaning is produced through meaning producing-practices, including representational systems and ideology that reside in language.

For the past three decades, studies in ideology have been the major concern of Critical Discourse Analysts. At the centre of these studies is media discourse, especially with a primary focus on news production, reporting and broadcasting (van Dijk 1988a, 1988b, 1995; Fowler 1991; Fairclough 1992, 1995a, 1995b, 2006). Critical Discourse analysts subject media texts to critical analysis to uncover the interplay between language and social relations and how these two concepts combine to construct an ideologically motivated discourse. Ideological studies have evolved and grown central to current social commentaries, political and media discourses to uncover the interface between language and ideology and how discourse, especially media discourse, influences the ideological positioning of individuals, groups, and societies.

Frazer (1990) postulates that an individual's understanding of the world and their construction of the social identity in their experiential world are discursively constructed. This implies that a person's perception of the social world in terms of personal and socio-cultural identity is greatly determined by the ideological lens available to them and their position. This means that an individual's personal stance and position on a subject influences their perception of the world in terms of linguistic images, storylines and other discursive practices they engage in. In media discourse, news is situated within different contexts, and the contexts determine to a large extent the language used, the topical issues discussed, and the moral judgement made by those who report the news.

Positioning involves the process of ongoing construction of the self through talk, particularly through the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person's actions intelligible and relatively determinate as social acts and within which the members of conversations have specific locations (Tan and Moghaddam, 1999, p. 183). The positioning theory is a social constructivist approach developed in the late 1980s to focus on gender, stereotyping, and identity creation (Slocum and van Lagenhove, 2003). It involves the use of rhetorical devices by which oneself and other speakers are put in a continuum to show various kinds of relationships. The relationships may include power, competence, moral standing, marginalization and discrimination in terms of race, gender and language (See. Davies and Harré, 1990; Harré and van Langenhove, 1991; van Langenhove and Harré, 1993a).

Davies and Harre (1990) draw from post-structuralist theory and feminist models and discuss issues like subjectivity, storyline, and narratives that feature dominantly in the positioning theory. After the publication of Davies & Harre (ibid), several works have been conducted to refine and reshape the tenets, assumptions and the applicability of the positioning theory (Harre & Moghaddam, 2003; Harre & van

Langenhove, 1991, 1999; van Langenhove & Harre, 1994 etc.).

Positioning is a discursive process by which selves are situated in interlocutions, where the participants subjectively and coherently produce joint storylines. Scholars identify two types of positioning: interactive and reflexive positioning. While the former refers to the phenomenon in which what one person says positions another, the latter refers to the situation in which one positions oneself. In both instances, there are some ideological stance taken by the participants involved in the communicative situation. Ideological positioning is very key in the analysis of media discourse. It involves a body of ideas that reflects the beliefs and interest of a nation, individuals or society. It embodies the set of beliefs by which a group or a society orders reality so as to render it intelligible. van Langenhove & Harre (1995) aver that in ideological positioning and discursive processes, there are two important things which inform the interpretation of a given text:

a. People position themselves and others
b. People present versions of the material and social world by means of rhetorical reconstructions.

It can be deduced from the above statements that positioning allows a person to construe the world differently from others due to the position they have taken in a particular discursive context. In discourse, an interlocutor can be variously positioned, and in each of the positioning, their perception of the world and the ideological current that passes through them may differ. An individual can position another person in either negative or positive limelight, depending on where one stands. This results in stereotyping, misrepresentation, distortion, discrimination and marginalisation etc.

van Langenhove & Harre (1995) describe stereotypes as something negative and as something that has to be corrected or changed. They are generally a set of consensual beliefs of one group about the attributes shared by members of another group. Stereotypes can be described as a biased perception of a person, and they may be described as a distortion of reality as a result of the subjectivity of one's perception towards an entity. van Langenhove & Harre (ibid) further state that stereotypes refer to categories which are wrongly represented. These categories are prejudiced, discriminated against, and the realities about them distorted. Ideologically, stereotyping is regarded as a cognitive process that takes place inside a person's mind. This presupposes that an individual's actions or words are characterised by stereotypical tendencies, and these affect the way an individual perceives the world. This means that the ideological positioning of a people is a cognitive process informed by socio-cultural factors.

In the positioning theory, there are certain determinants that enable the analyst to determine how an interlocutor is said to have positioned themselves and another in their discourse. First and foremost, the lexical choices made by the speaker contain tropes which impose certain identities on the speakers and determine who the speakers should be. Secondly, interlocutors in a discourse may not be aware of the hidden meanings in their linguistic choices, so they may take for granted certain things they say in the communicative situation. Similarly, the way interlocutors construe their experiential world varies from person to person due to several factors, including the status of the speaker, one's attitude towards the speaker and his message, availability of alternative discourses and other hidden factors that are encapsulated in the linguistic choices made. Another factor worth considering is the fact that the positions constructed for oneself and others are an accumulation of fragmented experiences lived by one, but these fragmented experiences are non-contradictorily linear. Lastly, the positions assumed by interlocutors may be seen by the interlocutor himself or other participants in the communicative situation in terms of identified roles (overt or covert) or in terms of characters in shared storylines, identity creation and power domination.

Some scholarly works have been conducted in the field of mainstream media to explore the ideological viewpoints and stance of newsmakers (Jegede, 2015; Pan, 2015; Hassan, 2018; van Langenhove & Harre, 1995, 1999 etc.). These works have focused on how the media use language to initiate and instantiate discourse and how such discourse influence the ideology of readers or listeners in a given society. Other works like Michira (2002) and Kunihira (2007) have focused on different but similar trajectories. Michira (2002) for instance, discusses how some popular images of Africa are represented in the Western electronic and print media, and points out the tenets underpinning these presentations. Kunihira (2007), on the other hand, explores how the American media portray Africa in their coverage and reportage. The study reveals that the representation of Africa in the American media is characterized by stereotype, underrepresentation and misrepresentations. These studies, however, fail to give specific examples and instances from western print media organisations as sources of evidence to buttress their claim of misrepresentation of Africa and her people. Similarly, these works reviewed in the literature seem not to discuss the African experiences recounted by the foreign media houses like AFP, Aljazeera, BBC, CNN, France24 and Reuters in their news broadcast and explore how such experiences position the selected African countries and the African continent as a whole in terms of ideology and identity construction.

Exploring the ideological positioning of Africa in the *Daily Graphic* is therefore justifiable as it will fill this gap in the literature of language and representation and also add to the growing literature in the field of media, language and ideology, and language and identity construction.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive qualitative approach to explore how the print media use language to ideologically position Africa and to recount its experience. Twenty-four news items, especially the headlines from the December 2020

(1st – 15th) Edition of the Daily Graphic's *Inside Africa* column were purposively selected from the print newspapers as data for the study. To begin the analysis, the new items were assigned numbers, and the rationale for the coding was for easy identification and referencing. The data were closely studied and emerging patterns from the data were identified and categorized. van Langenhove & Harre's (1999) Positioning model underpinned the exploration of how foreign print media use language to position the African continent and how such positioning ideologically enact an identity for the continent.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

In this section, the study will discuss the African experiences recounted by the foreign media in their news broadcast and explore how such experiences position the selected African countries in terms of ideology and identity construction.

4.1 Foreign Media's Account of the African Experience

The study sought to find out which foreign media are dominant in the broadcast of the African experiences and what do they recount as significant African experience in their reportage. The table below shows the foreign media organisations which are dominant in news broadcast concerning issues in African countries in particular and the African continent in general, and the frequency and percentage distribution of the broadcast of the African experience.

Table 1: Foreign media organisation and their coverage of the African experience

Media organisation	Frequency of the African experiences	Percentage
BBC	16	67.7%
AFP	3	12.5%
Aljazeera	3	12.5%
France 24	2	8.3%
Total	24	100%

From the table, it is observed that four main foreign media organisations: BBC, AFP, Aljazeera and France24 are those which frequently give the African experience frequent media coverage, with BBC being the most dominant and France24 the least dominant. Out of the twenty-four news items reported, the BBC leads with a frequency of 16 representing 67.7%, followed by AFP and Aljazeera with a distant and marginal frequency of 3 each representing 12.5% respectively. France24 comes last with a frequency of 2, representing 8.3% of the total data used. The study moves further to examine the significant African experiences that are given media coverage by these four global media hubs in the *Inside Africa* column of the *Daily Graphic*, Ghana's most popular newspapers.

4.2 BBC's coverage of the African experience

The study shows that BBC's account of the African experience from 1st to 15th December, 2020 covers issues in

ten sovereign African nations, namely Togo, Ethiopia, Uganda, Algeria and Nigeria. The rest are Ivory Coast, Liberia, Ghana, Kenya and Gambia. Each of these countries has its own peculiar experience, which was captured as news for the audience worldwide. The experiences recounted include but not limited to politics, elections and post-election issues, security, refugee situations, crime, justice and health.

The following headlines are captured as the representation of the African experience in a form of news item:

DGIA1a – Togo's first female presidential candidate arrested.
DGIA2a – Uganda's Bobi Wine suspends election campaign
DGIA2b – Questions remain over return of Algerian President.

DGIA4a – Ivorian opposition figure in hospital.
DGIA8b – Ethiopian opposition party calls for release of its leaders.

These headlines above do not portray the African countries involved in a positive perspective. For instance, the arrest and detention of Brigitte Adjamagbo-Johnson, who in 2010 was the first woman in Togo's history to run for president, has demonstrated how Togo's political arena has been dominated by men and how they use the power they wield to suppress the vulnerable and to decapitate women. The headline also suggests that Togo, as a state, does not promote women's participation in multiparty democracy and mainstream politics. Another instance is found in DGIA2a where Uganda's opposition presidential candidate Kyagulanyi, also known as Bobi Wine, suspends his campaign, following the attacks on his campaign team, which resulted in injury to his car and some of his supporters. This event does not position Africa in a good limelight in the comity of nations. Political intolerance has plagued the continent, and this positions it as a continent which shows no respect for democratic governance. Similarly, the African experience found in DGIA2b centres on the ill-health of the 75-year old Algerian President Abdelmadjid. His poor health has stifled and stagnated the smooth running of the Algerian economy. His reception of medical treatment outside his country paints a gloomy picture of the poor health facilities and healthcare delivery in Africa. His convalescence also depicts Africa as a continent where politics is a preserve of the aged.

Cote d'Ivoire's political experience has been bedevilled by a lot of political unrest due to unlawful arrest and detention of most opposition leaders. Pascal Affi N'guesson, the opposition leader, boycotted the 2020 polls and formed a rival government; he was arrested, detained and tortured, a situation which has led to his hospitalisation amidst tight security outside his hospital room. This gives an impression that in Africa, opposition members are regarded as enemies and must be manhandled. In N'guesson's situation, his arrest and detention stem from the fact that he has been very expressive and articulate about the third term mandate of the

ruling President, Alassane Ouattara. A similar situation obtains in Ethiopia where two prominent opposition leaders have been jailed and their party offices closed down. These two leaders have been charged with terrorism. It can be inferred that the ruling party uses this strategy to cripple the parties in opposition in order to pave the way for the ruling government to rule. These African experiences recounted by the BBC as news cast a slur on the good image of Africa as far as politics in Africa is concerned. The African political landscape is characterised by election rigging, unconstitutional assumption of power, arrest and detention of opposition members etc. have stolen the political pride and reputation from most African countries.

Another important African experience recounted in the reportage of BBC focuses on security and crime. These are captured in the following headlines:

DGIA1b - Ethiopia's Tigray forces 'shoot down warplane.'
DGIA3a – Nigerian police raid 'baby factory'.
DGIA 3b – Ethiopia and UN 'reach Tigray aid deal'.
DGIA10a – Hundreds of students missing in Nigeria school attack.
DGIA11a – 'Common criminals' behind Nigeria school attack–Army.

From the above headlines, it can be observed that whilst crime stories are reported in Nigeria, security and refugee issues are captured as news in Ethiopia. The criminal cases reported include the rescue of ten people, including four children, four pregnant women and two women from an illegal maternity home which is used as a breeding factory for the production and sale of babies, a heinous crime that does not portray Nigeria well to the international community. The focus of these crimes is on school children and babies. The abduction and kidnapping of school pupils in Nigeria has risen to a notorious level, tarnishing the image of the country and the African continent as a whole. Crime stories foreground Africa as bloody, chaotic and warlike.

The Ethiopian experience is similar to other experiences covered in other part of Africa. It involves a month-long fighting between the federal army of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front, which has resulted in the killing of hundreds of innocent people. Because many people have been displaced, there was the need for the UN to broker a deal with the government of Ethiopia to enable aid to be sent to the areas affected by the war. Ironically, Eritrean refugees who fled the war-torn region of Tigray to stay in Addis Ababa are to be returned to Tigray, a move which has been described as inhuman. This clearly positions Ethiopia as a country which is very insensitive to the plight of refugees, especially women and children who are the most vulnerable. War and refugee challenges have soiled the image of the African continent, making it unattractive for international investment and partnership.

The searchlight of BBC captures the electoral and post-electoral experiences in Africa. Apart from Ghana (DGIA5 –

Ghana votes to consolidates multiparty democracy) which is commended highly for consolidating her multiparty democracy through the ballot for the 8th conservative time under her 4th republic, the rest of the elections organised in Africa to elect national leaders have been characterised by rigging, fraud and unlawful acts including unlawful arrest and detention of opposition leaders, including female opposition leaders. Others were an attempt to circumvent the national constitution to pave the way for the ruling government to continue to be in power against the sovereign will of the people. This African experience has been the fulcrum upon which all chaos and political unrest revolve.

In furtherance to the above, justice and sanctions are recounted as African experiences by the British Broadcasting Corporation. In DGIA9a, it is observed that the government of Kenya has been ordered by the by the High Court to compensate four people who were tortured and inhumanly treated during the violence that hit Kenya after the disputed 2007-2008 election. In a similar vein, a former Liberian rebel leader appears in court and is charged with murder, recruitment of child soldiers and rape. A fair trial at the Swiss' court will appease the victims, but one wonders why the accused is not tried in Liberia but in Switzerland. Here are headlines which capture the African experience of justice and sanctions:

DGIA4b - Liberian war crimes suspect appears in court.
DGIA9a - Kenya ordered to pay sex attack survivors.

Lastly, health is a key African experience recounted by the BBC in the *Inside Africa* column of the *Daily Graphic.* It recounts the plan of the Nigerian government to receive about 20 million Covid-19 vaccine in its fight against the pandemic. This movie shows the commitment of the Nigerian government in its quest to fighting this global pandemic with other world leaders. The headline, *DGIA10a – Nigeria to receive 20 million covid-19 vaccine*, is an apple attestation that the African experience include health and health-related experiences.

4.3 Aljazeera's coverage of the African experience

From 1st to 15th December, 2020, the Aljazeera recounted three African experiences as news from three African countries: Nigeria, Sudan and Cote d'Ivoire. In recounting the Nigerian experience, it is observed that Nigeria does not have a reputable image in the face of the global world. She has been blacklisted by the US for religious freedom violations. Another issue covered by the Aljazeera is the visit by the Sudanese Prime Minister to Ethiopia on the rising spate of refugees fleeing Ethiopia to Sudan, which also has its own food and water shortage crises it is grappling with. The Tigray war experience has dented the reputation of Ethiopia and the rippling effect is transferred directly to her neighbour Sudan. Aljazeera's last coverage of the African experience in the data analysed is on politics, that is, the swearing-in of President Alassane Ouattara for a third term in office. This experience is a complete departure from the country's constitution and it is

an infraction which has sparked conflicts in some part of the country leading to the death of dozens of people in Cote d'Ivoire which is further worsening the political tension in that country which used to be peaceful. News on religious freedom violations, the swearing-in of President Ouattara for a third term even though the constitution does not sanction it, and the worsening situation of refugees in Ethiopia does not mirror Africa in a positive perspective. It positions Africa as a continent plagued with war, brutalities and disrespect for religious pluralism and democracy. Here are the headlines which contain the African experiences as captured by Aljazeera in its news bulletin:

DGIA7a – US blacklists Nigeria for religious freedom violations

DGIA11b – Sudan PM visits Ethiopia as refugees surpass 50,000.

DGIA12a – Ouattara sworn in for third term.

4.4 AFP and France24's coverage of the African experience

AFP chronicles the clash of lawmakers in the parliament house of the Democratic Republic of Congo, a worrying situation which gives Africa and her people a negative image. The second African experience covered by the AFP is about the justification given by the International Court of Justice in The Hague for the seizure of a Paris mansion which belongs to the son of the Equatorial Guinea's president following his conviction for money laundering. This situation seems to be endemic in the context of Africa and has impoverished most African countries. The international community perceives African leaders as people who loot national coffers and leave their ordinary citizens to live in abject poverty. The third story carried by AFP is very heart-warming and glorifies Africa. Uganda's Ex-Chief Justice has been appointed by the Supreme court of China as an expert on the adjudication of international commercial disputes. This experience positions the judicial system in Uganda on a higher pedestal and gives it a very good global reputation.

France 24 captures two African experiences in Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire. In the Liberia experience, voters of that country go to the polls in a referendum on whether or not a sitting president of that country can be in office for three conservative terms. This is seen as an affront to democracy and a desire of selfish African leaders to circumvent the constitution to enable them to stay in power, a situation which has tarnished the political image of most African countries. The Ivorian experience centres on the call by the opposition leader Konan Bedie for an inclusive dialogue with the government after a disputed election. This move, according to the international community, is welcoming since it will foster some amount of unity in a politically polarised country like Cote d'Ivoire. The headlines that recount these African experiences are as follows:

DGIA7b – Rivals clash in Dr Congo Parliament
DGIA8a – China's Supreme Court hires Uganda's ex-chief justice.

DGIA10c – Court rules Obieng mansion seizure was justified.

DGIA9b – Cote d'Ivoire: Konan Bedie calls for dialogue.

DGIA6 – Liberians to vote in referendum on third term presidency.

4.5 Ideological positioning and identity construction in the coverage of the African experience

Media giants such as BBC, Aljazeera, France24, Reuters and AFP which claim to be impartial and objective in their news broadcast internationally, have been often perceived to impose their values and views on their readers and have been accused of being biased in their media coverage (Rendall, Ward & Hall, 2009). Scholars like Seo, Johnson & Stein (2009) maintain that these media hubs use negative wording in identifying African leaders and other leaders who are not Americans nor Europeans. From the analysis, it is observed that all the four foreign media organizations share something in common as far as ideological positioning is concerned. For instance, out of the twenty-four African experiences broadcast, only two of them were positioned in a positive limelight. These include Ghana's consolidation of her multiparty democracy and the appointment of Uganda's Ex-Chief Justice, Justice Bart Katureebe, to the Chinese Supreme Court. These two experiences are covered objectively and accurately without biases, stereotyping and prejudices. The newsmakers in this coverage were fair in admitting that there are brighter experiences such as judicial expertise, political and electoral experiences that are yet to be given a media coverage.

From the analysis, it is observed that Western media generally give negative and prejudiced media coverage to the experiences of the non-western world (Michira, 2002; Yang & Zhang, 2003; Li, 2005; Kunihira, 2007). In the analysis, it is observed that the African experience captured by the media giants as headlines include conflicts/civil wars, imprisonment and torture of political opponents, abduction and kidnapping of school children and other darker side of the African society. However, these media organizations seldom cover the successful stories and events that have the potential of bringing the image of Africa to a positive limelight; rather, they hype trivial issues from Europe and America and create discourse for them and the discussants craftly position these issues positively to make them appealing and believable.

It is clearly observed that the four media hubs identified in this study are not ideologically neutral in the construction of their news headlines. They propagate different ideologies depending on the ideological positioning of the media organization and the context in which the media coverage is given. The ideological positioning influences to a large extent the lexical choices and style used by the media hub in the creation of the news as discourse. Positioning in terms of ideology has a detrimental effect on people's perception and identity construction. The constant delineation of Africa as a continent of war, crime, power abuse, murder and brutalities

etc. enacts a gloomy and cloudy identity for it. This identity created as a result of the news discourse becomes indelible in the minds of tourists, investors and business people who might have loved to come to Africa for tour, business or trade. A negative identity construction of the African experience leads to a misrepresentation and this has dire social, economic, political and cultural ramifications on Africa, her people and their way of life.

V. CONCLUSION

The study sought to explore the ideological positioning and construction of the African experience in the print media. The study used a descriptive research approach to carry out a qualitative analysis of the *Inside Africa* stories extracted from the *Daily Graphic* as data. The study observed that foreign media organisations such as the BBC, AFP, Aljazeera and France24 ideologically position Africa in prominently stereotyped and negative perspective, and this creates a very gloomy and murky identity for her. The negative identity created impacts on the cultural, political and socio-economic life of the people of Africa. The study concludes that foreign media organisations are stereotypical in their coverage of the African experience. The paper recommends that the western media should be guided by circumspection in their reportage and representation of Africa since there are countless beautiful things about Africa that the lens of the western media has yet not discovered. The study has implications for further study on ideological positioning and identity construction of the African experience in the media on one hand, and the strive for positive representation of Africa in the western media on the other.

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