Representations of Child Sexual Abuse in Jamaica

A Corpus-Assisted Discourse Study of Popular News Media

Edited by

Tatyana Karpenko-Seccombe, Kenisha Nelson, Christine Fray et al.

www.mdpi.com/books/mono/5902

ISBN 978-3-0365-2467-2 (Hbk) ISBN 978-3-0365-2466-5 (PDF)

Published: August 2022



News media shape public opinion on social issues such as child sexual abuse (CSA), using particular language to foreground, marginalize or legitimize certain viewpoints. Given the prevalence of CSA and the impact of violence against children in Jamaica, there is a need to examine the representation of children and their experience of violence in the news media, which remain the main source of information about such abuse for much of the population. The study aims to analyze accounts of CSA in Jamaican newspapers in order to show how different representations impact public understanding of CSA. This study offers a new perspective around child abuse by using an eight-million word corpus from articles over a three-year period (2018- 2020).

The study argues that media reports often fail to conceptualise and represent accurately children who have experienced abuse. Representations of children are generic, their experiences often reduced to statistical summaries. Corpus analysis uncovered the use of terms which normalize sexual abuse. From the reader's perspective, there was little emotional connection to the child or the child's experience. The newspapers rarely report first-hand survivors' experience of abuse, depriving these children of a voice. Instead, a marked preference is given to institutional voices. An issue of concern is a tendency to sensationalism with disproportionate attention given to cases involving celebrities.

By exposing these problems, the authors hope that news media in Jamaica can play a more positive role in heightening awareness around child abuse and allowing the voices of victims/survivors to be heard.





MDPI Books offers quality open access book publishing to promote the exchange of ideas and knowledge in a globalized world. MDPI Books encompasses all the benefits of open access – high availability and visibility, as well as wide and rapid dissemination. With MDPI Books, you can complement the digital version of your work with a high quality printed counterpart.



Open Access

Your scholarly work is accessible worldwide without any restrictions. All authors retain the copyright for their work distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License.



Author Focus

Authors and editors profit from MDPI's over two decades of experience in open access publishing, our customized personal support throughout the entire publication process, and competitive processing charges as well as unique contributor discounts on book purchases.



High Quality & Rapid Publication

MDPI ensures a thorough review for all published items and provides a fast publication procedure. State-of-the-art research and time-sensitive topics are released with a minimum amount of delay.



High Visibility

Due to our global network and well-known channel partners, we ensure maximum visibility and broad dissemination. Title information of books is sent to international indexing databases and archives, such as the Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB), the Verzeichnis lieferbarer Bücher (VLB).



Print on Demand and Multiple Formats

MDPI Books are available for purchase and to read online at any time. Our print-ondemand service offers a sustainable, cost-effective and fast way to publish MDPI Books printed versions.

MDPI St. Alban-Anlage 66 4052 Basel, Switzerland Tel: +41 61 683 77 34 Fax: +41 61 302 89 18 www.mdpi.com books@mdpi.com

