



## Article

# An Analysis of Rhetoric in Crisis: Goodluck Jonathan, Muhammadu Buhari, and the Chibok School Girls Abduction

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**Abstract:** This study analyzed the rhetoric of Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari regarding the Chibok School Girls' abduction and rescue. Anchored on speech act theory and invitational rhetoric theory, the research employed textual analysis to examine eight speeches delivered between April 14, 2014, and December 31, 2015. Findings revealed that Goodluck Jonathan significantly utilized rhetorical canons (invention, arrangement, memory, and style) in his speeches, whereas Muhammadu Buhari showed minimal deployment of these canons. Both leaders employed rhetorical proofs, but audience reaction primarily questioned their ethos, doubting their credibility and authority in handling the crisis. The study's results indicate that effective rhetoric is crucial in leadership, particularly during conflicts. The analysis highlights the importance of developing comprehensive rhetorical strategies that incorporate all canons of rhetoric to persuade citizens. The research recommends that Nigerian political leaders enhance their rhetorical skills to effectively address national crises, establish credibility, and provide solutions rather than mere rhetoric. By doing so, leaders can better engage citizens and respond to critical issues, ultimately fostering trust and cooperation.

**Keywords:** Boko Haram, Rhetoric, Insurgency, Terrorism and Abduction

**Citation:** Joe, E. J. D. An Analysis of Rhetoric in Crisis: Goodluck Jonathan, Muhammadu Buhari, and the Chibok School Girls Abduction. American Journal of Social and Humanitarian Research 2025, 6(4), 900-909

Received: 10<sup>th</sup> Apr 2025

Revised: 17<sup>th</sup> Apr 2025

Accepted: 28<sup>th</sup> Apr 2025

Published: 07<sup>th</sup> May 2025



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## 1. Introduction

In recent times, Nigeria has witnessed an upsurge in the extremely violent activities of an Islamic fundamentalist group known as Boko Haram. This group operates in some parts of Nigeria and holds a brand of Islam fiercely opposed to Western education and the Nigerian government. Boko Haram, which literally means Western education (Boko) is sinful (Haram), has been seen by analysts and scholars as a result of numerous efforts by some radical religious elements. The movement was led by Mohammed Yusuf until his death at the hands of security forces in 2009, after which Abubakar Shekau succeeded him. Apparently, Boko Haram had links with Al-Qaeda until recently announcing allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)[1]. Factors contributing to the rise of Boko Haram include issues such as poverty, unemployment, injustice, and leadership failures, which held special appeal for the indigent and disaffected youths who later constituted the majority of its members. The group also took advantage of the Almajiri nomadic system of Islamic education practiced in Northern Nigeria for mobilization. Alliances and financial agreements between northern politicians and the late Boko Haram leader Yusuf, and the failure to honour these agreements, are also summarized as having implanted the violent approach adopted by the group.

Adherents of Boko Haram hold a creed of uninhibited destruction of human life and any institution that contradicts its interpretation of Islam. Since the onset of the insurgency in 2009, their activities increasingly assumed a violent dimension, killing over 20,000 people and displacing over 2.3 million from their homes[2]. Nigeria was estimated to have had the highest number of terrorist killings in the world in one year by July 2014, with over 3,477 killed in 146 attacks. The insurgency escalated significantly after a confrontation with security personnel in Borno State in 2009, which resulted in the death of Mohammed Yusuf under controversial circumstances following a police crackdown. This event was seen as portentous of an unprecedented wave of insurgency that destabilized and exposed the incompetence of the Nigerian security system. When the group's demands, including the trial of officers who killed their leader and the Islamization of Northern Nigeria, went unmet, they resorted to wanton destruction[3].

Since 14th April 2014, when members of Boko Haram abducted about 276 girls from Government Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State, public discourse has largely focused on the Federal Government's action or inaction[4]. The abduction of these girls was widely criticized as a despicable act of terror and came as a rude shock globally. It left in its wake widespread confusion, desperation, and anger, based on conflicting reports. Government communication is often a focus during crises, as it is the government's primary responsibility to keep citizens informed[5]. However, the Nigerian government's immediate response was an outright denial, confirmed true by foreign media days later, prompting controversy and public criticism. Beyond the initial denial, there was a plethora of other government communication at variance with the obvious[6]. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to undertake a comparative analysis of former President Goodluck Jonathan and President Muhammadu Buhari's rhetoric in handling the Chibok School Girls abduction and rescue between April 2014 and April 2016[7].

Rhetoric, understood as the artful use of language, especially for persuasive speech, has been applied in conflict situations from antiquity. Political narratives are often responsible for wars, making wartime rhetoric by leaders crucial to outcomes. In wartime situations like the Boko Haram insurgency, rhetoric plays a key role in countering insurgent acts, drawing citizen support, and gaining international backing. An overwhelming submission in literature posits that rhetoric can undermine factors driving terrorism. The analysis of selected statements by the administrations of former President Jonathan and President Buhari can reveal the rhetorical strategies adopted in the fight to rescue the abducted Chibok School Girls.

#### **AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this study is to comparatively analyse rhetoric by former President Goodluck Jonathan and President Muhammad Buhari in handling Chibok School Girls' abduction and rescue.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- a. Analyse the rhetorical canons adopted by Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammad Buhari in handling the abduction and rescue of the Chibok School Girls.
- b. Analyse rhetorical proofs used by Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammad Buhari in handling the abduction and rescue of the Chibok School Girls.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions were addressed by the study:

- a. What were the rhetorical canons adopted Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari in handling the abduction and rescue of the Chibok School Girls?
- b. What rhetorical proofs were used Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari in handling the abduction and rescue of the Chibok School Girls?

### **The Concept of Rhetoric**

Rhetoric is the art of addressing public concerns by employing deliberate persuasive strategies before a public audience at a specific occasion in order to transform some aspects of a problematic situation by encouraging new forms of thought and action. This involves persuading the audience to identify with a communally shared discourse or adopting new thoughts and actions within society. In traditional rhetoric, the message was primarily delivered orally, with spoken language as the primary tool, although nonverbal cues were also important. Examples include speeches during election campaigns or presidential addresses. Persuasion is accepted as key in achieving coordinated action for the common good, which is the objective of every democratic government. Thus, studying evidence of persuasion in the rhetoric of democratic leaders involved in the Chibok school girls' rescue is a veritable [8].

Contemporary or "new rhetoric" is fundamentally similar to classical rhetoric, retaining the underlying principles of definitions and analysis. It is still centered on techniques, usually verbal, designed and employed to persuade and impress people, using effective language to clarify or add strength to persuasive oratory. Contemporary rhetoric is connected to a speaker's deliberate effort to gain adherents to a preconceived view. While affected by global developments like expanding population, new technologies, and pluralism, these realities have not altered how rhetoric functions or is analyzed. However, some scholars suggest a more flexible approach tailored to the modern world, arguing that classical rhetoric has had too strong a hold on twentieth-century discourses and there is a need for a new theory accounting for present realities. This view suggests adapting rhetorical theory to contemporary circumstances, which have radically changed since ancient Greece [9].

Rhetoric originated in ancient Greece, particularly in 5th-century B.C.E. Athens, which was experimenting with democracy. This political revolution brought about new social practices requiring different orientations. Rhetoric became necessary in public forums and institutions where issues were debated and assented to, expanding beyond the elite. The study of rhetoric in ancient Greece emphasized content and form, stressing proper articulation through exhaustive research. Language was used adequately to ensure that the rhetorical canons, especially invention, reflected the rhetor's ideas. In ancient Rome, rhetorical practice incorporated ceremonial and religious elements due to the spread of Christianity, although aspects of Greek rhetoric in secular issues and as an academic discipline persisted. During the Medieval period, writing instruction was often limited to the clergy, with texts guiding inventional practices for new rhetorical genres like letter writing, preaching, and poetry. These new genres flourished to meet social needs, such as maintaining records, teaching Christian principles to a largely illiterate public, and exploring the aesthetic potential of written language [10].

The Renaissance saw rhetoric elevated to a preeminent place, with the orator representing the ideal educated person skilled in eloquence and involved in active political life. This era emphasized the importance of maintaining the link between eloquence and wisdom. Some scholars advocate for a "new rhetoric" that moves from planned to spontaneous, public to private, official to vernacular, and oratory to multimedia discourse. This includes analyzing the rhetoric of popular culture, history, politics, and even personal identity. The new rhetoric shifts focus from producing public discourse to enhancing its consumption, from discovering knowledge to managing the discoveries of other disciplines, and from external public problems to an internal focus on the mind and imagination [11].

### **Rhetorical Canons**

Rhetorical canons are techniques comparable to a universally accepted schemata that give order or structure to rhetorical acts and serve as benchmarks for evaluating rhetorical communication quality. There are traditionally five canons: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery [12].

1. **Invention (Inventio):** This is the creation or production of the message. It involves devising matter, true or plausible, that makes the rhetorical act convincing. The content must be carefully planned and designed alongside a framework for delivery to achieve the desired audience impact. Invention is the discovery of every available means of persuasion, requiring extensive research for resources for a persuasive speech in both classical and contemporary times. The rhetor draws on specialized and general knowledge about the subject matter because they stand as an authority for the audience. It involves finding something to say that supports the speaker's position and is considered by some the most important canon. Invention embraces surveying and forecasting the subject and arguments suitable for a rhetorical effort, including logical, emotional, and ethical modes of persuasion. Historically, invention encompassed strategic acts that provide direction, ideas, subject matter, arguments, insights, and understanding of the rhetorical situation. The purpose of invention is to lead to judgment, reach new insights, locate arguments, solve problems, or locate subject matter. Resources for invention include public memory, maxims, facts, statistics, and examples [13].
2. **Arrangement (Dispositio):** This is the ordering and organization of the message content. It involves arranging the different parts of a speech or rhetorical act in a sequence that achieves the desired effect, usually persuasion. Arrangement assesses the selection and structure of subject matter, determining how each part contributes to the speech's unity and purpose. It involves organizing gathered materials into a coherent structure with an introduction, body, and conclusion. Conventionally, the introduction should arouse audience interest, establish speaker credibility, and state the purpose; the body contains the discourse's thrust; and the conclusion recaps the presentation. However, some suggest effective arrangement is less about strictly following rules and more about capturing audience attention and interest. Specific functions of an introduction include capturing attention, stating the topic and purpose, relating the topic to the audience, and setting a tone. Methods to enhance attention and interest include using quotes, questions, current events, stories, demonstrations, literary material, humour, or creating suspense [14].
3. **Style (Elocutio):** This is the adaptation of suitable words and sentences to the matter devised. It is the vocabulary or choice of words and expression that suits the rhetorical situation and is often an identifying mark of the speaker or writer. Style considers how grammatical rules are applied for effective communication[15]. It focuses on fitting proper language to invented material, requiring a command of language to convey arguments in striking and persuasive phrases. Great language captures and holds audience attention. Style involves choices regarding words, phrases, and sentences. It can be classified into formal language and figurative language. Formal language employs declarative and assertive expressions. Figurative language uses figures of speech like synecdoche, metaphors, parallelism, periphrasis, simile, alliteration, and anaphora.
4. **Memory (Memoria):** This is the firm retention in the mind of the matter, words, and arrangement. In the classical age, orators had to memorize long and complex speeches, which was essential for delivery without notes. A trained memory was crucial as speeches could last several hours. Today, memory has expanded to encompass more than just retention, including using available tools from an archive. It is important for determining suitable sources and managing information. Memory also acts as an inventory for past events used as heuristics to invent content in a new way. The ability to remember and make inferences is key. Memory also relates to the audience's ability to retain the material. It involves analyzing methods a speaker uses for ideas to be retained by listeners. Methods to achieve memory easily include reading speeches aloud, recording and listening, breaking speeches into parts, identifying key points, and taking breaks.

5. **Delivery (Pronuntiatio):** This is the actual delivery of the rhetorical act. It involves the graceful regulation of voice, countenance, and gesture. Delivery involves maximizing vocal elements in relation to bodily actions. Effective delivery requires proper diction, appropriate appearance, right carriage, gestures, volume, and pausing. It deals with the manner in which a speaker physically performs the speech through crafted use of voice and gesture. Historically, delivery involved significant physical performance, contrasting with the "talking head" approach of contemporary rhetors. Drama is sometimes seen as the capstone of rhetoric, illustrating delivery's role in making a speech superb through attention to voice modulation, projection, eye contact, and gestures[9].

#### **Rhetorical Proofs**

A fundamental element of successful rhetoric is combining logical study (logos), psychological study (pathos), and sociological study (ethos) to provide sources of proof or persuasive possibilities adaptable to any situation. These proofs offer insights into analyzing traditional and contemporary rhetoric[3]

1. **Ethos:** This is concerned with the speaker's credibility, personal integrity, and reputation. It involves the sociology of good character, identifying references to the speaker's credibility, knowledge, and capacity. Reference to the authority and power the speaker wields is also identified. When people are convinced a speaker is knowledgeable, trustworthy, and has their best interest at heart, they are likely to accept what the speaker says. Audience attention to ethos implies that a composition can persuade if credibility and assertiveness are extrapolated from it. Previous achievements brought forward can convince the audience of credibility [2]
2. **Pathos:** This refers to a complete psychology of emotions intended to aid understanding audiences' emotional response to the rhetorical situation. It entails identifying and classifying references made by the speaker to appeal to audience emotions through words or phrases connecting to their beliefs. The goal is to stimulate audience emotions to affect their judgment on previously held views, while focusing on the truthfulness of the exigency. This gives the audience a sense of belonging and encourages positive responses to the rhetor's persuasion[7]
3. **Logos:** This refers to the logic of sound arguments made by the speaker through sound logical reasoning. It encompasses persuasive acts backed by a logical string of arguments. Logos involves persuading through inferences, deductions, and sound logical reasoning based on available evidence. This is achieved through simple, unequivocal expressions that conform to grammar rules for audience understanding and persuasion. Logical arguments are significant when the audience can make inferences based on the rhetor's presentation of facts[6]

4. **Framing**

Framing is described as a process whereby communicators, consciously or unconsciously, construct a point of view that encourages the interpretation of a given situation in a particular manner. Frames operate in four key ways: they define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies. Framing is how an interpretation arises from the interaction of representational, individual, and social forces, influencing how people orient their thinking about an issue. Meanings or interpretations are created by rhetors, constraining the audience's perception based on the speaker's viewpoint. Controlling the framing of information greatly influences the interpretation and meaning attached to it by recipients. Framing often involves a particular event or exigency carefully contrived, orchestrated, and executed, subject to societal commendation or condemnation. These activities



are often driven by a commitment to a cause or objective, which determines how the situation is framed. The abduction of the Chibok girls elicited rhetorical responses from Presidents Jonathan and Buhari, making it necessary to pay close attention to what they said and, more importantly, how they framed the event, as framing significantly affects decisions[9]

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored on the **speech act theory** and **invitational rhetoric theory**.

**Speech act theory:** Austin's speech act theory posits that language in speech is used for various functions like promises, invitations, and requests. An utterance performs an act without necessarily naming it, and some speech forms implicitly perform acts even without explicit performative verbs. Speech act denotes that utterances are not just meaning bearers but perform actions. Language use is considered more as action than just a medium for conveying meaning. A statement not only describes a situation but performs a specific kind of action. Speaking a language involves performing speech acts like making statements, giving commands, asking questions, and making promises. Austin proposed three categories: locutionary (saying something), illocutionary (performing an act by saying something, e.g., promising), and perlocutionary (producing an effect on the listener by saying something, e.g., persuading). Rhetoric has a bearing on how language is used orally and in writing, and every human utterance can be understood as rhetoric because they are speech acts meant to serve specific purposes, such as persuasion. Rhetoric studies the effectiveness of language, including emotional impact and propositional content. The speeches of Jonathan and Buhari were speech acts meant to persuade and draw citizen support in handling the Chibok School Girls abduction and rescue.

**Invitational rhetoric theory:** propounded by Sonja K. Foss and Cindy Griffin, suggests that not all rhetoric aims to persuade. It proposes an alternative where the goal is not necessarily audience change, but rather inviting the audience to understand a perspective or contribute to discourse, fitting a democratic context where citizens can contribute.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The study adopted textual analysis as the research design, a method for gathering and analyzing information to infer likely interpretations of a text. Textual analysis describes and interprets features of recorded or visual messages, aiming to explain the life-world of the text and the author's perspective. It is grounded in qualitative research principles suitable for describing speech acts. Specifically, the study employed the neo-Aristotelian method of rhetorical criticism. This method analyzes arguments using the five canons of rhetoric (invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery) and rhetorical proofs (ethos, pathos, and logos).

The population of the study comprised all eight speeches made by Muhammadu Buhari and Goodluck Jonathan that explicitly referenced the abduction and rescue of the Chibok School Girls between April 14, 2014, and December 31, 2015. The population also included comments from The Washington Post (38 comments on a June 26, 2014 op-ed by Jonathan) and Premium Times online Newspaper (70 comments on a September 29, 2015 article about Buhari's UN speech). A census approach was adopted, analyzing the entire population of eight speeches and 108 comments (total 116).

The research instrument was a framework developed using the formalised Roman work *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, incorporating the five canons of rhetoric and the rhetorical proofs explicated by Aristotle. The units of analysis were invention, arrangement, memory, style, ethos, pathos, and logos. Content categories for coding texts used the canons and proofs: invention (identifying resources like statistics, facts, examples), arrangement (detailing composition structure - introduction, body, conclusion), style (identifying formal and figurative language), memory (identifying methods/devices for

valid inferences or recall), delivery (regulation of voice/gesture), ethos (identifying references to speaker credibility, knowledge, authority), pathos (identifying appeals to audience emotion), and logos (identifying sound logical reasoning). Content validity of the instrument was ascertained by study supervisors and rhetoric experts. Qualitative data analysis employed the constant comparison method, comparing and contrasting interpretations and findings as they emerged from the data.

### 3. Results

#### Research Question 1: What were the rhetorical canons adopted by Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari in handling the abduction and rescue of the Chibok School Girls?

This research question was addressed by examining the rhetorical canons present in the speeches of Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari.

- a. **Goodluck Jonathan's** speeches showed a **significant use** of four out of the five canons of rhetoric: **invention, arrangement, style, and memory**.
- a. **Invention:** Jonathan significantly deployed invention, demonstrating mastery of the rhetorical situation. For example, in a media chat, he cited a statistic about the religious background of the kidnapped girls ("80%... are Christians") to show detailed knowledge. He also referenced global terrorist attacks (Twin Towers, Boston, Volgograd) and affected countries (Mali, Somalia, Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan) in his Democracy Day speech to contextualize the threat, exhibiting knowledge of terrorism at a global level. His UN General Assembly speech mirrored his understanding of ISIL's strategy, a plus for an address targeted at the international community.
- b. **Arrangement:** Jonathan's speeches generally followed the conventional structure of introduction, body, and conclusion. Introductions aimed to capture attention and state the speech's purpose. The body projected the central purpose, outlining government actions and future steps. Conclusions re-emphasized the aim, offering reassurances or expressing appreciation.
- c. **Style:** Jonathan deployed both formal language and figurative expressions extensively across all four analyzed speeches. Examples of formal language include strong, decisive statements like "I personally spoke with Barack Obama...", "I am determined to protect our democracy... by waging a total war against terrorism", and "My government... has spared no resources, have not stopped and will not stop until the girls are returned home...". Figurative language included Periphrasis ("the madness called Boko Haram"), Anaphora ("We must...", "We will..."), Parallelism ("We are a strong, resilient and courageous people.... We will all collectively protect, defend and develop this country"), Alliteration ("murder and mayhem"), and Synecdoche ("on our shores and ...on our soil"). These stylistic choices aimed to draw attention and emphasize points.
- d. **Memory:** The use of memory was scanty in Jonathan's compositions, with only two instances noted. He referenced the missing Malaysian Aircraft to show that finding missing persons/objects is globally challenging, connecting a past event to the present situation. He also invoked the Nigerian Military's past successes in peacekeeping missions (Liberia, Sierra Leone, etc.) to motivate them and project future success in prosecuting the war on Boko Haram and rescuing the girls.
- b. **Muhammadu Buhari's** speeches, in comparison, showed a **comparatively low deployment of rhetorical canons**.
- a. **Invention:** The use of invention was not significant in Buhari's speeches. There were instances noted as having "no trace of the use of invention".
- b. **Arrangement:** Buhari's speeches generally followed the introduction, body, and conclusion structure. However, the introduction in his address to BBOG

campaigners seemed to focus on criticizing the previous administration rather than immediately capturing the subject. The body outlined efforts and plans. Conclusions offered assurances on government actions.

- c. **Style:** Buhari employed formal language considerably in all four analyzed speeches, but figurative expression only in one speech. Examples of formal language include statements about relocating the command centre and declaring victory, taking steps under the Lake Chad Basin Commission, and establishing a multinational joint task force. Figurative language was limited. Instances included Alliteration ("mindless, godless group... fame and following") and Anaphora ("We shall...", "We are going to...") in his inaugural speech, and Alliteration ("degrade and defeat") in his UN General Assembly speech.
- d. **Memory:** There were no instances of the use of memory found in Muhammadu Buhari's speeches.
- e. **Delivery:** This canon had no significant connection to the study as the unit of analysis was mainly printed speeches.

In summary, Goodluck Jonathan significantly employed rhetorical canons of invention, arrangement, style, and memory, while Muhammadu Buhari deployed far less, mainly arrangement and style.

#### 4. Discussion

##### Research Question 2: What were the rhetorical proofs used by Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari in handling the abduction and rescue of the Chibok School Girls?

This research question examined the use of the three rhetorical proofs (ethos, pathos, logos) by the rhetors.

1. **Goodluck Jonathan** primarily used **pathos and logos** in his addresses.
2. **Ethos:** While ethos concerns the speaker's credibility and reputation, the study findings indicated that Jonathan did not pay much attention to this rhetorical proof in his compositions. Despite holding political offices and having authority, he did not appear to draw from previous successes to establish his credibility. Audience reaction, discussed later, heavily questioned his ethos.
3. **Pathos:** Jonathan appealed to the emotions of his audience, notably through the frequent use of plural pronouns like 'We, Our, Us'. This usage aimed to convey that the problem was a collective Nigerian issue, not just limited to the victims, fostering a sense of shared trauma and encouraging collective action. He expressed feeling "pained anytime I hear one Nigerian is killed", demonstrating empathy.
4. **Logos:** Jonathan demonstrated the use of logos. In his Democracy Day speech, he cited the Nigerian military's historical successes in peacekeeping missions as logical evidence supporting their capability to fight Boko Haram, presenting these facts for the audience to infer competence. His explanation for initial silence (to avoid compromising investigation) was presented as a logical reason, though its persuasiveness is debatable based on public reaction. His arguments for international cooperation were also presented logically, outlining steps taken and proposed.
5. **Muhammadu Buhari** primarily employed **pathos and logos** in his addresses, though the study noted few instances related to ethos in his speeches.
6. **Ethos:** Similar to Jonathan, Buhari did not appear to give much attention to establishing his ethos through his compositions. Although he held previous political offices, the study found few instances where he drew from past successes to build credibility. Audience reaction indicated significant questioning of his credibility.



7. **Pathos:** Buhari also appealed to the emotions of the audience through the use of collective pronouns like 'We, Our, Us'. For example, stating that the Chibok girls are "constantly on our minds and in our plans" was an attempt to appeal to the audience's emotions by suggesting shared concern.
8. **Logos:** Logos was dominant in Buhari's speeches. He provided logical breakdowns of strategies and step-by-step descriptions of planned actions. In his address to BBOG campaigners, he outlined steps under the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the multinational task force structure as logical evidence of his administration's efforts. His UN General Assembly speech logically presented the strategies taken and the progress made in driving back Boko Haram as the basis for the subsequent release of hostages, implying the eventual rescue of the Chibok girls would follow from these logical steps. He also logically presented the establishment of the multinational joint task force as part of a "bold and robust strategy".

In conclusion, both Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari employed rhetorical proofs of pathos and logos in their speeches concerning the Chibok girls, with logos being dominant. However, both rhetors did not significantly focus on establishing their ethos through their compositions.

## 5. Conclusion

Since 2009, Nigeria has been engaged in a war against Boko Haram terrorists. A significant event in this conflict was the abduction of approximately 276 girls from Government Secondary School, Chibok, on April 14, 2014. Former President Goodluck Jonathan declared war on the terrorists and pledged to do everything legally possible to rescue the kidnapped girls. Similarly, Muhammadu Buhari, in his inaugural speech on May 29, 2015, also promised to rescue the abducted schoolgirls. The study established that Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari used rhetorical canons and proofs in their compositions aimed at persuading audiences and seeking citizen support for rescuing the abducted Chibok School Girls, although not to the same degree. With respect to rhetorical canons, findings indicated that Goodluck Jonathan made significant use of the canons of invention, arrangement, memory, and style. In contrast, Muhammadu Buhari showed a near absence in the deployment of rhetorical canons, utilizing mainly arrangement and style. Regarding rhetorical proofs, both leaders employed pathos and logos in their speeches. However, the study found that both did not pay significant attention to the rhetorical proof of ethos in their compositions. In terms of framing, Goodluck Jonathan primarily framed the abduction and the fight to rescue the girls as a war unleashed against the Nigerian State by Boko Haram terrorists. Muhammadu Buhari also framed the abduction as war but used the blame frame more dominantly, interpreting the issue as a result of the immediate past administration's incompetence. The study established that audience reaction was largely uncomplimentary, as both leaders were perceived as lacking political will in the fight to rescue the abducted Chibok School girls. Audience comments heavily questioned the ethos (credibility) of the rhetors. Both Goodluck Jonathan and President Muhammadu Buhari were neither seen as credible nor as authoritative in handling the abduction and rescue of the Chibok School Girls. The speech act theory provided a framework for understanding utterances as actions intended to serve specific purposes, such as persuading and drawing support, which was relevant to analyzing the speeches of the presidents. The audience's reaction stemmed from how the compositions were presented and perceived, determining whether persuasion was successful.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were outlined:

1. Political leaders in Nigeria should endeavour to develop rhetorical strategies that embrace all canons of rhetoric in order to effectively persuade the citizens.

Specifically, rhetorical canons of invention, style, and memory must be effectively utilized in compositions that seek the support of citizens. This could be achieved through the acquisition of rhetorical competence by means of training.

2. Political leaders in Nigeria must give adequate attention to the rhetorical proof of ethos. This should be done by establishing credibility through making references to pragmatic antecedents in their compositions.
3. Muhammadu Buhari and other Nigerian leaders should establish credibility and exude visionary leadership by framing national exigencies based on attendant issues and possible solutions rather than framing them in a manner that casts aspersions on previous administrations.

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