

Promotion versus Prevention: Regulatory Focus  
Theory and Ebola Virus Disease Discourse  
การส่งเสริมหรือการป้องกัน: ทฤษฎีการมุ่งเน้นการกำกับดูแล  
และวาทกรรมโรคไวรัสอีโบล่า

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**Abstract**

West African ebola virus disease in 2014 is the worst epidemic outbreak ever in the world. This study targeted to discover the language used in ebola virus disease newspaper headlines by finding out whether or not ebola virus disease was the West African disease and examining the focus of ebola virus disease, either promotion focus or prevention focus, following to the Regulatory Focus Theory. Through critical discourse analysis, the study scrutinised, in total, 425 ebola virus disease newspaper headlines, published in the West African newspapers and those in other parts of the world where the effects were spread out, i.e. the United Kingdom and the United States. The results indicated that, the journalists in Western African and Western countries agreed that, through the locus of ebola virus disease, local coherence, and modality used, ebola virus disease was the West African disease. As for the focus of ebola virus disease, following to the Regulatory Focus Theory, a ‘scorpion’ picture was portrayed. While the Western African journalists were hoping that the situation would be better soon – promotion-focus, their Western counterparts prioritised safety and security reasons – prevention-focus. Although intercultural communication is taken into consideration, ethnocentrism should be lessened.

**Keywords:** *Promotion, Prevention, Regulatory Focus Theory, Ebola Virus Disease, West Africa, Critical Discourse Analysis*

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## บทคัดย่อ

โรคไวรัสอีโบล่าที่เกิดขึ้นในประเทศแถบแอฟริกาตะวันตก เมื่อปี พ.ศ. 2557 ถือว่าเป็นการระบาดของโรคที่รุนแรงที่สุดในโลก การศึกษานี้มุ่งศึกษาภาษาที่ใช้ในพาดหัวข่าวหนังสือพิมพ์เกี่ยวกับเรื่องโรคไวรัสอีโบล่า โดยการค้นหาว่าโรคไวรัสอีโบล่าเป็นโรคไวรัสแห่งแอฟริกาตะวันตกหรือไม่ และตรวจสอบว่าการกำกับดูแลของไวรัสอีโบล่ามุ่งไปที่การส่งเสริมหรือการป้องกัน โดยพิจารณาจากทฤษฎีการมุ่งเน้นการกำกับดูแล โดยงานวิจัยนี้ได้ใช้วาทกรรมเชิงวิพากษ์ในพาดหัวข่าวหนังสือพิมพ์จำนวน 425 หัวข้อข่าวที่ได้รับการตีพิมพ์ในหนังสือพิมพ์ของประเทศแอฟริกาตะวันตก และในประเทศอื่นๆ ในโลกที่ได้รับผลกระทบจากการแพร่ระบาดของโรคไวรัสอีโบล่า ได้แก่ สหราชอาณาจักร และสหรัฐอเมริกา ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ทั้งนักข่าวในแอฟริกาตะวันตกและในซีกโลกอื่นมีมุมมองตรงกันว่าไวรัสอีโบล่า คือ ไวรัสแห่งแอฟริกาตะวันตก โดยผ่านการวิเคราะห์ในเชิงสถานที่เกิดของโรค ความเชื่อมต่อของสถานที่ และคำกริยาช่วยที่นักข่าวใช้ ในขณะเดียวกัน เมื่อพิจารณาจากทฤษฎีการมุ่งเน้นการกำกับดูแล พบว่า การกำกับดูแลของไวรัสอีโบล่าเป็นลักษณะเหมือน “แมงป่อง” กล่าวคือ ในขณะที่นักข่าวชาวแอฟริกาตะวันตกนำเสนอสิ่งที่มุ่งหวังให้สถานการณ์ดีขึ้นเป็นลำดับ นั่นคือ การให้ความสำคัญกับการส่งเสริม แต่นักข่าวชาวตะวันตกกลับให้ความสำคัญกับความปลอดภัย หรือการป้องกัน แม้ว่านักข่าวควรมองไปที่การสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม แต่ควรให้ความสำคัญน้อยลงกับการถือทัศนคติความเชื่อที่ว่าวัฒนธรรมตนเองใหญ่กว่าหรือดีกว่าคนอื่น

**คำสำคัญ:** การส่งเสริม การป้องกัน ทฤษฎีการมุ่งเน้นการกำกับดูแล โรคไวรัสอีโบล่า แอฟริกาตะวันตก วาทกรรมเชิงวิพากษ์

## Introduction

The ebola outbreak is one of the biggest and scariest outbreaks in modern history. The media's role in helping or hurting the situation can play a major part in the social consequences of the outbreak and can help serve as a lesson in the future.

With no question, '[t]he Ebola outbreak in West Africa is the world's deadliest to date ...' (*Why ebola is so dangerous*, 2014). The first current spread of Ebola virus disease, shortly EVD or known as Ebola Hemorrhagic Virus, originated in West Africa had been reported in March 2014 in Macenta Prefecture, a rural of the Southeastern Guinea. Its severity had become unstoppable and transmissible geographically to its bordering countries including Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Senegal, and Mali and to the West like the United States, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Italy. Its prevalence had been discovered immediately within one and

a half months, from the end of July to the end of August 2014 (*2014 Ebola outbreaks*, 2014; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015). The crisis, in total, killed more than 10,000 people and almost 30,000 cases were found confirmed of having Ebola symptoms (World Health Organization, 2015).

Several academic scholars and professionals complained about the bias of journalists and media persons on EVD news reporting, particularly no possible information and ways to keep people away from the disease and panics are proposed (Yusuf, Yahaya, & Qabli, 2015). By using critical discourse analysis, in general, the finding of Zhang (2014) disagreed with a theoretical concept of news reporting in no prejudice, and found that since there are social impacts and variables and diverse journalistic paradigms and perspectives, journalists' and news reporters' opinions are naturally shared and expressed. This is confirmed by the results

of the studies of Trčková (2015), Milllear (2015), and Sibingo (2017) that, analyzing from the most well-known American newspapers regarding ebola virus disease, in the sight of American journalists, African people and (ebola virus disease) scenario are not perceived well and undervalued as ‘others’.

As for Trčková (2015) in greater details, the disease is such a deadly virus, seen as ‘war’ and ‘natural catastrophe’. Likewise, African infected people are left behind and powerless. More seriously, according to the study of Milllear (2015), ebola virus disease is African-related outbreak. As Sibingo (2017), moreover, apparently quoted that ‘..., the West maintains its dominance by establishing an invented narrative, perpetuating a reality that reasserts its own values as universal and Africa’s values as outside of the norm. The focus on Western participation in fighting the outbreak also illustrates this point. A Western-centric narrative asserts the West’s power to control and dominate’ (p.43).

***Promotion versus prevention: Regulatory focus theory***

Differing between promotion and prevention, the study bases its analysis on the regulatory focus theory that was developed by E.T. Higgins. The theory is a paradigm targeting to convincing a person to reach health promotion and disease prevention (e.g. Cesario et al., 2004; Communication Theory, n.d.; Higgins, 2015). The owners of the theory differentiate promotion from prevention that ‘[t]he promotion focus is concerned with accomplishments, hopes, and aspirations. It regulates the presence and absence of positive outcomes. Ideal self-guides, therefore, have a promotion focus. The prevention focus is concerned with safety, responsibilities, and obligations. It regulates the absence and presence of negative outcomes. Ought self-guides, therefore, have a prevention focus’ (Higgins, 1998).<sup>2</sup> Ludolph and Schulz (2015) referred these two types of focuses to gain- and loss-framing.

Taken from Higgins (1998, p.24-25), the following table gives some concluding remarks on differentiating between promotion and prevention.

**Table 1** Understanding of Promotion and Prevention Differences

Factor	Promotion	Prevention
Concern	Advancement, growth, accomplishment	Security, safety, responsibility
Goal	Hopes and aspirations	Duties and obligations or even necessities

<sup>2</sup> The author underlined the sentences.

**Table 1** Understanding of Promotion and Prevention Differences (to be continued)

Factor	Promotion	Prevention
Strategic approach	To make progress by pproaching matches to the desired end-state	To be prudent, precautionary, and avoid mismatches to the desired end-state
Persuasive communication focus	The state should be eagerness to attain advancement and gains.	The state should be vigilance to assure safety and non-losses.

**Source:** Higgins (1998, p.24-25).

It is claimed that ‘cross-culture differences in these systems [regulatory focus theory, i.e. promotion- and prevention-oriented] generally show that the collectivist, Eastern cultures (mostly East-Asian cultures) are considered as prevention oriented whereas Western cultures are considered as promotion oriented’ (Kurman & Hui, 2011). Similarly, the study of Ouschan et al (2007) exhibited ‘Australians were more promotion- but less prevention-focused than Japanese students’.

The studies of Dijkstra, Rothman, and Pietersma (2011) and Lin and Yeh (2017), together with gain framing, suggested designing an advertisement with promotion focus messages for the more effective outcome. Nevertheless, success and/or failure of promotion and prevention strategies is challenged by several obstacles including time constraint and prevalence of new comers who like to take risk behavior (Syme, 2007) as well as credibility of information provided (Mayrhuber et al., 2017).

#### **Objective of the study:**

The research studied the language used in ebola virus disease newspaper headlines by targeting to finding out how ebola virus disease was called. The study also aimed to discovering the focus of ebola virus disease, either promotion focus or prevention focus, following to the Regulatory Focus Theory.

#### **Methods and Materials**

The news content headlines between 21 July and 31 August 2014 of the English online newspapers from three main ebola-hit West African countries, i.e. Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone and from newspapers of other countries outside the West African and obtained the effects of the disease widespread were analysed by using the critical discourse analysis approach. The West African online newspapers including *NTA Newstime* (Guinea), *Daily Observer* (Liberia), and *Critique Echo Newspaper* (Sierra Leone) and the other ebola-hit countries’ newspapers including *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* (The United Kingdom) as well as *The Wall Street Journal* (The United States) were chosen. Monson (2017) insisted critical discourse analysis should have to be implemented in the case of ebola virus disease and with news headlines because ‘[i]t would be unfair to claim homogenization of the language of news headlines across all major newspapers and networks or argue that they all otherize in the same ways’ (p.13).

#### *Inclusion criteria*

- (1) Triangulation could be the best reason of including the three online newspapers from the West African countries and the other three ones from other countries affected by the deadly virus.

(2) Only headlines having the word ‘ebola’ were selected and included in this study. As a result of this, 425 cases met

the requirements. Following were a number of the headlines presented in all selected newspapers:

**Table 2** The Number of the West African and The UK and US Headlines

Newspaper	Number of cases	Per cent
<i>NTA Newstime (Guinea)</i>	39	9.18
<i>Daily Observer (Liberia)</i>	100	23.53
<i>Critique Echo Newspaper (Sierra Leone)</i>	12	2.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>35.53</b>
<i>The Guardian (UK)</i>	13	3.06
<i>The Telegraph (UK)</i>	147	34.59
<i>The Wall Street Journal (The US)</i>	114	26.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>64.47</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Regarding intercoding, Holsti’s (Anonymous, 1997; Wang, 2011) validity and reliability calculation was based upon the formula of  $PA_0 = 2A / (N1+N2)$ .  $PA_0$  was percentage agreed by two judges. The meaning of 2A referred to how much of coded items these two judges agreed. N1 and N2 were the items each judge had coded. In this study, the validity and reliability were as of 0.8682. This number came from  $738 / (425+425)$  or equally  $738 / 850$ . The intercoder of this study was an academic professional in the health communication field.

(3) It was, likewise, important to give a reason of choosing such period of time because of the highest prevalence of ebola virus epidemic reported (see *2014 Ebola outbreaks*, 2014).

(4) The best seller, English online newspapers were prioritised.

(5) Daily newspapers (not Tabloid ones) were considerably selected.

Even being short, how an issue discourse was constructed through newspaper headlines was understandable (Metila, 2013). This was because ‘..., newspaper headlines not only have the function of indicating the topic and summarizing the main content of the news text, but they also try to help the reader grasp the meaning of the text’ (Bonyadi & Samuel, 2013). And that could have impacts on what the audience think and feel and what the government should do (Harrabin et al., 2003).

This research employed critical discourse analysis or, briefly, CDA as the research tool. Critical discourse analysis fit well with this context as Huckin (2002) recommended its appropriateness in mass communication, media, and marketing communications. This was because ‘... it provides multiple points of analytic entry. It does not matter which kind of analysis one begins with, as long as they are all included are shown to be mutually explanatory.

It is in the interconnections that the analyst finds interesting patterns and disjunctions that need to be described, interpreted and explained' (Janks, 1997, p.329).

CDA does not primarily aim to contribute to a specific discipline, paradigm, school or discourse theory. It is primarily interested and motivated by pressing social issues, which it hopes to better understand through discourse analysis. ..., critical discourse analysts (should) take an explicit sociopolitical stance: they spell out their point of view, perspective, principles and aims, both within their discipline and within society at large. ... However, unlike politicians and activists, critical discourse analysts go beyond the immediate, serious or pressing issues of the day. ... And unlike most social and political scientists, critical discourse scholars want to make a more specific contribution, namely to get more in the reproduction of dominance and inequality'

According to Dahl, Andrews, and Clancy, (2013) referring to Fairclough, there are three dimensions and layers of analysis, including analysis of text (description), of processing (interpretation), and socio-cultural practice (explanation). In other words, text analysis focused on scrutinising verbal and/or nonverbal cues. In the third layer, these could be understood by looking at and around social and cultural contexts behind and hidden in such linguistic and semantic factors so that related discourses could be discovered. Studying in a greater depth of texts including encoding and meaning constructed was the second layer of processing analysis (Chairerk, 2013; Fairclough, 2015; Huckin, 2002). It was, nonetheless, important to state at this point that, the analyses of text (the first layer) and of socio-cultural practice (the third layer) were the good marriage in this study.

The findings of this study were divided into two parts, i.e. 1) how ebola virus was called and 2) the focus of ebola virus disease. As for the first section how ebola virus was called, it was

The notion of CDA is originated from Norman Fairclough. Even long, I shall, firstly, introduce the CDA's definition presented by van Dijk (1993) as follows:

interpreted and analysed by using the coding schemes of the locus of ebola virus disease, local coherence, and modality. To explain these, the locus of ebola virus disease represented and indicated a country and/or a continent of an outbreak of ebola virus. Local coherence referred to other countries and /or other continents out of the Western African ones that might or might not be affected by ebola virus outbreak. This could also help highlight and understand where the deadly virus came from. Modality considered word choices (i.e., verbs) used and level of certainty of the situation.

For the focus of ebola virus disease part, its analysis considered how positive and negative words the journalists employed. Being positive and promotion-oriented considered word choices, sentences, and/or phrases that provided a way of hope to fight against the situation and make it better. In contrast, word choices, sentences, and/or phrases that showed the bad and concerned situation and could not be waited anymore represented being negative and prevention-oriented.

**Results**

According to the objectives of the study, I shall draw the results in the following two sections including 1) how ebola virus disease was called and 2) the focus of ebola virus disease, based upon the Regulatory Focus Theory. The analysis of socio-cultural context was also added on to the result section.

**How ebola virus disease was called**

Through the lexical selection, how ebola virus disease was called could be depicted in two perspectives, i.e. how serious the virus disease was and whether or not ebola virus disease was called as Western African disease.

As for how serious the virus disease was, it was found that the Western press employed a stronger metaphor. The examples were:

**Table 3** A Comparison of How Ebola Virus Disease was Named between Western African and Western Countries

The West African Media	The Western Media
<p><u>Fearing Ebola</u>, Nigerians drink, bathe in salt water <i>NTA Newstime African</i>, 14 August 2014</p>	<p>Head doctor fighting Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone contracts <u>the deadly virus</u> <i>The Telegraph</i>, 23 July 2014</p>
	<p>Ebola: <u>worst ever outbreaks</u> shuts Liberia border <i>The Telegraph</i>, 28 July 2014</p>
	<p>Ebola outbreak: <u>deadly foreign diseases</u> are ‘potential major threat’ says Chief Scientist <i>The Telegraph</i>, 30 July 2014</p>
	<p>Ebola is <u>terrifying</u> – and proves how unprepared we are for epidemics <i>The Telegraph</i>, 31 July 2014</p>
	<p>Ebola outbreak: the doctor who came <u>from the dead</u> <i>The Telegraph</i>, 17 August 2014</p>
	<p>DR Congo confirms first Ebola cases in ‘new strain’ of <u>killer virus</u> <i>The Telegraph</i>, 25 August 2014</p>
	<p>Baby may have infected with <u>deadly Ebola virus</u> <i>The Telegraph</i>, 27 August 2014</p>
	<p>Lagos Hospital Confirms <u>Ebola-Related Death</u> <i>The Wall Street Journal</i>, 25 July 2014</p>
	<p><u>Deadliest Ebola Outbreak Ever</u> Spreads to Senegal <i>The Wall Street Journal</i>, 29 August 2014</p>

Both the Western African journalists *per se* and the Western counterparts presumably referred ebola virus disease as the West African disease and spread from the Western African continent through the locus of ebola virus disease, local coherence, ethnocentrism, and modality

### *The Locus of ebola virus disease*

The headlines given by the journalists both in the Western African and in the Western nations obviously indicated and implied to the Western African disease. Also, it seemed the Western African journalists had accepted this fact. Follows showed some outstanding examples.

**Table 4** A Comparison in the Locus of Ebola Virus Disease between the Western Africa and the Western Countries

The West African Media	The Western Media
Update on the Ebola Virus Disease <u>in West Africa</u> <i>NTA Newstime African</i> , 14 August 2014	Ebola risk unheeded as <u>Guinea's</u> villagers keep on eating fruit bats <i>The Guardian</i> , 04 August 2014
WHO deployed health worker receiving care after testing positive for Ebola <u>in Sierra Leone</u> <i>NTA Newstime African</i> , 24 August 2014	Ebola outbreak: <u>Congo</u> becomes fifth country with confirmed cases <i>The Guardian</i> , 25 August 2014
Spanish Organization Contributes To Ebola Fight In <u>Liberia</u> <i>Daily Observer</i> , 22 July 2014	Ebola cases in <u>west Africa</u> could rise to 20,000 says WHO <i>The Guardian</i> , 28 August 2014
American Doctor Contracted Ebola <u>in Liberia</u> <i>Daily Observer</i> , 27 July 2014	Ebola is just 'one plane ride away' from Western countries <i>The Telegraph</i> , 21 July 2014
'Stop Doubting Ebola' Campaign Intensifies In <u>ELWA Communities</u> <i>Daily Observer</i> , 03 August 2014	Ebola claims first victim in Africa's largest city <i>The Telegraph</i> , 26 July 2014
World Bank Group Mobilizes Emergency Funding To Fight Ebola Epidemic <u>In West Africa</u> <i>Daily Observer</i> , 07 August 2014	Ebola outbreak: American doctor fighting for life after contracting deadly illness <u>in Liberia</u> <i>The Telegraph</i> , 27 July 2014
US Pledges To Contain Ebola Outbreak <u>In W. Africa</u> <i>Daily Observer</i> , 07 August 2014	Ebola virus: what is happening in <u>West Africa</u> today may be relevant in London tomorrow <i>The Telegraph</i> , 30 July 2014
To Contain Ebola <u>In W/A</u> , USAID, CDC Announce Additional Assistance <i>Daily Observer</i> , 10 August 2014	Ebola outbreak 'could reach UK' <i>The Telegraph</i> , 30 July 2014
Head Of U.S. Health Experts Arrives In Liberia To Ebola Fight <i>Daily Observer</i> , 12 August 2014	Ebola crisis: Us peace corps pull out of <u>West Africa</u> <i>The Telegraph</i> , 31 July 2014



**Table 4** A Comparison in the Locus of Ebola Virus Disease between the Western Africa and the Western Countries (to be continued)

The West African Media	The Western Media
Ellen Embraces Health Workers' Efforts To Kick Ebola Out Liberia <i>Daily Observer</i> , 14 August 2014	Woman dies after flying to Gatwick from Ebola hit <u>Sierra Leone</u> <i>The Telegraph</i> , 03 August 2014
DR Congo Dispatches Five Medical Experts To Help Liberia's Ebola Fight <i>Daily Observer</i> , 21 August 2014	Ebola outbreak: BA suspends flights to <u>Sierra Leone and Liberia over virus</u> <i>The Telegraph</i> , 05 August 2014
Ebola Fear Forces Chinese Merchants <u>Out of Liberia</u> <i>Daily Observer</i> , 25 August 2014	Ebola: Several Britons across the UK quarantined at home after returning from <u>West Africa</u> <i>The Telegraph</i> , 05 August 2014
Sierra Leoneans in Saudi Arabia Pray Against EBOLA <i>Critique Echo Newspaper</i> , 30 July 2014	Ebola Fear Forces Chinese Merchants Out of Liberia <i>Daily Observer</i> , 25 August 2014
As WHO Approved Experimental Drugs to Fight Ebola, Canada Offers More Vaccine to <u>West Africa</u> <i>Critique Echo Newspaper</i> , 14 August 2014	The <u>Liberian</u> slum where Ebola spreads death among killer virus 'deniers' <i>The Telegraph</i> , 08 August 2014
	Experimental Ebola drugs use in <u>West Africa</u> is ethical, says WHO <i>The Telegraph</i> , 12 August 2014
	Canada to donate own Ebola vaccine to WHO for use in <u>Africa</u> <i>The Telegraph</i> , 13 August 2014
	Ebola outbreak: US orders embassy families <u>out of Sierra Leone</u> <i>The Telegraph</i> , 14 August 2014

Table 4 showed that ebola virus disease was spread from the West Africa and could be called as the West African disease. The majority of the news headlines created by both sides used other countries, persons, and organisations which were not based in the disease-hit countries as a subject of the sentence or phrase.

Especially in the sight of the Western journalists, furthermore, they were utilising phrases, verbs, and/or adjectives presenting being en route from one place to another. These included “‘one plane ride away’ from Western countries’ (*The Telegraph*, 21 July 2014); ‘what is happening in West Africa today may be

relevant in London tomorrow' (*The Telegraph*, 30 July 2014); 'could reach UK' (*The Telegraph*, 30 July 2014); 'pull out of West Africa' (*The Telegraph*, 31 July 2014); 'after flying to Gatwick from Ebola hit Sierra Leone' (*The Telegraph*, 03 August 2014); 'quarantined at home after returning from West Africa' (*The Telegraph*, 05 August 2014), and the like.

### **Local coherence**

In this sense, local coherence was meant to be the emphasis of the birthplace of ebola virus disease that came from the Western African countries. These following examples obviously exhibited such facts, especially from the sights of the Western journalists.

Ebola is just 'one plane ride away' from Western countries

*The Telegraph*, 21 July 2014

Ebola outbreak 'could reach UK'

*The Telegraph*, 30 July 2014

Ebola outbreak: Hundreds of Western aid workers evacuated  
as death toll approaches 750

*The Telegraph*, 31 July 2014

If Ebola was in the UK we'd cure it, says leading doctor

*The Telegraph*, 04 August 2014

First European Ebola patient arrives in Spain

*The Telegraph*, 07 August 2014

First Ebola patient on European soil 'weakened' by virus

*The Telegraph*, 08 August 2014

Ebola: British experts flown out to disease hot spots

*The Telegraph*, 08 August 2014

Briton with Ebola could be flown to UK for treatment

*The Telegraph*, 23 August 2014

British health care worker with Ebola is being flown home

*The Telegraph*, 24 August 2014

Spanish Priest With Ebola Virus Returns to Spain

*The Wall Street Journal*, 13 August 2014

### **Modality**

Modality was consisted of word choices including 'can', 'may', 'must', 'confirm', 'hope', 'pronounce', 'deny' and the like (Sulkunen & Törrönen, 1997). In this study, the modality presented in the West African online newspapers, generally, was not as certain as

the one that was given by their opponents. The former employed a wide range of the modality, from a softer to a stronger, i.e. *report*, *record*, *declare*, and *confirm*. In contrast, only the modality *confirm* was frequently used by the Western journalists. Follows exhibited the examples of the modality.

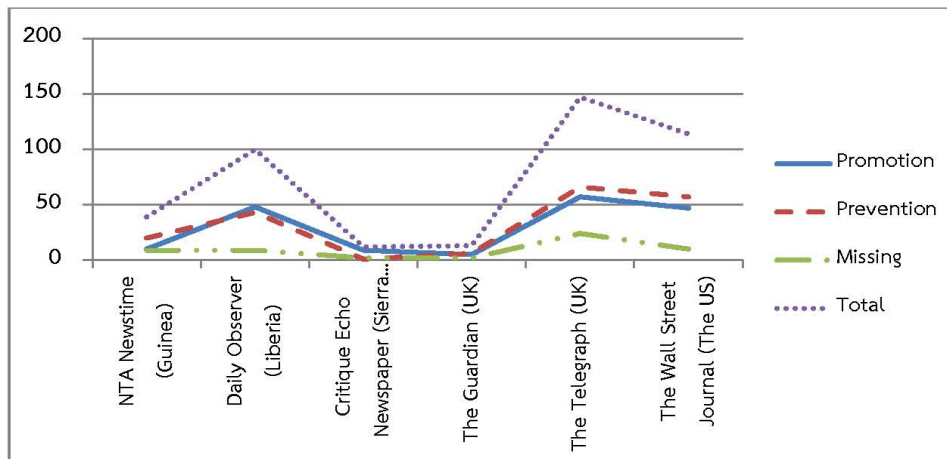
**Table 5** A Comparison of the Modality between the Western Africa and the Western Countries

The West African Media	The Western Media
Nigeria <u>records first</u> Ebola death <i>NTA Newstime African, 26 July 2014</i>	Nigeria <u>confirms</u> Liberian man died of Ebola in Lagos <i>The Telegraph, 25 July 2014</i>
Benin <u>reports two</u> Ebola cases <i>NTA Newstime African, 08 August 2014</i>	Ebola outbreak: Spain to accept <u>Europe’s first confirmed</u> case of the virus <i>The Telegraph, 06 August 2014</i>
Nigeria <u>records third</u> Ebola death <i>NTA Newstime African, 13 August 2014</i>	DR Congo <u>confirms</u> first Ebola cases in ‘new strain’ of killer virus <i>The Telegraph, 25 August 2014</i>
Nigeria <u>reports</u> 11th case of Ebola infection <i>NTA Newstime African, 14 August 2014</i>	Senegal <u>confirms</u> its first case of Ebola <i>The Telegraph, 29 August 2014</i>
Nigeria <u>confirms</u> 4th Ebola death <i>NTA Newstime African, 14 August 2014</i>	Lagos Hospital <u>Confirms</u> Ebola-Related Death <i>The Wall Street Journal, 25 July 2014</i>
Liberia <u>declares</u> curfew, seals Ebola-infested communities <i>NTA Newstime African, 20 August 2014</i>	Nigeria <u>Confirms</u> Second Ebola Virus Case <i>The Wall Street Journal, 13 August 2014</i>
Senegal <u>reports</u> 1st Ebola infection <i>NTA Newstime African, 30 August 2014</i>	Congo <u>Confirms</u> Ebola Outbreak <i>The Wall Street Journal, 25 August 2014</i>
DR Congo <u>confirms</u> 7 new Ebola cases: UN radio <i>NTA Newstime African, 30 August 2014</i>	
FOUR EBOLA CASES <u>CONFIRMED</u> IN BONG <i>Daily Observer, 24 July 2014</i>	

**The focus of ebola virus disease, based upon the Regulatory Focus Theory**

For ease of understanding, a figure exhibiting a comparative number of promotion- and

prevention focus for all selected newspapers in West Africa and other countries was pictured below.



**Figure 1** A Comparative Number of Promotion- and Prevention-Focus Discourse of Ebola Virus Diseases

Figure 1, generally speaking, demonstrated a ‘scorpion’ picture that whereas the West African journalists were hope-oriented, it was vice versa for the Western ones who were heading to safety and security of people. In other words, the former media persons were predominantly living with hope that this situation would sooner be better whereas safety and security came first, i.e. finding out a solution to escape from this was happening, in the sight of Western nations’ press. In details, promotion- and prevention-focus discourse of ebola virus disease was comparatively shown through the following techniques.

Through lexicalisation, promotion-focus discourse of ebola virus disease employed positive and hopeful words and phrases. In particular for the Daily Observer online newspaper, the word “donate” (i.e., UNDP Donates 4 Vehicles To Ebola Fight, 05 August 2014; Chinese Gov’t Donates Drugs, Equipment To Fight Ebola, 12 August 2014; LRDC Donates To Ebola Taskforce, 13 August 2014; Neyor Donates L\$100,000, Sanitation Materials To Ebola Fight, 14 August 2014; UK Ahmadiyya Muslim

Association Donates 10,000 British Pounds to Fight Ebola In Liberia, 17 August 2014; Liberian Financial Expert Donates US\$20,000 Protective Gears To Ebola Fight, 25 August 2014) was used most frequently. This was followed by “pledge ... to” (i.e., Chiefs, Elders Pledge Support In Combating Ebola, 31 July 2014; US Pledges To Contain Ebola Outbreak in W. Africa, 07 August 2014), “commit ... to” (i.e., Samaritan Purse Commits US\$1M To Ebola Fight, 22 July 2014, I Remain Committed To The Fight Against Ebola In Liberia, 26 August 2104; and “pray against” (i.e., Church Begins 3-Day National Fast and Prayer Against Ebola, 06 August 2014, Liberian Pray For Ebola, Other Calamities To Pass Over Nation, 10 August 2014).

As for the Critique Echo Newspaper, its journalist fell in love with the word ‘approve’ (including WHO Approves Experimental Drugs as Ebola Death Toll Tops 100, 12 August 2014, As WHO approved Experimental Drugs to Fight Ebola, Canada Offers More Vaccine to West Africa, 14 August 2014, and Ebola Shall Soon Become a History as Experimental Drugs Prove Promising, 25 August 2014).

In contrast, the most frequently used words and phrases by the Western world's journalists included something that was concerned and rather negatively. These were "declare" [not good facts and news] (WHO declares Ebola epidemic an international health emergency, *The Telegraph*, 08 August 2014, World Health Organisation declares Ebola outbreak an international health emergency, *The Telegraph*, 08 August 2014, WHO declares Ebola 'international health emergency' as death toll nears 1000, *The Telegraph*, 08 August 2014, Ebola outbreak: Guinea declares health emergency, *The Telegraph*, 14 August 2014), "died of" (Liberian Doctor Dies of Ebola Virus, *The Wall Street Journal*, 27 July 2014, Ebola Virus: Infected Priest Has Died in Spain, *The Wall Street Journal*, 13 August 2014, Ebola Virus: Infected Spanish Priest Dies, *The Wall Street Journal*, 13 August 2014, Ebola Virus: For Want of Gloves, Doctor Die, *The Wall Street Journal*, 16 August 2014), "hit" (How British business has been hit by the ebola epidemic, *The Telegraph*, 21 August 2014, Ebola victims in West Africa could hit 20,000, *The Telegraph*, 24 August 2014, Ebola victims in West Africa could hit 20,000, *The Telegraph*, 28 August 2014, China's Anti-Ebola Plan Hits Youth Olympics, *The Wall Street Journal*, 16 August 2014, Ebola Virus Outbreak Could Hit 20,000 Within Nine Months, Warns

WHO, *The Wall Street Journal*, 28 August 2014), and "quarantine" (Canadian girl quarantined in Ebola scare, *The Telegraph*, 30 August 2014, Sierra Leone to Quarantine Ebola-Stricken Areas, *The Wall Street Journal*, 13 August 2014, Ebola Virus Quarantine in Liberia Sparks Unrest, *The Wall Street Journal*, 21 August 2014, Ebola Virus Quarantine Sparks Clashes in Liberia, *The Wall Street Journal*, 21 August 2014).

### **The analysis of socio-cultural context**

As addressed in the focus of ebola virus disease, based upon the Regulatory Focus Theory, the journalists in the West African continents were living with a mindset that everything is going to be better soon after. In contrast, the journalists in the West like the UK and the US did not wait for any hope because life is full of choices. They sought out for a way to be free of ebola virus beforehand.

This was evidenced by the study of Trčková (2015) when 'African victims tend to be impersonalized and portrayed as voiceless and agently, rarely occupying the role of a "fighter" in the military metaphoric representation of the disease' (Trčková, 2015, p.29; Tshiswaka et al., 2017, as cited in Muzola, 2014). The Western African people were, therefore, cultivated with hope belief (Graw, 2005). Graw (2005) underlined that:

'Divination is one of the most resistant institutions of ritual life in West African countries such as Senegal and Gambia. Rather than being practiced at the margins of an Islamic orthodoxy, Senegambian divination is embedded in and integrating other forms of Islamic ritual. By focusing on the existential value of these practices rather than on their outward formal aspects, divination and Islam come into view as sharing in the construction of a cultural space of hope and prospect that allows the subject to deal with his or her most urgent concerns, predicaments, and afflictions' (p.28).

Karafilakis et al. (2016) did an interview with a woman in Sierra Leone who had shared hopelessness of hers and the people in the country. And because the people in the West Africa were embedded with ritual beliefs, this could cause resistance to modern medicine intakes (Jones, 2014).

In the West, its people were cultivated and learned with something that did not make them in danger and at risk (Pulkkinen, 2017). Instead, they prepared themselves to be safe beforehand. Many scholars (e.g., Furedi, 2006 as cited in Pulkkinen, 2017; Yusuf et al., 2015) agreed with this. By referring to Furedi (2006, p.10-11), Pulkkinen (2017) said that ‘... contemporary Western culture refuses to accept death and misfortune as a part of life and human condition’ (p.49).

Referring to a letter given to educators in Georgia, likewise, Bedrosian et al. (2016) prioritised the importance of safety and security among Americans that ‘This letter explained Ebola transmission and reassured Georgia

educators about the measures being taken to protect their safety’ (p.72). The statement of Wendy Parmet, Director of the Program on Health Policy and Law at Northeastern University School of Law, In Boston reassure the Americans’ mindset towards keeping them away from risky and dangerous circumstances, as stated “‘It gives us the false assurance that we can ignore the problems that are happening in Africa,” she said. “At the end of the day, we can’t. And our own safety depends on our getting it right there, not on building the walls”’ (quoted in Weintraub, 2014).

Another tragedy example that showed how ebola virus disease was called as ‘others’ and ‘African’ was the one presented and revealed by Monson (2017) by referring to Fatu Gayflor, who was born in Liberia and has migrated to the Americas and also is a singing volunteer for changes among Liberian women in the US. Even being a long quote, it must be done so that understanding and sensation could be completed:

‘[...] on tour, another singer had not wanted to touch a microphone after Gayflor had used it and suggested that it be sanitized. Since then, Gayflor has been bringing her own microphone to performances, and before each show, she tells the audience she is Liberian but has been living in the United States since 1999 and has not hosted any family or visitors from West Africa. People like Gayflor, aware of American stereotypes of Africans since the Ebola outbreak, preemptively reassure others that they do not have Ebola and have not recently been to, or interacted with, people from, Ebola-stricken countries. Furthermore, because of the Ebola panic, African residents feel pressured to quarantine themselves, as did the Rwandan schoolchildren in New Jersey’ (Monson, 2017, p.14).

### **Discussion and Suggestions**

West African ebola virus disease in 2014 is the worst epidemic outbreak ever in the World. This study targeted to discover the language used in ebola virus disease newspaper headlines by finding

out whether or not ebola virus disease was the West African disease and examining focus of ebola virus disease, either promotion focus or prevention focus, following to the Regulatory Focus Theory, in the comparative sights of the Western African and the Western countries’

journalists. Through critical discourse analysis, the study scrutinised, 425 in total, ebola virus disease newspaper headlines, published in the West African newspapers and those in the other parts of the world where the effects were spread out.

The results indicated that in the views of the Western African and the Western countries' journalists agreed that through the locus of ebola virus disease, local coherence, and modality used, ebola virus disease was the West African disease. This was evidenced by Monson (2017) that, 'The media triggered Americans' fear and conceptualization of Ebola as "other" and "African," sparking a discourse of panic and propelling the otherization of Africa and Africans living in the United States and those returning from West Africa' (p.3). Negative attitude of the West press towards the West Africans still existed not only in this study, but also in Trčková (2015).

As for the focus of ebola virus disease, following to the Regulatory Focus Theory, a 'scorpion' picture was portrayed. While the Western African journalists were hoping that the situation would be better soon – promotion-focus, their Western counterparts prioritised safety and security reasons – prevention-focus. In other words, the passive situation could be perceived in the Western African countries, while the active strategies were the main focus of the Western countries. This situation was consistently found in the study of Basch, Basch, and Redlener (2014) that in the West, promotion-focus messages were not as much cultivated and published as prevention-focus ones.

The results discovered above could be elaborated and understood by the fact of socio-cultural disparities that have embedded

their own citizens. No one was right or wrong, however. Windows should be opened up for media from all countries since the West African people are 'not passive victims or even potential enemies' anymore (Miliband & Piot, 2015, see also Pearson, 2015, quoting Dr Bruce Aylward, the World Health Organization).

The study suggests that ethnocentrism should be avoided and intercultural mindset should be cultivated in global media industry so that being a global village is truly reflected. No matter offline or online media coverage, media are playing an important role as an intermediary between a company and audience. Likewise, such media coverage from the West can build moral panic while underestimated healthcare treatment can be the expected result from such media coverage from the West Africa.

Future studies should pay attention to examining and scrutinising the selection and usage of images in the news about ebola outbreak. In addition to this, other aspects of the headlines of the ebola virus news stories should be taken into consideration. These include the analysis of positive versus negative words, that of panic-triggering versus informative words, and the like.

## Conclusion

Currently, emerging infectious disease, re-emerging infectious disease, and neglected infectious diseases always happen throughout the world. Intercultural communication is an integral part of health promotion and health prevention and must be respected. This is because different countries and people have different beliefs, values, and ideologies hidden and we cannot treat them as all the same. Otherwise, failures in disease control can be the



expected result and crisis communication and crisis management has to seriously be executed. In this study, it is revealed that the West African people are framed by hope whereas people from the West are embedded with a mindset that they can do it their ways. An intermediary agency, likewise, should be understood and analysed so that moral panics can be avoided. For human beings, nonetheless, equality should be shared.

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