

AFFECT AND PATERNITY TEST RESULTS IN THE VIRTUAL SPHERE:
THE CASE OF JOHN DOE

MASTER OF ARTS (APPLIED ETHICS) THESIS

GIFT JOSH SALIMA BANDA

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

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MASTER OF ARTS (APPLIED ETHICS) THESIS

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*BAH -(UNIMA)***

A dissertation submitted to the Department of Philosophy, School of Humanities and
Social Sciences in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Arts in Applied Ethics

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, unequivocally declare that this study is solely my original work and has not been submitted to any other institution for examination. Where relevant, I have duly acknowledged the use of other people's works and with this accept full responsibility for the content of the study.

GIFT JOSH SALIMA BANDA

Full Legal Name

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this study represents the student's own work and effort and has been submitted with our approval.

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Head of Department

DEDICATION

I convey my profound gratitude to my much-loved sisters, Wongani Monalisa Banda and Inellghbinose Begin Okoedo, for their unwavering support throughout my journey. With their invaluable assistance, I have been able to take a significant leap forward, and I will always remain indebted to them. Although words may not suffice to express my appreciation adequately, I want both of you to know that I am profoundly grateful. I hereby dedicate this study to you.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the ethical dimensions surrounding the disclosure of paternity test results in the virtual sphere, with a focus on the potential harm it can cause to children and families. This qualitative research explores various affective comments, upon which, a Thematic Content Analysis unveils and examines a plethora of emotions and sentiments arising from John Doe's case. The analysis exposes significant ethics of communication concerns to do with harm. The study emphasises the importance of prioritising the safeguarding of the well-being and privacy of the child in public discussions and disclosures, demanding a cautious and sensitive approach when handling sensitive information such as paternity test results. This is because innocent children, who are usually at the centre of such online discourse, need to be protected from harm, which may emanate from unpredictable affective discourse. This thesis argues that paternity test results should not be disclosed on social media platforms like Facebook. Disclosing paternity test results in the virtual sphere instigates unpredictable and uncontrollable affective discourse fraught with harm to certain individuals. This is unmistakable in the Malawian socio-cultural context where users are not privileged with a basic ethics education essential for appropriate public communication on sensitive matters. The affective virtual discourse in such a context appears to have the colossal potential to result in lasting emotional and psychological effects on the concerned parties, particularly innocent children. In defence of safeguarding the sanctity of individuals' well-being, particularly that of the child, it is advised that paternity test results remain undisclosed in the virtual sphere.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Introduction

The virtual sphere emerged following the advent of the Internet age. The platform allows individuals to share content, express opinions, and even discuss private family matters. The concept of the public sphere, as proposed by Jürgen Habermas, is challenged by this blurring of the line between public and private life domains (Nentwich & Straub, 2013). The virtual sphere is a space of *affect* while the Habermasian public sphere is that of critical discourse (Papacharissi, 2002. Dalberg, 2005, p.111). This study, which is focused on Malawi, analyses the impact of affective discourse within the virtual sphere. Specifically, the study examines comments and reactions of Malawian digital citizens to John Doe's public disclosure of negative paternity test results of his child on his Facebook page.

1.2 Background

The virtual sphere is an internet-era setting of public discourse that represents a partial shift of venue from Habermas' public sphere (Khan, et al. 2012). The Habermasian public sphere is a social space which is the nexus between the state and civil society (Regilme, 2016, p.1). Ideally, the public sphere acts as an impartial realm of private citizens detached from the state where deliberations can take place freely and democratically to generate public opinions and attitudes (Calhoun, 2010, p.301). These public opinions and attitudes can support, challenge, and guide decisions by the state. Examining the public sphere in connection with the media entails perceiving it as a channel for discourse that fosters unrestricted sharing of knowledge and concepts. Additionally, it entails reflecting on matters that are of public concern, influencing public perception, and conveying that perception to those in power for responsibility (Habermas, 1962).

The work of Habermas (1962) delves into the changes that took place in the public sphere across some parts of Europe during the 18th century. Prior to this time, there was no clear distinction between private and public life, nor between the state and society in feudal societies (Guidry & Sawyer, 2003, p.273). However, by the end of the 18th century, significant social changes occurred, leading to the weakening of feudal institutions and the church's power, which gave rise to new forms of public power. At first, the public sphere was dominated by the bourgeois public sphere, comprising the middle class who had the resources and knowledge to engage in discussions about political and social issues (Calhoun, 2010). The press and other media, including pamphlets, played a crucial role in the early public sphere, enabling communication and dissemination of public debates (Habermas, 1962).

In the past, the bourgeoisie held sway over the public sphere. Yet, Habermas posits that a truly ideal public sphere must be inclusive and open to all, regardless of social status. He contends that the efficacy of the public sphere is contingent upon the presence of robust, logical discourse where all individuals have an equal opportunity to influence others through the power and lucidity of their arguments (Calhoun, 2010). Additionally, the caliber of engagement, level of independence, lack of hierarchy, and commitment to lawfulness are all critical factors in determining the triumph of the public sphere (Habermas, 1962).

Over the years, the ideal Habermasian public sphere as a social space has, however, taken a twist courtesy of the internet: the world has been experiencing a mix of public and private spaces and the weakening of social bonds (Cela, 2015). Zizi Papacharissi (2002) indisputably attests to the transformative power of the Internet in the public sphere. The virtual realm has become the go-to platform for digital citizens to connect and effect change. Papacharissi terms this virtual realm, a 'virtual sphere' (p.3). The virtual sphere enables individuals, through various platforms, to seamlessly share their perspectives on various global issues. It offers a range of multimedia formats such as text, images, audio, and videos to communicate opinions and messages. These multimedia formats provide an excellent opportunity to reflect on the evolution of media and its impact on people's lives (Akram, 2018).

John Doe's case is an illustration of the nature of the virtual sphere and how dissimilar it is from the Habermasian public space. While the social public space is rational, the virtual sphere is both rational and affective (Papacharissi, 2010). Malawian social media celebrity, Doe, went viral in the virtual sphere after denying fatherhood to his alleged biological son on the grounds that Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) identification test results did not confirm his paternity. Through the discourses on John Doe's¹ Facebook post, it is claimed that Doe was in a relationship with a woman, Madam Doe. The couple broke up courtesy of what Doe pronounced as irreconcilable differences arising from Madam Doe's alleged constant infidelity. Madam Doe reached out to Doe for reconciliation, which the latter refused. It is claimed that Madam Doe asked Doe to help her conceive a child instead, to which he agreed. In the Facebook post, Doe claims, twelve days after their copulation, Madam Doe broke to him the news that she was pregnant for him.

John Doe further claims that, after the child was born, rumour was everywhere that he was not its biological father. This prompted John Doe to secretly take the child to a medical professional for a secluded DNA test. Results of the test confirmed that he was not the biological father. Doe then took images of the results and posted them on his Facebook page for the virtual sphere to see. He claimed that he believed the biological father is either a certain Mr Kondwani Y because he had found out that the man paid the child's hospital bills on a couple of occasions. He further claimed that there was also a certain Mavuto X, who he caught Madam Doe having an affair with. Upon getting the paternity results, Doe immediately abrogated all his social responsibilities and duties over the child.

The John Doe case confirms Papacharissi's impression that the distinction 'between that which is private and that which is public remains unclear' in the virtual sphere unlike in the Habermasian public space (Papacharissi, 2002, pp 3-4). As in the Doe

¹ Even though the issue is in the public domain, it would be against the interests of this study, which believes in respecting the privacy and rights of the child who was unwittingly brought under the gaze of social media, to mention names that would be key in revealing the child's identity. As such, John Doe is the name which shall be used to refer to the man who broadcast his paternity results on social media in 2022. Other names such as John Doe's partner and men implicated in the paternity case that might also lead to unwarranted exposure of the child under discussion have also been replaced by a pseudonym. Additionally, those Facebook users who accepted the use of their comments without exposing their names in this study have been assigned pseudonyms.

case, public opinions manifest in the virtual sphere and they are not a result of media reports. There is no initiative for legacy or established media to initiate public opinion formation in the virtual sphere. Public opinions in the virtual sphere are also not formed by political elites. Papacharissi notes that ‘sentiments in the virtual sphere can either be rational or affective in nature’ (Papacharissi, 2014, p.25). This, as the dissertation indicates later, is manifested in the reactions and discourses of Malawians pertaining to the John Doe paternity test results case on Facebook. The mode of discourse may not always be rational but still has sense. Such public discourses have *affect*. The existence of *ad hominem* attacks and the appeal to emotions indicate indispensable levels of *affect* in the virtual sphere discourses.

Against the prevailing background, this dissertation contends that disclosure and all forms of discourse on paternity test results should be legally banned from discourses in the virtual sphere engaged by Malawians on family matters in Malawi. The dissertation’s stand emanates from the utility of *affect* present in the virtual sphere that has the capacity to inflict irreparable harm on a child in instances of disclosure of paternity test results, and worse still, when such results prove negative. The dissertation assembles sentiments and discourses by Malawian digital citizens in the case of John Doe’s disclosure of negative paternity test results of his alleged biological son, which he posted on Facebook on 29 November 2022. This brings into contextual perspective the weight of harm that affective discourses may inflict on a child in the digital space. Human experiences and actions in society are conceived by *affect* (Ahmed, 2004, p. 191). These experiences and actions do, in themselves, sustain and become intertwined with other forces of *affect* (Massumi, 2002). In the virtual sphere, *affect* tends to have the capacity to produce shared public feelings and emotions that have the potential to climax into a significant action that connects and affects people (Papacharissi, 2014, p.26).

1.3 Rationale

This study sought to lay bare the extent to which discourses on family matters by Malawian digital citizens do not yield the same results in the virtual sphere as in the deliberative Habermasian public sphere and legacy media. The deliberations in the public space and legacy media are rational and present proper logic for a sound

conclusion (Habermas, 1962). In the virtual sphere, however, digital citizens present affective sentiments which curtail the enjoyment of private sphere freedoms from harm for members under the scrutiny of the digital text in circulation. While the public space is able to present a clear distinction between private and public issues, the virtual sphere is a foggy arena where private matters can affectively be treated as public, resulting in breaches of communication ethics.

The study emphasises affective discourses on the John Doe case over rational texts because *affect* is richer than reason and has greater potential for harm. Dwelling on *affect* is also of paramount value to this dissertation because it defines the nature of Malawian digital citizens' agency. With most Malawians lacking basic formal ethics education, the majority of Malawian digital citizens have considerably engaged in affective discourse much more than they do in rational discourse in private digital texts. This gives academic significance to Malawian digital citizens' discourses concerning texts relating to private affairs of a fellow Malawian as the discussions are prone to generating ethical issues concerning harm.

The study's engagement with John Doe's case helps to lay bare the duty that those who strategically circulate a text in the virtual sphere ought to fulfill even in instances where their privacy is intertwined with the privacy of others inasmuch as ethical issues of consent are concerned. The study argues that Doe, as a social father, had on him the onus of safeguarding the privacy of his son and partner in the virtual sphere. Instead, he abrogated his duty as a social father by going public. For this reason, there is high potential of violating the rights and freedoms of his son and partner where that which is private may be reacted to in the most harmful manner as though it were a matter of public concern.

The context of Malawian digital citizens participating in discourse concerning texts involving Malawians is of importance to the present study. The study helps to differentiate the extent to which *affect* does not yield the same results in the Malawian virtual sphere, unlike virtual spheres from developed societies in which virtual citizens are better equipped with more than just basic education. Digital citizens from developed societies understand the basic ethics of tolerance of liberty of speech and how it relates to harm in instances of disclosure of paternity test results. The

Malawian context is unique in that it sets out limits to the tolerance of the legitimate liberty of speech in the digital space upon disclosure of paternity test results: preventing harm in the case of the child who is ignorant of the virtually expressed sentiments. The study addresses a gap left concerning tolerance of affective discourses in the virtual sphere (freedom of expression), namely that, tolerating affective discourses on paternity test results in the virtual sphere lacks safety guarantees, which eventually harm a child in many ways (including the child's dignity). This is regardless of the fact that the discourses may appear to have a utilitarian end of collective action for a better life within and beyond the virtual sphere.

The study also spawns a scholarly opportunity to grapple with communication ethics in the virtual sphere within the Malawian socio-cultural context. Ethics play a crucial role in shaping boundaries of communication and the public discourse. As the virtual sphere blurs the line between public and private, the ethical implications of sharing personal information such as paternity test results become paramount. As such, this study examines the ethical dimensions surrounding the disclosure of such sensitive information in the virtual sphere, with a focus on the potential harm it can cause to children and families. By analysing the sentiments and discourses of Malawian digital citizens in response to John Doe's Facebook post, the study seeks to shed light on ethical challenges posed by affective discourses and their impact on personal lives. Through an exploration of moral responsibilities of individuals and the digital community as a whole, the study contributes to the ongoing discourse concerning responsible and ethical communication practices within the virtual sphere. By critically examining the complexities of sharing paternity test results online, the study can foster greater awareness of potential consequences of the practice and, in turn, advocate for ethical guidelines that protect the well-being of individuals, families, as well as society.

1.4 Provisional Literature Review

In discussing issues of public space, privacy and the social media, it is important to map out a route of how key thinkers have, over the years, conceptualised emotions or *affect* in the context of such spaces.

Papacharissi (2002) argues that the dawn of digital media technologies has changed the way people communicate, engage with each other, and participate in deliberation and debate in public life. Papacharissi explains that there has been a formation of a new 'public sphere' different from that of Habermas, separate in terms of traditional forms of media and communication, and the obscuring of the boundaries between public and private life. As far as Papacharissi is concerned, the internet does not just act as a public sphere where people participate in discourse and debates. Rather, the sphere goes beyond providing alternatives to legacy media, which Papacharissi claims is dominated by elites and may not provide sufficient room for every individual to contribute. The internet, therefore, becomes a space where individuals can effortlessly produce and distribute content and eventually form connections with other people of similar interests (Papacharissi, 2002).

Papacharissi (2010 a) observes that the virtual sphere has heightened civic engagement because of its ability to present various channels of participation in discourses, which would not be possible in the Habermasian ideal public sphere. Papacharissi points out that innumerable people can actively participate in the virtual space despite the sphere's great vulnerability to misinformation and its disregard for individual privacy.

The nature of the virtual sphere is said to have a great impact on the psychology of digital participants (Papacharissi 2014). Papacharissi contends that the deeds of an individual are not indiscriminate actions. The discourses in the virtual sphere tend to shape how individuals present and express themselves, and reveal their information. She further argues that this leads to the creation of networks and social media communities with a shared perception of things. These virtual communities, in turn, have the potential to create a cultural revolution as they push for political activism (Dobrin, 2010).

Papacharissi (2014) also postulates that the activism, politics and networks present in the virtual sphere have a great affinity to *affect*, hence the concept of affective public. She posits that networked publics are organized around and through shared affective experiences in that they are not shared by geography or social class but by shared emotional responses to events. Thus the affective publics come about due to

circulation of visual content, which generates strong emotional reactions from participants (Papacharissi, 2015). These emotions become the engine that shape and drive discourse and action.

As people are networked in affective publics, the self becomes heavily impacted in terms of how life's issues are perceived. Everyday issues concerning birth, life and death and even everyday family, work, pregnancy, and early childhood life activities affect virtual networks and get affected by them (Papacharissi, 2017). This echoes the earlier notion that public and private lives are hardly distinct. Papacharissi also notes that text circulation and discourse in the virtual sphere are rapid because of emotions (*affect*), and because of the affective responses the text generates from the discourse. People with common interests are actually those with common *affect*. This poses a great challenge to traditional media and journalism. Papacharissi (2014) argues that the affective news stories tend to be shorter and more personal than traditional news stories, and that they prioritize emotions and emotional responses over objective facts and information.

Further, Papacharissi looks at *affect* dynamics in the virtual sphere. She sets out to explore what happens to the publics when they materialize through *affect*. She considers the power of affective atonement, which is, how people come to feel their proximity to, or distant from, current events, news stories, and civic mobilization through social media. Public displays of emotion in the virtual sphere inform and even characterise the discursive contours of the platform reflecting, to some degree, the culture, mood, and feelings of the moment. Papacharissi defines affective publics as networked formations that are mobilized and connected or disconnected through expressions of sentiment (Papacharissi, 2010 b, Papacharissi, 2014, Papacharissi, 2015).

The noun *affect* is derived from the Latin word *affectus*, meaning disposition. *Affect* is often, but not exclusively, used as an alternative word expression for sentiment, mood, feeling or emotion (Hogg, et al, 2010, p. 646-677). The earliest philosophic endeavours to comprehend *affect* and its nature looked at it as a force that influences reason. According to Aristotle, reason acts as a filter between cognition and behaviour. When this filter is functioning properly, human cognition and behaviour

become logical. Emotions and stress, however, have the capacity to damage this filter leading to human judgements and behaviour being less logical than they ought to be. Aristotle defines *affect* as ‘that which leads one’s condition to become so transformed that his judgment is affected, and is accompanied by either pleasure or pain’ (Aristotle, ‘*Rhetoric*’, p.6). For Aristotle, the purity of reasoning in an individual is shifted by this embodied affective force which is followed by sensations of either pleasure or pain.

Descartes (1641) presents details of the supposed mechanisms of *affect* as a force in the human body. He argues that *affect* (which he terms ‘passions’) are ‘the perceptions, feelings or emotions of the soul which we relate specifically to, and which are caused, maintained and fortified by some movement of the spirit’ (p. 21). The spirit cited serves as a definitive material medium, facilitating the connection between the body and the mind.

Wundt (1897) cultivates a conception of *affect*, which suggests that emotions are not merely raw bodily sensations like pleasure and pain as claimed in Aristotle, but rather they are mental feelings. He argues that *affect* is actually a sixth sense. It is the first position from which persons begin to make considerations about their experiences, and this affective experience, in turn, unifies all the other senses (Fieldman-Barrett, 2017, p.23). Through this understanding, consciousness and experience are infused together, providing far-reaching implications of Immanuel Kant’s Transcendental Unity of Apperception.

Kant’s Transcendental Unity for Apperception indicates some metaphysics of perception in which human knowledge is imbued with *affect*. He explains that, when one is experiencing the appearance of an object, what they cognize is not actually what appears outside of our minds. When someone looks at an object, the mind begins to create the smell, shape and other qualities of the object. This object exists in the portion of space and time inherent in the mind. The real objective data of the object is what Kant describes as *Noumena* while that which the mind perceives are the *Phenomena*. Some *Noumena* become the *Phenomena* when intuition re-organises the raw data (Glendinning, 1999, p. 26, 40-41). The intuition is heavily tailored by *affect* as it fuses with consciousness to create the final perceptions of the *Noumena*. Hence,

humans are never in a state entirely free from *affect* through intuition which is an ingredient of feeling and consciousness, creating a unity of the self. Bergson (1988) agrees with Kant by arguing that ‘there is no perception without affection’ (p.58).

As an unchallengeable ingredient of cognition, as indicated by Kant, *affect* does have a direct impact on how the public relates to their environment, as well as how they act or comprehend things. This is because perceptions are not objective: they are subjective. Zajoric (1980) elaborates further the power that *affect* has in its relation with reason. He claims that *affect* reactions can override and occur even ‘without extensive perceptual and cognitive encoding and can be made sooner and with greater confidence than cognitive judgements’ (p.151-175). Lazarus (1982) contemplates *affect* to be post-cognitive, in that it is aroused after a certain amount of cognitive handling of data has been accomplished. In his interpretation, ‘affective reactions such as liking or disliking are a result of a preceding cognitive process that makes a diversity of content discriminations and identifies [their] features, examines them to find value, and weighs them according to their contributions’ (p.473). Lerner and Keltner (2000) argue that *affect* can both precede and follow cognition. They advance that emotional responses give rise to thoughts, and these thoughts give rise to emotions.

At this point, one realizes that whether *affect* happens before, during, or after cognition, it does have a significant effect on reason and the final enactment of human speech or action. The importance of *affect* in determining the final outlook of reason is presented by Damasio (1994), who asserts the crucial role of affect in determining rational cognition, emphasizing its necessity for enabling rational modes of thought. Fieldman-Barret in a *TedTalk* presentation (2020) points out that *affect* is not a mere friendly ally of reason. Elsewhere, Fieldman-Barret (2021) further claims that, “*affect* is the best guess of the state of one’s own body; the driver, which no one can overcome with rationality”. His research establishes that *affect* is created by the brain; by one’s prior experiences in life and, upon its creation, impacts reasoning or judgment. This judgement comes with feelings either of pleasantness or unpleasantness because humans feel in accordance with what their brains believe to be the reality of things.

Affect is a critical feature in interpersonal interactions and communication (Farroni et'al, 2021, p.21). Emotions are depicted as vibrant processes that facilitate an individual's interaction with frequently changing social interactions (Marinetti e'tal, 2011). In other words, emotions are crucial processes that actively shape the relationship between an individual and their significant environment, determining whether it is established, maintained, or disrupted (Papacharissi, 2015, p.160). *Affect* is 'a kind of message and, therefore, can influence the emotions, attributions, and ensuing behaviours of oneself and others, potentially evoking a feedback process to the original agent' (Albarracin & Kunkale, 2003, p. 453)

Hanslick points out that 'for an *affect* to be produced, there must be an object of attention [within the public sphere]' (Kivy, 2002, p.26). This implies that *affect* has a huge link with ethics because it relates to how one acts in relation to others. On the relationship between *affect* and ethics, Spinoza describes *affect* as impacting 'he modifications of the body whereby the active power of the said body is increased or diminished, aided or constrained, and also the ideas of such modification' (Spinoza, 1955, p.130). This indicates that right or wrong actions are not purely a result of reason: all human acts, including reasoning, produce and are produced by *affect*. However, the question is on whether we should engage *affect* in the discourse of the ethics of human actions if *affect* seems to be beyond human control.

For Brentano (1973), *affect* is intentional just like any other cognitive process. He claims that each action is constituted of a 'presentation', a judgment, and an emotion. Indeed, the nature of *affect* by persons acting publicly explains the nature of actions therein. This, he explains, is the same either in the public sphere or in the virtual sphere, as both involve human rhetoric and discourse. The virtual sphere, however, is interesting as Hansen (2003) argues that *affect* in the virtual sphere creates an interactive force that 'produces immediate embodied *affect* that links the human to the digital in a feedback loop' (p. 205). This implies that *affect* generated by a single virtual citizen may generate *affect* in others too.

The expression of sentiment in the virtual sphere falls under the freedom of expression of which John Stuart Mill is a strong proponent. Mill defends radical free speech which allows persons to be at liberty to engage in affective discourses in the

public sphere. He argues for ‘absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects, practical or speculative, scientific, moral, or theological’ (Mill, 1978, p.15). He declares:

the peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is that it is robbing the human race, posterity as well as the existing generation, those who descend from the opinion still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth, if wrong they lose what is almost as great a benefit. The clearer perception and livelier impression of truth are produced by its collision with error’ (Mill, 1859, Chapter ii).

This means that sentiments should not be limited because they help us realize morally praise-worthy opinions through public dialogue. Mill goes on to argue that dialogue should not be censored because there is no true censor (Mill, 1859). Only the harm principle is the rightful limit to sentiment.

In light of the foregoing, it is clear that discourses that take place on the internet and beyond generate and are generated by *affect*, and no matter the context, discourse is a right and is part and parcel of the liberty of self-expression. Thus, the question whether discourse in the virtual sphere should include the disclosure of or debate about paternity test results becomes critical. Revealing paternity test results in the virtual sphere, whether right or wrong is open to heated debate because the matter is considered unsuitable for the Habermasian public sphere. On the one hand, some argue that the relationship between material responsibility and the burdens generated by the creation of a needy child justifies a man to establish that he is responsible for the creation of a child before accepting this financial responsibility. On the other, some would argue that, once a man has become a social father, he is not justified to initiate paternity testing. In other words, paternity tests in the Habermasian public sphere are outrageous: there is no justification for performing infidelity testing on an innocent child. The debate on whether a man should go for a paternity test remains inconclusive in the extant literature.

In the wake of Mill’s freedom of expression, Habermas emphasised rational deliberation, equal participation, and the formation of the public will within a

detached public sphere. Mediated by digital technologies, online communication offers broader freedom of participation and expression. However, Habermas would be concerned about the blurring of public and private realms as it challenges the safety of some individuals. This would be the case because Habermas' framework of ethics of communication critically assesses the ethical dimensions of communication in the virtual sphere, striving for equal access, transparency, and responsible practices to foster an inclusive and informed digital public sphere that upholds moral values. As such, this study sought to contribute to existing literature concerning *affect* in relation to discourses in the virtual sphere, particularly in terms of how they raise ethical issues, courtesy of the John Doe case.

1.5 Virtual Sphere Constituted by Malawians Located in Malawi and the Diaspora

In Malawi, the virtual sphere is critical as it urges both those with little understanding of ethics, and those with a higher level of ethics discernment, to participate in discourse that analyses ideas and feelings. It is a space where people execute the rhetorical work of transforming felt affective energy into politics and action in the direction of a better life (Mill, 1859, pp.18-19). However, the monopolization of *affect* over pure reason in virtual deliberations has led to the question of respect for human dignity. Due to very low levels of censorship on digital deliberations, a considerable segment of the Malawian virtual sphere could engage in child cyberbullying, either knowingly or unknowingly.

The study respects the pertinence of *affect* in the context of the Malawian virtual sphere as it helps “indicate how people feel their closeness to, or distance from, a certain trending story which has the capability for action” (Papacharissi, 2014, p.127). However, the power of *affect* in the virtual sphere is a reason for concern when it comes to stories that present a conflict between virtual citizens' liberty to express their opinions and a person's freedom from harm. Since persons cannot be limited in terms of how they ought to feel in the virtual space, measures should be put in place to eliminate intentional and unintentional harm caused by affective reactions. The insights of eliminating harm in the paper are drawn from a connection between Virtual Sphere Theory, *Affect Theory*, Mill's liberty and harm principle, and the ethics of communication. This is aimed at limiting toleration of Malawian virtual citizens

who, driven by *affect*, appear to harm a child in the exercise of their liberties of self-expression through internet-based discourses (deliberation and debate).

1.6 Theoretical Framework

The study employed the Virtual Sphere Theory, *Affect Theory*, Mill's freedom of expression and harm principle, and theory of ethics of communication to examine the John Doe case. The Virtual Sphere Theory helps to provide an understanding of the history and perspectives of the virtual sphere and its communication classifications. The *Affect Theory* helps to explain the nature of discourse in the virtual sphere, bearing in mind that it is an arena of heavy emotional communication and discourse (Masumi, 1995). Ethics of communication helps present how such communication in the affective virtual sphere ought to be conducted and regulated (Laksana & Nurhaliza, 2023). These theories shall acknowledge the liberty of freedom of expression under which virtual communication is warranted. The study neither claims nor assumes that the authors of the theories propagated in analysing John Doe's case study speak in a compatible and united voice, but realizes that the theories can be engaged to formulate a traceable pattern that appears to carry the reader from a point of appreciating the nature of affective discourse in social media to their very impact on concerned persons.

Mill's Liberalism upholds and promotes tolerance. Persons should be tolerant of other individuals' demands as to how they desire to live and act, provided that what we are asked to be tolerant of does not harm anyone else, including the demanding individual. This is known as the Harm Principle. Mill argues that 'the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm from others' (Mill, 1859, pp. 21-22). Mill's Liberalism promotes individual liberties. This implies that the toleration of affective actions in the virtual sphere is something to be desired through, and because of, free speech. This study examines the extent to which the hallmark of liberty in the virtual sphere, which is affective expression, is a problem in instances of disclosure of paternity test results. It grapples with the moral dilemma moralists have between total promotion of affective public deliberations and debate in the virtual sphere and limiting it when freedom of speech and protection from harm are in conflict.

1.7 Problem Statement

The study grapples with the problem of harm in affective discourse on a circulating digital text in the virtual sphere involving Malawian participants located in Malawi and the diaspora. With *affect* driving most discourses in the virtual sphere, mainly Facebook, the context of the Malawian virtual sphere freedom of speech is called upon to ensure virtual dynamics materialize to connected action for better public life. When virtual discourses involve the disclosure, discussion, and debate of paternity test results, affective discourses are faced with the moral conundrum or failure of protecting the child in question from harm, versus the exercise of free speech. When the latter is enacted by virtual or digital citizens, respect for human dignity due to harm is destabilised. The moral fabric of society is shaken to the core because of a domino effect or copycat behaviour which may follow.

1.8 Study Objectives

1.8.1 Main Objective

The study mainly endeavoured to conduct an ethical investigation into the virtual sphere involving Malawians in Malawi and in the diaspora participating in a digital discourse on John Doe's disclosed paternity test results on Facebook, with the view of articulating ethics of communication in the virtual sphere.

1.8.2 Specific objectives

The study specifically examined affective discourses that prioritize emotions over rational responses in the John Doe case. Such discourse poses ethical challenges related to harm, duty, and privacy. The aim was to unravel the detrimental impact of this discourse on ethics of communication, particularly with regards to the disclosure and discussion of paternity test results in the virtual sphere. The study hence grapples with the following specific objectives:

- i. Analyse the nature of discourses in the virtual sphere of Malawi?
- ii. Identify the shortcomings of virtual discourses in relation to the disclosure of paternity test results in Malawi?
- iii. Assess the ethical implications of disclosing and debating paternity test results in the Malawian virtual sphere?

1.9 Research Questions

The study was directed by a primary research question along with a set of sub-questions.

1.9.1 Key research question

Is it ethically justifiable to disclose and debate the paternity test results of a child in the virtual sphere in the Malawian socio-cultural context?

1.9.2 Sub-research questions

- i. What is the nature of discourses in the virtual sphere of Malawi?
- ii. What are the ethical propositions of virtual discourses as regards liberty?
- iii. What are the shortcomings of virtual discourses in relation to the disclosure of paternity test results in Malawi?
- iv. What are the ethical implications of disclosing and debating paternity test results in the Malawian virtual sphere?

1.10 Methodology

The study employed a qualitative methodological approach to explore the nature of the virtual sphere as well as discourses that surround the John Doe paternity test digital text circulation. The observation provides this study with data for deliberation and analysis which, in turn, help the study yield the specific empirically observable affective discourse worth weighing against the suggested theories.

1.11 Research Design

This qualitative research employed the case study research design. Data was collected from Facebook on John Doe's page. The data is, particularly, the post of Doe's disclosure of his paternity test results dated 29 November 2022 and the discourses that follow. The post had, so far, generated more than 5000 comments. The study purposively compiled 1000 affective comments and reactions as a sample from the entire data set. The 1000 comments represented 20 per cent of the total comments, hence a statistically sizeable sample to provide a good analysis as well as conclusions that could be effectively cross-checked with the central argument of the dissertation.

The purposively selected sample was categorized into thematic groups of *affect* to realize the various emotional reactions towards John Doe's Facebook post.

This design helped to provide a detailed study into the nature of harm in virtual discourses from Malawian digital citizens upon John Doe's disclosure of his paternity test results. The purposive sampling of affective discourse was validated by the notion that affective dialogues have the capacity to generate harm in the virtual sphere where private matters are not handled as strictly private as would be the case in legacy media. This enabled the study to examine the affective data sample under a Millian ethical examination on liberty.

1.12 Outline of Study

Chapter 2 of this dissertation looks at relevant literature sources that look into the nature of the virtual sphere, *affect* and the ethics of communication. The chapter provides a detailed review of Papacharissi's literature on the nature and evolution of the virtual sphere. The chapter also provides further detail on the phenomenon of *affect* and how it manifests in the virtual sphere. It further looks at the uniqueness of the Malawian virtual context in comparison with virtual spheres participated by non-Malawians from developed countries. The same chapter explains Mill's position on harm through linguistic interchanges as indicated in his theory of liberty in order to understand how affective discourses in the virtual sphere become a problem in instances of paternity test results disclosure and ensuing debate. The chapter finally indicates how John Stuart Mill brings context to how the nature of linguistic interchange in the virtual sphere may and may not be labelled as harm.

Chapter 3 presents the research method and methodology and discusses details of the John Doe case in the virtual sphere. The chapter further explores deliberately sampled affective discourses that surrounded the John Doe paternity test Facebook post. It lays bare the nature of the 1000 purposively selected affective discursive responses sampled from the comments section under the John Doe post of paternity test results. The nature of the case is examined in terms of differences from the Habermasian discourse.

Chapter 4 presents data that was collected online. The primary objective is to explore emotional themes by utilising Thematic Content Analysis. This approach involves

identifying recurring patterns and experiences to gain a more profound understanding of participants' attitudes and perceptions. The findings are integrated with relevant literature to contribute significantly to knowledge in the field of study at hand. Limitations encountered during the presentation of data are also acknowledged accordingly in the chapter. This chapter is crucial in that it provides valuable insight into affective experiences within the research context and their implications for future studies and applications.

Chapter 5 analyses data presented in chapter four. The analysis focusses on the emotional themes that were identified through the Thematic Content Analysis. The objective is to interpret and contextualize the patterns and experiences of emotions among the participants. A critical examination of the findings and their relationship to existing literature and theoretical frameworks generates an in-depth understanding of the emotional landscape within the research's context. Additionally, the chapter explores the practical implications of the results and offers valuable insights for potential real-world applications and future research directions. To ensure a balanced perspective of the research's outcomes, study limitations are transparently considered. The research aims to foster further exploration of affective experiences in its chosen domain, thereby enhancing the overall significance and relevance of the study.

Chapter 6 concludes the study by summarily discussing key points, key issues raised and the central argument of the dissertation, ethical framework, and suggests areas for further research.

1.13 Chapter Summary

The study conducts an ethical investigation into the Malawian virtual sphere, exploring affective discourses surrounding the disclosure of paternity test results on Facebook. The study employs a qualitative methodological approach, utilising a case study design and purposive sampling to analyse 1000 affective comments. Four theoretical frameworks, namely Virtual Sphere Theory, *Affect Theory*, Mill's harm principle, and ethics of communication contribute to the examination of ethics in virtual public deliberations. The central research question probes the ethical justifiability of disclosing and debating paternity test results in the Malawian virtual sphere, taking into account issues of harm, duty, and privacy. The study seeks to shed

light regarding complexities of affective discourse and to contribute to the understanding of ethics of communication in this context.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Chapter Introduction

The internet has undoubtedly transformed how individuals communicate. This has also presented ethical dilemmas concerning online harm. The present literature review comprehensively presents the dissertation's theoretical framework by delving into the intersection of the virtual arena, *affect*, ethics of communication, and harm. It underscores the pressing need for an improved comprehension of the ethics of communication in online spaces to foster a more equitable and sensitive virtual sphere. The theoretical framework provides ethical backing to the dissertation's aim of advancing a more responsible and inclusive online environment, particularly with regard to revealing paternity test outcomes among Malawian participants.

2.2 Theory of Affect in the Virtual Sphere

The concept of *affect* in the public sphere centres on the influence of emotions, feelings, and moods on online interactions and public discussions (Serrano-Puche, 2018). It explores how these emotional factors can shape opinions, attitudes, and behaviours in the digital realm, especially in the context of social media platforms and public forums (Laksana & Nurhaliza, 2023). It is pertinent to understand that the nature of the virtual sphere as a space of *affect* is courtesy of the evolution of the public sphere over centuries from a physical space to a virtual sphere.

2.2.1 The evolution of the public sphere: from coffee houses to social media

The virtual sphere is a location for public discussions that has emerged in the Internet Age. It represents a shift from Jürgen Habermas' public sphere to a digital one. In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962), Habermas discusses the theory of communicative action, where he describes the development of the public sphere as a sociological occurrence that transpired in the salons and coffee shops of

18th century Europe. Prior to the weakening of monarchical powers that ultimately resulted in the French Revolution, public affairs were predominantly decided at the king's court. As a tugging and pulling developed among the monarchs, church, and developing bourgeoisie businessmen, the bourgeoisie won rights and protections for their newly acquired property, which in turn developed into arguments about free speech and press that guaranteed space for public opinion (Calhoun, 2010).

The public sphere's rise occurred alongside the emergence of liberal philosophy by the likes of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Immanuel Kant (Ivison, 2010). According to Habermas (1962), the public sphere was a space exclusive to the bourgeoisie since it excluded the poor and uneducated. It only made sense to participate in the sphere if one had the financial means to contribute or partake in a meaningful way. That notwithstanding, throughout the early development of capitalism and classical liberalism, the public sphere and the quality of debate that took place were notably egalitarian, lively, and rational (Sawyer & Guidry, 2003). The growth of long-distance trading required news about those new places of trade and a need for public relations between people who had a stake in that growth of trade. The relationships were horizontal; between people of roughly the same social status rather than vertical, between noblemen and commoners, or a king and his subjects. This entails that, initially, the public sphere was a thriving and positive space for logical discourse on issues of public interest (Habermas, 1962).

Habermas (1962) believes that in the 1830s, a shift started to take place, guided by the Industrial Revolution and the rise of consumerism. Taking a Hegelian dialectical view, he believes that liberalism sought to save itself from its internal contradictions by making a welfare state for those that capitalism was not looking after (Pippin, 1991, p. 329). While the increasing size of corporations and the development of the mass media meant a demarcation between the public and private spheres became blurred, the pure and authentic nature of the salons and coffee houses, and the independence of local newspapers got dissolved (Habermas, 1962).

Habermas (1962) argues that initially, journals, moral weeklies, and the writings of the men of letters ran unprofitably as hobbyhorses of the moneyed aristocracy. These later became swallowed and unfeasible due to the growing power of the publishing

industry. In 1789, the year of the revolution in France, every politically-minded man of any worth started a club or journal. However, the emergence of an authoritarian state on the heel of the revolution stifled the explosions of free speech in these clubs and journals. The rise of advertising led to editors selecting content based on profitability. Publishing companies had to cater for the demands of the stock market. Habermas argues that this shift had a negative impact on the public sphere's ability to foster rational discussions (Guidry & Sawyer, 2003) as politics and morality were now influenced by economic interests and the flow of capital. This instability of classical liberalism necessitated government intervention to establish a welfare state (Habermas, 1962).

Habermas thinks this recreated those vertical relationships seen under feudalism. The public became dictated by public relations as governments and business advertising turned to psychology to influence the public with emotive ad campaigns. Advertising Psychology has more to do with the relationship between the Lord and serf, and it should, under a democratic thinking society (Calhoun, 2010). The public sphere became less horizontal, and less of a rational critical environment for incubating ideas and became an area more heavily influenced by hierarchical systems. A good example of this is the way mass media operates in a single vertical direction. There is no interaction between readers and editors and the medium is simply consumed. However, Habermas still expresses hope for the public sphere and highlights it as a fundamental mechanism of democracy. It is a sphere that is the base of democratic debate, equality, and rationality (Habermas, 1962). These vertical relationships and the mass media run counter to the view that an active democracy should mean that all citizens can engage in society and express their views. The question that arises in the internet age is on whether we have turned that corner.

To an extent, the internet has arguably changed all this. One of the biggest questions that contemporary Habermasians have asked of the internet and politics is whether this new space acts as an effective public sphere or divides and acts as an echo chamber, stifling rational debate. Habermas himself is doubtful of the internet's potential for restoring some balance to the public sphere for these same reasons. He also argues that political discussions and debates online still coalesce around the press and central narratives that are dictated by traditional offline media (Habermas, 1962).

Barber (1995) similarly argues that features such as interaction speed, user solitariness and emphasis on images polarize and limit rational discussions online. Newman (2003) observes that the internet has fewer 'central nodes, fewer gatekeepers, and fewer agenda setters' than traditional public discourse and so makes the playing field more accessible and more horizontal. Online content is less polled into advertising than traditional mediums. While the internet has its limitations for expanding and re-energising the public sphere, its real effect has only just started to emerge.

Warner (2002) thinks that the Habermasian thinking of a public sphere would indeed find problems in negotiating with various vertical power structures in the internet age. He argues that looking at the public as a single united entity is hazardous to any theory of media and communication. He argues that the public is not one entity since people do not always imagine the same idea at all times. The public is no longer one physical space where people convene to deliberate nor is it a fixed universal physical entity of convergence.

According to Warner (2002), marginalised groups require a counter-public space to voice their opinions and interests. It is a crucial alternative to the mainstream public. The circulating text often generates conflict and overlaps with other spheres of discussion and debate. This text is passed on from one person to another, acquiring new meanings and interpretations, resulting in the formation of yet another public space outside the main public. Warner further contends that counter-publics are created to oppose exclusionary practices that occur within the dominant public sphere, and they include religious minorities, the LGBTQ+ community, and feminists. The role of media is vital in shaping discourse and public opinion, including counter-publics. The media can construct and disseminate dominant narratives that impact social outcomes, but it can also exclude certain voices and perspectives. It is crucial for the media not to assume that the audience will interpret the text in the same way. Community radio stations and the internet play a significant role in creating counter-publics, as they provide alternative media for marginalized groups to express their views and challenge the dominant narratives (Warner, 2002).

According to Warner, instrumental in the formation and dynamics of the public and counter-public is the circulation of text. He uses the term 'text' in a broad sense to

refer to any form of communication that can be circulated and interpreted within a public sphere. He argues that a text can be any artefact that can be read, interpreted, or otherwise engaged with, including written documents, speeches, images, and even material objects. Warner's definition of text is intentionally broad, as he argues that any form of communication is text, and these include books and newspapers, as well as newer forms of media, such as social media and online forums. The meaning of a text is neither fixed nor static: it is rather shaped by its context and the interpretive practices of its readers and viewers. This means the text can be interpreted in a variety of ways depending on the social, cultural, and political context in which it is read (Warner, 2002).

Fraser (1990) thinks that 'in democratic societies, one needs not be limited to a public and a counter-public' (p.220). She extends the scope to a multiplicity of publics by arguing that the traditional conceptions of the public sphere as a realm of free and open debate among equal citizens are inadequate for understanding the complexities of contemporary democratic societies. Fraser is of the view that the public sphere is structured by multiple axes of power including gender, race, and class. She rather suggests that certain groups have historically been excluded from the public sphere and that even when they are included, their perspective may be marginalised or silenced. Furthermore, Fraser is critical of the idea that the public sphere is a neutral space, arguing that it is always already embedded within larger social, economic, and political structures. She points out what is termed as the politics of difference which she claims do acknowledge and address the multiple axes of power that shape the public sphere. This politics of difference, she argues, involves expanding the scope of public debate to include previously marginalized voices and recognising how different social groups experience the public sphere differently.

Fraser sees the public sphere as a realm that is a contested and as a contingent space shaped by multiple axes of power. This implies that the public space is neither a single unified nor a dual space as suggested by Habermas (1964) and Warner (2002) respectively. It is made up of multiple spheres that are often organized around particular identities. These spheres can be both physical and virtual, and they can be shaped by a range of factors, including media technologies, institutional structures and cultural norms. Under such circumstances, there is need to work towards creating

more inclusive and democratic spaces for public debate and discussion. Media technologies are, hence, an elemental tool in the operations and dynamics of the spaces (Fraser, 1990, pp. 220-241).

According to Fraser, the media and the internet play an important role in shaping public discourse and debate as media technologies have a significant impact on how individuals and groups interact with each other and participate in public life. She suggests that traditional mass media such as television and newspapers have often played a goalkeeping function, determining which voices and perspectives are included in public debates. This has historically led to the exclusion of marginalized groups, such as women, racial minorities, and the working class, from the public sphere. The rise of the internet has the potential to challenge this goalkeeping function, allowing for a greater diversity of voices and perspectives to be heard.

Fraser further argues that the internet and social media can also be used to reinforce existing power relations and inequalities. For example, she points out that the algorithms used by social media platforms can create 'echo chambers' that limit exposure to diverse viewpoints and reinforce existing biases. Additionally, she notes that the rise of online harassment and hate speech can discourage some marginalized groups from participating in public debate. The marginalisation of minority groups is what John Stuart Mill (1859) terms the tyranny of the majority, which this chapter shall provide further details on. Important to Fraser's concern and that of Mill are the dynamics of freedom of speech and the right to be heard by all in the public sphere.

Indra de Lanerolle (2020) has explored the concept of fluid publics and how hashtags play a significant role in the creation and flow of publics in digital spaces. De Lanerolle argues that the traditional notions of the public, which are based on fixed identity categories and clear boundaries, no longer apply in digital spaces. Instead, digital publics are fluid and constantly evolving. Individuals participate in multiple publics simultaneously and move in and out of them based on their interests and identities. In the wake of many publics, individuals identify with multiple publics as well.

Hashtags are a crucial tool for the creation and circulation of these fluid publics. De Lanerolle notes that hashtags allow individuals to connect with others who share similar interests or concerns, regardless of their geographical location or offline identities. By using hashtags, individuals can create and participate in publics that are based on shared values or issues, rather than fixed identity categories. She argues that hashtags can also be used to challenge dominant narratives and power structures. Hashtags can create counter-publics, which allow marginalized groups to speak out and assert their voices in digital spaces. Through the use of hashtags, individuals can also mobilise around social and political issues, and raise awareness about topics that are often overlooked by mainstream media (de Lanerolle, 2020). This far, we see an evolution of the public sphere from a single physical entity into a fluid multiplicity of publics and counter-publics in the virtual space, courtesy of the internet. Granted, individuals can shift from one public to another. However, the issue is the extent of availability of individual liberty to engage in discourse in the fluid virtual space.

2.3 Of publics, millian individual liberty of speech and the Harm Principle

In the wake of multiple and fluid publics in the physical and virtual spheres, and the ability of the media to marginalise minority publics, the media provides potential room for bigger publics to be tyrannical of smaller publics, taking liberty to the sword. As monarchies declined, John Stuart Mill (1859) noticed that some had thought the struggle for liberty had been won. If the public controls government, why worry about limiting the government's power? Surely, people do not need to be protected from themselves.

Mill is however sceptical about about trusting the state to maintain the liberty of individuals. He hence declares that an individual's liberty is not that safe in a democratic state (Rodriguez-Toubes, 2001). Mill maintains that even a democratic government can destroy liberty. Majorities can tyrannise minorities (Eisenberg & Spinner-Havel, 2005). Since the French Revolution, it was perceived that such phrases as 'self-government' and 'the power of the people over themselves', do not express the true state of the case. Those in positions of power are not always the same as those under their authority. Self-governance is not an individualistic concept, but rather a collective effort. In practice, the desires of the people are often aligned with the views of the most active and populous group. Yet, this majority may consist of

those who have convinced others that they represent the majority, and consequently, they may suppress minority groups. Thus, it is essential to implement safeguards against the misuse of power, such as the oppression of select segments of society. Hence, in theory, Mill presents the nature of true freedom of individuals living in a public.

In *On Liberty*, Mill argues that governments, no matter the system enacted, are also a threat to individual liberty. This assertion is put into perspective by Thomas Jefferson (1785) who argues that the nature of progress of things is for liberty to yield and government to gain ground. Apart from the government, there is also a special force within the public sphere that destroys individual liberties. Every society develops beliefs, opinions, and attitudes which are accepted by the majority as the bold method of perception. Individuals who show signs of deviating from this established norm of living by the majority are pressured to conform and adopt that which the majority advocate for.

Mill articulates:

When society is itself the tyrant – society collectively over the separate individuals who compose it – its means of terrorizing are not restricted to the acts which may be done by the hands of its political functionaries. Society can and does execute its mandate, and if it issues wrong mandates instead of right or any mandate at all in things with which it ought not to meddle, it practises a social tyranny more formidable than many kinds of political oppression, since, though not usually upheld by such extreme penalties, it leaves fewer means of escape, penetrating much more deeply into the details of life, and enslaving the soul itself. (Mill, 1859, p.21).

The government (through the media), and the majority public, are both instruments of limiting the freedoms of smaller publics. While the government may use force, the majority uses criticism and ostracism to limit individual liberties.

Mill believes that individual liberty should not be unlimited. He argues that society has the right to exert control over individuals in certain situations. To distinguish

between these, Mill distinguishes between two types of actions: self-regarding actions and other-regarding actions. Self-regarding actions refer to actions that only affect the individual performing them. Mill believes that society has no authority to interfere in these actions. He states that individuals are not answerable to society for their actions as long as they do not affect anyone else's interests but their own.

Other regarding actions refer to actions which directly affect other individuals. Individuals who act out actions that harm others should be punished and, if need be, incarcerated. Society's only legitimate power over an individual lies in this statement. Mill writes:

the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of an action of any member is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized society, against his will, is to prevent harm in others (Mill, 1859, p.13).

While Mill proposes that a society has a right to exercise power over an individual if his actions harm others, he holds that the freedom to hold and express ideas of one's choosing should be completely unconstrained:

If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind (Mill, 1959, p. 15).

He argues that the free exchange of ideas, without fear of punishment, is essential for personal growth and societal well-being.

Mill puts forth two reasons why society benefits when ideas are not suppressed. Firstly, he proposes that in suppressing an idea, society runs a risk of suppressing the truth. Society should allow for the expression of even the most unorthodox of ideas because these ideas may end up containing more truths than those held by the majority. He argues:

The opinion, which it is attempted to suppress by authority may be true. Those who desire to suppress it, of course, deny its truth: but they are not infallible. Yet it is evident in itself, as any amount of

argument can make it, that ages are no more infallible than individuals - every age has held many opinions that subsequent ages have deemed not only false but absurd, and it is as certain that many, once general, are rejected by the present (Mill, 1859, p. 19).

Mill maintains that even when an individual or society at large thinks an idea they are certain of is true, it is not beneficial to suppress all opposing ideas for even in the event that one has arrived at the truth, contradictory ideas must exist. A true idea maintains its strength and vigour only as long as it is constantly attacked by conflicting ideas. Once a true idea is accepted as absolute, it loses that which makes it truly valuable.

Liberty of thought and liberty of action combine to give cultivation of one's individuality, and this is essential for social progress. When individuals break free from the tyranny exercised by both governments and the majority and live unconventional lives, they undergo experiments of living', and these experiments drive individual and social development.

As it is useful that while mankind is imperfect there should be different opinions, so it is that there should be different experiments of living...and that the worth of different modes of life should be proved practically when anyone thinks fit to try them. It is desirable, in short, that in things which do not primarily concern others individuality should assert itself. Where not the person's character but the traditions or customs of other people are the rule of conduct, there is wanting one of the principal ingredients of human happiness, and quite the chief ingredient of individual and social progress' (Mill, 1859, p. 61).

Mill fears the tyranny of the majority would gain supreme control over individuals. Because of this danger, he calls for individuals to practise nonconformity solely for the sake of breaking the chains of custom and displaying to people that different ways of living and thinking are possible, for it is only in a society where nonconformity and unconventionality are prevalent that social progress is achievable.

Individual liberty is often undervalued, with some believing that personal freedom should be forfeited in favor of the common good. This misguided view assumes that liberty is solely for the benefit of the individual, to the detriment of society. However, as Mill argues, the greater good can only be achieved by allowing individuals to act and think freely, provided that their actions do not infringe upon the rights of others. It is important to realise that in modern society where many threats to liberty exist, people should understand this all-important truth. Our attitude towards such matters should depend on whether we view civilisation as fixed or advancing. In an advancing society, any restriction on liberty reduces the number of things tried, which consequently reduces the rate of progress. In such a society, freedom of action is granted to the individual, not because it gives them greater satisfaction, but because if allowed to go their own way, they will on average serve the rest better than under any orders.

The Harm Principle is an essential element in Mill's theorising. It means that the state and an individual's neighbors should allow them to live their lives without interference, as long as they do not harm anyone in the process. In other words, your freedom to do what you want ends where someone else's safety begins. You are free to explore alternative lifestyles as long as you do not hurt anyone. It is good to be paternalistic towards children, as they need protection, but this does not extend to adults who are of sound mind. Instead of telling people how to live their lives, it is better to let them make their own mistakes. This individual freedom is the foundation of creativity and the key to lasting happiness for ordinary people.

Free speech should be protected until it incites violence. The context, timing, and location of the speech are just as important as the content itself. Mill argued that offensive free speech should not be restricted because it is not inherently harmful. He believed that dissent was necessary to prevent us from becoming complacent in our beliefs. In order to think critically and make progress, it is important to consider a range of perspectives, as censorship stifles innovation. (Mill, 1859). However, critics of Mill are uncomfortable with Mill's liberalism as it is perceived as going too far. Individual lives within a public are more heavily enmeshed with others than Mill realizes. Some speech does cause deep psychological harm that it can be so damaging.

Habermas (1987) thinks that so long as the public is involved, this liberty of communicative expression needs to be put in check by ethical yardsticks.

2.4 Jurgen Habermas' Theory of Ethics of Communication: A Remedy to Mill's Defects of Libertarianism

Habermas (1987) purports the idea that 'moral judgements are based on communicative processes that involve mutual understanding, rather than on subjective personal preferences or objective rules' (p.95). He argues that human beings are fundamentally social creatures who rely on language and communication to form and maintain social relationships. He thus develops the theory of communicative action, which emphasises the importance of mutual understanding and rational discourse in social interaction. For Habermas (1987), Communication is not just a means of conveying information or expressing individual opinions but also a way of reaching mutual understanding and establishing shared norms and values in a public sphere (pp.96, 107-108). Communicative action is an action that is oriented towards understanding and achieving mutual agreement among participants (Gasper, 1999). For communicative action to be successful, it must meet conditions of sincerity (the speaker must believe what they are saying), truthfulness (the speaker must believe the claim is true and be able to provide evidence to support it), and normative rightness (the speaker's claim must be consistent with shared norms and values).

Communication can take the form of either strategic communication or communicative action. Strategic communication aims to achieve the goals of the speaker while communicative action is oriented towards mutual understanding and agreement among participants. Habermas (1987) argues that communicative action is essential for the establishment of normative principles that are acceptable to all members of society (pp. 122, 127, 171). However, modern society has been disrupted due to changes in communicative action as it is torn apart by two spheres of reality: the system and the lifeworld. The system refers to various institutional structures and processes that govern modern societies, such as the market economy, the political system, and bureaucratic organizations. The lifeworld, on the other hand, refers to the informal and normative dimensions of social reality, such as cultural traditions, shared values, and everyday practices (Gasper, 1999)

According to Habermas, the system and the lifeworld are both important, but they operate on different logics and norms. The system is characterised by efficiency, instrumental rationality, and a focus on strategies for achieving specific goals or outcomes while the lifeworld is characterised by action, mutual understanding, and the expression of normative expectations and cultural traditions (Gasper, 1999). Modern societies, Habermas argues, have been increasingly dominated by the logic of the system to the detriment of the lifeworld. This is the case because the system tends to colonize the lifeworld, turning it into a means of achieving economic or political goals. As a result, social interactions become increasingly commodified and rationalised, and the normative dimensions of social reality are marginalised. For a more democratic social order, Habermas argues that the lifeworld should resist the system to help maintain the moral and normative dimensions of social reality (Habermas, 1987, pp 172-173).

For a better lifeworld, Habermas suggests that a relationship should exist between the social sciences and moral theory. He suggests that the social sciences provide a necessary foundation for moral theory by providing empirical evidence about social phenomena and human behaviour. Social scientific research can help to identify patterns and regularities in social life, and can provide a basis for developing empirical theories of social action and interaction (Gasper, 1999). These theories can, in turn, inform and shape moral theory by providing a basis for understanding the social and cultural context in which moral norms and values are embedded.

Habermas (1987), however, points out that empirical research from the social sciences cannot tell humans what is morally right or wrong. He, therefore, argues that moral theory must go beyond the empirical realm and incorporate normative and evaluative dimensions of reality. The moral theory should be informed by the assumption that there exist universal moral principles that are valued by all humans, regardless of their cultural or historical context. These principles should be grounded in the concept of communicative rationality and should be open to critical scrutiny and evaluation. Habermas suggests that moral reasoning should be based on a process of communicative argumentation, in which individuals engage in a dialogue to reach mutual understanding and agreement about moral norms and principles. In this

process, participants are expected to provide reasons for their moral claims and be open to critical scrutiny and evaluation of their arguments (Habermas, 1987, p.195).

The communicative action theory has important implications in a democracy. Habermas points out that democratic societies must be grounded in rational communication and deliberation to make just and legitimate decisions. Democratic societies only work when all individuals have equal access to communication and the ability to participate in decision-making processes. This requires a public sphere where citizens engage in open, rational discussions and debates about issues that affect them. In the sphere, individuals can exchange ideas and perspectives, deliberate together, and come to a mutual understanding and consensus.

2.5 On the nature of the Digital Tongue: *Affect Theory* in the Virtual Sphere

The digital tongue is a metaphor used in this study to refer to voices and discourses in the virtual sphere. The prominence of rationality in Habermas, in the exchange of ideas, perspectives, deliberation, and the consensus is challenged by *affect*, especially in the virtual sphere. Papacharissi (2002) argues that ‘the dawn of digital media technologies has affected the public sphere’ (p.9). Papacharissi further contends that the virtual sphere is characterised by a new set of technological, social and cultural affordances that are transforming the way people communicate with each other. These affordances include things such as interactivity, user-generated content, and the ability to connect with people from around the world in real-time. She suggests that these affordances are enabling new forms of public discourse and civic engagement, as well as new modes of cultural expression and social identity formation. Papacharissi further argues that the virtual sphere is not a place of isolated individuals engaging in self-expression: it is rather a vibrant and dynamic public sphere that is shaping the way we understand and interact with the world around us.

The virtual sphere is a new public sphere different from that of Habermas. This sphere is different in terms of traditional forms of media and communication, and obscuring boundaries between public and private. Just like in Habermas’ public sphere, people engage in debate and discourse on the internet. However, these people are provided with alternatives to the legacy of established media, which she claims is dominated by

elites and may not provide sufficient room for every individual to contribute. It therefore becomes a place for individuals to effortlessly produce and distribute content, in the long run leading to the formation of connections with other people of similar interests (Papacharissi, 2002, pp 10-12).

Papacharissi, however, points out that there are challenges and risks associated with the virtual sphere, such as issues related to privacy, security, and the potential for online echo chambers and filter bubbles. Echo chambers and filter bubbles are the phenomena which occur in online spaces, including social media platforms, where people are exposed to information and opinions that reinforce their existing beliefs and values and may limit their exposure to alternative perspectives. With an echo chamber, individuals or groups are exposed only to their pre-existing views and beliefs. People are surrounded by like-minded people and are rarely exposed to opposing views. A filter bubble, in contrast, is an algorithm filtering information by search engines or social media platforms based on the user's previous search and click behaviour such that results are a personalized presentation of the user's pre-existing beliefs and interests. Papacharissi suggests that these challenges require us to be vigilant and proactive in developing new strategies for digital literacy and responsible online citizenship (Papacharissi, 2010a).

Papacharissi (2010) contends that the internet has affected the privacy of individuals as much as it has affected democracy. She argues that privacy has undergone evolution from ancient times to the present day and that the complexities of privacy have been shaped by culture, politics and technology. Papacharissi further observes that the law and other values such as security, freedom of speech and public interest have been significant in the protection of privacy. Privacy, Papacharissi argues, is thus a negotiated value and not absolute. In this regard, technology has the potential to enhance or threaten privacy due to its fluid nature (Papacharissi, 2010b).

The potential of the technologies has also been to enable new forms of communication and democratic participation. The internet has provided new opportunities for political participation, activism, and mobilization. However, it has eroded privacy, and trust in institutions and has affected participation. The spread of misinformation, polarization and algorithm biases has affected people's interactions.

This has impacted individual autonomy and agency as they affect how people perceive things. She therefore calls upon individuals, governments and technology to protect individual privacy. The collection and use of private data and encryption are better tools to handle this (Papacharissi, 2010 b).

Social networking sites have transformed how people construct and express their identities, participate in communication, and engage in culture online. She argues that there has been a facilitation of the emergence of a new type of self-identity that is networked rather than individualistic or community-based. This self is constantly in a state of flux, shaped by the interactions and connections one has with others online. The online communities that are formed are characterised by fluidity as they may dissolve rapidly based on changing circumstances. The culture that has emerged on social media networks is also unique in that it has new forms of expression and interaction that are not possible in other contexts (Papacharissi, 2010 a).

The internet has transformed how people communicate and engage with the public, by enabling new forms of affective communication. There has been a creation of what Papacharissi terms ‘affective publics’ (Papacharissi, 2014). She defines affective publics as networked publics in which collective sentiment is integral to the production, circulation, and reception of content. In other words, affective publics are online communities that are bound together by shared emotional experiences and sentiments (Papacharissi, 2012). These communities can be both positive and negative and can have significant political implications (Papacharissi, 2014).

One key argument presented by Papacharissi (2012) is that affective communication has become a powerful tool for political mobilization as emotions are often more effective than rational arguments in motivating people to take action. However, Papacharissi also acknowledges the potential dangers of affective communication, such as the spread of misinformation and the manipulation of emotions for other personal purposes and agendas. She argues that *affect* does affect rationality and decision-making. She further contends that emotions play a crucial role in shaping our beliefs and as such, affective reasoning can lead to biases and errors in judgement if emotional responses are not properly regulated or if they are based on inaccurate or incomplete information (Papacharissi, 2015 a.).

As people are networked in affective publics, the self becomes heavily impacted in terms of how issues of life are perceived. Everyday issues of life and death and even everyday family work, pregnancy, and early childhood activities affect and get affected by the virtual network (Papacharissi, 2017). This echoes earlier notions that public and private lives are hardly distinct in the virtual sphere. Papacharissi argues that text circulation and discourse in the virtual sphere is rapid because of emotions, and because of the affective responses it generates from the discourse. People with common interests are people with common *affect*. This poses a great challenge to traditional media and journalists. She argues further that these affective stories tend to be shorter and more personal than traditional news stories, and that they prioritize emotions and emotional responses over objective facts and information. (Papacharissi, 2014).

Papacharissi delves into the intricate dynamics of affect in the digital domain. She aims to uncover the profound impact that emotions have on individuals' public engagement and discourse. She emphasizes the significance of affective atonement, which centers on people's emotional proximity or distance from current events, news stories, and civic mobilization via social media. Emotional displays in the virtual world can influence and define the discursive landscape of the platform, serving as a reflection of society's culture, mood, and sentiments. She defines affective publics as networked formations that are mobilized and connected or disconnected through expressions of sentiment (Papacharissi, 2010, Papacharissi, 2014, Papacharissi, 2015b).

Garman (2004) argues that affective reactions are not limited to the virtual sphere as they present themselves in all public spheres, be it virtual or physical. She contends that bodily experiences of anger and pain can be powerful tools for the dynamics of society and politics. She continues to argue that the media tries to flatten and depoliticize these emotions of anger and pain, which motivate change. The media does this by reducing them to sensationalist images that sell newspapers or garner clicks. Garnering clicks is the practice of creating online content, such as articles, videos, or social media posts, which are designed to attract a large number of clicks or views. This is often done by using sensational or attention-grabbing headlines, provocative images or videos, or controversial topics that are likely to generate strong

reactions from readers or viewers. Such representations obscure the political roots of these emotions and fail to engage with the complex ways in which they are embodied. Garman (2004) also posits that anger and pain in individuals, no matter the source, can challenge dominant narratives and mobilise support for marginalized communities. The individuals that have embodied pain and anger form a distinct public marginalised from the dominant public holding the mainstream narrative. This distinct public sphere is focused on the embodied experiences of the marginalised sphere and its struggle for social change. This distinct sphere makes its voice heard through a demand for a seat at the table in the broader public sphere landscape. The question that needs to be answered borders on the extent to which communication is affected by the collision of *affect* and reason in the virtual sphere.

2.6 When feelings and reason collide: Affect Theory, reason and communication

According to Aristotle's 'Rhetoric', *affect* or emotions are an important part of persuasive communication. Aristotle argues that emotions can be a powerful tool for persuasion but they need to be used strategically. He alludes to *Pathos*, which is an appeal to emotions in certain types of arguments, especially those related to issues of morality and justice. He further argues that humans have different emotions in different situations. Both audience and the communicator must understand the emotions of the listeners. He contends that emotions can be used improperly, leading to manipulation or even undermining the communicator's credibility. This is because emotions can affect rationality and lead to poor decision-making. Aristotle then argues that emotions can cloud judgement and lead to decisions based on how one feels rather than what is rational or logical. The point he makes is that it takes skill and reason from a communicator to use emotions in a proper manner (*Rhetoric*).

In *Passions of the Soul*, Descartes (1649) does not concentrate so much on *affect* as did Aristotle. He believes that emotions or passions, are innate bodily responses to external stimuli. He argues that passions were not within our control, but rather, they were automatic and involuntary responses that arose from our bodily sensations and perceptions. These passions could either be good or bad, depending on whether they contribute to our overall well-being or are hindered by them. Humans must thus cultivate good passions over bad passions for well-being. Descartes believes this to be important as emotions could be both a source of pleasure and a cause of suffering.

Wundt (1998) recognises the importance of *affect* or emotions in human experience. He believes that emotions are a fundamental part of our psychological makeup and play a critical role in shaping our thoughts, perceptions and behaviours. He points out that *affect* is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon that involves both psychological and physiological processes. This points to the notion that *affect* is characterised by several different components including physiological arousal, subjective feeling states, and expressive behaviours. The context of culture is important in shaping experiences of *affect*. Emotions are hence not universal but rather shaped by social and cultural factors, and these cultures may have different emotional norms and expressions.

Kant (1788) argues that *affect* does have a role in human experience as well as moral decision-making. He argues that, even though *affect* plays a limited role in moral decision-making since our moral obligations are purely determined by reason alone, emotions, could potentially cloud our judgement and lead us to make decisions that are not in line with our moral duties. Kant points out that *affect* is very important in aesthetic experience. This is because emotional responses to art and beauty are a crucial part of our experience of this phenomenon. The emotions we feel when we encounter beauty or art are a response to the harmony and unity that we perceive in these objects rather than a response to any particular content or message. The emotional responses to beauty are universal across all cultural contexts as the experience is elicited by human nature and connects everyone.

Bergson (1888) argues that *affect* or emotions are not simply a reaction to external stimuli, but rather a creative and dynamic force that shapes our perception and understanding of the world. He argues that *affect* is a form of intuition that allows us to connect with the vital and dynamic aspects of reality that are often overlooked by more rational modes of thought. He argues that affective experience allows for deeper access to deep-level reality that is not accessible through rational analysis or conceptual thought. Furthermore, he emphasises the duration of *affect*, arguing that affective experiences are not discrete moments in time but rather an extended and continuous processes that unfolds over time. Emotional experiences are shaped by the unique duration of our lives and are a product of the interplay between our personal histories and the wider cultural and social contexts in which we live.

Zajonc (1980) presents what he calls the theory of mere exposure, arguing that mere repeated exposure to a stimulus increases an individual's liking or preference for that stimulus. This is the case even if the individual's liking or preference for that stimulus happens when the individual is consciously aware of the exposure or not. He argues that this effect is due to affective processes, rather than cognitive processes and that it had important implications for social behaviour and attitude. He, particularly, emphasises the importance of *affect* in social perception and cognition, arguing that affective reactions to stimuli could occur rapidly and automatically without conscious awareness or deliberate thought. These affective reactions, in turn, could shape subsequent cognitive processing and behaviour. The affective reactions are not passive reactions to stimuli, but rather active and dynamic processes that influence our perception and interpretation of the world. He propounds the view that affective reactions could help a person prioritise and organise information and that they could play an important role in guiding human behaviour and decision-making.

Lazarus (1982) argues that emotions are the results of a cognitive appraisal process where an individual evaluates the meaning of an event or situation. This cognitive process involves assessing whether it poses a threat or opportunity and whether they have the resources to cope with it. Based on this evaluation, the individual experiences an emotional response that causes them to take action. He argues that emotions are not just a reaction to changes in the environment but they also play an important role in initiating and facilitating change. He believes that emotions can motivate individuals to take action to improve their situation and that they can help individuals to cope with difficult situations by providing them with the energy and focus needed to make changes.

Lerner and Keltner (2000) argue that, when it comes to understanding the role of emotions in judgement, emotions should not be understood simply as positive or negative, but should rather be differentiated based on their functional properties such as whether they are associated with approach or avoidance tendencies, whether they are specific or general, and whether they are high or low in arousal. For example, happiness is associated with an approach tendency which, in turn, causes an individual to make decisions based on feelings rather than analytical reasoning. Sadness, in contrast, has a withdrawal tendency and makes individuals make

decisions based on information rather than feelings. Anger leads to systematic processing and individuals are likely to make decisions that involve retaliation or punishment. Anxiety may lead individuals to engage in avoidance behaviours. Overall, emotions are differentiated based on their functional properties.

At this point, one realises that whether *affect* happens before, during or after cognition, it does have a significant effect on reason and the final enactment of human speech or action. The importance of *affect* in determining the final outlook of the reason is presented by Damasio (1994) who argues that *affect* is necessary for enabling more rational modes of cognition. Fieldman-Barret in a *TedTalk* presentation (2020) points out that *affect* is not a mere friendly ally of reason. She claims, ‘*affect* is the best guess of the state of one’s own body, it is the driver, which no one can overcome with rationality’’. She points out that even though *affect* is created by the brain (by one’s prior experiences in life), it impacts reasoning or judgment. This judgement comes with feelings either of pleasantness or unpleasantness because humans feel what their brains believe to be the reality of things.

In interpersonal interactions and communication, *affect* is a critical feature. Emotions are depicted as vibrant processes that facilitate an individual's interaction with frequently changing social interactions. In other words, emotions are considered to be processes of establishing, maintaining, or disrupting the relationship between the individual and the environment on matters of significance to the individual (Papacharissi, 2015, p.160). Abaracci and Kunkale (2015) argue that *affect* is a broad construct that includes both emotions and mood. Emotion is short-lived while mood is long-lasting. The authors argue that both are a part of *affect* and they play a huge role in attitude formation: they can influence the way people process and respond to information. Their findings reveal that *affect* has a strong influence when the object of attitude is abstract, such as a political ideology, rather than concrete as exemplified by a specific object. They also found that *affect* plays a stronger role in shaping attitudes towards personal preferences or opinions over objective truths. *Affect* is more likely to influence the formation of a person’s attitudes towards an object of perception, which points to the notion that *affect* is active during a decision-making process.

Hanslick claims that “for an *affect* to be produced, there must be an object of attention [within the public sphere]” (Kivy, 2002, p.26). This implies that *affect* has a huge link with ethics in that it relates to how one acts about others. Concerning the relationship between *affect* and ethics, Baruch Spinoza expresses *affect* as impacting “the modifications of the body whereby the active power of the said body is increased or diminished, aided or constrained, and also the ideas of such modification” (Spinoza, 1955, p.130). This indicates that right or wrong actions are not purely a result of reason. All human acts, including reasoning, produce and are produced by *affect*. However, one wonders, whether we should engage *affect* in the discourse of the ethics of human actions if *affect* seems to be beyond human control.

According to Brentano (1973), emotions have intentionality, meaning that they are directed towards objects or situations in the external world. He suggests that emotions include a positive or negative evaluation of these objects or situations based on the perceived value or disvalue. Moreover, he differentiates emotions from other mental phenomena such as perception and thought. Emotions are characterised by a unique felt quality or tone which he calls ‘feeling-tone’. This feeling-tone is a necessary component of emotional experience, and could not be reduced to any other aspect of mental-life.

Hansen (2003) argues that *affect* is important for one’s social life and plays a crucial role in shaping our interactions with others. He argues that affective experiences, such as emotions and moods, are not simply individual experiences, but are shaped by broader social and cultural contexts. *Affect*, he argues, is closely tied to power and social inequality. He suggests that certain affective experiences, like fear or anger, may be more prevalent among marginalised or oppressed groups while other affective experiences, such as contentment and satisfaction, may be more prevalent among those with greater social and economic power. The media, he argues, shapes *affect*. Various social and political issues can have a profound impact on how we experience and respond to these issues affectively, influencing whether we feel sympathy or hostility.

2.7 Navigating the emotional terrain: the imperative of the ethics of communication in affective discourse

The establishment of *affect* as affecting logic and communication itself raises ethical questions in and beyond the virtual sphere. This warrants seeking the ethics of communication throughout the discourses of any kind of sphere of communication in as much as the media is concerned. Franz Kruger (2004) and Herman Wasserman (2012) argue that the media has become an engine of three modes of ethics: black, white, and grey. Black ethics refers to the unethical practices that are deliberately carried out to further personal interests. It involves misinformation or misleading information. White ethics, in contrast, is the ethical practices of the media that are correct. These include fairness, accuracy, impartiality, transparency and accountability. It involves reporting the truth, presenting balanced and unbiased information, protecting sources and respecting the privacy of individuals. Grey ethics refers to practices that fall between black and white ethics. It involves situations which may be characterised by conflict of interest or in which a journalist may have tough ethical decisions to make.

The above-mentioned categories of ethics, according to Kruger and as later extended by Wasserman, characterise social media so much that they pose a challenge to journalism. Wasserman argues that social media has affected journalism ethics both positively and negatively. On the positive side, social media provides new opportunities for journalists to access information, communicate with sources, and engage with audiences. It allows for a greater diversity of voices and perspectives in the media landscape. However, social media has also created challenges due to an increase in sensationalism, hate speech, misinformation and fake news as well as the spread of hate content. Every member of social media is a journalist in a way. Against this backdrop, Wasserman argues for self-regulation as a tool for promoting ethical journalism in the virtual sphere. This self-regulation is possible through a proper code of ethics, providing remedies for complaints from the public (Kruger, 2004: Wasserman, 2012).

Anthea Garman and Pascal Mwale (2005) recommend the importance of context when it comes to ethical decisions. They believe that ethical principles cannot be applied in a one size fits all manner. Ethical decisions, they argue, must consider the

unique social, political, and cultural context. They advocate for a nuanced understanding of the ethical implications of communication. Garman and Mwale argue that a nuanced approach to the ethics of communication on social media requires consideration of three key factors: context, intent, and power. These factors interact with each other to shape the ethical implications of communication on social media. With intent, a communicator's objective and impact should be considered since some satire may have a purpose for harm. Contextually, they argue that communicators should consider the culture of their audience. Communication ethics should also consider power dynamics.

Arnett (2003) provides a broader outlook of the ethics of communication, arguing ethical communication needs to be contextualised. He contends that ethical communication is essential for building a just and equitable society and that it is the responsibility of all individuals to engage in ethical communication. Arnett argues for five principles of ethical communication, namely; honesty, respect, fairness, responsibility and compassion. He explains that these principles should guide all communication and that they are essential for building relationships of trust and understanding. Thus, communication ethics need to be considered in various contexts. Arnett (2003) further argues that honesty, respect, and responsibility in interpersonal communication guide navigating ethical challenges in relationships. In the workplace, issues of power dynamics, corporate social responsibility and whistleblowing offer guidance for ethical communication. He postulates that communicators in politics, media and public relations have the responsibility to ensure that their communication is honest, respectful and responsible. In digital contexts such as social media, online journalism and digital advertising, the same principles of communication ethics must apply due to ethical issues of cyberbullying, privacy and online deception (Arnett, 2003).

Lack of communication ethics would lead to intimidation, harassment or online threats to individuals, which may result in further consequences such as anxiety, harassment, depression and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). That mentioned, another issue that rises is whether social media companies can prevent online harassment incidents beyond the current state of affairs, which is an area that would need further research. Negligence of the ethics of communication results in what

Wardie and Derakhshan (2020) describe as the creation of a post-truth environment. This is a scenario in which people are more concerned about their emotions and beliefs over facts.

2.8 The gap: affective publics and paternity test results in the virtual sphere

Cherng et al. (2006) define Paternity testing as a ‘scientifically proven procedure for establishing biological links between individuals, usually between a potential father and child’ (p.76). Onoja (2011) postulates that ‘paternity testing, otherwise known as parentage testing is not a new concept but has evolved over time with advancing technology’, arguing that, ‘it has made paternity fraud more and more difficult’ (p.406). Paternity fraud is ‘a charge made when a woman falsely accuses a man of fathering her child to get child support or some financial benefits’ (Henry, 2006, p.25). Lee (2019) guarantees that comparing their genetic profiles, paternity testing can accurately define the possibility of a biological relationship such that the results can have significant impacts on legal rights, family connections, and personal identity. Far-reaching research has been conducted on the scientific cogency and reliability of paternity DNA testing systems. Scholars such as Smith et al. (2019) and Johnson et al. (2020) have conducted thorough reviews of PCR-based and STR analysis techniques, highlighting the necessity of precise genetic analysis for accurate paternity determinations. The mentioned scholars argue that the most precise scientific techniques are the way forward for paternity testing since a lot is at stake if there are inaccuracies. That which is at stake, is indeed a paternity attributed wrongly, which further places social responsibilities on a man who would otherwise not place himself in a position to shoulder such social responsibilities over the child had the results been accurate. The link between paternity test results and social responsibilities eventually waterdown binding legal implications.

It is worth noting that Green et al. (2017) and Martinez and Garcia (2022) have conducted in-depth studies to explore how paternity test results can significantly impact family law proceedings, including the establishment of parental rights, child support obligations, and inheritance claims. They all arrive at a conclusion that paternity test results are not merely scientific results. Rather, they bind the biological father to various legally binding obligations, which are basically social

responsibilities over the child, which lean heavily on the need for financial support. At the centre of these legal obligations placed on the father is arguably the ethics that point towards the dignity of the child. In a discussion of ethics in relation to paternity test results, the very processes involved in paternity testing and the results equally need a touch of ethics.

Jones and Williams (2018) and Brown et al. (2021) have produced notable works on the ethical dimensions of paternity testing, examining issues such as informed consent, privacy protection, and the potential psychological impacts on individuals and families. All scholars argue that regardless of the motivations there may be, caution ought to be upheld for the dignity of the concerned parties. However, Rodrigues and Perez (2023) and Nguyen et al. (2021) argue that the motivations for paternity testing are not fully understood, and they highlight the importance of continued research in the area of motivation. This study, as a peripheral aim, seeks to highlight the motivation behind paternity testing and disclosure of the results, in the context of the Malawian society.

Paternity testing is accessible in Malawi, evidenced by studies conducted by Mbewe et al. (2018) and Chirwa and Mwale (2020), which provide valuable insights into the accessibility of genetic testing services and the cultural perceptions of genetic testing within Malawian communities. The findings suggest that paternity testing need to be conducted with caution, due to the sensitive nature of the cultures in Malawi. The findings point towards the need for culturally sensitive approaches to genetic healthcare delivery. The findings also argue that, Malawi being a developing nation, there is need for prioritizing the development of comprehensive genetic healthcare resources for all Malawians. Indeed, a comprehensive genetic healthcare is essential for accuracy in results. While the literature in Malawi regarding paternity test results points towards the need for culturally sensitive caution on such matters, the available information is scanty regarding how paternity test results ought to be handled in relation to disclosure in the virtual sphere (social media) and *affect*.

This far, this discussion has shown that discourses on the internet and beyond do generate and are generated by *affect*. Furthermore, no matter the context, discourse is a right which is part and parcel of the liberty of self-expression. In a sphere where the

line of demarcation between that which is private and that which is public is not clear, ethics of communication need to be pronounced. The important question is whether discourse in the virtual sphere should involve the disclosure or debate of the results of paternity tests. Paternity tests, whether right or wrong, are open to debate and controversy that is not easy to resolve. Being a private matter in nature, it would not be easy to deliberate over it with sober minds in the Habermasian public space.

It is understandable that some individuals believe it's important for a man to confirm his responsibility for a child's creation before accepting financial obligations. This viewpoint stems from the belief that material responsibility carries a weight that is created by the presence of a needy child. On the other hand, others would counter-argue that, once a man has become a social father, there is no justification for initiating paternity testing, except in situations where a child demands such a test, but then what would the child's motive be? Otherwise, paternity tests in the Habermasian public sphere are outrageous and hence ethically unjustified. There is no justification for conducting infidelity testing on a blameless child. The debate on whether a man should go for a paternity test or not remains inconclusive in the relevant literature, particularly in the Malawian context. The question is whether, bearing in mind the affective nature of discourses in the virtual sphere, paternity test results should be disclosed and discussed there.

This study, therefore, expands frontiers of literature about *affect* concerning discourses in the virtual sphere in terms of how they raise ethical issues courtesy of the John Doe case. A man's suspicion of misattributed paternity is an *affect*-action, which upon disclosure on social media courtesy of freedom of expression, would inevitably trigger a hot affective debate with a child at the centre stage, which is viewed as ethically very harmful to the child. The dissertation seeks to look into such dilemma.

2.9 Chapter summary

This chapter has delved into the *Affect Theory*, an area of study that explores the intricate relationship between emotions, reason, communication, and ethics. The chapter has probed the historical perspectives of the topic, from the days of Aristotle

to contemporary scholars, examining how *affect* influences decision-making, persuasion, and human experience. The chapter emphasised the expansive use of emotions in communication to avoid irrationality and manipulation, while also highlighting ethical considerations. It has stressed the importance of remaining vigilant particularly in the digital realm where social media can lead to misinformation and hate speech.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter tackles the John Doe matter by delving into the research design and methodology used to investigate this phenomenon. A sample of 1000 affective comments out of 5000 on John Doe's paternity test results on Facebook was purposely selected for analysis. The deductive research approach that was used drew on the concepts of freedom of speech and ethical communication in the virtual public sphere to explore the delicate balance between the expression of freedom and potential harm to John Doe's child. The chapter provides an overview of the research design, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations, as well as the scope and limitations of the study. The research design's strengths and limitations are critically evaluated to align them with the research objectives.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is a complete blueprint that guides the whole research process, outlining how investigators intend to address their study questions or hypotheses (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). It has several critical components, including a clear expression of research questions or hypotheses to be investigated. Researchers choose whether to conduct a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods study and develop a sample strategy for participant selection or recruitment (Creswell, 2014). The design also specifies the data collection methods and tools, such as surveys, interviews, or experiments, as well as the variables and measurements that will be used (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Furthermore, it includes a plan for data analysis, whether statistical or qualitative, as well as an estimate of the study's timeline, outlining major milestones and activities (Bryman, 2016). The research design also addresses ethical

aspects such as participant permission, confidentiality, and risk assessment (Neuman, 2000).

The case study design involves a comprehensive investigation of a specific phenomenon within its real-life context, using multiple sources to understand complex social phenomena (Yin, 2018). This approach enables the exploration of specific cases, capturing their richness while considering various perspectives (Stake, 1995). For this study, a case study design is fitting. It allows for in-depth exploration of raw data in local contexts of affect in the virtual sphere, and the ethical challenges it presents.

Research methodology is the systematic approach and framework used by researchers to conduct a study or investigate a research question (Creswell, 2014, p.3). According to Bryman (2016), research methodology encompasses the overall design, and procedures employed to collect, analyse, and interpret data in a study. A well-designed research methodology ensures that the research is conducted rigorously, ethically, and with a high level of validity and reliability. Creswell (2014) argues that research methodologies are broadly categorized into two main types: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research is based on the 'collection and analysis of numerical data, while qualitative research involves the collection and analysis of non-numerical data, such as text, images, or observations' (Cresswell, 2014, pp.21, 75, and 175).

Several key considerations were taken into account in considering the right research methodology for this study. The 'first key consideration is the research question and objective, which guide the selection of an appropriate research methodology' (Bryman, 2016, p.26). If the research question requires numerical data for statistical analysis, a quantitative research methodology may be more suitable. In contrast, if the research question aims to explore subjective experiences or social phenomena, a qualitative research methodology may be more appropriate.

The type of data to be collected and analysed was another important consideration in selecting a research methodology for this study. Quantitative research is best suited for data that can be measured numerically, whereas qualitative research is more appropriate for data that is subjective, contextual, or difficult to quantify. The overall

design of the study, such as cross-sectional, experimental, or observational, can influence the choice of research methodology. The sample size and accessibility of the target population also impact the choice of research methodology. Quantitative research often requires a larger sample size to ensure statistical power, whereas qualitative research may involve a smaller sample size with a focus on an in-depth exploration of a specific phenomenon (Bryman, 2016).

3.2.1 The type of research methodology used

This study employed the qualitative methodology. Qualitative research will allow for an in-depth exploration of the complexities and nuances of *affect* expressed in affective comments related to paternity test results. Through qualitative research such as Thematic Content Analysis of online affective comments, the study captured the rich and varied *affect*, attitudes, and perspectives of individuals engaged in discourse related to John Doe's paternity test results Facebook post. Qualitative research enabled this study to uncover the underlying meanings and motivations behind the affective comments, shedding light on the intricacies of human conduct in the virtual sphere.

This study grapples with a social phenomenon manifesting in the virtual sphere. Qualitative research is well-suited to examining such social phenomena as ethical yardsticks are put to the test against potential harm in the context of paternity test results' affective comments. A qualitative research approach provided this study with an opportunity to understand the ethical concerns, values, and beliefs of individuals who participate in these online discourses. The study was able to explore how feelings expressed in affective comments can impact individuals' emotions, well-being, and relationships, and how the *affect* relates to broader ethical considerations. Qualitative research can also uncover further potential harms such as stigmatization, discrimination, psychological distress, stress, anxieties, nightmares and even trauma, which may arise from affective comments on paternity test results, and provide insights into the ethical implications of these harms.

Creswell (2014) notes that qualitative research is particularly appropriate for studying social phenomena (p.175). The affective comments on paternity test results, shaped by cultural, social, and contextual factors, become more visible with qualitative research.

It allowed this dissertation to explore the social and cultural influences on the formation and expression of *affect* in the virtual sphere related to paternity test results. The dissertation was able to investigate how societal norms, cultural expectations, and social dynamics shape the feelings expressed in affective comments related to John Doe's paternity test results disclosure and how these factors contribute to the ethical problems of harm that may arise in these online discussions.

Lastly, the qualitative research in this study provides a voice to individuals who participate in discussions related to paternity test results. The study managed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the diverse range of *affect* expressed in the virtual sphere. This can lead to more nuanced and contextualised findings that can inform ethical guidelines related to paternity testing and online discussions of paternity test results.

3.2.2 Research Approach

Bryman (2016) describes research approach as a mechanism that helps researchers to define and make use of research methodologies effectively. There exist two research approaches: deductive and inductive. The deductive research approach involves starting with a general theory and testing it through specific observations or data collection. It follows a top-down approach, where the researcher begins with a theoretical framework and then collects data to confirm or refute their hypotheses (p.37). Deductive research was appropriate for this project as the study already had an established theoretical framework that guided its research process.

Inductive research approach, in contrast, involves drawing conclusions from specific observations or data and then developing a theory or hypothesis based on those observations. It follows a bottom-up approach where the researcher begins with specific data and looks for patterns or themes that emerge from the data to develop theories or generalizations. Inductive research is appropriate when the researcher aims to explore new or understudied phenomena and seeks to generate theories or explanations from the data collected (Bryman, 2016). It is worth noting that deductive and inductive approaches are not mutually exclusive and they can be used in what is called 'abductive reasoning', where the researcher uses both observations and theory to develop and test hypotheses (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, pp.167-186).

This dissertation adopted a deductive research approach as it had an established theoretical framework that encompasses models of communication and harm as well as ideas that explain the virtual sphere phenomenon. This approach enabled the dissertation to systematically build on existing theories, contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the field of communication ethics.

3.2.2.1 Justification for a Deductive Research Approach

This study has a firm foundation of theories related to communication, harm, *affect*, and the virtual sphere, which provides a framework for its research questions. Creswell (2014) argues that a deductive research approach is appropriate when the researcher has an established theoretical framework that guides the research process. By employing a deductive approach, the study built on the aforementioned theories for proper data collection and analysis. This ensured that this research is grounded in theory and that the findings are supported by empirical evidence, enhancing the rigour and validity of the research (Creswell, 2014).

By using a deductive approach, the dissertation makes a meaningful contribution to the field of communication and the virtual sphere phenomenon. Through empirical analysis of various affective comments on John Doe's Facebook post, the dissertation provides evidence that either confirms or challenges existing theories, further advancing the understanding of communication in the virtual sphere. This research approach also provided insights into underlying mechanisms and processes that govern communication in virtual environments, contributing to the development of practical applications and strategies for effective communication in virtual contexts.

3.2.3 Research Site

Research site refers to the location or environment where data is collected or where research is conducted (Leavy, 2017, p. 92). The choice of Facebook as the research site for studying the negative paternity test results posted by John Doe in Malawi was based on its widespread usage and socio-cultural significance in the country. Facebook is one of the most popular social media platforms in Malawi with a large user base that spans different demographic groups in both urban and rural areas. About 81.2 per cent of Internet users in Malawi are active social media users, indicating a high level of social media use in the country (DataReportal, 2021). Actually, according to Kemp (2021),

Facebook is the most widely used social media platform in sub-Saharan Africa with a penetration rate of 16 per cent in 2021. The penetration rate is the total number of Facebook users against the total population of the region. It is a platform that allows users to easily share and comment on posts, making it an ideal site for exploring how negative paternity test results are communicated and discussed in the local context. Additionally, Facebook has become an important space for public discourse in Malawi where people discuss a wide range of social, cultural, and political issues, including personal matters like paternity testing. Therefore, the choice of Facebook as a research site provided insights into the social dynamics of discussing negative paternity test results in a digital environment that is relevant to the local population as well as Malawians in the diaspora who seek to remain in the loop on online-based trends particular to Malawi.

Furthermore, the choice of John Doe's post, specifically, was based on the timeliness and relevance of the content. By selecting the latest post on the topic of online paternity test disclosure in Malawi, the study was able to capture the most current *affect* and reactions from the local community. This was particularly valuable for understanding the immediate impact and affective responses associated with negative paternity test results. For example, it was able to reveal the initial shock, disbelief, disgust, annoyance, rage, disappointment, anger, or sadness that users may express in response to John Doe's posts. By examining the comments, likes, shares, and other interactions with the post, the study uncovered the immediate affective reactions of the online community to this sensitive topic, which may not be fully captured in older posts or data from other sources.

Moreover, affective reactions expressed by users in response to negative paternity test results provide insights into the social, cultural, and psychological dynamics at play in the context of paternity testing in Malawi. For instance, the affectivity and sentimentality of the responses indicated the sensitivity and significance of the topic within the local culture where issues of paternity, family, and identity may carry deep emotional weight. The responses also had potential to reveal the social norms, values, and expectations related to paternity testing in Malawi and how they are reflected in the online interactions on Facebook. By analysing the feeling and tone of the affective comments, as well as the language, symbols, and discursive strategies used by users,

the dissertation had potential to gain a nuanced understanding of the *affect* landscape surrounding negative paternity test results in Malawi, and how it is mediated through social media.

3.2.4 Sample Size

Sample size in research refers to the number of individuals or units that are included in a study to represent a larger population (Nisbet & Ross, 1980). The sample size is a critical aspect of research as it can affect the statistical reliability and validity of the findings of a study. In this study, 1000 comments were purposively chosen. These are words and images dispatched as comments in response and reaction to John Doe's post under discussion. The purposive sampling approach was used to deliberately select comments that are affective in nature. The first justification for using such sample size and purposive sampling in the study was that the research focus and main research question justified the sample size and purposive sampling approach. By intentionally selecting affective comments, the study aimed to explore the affective responses and *affect* expressed by users in the context of negative paternity test results. This purposive sampling approach allowed for targeted analysis of the specific phenomenon under investigation, providing insights into the affective reactions and feelings expressed by users in this context.

Secondly, by selecting 1000 comments, representing 20 per cent of the total comments, the study managed to collect and analyse more efficiently within available time. Furthermore, the purposive sampling approach of deliberately choosing affective comments provided unique insights into the phenomenon of *affect* under interest. By intentionally selecting comments that were affectively charged, the study was able to capture a range of feelings, opinions, and attitudes that could not be evident in a random sample. This approach allowed for a focused analysis of the specific aspect of interest and may provide valuable findings that were directly relevant to the research question and objectives.

3.2.5 Target Population

The target population in research refers to the specific group of individuals or entities to which the research findings will be generalised. It is a group of individuals or entities that share common characteristics and are of interest to the researcher (Locke

etal., 2008). Affective comments, such as those expressing anger, frustration, or other intense emotions can have a significant impact on the individuals involved as well as the broader online 'community'. These comments can potentially incite further harmful behaviour, perpetuate negative feelings, and contribute to a toxic online environment, leading to cyberattacks. By targeting affective comments, the research aimed to investigate the potential harms associated with harmful speech and contribute to the understanding of the impact of affective language in online discourse.

The study sought to shed light on the ethical considerations associated with harmful speech on social media. Studying affective comments in the context of harmful speech raised important ethical concerns as it involved analysing potentially harmful or hurtful language. By examining these comments, the study highlighted the ethical implications of harmful speech, including the potential consequences for individuals involved and the broader implications for online communication. This justified the choice to target affective comments in the study as it aimed to contribute to the ethical discourse on harmful speech in online environments.

Furthermore, by targeting affective comments, the study provided insights into the potential impact of harmful speech on individuals and communities. Affective comments can have a profound effect on the well-being, mental health, and social dynamics of those involved. By examining affective comments, the study contributes to the understanding of the harms associated with harmful speech and raises awareness on the need for responsible online communication. This justification aligns with the broader societal concern of promoting safe and respectful online interactions and addressing the negative impact of harmful speech on social media platforms.

3.2.6 Data Collection Technique

Data collection techniques refer to the methods used to collect data from participants or sources for analysis. These techniques can vary depending on the nature of the research question, the type of data being collected, and the resources available (Lazar et'al, 2017). In this study, non-participant observation was used as the data collection technique, where Facebook comments were collected and analysed. The non-participant data collection technique is a data collection method in which the

researcher does not directly interact with the participants but, instead, the data is collected from sources such as public records (Flick, 2018). Non-participant observation allows for naturalistic data collection. By collecting Facebook comments as they naturally occurred on the platform without direct involvement or interference from the researcher, the data collected was likely to be more authentic and representative of real-world interactions. This naturalistic approach provided a more accurate reflection of how users engaged in online discussions and expressed their opinions or *affect* through the comments on the Facebook posts. This justification was aligned with the aim of the study in order to understand and analyse the actual behaviours and responses of users in the context of the negative paternity test results without influencing their behaviour through researcher participation.

Non-participant observation avoids potential biases introduced by participant involvement. By not actively participating in the online discussion or engaging with the users who post comments, the researcher minimized the risk of influencing the content or tone of the comments. Participant involvement, in contrast, could introduce biases, such as the Hawthorne effect or demand characteristics, where participants may alter their behaviour or responses due to the awareness of being observed (Franke & Wacłaski, 1996). Non-participant observation mitigated such biases and allowed for a more unbiased and authentic collection of Facebook comments as data for analysis.

Furthermore, Facebook comments are publicly available on the platform, and collecting them as data does not require direct contact or interaction with participants. Non-participant observation provides practical advantages in terms of data collection efficiency and accessibility. This made data collection relatively easier and more efficient compared to other data collection techniques that may involve participant recruitment, consent procedures, and data collection in real-time or controlled settings. Non-participant observation allowed for the collection of a large volume of data from a wide range of users and comments, providing a rich and diverse dataset for analysis.

3.2.7 Sampling Method

Sampling method is the technique used to select a representative group of individuals or entities from a larger population for study. Probability sampling involves selecting a sample using random processes while non-probability sampling method relies on deterministic techniques (Gilner et'al, 2017). This dissertation engages a non-probability sampling method. However, there are various kinds of non-probability sampling types, including: quota sampling, purposive sampling, snowball sampling and convenience sampling. Non-probability purposive sampling involves selecting a sample based on specific characteristics or criteria that are relevant to the research question. This type is used when the focus is on a specific group (Kumar, 2014: De Vaus, 2014: Bryman, 2016). This was the preferred purposive sampling method for this study because the study concentrated on specific comments that carried an *affect*. Purposive sampling is further categorized into various kinds, namely, expert sampling, criterion sampling, maximum sampling, homogenous sampling and critical case sampling. The dissertation proceeds from the broader purposive sampling into the narrower homogenous sampling. Homogenous sampling involves selecting participants who share certain characteristics or experiences that are relevant to the research question (Teddie & Yu, 2007).

The study uses the non-probability purposive homogenous sampling method. This was because although the purpose was to assemble a sample that was rich in *affect*, the *affect* has to be that which is enacted by Malawians both in Malawi and in the diaspora. This is because Malawians share similar identities in many ways such that the kind of harmful effect in the sample could be well characterised and analysed as criteria for cutting into the sample under study. The non-random or purposive homogenous sampling of this study involved intentionally selecting affective comments by Malawians that aligned with the research question or objectives. This method afforded the study opportunity to focus on affective comments by Malawians. These comments shed light on potentially unethical or harmful speech in the context of the post. By deliberately selecting affective comments from Malawians, the study sought to capture the range of *affect* and feelings expressed in response to the posts, and how the *affect* related to the Malawian identity and values, which was crucial in understanding the impact and implications of the negative paternity test results on the Malawian public.

Furthermore, using the chosen sampling method enabled the study to gain a deeper understanding of the specific phenomena of *affect* within the targeted subset of comments and enhanced the validity and integrity of the study's findings by focusing on comments that are most relevant to the research objectives. While purposive sampling could not provide a representative sample of the overall population, it aligned with the specific focus of the study and provided an opportunity to explore the sentiment and affective responses in the context of negative paternity test results.

3.2.8 Data Analysis

Data Analysis is the process of analysing and interpreting data to identify patterns, relationships, and trends. There are various kinds of Data Analysis such as descriptive analysis, inferential analysis, exploratory analysis, confirmatory analysis, qualitative analysis and mixed method analysis (O'Connor, 2015, p.68). This study employed the qualitative analysis method because it involves analysing non-numerical data such as texts and videos to identify patterns. The study specifically engaged Thematic Content Analysis as a qualitative data analysis system.

With Thematic Content Analysis, the dissertation identified and analysed the themes or patterns, frequency, distribution, and characteristics of specific words and phrases in the comments (Creswell, 2014). The patterns and themes in the qualitative data were systematically categorised based on observational notes by the researcher. Thematic Content Analysis involves familiarization with the data and identifying and labelling features of the data which can be descriptive, interpretive or evaluative. Potential themes are then searched and reviewed. Finally, the themes are labelled in a way that reflects the meaning of the entire group of the categorized data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp.77-101). Thematic Content Analysis was valuable to this dissertation because it uncovers rich, nuanced insights from qualitative data. It allows for the identification and exploration of patterns and themes that may not be immediately apparent, providing a deeper understanding of complex phenomena of affective comments in the virtual sphere (Creswell, 2014). It further enabled the dissertation identify any unethical or harmful speech present in the comments and allowed for an objective examination of the content instead of relying solely on subjective

interpretations. The use of this method in this study enhanced the validity, reliability, and rigour of the findings and contributed to the overall quality of the study.

3.2.9 Observance of Research Ethics

Research ethics refers to the principles and guidelines that guide ethical conduct in research. It involves ensuring that research is conducted in a way that is respectful, fair, and responsible, and that safeguards the welfare and rights of the research subjects. (American Psychological Association, 2021, p.5) In line with the research ethics requirements for this study, the researcher sought consent from John Doe (Pseudonym), the individual who originally posted his negative paternity test results on Facebook. The researcher sought permission to use either his official name or Facebook username in the research. However, John Doe refused to grant consent for the use of any of these in this dissertation. By establishing ethical guidelines and standards, the researcher redacted his name and face, and used a pseudonym, "John Doe," to refer to him. Other names and faces such as John Doe's partner (Madam John Doe) and men implicated in the paternity case that might also lead to unwarranted exposure of the child under discussion have also been redacted for pseudonyms. In addition,, those Facebook users who accepted the use of their comments without exposing their names have been assigned pseudonyms and have their faces obscured. The child's face has also been obscured in all images. The study was approved by the University of Malawi Research Ethics Committee (See appendix for certificate of approval).

3.2.10 Scope and Limits of the Study

As a research concept, study limitations refer to potential weaknesses, shortcomings, or constraints that may affect the quality, scope or generalizability of research findings. These limitations can arise from various factors such as the research design, sample size, data collection method and data analysis techniques (Golofshani, 2003, p.597). This study acknowledged and addressed its limitations to ensure that its findings are interpreted and applied appropriately. One limitation of the study was lack of random sampling. Random sampling, which involves indiscriminately selecting participants from the target population, provides an unbiased representation of the population and enhances the external and statistical validity of the findings (Bryman, 2016). However, the use of non-random purposive sampling, specifically

selecting affective comments from the Facebook post, was ideal for the study's need to address its research questions using qualitative data.

The use of purposive sampling may introduce sampling bias, as it may not accurately represent the entire population of comments on the Facebook post. For instance, by focusing only on affective comments, other types of comments that could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic or different perspectives may be missed. The study, hence, ignored the other publics participating in the discourse to concentrate on affective publics alone. This had potential to limit the external validity of the study's findings as the results could only apply to the selected comments and could potentially inaccurately reflect the broader population of comments. A clear description of the sample and its limitations will be provided to mitigate potential bias and caution will be exercised in interpreting and generalizing the findings beyond the sample.

3.3 Chapter Summary

This study utilised a qualitative research design with Thematic Content Analysis as the data analysis method because it involved examining data to categorise and interpret recurring themes and ideas in order to gain underlying meanings, attitudes and experiences expressed in the data (Facebook comments). Purposive sampling was employed to select affective comments from the Facebook post, and data were collected through non-participant observation by analysing the comments made by Malawians both in Malawi and in the diaspora.

The choice of qualitative research design and data analysis method resonated with the research objectives and the nature of the research question, which sought to explore the affective impact of negative paternity test results as expressed through Facebook affective comments. Narrative and content analyses allowed for an in-depth examination of the language, themes, and meanings conveyed in the comments, providing rich and contextualised data to answer the research question.

The research, however, encountered some limitations in terms of its methodology. The use of purposive sampling created a sampling bias because it did not fully represent the entire population of comments on the Facebook post thereby limiting the

external validity of the findings. Additionally, the lack of random sampling impacted the statistical generalisability of the findings: the results may not be statistically generalizable to the larger population. Regardless of this limitation, the paper's data employed purposive sampling because not all comments were affective in nature. A random sample would lead to the creation of assumptions as well as heavy inconsistencies in the discourse on affect.

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Malawi and steps were taken to protect privacy and confidentiality such as using pseudonyms and obtaining informed consent. Rigorous and systematic data analysis techniques, including categorisation and interpretation, were used to enhance the rigor and trustworthiness of the findings. The study's findings provide valuable insights into the emotional impact of negative paternity test results as expressed in Facebook affective comments and contribute to existing literature concerning online communication, social media, media ethics, Virtual Sphere Theory and public sphere theory in general.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter investigates 1000 comments posted by Malawian internet users on John Doe's Facebook post dated 29 November, 2022. The 1000 comments represent 20 per cent of the total number of comments that the post attracted. The comments are categorized into different groups based on their thematic content, namely: comments of approval, appreciation and commendation, comments of anger and rage, comments of disgust, displeasure and disappointment, comments of embarrassment and shame, comments of scorn and derogatoriness, comments of sympathy, empathy and compassion, comments of sarcasm and allegory, gnostic and agnostic comments, comments of amusement, happiness and joy, comments of awe and wonder, comments of inspiration and motivation, comments of love, affection and endearment, comments of misogyny and male chauvinism, comments of misandry, and comments of disparagement of knowledge. This chapter does not analyse the ethical implications of these comments. That will be done in the next chapter. Rather, it focuses on providing a description of the findings. The categories of comments made by the users reflect either thoughts and feelings, or underlying emotions and attitudes of the relevant users.

4.2 John Doe's Paternity Test Results from his Facebook Post

John Doe offers a subjective justification for his decision to publicise the paternity test results conducted on his child. The results indicate that he is not the biological father to his child. According to John Doe, his relationship with the child's mother, Madam Doe, had ended prior to the conception of the child. However, Madam Doe had asked John Doe to help her conceive a child. John Doe claims that despite his initial resistance, he eventually submitted to Madam Doe's request. He claims that he had sexual intercourse on one occasion with Madam Doe. 12 days later, as John Doe

claims, Madam Doe informed him that she had conceived a child by him. John Doe claims that he initially was sceptical about the paternity. He claims, he had heard rumours that two other men were also being considered as the potential biological fathers of the child. While Madam Doe denied these claims, John Doe decided to conduct a paternity test without the consent of the mother to his child. John Doe's Facebook post explains that he felt compelled to share the DNA test results publicly because the child's mother had already made claims on social media that he was the biological father. John Doe emphasises that he would not have posted the test results had the mother of his child not made her own claims public. He argues that his intention was to clear his name in the public eye.

John Doe

The sad part is dat chibwezi chitatha afta a year anandipeza kumandiuza kut all wat she want is mwana 4m me,,,anapanga ma film ake mpaka ndinagonja,,chongolawa kamodzi n 12 days anandiuza kut ali ndimimba,,,zinamdikaikitsa n i told her kuti nga wandikoloweka i will regret,,2 months afta i recvd a complaint 4m Moreen H kut Mavuto X akusokoneza chibwenzi chawo n 25,,nditamufunsa she said ndimangomudyea ndalama,,i wasnt satsified wt d answer dats why i had to do the DNA,,i wudnt hv posted it here bt d problm is she made sure kut dziko lonse lidziwe za mwanayi ye she knew ntedza umadyedwaso ndi akhwangwala ena,,am not saying mwana ndi wa Mavuto X nawo atha kukapanga ma DNA pakut zanve Kondwani Y yana emweyunso anawatchulaponso a ndipo ma bill ak bhwangwala ai koma enawa awa awa,,ndikaganiza moratsa masanawa ndibwela ndi ma scrnshots.

In addition, to John Doe's justification above for publicly sharing the results of his paternity test, he attached the test results to the above Facebook post. The test results indicated that he was not the biological father, as shown below:

Case Ref: ALPH0016MW
Date: 23 November 2022

AlphaBiolabs™

DNA PROFILING TEST REPORT

Alleged Father: John Doe
Name of Mother: Not Tested
Name of Child: Child's name hidden in this study

ALLEGED FATHER	PATERNITY RESULT
John Doe	Paternity excluded

Statement
A comparison of the DNA profiles of John Doe and Child shown in the technical data table below, does not support the hypothesis that John Doe is the biological father of Child. 8 mismatches were observed between the alleged father and child when no mismatches are expected between a true biological father and child.

All testing has been performed based on information provided by the client. As this is a Peace of Mind test the identity of the sample donors and the chain of custody of the samples cannot be guaranteed; therefore these results are not court admissible.

Conclusion
This result excludes John Doe as the biological father of Child

John Doe's Facebook post attracted approximately 5,000 comments. From this large pool of comments, a sample of 1,000 was selected for analysis based on their emotional and affective nature or potential to trigger emotional responses. It is important to note that these comments were from Malawians in Malawi and the diaspora, providing valuable insight into the attitudes and opinions of individuals from the same cultural context as John Doe. This study understands the participants as Malawians because they were all contacted and asked about their citizenship.

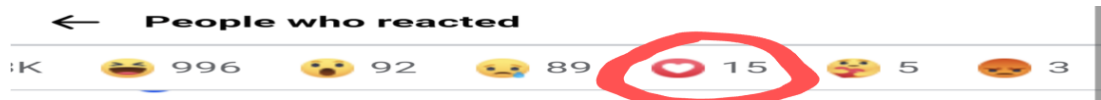
The sample of comments was further divided into distinct categories based on the type of *affect* they conveyed. In the chapter's sections that follow, each category of *affect* is explored in detail, with a focus on the translations and meanings of the comments within each thematic group.

4.3 Comments of Approaval, Appreciation and Commendation

Comments of commendation on social media refer to positive remarks or messages that one leaves on a post or content that another person finds impressive, helpful, or inspiring. They can also refer to messages that recognise and acknowledge the posts that are perceived as efforts or achievements of the person who posted the content. While not an *affect* by itself, a commendation can illicit positive emotions and *affect* the giver, recipient or another reader leading to feelings of happiness, sadness, anger, and excitement. Commendation is a more specific expression of praise or admiration of a perceived achievement. Approval on the other hand is a general expression of agreement, satisfaction or acceptance. It indicates that something meets a certain expectation or standard that is considered good, appropriate or desirable. It can be through words or gestures that point towards affirmation. (Duffet, 2017, p.31). Below are comments and reactions that indicate either commendation and/or approval of John Doe's paternity test results posted on Facebook.



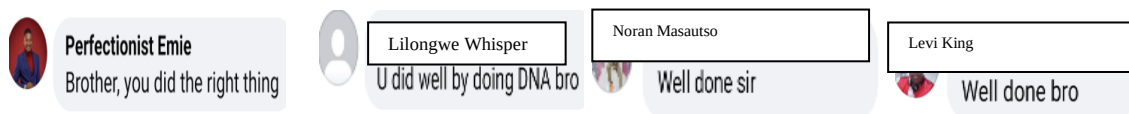
In the screenshot above, 3000 people (3K) reacted with a ‘like’ reaction John Doe’s Facebook post. The reaction typically reflects interest, approval or agreement with the content of the post.



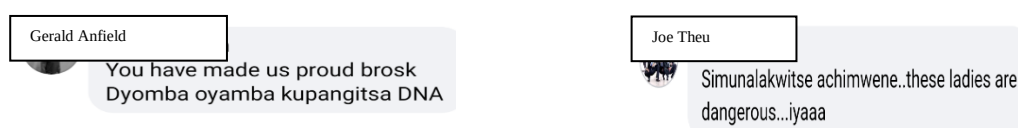
In the screenshot above, 15 people reacted with a ‘love’ emotion. This reaction goes beyond approval and indicates a stronger positive sentiment. It expresses affection and admiration for the content or the person who shared it.



The screenshot above indicates that 30 people of the participants shared John Doe’s post. The share option is a commendation. The option allows users to distribute the post to their own timeline or share with friends and followers, hence indicating some higher levels of endorsement. Users essentially recommend its content to their own social network as entertaining enough to share and expose it to broader audiences beyond the original poster’s connections.

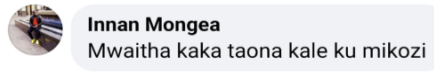


The use of the terms ‘Sir’, ‘Brother’ and ‘Bro’ above suggest a sense of commendation through respect and solidarity.

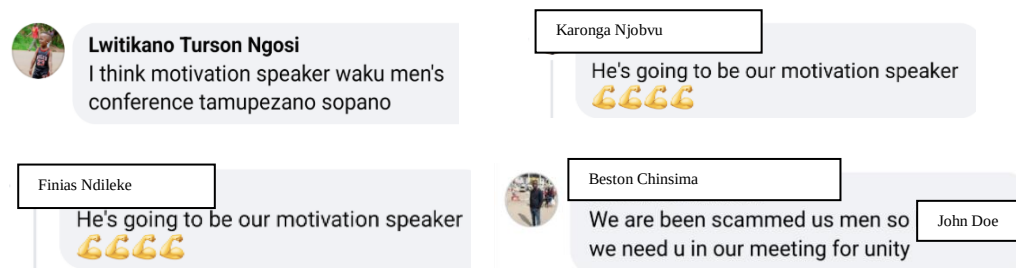


Translations: *Dyomba oyamba kupangitsa DNA* [The first Yao to conduct a DNA test]. *Simunalakwitse achimwene...* [You have done no wrong brother] Above, the use

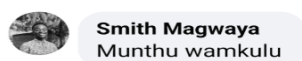
of the word ‘proud’ and the expressions ‘brosk’ and ‘brother’ suggest a feeling of affinity towards John Doe. The comment further highlights John Doe’s cultural identity as a member of the Yao tribe and commends him for being the first of his tribe to conduct a DNA test.



Translations: *Mwaitha Kaka taona kale ku mikozi* [You have done well respectable brother/friend: we have already seen your test results on *Mikozi* Facebook page]. The use of the phrase ‘*mwaitha*’ [you have done well], and the honorific ‘*Kaka*’ [respectable brother/friend], seek to honour John Doe. The mention of the post being seen on another Facebook page suggests that the news is spreading and has a broader sense of public approval.



Translation: *tamupezano sopano* [we have found him]. The phrase ‘motivation speaker’ suggests John Doe is someone commended to inspire others based on his experiences.

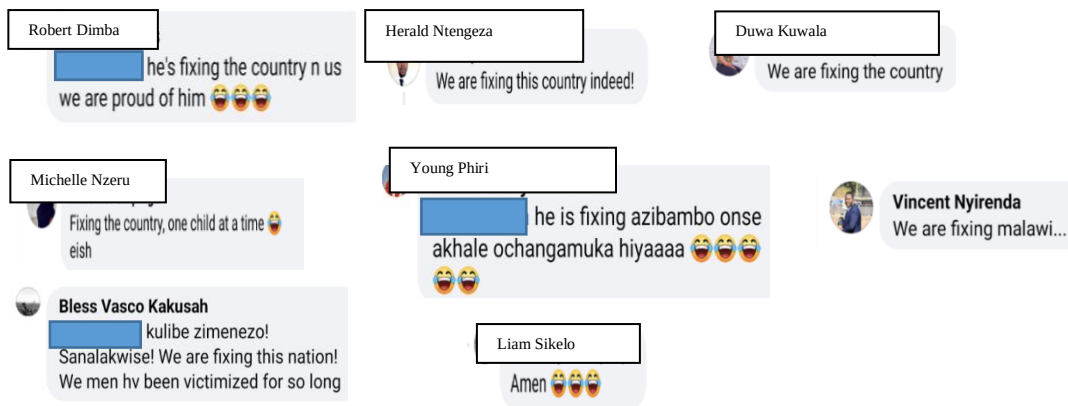


Translation: *Munthu wamkulu* [Great one/Elder/Big man]. It is a brief expression of approval through admiration.



Translations: *Lelo tiswera pano ndithu* [We will be here following developments all day]. *Kachikena Agideee, lero ndipo pano kuwerenga basi* [Lets do this one more time, I will be here reading everything]. *Q* [Following]. The comments above imply a

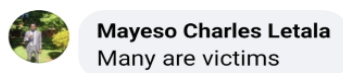
level of engagement and even approval of the further continuation of the developments related to the topic.



Translations: *Kulibe zimenezo! Sanalakwise!* [No way! He did no wrong!]. *Azibambo onse akhale ochangamuka* [Men must develop a tough skin]. The comments above express both commendation and approval in that they uphold the belief that John Doe's actions are contributing to 'fixing the country'. Using the word 'we' suggests that John Doe's actions, which the users perceive as improving society are actually some sort of collective goal.



The comments above expresses approval and commendation by suggesting that truth is objectively important. John Doe's actions are seen to align with the value of truth.



The user above implies that men are often victims of false paternity claims or deception by women, which could be seen as a form of sympathetically approving of John Doe's decision.



Translation: *Zimenezi mukanamuuzano mkaziyo kuti samayenera kuliuza dziko za mwanayo kuti ndi {John Doe}, azimai ambiri amakatenga mimba mkudzapaka mamuna wa ndalama umene uli moyo wa uhule....ena atengelepo phunziro* [You should have told the mother of the child that she was not supposed to lie to the world about the child's paternity saying {John Doe} is the biological father. Many gold diggers falsely assign paternity to rich men, this should serve as a lesson]. Both comments stress John Doe's action serving as a lesson. The phrase 'let other women learn from this' implies that the user sees John Doe's actions as an example to follow in terms of honesty and transparency in relationships.

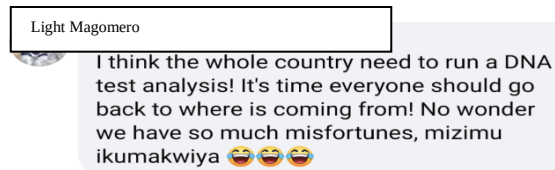


The users above approve John Doe's act by expressing a desire to emulate his example.

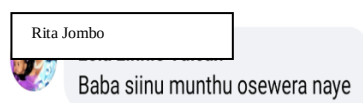


Translations: *Masana kuli mwambo oona nkhope* [In the afternoon, we will have the baby's face viewing ceremony (screenshots)]. *Simunaganizebe mofatsa bwana? Tikufuna nao mascreenshot wo* [Haven't you given it a good thought boss? We need to see the screenshots. *Ma screenshot wo ndye akuchedwatu* [It is taking long to post the screenshots] *Tulutsa Jocker tione* [Show us the 'Joker' (Screenshots)]. *Koma kumeneko. Tudikira ma screenshots wo ife* [Oh yes, we are waiting for the screenshots]. *Lero ndili pano kudikila ma screen shot uku ndikumwa thiyi wanthochi*

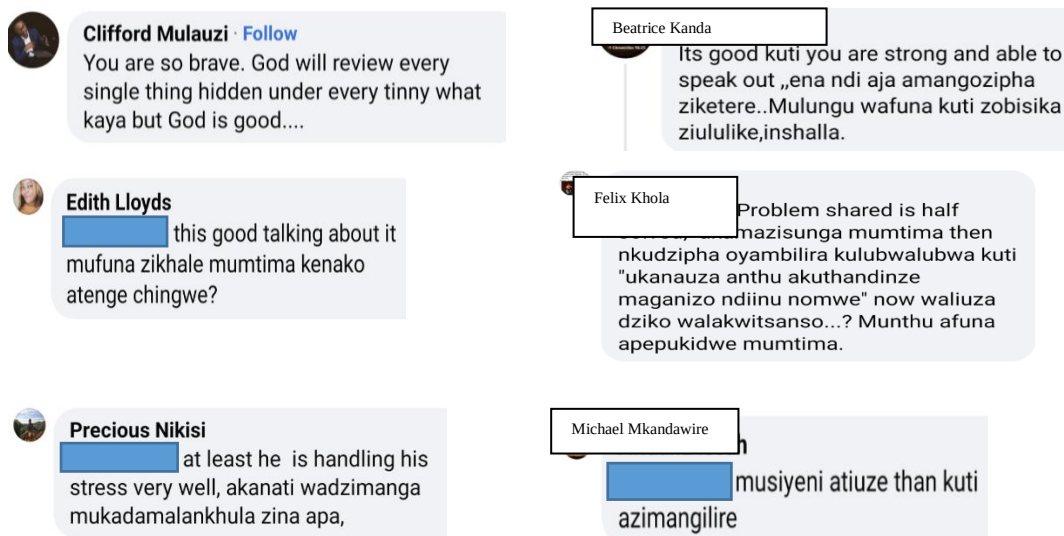
[I will be here all day waiting to see the screenshots while I take my tea and bananas]. *Ngati mwatokota inuo ndie kuti kwavutadi biggy. Vungani ma screenshot changu changu kunja nkwadzuwa* [If this is coming from you, boss, things are really tough for you. Show us the screenshots as soon as possible]. *Ma screenshot pliz movunge around 12 APA ndili ku munda kaye* [Send the screenshots around 12 noon, for now I am working on my farm]. The users above are interested in the situation and want to see more evidence or information regarding the DNA test results hence expressing approval of the public discourse.



Translation: *mizimu ikumakwiya* [the ancestral spirits are angry]. The user expresses a belief that DNA testing can help address societal issues and improve the country. He believes that national DNA testing would address spiritual misfortunes of the country.



Translation: *Baba siinu munthu osewera naye* [Daddy, no one can play you]. In great commendation, the user suggests that John Doe cannot be tricked or easily manipulated.

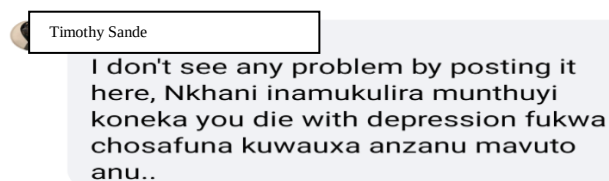


Translations: *ena aja amadzipha ziketere. Mulungu wafuna kuti zobisika ziululike, inshallah* [some people commit suicide with such issues. God has willed for the truth

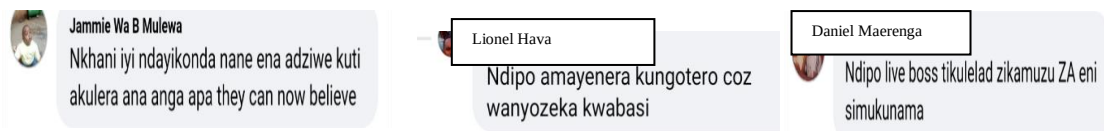
to come to the open, God's will]. *Akamazisunga mumtima then nkudzipha oyambilira kulubwalubwa kuti unauza anthu akuthandize ndiinu nomwe now waliuza dziko walakwitsanso? Munthu akufuna asepukidwe mtima* [If he had committed suicide, many of you would be the first to say he should have come in the open to speak. He has done that and you say he is wrong? Let his heart be at peace]. *Mufuna zikhale mumtima kenako atenge chingwe?* [You want issues to be kept in his heart and then he should commit suicide?] *Musiyezi atiuze than kuti azimangilire* [Let him speak out than commit suicide]. *Akanati wadzimangilira mukulankhula zina apa* [Would you have been sorry had he committed suicide?]. The comments above express commendation and approval by praising John Doe for being strong and courageous in speaking out about the situation. The users acknowledge that some people in similar situations might resort to drastic measures like suicide and express gratitude that the truth has come to light. Some users invoke God, indicating a belief in divine justice.



Translation: Post iyi mudyera malume [This post will make you go viral uncle]. *Ndiwe dolo aise. Watitsekula mmaso...Tizingochinda basi. Sinzakwatira* [You are so brave my friend. You have opened my eyes. We will just be fucking around. I will never get married]. *Umatha iweyo* [This is good from you]. The use of the word 'brave' suggests that the users believe John Doe's actions were courageous and worthy. The first user indicates that John Doe will earn recognition and admiration from others. The second user commends John Doe for displaying the courage to expose infidelity. He adds two emojis representing claps, which represents a congratulatory gesture of approval.



Translation: *Nkhani inamukulira munthuyi koneka you die with depression fukwa chosafuna kuwauza anzanu mavuto anu* [The issue was just too much for him. People fall into depression when they decide not to tell others the issues they are passing through] The user above shows approval by recognising the gravity of the situation and by believing that it was important for John Doe to share the story to prevent him from succumbing to depression.



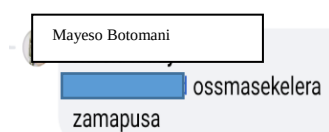
Translation: *Ndipo amayenera kungotero coz wanyozeka kwabasi* [He has every right to come public because he was being taunted]. *Nkhani iyi ndayikonda nane ena adziwe kuti akulera ana anga apa* [I love this post; some men should know that they are raising my children here]. *Ndipo live boss tikulelad zakamuzu ZA eni simukunama* [True boss, we really are raising illegitimate children, you are not lying]. The users base their justification for John Doe's actions on the claim that the wife was telling the public that John Doe was the biological father of the child and on the claim that there were other men who were raising illegitimate children without their knowledge.



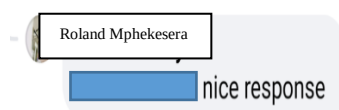
The user above believes that John Doe is exhibiting responsible behaviour. Using phrases such as 'made us proud' and 'salute comrade' indicates worthiness, recognition and respect for John Doe. The hand and fire emojis strengthen the user's fierce approval.



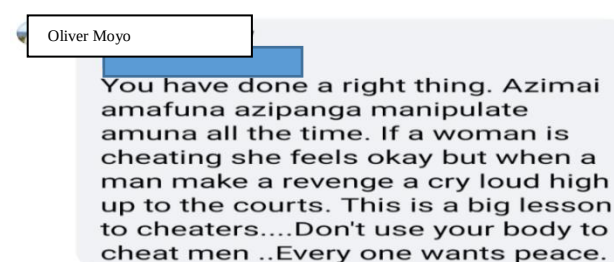
Translation: *Uyu ndi Kaka* [This man is a respectable brother]. The user sees John Doe in positive light.



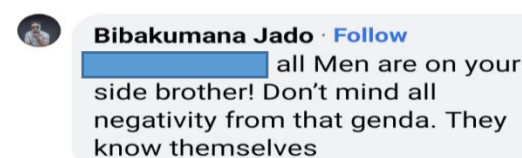
Translation: *Osamasekelera zopusa* [Don't tolerate nonsense]. The user commends John Doe for not taking the actions of the mother of his child lightly.



The user above appreciates the content or tone of the response by John Doe to the mother of his child. The user indicates approval at the quality of John Doe's communiqué.



Translation: *Azimai amafuna* [Women want]. The user seems to take a strong stance on the issue of infidelity, suggesting that unfaithful women should not use their bodies to deceive their partners and that everyone wants peace. The language used in the comment is emotive.



The user appears to express support and approval for John Doe by suggesting that all men are on his side of thought. The comment also seems to suggest that there may be negativity coming from women and as such, that should be disregarded when making serious decisions.



Translation: *Ndipo ndizoona mboba* [You speak the truth, great one]. The comment appears to offer praise for John Doe, as he is seen as possessing admirable traits.



Ine Ndili Kumastand

[redacted] mesa jezebeloyo
anawonesesa kut dziko liziwe naye
ayanike kut omwe timadziwafe tiziwe

Yohane Sleep

ri

[redacted] Simunalakwe iyeyo
ndamene analakwa posunga chisisi
pot ndimene zimakhallira



Kankhande Levison

[redacted] koma simkazi yo.anapangs
zoti anthu aziwe mmesa



Patricia Mgonezulu

Mwana mmene akapangidwa post
anthu simunaleletse musiyeni mu thu



Poto History Memes MW · [Follow](#)

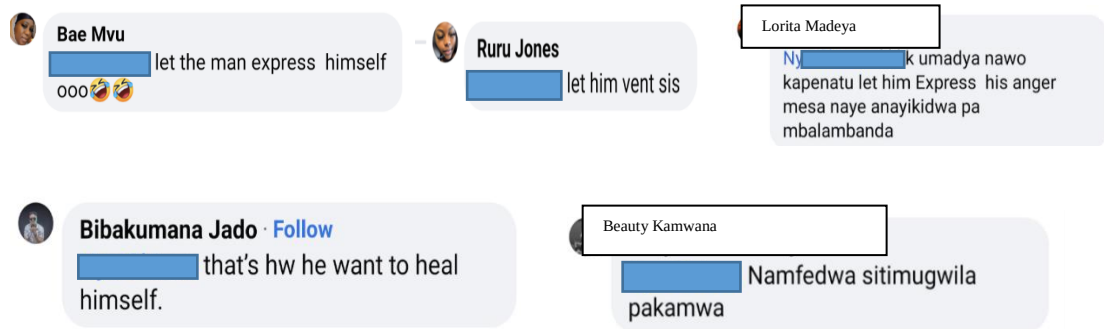
[redacted] Bro palibe Chomwe
mwalakwisa apa uyuyu mawanga
ake ndomwewo,, ife mungotiuza
mteengo wa DNA test tiziwe Basi

John Doe

[redacted] problm ndyot mkazyo
anauza dziko lonse nkhanayi nde
ndipovuta kut ndiisunge ndekha,,,coz
dziko lomwe analiuzalo likanadzakhala
likumandifusa mafuso ambili ngat
mwanayo atakhala sakupeza thandizo
lazofuna za mwana

Translations: *Mesa Jezebeloyo anawonetsa dziko kuti lidziwe. Naye ayanikidwe kuti omwe sitimadziwafe tidziwe* [It is Jezebel that disclosed the issues to the world, for this reason, she should be brought to shame too so that we all should know]. *Simunalakwe iyeyo ndamene analakwa posunga chinsinsi poti ndi mmene zimakhala* [You did nothing wrong, it's the woman that did wrong by keeping a secret from you]. *Koma simkaziyo anapangitsa zoti anthu aziwe mmesa* [It is the woman who made these issues come out to the public]. *Mwana mmene akapangidwa post simunalelese musiyeni munthu* [She was allowed to tell the public that the child belonged to John Doe, now let John Doe tell the public his facts too] *Problem ndyot mkazyo anauza dziko lonse nkhanayi nde ndipovuta kuti ndisunge ndekha coz dziko lomwe analiuzalo likanadzakhala likumandifunsa mafunso ambiri ngati mwanayo atakhala sakupeza thandizo lavofuna za mwana* [The problem is that the woman disclosed the issue to the world and it is the very same world she told that would have been asking me questions concerning the child's welfare in the event that the child was not receiving good care] . *Bro, palibe chomwe mwalakwitsa apa uyuyu mawanga ake ndi omwewo, ife mungotiuza mtengo wa DNA basi* [Brother, you did nothing wrong, all ladies are the same. Tell us, your fellow men, the charges for a DNA test]. The above users all place the blame on the mother to John Doe's child for the DNA

results issues to come to the public. They give approval to John Doe who is seen as simply clearing his name on an issue already in the public.



Translations: *Namfedwa sitimugwira pakamwa* [Never close the mouth of a grieving person] *umadya nawo kapenatu let him express his anger mesa naye anakidwa pa mbalambanda* [Are you the one that impregnated her? Let him express his anger, he was exposed and now it is his turn to expose her]. The above users approve John Doe's act as they see it as part of healing his emotional pain, an act which they highly commend to avoid bottling his feelings.



Translation: *inuyo mukuona ngati waperewera nzelu koma vuto ndiinuyo, sanalakwitse wachita bwino* [You may think that John Doe is immature, however you are the immature ones. He has done no wrong in fact he has done something good]. The user above asks everyone to refrain from criticizing John Doe as he is a commendable character.



Translation: *zimenezi muzikawuzana konko ndi mkazi mzanu...ife we are with him* [Tellyour ideas to your fellow women, we men support him]. The user above generalizes that all men approve John Doe's action and it is understandable that women do not.



Levson Prosper Mkandawire

[redacted] this issue has been handled well, kungoti inuyo zakuwawa chabe, koma pa easy, ngati mnaganizapo zopanga zimenezi bola asakhale wandalama zochuluka otherwise anthu ngati ife timapita for DNA test 😂😂



Ahmad Balaka

Inetu mkuona kwanga sanaperewere munzeru ndipo achita bwino cos Azimayi enanu muli mmabodza ndichibwana Ndiye zisamapweteke

Translation: *kungoti inuyo zikuwawa chabe, koma pa easy, ngati mnaganizapo zopanga zimenezi bola asakhale wandalama zochuluka otherwise anthu ngati ife timapita ku DNA* [just that some of you are in pain. Take it easy, if you want to do this to another man make sure he should not be a wealthy man otherwise he will also conduct a DNA test] *Inetu mkuona kwanga sanaperewere munzeru ndipo achita bwino coz azimayi enanu muli mmabodza ndichibwana ndiye zisapweteke* [in my view this man is not a brute because some of you ladies are full of lies and immaturity]. These two comments above suggest that ladies who think John Doe did not do the right thing are mistaken, since men are now too awake to be cheated.



Maury Lirani

[redacted] katswiri of the year kkkkk

Translation: *Katswiri of the year* [Star of the year]. The above post gives praise of approval to John Doe.



Agness Chanachi

[redacted] ba zisakuphonye

Maureen Lakeni

Daniel

[redacted] uma mwafika kuno

Eaton Nkondo

[redacted] ie zamve kuno 😊😊



Molly Nicah

Ch [redacted]



Ja Ni Ne

[redacted] hane mwafikako kuno



Tandira Manda

😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊 [redacted]
[redacted] tabwera kuno udzamve

Translations: *Memory Chirwa mwafikako kuno* [Memory Chirwa have you seen this?]. *Cecilia Mulemba zisakuphonye* [Cecilia Mulemba do not miss this]. *Bettie Nachuma mwafika kuno* [Bettie Nachuma have you been here?]. *Aggie Mwaki tabwera udzamve* [Aggie Mwaki come and listen]. *[Friend] Zamve kuno* [Friend,

come and listen]. The users above tag and invite a friend recommending they follow what is happening.

Eli Chifundo
Dont say us.. ukanati "you dont owe me" an explanation.. enafe he owes us.

This comment seeks to approve that John Doe owes the public a rendering of the truth.

Filimoni Chindebvu
wapanga bwino azikazinu uhule too mch

Translation: *Wapanga bwino, azikazinu uhule* [He has done well, you women are prostitutes]. User commends John Doe on grounds that he perceives women as prostitutes.

 **Harrison Gama Nastazio**
sanalakwatse mayi,,,nanga akanangosiya osamathandiza mwanayo inu nomwe kudzadziwa tsogolomu bwez mukuzati chaa?

Translation: *Sanalakwaitse mayi....nanga akanangosiya osamathandiza mwanayo inu nomwe kudzadziwa tsogolomu bwenzi mukuzati chaa?* [He has done nothing wrong, woman...if he had just stopped helping the child without explaining the reasons in public and it came to your knowledge, what would you have said?] This user commends John Doe's act as good for the child, arguing that at least it explains why he has relieved himself his fatherhood duties.

 **Fatsani Benedict Mbuna**
Nya Chirwa perhaps you would have said "you don't owe me an explanation" because this is helpful to a lot of men. To your gender mwina zakuwawani koma ife zatikomela kwabasi ndipo za maturity mukunenazo nza useless

Translation: *mwina zakuwawani koma ife zatikomela kwabasi ndipo za maturity mukunenazo nza useless* [This may have offended you but it has pleased us a lot and it

is useless to talk about questions of maturity]. The user argues that John Doe's decisions regarding the post as pleasant to him/her regardless of what others think about them.



Anthony Arthur Alexander Simwaka

zako izoo Bola taidzwa komanso Sanalaqise wapanga move yabho yolimbikisa azibambo to do this thing sizoon mu2 uzilela mwana oti siwako



Kennedy Paulo

Thank God coz wadziwa mwachangu akazi ngat awa ndamene amathamangira divorce podziwa kut atha kupeza ndalama Kwa iwe

Translation: *Zako izoooo Bola taidzwa komanso sanalaqise wapanga move abho yolimbikitsa azibambo to do this thing sizoon mu2 uzilela mwana oti siwako* [We don't care, so long we now know the truth. He has done no wrong. His move motivates men to conduct DNA tests. It is not fair to raise a child that is not biologically yours]. *Wadziwa mwachangu akazi ngat awa ndamene amathamangira divorce podziwa kut atha kupeza ndalama kwa iwe* [The truth has been timely because such ladies will file for divorce to milk you of your wealth] The first user perceives John Doe to have done men a big favour through his commendable decisions, setting them a good example. The second user thinks John Doe is lucky for knowing the truth.



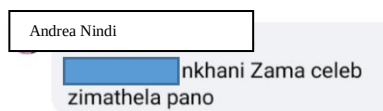
Peter Mathew Chalemera

never Ndipo mkuluyu Ali ndi Nzeru zokwanira bho bho mkona Ali ndi ndalama Komansotu wafotokoza monveka bwino kuti Mkaziyo Anapanga publicize zamwanayo nde amayenera kubwera poyera kumene Nayenso Kuliuza Dziko Kuti mwanayo si wake Chifukwatu munthuyu ndi Mnyamata akufuna apange clear dzina lake

Translation: *Ndipo mkuluyu ali ndi nzeru zokwanira bhobho mkona ali ndi ndalama Komansotu wafotokoza monveka bwino kuti mkaziyo anapanga publicise zamwanayo nde amayenera kubwera poyera kumene Nayenso kuliuza Dziko Kuti mwanayo si wake Chifukwatu munthuyu ndi Mnyamata akufuna apange clear dzina lake* [He is very mature and he has explained fully well that the mother to the child is the one that brought this issue to the public and he felt compelled to clear his name as he is still a young man]. The approval by the above user rests in his saying that John Doe's wealth is a clear indication that he is a wise and matured young man. He argues that, being a young man, John has the recommended duty to clear his name to and in public on issues already brought to the public.



Translation: *osamasekelera zopusa...chilungamo nchofunika...zonsezi bwenzi palibepo...mumasunga kam'peni kuphasa* [Do not entertain stupidity...truth is important...this would not have happened...you are betrayers] There is a strong commendation by this user by using the phrase 'very very good' The user invokes empathy by invoking a hypothetical situation of the consequences of raising a child that is not biologically yours after being lied to.



Translation: *Nkhani Zama celeb zimathela pano* [Issues involving celebrities are public matters]. The user above says 'Private issues of celebrity couples should find their way into the virtual sphere'. The user approves publicizing the scandal courtesy of John Doe and the mother of his child being public figures.



The user above approves and commends the discourse as a source of entertainment



Translation: *Chilungamo kuwawa* [truth hurts]. The user shows empathy for John Doe. However, his commendation is consequential in nature as he perceives freedom as the ultimate goal regardless of the painful circumstances.

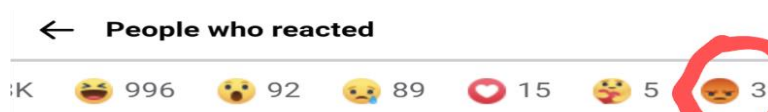


Translation: *kuvomera mimba zaka zino kutivuta, mwana kubadwa ngati sakufanana ndi wina aliyense wakwanu DNA iyendepo basi* [accepting responsibility for pregnancies will become difficult, if the child does not resemble anyone from my family, DNA testing will be the way to go]. This user goes further to insert a meme of a Caucasian couple with four African men, showing the Caucasian woman carrying a mixed-race child with a caption ‘one year later. This insinuates infidelity by the woman and the need for DNA testing when the child appears racially suspicious.

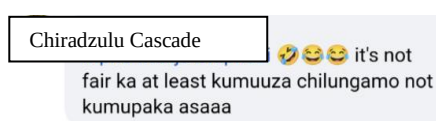
4.4 Comments of Anger and Rage

Comments and reactions of anger and rage on Facebook or other social media platforms can take various forms, ranging from mild irritation to full-blown anger and rage. These comments are often fuelled by emotional reactions to controversial or sensitive topics. One common form of angry comments is name-calling and personal attacks. When people feel strongly about a particular issue, they may resort to attacking the person who holds opposing views, and this is fallacious. This type of behaviour is known as "ad hominem" and is a fallacy that attacks a person's character rather than addressing the issue at hand (Yap, 2012, p. 1). Another form of angry comments is the use of strong language and expletives. When people are upset, they may express their emotions through the use of profanity and vulgar language. According to research, the use of profanity can be a coping mechanism for dealing with negative emotions such as anger and frustration (Jay & Janschewitz, 2008). However, the use of such language can also be perceived as offensive and disrespectful, leading to an escalation such as a fight. Angry comments can also involve the use of aggressive and threatening language. This type of behaviour is not

only unacceptable but can also be illegal in that it can be considered harassment (Piotrowski & Kline, 2015).



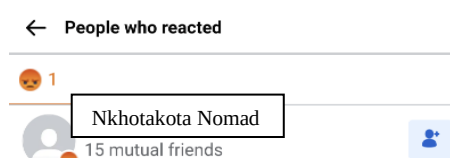
The screenshot above indicates that 3 people reacted with rage and anger to John Doe's post.



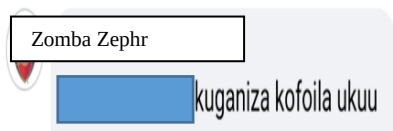
Translation: *kumuuzza chilungamo not kumupaka asaaa* [telling him the truth and not dumb fake things]. Although the user utilises laughter emojis at the beginning, he includes a mild irritation at the end of the comment by using the interjection 'asaaa' which is a state of mild rage and bitterness.



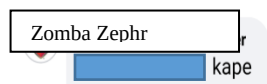
Translation: *Mkaziyo wangokukanizani kupeleka ku Satanism sembe mwanayo mwapsa mtima mpake zafika apa anthu opusa inu* [The mother of your child refused to allow you to sacrifice the child into your satanic cult, no wonder you are angry with her, stupid man!] The user calls John Doe as 'foolish' and 'satanic, to indicate his annoyance and rage.



The foregoing is a reaction of rage and anger from a participant who accuses John Doe of belonging to a satanic cult and calls him 'foolish'. The anger here has been passed on from one participant to another through opposing views. The rage continues below in other users who counter the proposition that John Doe is satanic and foolish:



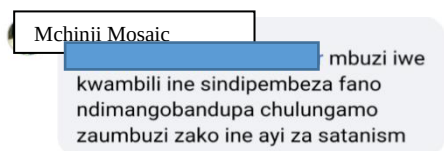
Translation: *kuganiza kofola ukuu* [this is irrational]. This comment, while not fully out of anger and rage, represents bitter confrontation.



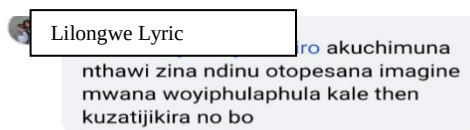
Translation: *Kape* [Dumb]'. The user is bitter.



Translation: *Kasome iwe waganyu wa pa Facebook page yake* [Go to the toilet to help yourself, John Doe's fanatic]. Using foul language indicates rage above.



Translation: *mbuzi iwe kwambili ine sindipembedza fano ndimangobandula chulungamo zaumbuzi zako ine ayi za satanism* [You're as dull as a goat, I do not worship idols, I only speak the truth and I don't engage in your stupid behaviour and satanism].



Translation: *akuchimuna nthawi zina ndinu otopesana imagine mwana woyiphulaphula kale then kuzatijikira no bo* [A man's relatives are sometimes

irritating, why abandon a child that had made it into a rich family? Not nice]. This user argues that John Doe's actions are irritating.

Rumphi Raindrop

Ine ndikuona ngati ku lab kwayenda chinyengo that girl can't cheat on you ,we as a family we're asking for another DNA at our own bill thank you

Translation: *Ine ndikuona ngati ku lab kwayenda chinyengo* [I think the DNA results have been doctored]. The user attaches herself as part of an irritated relative to the mother of John Doe's child and indicates she and all the family members are irritated and disappointed by John Doe and are proposing another DNA test to be conducted, one that is court admissible.

Chitipa Celestial

Mwana oti siwako azililira chips iiii

Translation: *Mwana oti siwako azililira chips iiii* [Imagine a child that is not yours wanting you buy them chips: not good]. The user intends to spark irritation in people who believe one has no duty to provide for a child that is not theirs. He also seems to show that it is annoying for such a child to be crying for food in your presence. He uses the irritation interjection 'iiii'

Ntcheu Nomad

I think the whole country need to run a DNA test analysis! It's time everyone should go back to where is coming from! No wonder we have so much misfortunes, mizimu ikumakwiya 😞😞😞

Translation: *mizimu ikumakwiya* [the ancestral spirits are angry]. The user uses two exclamation marks in his comment to indicate that he is screaming with rage and argues that there is anger in the metaphysical realm attributed to the ancestral spirits.

Mwanza Mirage

Physically posatengela za Makono zanzu
mukut dna Chan Chan „koma ifeyo tikut
mwanayu mukufananaye chikhala kut
timakhala nanu chifupi tikanazacheza nanu
mwanayunso Ali pomwepo
tikanazatsimikiza kut kodi mwanayu
ndiwanudi kapena ai koma padakali pano
zigwilani kae Za ma compyutazi

Translation: *Posatengera za makono zanzu mukuti dna chan chan...koma ifeyo tikut mwanayu mukufanana chikhala kuti timakhala nanu chifupi tikanazacheza nanu mwanaunso ali pomwepo tikanazatsimikiza kuti kodi mwanayu ndinudi kapena ai koma padakali pano zigwilani kae za ma compyutazi* [Without considering whatever technology you used, we believe the child looks like you and we could even come and have a face to face chat with you in front of the child to prove that the child is yours. Otherwise, for now stick to your truths based on technology’. This comment carries with it violent intentions towards John Doe. In the Chichewa language, the phrase ‘tikanacheza nanu’ does not always mean having a face-to-face talk. It sometimes means to chide someone who is considered to have acted irresponsibly. The user is also irritated by the fact that technology was used to ascertain paternity when the child resembles John Doe. The irritation is so intense that the user wants to meet John Doe in person.

Balaka Bonsal

Verry verry Bad girl

Dedza Drifter

Mkaziyi ndi trash aise eish! wayenera kuti
wakudzoletsa toilet zochuluka

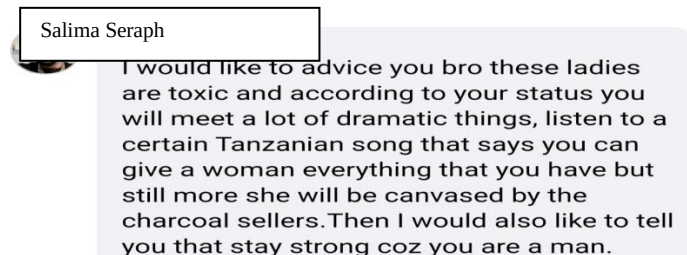
Translation: *Mkaziyi ndi trash aise eish! Wayenera kuti wakudzoletsa toilet zochuluka* [This woman is useless my friend, unimaginably so! She appears to have smeared a lot of shit on you]. The users call the mother of John Doe’s child ‘trash’ and discriminatorily, a very bad girl.



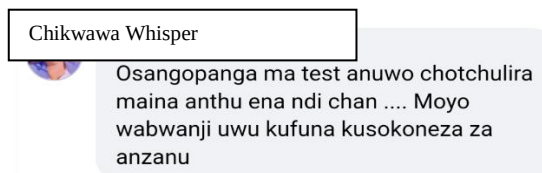
Emmie Reine Mtekateka

You set yourself up the moment you went
back to her so she played you cause nanga
all this explanation shows she was messy
nde bwana mufuna ife titani you already
where rolling in the mud with dirt

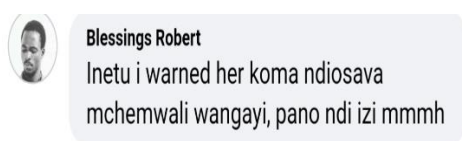
Translation: *Bwana mufuna ife titani* [What do you want us to do, sir?] The comment indicates that the disclosure of the paternity test results in social media is irritating since he consented to have the child by a woman who he already knew was promiscuous.



The user above indicates that ladies are bad people. While sounding compassionate in the text, the user shows rage by generalising that all ladies are toxic and unappreciative.



Translation: *Osangopanga ma test anuwo chotchulira maina anthu ena ndi chan...Moyo wabwanji uwu kufuna kusokoneza za anzanu* [why not just conduct the DNA test in private? Why did you go public and mention names? What kind of manners are you showing by causing havoc in the lives of others?] The user shows mild irritation by questioning John Doe's decision to go public and the effect the decision has on other people's lives.



Translation: *Inetu I warned her koma ndiosava mchemwali wangayi, pano ndi izi mmmh* [I warned her, but this sister of mine could not listen, see the results now]. The

user, in a sarcastic manner, considers John Doe's partner his sister. He then shows his irritation for her promiscuity. The interjection 'mmmh' indicates that he is not amused.

Mzuzu Mirage
 Kumangotchulapo mayina azako ngati
achina Buluma uli chete anyway sizinayende
koma

Translation: *Kumangotchula mayina azako ngati achina Buluma uli chete anyway sizinayende koma* [why do you go about mentioning names of other people like Buluma did? Things did not go well, anyway]. The user shows mild rage for the disclosure of names by John Doe to the public. He compares him to Hellen Buluma who stirred public anger in Malawi for using a parliamentary hearing to publicly reveal names of high ranking figures who were allegedly involved in certain government scandals.

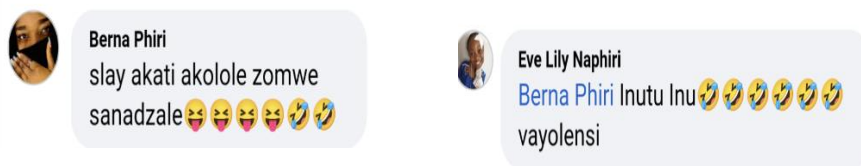
 Fourthie Ngoni Chimbamba
Azimayi mwagundikatu kuchosa chisoso
mmaso mwanzanu mwanu mulimyala poti
zanu zabisika

Translation: *Azimayi mwagundikatu kuchosa chisoso maso mwanzanu mwanu mulimyala poti zanu zabisika* [Women, you are busy removing a speck in your fellow woman's eye when your eyes contain stones, and you're doing this because you are able to hide your shortcomings]. This user is irritated by comments by most women who ridicule John Doe's partner.

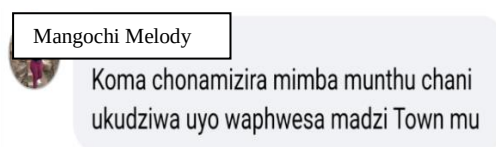
Karonga Kaleidoscope
 WACHITA BWINO KUT ENASO OMWE
AKULELA ANA KOMA MOKAIKILA. MWINA
APITILE NDI MAGANIZO OKAPANGA DNA

N_2 NKAZIYOSO ADADZIWISA DZIKO LOSO
ZA MWANAYU KUT NDIWA
CHONCHO WANKHOZA KUDZIWISA
DZIKO KUT IYEYU SI MWAMUNA WAMWANA
KALE MONGA M'MENE NKAZIYU
ANKAGANIZILA KUT ATHU ADZIWA
ZIMENEZO .. THANK YOU

Translation: *(John Doe) wachita bwino kuti enaso omwe akulela ana koma mokaikila. Mwina apitilile ndi maganizo okapanga DNA. N_2 Nkaziyonso adadziwisa dziko loso za mwanayu kuti ndiwa John Doe. Choncho John Doe wankhonza kudziwisa dziko kuti iyeyu si mwamuna wamwana kale monga m'mene nkaziyu ankaganizila kuti anthu adziwa zimenezo* [John Doe has done well. This will help those that doubt paternity of their children to go ahead and have DNA tests. Point number 2 is that, the woman told the public that the child belonged to John Doe. For that reason, John Doe is right to come to the public and clear his name and indicate that he has no child, contrary to what the woman wanted the public to know]. The user indicates his irritation based on the texting style: he writes everything in capital letters.



Translation: *Slay akati akolole zomwe sanadzale* [A slay queen trying to reap where she did not sow]. *Inutu inu vayolensi* [You're being violent]. The user uses the term 'slay' to define John Doe's partner as a gold digger, which is an indication of her rage towards her behaviour. The other user calls the first comment violent and yet inserts laughter emojis to indicate that she shares the same sentiment.



Translation: *Koma chonamizira mimba munthu chani ukudziwa uyo waphwesa madzi Town mu* [Why would you lie to a man about the paternity of your child when your promiscuity is known everywhere in town?] The user poses a question of rage that accuses John Doe's partner of sleeping around with men in town.



Translation: *Ayi ndithu tikapuma kumwamba* [We will rest in heaven] The above user uses a GIF which is an internet animated image to express irritation and rage with words in capital letters 'WHAT?!' which contains an exclamation mark to indicate that they are screaming.



Dai Odala Chimphepo

Its possible to bribe the LAB guys to give results in your favour... the truth dwells in the most high... not this paper things



Dai Odala Chimphepo

[redacted] why coming to my comment stupid, get the message clearly, fucken boy

The user above highlights a possibility that the lab results were doctored and when his remark is opposed, he gets angry and uses foul language, namely '*fucken boy*' to curse.



Davie Mwangonde

[redacted] the lady is evil that's theft by trick it's better to marry someone whom you already know that she has a kid(s) koma in this case mkaziyo ndolakwisa amutchule biological father wamwanayo basi so that the kid shud grow up with his real father



Moffat Armstrong Edison Mbale

[redacted] Thanks to you too for opening me up. Some human beings are evil my dear, they will have joy over someone's misery. I know you are stressed, however, believe in yourself, as long as you know that your hands are clean, just continue to be courageous. Come what may.....fight on.

Translation: *koma in this case, mkaziyo ndolakiwtsa amutchule biological father wamwanayo basi* [However in this case, the woman is wrong and she should mention the biological father of the child] The above users insinuate that John Doe's partner is evil, a derogatory term that is expressed out of rage and anger from the perceptions they have regarding her.



Mulanje Meadow

[redacted] bro dnt mind this shallow minded lady, there is nothing tangible coming out of her mouth, they belong to the same whatsapp group.

Mulanje Meadow above calls his fellow user shallow minded and attacks her gender as he is irritated that she argued that John Doe should not have brought the results to the public.



Davie Mwangonde

[redacted] Ine sindingalole zimenezo mkaz shud pay for her sins angowaulul Bambo eni ake amwana azikamulera mwana wawo okha taona anthu akupanga reunite ndi biological parents after 18 years or so nde muziti uyuyu wakula kale sizooona



Abiti Saiti Sangala

Clever to those who have find the truth before it is too late, ena akadagonabe tulo chifukwa cha kusazindikila. Just adopt the child , and put the mother in jail for allegedly planned to steal your property in the innocent child 's name.

Translation: *ena akadagonabe tulo chifukwa cha kusazindikila* [Some are still in the dark because of ignorance]. *Ine sindingalole zimenezo mkazi should pay for her sin angowaulul bamboo ake amwana azikamulera mwana wawo okha taona anthu akupanga reunite ndi biological parents after 18 years or so nde muziti uyuyu wakula kale sizoon*a [I would not allow a woman to do this to me. She must pay for her sins. She must tell us who the real father of the child is so that he must take responsibility. We have seen people reunite with their biological parents after 18 years and you cannot say this child is already grown, no way] The first user's rage above demands that John Doe's partner be incarcerated: he accuses her of theft. The second one says she should pay for her sins. Both users are calling for justice concerning a perceived evil.



Sionse A Mwayie Phiri

Ngati analera mwana oti mimba yake sanapereke ndi iye Joseph wa Maria what more Inu oti munadyako ndege ndege 🙄🙄🙄 wamzako ndi wako yemwe pitilizani ntchito ya Chifundo munaiyambayo mwina azakutolani ndiyemweyo,,,the baby is innocent and by now you have made a big bond with him,,, zosayendatu

6 mths Like Reply 🍌❤️😂 18



Steve Mzembe

[Sionse A Mwayie Phiri](#) if you are in his shoes can u do the nonsense you are saying it's easily said than done

Translation: *Ngati analera mwana oti mimba yake sanapereke ndi iye Joseph wa Maria what more inu oti munadya ndege ndege. Wamzako ndi wako yemwe pitilizani ntchito ya chifundo munaiyambayo mwina azakutolani ndiyemweyo...zosayendatu* [If Joseph took responsibility for Mary's pregnancy and a child that was not biologically his, how about you that had unprotected sex with your woman? Continue the good work of caring for the child, maybe it is the same child that will care for you one day...not nice]. The first user above advises John Doe to adopt the child. This sparks rage in the user below who calls the very suggestion of adoption of the child 'nonsense'.

Mzimba Melody

Sionse A Mwayie Phiri no peace for the wicked, the kid dont belong to him, thats a painful path everyman can not wirhstand unless he is foolish ... dishonest of a mother will make that kid to suffer ...a lesson to everybody

The user above labels John Doe's partner as wicked and dishonest and pointing towards what he perceives as justice, he declares that she deserves no peace and rest.



Griffin Johannes

Yesterday I was telling my friend, Akazi okwela matebulo ku Blues ndi ku Four Seasons aja apeweni kuwaika pakhomo. Ambiri aja ndi adziko lonse 🤢

Translation: *Akazi okwela matebulo ku Blues ndi ku Four seasons aja apeweni kuwaika pakhomo. Ambiri Aja ndi adziko lonse* [Women who party at Blues and Four Seasons should be avoided when it comes to marriage. Most of them belong to all men]. While being irritated with ladies like John Doe's partner that go out to nightclubs, the user uses a trash emoji as indication of disgust and irritation, representing such women as garbage.



Ndadza Mtalema

I went through the comment boxes.. 90% ya akazi akuti [redacted] apitilizebe kusamala mwana yo...

Am asking, who can enjoys the food Once you know that it has been poisoned?

Uhule wanuwo waoneka poyera...

Salima Serenade

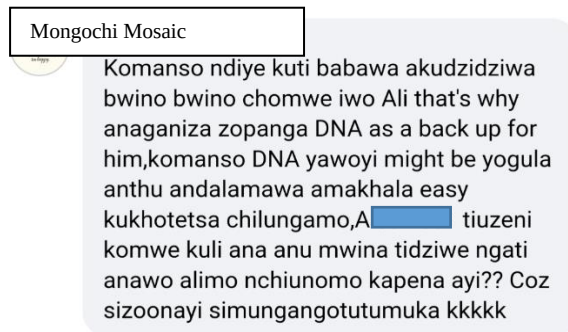
[redacted] wapanga bwino azikazinu uhule too mch

Translation: *90% ya akazi akuti John Doe apitilizebe kusamala mwana yo...Uhule wanuwo waoneka poyera* [90 per cent of women want John Doe to continue caring for the child...your prostitution has been exposed in public]. *Wapanga bwino azikazinu uhule too much* [He has done well: you ladies are prostitutes]. The irritation felt by this user makes him come up with a questionable statistic and labels all ladies as prostitutes. The second user makes a similar remark.

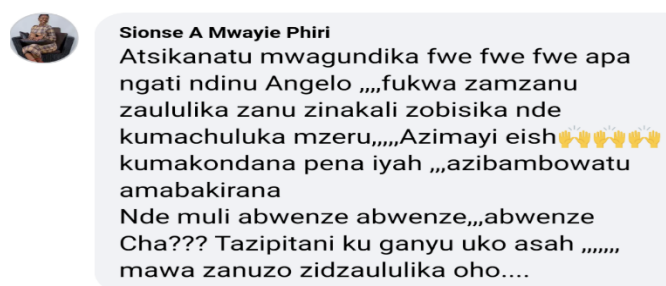
Rumphi Rhapsody

[redacted] 😊😊😊😊😊 osangoti ndinatota

Translation: *Osangoti ndinatota* [Why not just say you had an erection]. The user uses a laughter emojis to show his mild irritation with the fact that John Doe painted the mother of his child as bad by saying she tricked him into sleeping with her instead of simply saying he was horny.



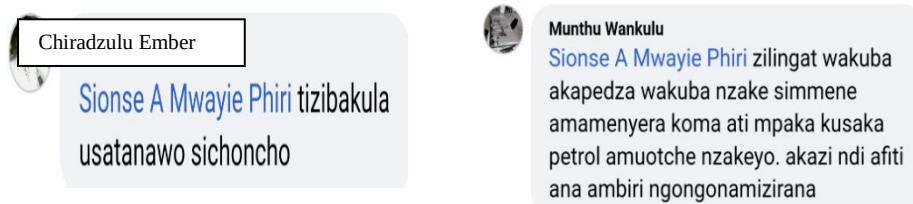
Translation *Komanso ndiye kuti babawa akudziwa bwino bwino chomwe iwo ali that's why anaganiza zopanga DNA as back up for him, komanso DNA might be yogula anth andalamawa amakhala easy kukhotetsa chilungamo. A (John Doe) tiuzeni komwe kuli ana anu mwina tidziwe ngati anawo alimo nchiunomo kapena ayi?? Coz sizoonatu simungangotutumuka kkkk* [This man knows himself and that's why he went for DNA to confirm. And this lab report was possibly obtained corruptly, it is easy for the rich to twist the truth. (John Doe), tell us where your other children are and show us their DNA test results too]. This user implies that John Doe could be impotent or a trickster benefitting from fake DNA results.



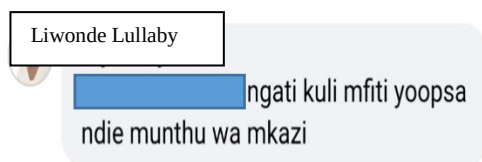
Translation: *Atsikanatu mwagundika fwe fwe fwe apa ngati ndinu Angelo...fukwa zamzanu zaululika zanu zinakali zobisika nde kumachuluka nzeru...Azimayi eish. Kumakondana pena iya...azibambowatu amabakirana. Nde mulu abwenze abwenze cha? Tazipitani ku ganyu uko asah...Mawa zanzu zidzaululika oho...* [Girls, you are busy castigating your fellow female as if you yourselves are angels. It is because your

sins are hidden that you act wise. Ladies, please, love one another. Men defend each other. You say she must pay, what must she pay? Go do your work].

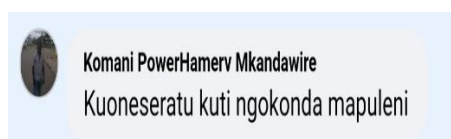
The user above is enraged by ladies accusing John Doe's partner, Madam Doe. She uses the interjections 'fwe fwe fwe' to indicate that what the ladies criticising John Doe's partner are saying is rubbish. She utilises emojis of hands raised to show awe at the lack of empathy in women who fail to defend their fellow woman. She uses the interjection 'asah' to show disgust and irritation. Below are comments of rage in response to the user above:



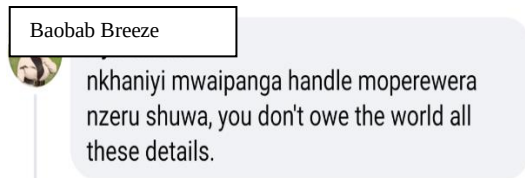
Translation: *Zilingati wakuba akapedza wakuba nzake simmene amamenyera koma ati mpaka kusaka petrol amutche nzakeyo. Akazi ndi afiti ana ambiri ngongonamizirana* [It's like what happens when a thief catches a thief; he beats him mercilessly and even attempts to use petrol to burn him to death. Women are witches. The paternity of many children is suspect]. *Tizibakula usatanawo sichoncho* [You want us to praise her satanic behaviour, right?] Labelling women witches indicates anger and rage towards all women. The second comment says she cannot support an evil act in the name of being a fellow woman.



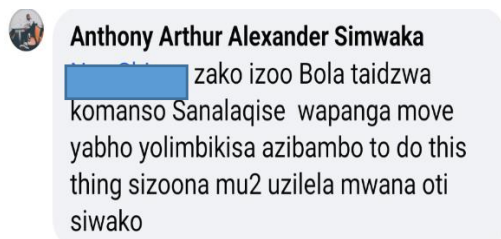
Translation: *ngati kuli mfiti yoopsa ndie munthu wa mkazi* [the worst wizardry is from a woman]. The user tries to indicate John Doe's partner as a sorcerer and worse.



Translation: *kuonetseratu kuti ngokonda mapuleni* [you show us that you love unprotected sex]. The user is mildly irritated by John Doe's reckless sexual behaviour.

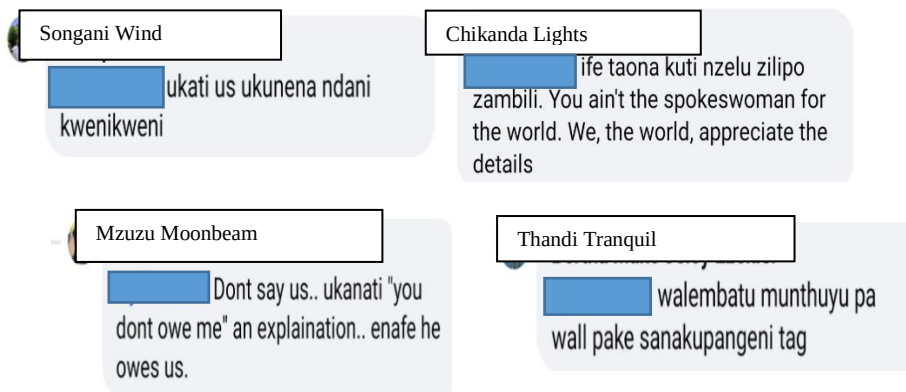


Translation: *nkhaniyi mwaipanga handle moperewera nzeru shuwa* [you have surely handled this issue with immaturity]. The user, Baobab Breeze, above, is irritated by the nature of disclosure itself and points everything to a lack of maturity. Her irritation is responded to by comments of rage below:

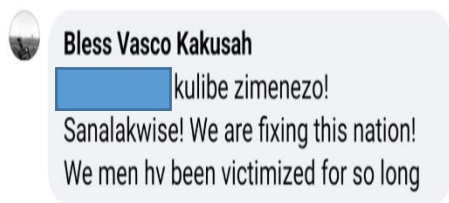


Translation: *Zako izoo Bola taidziwa komanso Sanalaqise wapanga move yabho yolimbikitsa azibambo to do this thing sizoonu mu2 uzilela mwana oti siwako* [We don't care, so long we now know, he is not wrong. He has made a good move that empowers men. It's not good to raise a child under your false paternity]. The user is irritated by Baobab Breeze's logic, and so, are the other users below who, in rage, rant at her.

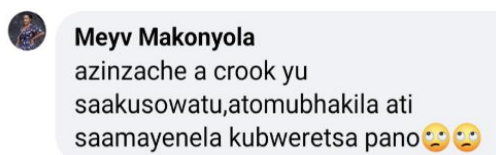




Translations: *Anakupangeni tag ngati?* [Did he tag you?]. *Ukati us ukunena ndani kwenikweni* [When you say ‘us’ who are you referring to exactly?]. *ife taona kuti nzelu zilipo zambiri* [we think that John Doe is intelligent]. *Ukanati...enafe* [You should say...some of us]. *Walembatu munthuyu pa wall pake sanakupangeni tag* [He wrote on his wall and he did not tag you]. The above users are so irritated that they distance themselves from the views of Baobab Breeze.



Translation, *Kulibe zimene! Sanalakwitse!* [No way, he is not wrong!]. The user uses three exclamation marks to indicate that he is screaming with rage and pain over the victimhood of men from the tricks of women and he seems to have reached a breaking point.



Translation: *azinzache a crook yu saakusowatu, atomubhakila ati saamanela kubweretsa pano* [It’s not hard to tell allies of the crook, they are saying he was not supposed to make this issues public]. She calls Baob Breeze a crook and uses emojis with rolling eyes to indicate annoyance.

Mangasanja Sun

[redacted] kagwere uko nawe apa....iya
mxiew....mesa anayamba ndi mkazi yo
talking shot in public nde iye
walakwsanji.....? He has done what he
had to do....finish and bravo

Translation: *kagwere uko nawe apa....iya mxiew....mesa anayamba ndi mkazi yo talking shot in public ndiye walakwsanji?* [Go to hell eish (curse)...is it not the woman who began talking shit in public, what is wrong with him responding? The kissing of lips in 'mxiew', and asking her to go to hell indicate great frustration and rage concerning Baobab Breeze's remarks.



Chichiri Wanderer

[redacted]
Zauhule!



Dowa Hand

[redacted] ndi savage uyu

Mazabuka Melody

[redacted] Waonekeratu kuti zako ndi
zomwezo nawenso.. zikuvutani
simunati.



Mchomanga Ayuthe Banda

Uhule wanuu tinatopa nawo ife

Translation: *Zauhule* [Prostitution!] *Waonekeratu kuti zako ndi zomwezo nawenso...zikuvutani simunati* [Its evident you are like that woman...you won't it easy]. *Ndi savage uyu* [you're a savage]. *Uhule wanuu tinatopa nawo ife* [We are tired of your prostitution]. Notice that the first user uses the exclamation mark to indicate screaming. Some users use derogatory terms like 'prostitute' and 'savage'. The second user shares the same thought by arguing that the two women are the same.



Wilford Evans Zachariah Mngulu

[redacted] ndnu a ku banja la Kwa
mkaziyo mwina

Translation: *ndnu a ku banja la Kwa mkaziyo mwina* [You are probably related to the woman]. The user questions the capacity in which Baobab Breeze is responding from.

Chinthecho Soil
 Nya Chirwa same gender
 mungalankhule chiyani.zimakhalatu
 zopweteka!

Translation: *mungalankhule chiyani.zimakhalatu zopweteka* [you cannot relate with this, this is painful!]. User is irritated by Baobab Breeze's lack of empathy for John Doe and uses an exclamation mark to indicate his rage and disappointment in her.

Sanga Sands
 Muchepetse uhule azimayiii,
 nakakhala ine nakachita kupangitsa
 PRESS BRIEFING..nkutenga ma picture's
 a HULEYO ndi MWANA wake yemweyo
 amve mm'bebe.

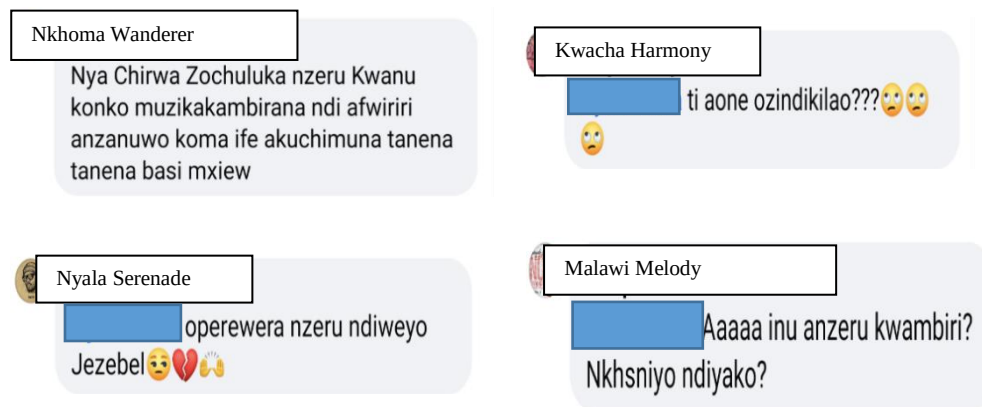
Translation: *Muchepetse uhule azimayiii, nakakhala ine nakachita kupangitsa PRESS BRIEFING..nkutenga ma picture's a HULEYO ndi MWANA wake yemweyo amve mm'bebe.* [Stop your prostitution ladies. If I were the one, I would have conducted a press briefing showing pictures of the prostitute and her child so that they feel pain]. This user argues that they would have taken harsher steps than those taken by John Doe. He uses derogatory terms e.g. 'prostitute: to signify anger. His anger is indicated further by writing the words press briefing, prostitute and child in capital letters to indicate full swing rage.

Namalaka Wish
 ukatero wapanilira
 mwamuna opepera kwanuko 😂😂

Translation: *ukatero wapanilira mwamuna opepera kwanuko* [you seem to be in the embrace of a silly man].

Misonzi Lirani
 Opelewela dzeru ndiweyo zakumidima
 zimayeneleka kubwera poyera mwinaso
 are one of them. Palibe chinthu
 chopweteka kulira mimba oti mwana oti
 siwako zongopakidwa at least mwana
 omupeza coz umakhara u knew
 happened

Chizumulu Strong
 iweyoxo wapanga comment
 zopanda nzeru... As a matter of fact,
 ukuonekaxo ngati Angella 😂😂👋



Translation: *iweyoxo wapanga comment zopanda nzeru...ukuonekaxo ngati Madam Doe* [You lack maturity too. And you look like Madam Doe]. *Opelewela dzeru ndiweyo zakumidima zimayeneleka kubwela poyera poyera mwinaso are one of them.* *Palibe chinthu chopweteka kulira mimba to mwana oti siwako zongopakidwa at least mwana omupeza coz umakhala u knew happened* [You are the one that lacks maturity. Things in the dark need to come to light, and you seem to be one of them. There is nothing as painful as caring for a child that is not yours. At least a foster child is something you already know]. *Aaaaa inu anzeru kwambiri? Nkhaniyo ndiyako?* [You think you are wiser? *Ti aone ozindikirao??* [Look at the so called wise one. Does the issue concern you?]. *Operewera nzeru ndiweyo Jezebel* [You are the one who lacks intelligence, Jezebel]. The above user angrily labels Baobab Breeze as lacking maturity.



Translation: *ukatero nawenso uli ndi zako zomwe ukubisa mxieew this gender* [You are also hiding something, mxiew (cursive paralinguistic utterance), this gender]. *Naye ana ake anapangira njira yomweyo Baobab Breeze uyo timufufuze* [Baobab Breeze should be investigated; it seems her children also have false paternity]. *Zanu*

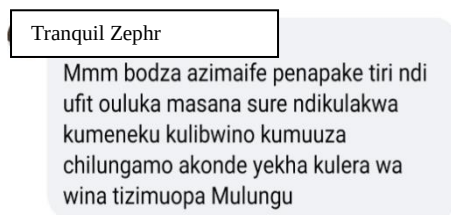
nzimodzi achitsiru pamtoso penu [You are just like her, foolish asshole]. *Ndiyesa ndinu modzi mwaiwo* [I believe you belong to her group]. *Mmodzi mwa hulero* [One of the prostitutes]. The curse interjection ‘mxiew’ indicates rage in the first user and the first two users’ claim she should be investigated as she appears suspicious. The third user goes ahead to use foul language, which depicts anger and rage. The last user uses the derogatory word ‘prostitute’ to indicate rage.



Translation: *mopelewera coz mkaziyo deserve* [This is immaturity: the lady deserves (knife emojis)]. The user signifies that John Doe’s partner deserves death by stabbing with a knife and calls her immature, which ironically, is more mature than asking for her murder.



Translation: *Chizungu chimakuvutani eti?? Munthu wanena why he did this* [You have problems understanding English? He has already indicated why he did this]. The user is irritated.



Translation: *Mmm bodza azimaife penapake tiri ndi ufiti ouluka masana sure ndikulakwa kumeneju kulibwino muuza chilungamo akonde yekha kulera wa wina tizimuopa Mulungu* [Truth be told ladies are full of daylight witchcraft. This is so wrong. It is better to tell the man the truth so that he should make an informed choice regarding whether he should care for the child, we must fear God]. Here, irritation is seen in describing women as ‘witches’, implying that they are evil doers.

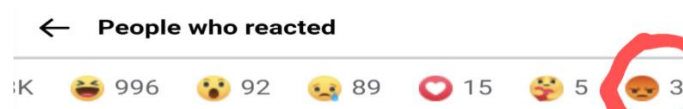


Translation: *John Doe...asiyeni amwinye yawa ali same whatsapp group yomangotibera....kkkkk...Nthawi yawo yatha* [Leave these thieves, they belong to the same group, thieves, their time is over]. Calling them thieves indicates mild irritation.

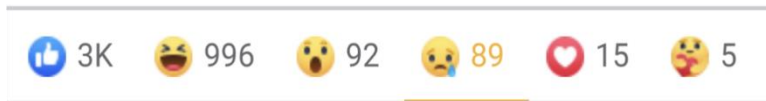
4.5 Comments of Disgust, Displeasure And Disappointment

Comments of disgust, disappointment and displeasure on social media, particularly Facebook, are common forms of expression when users encounter content that goes against their beliefs, values, or ethical standards. These comments can range from mild expressions of disapproval to full blown rants often accompanied by strong emotions and negative language. Users may also use images, GIFs, emojis or the dislike button to express their displeasure. Some users may show disapproval through brief expressions of disapproval such as ‘ugh’, and others through longer rants and condemnations (Jaidka et’al, 2018).

Comments of disgust and displeasure usually contribute to the polarization of online communities leading to the creation of counter-publics. They are triggered by content that goes against a user’s moral expectations, beliefs and values. This, however, helps indicate the user’s stance in relation to the circulating text under discourse. This is a stance that comes about because the user is dissatisfied, unhappy and disappointed with the circulating text and becomes a critic when they perceive the content is biased or one-sided. Regarding negative effect, comments of disgust and displeasure can lead to harassment or cyberbullying, which can harm the mental health and well-being of others (Kim et’al, 2017). This section considers comments of disgust and displeasure to John Doe’s post.



The encircled area in the image above indicates 3 people were angry at John Doe’s post. However, it should be noted that the same emoji reaction is used to apply for cases of disgust towards a social media post.

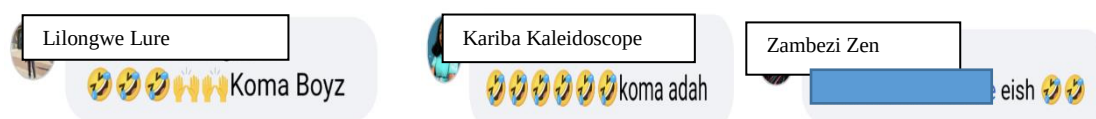


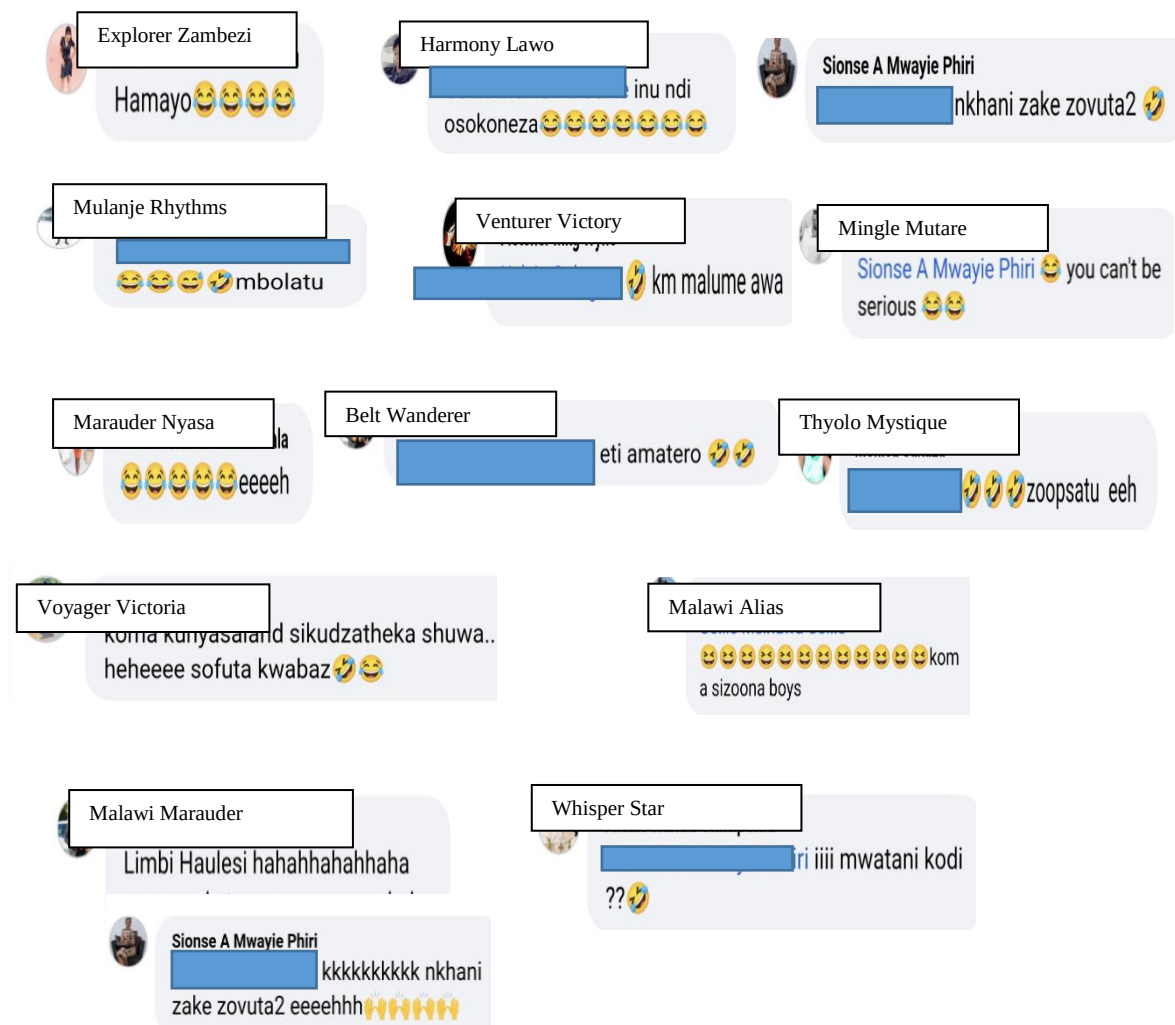
Above, there is an indication of 89 people reacting with a sad reaction. The sad reaction, as is that of rage, also indicates displeasure.

Phalombe Sweet Sad	Miti Kijani Too bad	Jengo Mdogo Too bad	Bahari Raha Too bad
Mawingu Safi Sad	Asante Friend Sad	Jiwe Love So sad	Blantyre Sauti So sad...
Yao Mchanga Mmmmm	Zomba Speech Mmmmm	Gold Dust Very bad	Chingwe Tamu Not gooder at all
Lomwe Mwangaza Ayayayayay	Dya Kartel eeesh	Lingadzi Waters eeesh	John Clean Eishiiii See translation
Lirangwe Fresh Mmmmmmm ai	Mulanje Tea Koma ku Malawi eh eh	Mpunga Sale Koma	Mark Islam Martin Anjelz Mumba aaaaah
Mponda Bwino Martin Anjelz Mumba aaaaah	Nsanje Chikondi akumba Komatu girls ayi zikomo	Mary Clean Sackinah Kwitanda Msosa abale inu inu	John Hindu Thumbiko Chenda mwandawire poor
Nkhota Song Zovuta yoo!	Salima Waters Zovuta	Fallin Flower Kma Nde zovutatu...	
Dawn Sun Zosayendatu	Dawn Moon zovuta	Neno Whisper Eeeee zovuta kwambiri	Mgab Heat Zinthu zake 😞😞
Rise Corner Zosayenda	Shire Flow Zosayenda	Songwe Song Lack of maturity. Zobweletsa pagulu izi	



Translations: *Zosayenda* [This is not on]. *Zovuta* [Difficult situation]. *Tchuzi kaye, munangodzuka nkuganiza zopanga DNA? Kapena mwanayo anaulula yekha?* [Excuse me, did you just wake up and decide to conduct a DNA test, or is it the child that asked you to do so?]. *Koma zinthu zake mwana uja mmanja mwa atate wake wachokamo* [Such a crazy situation, the child no longer belongs to his father]. *Zobweletsa pagulu izi* [Is this worth the public eye?]. *Pot wachuma sanalakwisa koma this is stupid n lack maturity sinkhani yot mungabwelese pa social media iyi nawo amalawi azanga nkuswa zochita nkumabwewetela nkumaseka but paumunthu this is not on...sitikukana mkaziyo analakwisa kom there's no reason kuti mpaka mupange like mwapangilamu bwana ndinkani zot mukangangokambisana kwanokhako* [Seems like the rich are never wrong, but this is stupid and it shows lack of maturity to bring such issues on social media. My fellow Malawians, it is senseless to even comment on his post or to even laugh about this, this is inhumane. We agree the woman is wrong but that is not reason enough to conduct yourself in the manner you have, this is an issue you could have discussed behind closed doors]. The foregoing are interjections used by Malawian Chichewa speakers to express their displeasure or disappointment regarding a given issue.

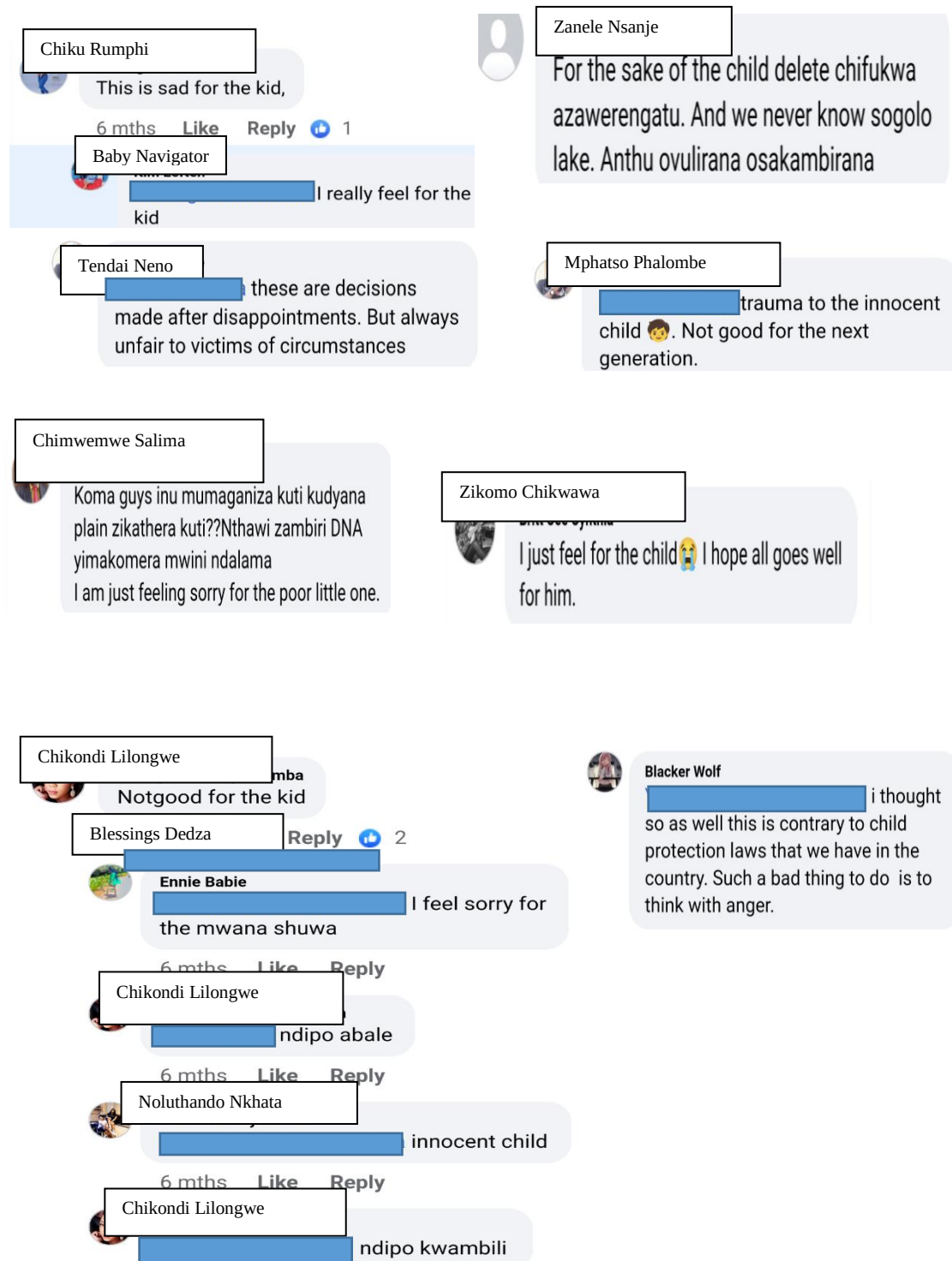




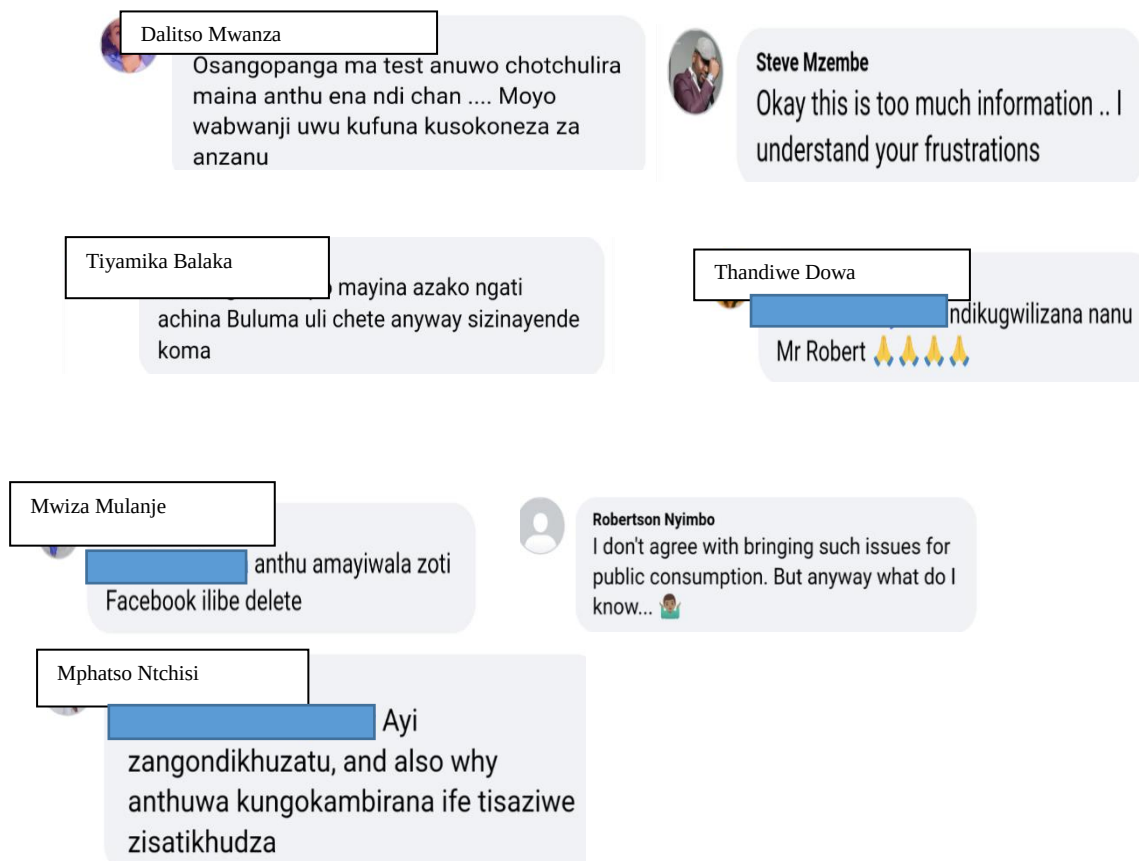
The above users make interjections of displeasure complemented by laughter emojis in contrast to the comments that were presented before this group. This group shows a sense of mild displeasure regarding John Doe's act in that while they are disgusted by his post, they do not want to irritate him. They, in other words, include the laughter emojis to keep their emotions from spilling over to the author of the main circulating text.



Translation: *eya kulakwa ukuku* [yes, this is wrong]. *Maganizo abwanji awa* [what kind of thinking is this?]. *Zodabwitsatu* [This is strange]. The above users question John Doe's decision and mostly make brief declarations that the move is wrong.



For the sake of the child delete chifukwa azawerengatu. And we never know sogolo lake. Anthu ovulirana osakambirana [For the sake of the child, delete the post, because he will grow up and see it. And we never know what kind of future he has. You people saw each other naked, why not discuss this privately]. *Koma guys inu mumaganiza kuti kudyana plain zikathera kuti? Nthawi zambiri DNA yimakomera mwini ndalama* [What did you think having unprotected sex would lead to? On many occasions, DNA tests favour the the rich]. The users above show their displeasure regarding the post on the basis that there is an innocent child involved in the entire scandal, and that rights of the child have in a way been infringed upon.



Osangopanga ma test anuwo chotchulira maina anthu anthu ena ndi chani...moyo wabwanji uwu kusokoneza anzanu [Why didn't you just conduct the test without posting them to the public. What kind of life is this: destroying other people's lives. *Anthu amayiwa zoti Facebook ilibe delete* [People forget that nothing is permanently deleted on Facebook]. *Kumangotchulapo anzako ngati achina Buluma uli chete* [Just publicising other people's names as if you are Buluma]. *Ayi zangondikhudzatu, and also why anthuwo kungokambirana ife tisadziwe zisatikhudza*



Ziko Thyolo

Inu ndiye oyela kapena angwiro mukubweletsa machimo azanu pa air remember the bible say do not judge, I don't know the whole story but if angela did that it was wrong and the way you are acting is wrong too, so too wrongs can't make things right



Fourthie Ngoni Chimbamba

Azimayi mwagundikatu kuchosa chisoso mmaso mwanzanu mwanu mulimyala poti zanu zabisika

The diagram illustrates two parallel communication paths between Nellie Mangochi and Dalitso Chiradzulu. The top path is labeled 'Tendai Mzimba' and the bottom path is labeled 'Kkkkkkkkkkk'. Both paths show a sequence of messages: 'ati onse amve kuwawa' and 'You are heart broken that's why you are writing all this stff. Sorry koma'.

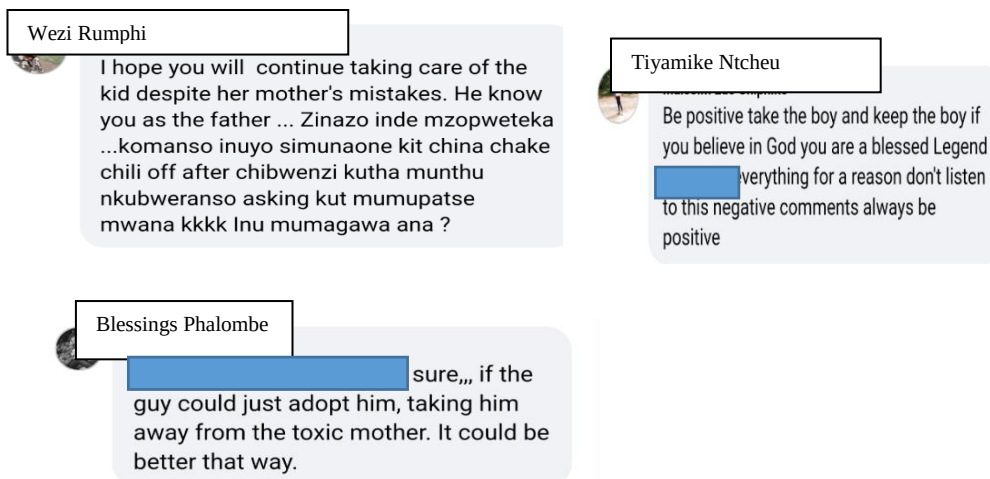
104



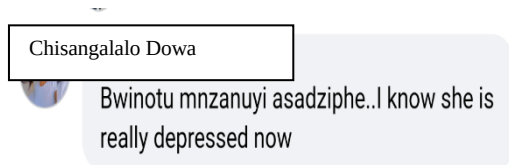
Translations: *Koma nthawi yomwe tea ngati ino* [This is breakfast time]. *Nde mwasankha kuyambitsa nkaniyi month-end, kulakwatu* [Why have you chosen to bring this issue month-end, this is wrong]. The above users are not pleased with the timing of the post.



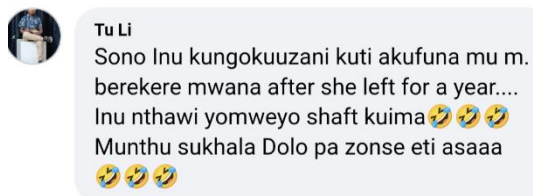
Translation: *Koma amalawi santha kucheza* [Malawians do not know how to live with one another] *kwmbw kwake* [very true]. The users above are not pleased with the release of the text on social media and the very discussion that ensued from it.



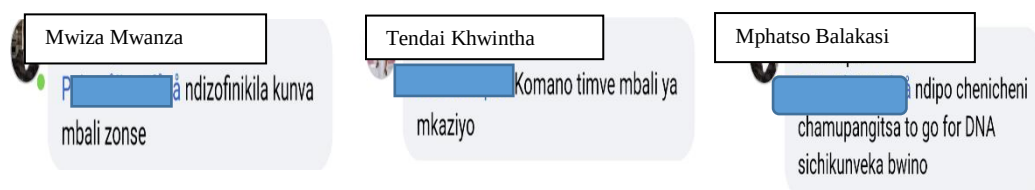
Translation: *Zinazo inde nzopweteka...komanso inuyo simunaine kit china chake chili off after chibwenzi kutha munthu nkubweranso asking kuti mumupatse mwana kkk inu mumagawa ana* [The other things are indeed painful; however, didn't you sense there was something wrong after your relationship had ended and she came back asking for a child? Are you a sire?]. The users above disprove the idea that John Doe must disown his child, they believe he should take care of him.



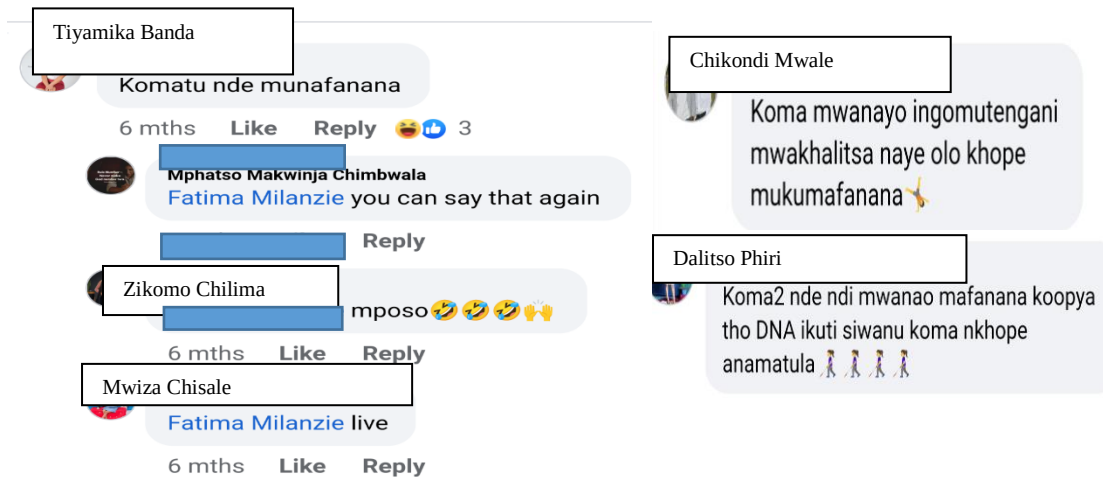
Translation: *Bwinotu mnzanuyi asadziphe* [Be careful, your fellow woman should not commit suicide]. The users above believe that the discourse could cause considerable harm to Madam Doe.



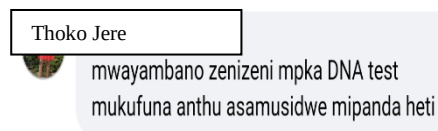
Translation: *Sono inu kungokuuzani kuti akufuna m'berekere mwana after she left for a year... inu nthawi yomweyo shaft kuima. Munthu sukhala dolo nthawi zonse eti asaaa* [She came back after a one year break up, asked you for a child and immediately you had an erection. One cannot be clever all the time]. The users above are not pleased with John Doe's poor sexual discipline.



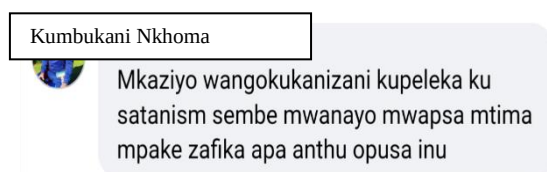
Translation: *Komano timve mbali ya mkaziyo* [Let us hear the woman's side of the story]. *Ndizofunikadi kumva mbali zonse* [It is important to hear both sides of the story]. *Ndipo chenicheni chamupangitsa to go for DNA sichikumveka bwino* [The main reason he went for the DNA test is not clear]. The above users look at the entire scandal as absurd and are displeased that people are only interested in John Doe's side of the story. They believe the story is not balanced for one to comment on meaningfully.



Translation: *Komatu nde mufanana* [You resemble the child]. *Mposo* [exactly]. *Koma mwanayo ingomutengani mwakhalitsa naye olo khope mukumafanana* [Just adopt the child, you have been with him for a long time and your faces even resemble]. *Koma2 nde mwanao mafanana koopsy tho DNA siwanu koma nkhope anamatula* [The child looks like you although DNA results indicate that he is not your biological child]. The users above seek to indicate their disappointment with John Doe because the child resembles him.

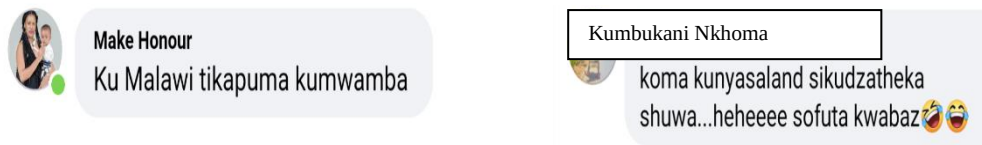


Translation: *Mwayambano zenizeni mpaka DNA test mukufuna anthu asamusidwe mipanda heti* [You are venturing into serious issues to the extent of going for DNA, you want surbaban husbands to divorce their wives, right?]. The users above are concerned that John Doe's move could have a significant negative impact in families across the country.

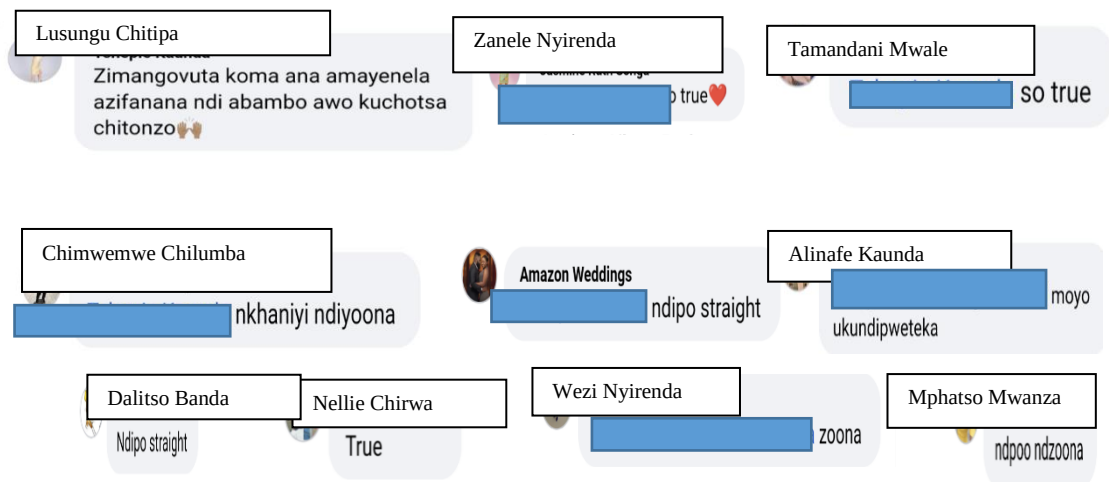


Translation: *Mkaziyo wangokukanizani kupeleka ku Satanism sembe mwanayo mwapsa mtima mpake zafika apa anthu opusa inu* [It's just that the mother to your child refused to allow you to sacrifice the child at your satanic cult and you are angry

at her, stupid man!]. The user suspects John Doe tried to kill his own child and he is disappointed with him. This comment generates a reaction of rage as shown below.



Translations: *Ku Malawi tikapuma kumwamba* [Malawians will rest in heaven]. *Koma kunyasaland sikudzatheka shuwa...heheeee sofuta kwabaz* [Malawi can only have rest in heaven: two many scandals]. The users above are displeased with such scandalous stories as John Doe's happening in Malawi seemingly frequently.



Translations: *Zimangovuta koma ana amayenela azifanana ndi abambo awo kuchotsa chitonzo* [Ideally, it would have been good if all children looked like their fathers to avoid such embarrassments] *nkhaniyi ndiyoona* [This story is true]. *Moyo ukundipweteka* [I am deeply hurt] *Ndipo straight* [Very true] *Ndipo ndizona* [True]. *Zoona* [True]. The users above agree with the sentiment of displeasure in that they feel a woman becomes a victim of shaming not because of infidelity, but simply because the child does not look like the father.



Sionse A Mwayie Phiri

Atsikanatu mwagundika fwe fwe fwe apa
ngati ndinu Angelo,,,,fukwa zamzanu
zaululika zanu zinakali zobisika nde
kumachuluka mzeru,,,,Azimayi eish👏👏👏👏
kumakondana pena iyah,,,azibambowatu
amabakirana
Nde muli abwenze abwenze,,,abwenze
Cha??? Tazipitani ku ganyu uko asah,,,,,
mawa zanuzo zidzaululika oho....

Chimango Tembo

ndipo ambiri
apapa akuoneka kuyera mtima poti
zawo za bisika

Translations: *Atsikanatu mwagundika fwe fwe fwe apa ngati ndinu Angelo...fukwa zamzanu zaululika zanu zinakali zobisika nde kumachuluka nzeru...Azimayi eish. Kumakondana pena iya...azibambowatu amabakirana. Nde mulu abwenze abwenze cha? Tazipitani ku ganyu uko asah...Mawa zanuzi zidzaululika oho...* [Girls, why are you busy castigating a fellow woman as if you are angels. It is because your sins are hidden that you are acting wise. Ladies, please! Love one another. Men defend each other. You say she must pay, what must she pay? Go mind your business since you do not have any serious work to do. Next time it will be your mess being publicised]. *Ndipo ambiri apapa akuoneka kuyera mtima poti zawo za bisika* [Many appear holy here because their dirty linen is hidden]. The users above are not pleased with women's reactions against John Doe's partner.



Martin Anjelz

Ndiwe Dolo ase 🍌🍌 Watitsekula Mmaso..
Tizingochinda Basi
Sinzakwatila

Chimwemwe Mzuzu

Martin Anjelz Mumba aaaaah

Lusungu Chitipa

Martin Anjelz Mumba aaaaah

Translations: *Ndiwe dolo ase. Watitsekula mmaso...Tizingochinda Basi. Sinzakwatila* [You have opened my eyes. I will just be fucking around. I will never marry]. The last two users above are displeased with the first user.

Baobab Breeze

nkhaniyi mwaipanga handle moperewera
nzeru shuwa, you don't owe the world all
these details.

Translation: *Nkhaniyi mwaipanga handle moperewera nzeru shuwa* [You have handled this issue with lack of maturity] Baobab Breeze above expresses displeasure regarding John Doe's approach to his paternity issue and she concludes that he lacks

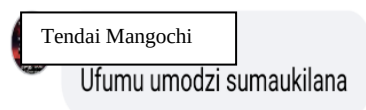
maturity: ‘This issue has been handled immaturely, you don’t owe the world all these details. And the following comments agree with Baobab Breeze’s displeasure and disappointment as shown below:



Translations: *Ndiponso osakambirana konko bwanji* [And why not resolve the matter in private?]. *Ndponso anakatha kukambirana zawozo konko aaaa* [They would have resolved their issue in private]. The last user uses the expression ‘aaaaa’, indicating displeasure.



The above three agree absolutely with Baobab Breeze. The last user says ‘*absolutely true*’



Translation: *Ufumu umodzi sumaukilana* [A kingdom should not be divided against itself]. The comment shows displeasure at the thought of a family unit fighting itself.

Ayanda Chiradzulu

And then the kid will one day grow up and realize that he was once the topic of discussion on social media. He will one day realize that someone posted him on social media and everyone knew that his mother 'lied' to the world that the pregnancy was for this guy yet it was for another guy. I can imagine the kind of confusion that he will have and that confusion will have the power to change his life for better or for worse... I pray it shouldn't be for worse.

I am very sure that this issue could have been sorted out kwawo konko. Kuthamangitsana akanachita kwawo konko and zikanathela konko. The kid is so innocent. He doesn't know what went wrong or what is going on. Imagine how this kid will grow up among his friends. Imagine the kind of torture that he will go through ku secondary school where students laugh, mock and chill mosekana.

Apapa sizinayende makamaka Kwa mwanayo. Koma Kwa abwanawo nde zawayendela. I just wish it wasn't posted on Facebook. And I am also thinking about the woman. Ofcoz imafika nthawi imene munthu umakolola zomwe wadzala komabe I am just thinking about her. These will be hard weeks and months for her. I can imagine her at the work place where people akulozelana kuti onamizila mimba mzake uja ndi uyutu. I can imagine the stories around her neighborhood.

Zina tikamachita tidzizamala ndithu. Ngakhale zimakhala Zokoma komabe tidzizamala ndithu. One simple action may result into alot of complications, frustrations and regrets.

I feel sorry for Madam John Doe

The above user shows great displeasure towards John Doe's decision: she defends the child's rights and empathises with him.

4.6 Comments of Embarrassment and Shame

Embarrassment is triggered by a situation where one feels awkward, exposed, or socially judged. Shame on the other hand, is a deeper and more intense emotion arising from a sense of moral inadequacy, believing they have violated their own societal standards or expectations. (Merriam-Webster, n.d). Facebook comments and reactions expressing embarrassment and shame usually manifest in various forms, including textual comments and visual responses to a particular post or interaction on the social media platform. Below are comments that carry feelings of embarrassment and shame.

Matthew Mangochi

Pyt Moe

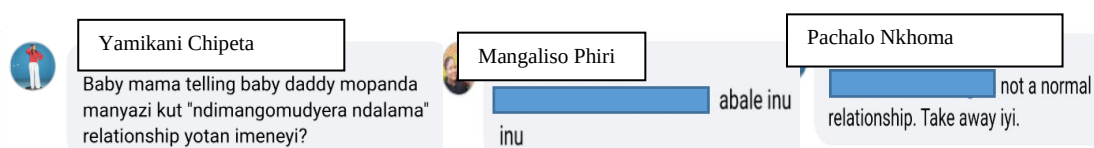
Ladies siamuna onse achuma omwe Ali ndi zibwana....Tiyeni tiphunzile kukhala a chilungamo..What has happened here tiphunzilepo chinachake....This is so embarrassing.... Well done Mr [REDACTED]..Njale azikwela Anu enieni😂😂😂... Anyways tikudikila ma screenshot a mpinganjira... musavutike kupanga specify mpinganjira ofuntha tonse tikumudziwa kale bwana😂😂😂😂

Francis Nyasa

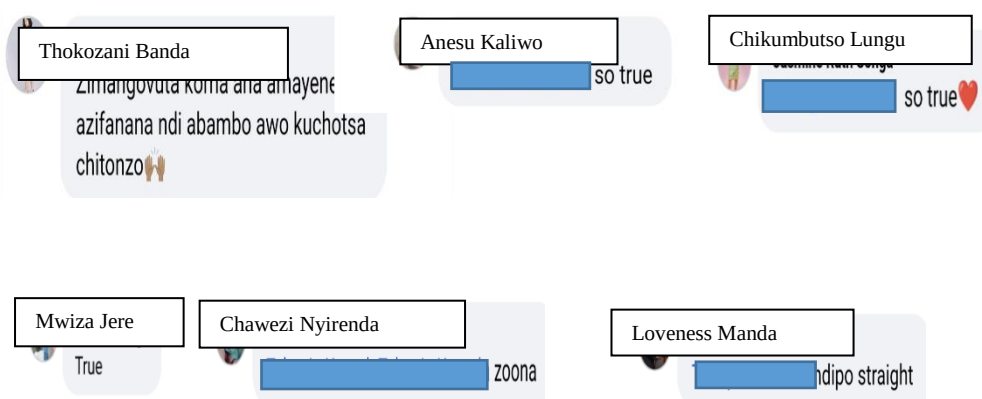
Efrida Felias

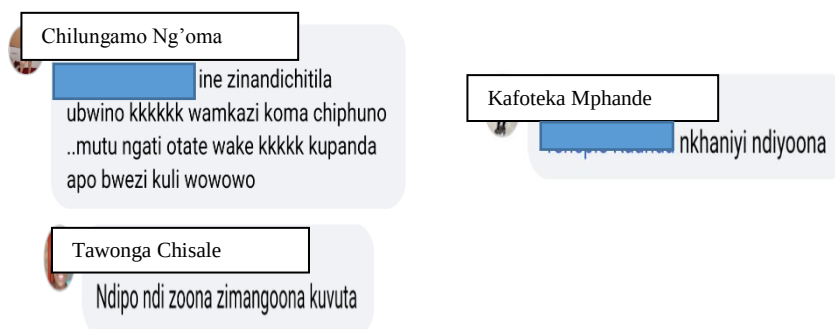
[REDACTED] exactly maaa

Translation: *Ladies siamuna onse achuma omwe ali ndi zibwana...tiyeni tiphunzile kukhala a chilungamo. What has happened here tiphunzirepo chinachake...This is embarrassing....well done Mr {John Doe}...Njale azikwela ani enieni...Anyways tikudikira ma screenshot a Kondwani Y...musavutike kupanga specify Kondwani Y ofuntha tikumudziwa kale bwana.* [Ladies, not all rich men are fools. Let us learn to be truthful. This is so embarrassing. Well done Mr. John Doe. Your cars should be enjoyed by your real children. Anyways, we are waiting for the screenshots of Mr Kondwani Y. Don't be troubled trying to explain which Kondwani Y, we already know who the libidinous Kondwani Y is]. The user above makes her feelings of embarrassment clear and the users below agree.



Translation: *Baby mama telling baby daddy mopanda manyazi kuti 'ndimangomudyera ndalama: relationship yotani imeneyi?* [The woman telling the man that she eats other men's money, what kind of relationship is this?] The user thinks John Doe and his partner are in a shameful relationship and the other user shares the same sentiment.





Translations: *Zimangovuta koma ana amayenera azifanana ndi abambo awo kuchotsa chitonzo* [In an ideal scenario, it would have been good if all children looked like their fathers to avoid this dehumanisation] *Zoona* [True] *Nkhaniyi ndiyoona* [This is true]. *Ndipo ndi zoona zimangoona kuvuta* [Its true in an ideal scenario] *ine zinandichitira ubwino kkkkkk wamkazi koma chimphuno mutu ngati itate wake kkkkk kupanda apo bwenzi kuli wowowo* [things went well for me. I have a daughter who has the nose and head of her father. Without the resemblance, there would have been alot of noise]



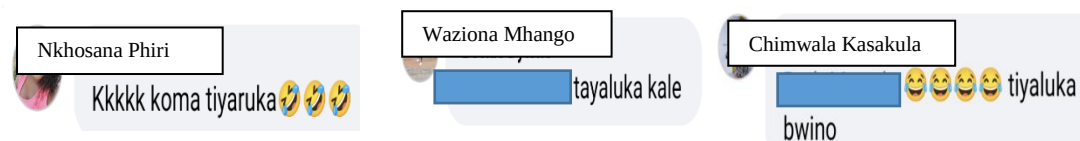
Translation: *Komatu ndiye ma baby mama fe tinaopya na popaka munthu mimba pokhapa....DNA itangobwera ya free kumalawi kuni anthu tingayaluke* [Honestly, we baby mamas have become dangerous when it comes to who we ascribe paternity to...If Malawi had free DNA testing, a lot of people would be embarrassed].



The above user thinks it is shameful to publicise information like the one John Doe did.



Translations: *Muchepese ma plain akulu* [Stop having unprotected sex]. *Inunso muchepetse ma plain, kapena kudya bayabaya...azimayiwa atipweteka* [Stop having unprotected sex and sleeping around...these women will harm us]. *Kuoneseratu kuti ngokonda mapuleni* [it's clear that he likes engaging in unprotected sex]. *Zamanyazi* [Shameful]. The users above think such embarrassing scandals boil down to lack of sexual discipline.



Translations: *Kkkkk koma tiyaruka* [we will be embarrassed] *tyaluka bwino* [we will be embarrassed indeed] *tyaluka kale* [we have already been embarrassed]. The users above feel the entire John Doe situation will or has already embarrassed women.

4.7 Comments of Scorn and Derogatoriness

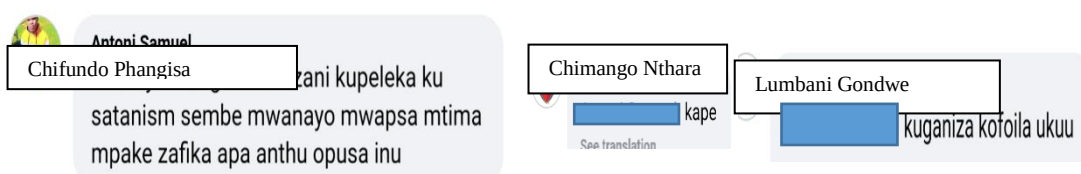
Scornful and derogatory comments on social media, including platforms like Facebook, refer to negative and offensive remarks aiming at belittling, insulting, or demeaning individuals, groups, or ideas. These comments often contain disrespectful language, personal attacks, or discriminatory content, and they contribute to a toxic online environment (McTernan, 2021). They can take various forms such as hate speech, cyberbullying, trolling, or online harassment. It is important to note that, while social media platforms provide avenues for communication and expression, they also facilitate dissemination of harmful and derogatory content due to lack of immediate consequences for such behaviours.

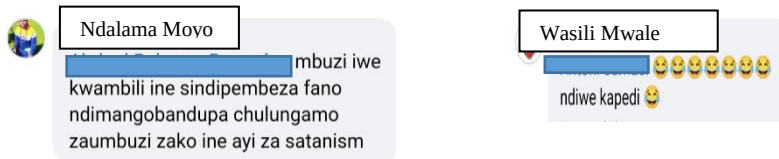


Translation: *Amafuna Rich Dad for her son Abale zangovuta* [She wanted a rich dad for her son, people, she has failed]. *Zamanyazi* [Shameful]. *Zikusalira* [You will be on your own now]. *Usiye kunyenga plain waonatu zakusata* [Stop fucking without protection, see now you are alone]. *Amafunako ndalamazo basi....ndalama itipweteketsa* [She wanted the money...money will get us in trouble].



Translation: *Mwana ndi wanga* [The child is mine]. *Komaso mwanayi akuwoneka ngati nkhanayi amayidziwa kaletu* [It seems the child already knew the issue]





Translations: *Mkaziyo wangokukanizani kupeleka ku Satanism sembe mwanayo mwapsa mtima mpake zafika apa anthu opusa inu* [The woman has denied you opportunity to sacrifice the child to Satanism: that is why you have reached this extent, stupid man]. *Kuganiza kofaira uku* [This is foolish thinking]. *Kape* [fool]. *Mbuzi iwe kwambili ine sindipembedza fano ndimangobandupa chilungamo zaumbuzi zako ine ayi za Satanism* [You are as foolish as a goat, I do not worship idols I only speak the truth, I do not do Satanism]. *Ndiwedi kape* [You're really a fool].



Translation: *Mwangoyezetsa DNA basi?* [You only conducted a DNA test?] *hahahahah mumafuna ayezeseo china cha* [what other thing did you want him to test] *apopo anakayeza BP...Blood group and ujeni* [He was also supposed to have a test for blood pressure, blood group and other things]. *Ujeniyo makamaka* [the other things especially] *kkkkkkkk....Ujeni uyu...Corona. Ndaiwala china ngat?* [Corona virus too, have I forgotten any other thing?]



nde mufananako tu kapena chifukwa
chomuthandizako ?

Translation: *nde mufananako tu kapena chifukwa chomuthadizako* [The child resembles you, is it because you are giving child support?]



Vuto lomagonana ndi amuna ambiri
pakamodzi umasowa omutchula adadi as a
result umangoyamba kubwebwetula aliyese
nde wagwa nayotu 🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔👉

Translation: *Vuto lomagonana ndi amuna ambiri pakamodzi umasowa otchula adadi as a result umangoyamba kubwebwetula aliyense nde wagwa nayotu* [The problem with having multiple sex partners is that you identify your child's father randomly, sadly you have goofed.]



Vuto lake makonda azimatako
😂😂😂😂😂



Dya Kartel chimkaz chake mchakwa
m'bama chamatako chijatu ase
😂😂😂



Kukonda akazi amatako, akuonesha pole
mzanga 🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔

Translation: *Vuto lake makonda azimatako* [The problem is that you love women with big buttocks]. *Kukonda akazi amatako akuluakulu, akuonesa pole mzanga* [you love women with big buttocks, they have taught you a lesson]. *Chimkazi chake mchakwa m'bama chamatako chijatu aise* [The woman is the one from M'bama with big buttocks].

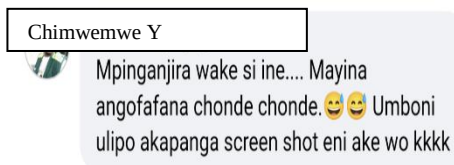


And I quote "anapanga ma film ake mpaka ndinagonja" ayi zikomo atchamani 🙏

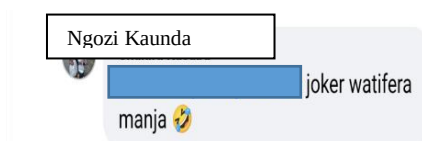


I quote "anapanga mafilimu ake mpaka mnagonja, ndadya plain" 😂😂😂

Translation: *Anapanga ma film ake mpaka ndinagonja ayi zikomo atchamani* [She played her tricks and I could not resist her seduction, thank you so much chairman].
Ndadya plain [I slept with her without protection].



Translation: *Kondwani Y wake si ine...Mayina angofafana chonde chonde. Umboni ndipo ulipo akapanga screen shot eni ake wo kkkk* [I am not the Kondwani Y he is talking about. We just happen to have the same surname. The evidence will be presented in the screenshots which they shall post].



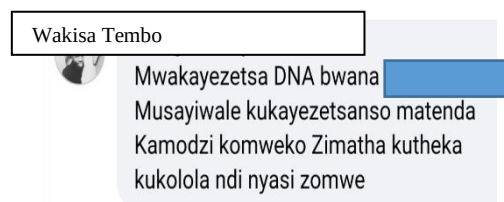
Translation: *Joker watifera mmanja* [She has lost the game].



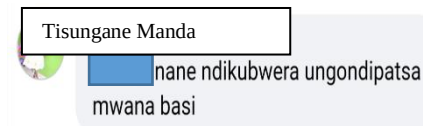
Translation: *Mwana oti siwako azililira chips iii* [A child that is not yours crying for you to buy him chips, hey, sad].



Translation: *mizimu ikumakwiya* [the spirits are getting angry].



Translation: *Mwakayezetsa DNA bwana. Musayiwale kukayezetsanso matenda Kamodzi komweko Zimatha kutheka kukolola ndi nyasi zomwe* [You have done the DNA test. Do not forget to test for Sexually Transmitted Infections. That one time may end up messing up your life].



Translation: '*John Doe*' *nane ndikubwer ungondipatsa mwana basi* [John Doe, I am coming you should also make me pregnant].



Translations: *uyuyu akhoza kukhala walipire ma results kuti atuluke chonchi* [It could be that he paid someone to generate fake results]. *Exactly what I was saying ndi sister wanga kuti koma mwati ma results who sanawapange alter coz mwanao amachita kuonekeratuh kuti ndidyoba kukhala ine Madam Doe nkapanga DNA yangaso kuseli coz izizi sizoonai* [Exactly what I was telling my sister. The results must have been doctored because the child looks exactly like him. If I were Madam Doe, I would do my own DNA test because this is not on].



Translation: *Kutchayaaaa kugwetsaaa* [Knock out].

Somo Banda
 Wale adenuga productions... this is super story WATCH OUT 4 PART2 🤔🤔🤔🤔

The above user trolls the John Doe case as a histrionic movie.

Thanks Chirwa
 [redacted] koma kulelela mwana oti siwako ...ndikulakwa kwakukulu eeeee zovuta

Explore Mulanje
 [redacted] i eya nkulakwa ukuku

Translations: *koma kulelela mwana oti siwako...ndikulakwa kwakukulu eeeee zovuta* [It's not right to raise a child that is not yours...this is so wrong] *eya nkulakwa ukuku* [Yes, this is wrong].

Lilongwe Dream
 Mkaziyi ndi trash aise eish! wayenera kuti wakudzoletsa toilet zochuluka

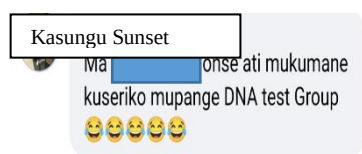
Translation: *Mkaziyu ndi trash aise eish! Wayenera kuti wakudzoletsa toilet zochuluka* [This woman is trash, my friend. Unimaginable! She has smeared you with a lot of shit]

Emmie Reine Mtekateka
 You set yourself up the moment you went back to her so she played you cause nanga all this explanation shows she was messy nde bwana mufuna ife titani you already where rolling in the mud with dirt

Translation: *Nde bwana mufuna ife titani* [So what do you want us to do, Sir?].



Translation: *kuvomera mimba zaka zino kuzivuta. Mwana kubadwa ngati sakufanana ndi wina aliyense wakwanu DNA iyendepo basi* [Accepting responsibility for a pregnancy is becoming difficult in this age. If the child looks like no one in your family, DNA test should be conducted].



Translation: *Ma Kondwani Y onse ati mukumane kuseriko mupange DNA test Group* [All Kondwani Ys should meet to create a DNA test group behind the curtain.



Translation: *Ndi azibambotu awa ntengo wa condom sakudziwa nkomwe* [These are men, they do not even know the price of a condom]. *Eish zoopsya aise ndi azibambodi* [Strange! Dangerous indeed, that's men indeed]. *Nthawi alibe* [They have no time] *amakwana* [they are a class of their own].



Karonga Craze

Koma chonamizira mimba munthu chani
ukudziwa uyo waphwesa madzi Town mu

Translation: *Koma chonamizira mimba munthu chani ukudziwa uyo waphwesa madzi town mu* [Why would you lie about paternity when you fully know each of the many men you have slept with in town].



Mwas Kai Lupe

[redacted] the mother
is the crooked one here, she have done
the kid injustice..... It wouldn't miss the
public eye even if it wasn't publicize as it
had....she is the one who have neglected
the child for her own selfish reasons.

The user calls John Doe's partner crooked.



Dusk Daisy

[redacted] bro dnt mind this shallow
minded lady, there is nothing tangible
coming out of her mouth, they belong to
the same whatsapp group.



Mingle Mchinji

[redacted] iweso uhuletu
udakupha
Zabanja mwayeni izi

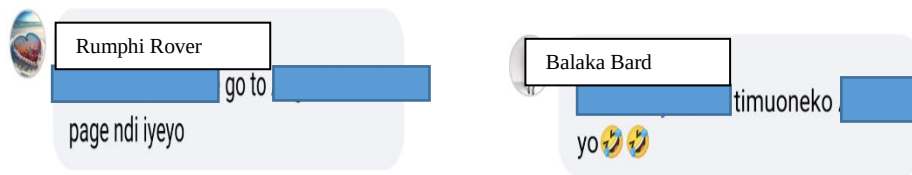
Iweso uhuletu udakupha zabanja mwayeni [Your prostitution is deep rooted: this issue concerns their family, leave them alone].



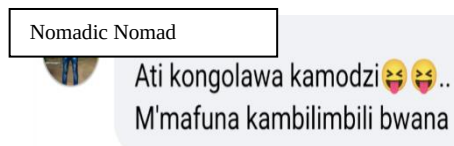
Chikwakwa Wonder

komanso ndiye kuti babawa akudzidziwa
bwino bwino chomwe iwo Ali that's why
anaganiza zopanga DNA as a back up for
him, komanso DNA yawoyi might be yogula
anthu andalamawa amakhala easy
kukhotetsa chilungamo, A suwedi tiuzeni
komwe kuli ana anu mwina tidziwe ngati
anawo alimo nchiunomo kapena ayi?? Coz
sizonayi simungangotutumuka kkkkk

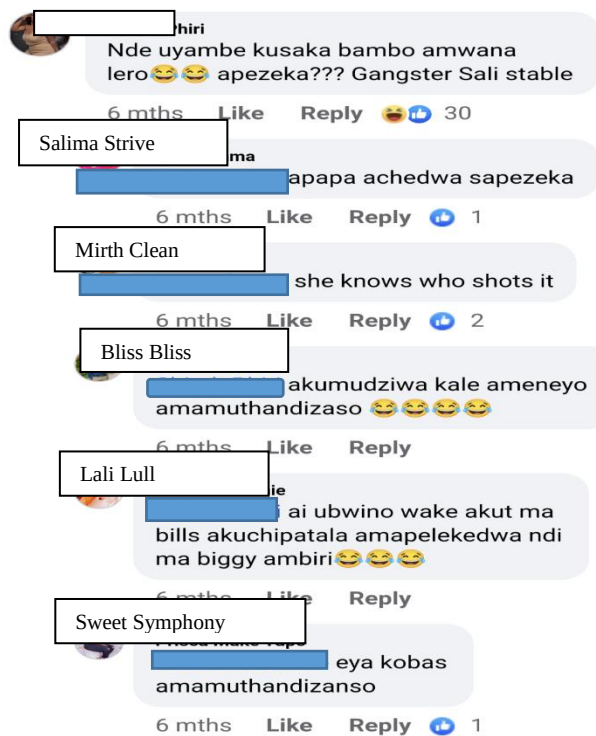
Translation: *Komanso ndiye kuti babawa akudziwa bwino chomwe iwo ali that's why anaganiza zopanga DNA as a back up for him, komanso DNA yawoyi might be yogula anthu a andalamawa amakhala easy kukhotsetsa chilungamo, Tiuzeni komwe kuli ana anu mwina tidziwe ngati anawo alimo ntchiunomo kapena ayi? Coz sizoonayi simungangotutumuka kkkk* [Let's be mindful of the fact that this man knows himself and that's why he went for the DNA test to protect himself, and this lab report was obtained using a bribe and it is easy for the rich to twist the truth. John Doe, tell us where your other children are and show us their DNA test results too].



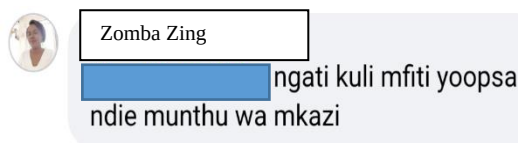
Translations: *timuoneko Madam Doe-yo* [Let us see Madam Doe]. *Go to Madam Doe page ndi iyeyo* [Go to Madam Doe's page, that's her].



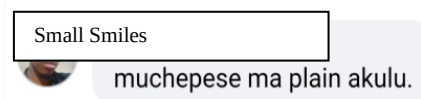
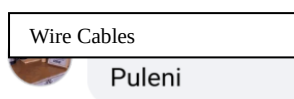
Translation: *Ati kongolawa kamodzi. M'mafuna kambilimbili bwana* [You say you slept with her only once, just to experience how it feels to sleep with her, do you mean you wanted to sleep with her many times to accept paternity?].



Translations: *Nde uyambe kusaka bambo amwana lero apezeka? Gangster Sali stable* [Now her search for the father of the child begins, but will she find him? Gangster is not stable]. *Apapa achedwa kupezeka* [It will take time to find the father]. *Akumudziwa kale ameneyo amamuthandizaso* [She knows who the father is and he supports her financially]. *Ai ubwino wake akut ma bills akuchitapatala amapelekedwa ndi ma biggy ambiri* [good thing is that her hospital bills were paid for by many rich men]. *Eya kobasi amathandizanso* [yes, they were supporting her financially].



Translation: *Ngati kuli mfiti yoopsa ndie munthu wamkazi* [A woman is the most dangerous witch].



Translations: *Puleni* [plain sex]. *Muchepese ma plain akulu* [Avoid having plain sex, sir]

Baobab Breeze
nkhaniyi mwaipanga handle moperewera
nzeru shuwa, you don't owe the world all
these details.

Translation: *nkhaniyi mwaipanga handle moperewera nzeru shuwa* [you have handled this issue immaturely sure]. The user is irritated by the nature of John Doe's disclosure itself and points everything to a lack of maturity. Her irritation is responded to using scornful and derogatory comments comments below:

Meyv Makonyola
azinzache a crook yu saakusowatu,
atomubhakila ati saamayenela
kubweretsa pano 🤔🤔

Masautso Chirwa
[redacted] ukatero wapanilira
mwamuna opepera kwanuko 😂😂

H-Kritic Beats
[redacted] he's in pain ! I understand!
Akazi ausiru ayaluke Basi 🚶

Mulungu Mwale
[redacted] moperewera nzeru ndiweyo
Jezebel 🤔💔🔥

Mzati Bwanali
[redacted] lwe usatitukwanitse wamva

Don2 malawi official
[redacted] zanu nzimodzi achisiru
pamtoso penu

Zindaba Kaunda
[redacted] ndi savage uyu

Nthenda Kamanga
[redacted] Zauhule!

BiggerThan Her Nyash
[redacted] inuyo ndamene mwapanga
Comment Zoperewera nzeru 😂vuto
amalawi Timafuna Tizizionesa ngat
Athu anzeru tili Mbuli ...Mwinaso Ndiwe
Ntumbuka Tu iwe ...paja atumbuka
yanu Ija ...Nchifukwa mumakhala athu
akuda alwes ...

Mchomanga Ayuthe Banda
Uhule wanuu tinatopa nawo ife

Ine Ndili Kumastand
[redacted] mesa jezebeloyo
anawonesesa kut dziko liziwe naye
ayanike kut omwe timadziwafe tiziwe

Masale Gift Yamikani
[redacted] iweyoxo wapanga comment
zopanda nzeru... As a matter of fact,
ukuonekaxo ngat [redacted] 😂😂🤔

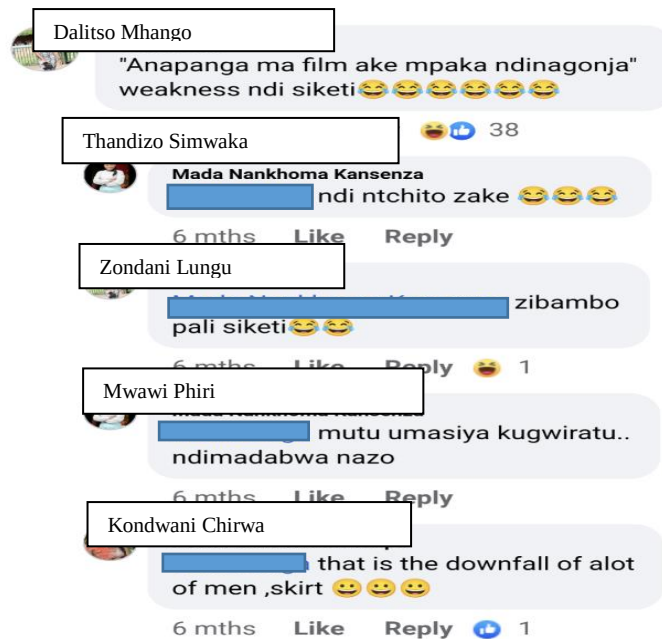
Translations: *Zauhule* [Prostitution]. *Ndi savage uyu* [he is a savage] *Uhule wanu tinatopa nawo ife* [we are tired of your prostitution]. *Zanu nzimodzi achisiru pamtoso penu* [you all are the same, foolish ass-holes] *Iwe usatitukwanise wamva* [listen, do not tempt us into cursing you]. *Operewera nzeru ndiweyo Jezebel* [you are the one that lacks maturity, Jezebel]. *Akazi ausiru ayaluke basi* [foolish women must be shamed]. *ukatero wapanilira mwamuna opepera kwanuko* [you say that but you are in the embrace of a weak husband where you are]. *azinzache a crook yu saakusowatu, atomubhakila ati saamanela kubweretsa pano* [its obvious she's an ally of the crook, defending her by insisting that this issue was not to be made public]. *iweyoxo wapanga comment zopanda nzeru...ukuonekaxo ngati Madam Doe* [It is you who lacks maturity. And you look like Madam Doe]. *Mesa Jezebeloyo anawonetsa dziko kuti lidziwe. Naye ayanikidwe kuti omwe sitimadziwafe tidziwe* [It is Jezebel that brought the issues to the world, for this reason, she should be shamed too so that we all should know]. *Baobab Breeze inuyo ndamene mwapanga Comment Zoperewera nzeru. Vuto amalawi Timafuna Tizionesa ngat Athu anzeru tili Mbuli...Mwinaso Ndiwe Ntumbuka Tu iwe...paja atumbuka yanu ija...nchifukwa mumakhala athu akuda alwes...* [Baobab Breeze, you are the one that commented with immaturity, low intelligence. The problem with Malawians is that you want to appear intelligent when you are dumb. You must be a Tumbuka. This is a Tumbuka trait. That is why your tribe is dark skinned always].



Griffin Johannes

Yesterday I was telling my friend, Akazi okwela matebulo ku Blues ndi ku Four Seasons aja apeweni kuwaika pakhomo. Ambiri aja ndi adziko lonse 🙋

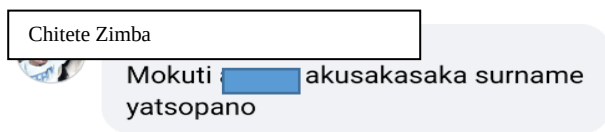
Translation: *Akazi okwela matebulo ku Blues ndi ku Four seasons aja apeweni kuwaika pakhomo. Ambiri Aja ndi adziko lonse* [Women who party at Blues and Four Seasons should be avoided when it comes to marrying them. Most of them belong to all men].



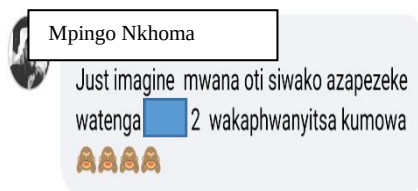
Translation: *Anapanga ma film ake mpaka ndinagonja, weakness ndi siketi* [She palyed her tricks and I was eventually seduced. Your weakness is a woman's skirt.] *ndi ntchito zake* [that's what he does] *zibambo pali siketi* [men and skirts!] *mutu umasiya kugwiratu..ndimadabwa nazo* [their brains stop functioning, I find that amusing].



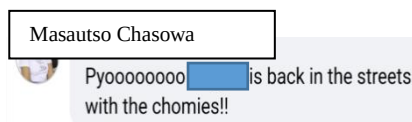
Translations: *Akuti nangolowamo kamodzi kenako ndili ndi mimba yako eeeh* [He says he entered her only once then heard she is pregnant by him, strange]. *Mimba ndi ma seconds, koma uyuyu anakolowekedwa* [Pregnancy takes seconds, but this one was duped] iye amafuna mpaka ka 4 [he wanted to have sex with her up to 4 times]. *Anaona kuti ndi pamene amafuna atchukileko naye* [She wanted to shine in his fame]. *Gregory mugala komatu mukanapola moto* [Gregory mugala please cease fire]. *Kuonekeratu kuti ngokonda mapuleni* [it's evident that he likes having unprotected sex].



Translation: *Mokuti [child's name] akusakasaka surname yatsopano* [As we speak [child's name] is hunting for a new surname].



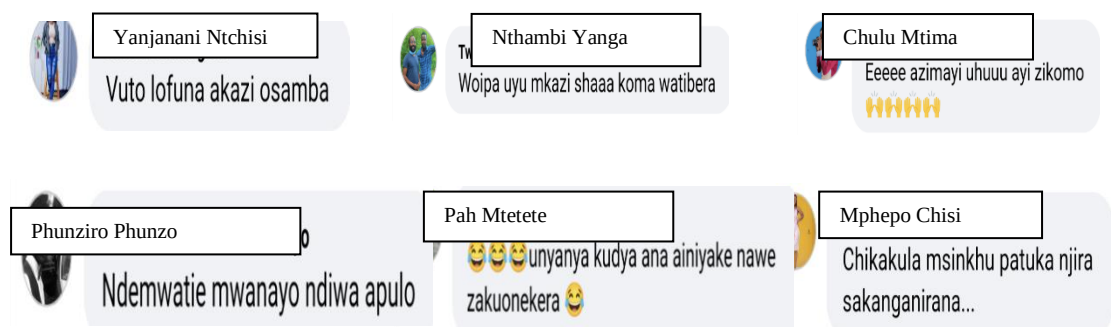
Translation: *Just imagine mwana oti siwako azapezeke watenga (John Doe) 2 wakaphwanyitsa kumowa* [Imagine a child that is not yours crashes your fancy car after getting drunk at a party].



Translation: *Chomies* [Friends].

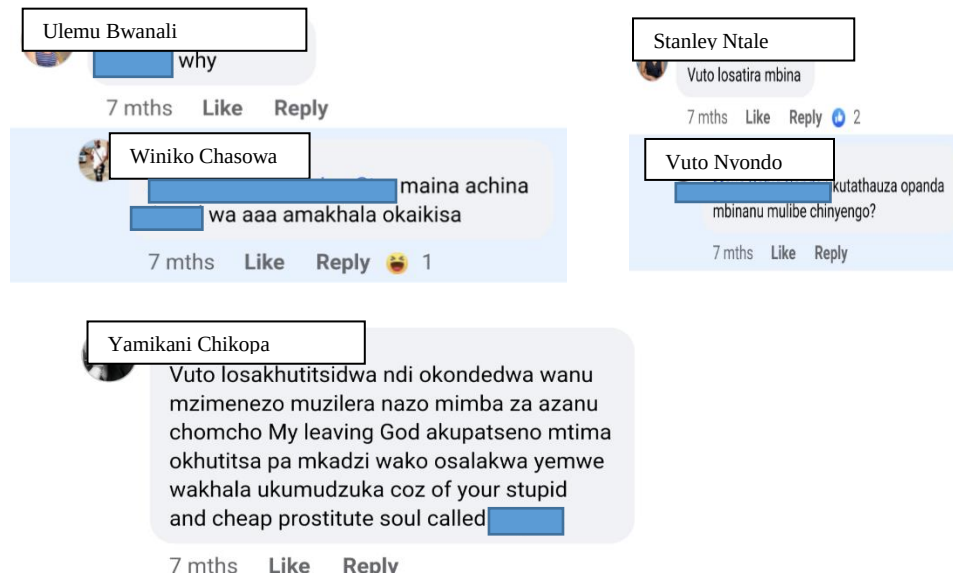


Translation: *Fyuuuu mamuna wauluka ngat aviator* [The man has flown away like an aviator] *chindege amwene* [a big aeroplane]. *Kuuluka pa 1.00 utaseka 20 pin yandio* [flown at 1.00 after staking 20 thousand kwacha meant for buying relish] *akazi osewera aviator sopano* [behold, ladies that play aviator] *kkkkk Amati aphulila chikafika pa 2.10* [She thought she would cash out when the plane reached point 2.10].



Translation: *Eeeee azimayi ayi zikomo* [wow! Women, I'm awestruck!]. *Woipa uyu mkazi shaaa koma watibera* [Bad woman, she is a thief]. *Vuto lofuna akazi osamba* [That is the problem with being attracted to good looking women]. *Chikakula*

msinkhu patuka njira sakanganirana [When a big thing comes in your path, make way]. *Unyanya kudya ana ainiyake nawe zakuonekera* [You sleep around with girls too much, now see what has happened to you]. *Ndemwatie mwanayo ndiwa apulo* [So you say the child belongs to the prophet?].



Translation: *Nzonse ndi chabe koma pa birthday pako amvekere zikomo kwambiri mzanga unandibelekela mwana akuziwa kuti amanyengesa kwa gulu uhule opanda nawo manyazi* [On your birthday she thanked you for helping her conceive a child, yet she knew she had been sleeping around with loads of men, shameless prostitution]. *Maina achina Madam Doe-wa aaa amakhala okaikisa* [Girls with names like Madam Doe's are questionable characters]. *Azimayi ambili amatelo mwina pa 10 atatu ndiomwe amanena chilungamo 7 amatilelesa anomwe omwe siathu* [Women are like this, seven out of ten women have illegitimate children in their families, only 3 are honest]. *Vuto losatira mbina* [That's the problem with going for women with big buttocks]. *Ukutanthauza opanda mbinanu mulibe chinyengo* [Do you mean ladies like you without big buttocks are honest?]. *Vuto losakhutitsidwa ndi okondedwa wanu mzinenezo muzilera nazo mimba za azanu chomcho my leaving God akupatsaseno mtima okhutisa pa mkadzi wako osalakwa yemwe wakhala ukumudzuka coz of your stupid and cheap prostitute soul called Madam Doe* [Your problem is that you are not satisfied with your first wife, you will be raising children that are not your own. May the living God give you a heart that is satisfied with your first innocent wife who you abuse because of your stupid and cheap prostitute soul called Madam Doe].

4.8 comments of sympathy, empathy and compassion

Comments of sympathy and empathy in Social media are expressions of compassion, understanding, and support towards individuals who are experiencing difficult or challenging situations. Sympathy involves acknowledging and expressing sorrow or concern from someone's pain or loss, while empathy involves understanding and sharing the feelings and emotions of another person (Duna, 2000).

In the context of social media, comments of sympathy and empathy can be found in response to various situations, such as when someone shares a personal story of hardship, loss, or emotional distress. These comments aim to provide comfort, encouragement, and solidarity to the person in need. They can take the form of kind words, supportive messages, virtual hugs, or sharing personal experiences to show that the user understands and relates to emotions being expressed. By expressing sympathy and empathy through comments on social media, users contribute to a supportive and caring online environment, fostering a sense of community and helping individuals feel less alone in their struggles (Pena et al., 2015).



The numbers above indicate that 89 people felt sad about the John Doe situation by using a sad emoji to indicate sadness either on behalf of John Doe, his child, or his partner. Whoever the emotions are directed to, they contain an element of sadness.



In the above screenshot, 5 people used the 'care' reaction which is also used to express feelings of empathy. The users below express emotions of sympathy or empathy to either John Doe's child or Madam Doe.



Sizwe Nthembu
Khululukani

Lihle Nkosi
I can feel ur pain

Jabulani Ngwenya
I can feel your pain 🙏

Thandeka Mhlanga
I can feel your pain 🙏

Esmie Note
Bas pitilizani kulera mwanayo kwakul
mwapanga kale

Nomsa Jere
Mukanangopitiriza kulera

Grace Milk
Pitilizan kumulera as step father
Shame to the poor kid 🙏🙏🙏
Zomvesa chisoni

Ayize Nene
Ziliko ❤️❤️

Sand Fluid
Yes she was wrong kulengeza pa social media that the boy is urs, koma as a man mumayeneranso kuganiza moyo wamwanayo mtsogolo muno coz social media imasunga zithu, Kodi mwanayo azachilandira bwanji? If azakhale weak in mind azatha kupanga commit suicide or ku xool osachota bwino kumene. Pali Zina timapanga titapsya mtima tisanaganize kawiri.

Mwana is innocent in this matter.

7 mths Like Reply 4

Pettie Timm I Support Ur Comment
7 mths Like Reply 1

Pettie Timm its true koma nizokwana
7 mths Like Reply 1

Therapy Talk
So you even invested in her.....So sorry bro.



Njabulo Mbuli

Zinu zake zosaknala bwino anyway waiting other side timve mbali yao

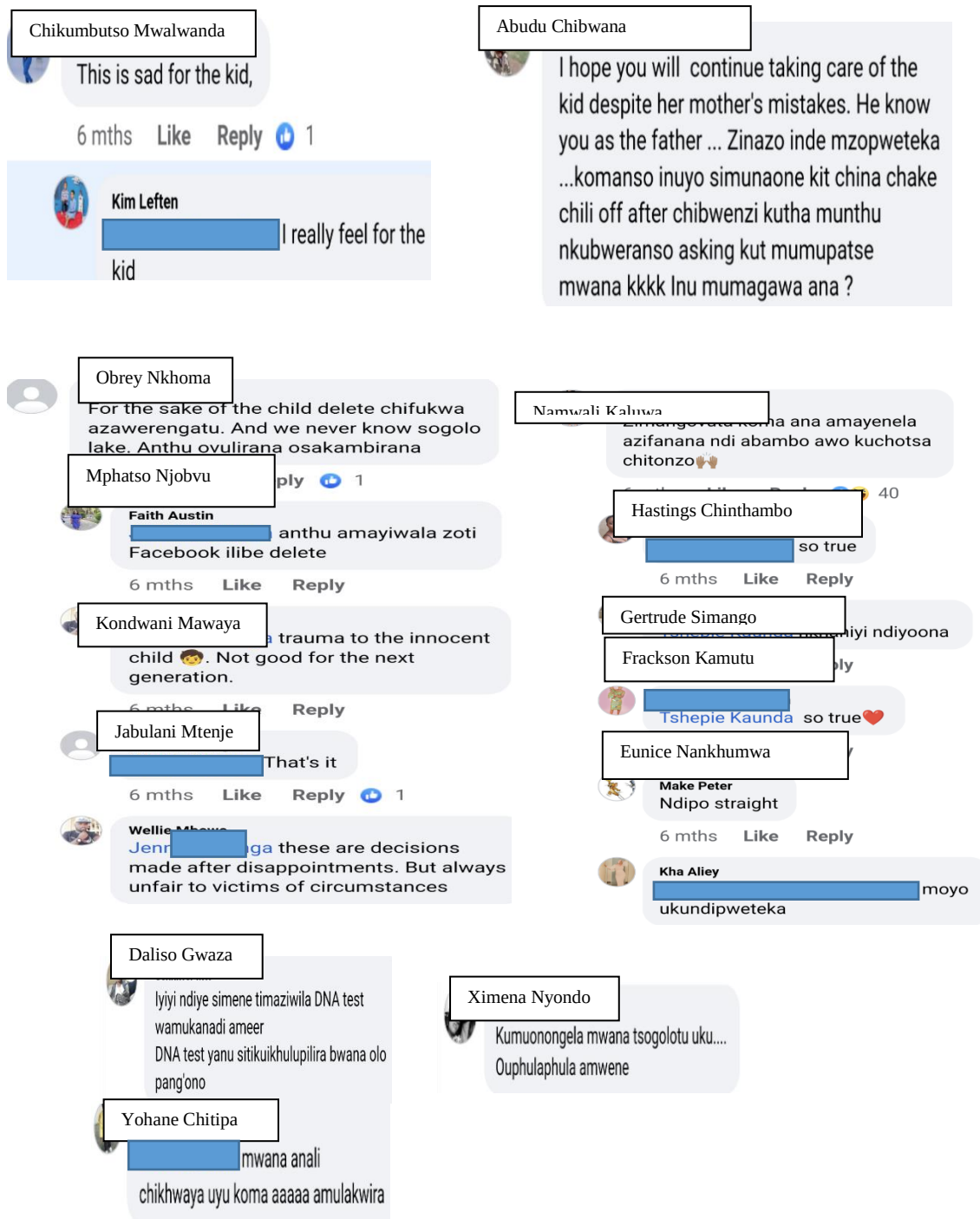
Sibusiso Mnthethwa
very true on that aspect.. he is avictim if circumstances

Gugulethu Ndaba
I just feel for the child 🙏 I hope all goes well for him.

Lindiwe Maseko
Shaaaaa ngat yabodzatu 🙏🙏🙏
wamulakwira mwana



Translations: *Khululukani* [Forgive]. *Bas pitilizani kulela mwanayo kwakukulu mwapanga kale* [Continue raising the child, you have already done the bigger part]. *Mukanangopitiliza kulera* [You should have just continued to raise the child]. *Pitilizani kumulera...zomvetsa chisoni* [Continue raising him...this is sad]. *Ziliko* [This is too much]. *Yes, she was wrong kulengeza pa social media that the boy is urs, koma as a man mumayeneranso kuganiza moyo wa mwanayo mtsogolo muno coz social media imasunga zinthu. Kodi mwanayo azachilandira bwanji? If azakhale weak in mind azatha kupanga suicide or ku xool osachota bwino kumene. Pali zina timapanga titapsya mtima tisanaganize kawiri. Mwana is innocent in this matter* [Yes, she was wrong to publicise in social media that the child is yours. But as a man, you were supposed to reflect carefully on the future of the child. Social media keeps all these comments. How will he react when he grown up and reads these comments? If he shall have a weak mind, he will commit suicide or not perform well in school. You were supposed to think twice before acting out of anger. The child is innocent in this matter]. *Zinthu zake zosakhala bwino...timve mbali inayo* {This is not good...we should hear the other side of the story}. *Koma guys inu mumaganiza kuti kudyana plain zikathera kuti?? Nthawi zambiri DNA yimako mwini ndalama* [Guys, where did you think having unprotected sex would lead you? Usually, DNA tests favour the rich]. *Shaaaa ngati yabodzatu. Wamulakwira mwana* [Wow! Unbelievable. You have wronged the child]



Translation: *Zinazo inde mzopweteka...komanso inuyo simunaone kit china chake chili off after chibwenzi kutha munthu nkubweranso asking kuti mumupatse mwana kkkk inu mumagawa ana* [The other things are indeed painful. However, didn't you question why someone asked for your child a year after breakup? Are you a sire?]. *And we never know sogolo lake. Anthu ovulirana osakambirana* [We never know the child's future. You people saw each other naked, why didn't you resolve this in private]. *Anthu amayiwa zoti Facebook alibe delete* [People forget that things

posted on Facebook can never be delete permanently]. *Zimangovuta koma ana amayenera azifanana ndi abambo awo kuchotsa chitonzo* [Ideally, a child needs to resemble its father to avoid such taunts]. *Nkhaniyi ndiyoona* [This is so true]. *Moyo ukundipweteka* [I'm deeply hurt]. *Kumuonongela mwana tsogolotu uku...Ouphulaphula amwene* [This is destroying the child's future, he was already destined for a good life]. *Mwana anali chikhwaya uyu koma aaaaa amulakwira* [The child was already rich; they have wronged him]. *Iyi ndiye simene timaziwila DNA test wamukanadi (Child's Name), DNA test yanu sindikuikhulupilira bwana olo pang'ono* [This is not how I know DNA testing. Why have you rejected your son (Mentions Child's name) boss? I do not believe this at all].

Valesi Manda

aaaah she's my friend
pa Facebook pa aah zandikhudza Kani
ndi iyeyo

Winston Malindi

agree with u totally..
nkhani ya sensitive ngt iyi busy
publicizing it like this.
One day the kid wu grow up & read this.
We know mayake analakwitsa but this
wu jxt add trauma 😞

Ulemu Phiri

Bwinotu mzanuyi asadzipe..I know she is
really depressed now

Tamala Maliseni

Children are Gift from God, imagine the
innocent baby growing with such rumors
around his world? Posting the name and
the picture of the baby I don't think that was
the right approach.... May God who knows our
Future protect this child mpaka maso
mphanya ake azakwanilitsidwe no matter
the foundation.

Sifa Nyirenda

Inu ndiye oyela kapena angwiro
mukubweletsa machimo azanu pa air
remember the bible say do not judge, I don't
know the whole story but if [redacted] did that it
was wrong and the way you are acting is
wrong too, so too wrongs can't make things
right

Rodrick Ngwira

Children are Gift from God, imagine the
innocent baby growing with such rumors
around his world? Posting the name and
the picture of the baby I don't think that was
the right approach.... May God who knows our
Future protect this child mpaka maso
mphanya ake azakwanilitsidwe no matter
the foundation.

Prisca Mwale

mwana wakwithu you are
very right . All of us commenting here
are not angels . This issue was better
solved under carpet. You are causing a
very big trauma to the child . The child
will suffer from post trauma effect for
the rest of his life . Nowadays social
media is very cruel . Some will keep all
these and he will be reminded at school
about what has happened between his
mother and " was supposed to be father
".
Let's put our two friends in prayers so
that they discuss and remove all these
things written here



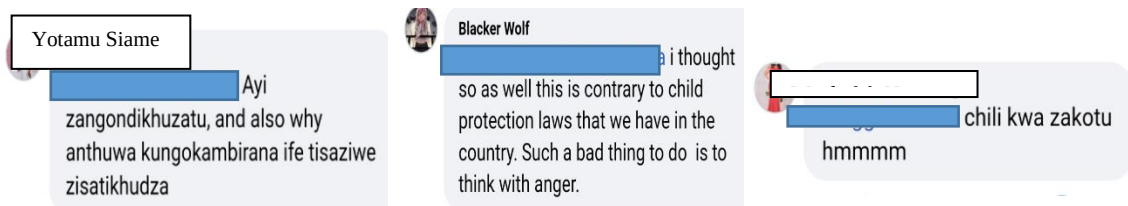
Sionse A Mwayie Phiri

Ngati analera mwana oti mimba yake
sanapereke ndi iye Joseph wa Maria what
more Inu oti munadyako ndege ndege 🙄
wamzako ndi wako yemwe
pitilizani ntchito ya Chifundo
munaiyambayo mwina azakutolani
ndiyemweyo,,,the baby is innocent and by
now you have made a big bond with him ,,
zosayendatu

Qabaniso Banda

mwana yoyi
tazingomuthandizani koma mayi akewo
usawathandize coz ziphezeka kuti mwanayo
mwamuna amene anapasidza mimba ndi
bambo ake ndi dobadoba mtown umo koma
mwina mkadziyo amangofuna mwanayo it
is ok kuti mwadziwa chowona chenicheni
musanalowesepo zambiri koma mkadziyo
mtuluki bisi ayende yake koma
mwana yoyi msamalani za mawa
sizimadziwika

Translation: *Bwinotu mzanuyi asadziphe* [Be careful make sure your partner does not comit suicide]. *Zandikhudza kani ndi iyeyo* [I am touched, so it is her]. *Mpaka maso mphenya ake azakwanilitsidwe* [Until his vision comes true]. *Inu ndiye oyela kapena angwiwo mukubweletsa machimo anzanu pa air* [Youconsider yourself holy or righteous by parading the sins of your partner publicly]. *Ngati analera mwana oti mimba yake sanapereke ndi iye Joseph wa Maria what more inu oti munadyako ndege ndege. Wamzako ndi wako yemwe pitilizani ntchito ya chifundo munaiyambayo mwina azakutolani ndiyemweyo...zosayendatu* [If Joseph accepted responsibility for Mary's pregnancy, what more with you who had sex with your partner? Your fellow man's child is equally yours. Continue with the charity work that you have astarted concerning the child, it is this same child who will help you in future]. *Mwanayo tazingomuthandizani koma amakewo usawathandize coz zipezeka kuti mwanayo mwamuna amene anapasidza mimba ndi bamboo ake ndi dobadoba mtown umo koma mwina mkadziyo amangofuna mwanayo it is ok kuti mwadziwa chowona chenicheni musanalowesepo zambiri koma mkadziyo mtulukeni basi ayendele yake koma mwanayo msamalen i za sizimadziwika* [Take good care of the child. It is possible the mother got pregnant from a poor man who cannot take care of the child, and all she wanted from him was a child. So, take care of the child and not the mother. At least you now know the truth. We never know what tomorrow holds].





Kate Molly Maiden

Koma before kupanga post pano munamuza mkaziyo or mwapangila chiphyela mtima?. Next time mudzikambirana konko not kuponya pano Facebook siankhoswe ammanjamu coz zoti mmapanga ubwenzinaye Munthuyu sitikadziwa ndepotino zavuta chombwerapano ndichani mmalo mokamba konko.China mwalakwa kumatchula anthuenawo mukatelo mukufuna kugwenyeza mabanja awo kuti amagonanso ndimkaziyo inubwanji mmaleka kungokamba mbaliyanu why mentioning enawo. Mukule munzule akulu.ndipo mwamulakwira mwana kuti azitonzedwa pa media chifukwacha mphulupulu zanu, mwapangazo mwamuika mkazipa chitonzo kuti amunaena asadzamukhulupilirensa.. Grow up ayise.. 🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏

6 mths Like Reply 2



Robertson Nyimbo

I don't agree with bringing such issues for public consumption. But anyway what do I know... 🙏

6 mths Like Reply 26

Tendai Mumba

Robertson Nyimbo I second you, what do I know too. The worse is that of mentioning other silent catalyst. My prayer is that their spouses handles this with diligence



Rachel Sea

And then the kid will one day grow up and realize that he was once the topic of discussion on social media. He will one day realize that someone posted him on social media and everyone knew that his mother 'lied' to the world that the pregnancy was for this guy yet it was for another guy. I can imagine the kind of confusion that he will have and that confusion will have the power to change his life for better or for worse... I pray it shouldn't be for worse.

I am very sure that this issue could have been sorted out kwawo konko. Kuthamangitsana akanachita kwawo konko and zikanathela konko. The kid is so innocent. He doesn't know what went wrong or what is going on. Imagine how this kid will grow up among his friends. Imagine the kind of torture that he will go through ku secondary school where students laugh, mock and chill mosekana.

Apapa sizinayende makamaka Kwa mwanayo. Koma Kwa abwanawo nde zawayendela. I just wish it wasn't posted on Facebook. And I am also thinking about the woman. Ofcoz imafika nthawi imene munthu umakolola zomwe wadzala komabe I am just thinking about her. These will be hard weeks and months for her. I can imagine her at the work place where people akulozelana kuti onamizila mimba mzake uja ndi uyutu. I can imagine the stories around her neighborhood.

Zina tikamachita tidzisamala ndithu. Ngakhale zimakhala Zokoma komabe tidzisamala ndithu. One simple action may result into alot of complications, frustrations and regrets.

I feel sorry for **Madam John Doe**

Translation: *Ayi zangondikhudzatu, and also why anthuwa kungokambirana ife tisaziwe zisatikhudze* [Well, the issue has just touched me, if anything why couldn't they just discuss it in private without letting us know?]. *Chili kwa mzakotu* [When you are not in her shoes]. *Koma before kupanga post pano munamuza mkaziyo or mwapangira chiphyela mtima? Ext time mudzikambirana konko not kuponya pano Facebook siankhoswe ammanjamu coz zoti mmapanga ubwenzinaye Munthuyu sitikadziwa ndepotino zavuta chobwerapano ndichani mmalo mokamba konko. China mwalaka kumatchula anthu ena mukatelo mukufuna kugwenyeza mabanja awo kuti amagonanso ndimkaziyo inubwanji mmaleka kungokamba mbaliyannu why mentioning enawo. Mukule munzule akulu. Ndipo mwamulakwira mwana kuti azitonzedwa pa media chifukwacha mphulupulu zanu, mwapangazo mwamuika mkazipa chitanzo kuti amunaena asadzamukhulupilirensa...Grow up aise* [Did you seek consent from your partner to post the test results here or you simply acted out of anger? Next time, resolve it in private because Facebook is not your family arbitrator or counsellor. We never knew you were in a relationship with her, why bring your issues to the public after things have soured between you two? The other thing is that, you are wrong to mention names of other men in this. Do you want to destabilise their marriages? Why didn't you just say your side of the story without mentioning other people? Get some sense. Reason like a grown up. And you have also harmed the child because he will be ridiculed on social media because of your folly. You have also exposed the mother to ridicule and other men will never trust her again. Grow up my friend].

Further Translations: *Apapa sizinayende makamaka kwa mwanayo. Koma kwa abwanawo nde zawayendela...imafika nthawi imene munthu umakolola zomwe wadzala...zina tikamachita tidzisamala ndithu. Ngakhale zimakhala Zimakoma komabe tidzisamala ndithu* [Things did not go well here, especially for the child. But things have gone well for the boss. There comes a time when you reap what you sow. We should be careful with our actions. Although some actions feel sweet, we should exercise caution regarding].

The users below indicate emotions of sympathy, empathy and compassion for John Doe.

 **Loveness Siamasiku**
I like it that you are at least speaking out instead of kuzinkweza monga achitila Ena after kuwawidwa mtima
6 mths Like Reply

 **Jayne Nachisale M'bawa**
[redacted] nthawi zinatuzimayi ndife ozikonda. Eishhhh apapa sipanayende bwino

 **Prudence Mutale**
Ukufunika therapy come I will help you

 **Edith Lloyds**
[redacted] this good talking about it mufuna zikhale mumtima kenako atenge chingwe?

 **Clement Clean**
This is lesson to all gents out there aka tidye 9/9 akufuna mwana tizidabwapo mapeto ake zimakhala ngati izi... Broth [redacted] i know it's hard n it takes kulimba mtima osazipha kmaso kubwe poyera ngati apa, Inuyo dekhani chifukv anthu ambiri pano akufuna akuoneni kupusa kwanu n kukutolani ma mistake just solve this issue out of social media.. And last thing just adopt the boy it's God plan

 **Salt Water**
Kkkkkkkkkk [redacted] zitayeni basi I know how it hurts koma basi mulekeni bola iweyo waziwa chilungamo khala ndi mtendere wako. Nafe azimai titengepo mphunziro palibe chinsinsi pa dziko pano

 **Akatama Sleep**
[redacted] eya nkulakwa ukuku

 **Buleya Sichone**
[redacted] koma kulelela mwana oti siwako ...ndikulakwa kwakukulu eeeee zovuta

 **Felistus Simukonda**
[redacted] Namfedwa sitimugwila pakamwa

 **Inonge Namalungo**
Very sad brother..

 **Deborah Kalemera**
Sorry bro zimachitika tingoyamika mulungu kut chilungamo mwachidziwa

 **Linyanga Theresa**
You are heart broken that's why you are writing all this stff. Sorry koma



Kondwani Nyambe

I would like to advice you bro these ladies are toxic and according to your status you will meet a lot of dramatic things, listen to a certain Tanzanian song that says you can give a woman everything that you have but still more she will be canvased by the charcoal sellers. Then I would also like to tell you that stay strong coz you are a man.



Moffat Armstrong Edison Mbale

A Malawi anzanga ndizowawa. I know it took a lot of courage for [redacted] to publicize this. I know it's part of healing. Komabe this lady has been disciplined pang'ono chabe by [redacted] action. Thanks to good people who alerted [redacted] thanks again to technology without which he was going to give in to this evil human being. To me I have learnt a lot from this courageous man because I was once a victim of this trick back in my school days, so I see sense in what triggered this intense and immediate action.



Moffat Armstrong Edison Mbale

[redacted] Thanks to you too for opening me up. Some human beings are evil my dear, they will have joy over someone's misery. I know you are stressed, however, believe in yourself, as long as you know that your hands are clean, just continue to be courageous. Come what may.....fight on.



H-Kritic Beats

[redacted] he's in pain ! I understand!
Akazi ausiru ayaluke Basi 📺



Dya Kartel

Mentor ndiinu a strong mwaonetsa uwachalume coz ma gyz ena bwez tikumva pano kut akukafunsa ntengo wachingwe..

Keep on moving forward osonaso mmbuyo tym ikanalipo



Fanny Window

[redacted] komano muthuyi ine ndamuvesesa 😊😊😊



Dalitso Nalumino

Okay this is too much information .. I understand your frustrations



Translations: *kuzikwenza monga achitila ena after kuwawidwa mtima* [committing suicide because of a heartbreak like others do]. *Nthawi zinatuzimayi ndife ozikonda. Eishhhh apapa sipanayende bwino* [Sometimes we women are so selfish. Things did not go well here]. *Mufuna zikhale mumtima kenako atenge chingwe* [You want him to bottle things in his heart then commit suicide] *Ukufunika therapy* [You need therapy]. *Akati tidye 9/9 akufuna mwana tizidabwapo mapeto ake zimakhala ngati izi...* It takes kulimba mtima osazipha kmaso kubwera poyera ngati apa. Inuyo dekhani chifukwa anthu ambiri pano akufuna kuoneni kupusa kwanu n kukutolani ma mistakes [It takes courage to not commit suicide and come in the open. You should relax at this time because people want to tempt you so they can accuse you of making mistakes]. *Zitayeni basi...koma basi mulekeni bola iweyo waziwa chilungamo khala ndi mtendere wako. Nafe azimai titengepo mphunziro palibe chinsinsi pa dziko pano* [Let go of everything, at least you now know the truth: be at peace with yourself. As women, we have learnt that there is no secret on this planet]. *Koma kulelela mwana*

oti siwako...ndikulakwa kwakukulu eeeee zovuta [Raising a child that is not yours is very wrong]. *Eya nkulakwa ukuku* [Yes, this is so wrong]. *Bro zimachitika tingoyamika mulungu kut chilungamo mwachidziwa* [Bother, these things happen. We should thank God that you now know the truth].

Further Translations *Namfedwa sitimugwira pakamwa* [Never silence the bereaved who mourns]. *A Malawi anzanga ndizowawa* [My fellow Malawians, it is painful]. *Mentor ndiinu a strong mwaonetsa uwachalume coz ma gys ena bwenz tikumva pano kut akukafunsa ntengo wachingwe* [Mentor you are strong: you have shown your masculinity because many guys would have committed suicide]. *Koma munthuyi ine ndamumvesesa* [I understand him]. *Achimwene* [Elder brother]. *Akazi ausiru ayaluke basi* [Silly ladies must be exposed]. *Akazi ngati ali ndikuthekera koswera mtima John Doe enafe akavunyani achabe chae atiswera mapapo omwetu* [If ladies can break John Doe's heart, what about poor men like us, they would destroy our lungs]. *Koma ndipo ayayaya* [This is something else, you are right]. *Eish ndipo...izi za DNA zi ku Malawi zitakhala zotchipa ine apaaa ambiri tikhala opanda Ana amati timafanananao dzipumi aja* [If DNA testing was cheap in Malawi, I swear most of you would have realized that those children with foreheads that resemble yours are not yours]. *Ndipod bro* [True brother].



Deborah Kalemera

Sorry bro zimachitika tingoyamika mulungu kut chilungamo mwachidziwa

Rashid Mphatso

Pa post iyi utha kupezapo wa banja. Pachuluka ma wounded soldiers. Shattered hearts. Ena angotsala kachidutswa kamodzi kudikira ena akamalizitse.



Blue jay

I would like to advice you bro these ladies are toxic and according to your status you will meet a lot of dramatic things, listen to a certain Tanzanian song that says you can give a woman everything that you have but still more she will be canvased by the charcoal sellers. Then I would also like to tell you that stay strong coz you are a man.

Aisha Matola

Kkkkkkkkk Ibrahim zitayeni basi I know how it hurts koma basi mulekeni bola iweyo waziwa chilungamo khala ndi mtendere wako. Nafe azimai titengepo mphunziro palibe chinsinsi pa dziko pano

Zainabu Mwale

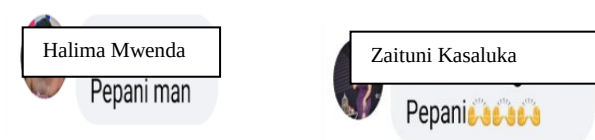
I don't see any problem by posting it here, Nkhani inamukulira munthuyi koneka you die with depression fukwa chosafuna kuwauxa anzanu mavuto anu..

Sorry bro zimachitika tingoyamika mulungu mulungu kuti chilungamo mwachidziwa [Sorry brother, let us be thankful that at least you know the truth]. *sanga Nkhani inamukulira munthuyi koneka you die with depression fukwa chosafuna kuwauza anzanu mavuto anu* [This issue was too much for him, that's why some kill themselves because of depression caused by silence].

The users below express emotions of sympathy and empathy to the other men suspected to be involved in the John Doe case.



Translations: *Kumangotchula mayina azako ngati achina Buluma uli chete anyway sizinayende koma* [You are at peace exposing other people's names just like Buluma? Anyway, things did not go well]. *Ali Duu* [Quietly so]. *Eti amatero* [Is that how things need to be done]. *Zosayenda town yamanga ankolo* [Not nice, things are tough out there].



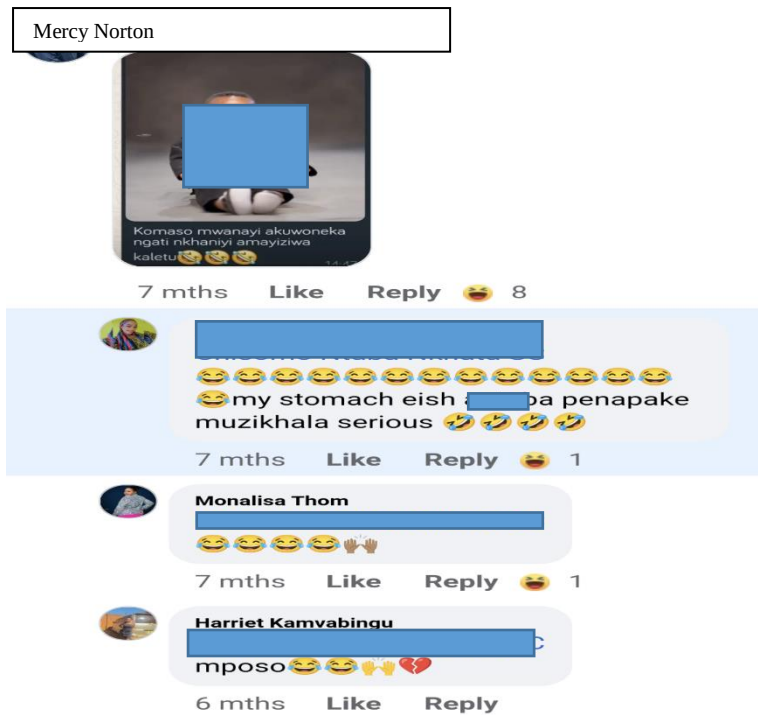
Translations: *Pepani* [Sorry]. The above users seek to soothe John Doe.

4.9 Comments of Sarcasm and Allegory

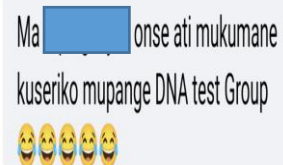
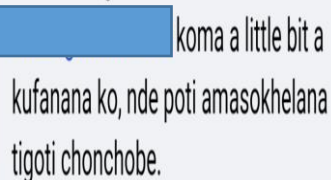
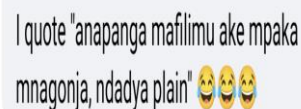
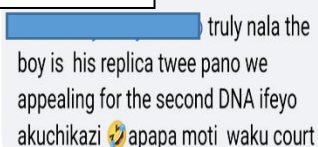
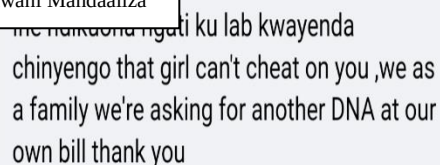
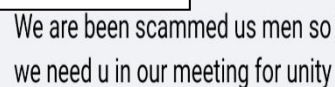
Sarcastic comments contain irony used to mock or convey contempt. The mocking in sarcastic comments often involves a harsh and severe tone. Allegorical comments usually involve metaphor or symbolism. Allegory is a literary device that uses figurative language or actions to convey hidden meanings or moral lessons. Allegorical comments may or may not be characterised by mockery, a sharp contrast from comments of sarcasm (Bruns, 1988). Below are comments from the John Doe case which carry the elements of sarcasm.

The image displays a collection of 12 social media comment screenshots, arranged in two columns. Each comment is attributed to a specific user, with their name in a white box above the comment text. The comments are as follows:

- Zuvena Chimombo:** Tchuzi kaye, munangodzuka nkuganiza zopanga DNA? Kapena mwanayo anaulula yekha?
- Latifa Chisale:** unyanya kudyana ainiyake nawe zakuonekera
- Aasiya Chiwaya:** Vuto losatira mbina
- Hamidu Kaponda:** Ndemwatie mwanayo ndiwa apulo
- Zuvena Chimombo:** Kodi mukuti ndatani, ndisiyeni ndikhale ndi mtendere wanga ine
- Man Moses:** nde mufananako tu kapena chifukwa chomuthandizako ?
- Mwana ndi wanga:** (Redacted name)
- Halima Mwenda:** Koma nkaziyu ndi machine olera mwanayu sangasowe
- Abdalla Mwalabu:** Mwana oti siwako azililira chips iiiii
- Sandra Majawa:** amafuna Rich Dad for her son Abale zangovuta
- Chavuta Blantyre:** bambo amwana alipo kale, alera zimenezo



Translation: *Tchuzi kaye, munangodzuka nkuganiza zopanga DNA? Kapena mwanayo anaulula yekha?* [Excuse me for a moment, did you just wake up and decided to conduct a DNA test, or it is the child that told you to do so?]. *Kodi mukuti ndatani, ndisiye ndikhale ndi mtendere wanga* [What are you people saying? Leave me alone in peace]. *Vuto losatira mbina* [The problem of going for women with big buttocks]. *Ndie mwati mwanayo ndiwa apulo* [So, you say the child belongs to a prophet?]. *Unyanya kudya ana ainiyake nawe zakuonekera* [You sleep around with girls too much, now is time for you to feel the heat]. *Komanso mwanayi akuoneka ngati nkhanayi amayidziwa kaletu* [Seems this child already knew the issue]. *Eish antaba penapake muzikhala serious* [Mr Ntaba learn to be serious]. *Amafuna Rich Dad for her son Abale. Zangovuta* [She wanted a rich dad for her son. Its just that the plan has foiled]. *Mwana ndi wanga* [The Child is mine]. *Nde mufananako tu kapena chifukwa chomuthandizako* [You and the Child somehow resemble is it because you helped him sleep with the mother]. *Koma nkaziyundi machine olera mwanayu sangasowe* [The woman is hot, she won't fail to find another man to take care of the child]. *Bambo a mwana alipo kale, alera zimenezo* [The biological father is around, he will take care of the child]. *Mwana oti siwako azililira chips iiii* [Imagine a child that is not yours should be crying that you buy chips for him].





Ukufunika therapy... [You need some therapy]. Puleni [Plain Sex]. Vuto lomagonana ndi amuna ambiri umasowa motchula adadi as a result umayamba kubwebwetula aliyense nde wagwa nayo [The problem of having multiple sexual partners is that you fail to identify the real father of the child. You end up randomly picking men to make them the father of the child: you have goofed]. Ine ndikuona ngati ku lab kwayenda chinyengo [I suspect some corruption was involved to generate these lab results]. And I quote 'anapanga ma film ake mpaka ndinagonja' ayi ziko atchaman [And I quote 'she played her tricks on me and managed to seduce me, that's all I can say]. Truly nala the boy is his replica twee pano we appealing for the second DNA ifeyo akuchikazi apapa moti waku court [Truly the boy is his replica, I swear, we are appealing for a second DNA test in court as her relatives]. Nane ndikubwera ungondipatsa mwana basi [I am also coming to you, I want you to get me pregnant]. I quote 'anapanga mafilimu ake mpaka mnagonja, ndadya plain [she played her tricks on me and eventually managed to seduce me, and I had unprotected sex with her]. Lero ticheza kuno hettii...tikapumadi kumwamba [Today we will be busy chatting here alright? We will rest in heaven]. Amwene ndinu olemera zoonadi tikudziwa komano komereni mtima mkaziyo mukupemphani ingondipatsani ineyo, mwanayo ndiribe nazo vuto ndilera bola mkaziyo ndizikhala naye pafupi [Brother, I know you are truly rich. However, show me some grace, give me the woman, I will take care of the child so long as I live close to the woman]. Inetu I warned her koma ndiosava mchemwali wangayi, pano ndi izi mmmh [I warned this sister of mine but she does not take advice, and see what is happening now].

Further Translations: *komano akuti 'chibwenzi chitatha after a year anandipedza kumandiuza kuti all she want is mwana for me* [He says, after the relationship had ended, after one year, she came asking me to get her pregnant]. *Ma Kondwani Y onse ati mukumane kuseriko mupange DNA test Group* [All Kondwani Ys should meet and create a DNA test group behind the curtains]. *Koma a little bit a kufanana ko, nde poti amasonkherana tingoti chonchobe* [He, however, resembles the child, which makes some sense because each one contributed to the conception of the child]. *Chimakzi chake mchakwa m'bama chamatako chikatu ase* [The woman being spoken about is the one from M'bama, the one with big buttocks, my friend]. *Zimachitika koma* [It happens, however]. *Iye amafuna mpaka ka 4* [Did he want to have sex with her 4 times for her to believe that he is the father of the child]. *Akuti nangolowa kamodzi kenako ndili ndi mimba yako eeeeeh* [He says he just entered her once and soon she heard her saying she was pregnant, wow!]. *kuoneseratu kuti ngokonda mapuleni* [It is clear he loves unprotected sex]. *Akazi okwela matebuli ku Blues ndi ku Four seasons aja apeweni kuwaika pakhomo. Ambiri Aja ndi adziko lonse* [Women that party at Blues and Four Seasons should be avoided when it comes to marriage. Most of them belong to all men].



John Mulungu

Dyomba oyamba kupangisa DNA wapanga mbiri 😊



Natasha Selemani

Timuone maiyo wachaulele chosadzadzayo



Boypeq Ng'ambi

🤔🤔 fear woman



Phiri Kachaso

Komanso ndiye kuti babawa akudzidziwa bwino bwino chomwe iwo Ali that's why anaganiza zopanga DNA as a back up for him, komanso DNA yawoyi might be yogula anthu andalamawa amakhala easy kukhotetsa chilungamo, A suwedi tiuzeni komwe kuli ana anu mwina tidziwe ngati anawo alimo nchiunomo kapena ayi?? Coz sizoonayi simungangotutumuka kkkkk



Nia Mbewe

muchepese ma plain akulu.

6 mths Like Reply 🤔👍 7



Chikondano Mwale

paja nanunso mumagwa chifufu nd nkhan za eni wake 🤔🤔

Mwai Bondo

ati akavunyani
tilibe kothawira



Make Honour

Ku Malawi tikapuma kumwamba



Thoko Beza

Nde mwasakha kuyambitsa mkaniyi month-
end kulakwatu

Chisangalalo Kumwenda

Pa post iyi utha kupezapo wa banja.
Pachuluka ma wounded soldiers. Shu
hearts. Ena angotsala kachidutswa ka
kudikira ena akamalazitse.



Martin Anjelz

Ndiwe Dolo ase 🍌🍌 Watitsekula Mmaso..
Tizingochinda Basi
Sinzakwatila



Dalitsani Mazunzo

Pyooooooooo [redacted] is back in the streets
with the chomies!!

Tembo Zomba

[redacted] Mbina ili mwa mkaziyu and
mahip nkan anagonja 🤔

6 mths Like Reply

Chiku Chunda

[redacted] eeh ndichi mkazi
akulu 😊😊

6 mths Like Reply 2

Mphatso Malenga

[redacted] nde ulimotu
mwendowo 🙌🙌🙌😊😊😊

6 mths Like Reply 3

Zayne Lengwe

[redacted] Lamar
komano muthuyi ine
ndamuvesesa 😊😊😊😊😊

6 mths Like Reply

Zikomo Ndata

[redacted] ruja ndi chimkazi

6 mths Like Reply

Malindi Zimba

Nde uyambe kusaka bambo amwana
lero 😊😊 apezeka??? Gangster Sali stable

6 mths Like Reply 30

Ulemuwathu Nkhoma

[redacted] apapa achedwa sapezeka

6 mths Like Reply 1

Nkosi Mulanje

[redacted] she knows who shots it

6 mths Like Reply 2

Mzuzu Chulu

[redacted] akumudziwa kale ameneyo
amamuthandizaso 😊😊😊😊😊

6 mths Like Reply

Bwanali Lengwe

[redacted] ai ubwino wake akut ma
bills akuchipatala amapelekedwa ndi
ma biggy ambiri 😊😊😊😊😊

6 mths Like Reply

Tiyamike Moyo

[redacted] aya kobas
amamuthandizanso

Chipo Mphande
Moku [redacted] akusakasaka surname
yatsopano

6 mths Like Reply 🤔 23

Zikani Chitsanzo
Ma
options Alipo mbwee!

6 mths Like Reply 🤔 1

Mlotha Mtima
[redacted] ndipo nde mbweee, asankhe
ntundu wa anthu amene afune kukhala

6 mths Like Reply 🤔 1

Misozi Chikoti
[redacted]
🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔 brother wako
wadandaula tu

6 mths Like Reply

Emmanuel Mwaungulu
[redacted]
[redacted] koma ada 🤔🤔🤔

Kumbukani Mbewe

[redacted] Kuvomere mimba zaka zino kutivuta ,
mwana kubadwa ngati sakufanana ndi wina
aliyense wakwanu DNA iyendepo basi

HONEY MOON 1 year later.. 🤔



Thandazo Chirwa

Pa Malawi kulibe kupuma 🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔 and
tisaseke kwambiri nthawi inaliyonse
amalawi atha kupanga yako 🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔

6 mths Like Reply 1

Kleff C
[redacted] OK chabwino
🤔🤔

Mphatso Mbundula

"Anapanga ma film ake mpaka ndinagonja"
weakness ndi siketi 🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔

6 mths Like Reply 38

Mlaka Msozi
[redacted] ndi ntchito zake 🤔🤔🤔

Ndirande Masanje
[redacted] zibambo

Chimwala Mkandawire
[redacted] 1

[redacted] mutu umasiya kugwiratu..
ndimadabwa nazo

Mzimba Zambo
[redacted] Sketi nakatenje

Thando Nyirenda
[redacted] that is the downfall of alot
of men ,skirt 🤔🤔🤔

6 mths Like Reply 1

Zabwino Banda

Baby mama telling baby daddy mopanda
manyazi kut "ndimangomudyera ndalama"
relationship yotan imeneyi?

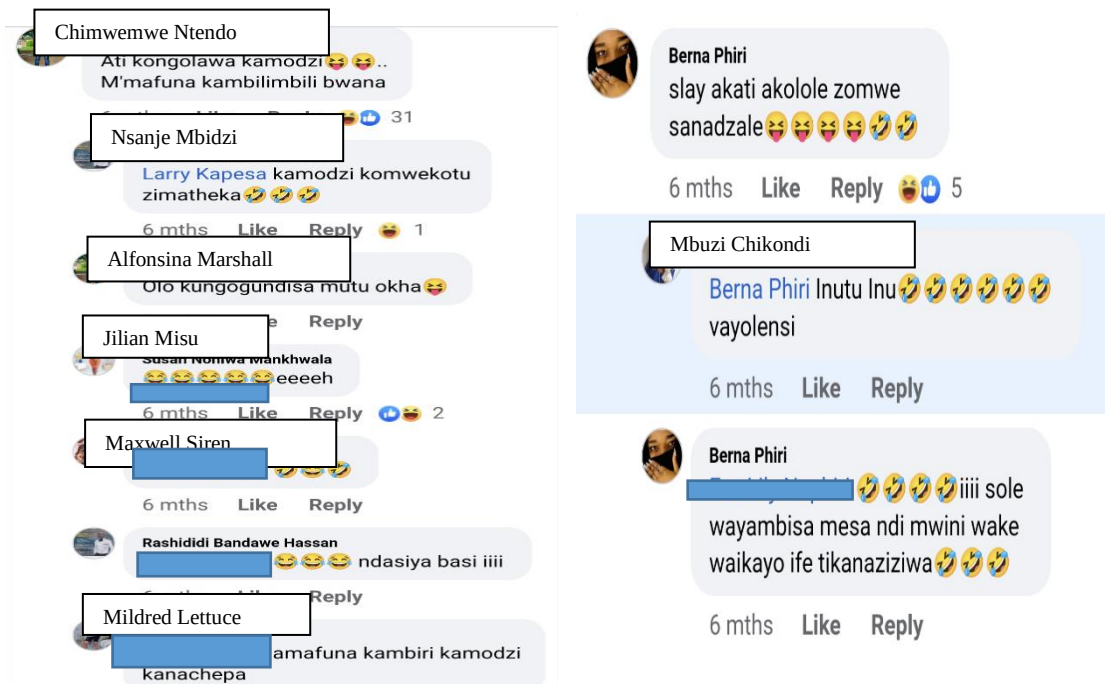
6 mths Like Reply

Zikani Chonso
[redacted] abale inu
[redacted]

6 mths Like Reply

Nthawi Kaliati
[redacted] not a normal
relationship. Take away iyi.

151



Komanso ndiye kuti babawa akudziwa bwino bwino chomwe iwo ali that's why anaganiza zopanga DNA as back up for him, komanso DNA might be yogula anth andalamawa amakhala easy kukhotetsa chilungamo. A John Doe tiuzeni komwe kuli ana anu mwina tidziwe ngati anawo alimo nchiunomo kapena ayi kkkkCoz sizoonatu simungangotutumuka kkkk [This man knows himself and that's why he went for the DNA test to protect himself. And this lab report was possibly obtained corruptly, and it is easy for the rich to twist the truth. John Doe, tell us where your other children are and show us their DNA test results too]. Muchepese ma plain akulu [Stop engaging in unprotected sex]. Paja nanunso mumagwa chifufu nd nkhan za eni wake [I know that you are too keen to know other people's private issues]. Dyomba oyamba kupangitsa DNA [The first Yao to conduct a DNA test]. Timuone maiyo wachaulele chosadzadzayo [Show us this woman who has overflowing grace]. Mbina ili mwa mkaziyu and mahip nkan anagonja [The big buttocks and the wide hips this woman has could have easily seduce me].

Further Translations: *Eeh ndichi mkazi akulu [She is a real woman my friend] Nde ulimotu mwendowo [And she has some legs on her] Komano munthuyi ndamumvesesa [I now understand him]. Uja ndi chimkazi [She is a real woman]. Osangoti ndinato ta [Why can't you just say you had an erection]. Siketi anakonza siyamasewera [Do not*

underestimate the power of a skirt]. *Mwendo wanu uli kutheraa mama* [Your legs are beautiful mama]. *Mokuti (mentions child's name) akusakasaka surname yatsopano* [(Mention's child's name), right now the child is hunting for a new surname]. *Ma options alipo mbwee!* [She has loads of other options]. *Ndipo nde mbweee, asankhe ntundu wa anthu amene afune kukhala* [Loads of them, she should choose the kind of people to which she wants to belong]. *Brother wako wadandaulatu* [Your brother is concerned]. *Koma ada* [Wow!]. *Nde uyambe kusaka bambo amwana lero apezeka? Gangster Sali stable* [So she must start looking for the father of the child today? Will she find him? A gangster is not stable]. *Akumudziwa kale ameneyo amamuthandizaso* [She already knows who the father is and he is already supporting her financially]. *Ai ubwino wake akut ma bills akuchitapatala amapelekedwa ndi ma biggy ambiri* [The good thing is that her hospital bills were being paid for by many rich men]. *Eya kobasi amathandizanso* [yes, they were also giving her financial support]. *Ati akavunyani tilibe kothawira* [They say we poor men have nowhere to run to]. *Ku Malawi tikapuma kumwamba* [Malawians will rest in heaven]. *Nde mwasankha kuyambitsa nkaniyi month-end kulakwatu* [You have chosen to start discussion this issues month-end, this is wrong]. *Pa Malawi kulibe kupuma and tisaseke kwambiri nthawi inaliyonse amalawi atha kupanga yako* [There is no resting in Malawi, we should not laugh at what has happened: anytime it may be your turn to be trolled by Malawians]. *Ok Chabwino* [Alright].

Further translations: *kuvomera mimba zaka zino kutivuta, mwana kubadwa ngati sakufanana ndi wina aliyense wakwanu DNA iyendepo basi* [accepting paternity will be difficult, if the child does not resemble anyone from your family, DNA testing will be the way to go]. *Pa post iyi utha kupezapo wa banja. Pachuluka ma wounded soldiers...Ena angotsala kachidutswa kamodzi kudikira ena akamalizitse* [You can be lucky to find a marriage partner under this post. There are loads of wounded soldiers. Some have only one small piece of their heart remaining waiting for someone to finish it off]. *Ndiwe dolo ase. Watitsekula mmaso...Tizingochinda Basi. Sinzakwatila* [You are clever, you have opened my eyes. I will just be fucking around. I will not marry]. *Chomies* [Friends]. *Baby mama telling baby daddy mopanda manyazi kuti 'ndimangomudyera ndalama' relationship yotani imeneyi?* [The woman telling the man shamelessly that she eats other men's money, what kind of relationship is this?]. *Abale inu* [I wonder too]. *Anapanga ma film ake mpaka ndinagonja weakness ndi*

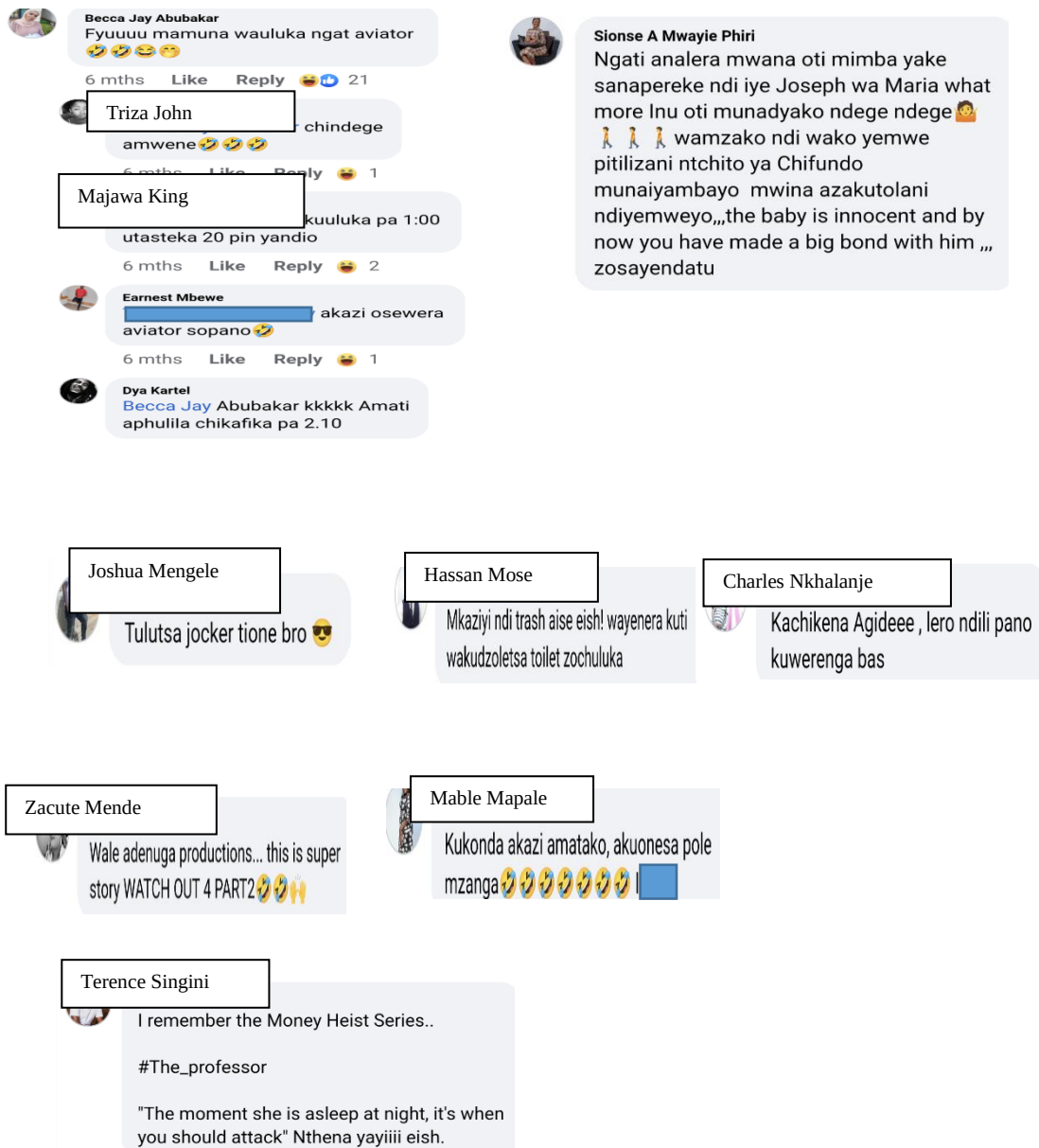
siketi [She did her tricks and I got seduced, the skirt is your weakness]. *Ndi ntchito zake* [It is his behaviour]. *Zibambo pali siketi* [Men and skirts]. *Mutu umasiya kugwiratu* [The brain stops functioning: I wonder]. *Sketi nakatenje* [The skirt is something else]. *Mwangoyezetsa DNA basi?* [You only conducted a DNA test?] *hahahahah mumafuna ayezeseo china cha* [what other thing did you want him to test for] *apopo anakayeza BP...Blood group and ujeni* [He was also supposed to test for blood pressure, blood group and other things]. *Ujeniyo makamaka* [the other things especially] *kkkkkkkk...Ujeni uyu...Corona. Ndaiwala china ngat?* [Corona virus too, have a I forgotten any other thing?]. *Sono inu kungokuuzani kuti akufuna m'berekere mwana after she left for a year... inu nthawi yomweyo shaft kuima. Munthu sukhala dolo nthawi zonse eti asaaa* [She came back after a one year break up, asked you for a child and immediately you had an erection. One cannot be a victor all times].

Further translations: *Ex sizinthutu* [Ex-lovers are cunning]. *Hahahaha asis anga dabwi kudabwanazo* [my sister, I am surprised]. *Chibwenzi kutha a year inu nkuzangolowa plain. Koma anthu mmapanga masewela nkona amakunamizila...koma munayezetsa* [A relationship ends and after a year you go straight into having sex without protection. People can be so immature no wonder she implicated you]. *Ndi azibambotu awa ntengo wa condom sakudziwa nkomwe* [These are big boys, they do not know the price of condoms]. *Eish zoopsya aise ndi azibambodi* [Oh, my goodness! That's dangerous, they are big boys indeed]. *Nthawi alibe* [He has no time] *amakwa* [He is on point]. *Just imagine mwana oti siwako azapezeke watenga John Doe 2 wakaphwanyitsa kumowa* [Imagine a child that is not yours crashes your fancy car after getting drunk at a party]. *Ndye DNA test result ili muthumba uziwa dad kunotu John Doe 2 yalowa ngalande heeee* [With the DNA test results in your pocket and you get to hear that he has driven John Doe2 into the drain. *Slay akati akolole zomwe sanadzale* [A slay queen trying to reap where she did not sow]. *Inutu inu vayolensi* [you're violent].

Further translations: *iiii sole wayambisa mesa ndi mwini wake waikayo ife tikanaziziwa* [I am sorry, she started it all, we would not have known if he had not posted it]. *Ati kongolawa kamodzi. M'mafuna kambilimbili bwana* [You are saying you had sex only once, so you wanted to sleep with her many times, boss]. *Kamodzi komwekotu zimatheka* [Once is enough]. *Olo kungogundisa mutu okha* [Even mere

genital contact]. *Ndasiya basi* [I am done]. *Amafuna kambiri kamodzi kanachepa* [He wanted to have it many times, once was not enough for him].

Below is a presentation of comments that contain allegory, a literary device that uses symbolism to convey hidden meanings.



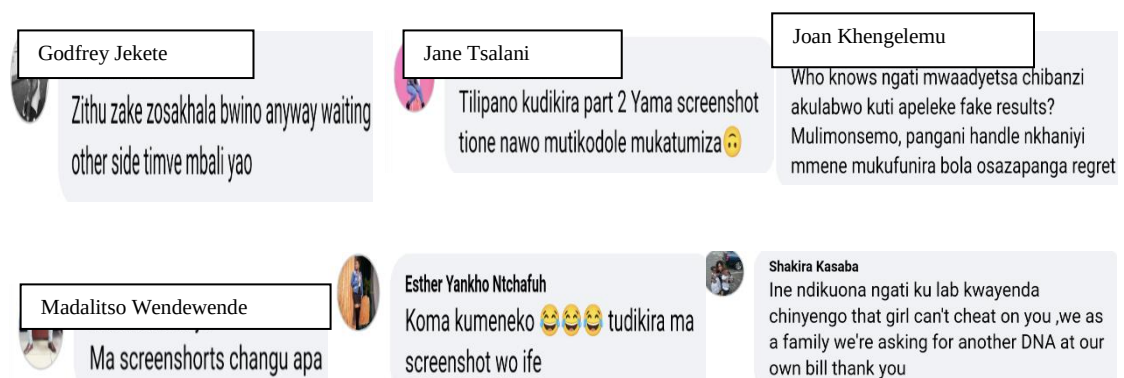
Translation: *Fyuuuu mamuna wauluka ngat aviator* [The man has flown away likethe aviator] *chindege amwene* [a big aeroplane]. *Kuuluka pa 1.00 utaseka 20 pin yandio* [flying at 1.00 after staking 20 thousand Kwacha meant for food] *akazi osewera aviator sopano* [ladies who play aviator] *kkkkk Amati aphulila chikafika pa 2.10* [She through she would cash out at 2.10]. *Ngati analera mwana oti mimba yake sanapereke ndi iye Joseph wa Maria what more inu oti munadyako ndege ndege.*

Wamzako ndi wako yemwe pitilizani ntchito ya chifundo munaiyambayo mwina azakutolani ndiyemweyo...zosayendatu [If Joseph accepted responsibility of Mary's pregnancy, what more with you who had sex with your partner. Your fellow man's child is also your child. Continue the charity work that you have started over the child, it's this same child that will help you in future].

Further translations: *Tulutsa joker tione bro* [Show us the joker brother]. *Nthena yayi eish* [Not that way please]. *Lelo tiswera pano ndithu* [We will be here all day following developments]. *Kachikena Agideee, lero ndipo pano kuwerenga basi* [Lets do this one more time, I will be here reading everything]. *Mkaziyi ndi trash aise eish!* *Wayenera kuti wakudzoletsa toilet zochuluka* [This woman is trash, my friend eish! She appears to have smeared you with a lot of shit]. *Kukonda akazi amatako, akuonesa pole mzanga* [you love women with big buttocks, they have taught you a lesson].

4.10 Agnostic And Gnostic/Epistemological Comments

The term 'agnostic' comes from the Greek word 'agnostos', meaning unknown or unknowable. In the context of the discussions or comments on social media, an agnostic comment expresses uncertainty, acknowledges the limitations of one's knowledge, or takes a more open-minded stance (Merriam-Webster, n.d). Agnostic comments tend to recognise that there may be multiple valid perspectives or that the topic at hand lacks definitive answers. These comments often invite further discussion and encourage the exploration of different viewpoints. Below are comments on the John Doe post that appear to be agnostic:





Keziah Mboni

Kodi zilipatidi?



Elizabeth Wasiya

I'm not an expert.

But analysing the situation from the beginning to end, I cannot say anything because as i said in the beginning,

I'm not an expert 😊



Dorcus Milward

Koma guys inu mumaganiza kuti kudyana plain zikathera kuti??Nthawi zambiri DNA yimakomera mwini ndalama

I am just feeling sorry for the poor little one.



Jayne Moyo

For the sake of the child delete chifukwa azawerengatu. And we never know sogolo lake. Anthu ovulirana osakambirana



Brenda Mputi

██████████

ndizofinikila kunva mbali zonse



Grace Mwapasa

██████████

Komano timve mbali ya mkaziyo



Brenda Mputi

██████████

ndipo chenicheni chamupangitsa to go for DNA sichikunveka bwino



Nara Mengi

Its possible to bribe the LAB guys to give results in your favour... the truth dwells in the most high... not this paper things



Elia Nyumba

Simunaganizebe mofasa bwana? Tikufuna nao mascreenshot wo



Sibongile Jere

Nde za surname zikhala bwanji.. muisamusa?



Aisha Masada

Ma sreenshot wo ndye akuchedwatu



Levison S Kanyamula Jnr

Tulutsa joker tione bro 🤔



Robertson Nyimbo

██████████

we did not see anything



Beckie Dytone

██████████

neso langa funso ndilime eli kut sizingatheke to bribe ku Lab ?



Sekelera Fahadi

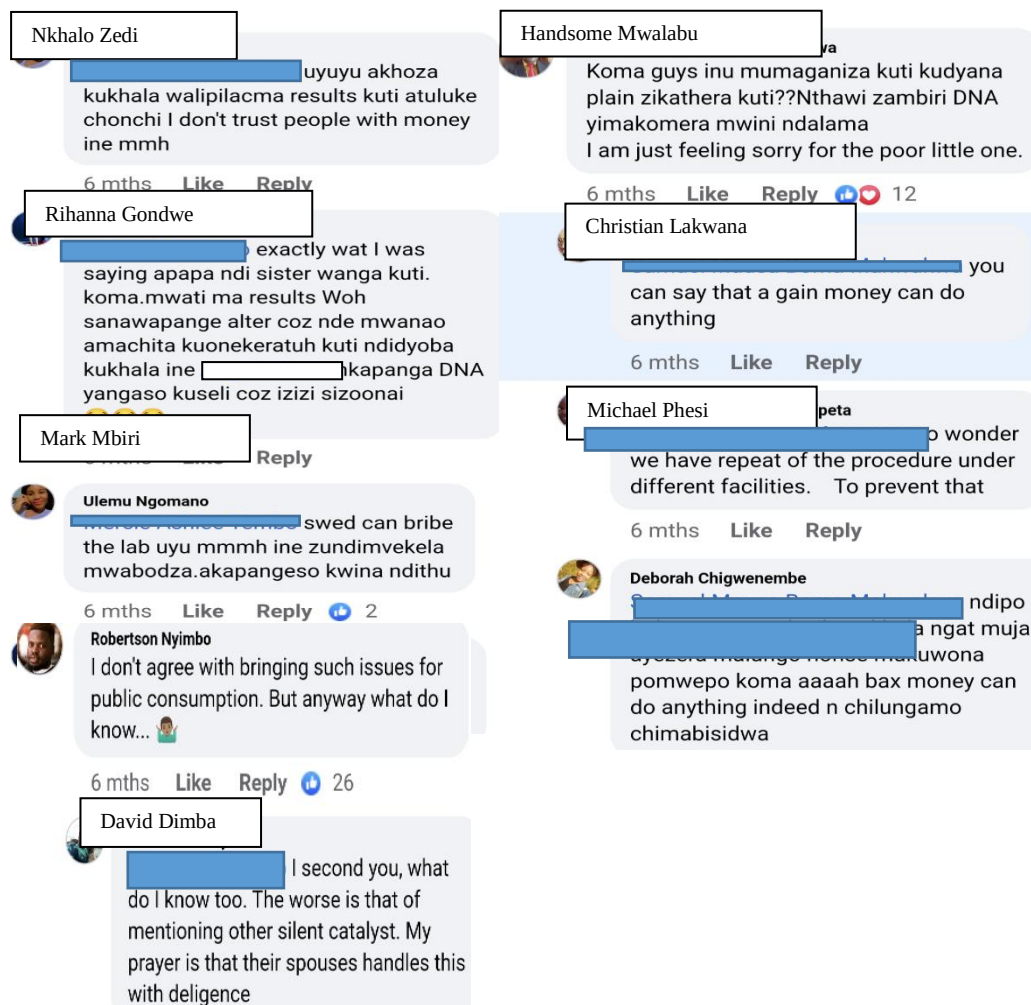
Inu ndiye oyela kapena angwiro mukubweletsa machimo azanu pa air remember the bible say do not judge, I don't know the whole story but if angela did that it was wrong and the way you are acting is wrong too, so too wrongs can't make things right



Memory Kwelepeta

Kod chakuchitisa mchan kt muganize zopita kuchipatala for DNA test?

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Translations: *Zinthu zake zosakhala bwino...timve mbali inayo* [This is not good...we should hear the other side of the story]. *Who knows ngati mwaadyetsa chibanzi akulabwo kuti apeleke fake results? Mulimonsemo, pangani handle nkhanayi mmene mukufunira bola osazapanga regret* [Who can tell if you have not bribed the lab technicians to present fake results? Whichever way, handle this case the way you want, just don't regret in future]. *Ma Screenshots changu apa* [Be quick with the screenshots]. *Ine ndikuona ngati ku lab kwayenda chinyengo* [I think there is something fishy with the lab results]. *Koma kumeneko. Tikudikira ma screenshot wo ife* [Oh yes, we are waiting for the screenshots]. *Kodi zilipatidi* [Give us an update of the issue].

Further translations: *Koma guys inu mumaganiza kuti kudyana plain zikathera kuti? Nthawi zambiri DNA yimakomera mwini ndalama* [Guys, what did you think having unprotected sex was going lead to? DNA tests mostly favour the the rich]. *For the sake of the child delete chifukwa azawerengatu. And we never know sogolo lake. Anthu ovulirana osakambirana* [For the sake of the child please delete because he will grow up and see this. And we never know what kind of future he has. You people saw each other naked, why not settle this privately?]. *Komano timve mbali ya mkaziyo* [Let us hear the woman's side of the story]. *Ndizofunikila kumva mbali zonse* [It is important to hear both sides of the story]. *Ndipo chenicheni chamupangitsa to for DNA sichikumveka bwino* [The reason he opted to go for DNA testing is not convincing]. *Simunaganizebe mofasa bwana? Tikufuna nao mascreenshot wo* [Haven't you thought over it boss? We want to see the screenshots]. *Inenso langa funso ndilime eli kuti sizingatheke to bribe ku Lab* [I have the same question, is it not possible to bribe the lab technicians for them to generate fake results?]. *Tulutsa Joker tione bro* [Send us the evidence, let us see it brother].

Futher translations: *Ma screenshot wo ndye akuchedwatu* [The screenshots are taking too long]. *Inu ndiye oyela kapena angwiro mukubweretsa achimo anzanu* [You think you are holy and perfect exposing the mistakes and sins of other people?]. *uyuyu akhoza kukhala walipila ma results kuti atuluke chonchi* [He must have paid a bribe to generate fake results]. *Exactly wat I was saying ndi sister wanga kuti koma mwati ma results who sanawapange alter coz mwanao amachita kuonekeratuh kuti ndidyoba kukhala ine Madam Doe nkapanga DNA yangaso kuseli coz izizi sizoonai* [Exactly what I was telling my sister that the results must have been doctored because the child looks exactly like him. If I were Madam Doe, I would do my own DNA test because this is just not on]. *John Doe can bribe the lab uyu mmmh zundimvekela mwabodza akapangenso kwina ndithu* [It appears John Doe has bribed the lab technicians, the woman must go for another lab test for a second opinion]. *Tili pano timva ndithu* [We are here, we will surely know]. *Bola process yake ikanakhala ngati muja ayezera malungo nonse mukuona pomwepo koma aaaah bax...chilungamo chimabisidwa* [It would have been better if DNA tests were done like the way they test malaria while everyone is watching. The truth has been hidden]. *Kod chakuchitisa mchani kt munganize zopita kuchipatala for DNA test?* [What made you think of going for a

DNA test?] *Nde za surname zikhala bwanji? Muisamusa* [What will happen to the child's surname? Will you take it away from him?].

In the broader sense, the term 'gnostic' is derived from the Greek word 'gnosis', meaning knowledge (Williams, 1998). In the context of discussions or comments, a gnostic comment refers to a statement or opinion expressed with a high level of certainty or knowledge. Gnostic comments tend to assert a particular viewpoint as unquestionably true, often without leaving room for alternative perspectives or further debate. These comments may be confident in their assertions and they present information as if it is factual or well-established.



Loveness Chirwa

Notgood for the kid



Tikhala Nsomba

We are fixing this country indeed!



Bornwell Munda

Not good at all



Dziko Nyirenda

Truth set people free... I support your decision. Enjoy your money



Mbedza Silence

Inetu i warned her koma ndiosava mchemwali wangayi, pano ndi izi mmmh



Florence Nkhukuzalira

This is not good at all eshiii



Blacker Wolf

i thought so as well this is contrary to child protection laws that we have in the country. Such a bad thing to do is to think with anger.



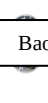
Elias Tsamba

Be positive take the boy and keep the boy if you believe in God you are a blessed Legend #Ibrahim everything for a reason don't listen to this negative comments always be positive



Pepe Mphande

Eish koma DNA uyuyu ndiosokoneza sure



Baobab Breeze

Yesterday I was telling my friend, Akazi okwela matebulo ku Blues ndi ku Four Seasons aja apeweni kuwaika pakomo. Ambiri aja ndi adziko lonse



Zikomo Masamba

Physically posatengela za Makono zanuzo mukut dna Chan Chan „koma ifeyo tikut mwanayu mukufananaye chikhala kut timakhala nanu chifupi tikanazacheza nanu mwanayunso Ali pomwepo tikanazatsimikiza kut kodi mwanayu ndiwanudi kapena ai koma padakali pano zigwilani kae Za ma computazi



Ndadza Mtalema

I went through the comment boxes.. 90% ya akazi akuti \$ apitilizebe kusamala mwana yo...

Am asking, who can enjoys the food Once you know that it has been poisoned?

Uhule wanuwo waoneka poyera...



Yohane Nyerere

nkhaniyi mwaipanga handle moperewera nzeru shuwa, you don't owe the world all these details.

Rachel Nkhoma

I agree with u totally..
nkhani ya sensitive ng't iyi busy
publicizing it like this.
One day the kid wu grow up & read this.
We know mayake analakwitsa but this
wu jxt add trauma 😞

Uthando Nkhoma

I kulibe zimenezo!
Sanalakwise! We are fixing this nation!
We men hv been victimized for so long



Chris Ek

Problem shared is half
solved, akamazisunga mumtima then
nkudzipha oyambilira kulubwalubwa
kuti "ukanauza anthu akuthandinze
maganizo ndiinu nomwe" now waliuza
dziko walakwitsanso...? Munthu afuna
apepukidwe mumtima.

Kaziwa Mulenga

I problem ndyot mkazyo
anauza dziko lonse nkhanayi nde
ndipovuta kut ndiisunge ndekha,,coz
dziko lomwe analiuzalo likanadzakhala
likumandifusa mafuso ambili ngat
mwanayo atakhala sakupeza thandizo
lazofuna za mwana

Fatsani Benedict Mtuna

perhaps you would have
said "you don't owe me an explanation"
because this is helpful to a lot of men.
To your gender mwina zakuwawani
koma ife zatikomela kwabasi ndipo za
maturity mukunenazo nza useless

Mwatipatsa Bande

I don't see any problem by posting it
here, Nkhani inamukulira munthuyi
koneka you die with depression fukwa
chosafuna kuwauxa anzanu mavuto
anu..

Hussein Mwale

And then the kid will one day grow up and
realize that he was once the topic of
discussion on social media. He will one day
realize that someone posted him on social
media and everyone knew that his mother
'lied' to the world that the pregnancy was for
this guy yet it was for another guy. I can
imagine the kind of confusion that he will
have and that confusion will have the power
to change his life for better or for worse... I
pray it shouldn't be for worse.

I am very sure that this issue could have
been sorted out kwawo konko.
Kuthamangitsana akanachita kwawo konko
and zikanathela konko. The kid is so
innocent. He doesn't know what went wrong
or what is going on. Imagine how this kid will
grow up among his friends. Imagine the kind
of torture that he will go through ku
secondary school where students laugh,
mock and chill mosekana.

Apapa sizinayende makamaka Kwa
mwanayo. Koma Kwa abwanawo nde
zawayendela. I just wish it wasn't posted on
Facebook. And I am also thinking about the
woman. Ofcoz imafika nthawi imene
munthu umakolola zomwe wadzala komabe
I am just thinking about her. These will be
hard weeks and months for her. I can
imagine her at the work place where people
akulozelana kuti onamizila mimba mzake
uja ndi uyutu. I can imagine the stories
around her neighborhood.

Zina tikamachita tidzisamala ndithu.
Ngakhale zimakhala Zokoma komabe
tidzisamala ndithu. One simple action may
result into alot of complications, frustrations
and regrets.



Sionse A Mwayie Phiri

Atsikanatu mwagundika fwe fwe fwe apa ngati ndinu Angelo,,,fukwa zamzanu zaululika zanu zinakali zobisika nde kumachulukana mzeru,,,Azimayi eish👉👉👉👉👉 kumakondana pena iyah,,,azibambowatu amabakirana Nde muli abwenze abwenze,,,abwenze Cha??? Tazipitani ku ganyu uko asah,,,, mawa zanzu zidzaululika oho....

Mulanje Songo

actually he did gud very very gud it's time for us guys to wake up...🙄 osamasekelera zopusa...🙄 imagine raising a child woti cwako thinking its ur blood...chilungamo nchofunika if the girl really Loved him zonsez bwez palibepo...😊 and also he has given us a heads-up to not be fooled by ma sweet talk a ur gender 😊😊 mumasunga kam'pen kumphasa 🙏🙏



Mariana Waya

You have done a right thing. Azimai amafuna azipanga manipulate amuna all the time. If a woman is cheating she feels okay but when a man make a revenge a cry loud high up to the courts. This is a big lesson to cheaters....Don't use your body to cheat men ..Every one wants peace.



Kate Molly Maiden

Koma before kupanga post pano munamuza mkaziyo or mwapangila chiphyela mtima?. Next time mudzikambirana konko not kuponya pano Facebook siankhoswe ammanjamu coz zoti mmampanga ubwenzinaye Munthuyu sitikadziwa ndepotino zavuta chombwerapano ndichani mmalo mokamba konko.China mwalakwa kumatchula anthuenawo mukatelo mukufuna kugwenyeza mabanja awo kuti amagonanso ndimkaziyo inubwanji mmaleka kungokamba mbaliyanu why mentioning enawo. Mukule munzule akulu.ndipo mwamulakwira mwana kuti azitonzedwa pa media chifukwacha mphulupulu zanu, mwapangazo mwamuika mkazipa chitonzo kuti amunaena asadzamukhulupilirensa.. Grow up ayise..👉👉👉👉👉

Nsanje Sandikonda

mwanawakwithu you are very right . All of us commenting here are not angels . This issue was better solved under carpet. You are causing a very big trauma to the child . The child will suffer from post trauma effect for the rest of his life . Nowadays social media is very cruel . Some will keep all these and he will be reminded at school about what has happened between his mother and " was supposed to be father " . Let's put our two friends in prayers so that they discuss and remove all these things written here

Bibakumana Jado

all Men are on your side brother! Don't mind all negativity from that genda. They know themselves

Translations: *Eish koma DNA uyuyu ndiosokoneza sure* [This DNA test brings confusion for sure]. *Inetu I warned her koma ndiosava mchemwali wangayi, pano ndi izi mmmh* [I warned her but this sister of mine could not listen to me, now see what has happened]. *Posatengera za Makono zanzu mukuti dna chan chan...koma ifeyo tikut mwanayu mukufanana chikhala kuti timakhala nanu chifupi tikanazacheza nanu mwanaunso ali pomwepo tikanazatsimikiza kuti kodi mwanayu ndinudi kapena ai koma padakali pano zigwilani kae za ma compyutazi* [Without considering whatever technology you used, we believe the child looks like you and we could even come and have a face to face talk with you in front of the child to prove that the child is yours. Otherwise, for now stick to your technology-based truths]. *Akazi okwela matebuoi ku Blues ndi ku Four seasons aja apeweni kuwaika pakhomo. Ambiri Aja ndi adziko lonse* [Women that party at Blues and Four Seasons should be avoided when it comes

to marriage. Most of them belong to all men]. *90% ya akazi akuti John Doe apitilizebe kusamala mwana yo...Uhule wanuwo waoneka poyera* [90 per cent of women want John Doe to continue supporting the child...your prostitution has been exposed to the public]. *nkhaniyi mwaipanga handle moperwera nzeru shuwa* [you have handled this issue with lack of maturity].

Further translations: *Apapa sizinayende makamaka kwa mwanayo. Koma kwa abwanawo nde zawayendela...imafika nthawi imene munthu umakolola zomwe wadzala... zina tikamachita tidzisamala ndithu. Ngakhale zimakhala Zimakoma komabe tidzisamala ndithu* [Things did not go well, especially for the child. But things have gone well for the man. There comes a time when you reap what you sow. We should be careful with our actions. Although some actions are pleasurable, we should exercise caution]. *Mwina zakuwawani koma ife zatikomela kwabasi ndipo za maturity mukunenazo nza useless* [You may be stressing but we are happy and it is useless to talk about maturity]. *Kulibe zimene! Sanalakwitse!* [No way, he is not wrong!]. *Akamazisunga mumtima then nkudzipha oyambilira kulubwalubwa kuti unauza anthu akuthandize ndiinu nomwe now waliuza dziko walakwitsanso? Munthu akufuna apepukidwe mtima* [Had he committed suicide, many of you would have been the first to say he should have come in the open to speak. He has done that and you say he is wrong? Let his heart be at peace]. *Problem ndyot mkazyo anauza dziko lonse nkhaniyi nde ndipovuta kuti ndisunge ndekha coz dziko lomwe analiuzalo likanadzakhala likumandifunsa mafunso ambiri ngati mwanayo atakhala sakupeza thandizo lavofuna za mwana* [The problem is that the woman told the world about this issue and, therefore, it is difficult for me to remain silent regarding the matter, and it is the very same world she told that would have been asking me many questions concerning the welfare of the child if I had not told the truth].

Further translations: *Nkhani inamukulira munthuyi koneka you die with depression fukwa chosafuna kuwauza anzanu mavuto anu* [This issue was too much for him, that's why some die of depression when they choose to be silent]. *Atsikanatu mwagundika fwe fwe fwe apa ngati ndinu Angelo...fukwa zamzanu zaululika zanu zinakali zobisika nde kumachuluka nzeru...Azimayi eish. Kumakondana pena iya...azibambowatu amabakirana. Nde mulu abwenze abwenze cha? Tazipitani ku ganyu uko asah...Mawa zanuzi zidzaululika oho...* [Girls You are busy bringing down

a fellow woman as if you are angels. It is because your sins are hidden that you act wise. Ladies, please! Love one another. Men defend each other. You say she must pay, what must she pay? Go do your work]. *Kampeni kumphasa* [ulterior motives].

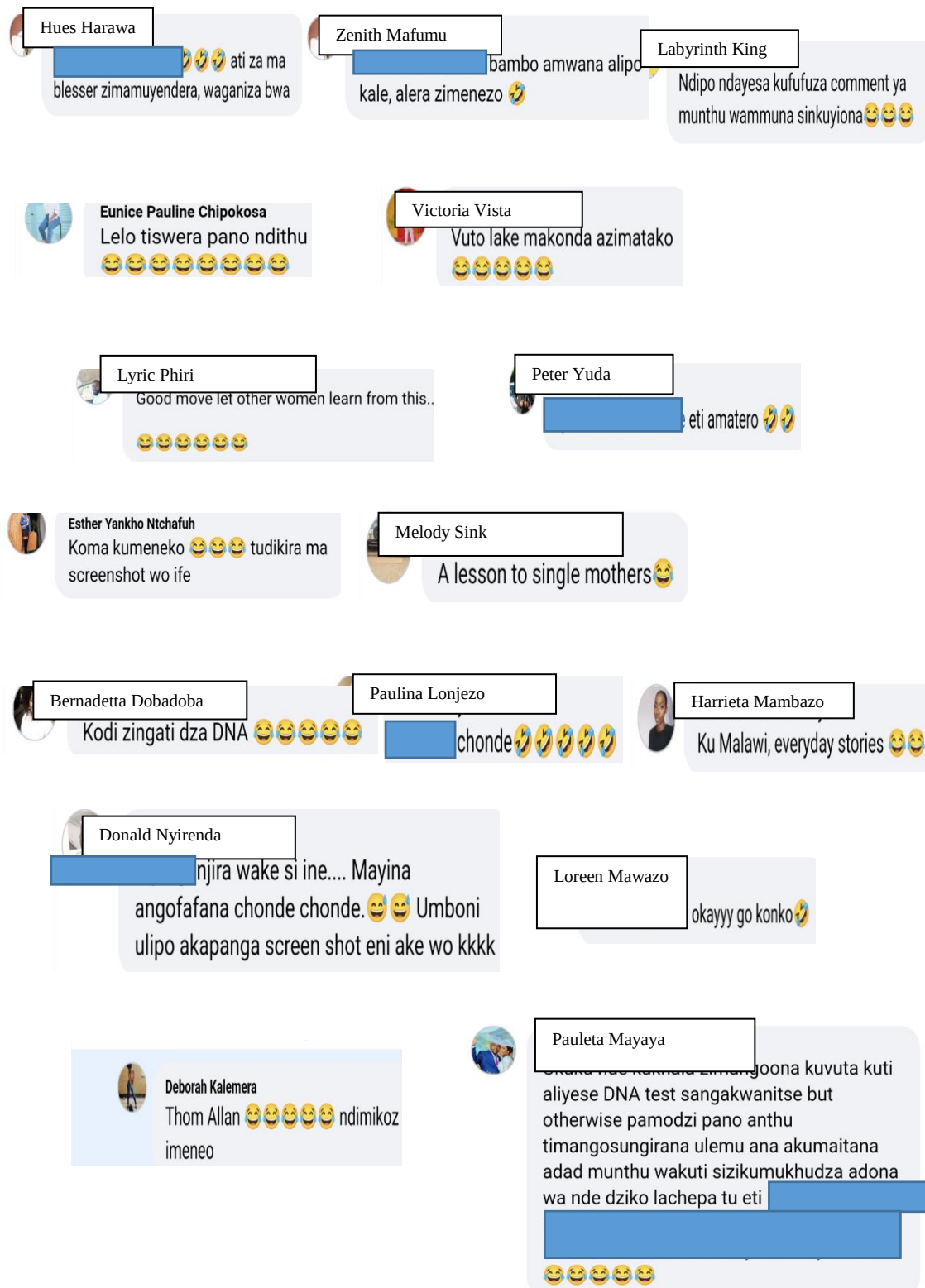
Further Translations: *Koma before kupanga post pano munamuuza mkaziyo or mwapangira chiphyela mtima? Ext time mudzikambirana konko not kuponya pano Facebook siankhoswe ammanjamu coz zoti mmapanga ubwenzinaye Munthuyu sitikadziwa ndepotino zavuta chobwerapano ndichani mmalo mokamba konko. China mwalaka kumatchula anthu ena mukatelo mukufuna kugwenyeza mabanja awo kuti amagonanso ndimkaziyo inubwanji mmaleka kungokamba mbaliyannu why mentioning enawo. Mukule munzule akulu. Ndipo mwamulakwira mwana kuti azitonzedwa pa media chifukwacha mphulupulu zanu, mwapangazo mwamuika mkazipa chitanzo kuti amunaena asadzamukhulupilirensa...Grow up aise* [Did you seek consent from your partner to post the test results here or you simply acted out of anger? Next time, talk about it in private because Facebook is not your family arbitrator or counsellor. We never knew you were in a relationship with her, why bring your issues to the public after your relationship went sour? The other thing is that, you are wrong to mention names of other men in this story. Do you want to destabilise their marriages? Why didn't you just say your side of the story without mentioning other people? Grow up! Furthermore, you have harmed the child: he will be taunted on social media because of your folly. You have also exposed the mother to taunts and other men will never trust her. Grow up my friend].

4.11 Comments of amusement, happiness and joy

Amusement is an emotion that arises when we find something funny, entertaining, or comical. It typically involves a sense of light-heartedness and enjoyment in response to a stimulus that is perceived as humorous. Amusement is usually immediate as it is a response to finding something funny in the immediate moment. Joy and happiness are positive emotional states associated with feelings of pleasure, contentment, and satisfaction. In terms of duration, joy and happiness, unlike amusement, tend to be a broader and more sustained states of well-being and contentment (Merriam-Webster, n.d). The laugh emoji is commonly used to indicate amusement, joy, and happiness on Facebook. The emoji is characterised by a wide-open mouth with closed eyes,

A collage of 18 screenshots of social media comments. Each comment is shown within a light blue or white bubble, with the user's profile picture and name at the top. The comments are in English and Shona, often accompanied by emojis. The users and their comments are as follows:

- Joan Nyirenda: Kodi mukuti ndatani, ndisiyeni ndikhale ndi mtendere wanga ine 😊😊😊
- Sara Konkuno: [redacted] sindikuwona comment yakotu apa 🤔🤔
- Hazel Chmtengo: [redacted] 😊😊
- Georgina Tumika Timvenje Sosola: [redacted] mwafika kuno kodi?? 🤔🤔🤔
- Janet Nightingale: BASI khululukani 🤔🤔🤔
- Florence Queen: 🐱🐱
- Mary Whiskey: 😂😂😂😂
- Joseph Meditation: 😊😊😊 unyanya kudya ana ainiyake nawe zakuonekera 😊
- Mphatso Mboni: Where can i send a vn? 😊
- George Harmony: Tichezela kuno lelo 😊😊😊😊
- Shire Blantyre: [redacted] n izaana 😊😊😊
- Luminary Grace: Pepani zavuta kumpando 😊😊😊😊😊
- Mapale Zambezi: 😊😊😊😊
- John Mystique: Eeeeeee 😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊 basi ingomuleran mwana
- [redacted]: [redacted] 😊😊😊😊😊
- Haven Phiri: Zikusalira 😊😊😊😊😊
- Nyala Namiwawa: [redacted] 😊
- Nyenyezi Mwezi: [redacted] lero anthu akhala busy ndi DNA
- Mphatso Kariba: [redacted] 😊😊😊😊
- Lullaby Pempho: Zosayenda 😊



Mark Makobiri

I think the whole country need to run a DNA test analysis! It's time everyone should go back to where is coming from! No wonder we have so much misfortunes, mizimu ikumakwiya 😂😂😂

Sono Inu kungokuuzani kuti akufuna mu m. berekere mwana after she left for a year... Inu nthawi yomweyo shaft kuima 😂😂😂 Munthu sukhala Dolo pa zonse eti asaaa 😂😂😂

6 mths Like Reply 🤔 3

Princess Lawrence

ex sizinthutu 😂😂😂😂😂

Faith Zawaka

onse ati mukumane kuseriko mupange DNA test Group 😂😂😂😂😂

Claire Walinase

eti eti ati he has money ngati depression imaona nawo za ndalama 😂

Beckie Maseko

timuoneko yo 😂😂

Berna Phiri
slay akati akolole zomwe sanadzale 😂😂😂😂😂

6 mths Like Reply 🤔 5

Nia Fayidi

Inutu Inu 😂😂😂😂😂😂
vayolensi

6 mths Like Reply

Berna Phiri
iiii sole wayambisa mesa ndi mwini wake waikayo ife tikanaziziwa 😂😂😂

6 mths Like Reply

Sara Malembo

owoh 😂😂😂😂😂

6 mths Like Reply

Griffin Johannes

sorry 😂

6 mths Like Reply

Griffin Johannes

Thom Allan aaah aaah nkhani ijanso 😂😂😂😂

6 mths Like Reply

Ocean Blue

Kkkkk koma tiyaruka 🤔🤔🤔

6 mths Like Reply 🤔👍 13

Rute Walala

asisi 2022
Kali konse kobisika mpyera kaonedwe

6 mths Like Reply

Tiyamike Mtima

ndikanakhara ine ndikanamupaka basii 🤔🤔

6 mths Like Reply

Mary Lichoro

tiyaluka
bwino

6 mths Like Reply 🤔 1



zoopsatu eeh

Gabriel Michaels

Ati kongolawa kamodzi 😊😊
M'mafuna kambilimbili bwana

6 mths Like Reply 🤔👍 31

Sakina Fahadi

kamodzi komwekotu
zimatheka 🤔🤔🤔

6 mths Like Reply 🤔 1

Aura Mkandawire

Olo kungogundisa mutu okha 😊

6 mths Like Reply

ala

eeeeeh

6 mths Like Reply 🤔👍 2

Ennie Babie

🤔🤔🤔

6 mths Like Reply

Fiona Way

ssan
ndasiya basi iiiii

Chisangalalo Phiri

Lero ndili pano kudikila ma screen shot uku
ndikumwa thiyi wantochi 🤔🤔

Mundideranji Mandanda

siketani anakonz
siyamasewera k

Rashida Kalanga

koma ada 🤔🤔🤔

Mtendere Yendani

poorest

Mavuto Mbedza

brother wako
wadandaula tu

Milika Jambo

Nde uyambe kusaka bambo amwana
lero 🤔🤔 apezeka??? Gangster Sali stable

Ramsey Weak

mpaseni mpando wa
unduna wazama dna bas 🤔🤔

Emerald Purple

mwachukatu 🤔🤔

 **TREVOR MAHAME**
[redacted] 😊😊 Mpo zinthu zake, kenaka uchiona china chukapanga check Pic yanga ati chione ngati zoyankhula zanga zugwilizana ndi maonekedwe

6 mths Like Reply 😊 2

 **TREVOR MAHAME**
[redacted] 😊😊😊 inetu mnadziwa, ndine munthu ofatsa koma

6 mths Like Reply

 **Donton Botolo**
[redacted] Siyani tikuweluzani ife coz dzuwa paja saladzerana 😂😂😂😂😂😂

 **Byson Dambo**
[redacted] ndeew mwat muzngolowa 😂😂😂😂

6 mths Like Reply

 **Hardy Mpunga**
[redacted] oh paja ndiwe waku Inhouse et 😊😊 Wangoyeneradi kutero 😂😂😂😂😂😂 Mufa

6 mths Like Reply

 **Damien Clear**
[redacted] aaaaq galu iwe pola moto 😊😊😊😊

 **Epha Kankuzi**
[redacted] eeh ndichi mkazi akulu 😊😊

6 mths Like Reply 😊 2

 **Taxina Calm**
[redacted] nde ulimotu mwendowo 🙌🙌🙌😊

6 mths Like Reply 🙌 3

 **Mirrium Wavuta**
[redacted] komano muthuyi ine ndamuvesesa 😊😊😊

 **Zoe Wonder**
"Anapanga ma film ake mpaka ndinagonja" weakness ndi siketi 😊😊😊😊😊😊

6 mths Like Reply 🙌 38

 **Mizu Mphande**
[redacted] a Kansenza [redacted] ndi ntchito zake 😊😊😊

6 mths Like Reply

 **Sandra Meke**
[redacted] zibambo pali siketi 😊😊

 **Sibongile Wasowa**
[redacted] 😊😊😊😊😊😊 osangoti ndinatota

6 mths Like Reply 😊 3

 **Joyce Neto**
[redacted] 😊😊 siketi anakonza siyamasewera k

 **Rachel Ewe Thamanga**
Ehhh anthu akwiya 😊

 **Veronica Nyambalo**
[redacted] iweyoxo wapanga comment zopanda nzeru... As a matter of fact, ukuonekaxo ngati [redacted] 😊😊

Luis Lekaleka
 aaaaaah iwe umafuna
 adzakadzidziwire kumwamba kuti
 mwana siwake
 😂😂😂😂

Bae Mvu
 let the man express himself
 000 🤔🤔

Sarafina Walandira
 😂😂😂😂😂😂😂😂😂😂
 Mwaki tabwera kuno udzamve

Boniface Langizo
 Dyomba oyamba kupangisa DNA wapanga
 mbiri 😂

Mercy Chitsime
 S [redacted] mwakwiyatu
 😂😂😂😂

Mervie Mervie
 [redacted] bola ndakuuza
 chilungamo 😂😂

Vincent Grab
 Ine pheeee kuwerenga ndili mu mkala
 sukulu ya unsembe 😂😂

Michael Folopenzi
 [redacted] koma aise
 iweyo iiii
 🙌😂😂😂😂😂😂😂

Lousie Patelera
 Kukonda akazi amatako, akuonesa pole
 mzanga 😂😂😂😂😂😂 [redacted]

[redacted] of course zaunsembezo
 mukunama 😂😂😂😂😂
 Koma that would be a great decision
 amwene. Zomwe tikumva daily aaaa
 😂😂😂😂 sizikutipatsa mphamvu
 osakwatirafe
 6 mths Like Reply 🍌 1

[redacted] 😂😂😂😂😂😂
 dikilani mukhulupilira mkamaliza. Ku
 Malawi kuno tipite ku holiday

Felister Wonderful Reply 🍌 1
 [redacted] ayi zikomo 😂😂😂😂😂
 mwasiyana ndi moyo womafuna
 chithandizo cha DNA test.
 Dziko ili 📍

Grace Glass Reply 🍌 1
 [redacted] tiye uko

[redacted] Akita safa apapaso pa
 nseu sakhalitsa Ena amutolapo 🤔🤔🤔

Boypeq Ngambi
 [redacted] 😂 fear woman

Sela Selempani
 [redacted] ati asamve kuwawa
 yekha 🤔🤔🤔🤔

Memory Pampani
 [redacted] Zaaone kuno 😂😂😂😂

Nelson Pamoto
[redacted] ndilipano
kuwerenga ma comments 🤔🤔
6 mths Like Reply

Lonely Kamwana
[redacted] ndipo live 😊

Favour Gauge
[redacted] 😊😊😊😊nkhani
sizimakupita ase eeh,trend yiliyonse
comment yako ndimaipezapo 🙌
6 mths Like Reply

Sydney Botolo
[redacted] kumwalira kulipo
🐱🐱🐱

Nolia Kwada
😊😊😊😊😊Ikhare Dna riddim bwanji
6 mths Like Reply 🙌😂 3

Linda Mbodzi
😊😊😊😊martin angels on the beat
kubed amwene mzimbe
mzimbe😊😊😊

Yvonne King
Pa Malawi kulibe kupuma😊😊😊😊😊and
tisaseke kwambiri nthawi inaliyonse
amalawi atha kupanga yako😊😊😊😊😊
6 mths Like Reply 🙌 1

Kleff C
[redacted] aOK chabwino
😊😊

Mwayitana Mzimba
Fyuuuu mamuna wauluka ngat aviator
😊😊😊😊😊
6 mths Like Reply 🙌🙌 21

Tania Solo
[redacted] ar chindege
amwene😊😊😊

Innocent Lemba
[redacted] dzukani kwacha 🤔🤔🤔

Emmanuel/Kennedy
Rexona Mawazo
😊😊😊😊😊😊😊aisee iwe you
nchipongwe
See translation

Barbie Chete
😊😊😊😊😊😊😊Kwachema tamia voice
sallettielivila

Queen Walakwa
😊😊😊😊😊zinthu zake

Collins Rains

Zoganiza sake 😂😂

Reply 1

Goshen Mtsinje

Peter Lumbe

nkuchikamwa 😊😊

6 mths Like Reply 2

 **Aisha Sanudi**  mbolatu
brasii 😄😄😄😄

6 mths Like Reply

Tinakondwa Kacheche
😂😂😂😂😂😂😂😂😂😂😂😂😂😂😂

Miles Black

is funny

Miles Black

Maury Gandaira

Japhesine Mtendere

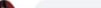
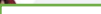
Joseph Kulira

kom

a sizoon boys

Jacobeth Office

Leah Need

Tina Masamu

Tina Tiyeni

Koma ndaseka 🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔

6 mths Like Reply 1

Lillian Nyenyezi

Shira Manyozo

Honestly ma comment akubeba kuwerenga eish 😂😂😂😂

6 mths Like Reply 3

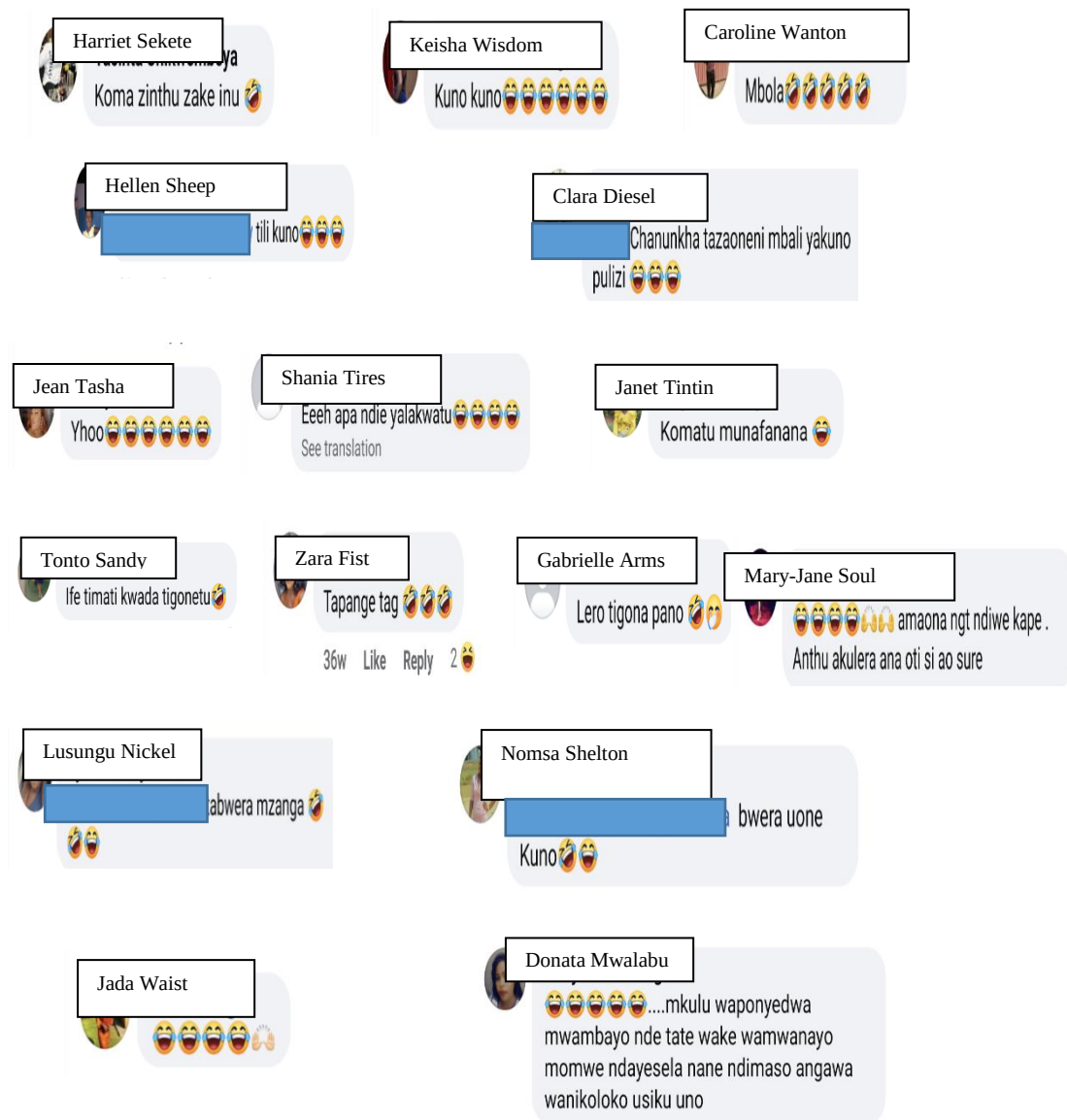
Janet Dallas

Imagine 😂😂😂😂

6 mths Like Reply 1

Thomson Mbola
[redacted] i can just ask him
only one question kuti "iweo sunafe
chifukwa chani?"

Loney Wadala

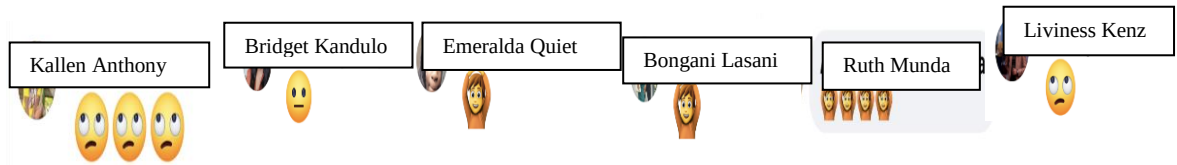


4.12 Comments of awe and wonder

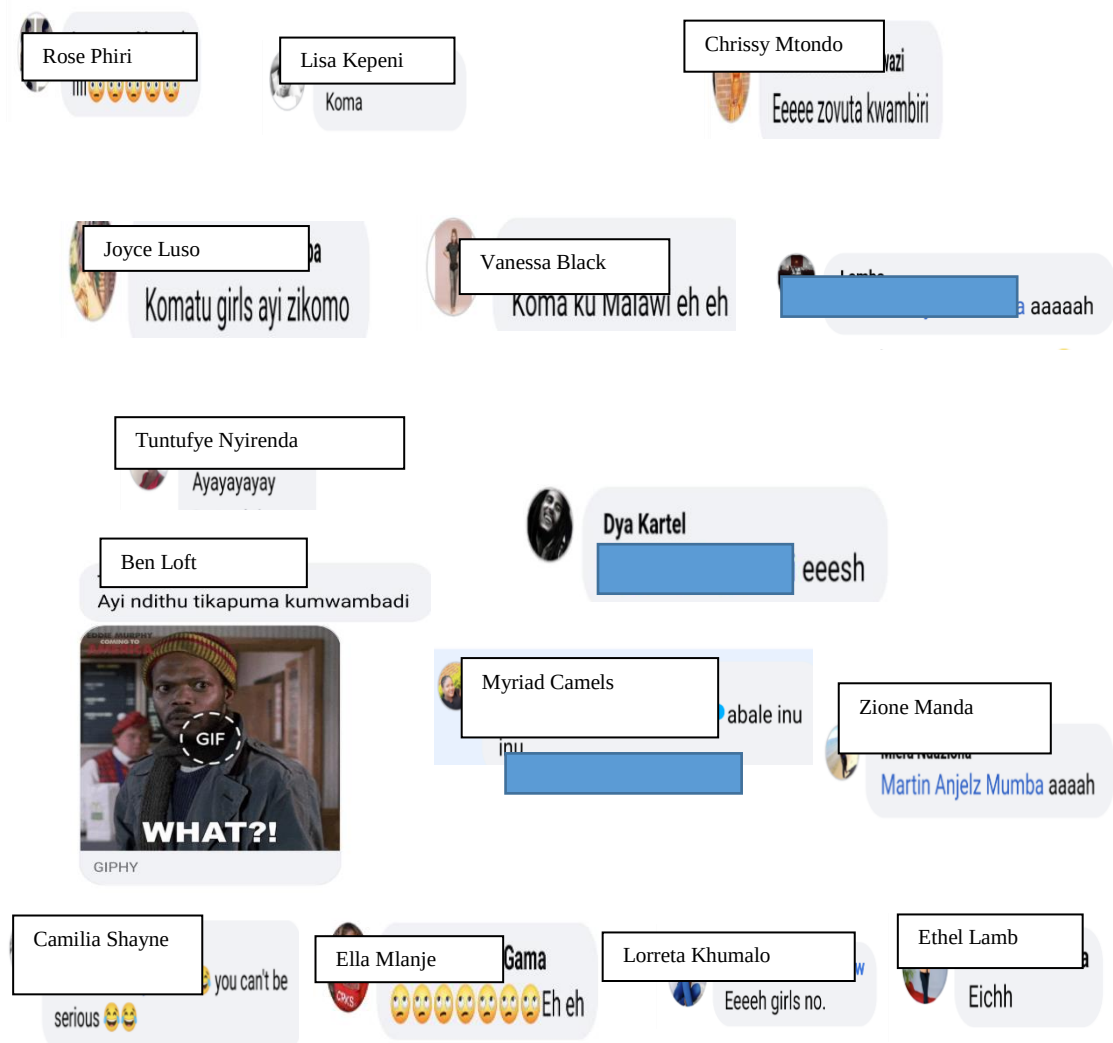
Comments of awe and wonder are expressions of astonishment, admiration, or amazement that people post in the virtual sphere. While awe and wonder may overlap and be used interchangeably, awe usually indicates feelings of profound reverence, admiration and respect at something or someone grand, powerful, or transcendent. It is associated with a sense of astonishment at the realization of the extraordinary (Merriam-Webster, n.d). Awe, in the context of the John Doe case, is in some users triggered by what some perceive as an extraordinary achievement, exceptional talent or breath-taking activities by John Doe. The comments in this regard acknowledge an immense impact or significance of what they experience on John Doe's post. Comments of wonder, in contrast, present a sense of curiosity at a puzzling mystery. It, hence, involves a sense of inquiry and a desire to understand and explore the

unknown. Wonder is hence expressed by those users who seek further information, seeking to look into other possibilities of the case or simply marvelling at the intricacies of the subject under discourse.

Below are comments in which user express astonishment towards the John Doe case through expression of emojis of surprise:



Below are comments that indicate awe as they present interjections that, in the normal Malawian socio-cultural context, carry an element of shock such as ‘iiii’, ‘koma’, ‘komatu’, ‘aaaah’, ‘eeesh’, ‘abale’, and ‘what?!’:



4.13 Comments of inspiration and motivation

Comments of inspiration and motivation indicate a sense of strong enthusiasm and provide a desired goal to achieve an action that a person seeks to emulate. Below are comments of inspiration and motivation already translated under other themes in the previous sections, and they reappear in this section carrying the emotions of motivation and inspiration below.



Ronald Kantanga

Well done sir



Moses Rex

We are fixing this country indeed!



Theo Gandaira

Let me try my luck



Ken Mowa

Truth set people free.... I support your decision. Enjoy your money



Loveness Sendeza

nane ndikubwera ungondipatsa mwana basi



Nene Kalima

Well done bro



Chris Label

Tulutsa joker tione bro 🤔



Luis John

Koma kumeneko 😂😂😂 tudikira ma screenshot wo ife



Thomas Lazaro

madala joker atulike apa 😂😂😂



Walker Jerusalem

Ma screenshot pliz muvunge around 12 APA ndili kumunda kaye



Peter Opera

Post iyi mudyela malume ur so brave



Mateyu Next

Ma screenshots changu apa



Kennedy Ganthu

Ngati mwatokota inuo ndie kuti kwavutadi biggy.Vungani ma screenshot changu changu kunja nkwadzuwa



Kunta Mess

I think the whole country need to run a DI test analysis! It's time everyone should go back to where is coming from! No wonder have so much misfortunes, mizimu ikumakwiya 😂😂😂



Mercy Bokosi

Kkkkkkkkkk [redacted] zitayeni basi I know how it hurts koma basi mulekeni bola iweyo waziwa chilungamo khala ndi mtendere wako.Nafe azimai titengepo mphunziro palibe chinsinsi pa dziko pano



Mayamiko Mpeni

phunzirani kugwila ma sober simuzakhumudwa

Billiat Nancy



 kulibe zimenezo!
Sanalakwise! We are fixing this nation!
We men hv been victimized for so long

Agness Malata



 who is us? Let him explain
in details asepukidwe munthu 😊

Chilenje Wamba



 musiyeni atiuze than kuti
azimangilire

Edith Lloyds



 this good talking about it
mufuna zikhale mumtima kenako
atenge chingwe?

Precious Nikisi



 t least he is handling his
stress very well, akanati wadzimanga
mukadamalankhula zina apa,

Mbendera Naison



 pepani ndithu ife
tazikonda kwabasi....

Thokozani Meke



 he sure does. It's an eye
opener

Cleopatra Nadine



 Namfedwa sitimugwila
pakamwa

Geraldine Botolo



Tilipano kudikira part 2 Yama screenshot
tione nawo mutikodole mukatumiza 😊

Bembeke NKhalango



 he's fixing the country n us
we are proud of him 😊😊😊

France Almond



 he's in pain ! I understand!
Akazi ausiru ayaluke Basi 🇧🇼

Cole Lesson



 nkhani Zama celeb
zimatshela pano

Jacob East



 Bro palibe Chomwe
mwalakwisa apa uyuyu mawanga ake
ndomwewo,, ife mungotiiza mteengo
wa DNA test tiziwe Basi

Harris Ahmed



 zimenezi muzikawuzana
konko ndi mkaz mzanu ...Ife we are with
him

Isaac Nacala



Good move let other women learn from this...
😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊

Samuel Hay



Kod DNA test mzingat madala? 😊 Nane
zayamba kundioopsa ❤️

Clifford Mulauzi



You are so brave. God will review every
single thing hidden under every tinny what
kaya but God is good....

Kondwani Kenzo



 ont say us.. ukanati "you
dont owe me" an explanation.. enafe he
owes us.

Loyce Tembo



Kod how much is DNA I want to check
something

Time Finess



 wapanga bwino azikazinu
uhule too mch

Roselyn Ngalauka



Zimenezi ndizo mzeru, we're passing
though times zinthu zikudula kwambiri
ndiye uzivutikaso ndi kusamala mwana
wa munthu wina? Akagwele uko 🇧🇼

Mavuto Harrison



 he is fixing azibambo onse
akhale ochangamuka hiyaaaa
😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊

Boy Lakes



 palibeso zoti let's
pray for our friends chani chani uko
aaah 😊 nobody is saying is an angel
here koma tasangalala naye
wachitazi

Kennedy Mercy



 zafika pa washauti ndiye
palibe zokambirana ndi kathali
kumbali.....ayaluke basi!

Taurai Morris
Kodi zingati dza DNA 🤔🤔🤔🤔

7 mths Like Reply 1

Harvey Mivi
[redacted] tiyedi tikadziwe mtengo

7 mths Like Reply

Jason Manda
Kuvomere mimba zaka zino kutivuta , mwana kubadwa ngati sakufanana ndi wina aliyense wakwanu DNA iyendepo basi

HONEY MOON 1 year later..

7 mths Like Reply 4

Garnet Fyson

This is lesson to all gents out there akati tidye 9/9 akufuna mwana tizidabwapo mapeto ake zimakhala ngati izi... Brother [redacted] know it's hard n it takes kulimba mtima osazipha kmaso kubwera poyera ngati apa, Inuyo dekhani chifukwa anthu ambiri pano akufuna akuoneni kupusa kwanu n kukutolani ma mistakes just solve this issue out of social media.. And last thing just adopt the boy it's God plan

Nelia Moto
Ukuku nde kukhala zimangoona kuvuta kuti aliyese DNA test sangakwanitse but otherwise pamodzi pano anthu timangosungirana ulemu ana akumaitana adad munthu wakuti sizikumukhudza adona wa nde dziko lachepe tu eti [redacted]

🤔🤔🤔🤔

Agag Waliko
[redacted] Problem shared is half solved, akamazisunga mumtima then nkudzipha oyambilira kulubwalubwa kuti "ukanauza anthu akuthandinze maganizo ndiinu nomwe" now waliuza dziko walakwitsanso...? Munthu afuna apekudwe mumtima.

Melon Sipo
[redacted] Men are on your side brother! Don't mind all negativity from that genda. They know themselves

Ulemu Farao
[redacted] perhaps you would have said "you don't owe me an explanation" because this is helpful to a lot of men. To your gender mwina zakuwawani koma ife zatikomela kwabasi ndipo za maturity mukunenazo nza useless

Georgina Mawazo
Ladies siamuna onse achuma omwe Ali ndi zibwana....Tiyeni tiphunzile kukhala a chilungamo..What has happened here tiphunzilepo chinachake....This is so embarrassing.... Well done [redacted]..Njale azikwela Anu enieni 🤔🤔🤔... Anyways tikudikila ma screenshot a mpinganjira... musavutike kupanga specify mpinganjira ofuntha tonse tikumudziwa kale bwana 🤔🤔🤔



Moffat Armstrong Edison Mbale

A Malawi anzanga ndizowawa. I know it took a lot of courage for [REDACTED] to publicize this. I know it's part of healing. Komabe this lady has been disciplined pang'ono chabe by [REDACTED] action. Thanks to good people who alerted [REDACTED], thanks again to technology without which he was going to give in to this evil human being. To me I have learnt a lot from this courageous man because I was once a victim of this trick back in my school days, so I see sense in what triggered this intense and immediate action.



Malachi Thom

[REDACTED] Thanks to you too for opening me up. Some human beings are evil my dear, they will have joy over someone's misery. I know you are stressed, however, believe in yourself, as long as you know that your hands are clean, just continue to be courageous. Come what may.....fight on.



Bae Mvu

[REDACTED] let the man express himself
ooo 🤔🤔

7 mths Like Reply 2



Ruru Jones

[REDACTED] let him vent sis

7 mths Like Reply 2



Harry Mourn

[REDACTED] Muchepetse uhule azimayiii, nakakhala ine nakachita kupangitsa PRESS BRIEFING..nkutenga ma picture's a HULEYO ndi MWANA wake yemweyo amve mm'bebe.

7 mths Like Reply 5



Bowa Whiskey

[REDACTED] 😊 actually he did gud very very gud it's time for us guys to wake up... 😊 osamasekelera zopusa... 😊 imagine raising a child woti cwako thinking its ur blood...chilungamo nchofunika if the girl really Loved him zonsez bwez palibepo... 😊 and also he has given us a heads-up to not be fooled by ma sweet talk a ur gender 😊😊😊 mumasunga kam'pen kumphasa 🙌🙌🙌

7 mths Like Reply



Dya Kartel

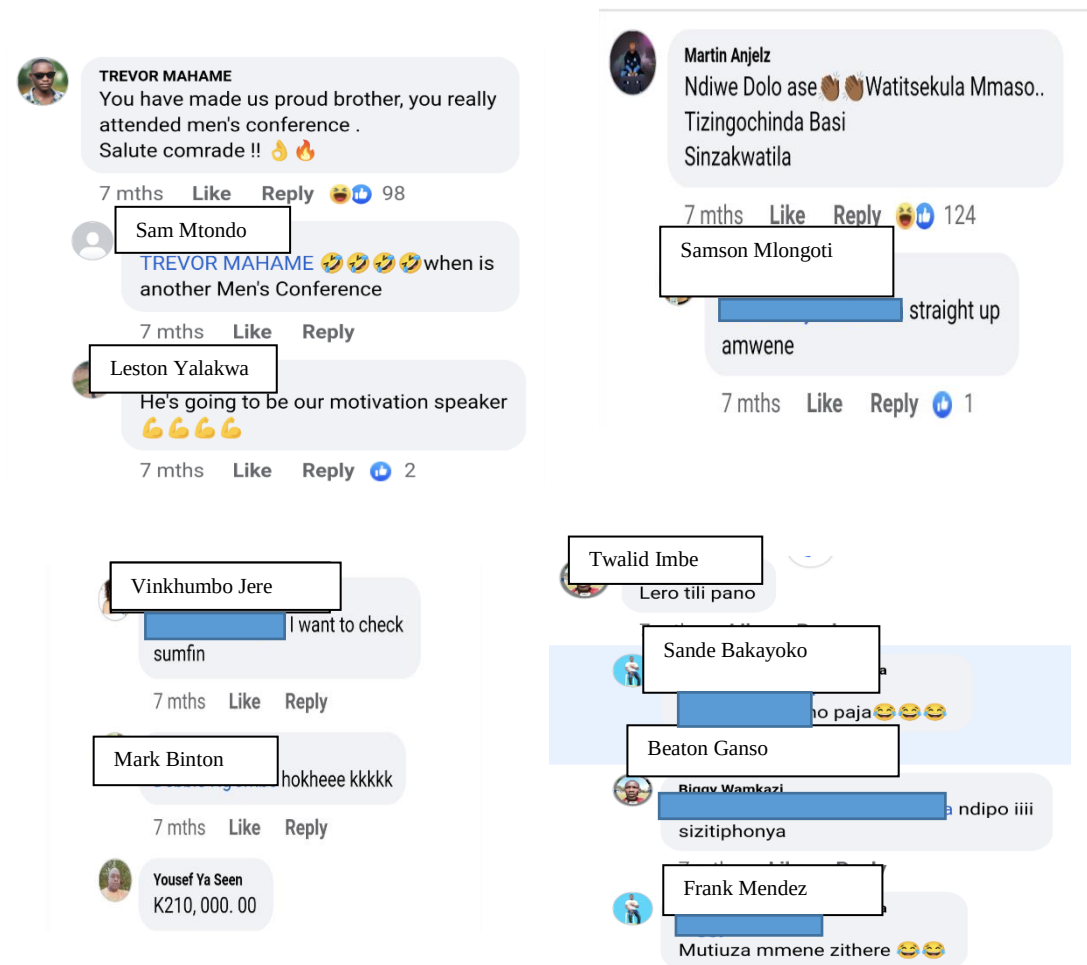
Mentor ndiinu a strong mwaonetsa uwachalume coz ma gyz ena bwez tikumva pano kut akukafunsa ntengo wachingwe..

Keep on moving forward osaonaso mmbuyo tym ikanalipo

Perez Cain

[REDACTED]
You have done a right thing. Azimai amafuna azipanga manipulate amuna all the time. If a woman is cheating she feels okay but when a man make a revenge a cry loud high up to the courts. This is a big lesson to cheaters....Don't use your body to cheat men ..Every one wants peace.

7 mths Like Reply 1



4.14 Comments of love, affection and endearment

Comments of love, affection and endearment indicate care, emotional closeness to someone, and tender feelings of fondness. Below are such comments on the John Doe post.



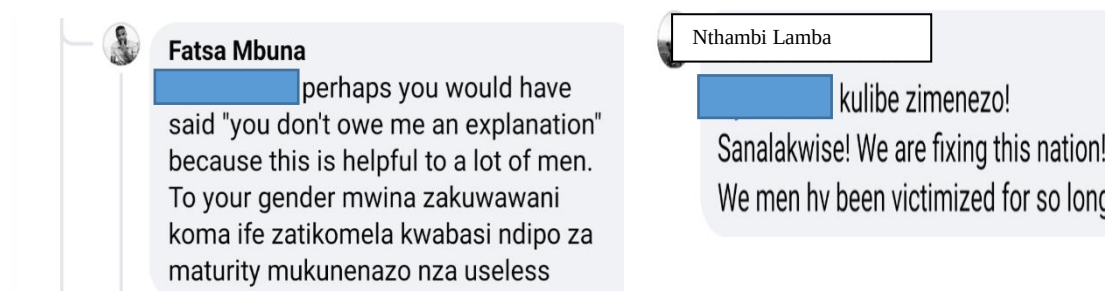
Translations: *Pa post iyi utha kupezapo wa banja. Pachuluka ma wounded soldiers...Ena angotsala kachidutswa kamodzi kudikira ena akamalizitse* [One can find a marriage partner through this post. There are a lot of wounded soldiers. Some are just remaining with an ounce of their hearts]. *Koma nkaziyu ndi machine olera mwanayu sangasowe* [The woman is hot, she won't fail to find another man to take care of the child]. *John Doe Nane ndikubwera ungondipatsa mwana basi* [John Doe, I am coming, I want you to get me pregnant].

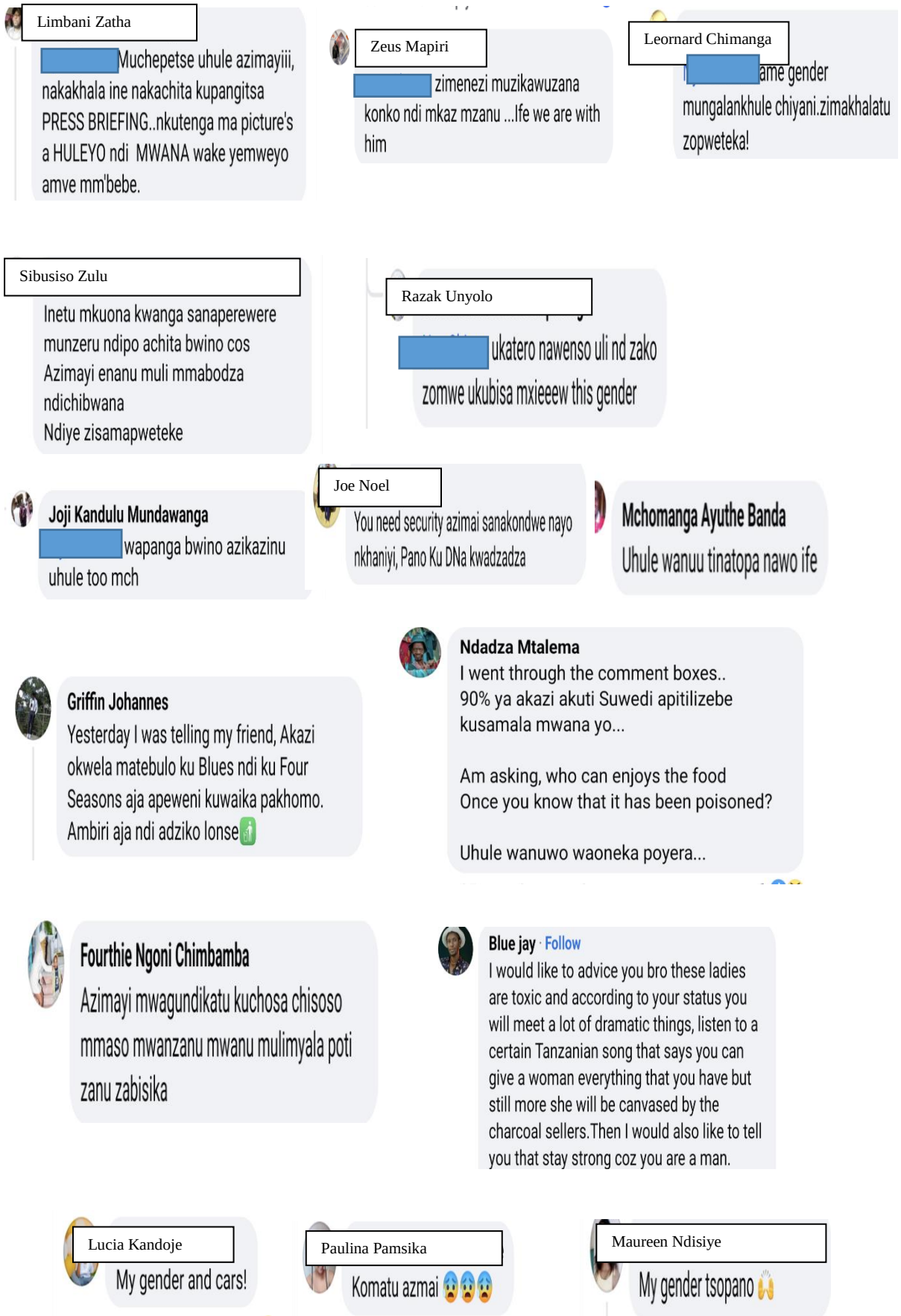
4.15 Comments of misogyny and male chauvinism

Misogyny and male chauvinism are both associated with gender-discrimination and prejudice. Misogyny is the hatred, prejudice, or contempt towards women. It is a broader term that encompasses various negative attitudes and behaviours directed specifically at women (Merriam-Webster, n.d). Below are some of the comments from the John Doe case that appear misogynistic:



The first user motivates feelings of prejudice amongst men against women by saying men should fear women. The other users agree. Translations: *ndpod bro* [very true brother]. *Ndipo ndili ndi ndimantha* [I am scared]. *Ndipo live* [Very true].





Christian Galanje

Ladies can humble aliyese indeed
samasamala that you re rich or poor ...amu
sole aixe

Posha Lisinje

Koma helewuuu 🤔🤔🤔 ndalama itipha
atsikana

Thomson Lakaelo

kwa

A wise man fill his brain before emptying his
mouth. African proveb

Susan Mandere

Koma guys azimayi aaaaah

Finnete Gerald

Azimayi atipha ndithu

Malamulo Banda

Koma azimayi pena iiihh!!! I think Satana
amatha kukhara patali ku maonera ma film
azimayi. Akundimvetsa chisoni ndimwanayu
this will catch up with him akazakula

Hlekwise Gandaira

Azimai mudya koma movutikira .

Lewis Ndilekeni

Kukhailisa ma hule 🤔🤔

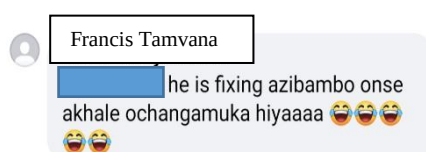
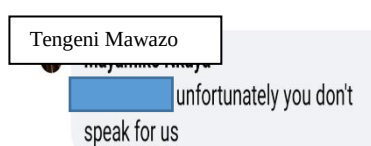
Amina Fayed

Koma azimayi chimene tikufuna mmmhh
sitikuchidziwa eeeee

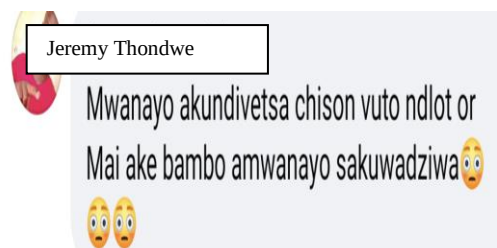
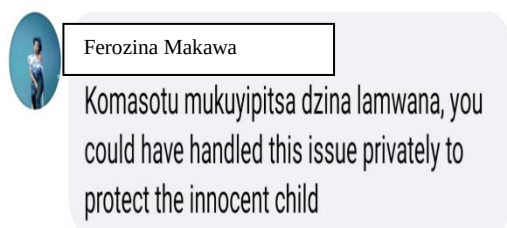
Translations: *wapanga bwino azikazinu uhule too mch* [Welldone: you women are practising prostitution too much]. *Uhule wanu tinatopa nawo ife* [we are tired of your prostitution]. *Akazi okwela matebulo ku blues ndi ku Four Seasons aja apeweni kuwaika pakhomo. Ambiri aja ndi adziko lonse* [Women that party at Blues and Four Seasons should be avoided, they are not to be married. Most of them belong to the whole world]. *Akazi akuti John Doe apitilizebe kusamala mwana yo...uhule wanuwo waoneka poyera* [Women say John Doe must continue to take care of the child...your prostitution has been exposed]. *Azimayi mwaqundika kuchotsa chisoso mmaso mwanzanu mwanu mulimyala poti zanu zabisika* [Women, you are busy removing a speck from the eyes of a fellow woman when in yours there is a stone, just because your scandals are hidden]. *Komatu azimai* [Women]. *Koma helewuuu ndalama itipha atsikana* [Money will kill us girls]. *Samasamala* [they do not care]. *Azimayi atipha ndithu* [Women will kill us]. *Koma azimayi aaaa* [Women]. *Koma azimayi pena iiiiih! Satana amatha kukhala patali ku maonera ma film azimayi. Akundimvetsa chisoni mwanayu this will catch up with him akazakula* [Women, I think Satan sits

back to watch and learn from women's actions. I feel sad for the child, this will catch up with him when he grown up] *Kukhaulisa mahule* [Punishing prostitutes]. *Azimai mudya koma movutikira* [Women, you will be paid but after struggles]. *Koma azimayi chimene tikufuna mmmhhh sitikuchidziwa* [As women, we don't know what we want].

Male Chauvinism can be seen as a manifestation of misogyny, as it perpetuates the idea of male superiority and reinforces gender inequalities. Male Chauvinism often involves the attitude of patronising behaviours towards women, assuming that men are inherently better or more capable than women (Merriam-Webster, n.d).

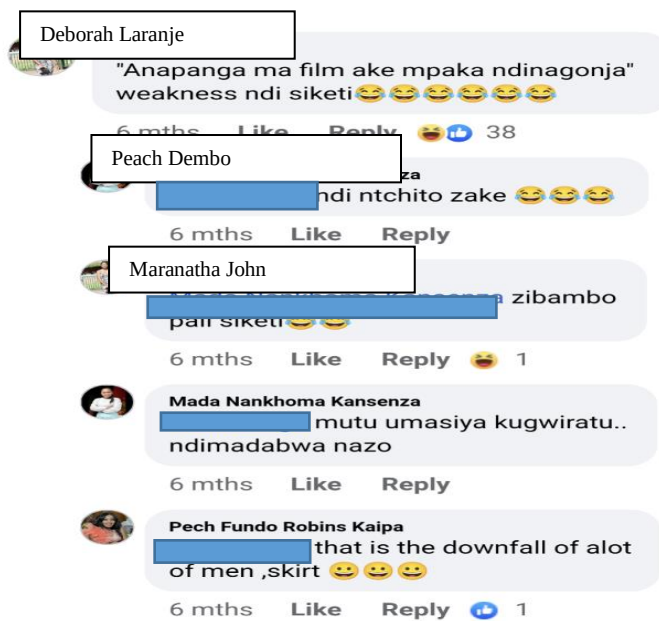


Translations: azibambo onse akhale ochangamuka hiyaaa [Men must be clever].



4.16 Comments of misandry

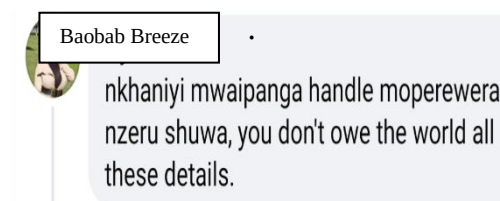
Misandry refers to the hatred, contempt, or prejudice against men or boys based on their gender. It perpetrates stereotypes and leads to animosity between genders (Merriam-Webster). Below are some of the comments that are stereotypical of men:



Translation: *Anapanga ma film ake mpaka ndinagonja, weakness ndi siketi* [She made her tricks and I was eventually seduced by her. His weakness is a woman's skirt.] *ndi ntchito zake* [he is like that] *zibambo pali siketi* [men and skirts] *mutu umasiya kugwiratu...ndimadabwa nazo* [the brain stops functioning, I find this amusing].

4.17 Comments of disparagement of knowledge

Disparagement of knowledge refers to the act of belittling or undermining the value of knowledge, information, or expertise of others. It can involve dismissing or ridiculing well-founded facts, scientific evidence, or educated opinions, often leading to a lack of respect for expertise and a disgust in reliable information (Merriam-Webster, n.d).



Translation: *nkhaniyi mwaipanga handle moperewera nzeru shuwa* [you have surely handled this issue with immaturity]. This comment, which denotes the sensitivity of John Doe's case, is bashed by many users below:

Kobina Balera

[redacted] can you edit your "us" to
"me" 😂

Gordin Lori

[redacted] Us??with who!? Maybe you
have also betrayed someone 🤔🤔

Kingsley Kayira

[redacted] speak 4 urself mahn

Shabbir Mickdad

[redacted] did he tag you? Wait a
minute! Who's us?? 🤔

Yusuf Mwapasa

[redacted] inuso ndiopanda zelu ..

Roosevelt Alidere

[redacted] unfortunately you don't
speak for us

Tionge Jere

[redacted]
Zauhule!

Baobab Breeze

Meyv Makonyola moti mmafuna
aliyense akhale oganiza ngati inu?
Zaziii

Patricia Akuda

azinzache a crook yu
saakusowatu,atomubhakila ati
saamayenela kubweretsa pano 🤔🤔

Isaac Mulinga

Mwana mmene akapangidwa post
anthu simunaleletse musiyeni mu thu

Adam Suleyman

[redacted] inuyo mukuona ngati
wapelewela nzelu koma vuto ndinuyo,
sanalakwitse ndipo wachita bwino

Olipa Betha

[redacted] kkkkk eti
akumphatikiza ndi ndan yemwe



Anthony Arthur Alexander Simwaka

[redacted] zako izoo Bola taidzwa
komanso Sanalaqise wapanga move
yabho yolimbikisa azibambo to do this
thing sizoona mu2 uzilela mwana oti
siwako



Translations: *inunso ndopanda nzeru* [you are dumb]. *Zauhule* [Prostitution]. *Azinzache a crook yu saakusowatu, atomubhakira ati saamyenela kunweretsa pagulu* [Allies of this crook are being exposed, they claim he was not supposed to make a public disclosure]. *Moti mmafuna aliyense akhale oganiza ngati inu? Zaziii* [So, you wanted everyone to think like you? Senseless]. *Inuyo mukuona ngati wapelewela nzelu koma vuto ndinuyo, sanakwitse ndipo wachita bwino* [you think he is immature but you are the problem. He is not wrong, in fact he has done well]. *Mwana mmene ankapangidwa post anthu simunaleletse musiyeni munthu* [When the child's picture was posted by the mother, you did not say anything. Leave the man alone]. *Zako izo bola taidzwa komanso sanalakwise wapanga move yabho yolimbikisa azibambo to do this thing sizoona mu2 uzilela mwana oti siwako* [we do not care, he is not wrong. This is a good move: he has motivated men to do this thing. It is not on for one to be taking care of a child that is not yours]. *Kkkkk eti akumphantikiza ndi ndani yemwe* [Who is she trying to include?].

More Translations: *Mwina zakuwawani koma ife zaticomela kwabasi ndipo za maturity mukunenazo nza useless* [Maybe it has pained you, but we are so glad and it's useless for you to try and introduce the question of maturity into the discussion]. *Ifenso mbali yakuno tazikonda* [this side, we are glad too]. *Et et zomwezi pakana kuyambapo ulangizi iyaaaa* [This issue should not cause her to start counselling us]. *Chemwaliso penapake simuli bho kkkkk nanga zitachitika kwa ine mchimwene wanu mungakondwe eti kkkkk* [Sister, you are not alright. If this had happened to me your

brother, would you have been amused?] *Baobab Breeze ndamene mwapanga comments zoperewera nzeru. Vuto amalawi Timafuna Tizizione ngati Anthu anzeru tili mbuli...Mwinaso Ndiwe Ntumbuka Tu iwe...paja atumbuka yanu ika...Nchifukwa mumakhala anthu akuda alwes.* [Baobab Breeze, it is you who has given a senseless comment. The problem with Malawians is that we want to appear very wise when, actually, we are brutes. From your behaviour, I think you belong to the Tumbuka tribe. That is why Tumbukas are very dark-skinned people].

4.18 Chapter summary

This chapter explored the thematic groups of comments on John Doe's paternity test results on Facebook. Analyzing 1000 comments from Malawian internet users, the chapter identified categories such as approval, anger, rage, disgust, sympathy, satire, and love. The findings offer insights into the diverse thoughts and emotions expressed by Facebook users, contributing to our understanding of online interactions. While it has not analyzed ethical implications, this chapter has presented the primary research that was conducted and it has laid the groundwork for the next chapter which shall proffer the analysis of the ethical implications of the empirical data against the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Chapter Introduction

In this Chapter, the John Doe case is thoroughly analysed through the lens of the four key theories already outlined in the literature review and theoretical framework section of chapter 2. The Virtual Sphere Theory is the foundation for comprehending the distinctive characteristics of online communication concerning the case and the establishment of virtual communities by users commenting on John Doe's Facebook post. *Affect Theory* in the Virtual Sphere is then utilised to investigate the emotional aspect of communication and its effect on public discourse related to the Facebook post. Mill's Freedom of Expression and Harm Principle scrutinise the fragile equilibrium between freedom of expression and the prevention of harm. Lastly, the Ethics of Communication Theory is employed to emphasise the moral responsibilities inherent in online interactions and the imperative of an inclusive and democratic virtual public sphere, which most users commenting on John Doe's Facebook post take for granted. This analysis underscores the significance of ethical considerations which, if considered, would not have protected John Doe's child from harm.

5.2 Theoretical Framework Recapitulation

The theoretical framework of this dissertation incorporates broadly four key theories. The Virtual Sphere Theory, explored by scholars like Habermas (1962), Warner (2002), Fraser (1990), and de Lanerolle (2020), examines the transformation of the public sphere from physical spaces to the digital realm. It discusses the democratisation of discourse and the need for inclusive and democratic spaces in the virtual sphere while also addressing concerns about echo chambers and diverse perspectives.

The *Affect Theory* in the Virtual Sphere, as discussed by Papacharissi (2002: 2010a: 2010b: 2014: 2015a: 2015b: 2017) and Garman (2004), concerns itself with the role of emotions in shaping online discourse. It highlights the formation of affective publics, the power of affective responses, and the challenges of echo chambers and emotional manipulation in online communication.

The Harm Principle and Freedom of Expression, presented by Mill (1859), emphasise individual liberties, freedom of thought, and expression. The two highlight the importance of avoiding harm while promoting personal and societal development through individuality and nonconformity.

Ethics of Communication Theory, influenced by Habermas (1984), explores communicative processes centred on mutual understanding and the balance between institutional structures and normative dimensions. It highlights the ethical dimensions of communication, including self-regulation, context, intent, and power, as discussed by Garman and Mwale (2005), and Arnett (2008). These key theories became relevant the moment John Doe decides to make the Facebook post and before any user decides to react or comment on the content.

5.3 Analysing John Doe's Paternity Test Results Facebook Post

John Doe offered a subjective justification for his decision to publicise the paternity test results conducted on his child. He posted the image of the results bearing the child's name and made the following translated caption: "The sad part is that when my relationship with her (Madam Doe) ended, she came to me asking that I help her conceive a child. She made her expert moves and managed to overpower me. I only 'tasted' (had intercourse with Madam Doe) her once. Twelve days later, she came to me saying she was pregnant. I was in doubt, and I told her that if I am not the biological father, she will regret it. Two months later, I received a complaint from Moreen H that Madam Doe is destroying her love affair with her partner, Mavuto X, the guy from Causalina in Area 25. I asked Madam Doe, and she said she was only using Mavuto X for his money and never really loved him. I was not satisfied with her response, and that is the reason I had to conduct a DNA test on the child. I would not have posted the results on Facebook but the problem is that she made the world believe that the child was mine. Yet she knew that her 'beans were being eaten by other crows' (she was sleeping around). I am not saying the child belongs to Mavuto

X, he too can go and conduct a DNA test of his own. I also hear of a certain Mr Kondwani Y who was paying hospital bills for the child. If I see it fit, I will also post screenshots of their conversations’’.

John Doe's decision to post the paternity test results on Facebook aligns with the realm of the Virtual Sphere Theory, which emphasises the democratisation of access to discourse and the formation of virtual communities. In this case, John Doe utilises the virtual sphere as a platform to address Madam Doe's alleged claims of the child's true paternity on social media. However, the disclosure of sensitive personal information, such as intimate details of their relationship and doubts regarding paternity, raises ethical concerns within the virtual sphere.

Affect Theory in the Virtual Sphere explores the role of emotions in shaping public discourse. John Doe's caption expresses emotions such as doubt, anger, and betrayal. His statement about regretting if he is not the biological father and speculating about other potential fathers triggers a domino effect of emotions in the digital sphere: emotional responses from the audience that are shared with others. These affective responses contribute to the formation of affective publics within the virtual sphere (Papacharissi, 2014). However, John Doe appears to miscalculate the potential risks of emotional manipulation, the impact on the child's well-being, and the potential harm caused by public exposure of private matters without consent of the concerned. John Doe's decision to post the paternity test results can be seen as an exercise of his freedom of expression, as emphasised by Mill's Freedom of Expression and Harm Principle (Mill, 1859). He seeks to defend his reputation and respond to Madam Doe's claims publicly. However, ethical considerations arise due to the potential harm caused by the disclosure of sensitive information, the potential stigmatization of the child, and the potential consequences of public exposure on the concerned individuals. John Doe's decision to publicly speculate about other potential fathers could also have detrimental effects, particularly on the men's families and reputations. The Ethics of Communication Theory emphasises ethical considerations and responsible communication practices (Katajamaki, et al, 2022). John Doe's caption raises concerns about respect, privacy, and the potential harm caused to the child and Madam Doe through public exposure. His decision to include personal details, such as their intimate encounter and doubts about Madam Doe's fidelity, disregards privacy

boundaries. Additionally, John Doe sets off towards the audience a domino effect of the potential for harassment, stigmatization, and emotional harm to concerned individuals. A serious concern is raised in that John Doe sets the tone of such domino effect built on DNA test results that are indicated as not court admissible. The first evidence of such domino effect is evident in the comments of approval, appreciation and commendation.

5.4 Analysing Comments of Approval, Appreciation and Commendation

Comments of commendation indicate positive remarks or messages that one leaves on a post or content that another person finds impressive, helpful, or inspiring (Merriam-Webster, n.d). For example, a user identified as ‘Finias Ndileke’ comments: ‘He’s going to be our motivation speaker’. Another user identified as ‘Beston Chinsima’ comments: ‘We are being scammed as men, so Mr [John Doe], we need you in our meeting for unity’. The phrases ‘motivation speaker’ and ‘we need you in our meeting’, suggest John Doe is someone commended to inspire others based on his experiences. While commendation is a more specific expression of praise or admiration of perceived achievement, approval signifies a general expression of agreement, satisfaction or acceptance (Merriam-Webster, n.d). For example, another user, Perfectionist Emie, says, ‘Brother, you did the right thing’. Another user, ‘Levi King’ comments: Well-done bro’. ‘Duwa Kuwala’ comments ‘We are fixing the country’, all to appreciate John Doe as piloting a noble duty. User ‘Inan Mongea’ comments, ‘You have done well respectable brother/friend (*Kaka*)...’ The use of the phrase, ‘you have done well’, seeks to venerate John Doe’s actions regardless of their potential effect on the innocent child. The use of the honorific ‘*Kaka*’ [respectable brother/friend], pursues the admiration of John Doe’s personality.

The virtual public sphere theory emphasises inclusive and democratic spaces for public debate, considering power dynamics based on gender, race, and class (Fraser, 1990). At first glance, it appears democratic enough to express opinions of John Doe as a man of noble duty and even a prospective motivational speaker for other men. However, these lack reasonableness as they validate the posting of sensitive private matters in the virtual sphere. While they appear to acknowledge John Doe’s courage and openness, they cannot avoid reinforcing harmful perspectives or perpetuating negative stereotypes. For example, calling for John Doe to motivate other men to ‘fix

the nation' creates a domino effect of doubting the true paternity of countless children in Malawi to unfair doubt, and questions the fidelity of women.

The *Affect Theory* in the virtual sphere highlights the role of emotions in shaping public discourse (Learner, 2000). The comments of approval, appreciation, and commendation can be seen as affective responses, indicating resonance with John Doe's story. However, the dangers of echo chambers in the virtual public sphere should be considered, as they may suppress opposing views and contribute to emotional manipulation (Papacharissi, 2010 a). For example, it would be hard for other users to counter-argue the notion of 'fixing the nation' through DNA testing of a child, which is presented as a gallant fight for an unconditional honourable cause. For example, 'Modric wa Goodson Kapalamula' comments: 'Uyu ndi Kaka', labelling John Doe as a 'respectable brother'. This potentially blocks opposite views because it is not in the tradition of Malawian norms to speak against a so-called 'respectable brother' of perceived noble thought.

Mill's freedom of expression supports individual freedom as long as the freedom does not harm others. The comments express individual freedom of expression, but it is crucial to ensure they do not promote emotional and psychological harm of others. User 'Mayeso Botomani' comments: '*Osamasekelera zopusa*' [Do not entertain stupidity]. This could potentially expose Madam Doe to emotional harm through ridicule, as she is shamed as being stupid or acting senselessly. The child is denied dignity as, by implication, he is viewed as a product of so-called stupidity. As words like 'stupid' are used, bearing in mind their potent affective tone, concerns about marginalizing minority publics from expressing opposite views become relevant in the virtual sphere.

The ethics of communicative action theory emphasises rational discourse, mutual understanding, and ethical considerations (Habermas, 1984). The comments lack respect and compassion for the child. For example, a user identified as 'Filimoni Chindebv'u' comments, 'He did well, and you women are prostitutes'. The fact that the child may be viewed as a 'bastard' mothered by a 'prostitute', demonstrates lack of respect and compassion in the expressions. User 'Emmanuel Chilonga Mwale' comments '...at least you are a free person now'. This comment brushes aside ethical consideration of John Doe's social responsibilities over his child by insinuating that

disowning the child is a mark of freedom, while overlooking John Doe's lack of fairness and consent in carrying out the DNA test. The potential impact of strong haunting words on concerned individuals, including the blameless child and the mother, has been taken for granted by this category of users. The impact is more potent as others express irritation in the next section.

5.5 Analysing Comments of Anger and Rage

Comments and reactions of anger and rage on social media platforms indicate irritation or annoyance towards a particular notion. For example, user 'Steve Mzembe' comments that it is 'nonsense' for John Doe to adopt the innocent child or even think of reversing his decision to abrogate his fatherly duties over the child. This category of comments in the John Doe case has some aspects that align with the Virtual Sphere Theory. The comments reflect the diversity of voices and perspectives found in the virtual sphere (Kruger, 2004; Wasserman, 2012). A different category of individuals expresses their anger towards John Doe for various reasons, including posting the DNA paternity test results on Facebook and accusing Madam Doe of infidelity. For example, three users react with the anger emoji to express irritation towards the post. 'Dowa Hand' comments: 'You are a savage', to signify John Doe's lack of reasonableness in posting the DNA test results. Another category expresses anger towards Madam Doe's alleged infidelity and towards women. A user identified as 'Savage 34' comments, '...the lady deserves (knife/dagger emojis)'. The user signifies that John Doe's partner deserves to be slain. The three knife/dagger emojis presented by 'Savage 34' indicate the passion for intensity towards the suggested brutality or assassination of the innocent child's mother. User 'Dedza Drifter' comments, 'Oh my goodness! This woman is trash, my friend! She appears to have smeared a lot of shit on you'. Reducing a human being to 'shit', is a desecration to the inviolability of one's dignity.

These reactions and comments showcase the multiplicity and fluidity of the publics within the virtual sphere, as individuals with different interests and identities engage in simultaneous discussions and express their viewpoints (Papacharissi 2010 a). The fluidity manifests in that some people happen to belong to a public that approves of John Doe's actions, while also belonging to a public that manifests anger and rage towards women. For example, user 'Martin Angelz' says, *Ndiwe dolo aise*.

Watitsekula mmaso...Tizingochinda basi. Sinzakwatira [You are so brave my friend. You have opened my eyes. We will just be fucking around. I will never get married]. The theory's emphasis on counter-publics, where historically excluded groups articulate their views, can be observed in this comment that expresses disappointment at lack of adherence to societal norms and expectations surrounding relationships, on the part of Madam Doe. This frustrates the user such that he resolves to engage with women for sexual pleasure only, with no intentions of marriage.

The presence of personal attacks, name-calling, and offensive language demonstrates the hindrance of rational debate. Instead of engaging in reasoned discourse, some individuals resort to aggressive language and *ad hominem* attacks. For example, user 'Balaka Bonsal' comments, 'very very bad girl', referring to Madam Doe. In terms of inclusivity and democratic spaces, some comments express anger towards those advising John Doe against posting the DNA results. User 'Mchomanga Ayuthe Banda' comments, 'We are tired of your prostitution'. He attacks another user, 'Baobab Breeze', who tries to reason with John Doe. This demonstrates the existence of different perspectives surrounding the appropriate use of social media platforms and privacy.

The comments of anger and rage observably show several connections to the *Affect Theory*. As already exemplified above, people express their emotional reactions to John Doe's post, with some being angry at him for sharing the DNA test results, others expressing anger towards his partner for alleged infidelity, and some even directing their anger towards broader issues related to gender. These comments demonstrate the affective responses to discourse and interactions, which generate 'rapid text circulation in the virtual sphere', as described by the theory (Papacharissi, 2014). Furthermore, the shared emotional experiences and sentiments among individuals with common interests, as seen in this category of comments, align with the formation of an affective public. At the same time, the presence of name-calling, personal attacks, and the use of strong language and expletives, indicates emotional intensity and aggression in online interactions. User 'Liwonde Lullaby' comments, 'the worst witchcraft is from a woman'. Using such strong *ad hominem* attacks contributes to the creation of echo chambers. This is because individuals are mainly exposed to information that reinforces their existing beliefs, which hinders alternative

perspectives. The use of aggressive and threatening language raises ethical concerns as these attacks can be harmful, offensive, and even potentially illegal. They also risk emotional manipulation. Therefore, it is important to avoid such language in debates and discussions to foster a respectful and open exchange of ideas.

Mill's theory of liberty emphasises the importance of freedom of thought and expression, arguing that suppressing ideas risks inhibiting social progress and the discovery of truth. He asserts that individuals should be free to live their lives as long as they cause no harm to others. The comments of anger and rage reflect the freedom of expression, as individuals are expressing their irritation, anger, and rage towards concerned individuals through open discourse. However, it is important to note that Mill's theory also includes the harm principle, which states that freedom of expression should be limited when it incites violence or causes harm. Some comments cross the line by resorting to personal attacks, abusive language, and threats. These tendencies can be considered harmful and go beyond the boundaries of responsible communication. Mill's theory also underscores the potential for the tyranny of bigger publics over smaller ones and the need to protect individual liberties. In the context of the comments of anger and rage, we can see this dynamic at play, as different groups of individuals express their anger towards those that criticize John Doe, especially user 'Baobab Breeze'. The rage creates the force of silencing those that try to reason with John Doe such that 'Baobab Breeze' hardly comments again to further reasonably defend her sound position. This silencing disrespects, oppresses and marginalizes rational views aimed at protecting the innocent child.

The Ethics of Communication Theory, as discussed by Habermas (1984) and other scholars, emphasises the importance of rational discourse, mutual understanding, and responsible communication in social interactions. It recognises the potential for moral judgments rooted in communicative processes and highlights the need for ethical considerations in public spheres, including the virtual sphere. In the case of the comments, however, we can observe a lack of rational discourse among the users and a prevalence of emotional reactions. Instead of engaging in reasoned argument, individuals resort to name-calling, personal attacks, strong language, and aggressive behaviour. These behaviours deviate from the ethical standards of communication promoted by the theory. Furthermore, the Ethics of Communication Theory identifies

the principles of honesty, respect, fairness, responsibility, and compassion as guiding principles for ethical communication (Arnett, 2008; Garman & Mwale, 2013). However, comments of anger and rage often lack these qualities, as they involve personal attacks, offensive language, and disregard for the feelings and well-being of others. For example, such disregard is exemplified in user 'Petros Magaletta' who comments, 'speak your ideas to your fellow women, we men support him'. Most concerning is the well-being of the innocent child at the center of the discourse. It is this deep concern for the innocent child that makes some users displeased and disappointed with John Doe.

5.6 Analysing Comments of Disgust, Displeasure and Disappointment

The comments of disgust, displeasure, and disappointment serve as a form of rational discourse within the virtual sphere, where individuals express their disapproval of John Doe's decision to publicly share the paternity test results and disown his innocent child. For example, users who identify as 'Jengo Mdogo', 'Miti Kijani' and 'Bahari Raha' all comment using the phrase, 'Too bad'. The Virtual Sphere Theory highlights the concern of echo chambers. This phenomenon limits the diversity of perspectives and hinders the formation of well-rounded public debates. Some of the comments expressing disgust and displeasure in response to John Doe's actions may stem from individuals within their respective echo chambers, reinforcing their existing beliefs and values. As such, there is not sufficient counter-veiling logical arguments against this group. For example, users 'Mawingu Safi', 'Asante Friend' and 'Jiwe Love' all comment, 'Sad'. And these comments are left unresponded to by the bigger publics in support for John Doe, stifling the fertile potential for a rational discourse. However, although marginalized, this category of comments ought to be commended for formulating what Warner calls a 'counter-public' against the dominant narrative that seeks to praise John Doe while consistently attacking Madam Doe and her innocent child.

According to the *Affect Theory*, emotions are deeply intertwined with online communication, and affective responses to discourse and interactions generate rapid text circulation within the virtual sphere (Warner, 2002; Papacharissi, 2014). Users' comments of disgust, displeasure, and disappointment exemplify the affective nature of their responses to John Doe's actions. For example, user 'Songwe Song'

disappointedly comments, 'Is this worth the public eye?' The comments expressing disgust and displeasure indicate strong negative affective responses to the content shared by John Doe, which goes against the beliefs, values, or ethical standards held by those users. These affective responses are rooted in the users' emotional experiences and sentiments, driving them to express their disapproval openly, much of which advocates for the protection of the child.

The *Affect Theory* also acknowledges the formation of echo chambers (Fraser, 1990). The comments expressing disgust, displeasure, and disappointment are a manifestation of this phenomenon, as users within their respective echo chambers reinforce their shared emotional responses and strengthen their disapproval of John Doe's actions. The users in this category keep using almost uniform phrases over and over again. For example: users Flavia Siliya, 'Dawn Sun', 'Shire Flow', all comment 'Zosayenda [*This is not on*]. Users 'Macheza pa Malawi', 'Nkhota Song', 'Shalom Malindo Phillips', 'Salima Waters', 'Mgablu Heat', all comment 'Zovuta' [*This is a difficult situation*]. The echo-chamber-forming the repetitive nature of the phrases used to indicate disapproval appears more impactful than plain words of logic. Some users facilitated communication tools, such as the 'sad' emoticons reaction to John Doe's post, to amplify their feelings of displeasure.

The comments expressing disgust, displeasure, and disappointment reflect users' exercise of their freedom of expression within the virtual sphere. Mill's principle emphasises the importance of freedom of thought and expression in discovering truth and promoting societal progress. For example, user 'Thabie Onycha Jehre' comments, 'Seems like the rich are never wrong but it is stupid to bring such issues to social media. My fellow Malawians, it is senseless to even comment on his post or even laugh about this, this is inhumane. We agree the woman is wrong but that is not reason enough to act in the manner you have. This is an issue you could have discussed behind closed doors'. This user exemplifies that the comments in this category reflect the exercise of individuality and nonconformity, as users voice their dissatisfaction and disappointment. These users represent a minority public. However, they are a significant force that calls for a reconsideration of John Doe's motives and actions.

The ethical considerations of communication theory emphasise the importance of critical evaluation, communicative argumentation, and the recognition of the interconnectedness of individual lives within the public sphere (Habermas, 1984). While users have the right to express their emotions, it is crucial to consider the context, intent, and power dynamics behind the comments. Ethical communication principles such as honesty, respect, fairness, responsibility, and compassion should guide online interactions. ‘Lilongwe Walker’ comments, ‘Where was your brain?’. ‘Baby Navigator’ comments, ‘This is very wrong’. ‘Victoria Vagrant’ asks, ‘What kind of thinking is this?’ This group of users appear to lobby for honest and fair treatment, responsibility, and compassion towards the innocent child, as ‘Mphatso Phalombe’ comments, ‘trauma to the innocent child. Not good for the next generation’.

According to Habermas (1984) and the Ethics of Communication Theory, moral judgments are rooted in communicative processes centred around mutual understanding rather than subjective preferences or objective rules. The comments expressing disgust, displeasure, and disappointment reflect users' moral judgments and their evaluation of John Doe's actions in light of their own beliefs, values, and ethical standards. User ‘Chikondi Lilongwe’ comments, ‘Not good for the kid’, citing John Doe’s channel of communication as faulty and lacking in mutual respect. The Ethics of Communication Theory emphasises the significance of rational discourse, mutual agreement, and open discussions. Users' comments in this category reflect their engagement in communicative action by expressing their disapproval and disappointment with John Doe's behaviour. They demand rational and ethical deliberation which, however, is not reciprocated. ‘Blacker Wolf’ comments, ‘...this is contrary to child protection laws that we have in the country. It is wrong to make decisions out of anger’. This comment indicates users' resistance to the system (major narrative of support for John Doe) by voicing their counter-opinions and asserting their moral expectations. However, the demand for a reciprocated rational discourse is not granted as some users seek to embarrass and shame the concerned individuals.

5.7 Analysing Comments of Embarrassment and Shame

Embarrassment is often triggered by a specific situation in which a person feels self-consciously humiliated. It typically arises when someone perceives that behaviour or

actions have deviated from social norms or expectations, resulting in a sense of unease (Merriam-Webster, n.d). For example, user 'Mathew Mangochi' comments: 'Ladies, not all rich men are fools. Let us learn to be truthful. This is so embarrassing. Well done Mr. [John Doe]. Your cars should be enjoyed by your biological children. Anyways, we are waiting for the screenshots of Mr Kondwani Y. Don't be troubled trying to explain which Kondwani Y, we already know who the libidinous Kondwani Y is'. The user indicates that the entire situation is an embarrassment for all ladies. Since embarrassment is a short-lived emotion, she transitions into asking for screenshots. Feelings of shame are more profound and enduring when they arise from a deeper sense of personal failure, inadequacy, or moral transgression. They involve feeling a deep sense of guilt, disgrace, or unworthiness about oneself. Unlike embarrassment, shame persists over a long period of time (Merriam-Webster, n.d). For example, user 'Thokozani Banda' comments, 'In an ideal scenario, it would have been good if all children looked like their fathers to avoid such shaming. Thokozani Banda is communicating that feelings of humiliation may be lifelong so long the child does not resemble the father'.

Through the analysis of the comments of embarrassment and shame against the Virtual Sphere Theory, we can observe the development of a multiplicity of Publics (Fraser, 1990). The comments reflect diverse perspectives within the virtual sphere, as individuals express their own emotions of embarrassment and shame in response to John Doe's post. These emotions are influenced by their social and cultural contexts, highlighting the multiplicity of the publics within the virtual sphere. For example, user 'Tshepie Kaunda' appears to indicate that a woman becomes a victim of scorn in society when the child does not resemble the father. These feelings are shared by users: 'Anesu Kaliwo', 'Chikumbutso Lungu', 'Mwiza Jere', 'Chawezi Nyirenda', 'Amazon Weddings', 'Loveness Manda' and 'Tawonga Chisale', who all feel women are victims of unfair social expectations of the child's phenotype.

The virtual sphere provides an egalitarian environment for dialogue in which merit and ideas take precedence over societal positions. While some users express negative emotions towards Madam Doe's alleged behaviour, they also indicate a sense of holding her accountable for her actions, regardless of her social position. For example, user 'Mathew Mangochi', who was the first example in this section, though

exhibiting feelings of embarrassment, points out that John Doe has done well as his wealth should not be used to raise a child that is not biologically his, thus technically holds Madam Doe liable.

While the Virtual Sphere Theory emphasises the need to avoid echo chambers and to actively seek out contrasting viewpoints, the comments of embarrassment and shame appear to be limiting. This is because the users seem to believe that acting against societal norms warrants no grounds for contrasting views other than rebuking Madam Doe and her innocent child just as user 'Mathew Mangochi' does by condemning Madam Doe's alleged actions. The potential for social stigma and rebuke arises from the child's public exposure and negative comments with the potential to *affect* the child's psychological and emotional state, possibly his entire life, as feelings of shame are long-term. The hostile environment of shaming could potentially isolate the child socially or create a sense of humiliation in the child's foreseeable future.

The *Affect Theory* in the Virtual Sphere focuses on the role of emotions and affective responses in shaping public discourse and online interactions (Papacharissi, 2015 a). The comments of embarrassment and shame reflect the emotional responses of individuals towards Madam Doe's alleged actions and the perceived violation of societal norms. The comments express discomfort, awkwardness, and judgment towards her alleged behaviour, particularly about her alleged infidelity and deception. For example, user 'Dalitso Bwana' comments, 'This is shameful'. In this case, the comment may serve as a form of social control, aimed at discouraging similar behaviour and to maintain social norms. The impact of the force towards maintaining the so-called social order is shared through the comments by female users, 'Nkhosana Phiri', 'Wazona Mhango' and 'Chimwala Kasakula', all embodying guilt, commenting, 'We will be embarrassed'. However, it is important to consider the potential harmful consequences to the innocent child within this context. Since emotions in the virtual sphere can be contagious, the incubated feeling of embarrassment and shame awaits the child when he grows up and becomes aware of the discourse that once surrounded him.

Mill's theory emphasises the importance of freedom of thought and expression while considering the potential harm that actions may cause to others. Some of the

comments directly target or harm the innocent child by exposing his identity and subjecting him to public disgrace. However, some would argue that the comments are primarily focused on criticizing Madam Doe's behaviour without directly targeting or harming the child, such that they might fall within the realm of protected expression under Mill's theory. This argument would demand one to acknowledge that it is crucial to differentiate between criticism aimed at the adult's actions and potential emotional and psychological harm inflicted upon the innocent child.

Habermas' theory highlights the significance of communicative processes centred on mutual understanding and rational discourse in society. The comments of embarrassment and shame may reflect individuals' judgments and reactions to Madam Doe's alleged actions and behaviours. However, the comments primarily consist of personal attacks, ridicule, or derogatory language towards Madam Doe without engaging in rational discourse or promoting understanding, which makes them appear ethically problematic, according to Habermas' theory. This is the case also because Habermas emphasises the importance of the normative aspects of social reality. The comments may uphold societal values and empathy but lack respect for the dignity of the concerned individuals, especially by targeting the child's social standing negatively. The attacks take a sharp twist when they become scornful and derogatory.

5.8 Analysing comments of scorn and derogatoriness

Scorn usually is a feeling of outright contempt or disdain towards someone or something. It involves a harsh sense of disapproval, often accompanied by a belief that the person or thing being scorned or mocked is unworthy or inferior (Merriam-Webster, n.d). For example, user 'Chitipa Celestial' comments, 'I would hate for a child that is not mine crying for French fries'. This user appears to harshly and entirely denounce the responsibility of providing food for a child that is not biologically connected to a man. The child is viewed as inferior and not qualified for bare minimum provisions such as food.

Derogation, in contrast, refers to the act of belittling or disparaging someone or something. It involves expressing a low opinion or diminishing the value or importance of a person, group, idea, or concept (Merriam-Webster, n.d). For example, user 'Chikondi Mphande' comments, 'The problem is that you love women with big

buttocks’. This comment indicates a disdain for the love of women with big buttocks and implies such women are inferior and not worth pursuing a thoughtful romantic relationship with. User ‘Mwai Nkosi’ shares the same attitude as he comments, ‘You love women with big buttocks, and they have taught you a lesson’. This user fortifies the position that women who are naturally endowed with big buttocks are a ‘red flag’, a warning of an impending danger, which in this case is eventual promiscuity.

According to the Virtual Sphere Theory, in John Doe’s case, the comments of scorn and derogatoriness directed towards him, his partner, and the child create a hostile and negative online environment. It is a hostile environment as indicated to speak harshly of women’s private body parts, such as buttocks, and equate them to lack of moral reasoning. It is also equally toxic to deny the child a right to be given food by his social father due to lack of genetic bonds. Such comments not only violate the principles of respectful communication but also contribute to a culture of aggression, animosity, and dehumanization. They disregard the well-being and dignity of the concerned individuals involved and hinder the potential for constructive dialogue and understanding.

Comments of scorn and derogatoriness on social media platforms like Facebook contribute to the emergence of affective publics based on negative emotions and sentiments. These comments generate emotional responses and circulation of harmful content, shaping public perception and discourse. They elicit a divisive and polarizing online environment where individuals express their negative *affect* towards John Doe, his partner, and the child. These affective responses can lead to the formation of online communities bound together by shared negative emotions and experiences.

While affective communication is a significant aspect of the virtual sphere, it is important to note that the impact of the comments of scorn and derogatoriness goes beyond the virtual realm. The emotional harm inflicted by such comments can have real-life consequences for the individuals involved, including the innocent child. Continuous exposure to negative affective content can lead to psychological distress, diminished self-esteem, and social isolation for the child. Moreover, the creation of an online atmosphere characterised by hostility and dehumanization can perpetuate a

culture of bullying and discrimination, affecting the child's well-being and social interactions beyond the digital space.

In relation to Mill's freedom of expression and harm principle, user 'Thanks Chirwa' comments, 'It's not acceptable to raise a child that is not yours...this is so wrong'. While individuals have the right to express their opinions and emotions, comments that belittle, insult, or demean others can contribute to psychological harm, emotional distress, and social consequences for the targeted individuals. User 'Dedza Drifter' comments, 'This woman is trash, eish! She has smeared a lot of shit on you'. In as much as user 'Bester' expresses himself, such scorn represents an unacceptable way to talk as such offensive remarks can lead to emotional distress, low self-esteem, and psychological harm to the child and the mother, impacting their reputation.

Habermas (1984) emphasises the significance of rational communication and mutual agreement or understanding in social interactions. User 'Zomba Zing' comments, 'a woman is the most dangerous witch'. Calling women witches or accusing them of witchcraft is a deviation from respectful and constructive communication principles, as it involves belittling, insulting, and demeaning women who already are considered a minority group. Such comments contribute to a toxic online environment and promote hostility. Room for rational discourse is significantly stifled, with a diminishing of an inclusive and respectful online public sphere where diverse perspectives can be heard and understood, leading to emotional distress, humiliation, and the erosion of one's sense of self-worth. Such toxicity, however, awakens feelings of sympathy, empathy and compassion in other users.

5.9 Analysing Comments of Sympathy, Empathy and Compassion

Sympathy involves the ability to understand and share the feelings or emotions of another person. It encompasses a sense of concern and support for someone who is experiencing pain, hardship, or difficult circumstances (Merriam-Webster, n.d). For example, users 'Rhoda Mumba', 'Kate Wind' and 'Fanny Solid', all commented 'Sad'. The comment indicates a recognition and concern for the suffering of the concerned individuals.

Empathy involves putting oneself in someone else's shoes and trying to feel what they are feeling (Merriam-Webster, n.d). Empathy helps build a connection, deepen

understanding, and fosters a sense of support and validation. For example, users ‘Lihle Nkosi’, ‘Jabulani Ngwenya’ and ‘Thandeka Mhlanga’ all comment, ‘I can feel your pain’, to show empathy for John Doe. User ‘Gugulethu Ndaba’ comments, ‘I feel for the child, I hope all goes well for him’, to show empathy for the child. User ‘Rachel Sea’ says ‘... I feel for Madam Doe’, showing empathy for Madam Doe.

Compassion goes beyond understanding and extends to a genuine concern for the well-being of others. It involves a desire to alleviate suffering or support others in difficult situations. Compassion is hence empathy in action, and a willingness to help or provide comfort. Steps are taken to offer assistance, comfort, or understanding. For example, user ‘Sionse A Mwayie Phiri’ comments, ‘If Joseph accepted responsibility for Mary’s pregnancy, what more with you who had sex with your partner? Your fellow man’s child is also your child. Continue with the charity work that you have already started over the child, it is the same child that will help you in future’. This user wants action taken whereby the child should be given support such that she alludes to the Bible to emphasize her point.

Within the virtual sphere, comments of sympathy, empathy, and compassion contribute to the democratisation of access to discourse by allowing users from diverse backgrounds to participate in providing discourses of comfort to those in need. These comments align with the concept of affective publics, which are online communities formed around shared emotional experiences and sentiments. By sharing their own emotional responses, users create a supportive and caring environment, fostering a sense of community and support. John Doe, Madam Doe and the child feel less lonely in their disparate struggles related to the Facebook post.

While the Virtual Sphere Theory raises concerns about echo chambers, comments of sympathy, empathy, and compassion in the John Doe case exhibit a degree of openness and understanding towards the concerned individuals. It is hence important to acknowledge that they have the potential to counteract the creation of echo chambers as they foster social cohesion, creating a space where the innocent child receives support. For example, user ‘Blacker Wolf’ comments, ‘...this is contrary to child protection laws that we have in the country. It is wrong to act out of anger’. This user invokes social cohesion towards a legal action as she thinks the public needs to

hold John Doe accountable for being perceived to have broken the law. These comments generate rapid text circulation, contributing to the affective circulation of emotions within the virtual sphere. This is evidenced when a group of users comment repetitively using a single utterance such as ‘I feel for you’, ‘sad’, ‘so sad’ and so on. The use of sad emojis and interjections conveys emotions and messages concisely and impactful towards the protection of the child, and the further exposure of the child, for those in support of John Doe.

According to Mill (1859), individuals should be free to express their thoughts and emotions as long as they do not cause harm to others. Comments of sympathy, empathy and compassion involve individuals expressing support towards those experiencing difficult situations. In fostering a supportive and caring online environment, users express their emotions and offer words of comfort for the sake of the well-being of others and create a sense of solidarity. They provide individuals with the freedom to share their experiences and receive support from their online communities.

However, Mill also raises important considerations when it comes to the potential for harm. While the intention may be to provide comfort and support to John Doe by some users, there is a risk of inadvertently causing harm to the innocent child. For example, user ‘Lihle Nkosi’ comments, ‘I can feel your pain’. Such a comment shows sympathy for John Doe, yet it also perpetuates stereotyping or stigmatisation of children not biologically related to their social fathers. It endorses Madam Doe’s alleged actions as accurate without knowing her side of the story. This may have both intended and unintended negative consequences, hence the need for the users to exercise sensitivity by considering potential impact of their words.

According to Habermas (1984), communicative processes based on mutual understanding form the basis of moral judgments. Comments of sympathy, empathy and compassion reflect the ethical dimension of communication by demonstrating understanding and support for individuals facing challenging situations. The comments contribute to just decision-making as some comments appear to prioritize seeking a solution for the well-being of the child. Ethical communication principles, such as honesty, respect, fairness, responsibility, and compassion, appear to guide comments of sympathy and empathy in the John Doe case. Some users appear to be

aware of the potential consequences of their words and try to avoid the promotion of a post-truth environment. However, some users fail to acknowledge the outcome of their comments as they engage in sarcasm and allegory.

5.10 Analysing Comments of Sarcasm and Allegory

Sarcastic comments, characterised by irony and ridicule, are a means of criticising individuals or ideas (Merriam-Webster, n.d). By employing sarcasm in their comments, users in this category of comments engage in rational discourse through a lens of subversion. For example, user ‘Mfumuyayikulu Mbedza Muafrica’ says ‘The child is mine’. This is ironic and seeks to ridicule John Doe for disowning his child while mentioning different other men as possible biological fathers. The user mocks John Doe by implying that anyone, including him, could by implication, be the father since he alleges that Madam Doe is promiscuous. However, some users also seek to challenge John Doe’s partner’s alleged infidelity. For example, user ‘Natasha Selemani’ comments, ‘show us the woman full of grace’. He appears to praise Madam Doe as full of grace yet it is ironic as she sarcastically wants to expose Madam Doe upon seeing her image displayed. Madam Doe’s alleged actions of infidelity are ironically termed as ‘grace’, to indicate the alleged act of freely giving her body to various men. Some users also engage the child in the discourse. For example, user ‘Tisungane Manda’ says, ‘I am coming honey, help me conceive a child’. The insinuation seeks to indicate that John Doe deserves his own biological child that needs to replace the one he has publicly disowned.

Allegorical comments allow for the conveying of hidden meanings or moral lessons through symbolic figures or actions (Merriam-Webster, n.d). In John Doe’s context, allegory is used by users to present complex ideas or critique social issues indirectly. For example, user Becca Jay Abubakar comments, ‘The man has flown away like what happens in the aviator game’. The user seeks to present a hidden meaning that Madam Doe messed up a relationship and she can only blame herself since things were initially in her control just as a gambler has control over his/her finances when making the decision to gamble in the aviator game. By employing sarcasm and allegorical references, the users contribute to the diversity of perspectives and interpretations in the virtual public sphere, aligning with the notion of fluidity and

multiplicity emphasised in the Virtual Sphere Theory, even though, some of the expressions used in the John Doe case are demeaning.

When analysing comments of sarcasm and allegory in light of the *Affect Theory*, one can observe an interplay between affective responses and the expression of emotions in the virtual sphere. Sarcastic comments, with their use of irony and ridicule, often evoke strong emotional reactions. They appear to generate affective responses such as amusement, laughter, or even anger. Allegorical comments, while not primarily focused on evoking emotions, can still have affective implications. Allegory often conveys symbolic meanings or moral lessons, which can resonate emotionally with the audience. User Becca Jay Abubakar's comment, for example, makes user 'Kusamala Msisika' comment, 'Flown at 1.00 after staking 20 thousand Kwacha meant for food'. This is a reaction to the allegory as it seeks to indicate the nature of the unimaginable loss suffered by Madam Doe, which is equated to losing money meant for food in an unexpected and irresponsible manner.

In the light of Mill's harm principle, it becomes evident that there is a strong dehumanizing and insensitive objectification of the innocent child. For example, user 'Chisomo Ntaba Nkhata SC' comments, 'Seems like this child already knew the issue'. This careless comment is a caption under the picture of the child, which 'Chisomo Ntaba SC' inserts with a fully exposed face of the innocent child, taken from Madam Doe's Facebook profile. This user's comment, with its sharp and biting tone, could eventually harm the child by causing emotional distress, humiliation, and/or degradation once the child grows and gets access to the discourse and the use of his picture. While sarcasm can be used as a form of social commentary or critique, the potential impact it has on the innocent child cannot be taken for granted as he is a targeted individual, explicitly so through the use of his image. The intent or effect of the sarcasm in most of the comments is to belittle, demean, or attack, and can hence be seen as harmful.

While comments of sarcasm aim to expose flaws or highlight societal issues, one would argue that the ethical boundary lies in whether the sarcasm swerves into personal attacks, perpetuates stereotypes, or incites hatred. It is obvious that a sizeable number of comments of sarcasm in the study findings perpetuate stereotypes against

women and incite hatred towards children who are or could not be biologically related to their social fathers across Malawi. Allegorical comments, although less explicitly focused on individuals, still carry and promote discriminatory views.

From an ethical standpoint, the use of sarcasm can raise questions about the intention behind the communication. If sarcasm is employed to degrade, humiliate, or belittle others, which is the case in the John Doe context, it should be seen as a violation of the principles of respectful and ethical communication.

In the case of John Doe, sarcasm was supposed to shed light on societal issues, challenge norms, or promote critical thinking about the issues at hand. However, it reinforces harmful stereotypes, perpetuates discrimination, and seeks to harm individuals without genuine purpose. It falls short of Habermasian ethical communication standards. This is exemplified by user ‘Griffin Johnanes’ comment that “Women who party at Blues and Four Seasons should be avoided. Most of them belong to all men”. The comment perpetuates stereotypes against all women that go out to nightclubs.

Allegorical comments, with their symbolic figures and hidden meanings, present a unique challenge in ethical analysis. The ethical evaluation of allegory depends on the moral lessons or messages conveyed through symbolism. The allegory is hypothetically supposed to promote understanding, empathy, or moral reflection, and contribute positively to ethical communication. However, the interpretation of the allegories in the John Doe case appears to perpetuate harmful ideologies, reinforce mockery, and promote discrimination without consideration for the innocent child. They portray Madam Doe as a woman who lacks control and discipline just as a gambler in the aviator game. Interestingly, other users concentrate on the knowledge surrounding the entire John Doe scenario.

5.11 Analysing Agnostic and Epistemological Comments

Agnostic comments express uncertainty, acknowledge limitations of one’s knowledge, or take a more open-minded stance (Merriam-Webster, n.d). For example, user ‘Godfrey Jekete’ comments, ‘This is not good...we should hear the other side of the story’. The user appears to accept her limitations in the knowledge at the present

state of affairs and considers John Doe's version of events and allegations as insufficient and unwarranted of trust.

Epistemological comments on the other hand are those that indicate confidence in the knowledge that one holds as justified truth (Merriam-Webster, n.d). For example, user 'Zikomo Masamba' comments, 'Without considering whatever technology you used, we believe the child looks like you and we could even come and have a face-to-face talk with you in front of the child to prove that the child is yours. Otherwise, for now, stick to your truths based on technology'. The user argues that the episteme or knowledge that he holds is that the child belongs to John Doe by simply looking at physical resemblances evident in the pictures. He is not convinced of Doe's science-based knowledge such that he denounces the DNA testing technologies.

The agnostic and epistemological comments align with the Virtual Sphere Theory in several ways. The Virtual Sphere Theory posits that the internet has transformed the public sphere, allowing individuals from diverse backgrounds to engage in discourse and share their opinions. The Agnostic comments reflect this democratisation of access to discourse, as they embrace open-mindedness and invite exploration of different viewpoints. For example, user 'Jayne Moyo' comments, 'It is important to listen to both parties concerned'. She seeks to call for Madam Doe's right to be heard because of any attempt to engage in the online discourse. The epistemological comments demonstrate the fluidity and multiplicity of interpretations within the virtual sphere, acknowledging that the topic at hand could hold definitive answers. For example, user 'Baobab Breeze' comments, this issue has been handled with lack of maturity, for sure. You don't owe the world all these details'. She is sure that John Doe is in the wrong and there is no need to even give an ear to Madam Doe as such issues should never be presented to the public.

In relation to the *Affect Theory*, the Agnostic comments, with their acknowledgement of uncertainty and openness to different perspectives, demonstrate a rational approach to discourse. They recognise that affective responses, such as emotions, can shape public perception and decision-making. For this reason, it is clear in the foregoing examples why the users demand further exploration as John Doe's side of the story is insufficient. The epistemological comments, by acknowledging knowledge, show an understanding of the potential risks and challenges posed by affective communication,

such as the spread of misinformation and the formation of echo chambers. Most users seek to silence John Doe's half-truths as done to user 'Baobab Breeze'.

Analysing the agnostic and epistemological comments through the lens of Mill's Freedom of Expression and Harm Principle, it is evident that freedom of thought and expression is essential for societal progress and the discovery of truth. The agnostic comments, with their recognition of multiple valid perspectives and openness to discourse, align with the idea that suppressing ideas inhibits social progress by preventing the consideration of conflicting viewpoints. These appear to protect the child from harm as they seek further knowledge and balanced perspectives for one to be warranted the freedom to comment on the John Doe case without causing harm. In acknowledging knowledge, the epistemological comments reflect an understanding of the harm principle, which states that individuals should be free to live their lives as long as no one is harmed. By approaching the topic with either uncertainty or open-mindedness, these comments embody respect for individual freedom and the pursuit of truth.

In the context of Ethics of Communication Theory, the agnostic and epistemological comments demonstrate an awareness of ethical considerations in online communication. The agnostic comments, with their recognition of the limitations of one's knowledge, reflect a sense of responsibility in engaging in discourse. They invite further exploration and deliberation, emphasizing the importance of rational discourse and critical evaluation. The Gnostic comments adopt a more cautious and reflective approach. These comments align with the ethical principles of honesty, respect, fairness, and responsibility, as they promote thoughtful engagement and consideration of different perspectives. It is, however, significant to notice that some users find the entire John Doe case a source of pleasure.

5.12 Analysing Comments of Amusement, Happiness and Joy

Amusement is a subjective state of being entertained or finding something enjoyable, often resulting in feelings of pleasure, mirth, or delight (Merriam-Webster, n.d). For example, user 'Mphatso Kariba' comments with four laughter emojis. She is one of the users in the category of amusement that add an emoji of laughter to indicate hilarity. While amusement is a temporal and fleeting emotion, happiness is more enduring and has depth in terms of the sense of fulfilment (Merriam-Webster, n.d).

For example, user ‘George Harmony’ comments, ‘We will be here all day’, then he inserts emojis of laughter. This is to show that he intends to experience in-depth happiness and would love to spend as much time as possible being entertained by the John Doe case. Joy, however, indicates feelings of inner contentment, gratitude, transcendence and enduring quality (Merriam-Webster, n.d). For example, user ‘Mark Makobiri’ comments ‘I think the whole country needs to run DNA tests! It’s about time everyone went back to where they came from! No wonder we have misfortunes: the ancestral spirits are angry [inserts laughing emojis]. This user is in a state of joy as he basks in John Doe’s case, which appears to give him contentment, prompting him to ask for nationwide DNA testing. He feels transcendent as he points to the ancestral spirits in unison with his reasoning, as the country’s misfortunes are down to divine punishment, hence an enduring quality of well-being in his life based on his understanding of the case in relation to spirituality.

The comments express themes of amusement, and happiness and reflect the positive affective experiences of individuals participating in the virtual sphere. The participation demonstrates the democratisation of access to discourse and the engagement of diverse voices. However, it is important to consider the potential echo chamber effect and limited exposure to diverse perspectives that may be associated with such positive affective responses. This is because, as people find the John Doe case entertaining, it limits the need for rational discourse such that affected individuals, such as the child and John Doe’s partner, may feel disrespected to see their private lives becoming a source of entertainment to the public without their consent.

Moving on to the *Affect Theory* in the Virtual Sphere, the comments of amusement, joy, and happiness align with the theory's emphasis on the role of emotions in shaping public discourse and the birth of affective publics. Such an affective public in the John Doe context indicates positive affective responses that contribute to the dissemination and circulation of the content of paternity test results within the virtual sphere. Even though the users find the content pleasurable, the risk of emotional bias, which overshadows critical thinking and rational discourse, is evident. As the need for critical discourse is ignored, ethics and the protection of the innocent child are equally ignored.

Applying Mill's Freedom of Expression and Harm Principle, the comments of amusement, happiness and joy can be seen as individuals exercising their freedom of expression without directly causing harm to others. However, it is important to consider the potential indirect consequences and impact of the situation. This is the case because the users are finding amusement in content that has not been approved by all individuals involved, some of whom may find it emotionally troubling. The users ought to balance individual freedom with the well-being of others and the overall tone of the discourse becomes crucial. Unfortunately, the joyful tone of the content posted by John Doe fails to foster the well-being of the innocent child.

The Ethics of Communication Theory highlights ethical considerations such as honesty, respect, fairness, responsibility, and compassion. The comments expressing amusement, joy, and happiness should be evaluated in terms of how they align with these principles. While they appear to not directly violate ethical norms, they still undermine the seriousness of the case and publicly disregard the emotions of those who may be affected, including the child.

The comments expressing amusement, joy, and happiness in response to the John Doe case have broader implications. While they reflect positive affective experiences and individual freedom of expression, certain potential limitations and ethical considerations have to be addressed. The positive emotions expressed in these comments contribute to a lively and engaging virtual environment, promoting a sense of enjoyment and contentment among participants. They add vibrancy to the discourse and create a positive atmosphere within the virtual sphere. However, they fail to strike a balance between positive *affect* and critical thinking to ensure a well-rounded and informed discourse. In so doing, they end up finding pleasure in that which is a source of harm to the innocent child and others. Beyond pleasure, some users appear to find the case a source of inspiration and motivation.

5.13 Analysis of Comments of Inspiration and Motivation

Inspiration involves the process of being mentally or emotionally stimulated to create, think, or act in a particular manner. Inspiration oftentimes arises from a role model (Merriam-Webster, n.d). For instance, user 'Martin Angelz' comments, 'You are so brave, my friend. You have opened my eyes. We will just be fucking around. I will never marry'. The user is inspired by John Doe's actions such that he is a source of

influence in the decision to never marry but rather stick to using women for self-indulgent activities at large, and sexual satisfaction in particular.

Motivation entails an inner drive or desire that initiates, guides, and sustains a person's behaviour towards achieving a particular outcome. It is a combination of internal desires as well as external rewards or consequences (Zeidner et'al, 2000). While inspiration is driven by an external stimulus like John Doe, motivation is driven by a desire to attain a certain goal. For example, user 'Samuel Hay' comments, 'How much is DNA testing? I have some anxiety'. The user appears to have been driven by an inner feeling of anxiety generated by John Doe's allegations and actions, while also wishing to attain an external goal of alleviating the fears he has through going to conduct DNA tests on his children.

The comments in this category represent the participatory nature of the virtual sphere, where users actively respond, share their thoughts, and find feelings of inspiration in the experiences shared by John Doe. There is a demonstration of how John Doe's actions and story have reached a wide audience and sparked motivation within the virtual sphere. The inspiration and the motivation enable users with such sentiments to act or behave like John Doe beyond the virtual sphere. For example, user 'Vilipanganga Nyolonyolo' comments, 'Let me try my luck'. This implies that the exposure to harm that John Doe renders to his child will also appear in the context of other children whose fathers share feelings of inspiration and motivation.

Affect Theory in the Virtual Sphere highlights the role of emotions in shaping public discourse and the formation of affective publics. In this category of comments, individuals are emotionally moved by John Doe's actions. They express enthusiasm, admiration, and a desire to emulate his example. For example, user 'Loyce Tembo' comments, 'How much is DNA-testing?' These affective responses illustrate how emotions can influence and mobilize individuals within the virtual sphere to want to act in particular ways. However, such *affect* appears to be influenced by factors such as personal beliefs and individual experiences. John Doe appears to awaken pre-existing perceptions, which only lacked greater motivation.

In line with Mill's Freedom of Expression and Harm Principle, the category of comments of inspiration and motivation express support for John Doe's decision to publicly share the paternity test results. For example, user 'Edith Lloyds' comments, 'It is good he is expressing himself openly rather than committing suicide'. The user views it as an exercise of his freedom of expression and sees his actions as justified in clearing his name. However, it is worth considering the potential consequences of such public disclosure, especially in terms of the harm it may cause to the child, the child's mother, or their social relationships. It is also worth noting the probable harm on other children once those motivated men gain enough emotional determination to proceed with conducting DNA tests on their children.

With regard to the Ethics of Communication Theory, it is important to critically evaluate the ethical implications of publicly being in discourse of personal matters, such as paternity test results and potential divorces. While individuals may find inspiration in John Doe's actions, it is crucial to consider the privacy and dignity of the child and the child's mother, which John Doe totally disregards. Public discourse of such personal matters without their consent raises ethical questions regarding informed consent, respect for privacy, and potential harm caused by disclosure. Irrespective of these considerations, some users appear to demonstrate caring attitudes and emotional fondness for either John Doe or Madam Doe.

5.14 Analysing Comments of Love, Affection and Endearment

Comments of love, affection and endearment indicate care, emotional closeness towards someone and tender feelings of fondness. For example, user Karol Bengo comments, 'You are in need of some therapy, come I will help you', indicating care and affectionate feelings towards John Doe. User 'Naomi Yalakwa' comments, 'Come to Mama', to indicate a nurturing keenness towards John Doe.

With regard to Virtual Sphere Theory, the comments of love, affection, and endearment reflect the virtual sphere's potential for individuals to form connections through expressing their emotions online. Users are able to convey their care and fondness for John Doe through their comments. This demonstrates how the virtual sphere allows for expressing emotions and forming virtual communities based on shared affection and admiration for a person. Some even admire Madam Doe. For example, user 'Fazida Mussah' comments, 'The woman is hot, and she won't fail to

find another man to take care of the child'. The user appears to admire the physical qualities of Madam Doe.

These comments align with the *Affect Theory* as they showcase the emotional responses and sentiments of love and affection towards either John Doe or his partner. Users express their emotional closeness and fondness for either of them, indicating the affective bonds formed through the virtual sphere. The comments also suggest that John Doe's actions have positively impacted these individuals, inspiring feelings of love and admiration. This becomes problematic for the child who may feel that being disowned in public as well as his paternity being in question makes his father loveable. For example, user 'Virginia Sosani' comments, 'I am coming, I want you to help me conceive a child too'. Such endearment appears to make the conception of John Doe's child an act that should not be taken for granted.

In the context of Mill's theory of Liberty, these comments do not directly relate to the harm principle. They, primarily, express personal emotions of love and affection towards John Doe and his partner. As long as these expressions of love do not incite harm or infringe upon the rights of others, they fall within the realm of individual freedom of expression. However, one would argue that the love and endearment expressed come at the expense of the privacy of the innocent child's, hence indirectly harming the child.

The comments of love, affection, and endearment can be seen as ethical expressions of positive communication. They convey care, emotional closeness, and admiration for John Doe, reflecting principles such as respect and compassion. However, it is important to bear in mind that the comments expressing a desire to marry or engage in romantic activities with either John Doe or his partner may raise ethical considerations, as they involve personal relationships and potential consequences for the individuals involved. Further, the desire to emulate or admire the conjugal relationship between John Doe and his partner would be appalling to the child as it is triggered by a scandal in which the innocent child is the centre of discourse. While showing emotional fondness to either Madam Doe or John Doe, there is, a deep resentment for the opposite gender in some users.

5.15 Analysing Comments of Misogyny and Male Chauvinism

Misogyny is used to describe a deep-seated and often ingrained prejudice, hostility, or hatred directed towards women or girls simply because they are female (Merriam-Webster, n.d). For example, user ‘Joji Kandulu Mundawanga’ comments, ‘He has done well, you women are prostitutes’. The user commends John Doe’s actions on the grounds that he perceives women as prostitutes; verbal mistreatment founded on gender differences. Male Chauvinism is an attitude where men assert their perceived superiority over women. It involves a patronizing and condescending attitude towards women. For example, user ‘Zeus Mapiri’ comments, ‘Address your fellow women, we men support him’. The user appears to indicate that women have no right to advise men, as only men can and ought to advise men.

The comments reflecting misogyny and male chauvinism align with the Virtual Sphere Theory in the sense that they exemplify the negative aspects of the virtual sphere. They highlight the emergence of echo chambers where individuals are exposed to viewpoints that reinforce existing beliefs, limiting the diversity of perspectives. These comments contribute to the marginalisation of minority publics such as women, and hinder rational debate by promoting harmful stereotypes and derogatory language. Having been a part of the comments on the John Doe post, these comments remind us that the potential for harm cannot be underestimated.

The comments also align with the *Affect Theory* in the Virtual Sphere. They demonstrate the power of *affect* and emotions in shaping public discourse within the virtual sphere. In this case, the affective responses reflect deeply ingrained attitudes and beliefs about gender roles, devaluation of women, and male chauvinism. The derogatory language, gas-lighting, and objectification present in these comments are indicative of the affective nature of communication and the impact it can have on social interactions. This may harm the woman and the child around which the entire discourse revolves.

Mill’s principle of Harm in relation to freedom of expression is relevant here. While freedom of expression is important, these comments cross the line by causing harm through gender-based insults, derogatory language, and demeaning remarks. They perpetuate harmful stereotypes, reinforce patriarchal norms, and contribute to the

marginalization and oppression of women. Mill's principle of Harm suggests that individual freedom should be limited when it causes harm to others, and these comments clearly fall within that realm.

From an Ethics of Communication perspective, these comments violate ethical considerations. They disregard principles such as honesty, respect, fairness, and responsibility, as well as the importance of rational discourse and mutual understanding. These comments contribute to an unhealthy communicative environment by promoting misogyny, perpetuating harmful stereotypes, and undermining the experiences and perspectives of women. The harm extends to the innocent child who is considered the genesis and emphasis of the entire discourse.

5.16 Analysing Comments of Misandry

Misandry is a term used to describe a strong or prejudiced hatred, dislike, or mistrust of men (Merriam-Webster, n.d). For example, user Deborah Laranje comments, 'She made her seductive moves and I was captured. Your weakness is a woman's skirt'. This user seeks to mock John Doe as lacking sexual discipline. However, this sparks a group of comments of misandry in which various women express mistrust concerning men's ability to exercise sexual discipline, and express prejudice against men by portraying them as a gender with weak ability to control their libido. For example, user Deborah Laranje comments again, 'Men and skirts'. User Mada Nankhoma Kasenza comments, 'Men's brains stop functioning, I wonder'. This indicates that, once exposed to a woman's nakedness, men fail to resist and lose control of all their mental faculties.

These comments align with the Virtual Sphere Theory as they exemplify the negative aspects of the virtual sphere. They contribute to the formation of echo chambers where individuals reinforce their existing beliefs and perpetuate negative stereotypes about men. By generalizing negative traits or behaviours to the entire male gender, these comments limit the diversity of perspectives and fail to recognise the individuality and diversity within the male population.

The comments also align with the *Affect Theory* in the Virtual Sphere. They reflect the affective nature of communication by displaying hatred, contempt, or prejudice

against men based on their gender. These affective responses perpetuate negative stereotypes and contribute to the marginalization of men. By making sweeping negative generalizations, they reflect deeply ingrained attitudes and beliefs that can shape public discourse.

From the perspective of Mill's principle of freedom of expression and harm, these comments cross the line by causing harm through their perpetuation of misandry. While freedom of expression is important, comments that generalise negative traits or behaviours to all men can reinforce prejudice and contribute to the marginalisation of men. They disregard the harm caused by perpetuating harmful stereotypes and prejudice, violating the harm principle in Mill's ethical framework.

In terms of the Ethics of Communication Theory, these misandrist comments violate ethical considerations such as respect, fairness, and responsibility. They fail to recognise the diversity within the male population and they generalize negative traits to the entire gender. Ethical communication should encourage respectful and inclusive dialogue, fostering understanding and empathy among individuals. These comments do not align with these principles and perpetuate harmful stereotypes and prejudice.

5.17 Analysing Comments of Disparagement of Knowledge

Disparagement is the act of belittling or speaking negatively to someone or something, often with the intention of diminishing their value, reputation, or credibility (Merriam-Webster, n.d). When disparagement is in relation to one's knowledge, the intention is to show that a particular person's awareness lacks credibility. For example, user 'Mulanje Meadow' comments, 'The mother to your child refused to allow you to sacrifice the child into your satanic cult, no wonder you are angry at her, stupid man!'. This user attacks John Doe, and another user, 'Yusuf Mwapasa' comes to John Doe's defence as he comments, 'this is faulty reasoning'.

The disparaging comments align with the Virtual Sphere Theory, as they represent the negative aspects of the virtual sphere. These comments contribute to a toxic environment where individuals attack and belittle others. They hinder constructive dialogue, undermine the diversity of perspectives, and create a hostile atmosphere that discourages meaningful engagement, as evidenced by how many users attack 'Baobab Breeze' for criticizing John Doe. User 'Baobab Breeze' asks, 'do you want everyone

to think like you?’ The response is even more toxic from other users who demean her reasoning as unnecessary and irritating for the sound minded ones.

The disparaging comments, furthermore reflect the *Affect Theory* in the Virtual Sphere. They evoke negative emotions, such as anger, frustration, or sadness, in the recipients or other participants. The affective responses generated by these comments contribute to a hostile and emotionally charged atmosphere, inhibiting rational discourse and preventing constructive dialogue.

From the perspective of Mill's principle of Harm, these disparaging comments can cross the line by causing harm. While freedom of expression is important, comments that involve personal attacks, insults, or demeaning language undermine the dignity and worth of individuals. They create a harmful environment that can negatively impact the well-being and credibility of the targeted individuals.

These disparaging comments violate ethical considerations within the Ethics of Communication Theory. They disregard principles such as respect, fairness, and responsibility. Dismissing or trivializing someone's opinions without engaging in constructive criticism or meaningful dialogue undermines respectful communication. Constructive engagement, empathy, and open-mindedness are essential for fostering an ethical communicative environment.

5.18 Analysing Comments of Wonder and Awe

In terms of the Virtual Sphere Theory, comments of wonder and awe indicate that the virtual sphere is a cosmos of a multiplicity of emotions. This is an acknowledgement of the immense impact or significance of what various users experience on John Doe's post. From the point of view of the *Affect Theory*, these comments indicate that some users are puzzled by the entire John Doe case. These comments fall in line with Mill's liberty of expression. They act against echo chambers as they appear to be left with sensitive feelings towards John Doe's post. They indicate a need for moral responsibility from all parties involved, as such, they appeal to the demands of the ethics of communication.

5.19 Chart Illustration of Comments' Themes

Figure 1 provides a visual presentation of the themes in chart format.

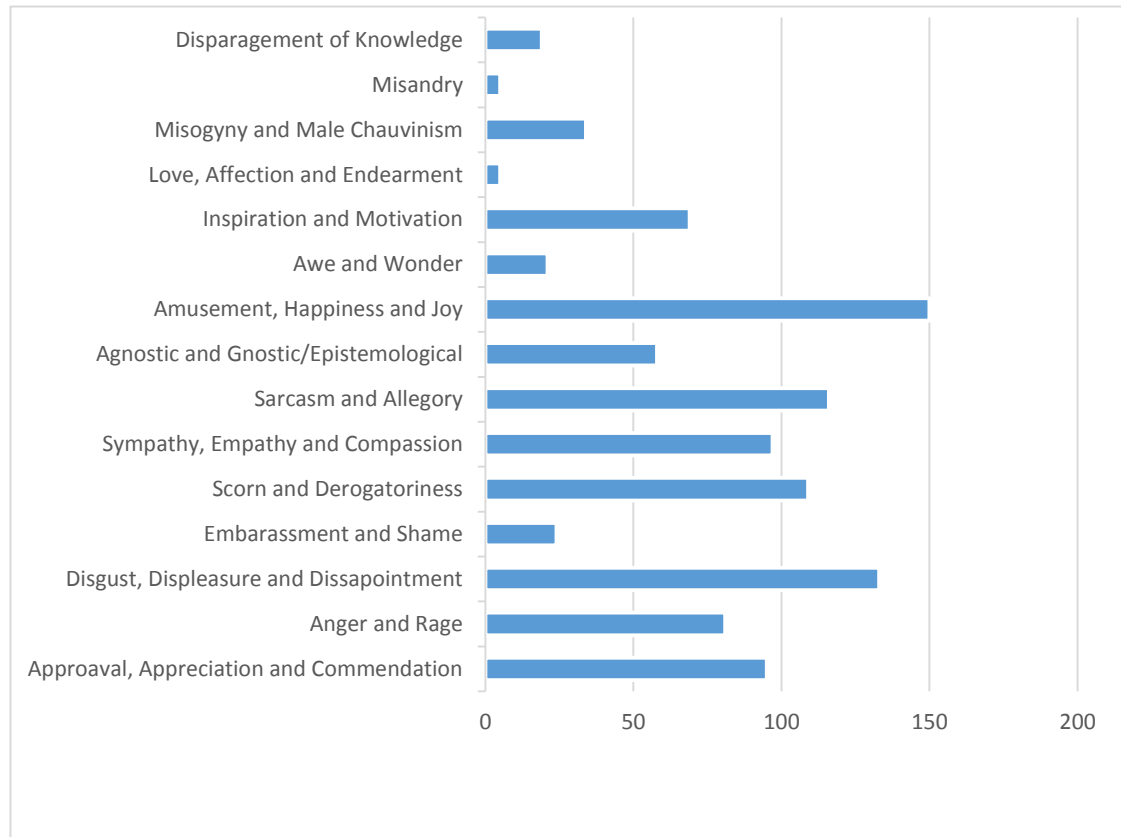


Figure 1: Comments' Themes

The data indicates a significant presence of negative reactions, including Disgust, Displeasure, and Disappointment (133) and Sarcasm and Allegory (116). Additionally, Scorn and Derogatoriness (109) and Anger and Rage (81) further emphasize the prevalence of harmful sentiments. These reactions collectively indicate a pervasive atmosphere of hostility and negativity that can exacerbate emotional and psychological strain, particularly for innocent children, perpetuating a cycle of emotional harm and social stigmatization. The overwhelming presence of Sympathy, Empathy, and Compassion (97), and Approval, Appreciation, and Commendation (95) indicates that the support and understanding are overshadowed by the negative discourse. The occurrences of embarrassment and shame (24), as well as misogyny and male chauvinism (34), further showcase the societal pressures and gender biases that can exacerbate the situation.

Given the socio-cultural context in Malawi, where public discussions on sensitive matters often lack ethical guidance, the unpredictable and uncontrollable nature of

online discourse presents substantial risks. The data unequivocally supports the thesis of the study, which argues that disclosing paternity test results on social media can lead to detrimental consequences, making it imperative to prioritize the safeguarding of the child's privacy and emotional health.

5.20 Summarising the Ethical Reflections and Insights from the John Doe Enigma

The case of John Doe exemplifies the unpredictable nature of affective comments in the virtual sphere. Although some comments in the John Doe case and the virtual sphere at large possess rational sense, the powerful effect of *affect* sways the entire discourse out of hand. The immeasurable power of *affect* over much of the discourse harms a number of players, especially the innocent child. *Ad hominem* attacks manifest to not only attack Madam Doe, but they also attack women in general and they constitute harm. The harmful affective comments have their place outside the scope of the ethics of communication.

Harm is likely to happen in affective discourse, which is amplified in the virtual sphere. Paternity test results should hence not be published online because of the high probability of harm done mostly to the child and collateral others, so long as the virtual public sphere is more of an affective framework and less of a rational one. It is, therefore, difficult to talk ethics of communication in the virtual sphere due to its affective nature, even though one would argue that not all affective comments are negative. In view of the entire discussion of the dissertation, we can form the following ethical argument: It is very difficult to talk about the ethics of communication in the virtual sphere due to its affective nature. Most of the affective comments in this study indicate that discourses in the virtual sphere are always out of hand and cannot be controlled in accordance with Habermas' communicative ethics. Considerable harm to innocent others is more likely to happen in a democratic virtual sphere. The disclosure of paternity test results in the virtual sphere can lead to intense affective public scrutiny and harsh judgment of the individuals involved.

The harm caused by the public disclosure of paternity test results can and does have lasting emotional and psychological effects on the child and the individuals involved. Protecting the well-being and privacy of the child should be a priority in public discourses and disclosures. Based on the evidence presented in Chapter 4, it can be

concluded that John Doe's child was harmed after he disclosed his paternity test results in the virtual sphere. Therefore, it is recommended that paternity test results should not be displayed in the virtual sphere to safeguard the well-being and privacy of the child and the individuals involved. This ethical argument highlights the challenges of ethical communication in a discourse of paternity test results in the virtual sphere, the potential harm caused by affective comments, and the importance of protecting the well-being and privacy of individuals, especially children, in public discourse.

It is imperative, however, to question the relationship of Mill's advocated freedom of expression, to what appears to be its inextricable link to the concept of harm in the John Doe case. Further, it remains unclear what is meant by harm in this case. For instance, if the paternity test is accurate and John Doe is not the biological father, then it is essential to determine whether anyone can be genuinely harmed by the true information or facts simply because it may cause pain. Additionally, it is crucial to ascertain whether every type of pain is considered a 'harm' in ethical terms.

5.21 Of freedom of expression, pain and harm

The study accepts freedom of expression on the part of John Doe and those commenting on the digital text. This has been greatly advocated for and appreciated through the lens of Mill's freedom of expression in the study. Mill also is not interested in limited pain or harm that comes with vocabulary, since he is only against physical harm in a civilized society. However, the study recognizes the limitation in Mill's harm principle and hence advocates for ethics of communication to remedy the loopholes in Mill's harm principle. The ethics of communication extends the scope of harm to incorporate even that which is caused by word or text. This, therefore, indicates a great relationship between freedom of expression and harm, whereby an expression of oneself that renders disrespect for other concerned persons qualifies as harm or unethical in communication.

The study focuses heavily on harm over mere pain because harm is broader, and does incorporate pain. Pain could be looked at basically as a subjective sensory perception from external stimuli leading to physical or emotional unpleasantness. Harm, on the other hand, may or may not constitute pain, however, harm is for a person to be in a

state in which they are worse off than they were before. In this case, the child, who is not aware of the online discourse is assumably not in pain. However, the child is potentially harmed since the affective discourse presents the innocent child in bad light, even in the face of scientific proof of lack of parentage links to John Doe. The derogatory, sarcastic, angry, deamianing nature of various comments, including those that support John Doe's truth, places the child towards harm. The possible ridicule and demeaning of the child's status places the child in a worse scenario than he was before the DNA test results were presented to the public. Indeed, freedom of expression would allow for such sensitive information to come public. However, ethics of communication reveal how detrimental that would be to the concerned individuals. Sadly, bearing in mind the indelibility of online discussions, the harm could persist for a lifetime.

5.22 Chapter summary

The foregoing discussion has explored various themes related to the John Doe case and applied four key theories: The Virtual Sphere Theory, *Affect Theory* in the Virtual Sphere, Mill's Freedom of Expression and Harm Principle, and Ethics of Communication Theory. The case was analysed through these lenses, considering factors such as paternity test disclosure, affective responses, gender dynamics, and the ethical implications of communication in the virtual sphere. The chapter observed how *affect* and emotions shape public discourse, the challenges posed by the various *affect* themes, and the importance of ethical considerations, respect, and responsible communication. Additionally, the chapter has examined the significance of freedom of expression, harm prevention, and the need for an inclusive and democratic virtual public sphere. Overall, the discourse in the chapter sheds light on the complexities of the ethics of communication in the virtual public sphere, and the impact of interaction on individuals and society. The chapter concludes that the John Doe case is one of harm done to the innocent and many collateral others.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter delves into the essential concepts discussed in the study, which grappled with a case of a man's suspicion of misattributed paternity. Upon disclosure of his paternity test results on social media there was an inevitable triggering of a hot affective debate with a child at centre stage, which the present study views as ethically harmful to the child, hence the need for it to be averted from the Malawian virtual sphere. This chapter highlights the key issues raised in the comments related to the paternity test results and the study's central argument. Furthermore, recommendations for potential research avenues are made in the chapter.

6.2 Key Points Raised

This study has raised three key points that revolve around the dominant theme of harm in the virtual public sphere. These key points are: the need for a balance between freedom of expression and preventing harm, a recognition of affective comments which can lead to significant harm for vulnerable individuals in the virtual public sphere, and the impact of emotions on online discourse, emphasising the need for an ethical framework that encourages responsible communication while safeguarding individuals' rights and well-being. These key points aimed to primarily foster a more rational and inclusive virtual public sphere in a context in which the concerned individuals are Malawians, just like the majority of the commentators.

6.2.1 Freedom of expression versus prevention of harm

Throughout the study's navigation of the John Doe case and the application of the Virtual Sphere Theory, *Affect Theory* in the Virtual Public Sphere, Mill's freedom of expression and harm principle, and the theory of the ethics of communication, tension between freedom of expression and the prevention of harm emerged as a key point. While freedom of expression is a fundamental right in democratic societies like

Malawi, its exercise in the virtual public sphere has been observed to have harmful effects. The John Doe case study has demonstrated how affective comments, although seemingly within the realm of free expression, can result in significant harm to concerned individuals, particularly to the innocent child. This raised the crucial ethical question about the need to balance the right to express oneself with the responsibility to protect all individuals from the adverse effects of online discourse such as cyberbullying or cyberattacks. Striking a balance between these competing values has been recognised as essential to fostering a sober and all-inclusive virtual public sphere.

6.2.2 The impact of affective discourse on harm

Affective discourse has been a distinct key that plays a central role in exacerbating potential harm towards concerned individuals in the John Doe case. Emotions and affective responses have been noted to too often take precedence over rationality in online discourses, leading to *ad hominem* attacks and harmful comments directed at individuals. Such harmful expressions have been noted to be deepened in the virtual public sphere even when involving issues in which the concerned individuals are Malawians. Users in this study's sample of 1000 comments have been noted to feel more vitalised to engage in rash and hostile behaviours. Consequently, the innocent child, who is at the centre of the entire online discourse, became a victim of the harmful repercussions of paternity-test disclosure in public. Concerning all is the fact that such public disclosure has been schemed by his father. This highlights the need to critically examine the nature of online interactions and the potential harm caused by unchecked affective discourse. Papacharissi's recognition of the power of emotions in shaping online discourse has been underscored as essential for devising ethical guidelines to mitigate harm and promote more responsible online public communication practices.

6.2.3 Need for an ethical framework for the virtual public sphere

When a complex interplay between freedom of expression and harm prevention is considered in the John Doe case, it is evident that there is need for an ethical framework for the virtual sphere. A key aspect of this framework is the need to foster an environment where respectful and responsible communication is encouraged, valuing the diversity of perspectives while avoiding harming vulnerable parties in line

with ethics of communication demands of pragmatists: Habermas (1984), Garman and Mwale (2013), and Arnett (2003). This involves promoting empathy and understanding in online interactions and implementing measures to address harmful affective comments in them. Additionally, ensuring privacy and protecting the well-being of concerned individuals, especially children, have been highlighted to be central to any ethical guidelines governing communication in the virtual sphere. It has been noted that, as technology and online interactions continue to evolve, an ongoing commitment to revisiting and refining this ethical framework becomes necessary in order to nurture a more sensitive and all-inclusive virtual public sphere that upholds freedom of expression without causing harm and without compromising the well-being and dignity of concerned individuals.

6.3 Key issues noted

The John Doe case generated approximately 5000 comments from Facebook users. The study sample comprised 1000 comments. The 1000 comments were categorised into various themes using thematic content analysis. These themes indicated that the John Doe case generated a wide range of emotions and sentiments in the virtual public sphere, with varying emotional tones and ethical considerations. Each of the theme categories presented key issues that have been noted below.

6.3.1 Comments of approval, appreciation and commendation

The key issue in the comments of approval, appreciation, and commendation in the John Doe case is that they exhibit positive praise for his actions, viewing him as an inspiring figure. However, these commendations lack reasonableness or sensitiveness as they have been seen to validate the public disclosure of sensitive private matters, potentially perpetuating harmful perspectives and negative stereotypes. While users exercise their freedom of expression, their potential to cause emotional and psychological harm to those involved, particularly Madam Doe and the innocent child, is of substantial magnitude.

6.3.2 Comments of anger and rage

The comments of anger and rage have been viewed to reflect diverse voices and perspectives in the virtual sphere, showcasing emotional reactions to John Doe's Facebook post and broader issues related to relationships and gender roles. Some

comments resorted to personal attacks, offensive language, and name-calling, hindering rational debate, and creating echo chambers that reinforced existing beliefs. The key issue is that these comments generated emotional intensity and aggression in the online discourse, potentially risking emotional manipulation and harm. While the comments represent freedom of expression, they crossed the line into harmful territory, violating Mill's harm principle and principles of Ethics of Communication, thereby raising ethical concerns about the well-being of the innocent child.

6.3.3 Comments of disgust, displeasure and disappointment

The comments of disgust, displeasure, and disappointment reflected some sort of rational discourse within the virtual public sphere, with users expressing disapproval of John Doe's actions. *Affect Theory* highlighted strong negative reactions from this group, while Mill's principle of freedom of expression was exercised. Ethical considerations from this group were noted as it called for compassion and responsible treatment of the innocent child. Users' moral judgments seek rational deliberation but are not sufficiently reciprocated rationally.

6.3.4 Comments of embarrassment and shame

The comments of embarrassment and shame raised the key issue of reproof as they expressed discomfort and disapproval towards Madam Doe's alleged actions. Some users held her accountable, while others contributed to echo chambers, limiting contrasting viewpoints. The potential harm to the innocent child from exposure and derogatory language to his mother raised ethical concerns as he was viewed as a product of dishonour.

6.3.5 Comments of scorn and derogatoriness

The comments of scorn and derogatoriness raised the key issue of the creation of a hostile environment, violating principles of respectful communication, and promoting aggression and dehumanization. These affective responses formed online communities fuelled by negative emotions, perpetuating cyber bullying and discrimination. The emotional harm inflicted on the innocent child was noted to have the potential to lead to psychological distress and social isolation. Ethical concerns arose regarding freedom of expression and the harm caused to targeted individuals.

The demeaning language and insults undermined dignity and self-worth, hindering rational discourse and mutual understanding in the online discourse.

6.3.6 Comments of sympathy, empathy and compassion

Comments of sympathy, empathy, and compassion indicated thoughtfulness as an important issue in online discourse as users expressed understanding and support for those facing disparate difficult circumstances, such as John Doe, Madam Doe, and the innocent child. These comments created a sense of community and democratised discourse. However, these comments called for the need for sensitivity to avoid the perpetuated stereotypes or unintentional harm to the child. Ethical communication principles were called to guide users to promote just decision-making and avoid a post-truth environment, especially for those that unintentionally harmed the child in their pursuit for being considerate of John Doe.

6.3.7 Comments of sarcasm and allegory

Comments of sarcasm and allegory raised the key issue of criticism in the virtual public sphere as in response to John Doe's Facebook post. Users aimed to criticise his actions and Madam Doe's alleged behaviour indirectly. Users used irony and ridicule to express their disapproval and challenge societal norms. However, such comments raised the worry of the potential to evoke strong emotional responses, potentially causing emotional distress, especially when targeting John Doe's child. Some sarcastic comments dehumanised the child, violating the harm principle. Sarcasm swerved into personal attacks, perpetuated harmful stereotypes, and incited hatred. Allegorical comments presented unique challenges because their interpretations either promoted understanding and empathy or reinforced harmful ideologies. Ethical communication standards hence called for promoting positive discourse while avoiding mockery and discrimination.

6.3.8 Agnostic and epistemological comments

The key issue in the comments of agnostic and epistemological nature is the democratisation of discourse in the virtual sphere, showcasing open-mindedness versus certainty. These comments promoted either rational discourse or an end to further debate, acknowledging multiple perspectives or limiting the need for other

perspectives, while demonstrating a sense of responsibility and respect in engaging with different viewpoints.

6.3.9 Comments of amusement, happiness and joy

Key issues from the comments of amusement, happiness, and joy included the limited exposure to diverse perspectives and the disregard for the seriousness of the situation. This category contributed to the circulation and dissemination of content without engaging in critical thinking or rational discourse. Furthermore, while these comments expressed individual freedom of expression, they indirectly generated potential emotional distress to those involved in the case. Ethical considerations, such as respect for others' emotions and well-being were overlooked in the pursuit of amusement and enjoyment from the sensitive content.

6.3.10 comments of inspiration and motivation

These comments raised the issue of the expression of admiration and enthusiasm for John Doe's actions, inspiring some users to make decisions based on his example. However, the virtual public sphere's participatory nature stimulated this group of comments to formulate a potential domino-effect harm to countless innocent children nationwide, should fathers decide to act in John Doe's manner.

6.3.11 Comments of love, affection and endearment

The comments of love, affection, and endearment expressed care and admiration for John Doe and his partner within the virtual sphere. They raised the issue of emotional bonds and positive communication but were noted to inadvertently harm the innocent child. Expressions of romantic desires towards them raised ethical considerations due to their personal nature.

6.3.12 Comments of misogyny and male chauvinism

The key issues noted in the comments of misogyny and male chauvinism were the display of deep-seated prejudice and hostility towards women, the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes, and the violation of the harm principle. These emotionally charged comments undermined the perspectives and experiences of women, creating an unhealthy communicative environment and potentially harming the innocent child who is at the centre of the paternity test case.

6.3.13 Comments of misandry

This set of comments exhibited a troubling trend of strong prejudice and hatred towards men by generalising negative traits to the entire male gender. These comments contributed to reinforcing existing beliefs and perpetuating harmful stereotypes about men, while also reflecting the affective nature of communication, with emotions of contempt and prejudice shaping public discourse. Violating Mill's harm principle, they caused harm by perpetuating harmful misandrist views and bigotry. Ethical considerations were disregarded, as respect, fairness, and responsibility were ignored outright, hindering the fostering of rational discourse.

6.3.14 comments of disparagement of knowledge

The key issues involved in comments of disparagement of knowledge are: the creation of a toxic and hostile environment, evoking negative emotions through affective responses, potentially causing harm, and violating ethical principles of respect and responsibility. These comments undermined constructive discourse, hindered rational discourse, and failed to foster a respectful and empathetic communicative environment in the virtual sphere.

6.3.15 Comments of awe and wonder

The key issue noted in the comments of awe and wonder is the demand for social and moral responsibility from all parties concerned, especially John Doe. The users appear to question if at all such sensitive and private matters had to be brought to the public. The users in this category appeared to be disturbed by the ability of the virtual public sphere to blur the line between that which is public and that which ought to be private as per the demands of the Habermasian physical public sphere.

6.4 Central argument and supporting points

6.4.1 Central argument

The disclosure of paternity test results in the virtual public sphere presents significant challenges for communication ethics due to its affective nature. Affective comments in virtual discourses often lead to uncontrollable and harmful discussions, particularly when they involve sensitive personal information like paternity test results. The harm caused by affective public scrutiny and judgment can have lasting emotional and psychological effects on the child and the individuals involved. Thus, to safeguard the

well-being and privacy of the child and the individuals concerned, it is recommended that paternity test results should not be disclosed in the virtual public sphere.

6.4.2 Supporting points

In the virtual public sphere, affective comments concerning cases involving disclosure of paternity test results wield an unpredictable power, capable of steering discussions in unforeseen directions, resulting in harm for all concerned parties, particularly innocent children. Ethical communication must adhere to principles that reject *ad hominem* attacks and hurtful affective comments aimed at individuals, such as Madam Doe and the innocent child in the John Doe case, recognizing that they fall beyond the acceptable scope of discourse. Habermas' communicative ethics faces challenges in the virtual realm, as emotional interactions often lead to harmful and uncontrollable territories, making it difficult to maintain rational discourse. The public disclosure of paternity test results in the virtual public sphere invites intense affective scrutiny and harsh judgment, imposing significant harm on the child and individuals concerned. Therefore, safeguarding the well-being and privacy of the child must be a top priority in public discussions and disclosures, demanding a cautious and sensitive approach when handling sensitive information like paternity test results. What recommended ethical framework, then, was John Doe's and similar cases to consider operating under?

6.5 Some suggested areas for further research

Based on the key points from this study, below are some suggested areas for further research:

6.5.1 Comparative study of different social media platforms

Since this study focused only on Facebook as a social media platform, further research could explore the nature of the same issue on other social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, or newer platforms that may emerge in the near future. Comparing how users of different platforms handle such sensitive information and the effects of affective comments on these platforms could provide further valuable insights.

6.5.2 Exploring the same issue in legacy media

This research centred on the virtual public sphere, specifically Facebook. Further research could investigate how the issue of disclosing paternity test results is addressed in traditional or legacy media, such as newspapers, television, or radio. Examining the differences in ethics of communication, public response, and potential harm in traditional media versus the virtual public sphere could be enlightening.

6.5.3 Cross-cultural comparative study

Considering Malawi as a specific context in which people have no access to basic ethics education to help them grapple with such sensitive information online that would hardly find permit in the Habermasian public sphere, further research could explore how the same issue is perceived and dealt with in other cultural contexts. A cross-cultural comparison could reveal how cultural norms, values, and communication practices influence the handling of sensitive information and affective discourse.

6.5.4 Temporal comparison within Malawi

Since the research touched upon a topic that appeared in the year 2022 when the internet had more affordable and has more users in Malawi, further research could delve deeper into the temporal aspect. This could involve conducting a more extensive temporal analysis, comparing the late 1990s (when the internet was introduced in Malawi) to the mid-2000s, say 1997-2007. This could shed light on how the virtual public sphere evolved in the country and how it impacted the handling of sensitive information as well as the dynamic nature of affective comments over time in Malawi.

6.5.5 Longitudinal study of online discourse

Instead of making a temporal comparison as earlier suggested, one could also seek out a longitudinal study, which could track the evolution of the issue of disclosing paternity test results in the virtual public sphere over an extended period in Malawi. This could help identify trends, patterns, and changes in communication ethics, public attitudes, and the prevalence of affective discourse in online platforms in Malawi. This could be a chronological research that grapples with the evolution of *affect* in relation to the sensitive issues of paternity test disclosure.

6.5.6 Ethical frameworks for online communication

Further research studies could also seek to develop and evaluate specific ethical frameworks tailored to online communication or social media platforms. These frameworks could address the unique challenges posed by affective discourse in virtual spaces and provide guidelines for responsible and ethical communication.

6.6 Chapter Summary

The study of John Doe's case serves as a prime example of how public disclosure of paternity test results can lead to intense scrutiny and significant harm to innocent children and affected others. It is crucial to uphold ethical communication principles to navigate these challenges, reject hurtful comments, and ensure the protection of well-being and privacy. The argument stands strong: to safeguard the innocent child, paternity test results should not be disclosed in the virtual public sphere. Further research can deepen our understanding of affective discourse on different social media platforms, legacy media, cross-cultural comparisons, and longitudinal studies. As society strives for a more sensitive and empathetic virtual public sphere, responsible communication is of utmost importance to safeguard the dignity and well-being of all concerned individuals, especially in the Malawian socio-cultural context.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: University of Malawi Research Ethics Committee Certificate of Approval



VICE-CHANCELLOR
Prof. Samson Sajidu, BSc MIw, MPhil Cantab, PhD MIw

Our Ref: P.06/23/268

Your Ref.:

CHANCELLOR COLLEGE
P.O. Box 280, Zomba, Malawi

Telephone: (265) 1 526 622
Fax: (265) 1 524 031
E-mail: vc@unima.ac.mw

13th September 2023

Mr Gift Salima Banda
MA in Applied Ethics
Philosophy Department
University of Malawi
P.O. Box 280
Zomba

Dear Mr Banda

RESEARCH ETHICS AND REGULATORY APPROVAL AND PERMIT FOR PROTOCOL NO. P.06/23/268: AFFECT AND PATERNITY-TEST RESULTS IN THE VIRTUAL SPHERE: THE CASE OF JOHN DOE

Having satisfied all the relevant ethical and regulatory requirements, I am pleased to inform you that the above-referred research protocol has officially been approved. You are now permitted to proceed with its implementation. Should there be any amendments to the approved protocol in the course of implementing it, you shall be required to seek approval of such amendments before implementation of the same.

This approval is valid for **one year** from the date of issuance of this approval. If the study goes beyond one year, an annual approval for continuation shall be required to be sought from the University of Malawi Research Ethics Committee (UNIMAREC) in a format that is available at the Secretariat.

Once the study is finalized, you are required to furnish the Committee and the Vice Chancellor with a final report of the study. The committee reserves the

right to carry out a compliance inspection of this approved protocol at any time as may be deemed by it. As such, you are expected to properly maintain all study documents including consent forms.

UNIMAREC wishes you a successful implementation of your study.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr Victoria Ndolo
CHAIRPERSON OF UNIMAREC



CC: Vice Chancellor
The Registrar
Director of Finance and Investments
Acting Head of Research
Chairperson UNIMAREC
UNIMAREC Compliance Officer

Appendix 2: Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Title of Study: Affect and Paternity-test Results in the virtual sphere: The Case of John Doe

Researcher: Gift Josh Salima-Banda

Introduction: You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Gift Josh Salima-Banda for the purpose of investigating emotional comments related to negative paternity test results in the virtual sphere by John Doe. This research is being conducted as part of a Master of Applied Ethics program at the University of Malawi.

Study Procedures: As a participant, you will be requested to provide consent to have your public comments analysed and included in the research study. The study involves the following procedures:

1. The researcher will collect and analyse emotional comments made by individuals in response to negative paternity test results posted on Facebook.
2. Comments will be captured through screenshots, ensuring the preservation of the original context and content.
3. The researcher will analyse the comments to identify themes, patterns, and ethical considerations emerging from the emotional responses.

Risks and Discomforts: Participation in this study poses minimal risks and discomforts. However, it is important to note that emotional comments may contain sensitive or distressing content related to personal experiences. Should you feel any discomfort or distress during the study, please discontinue participation and contact the researcher or appropriate support services.

Alternative Research Procedures: You have the option to choose not to participate in this study or to withdraw your consent at any time without penalty. Additionally, if you prefer not to have your comments included in the research, please inform the researcher, and your comments will be excluded.

Confidentiality: Your privacy and confidentiality will be strictly protected throughout the research process. All data collected will be de-identified and Research Ethics Committee personal information remains confidential. Only the researcher and authorized personnel



involved in the study will have access to the data. The collected data will be securely stored and only used for the purpose of this research study.

Voluntariness and Right to Discontinue Participation: Participation in this study is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without any negative consequences or penalties. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your relationship with the researcher or the University of Malawi.

Contacts for Additional Information: If you have any questions or concerns about the research study, your participation, or your rights as a research participant, please feel free to contact:

Researcher: Gift Josh Salima-Banda. Email: Ma-act-06-21@unima.ac.mw Phone: +265888505999

In the event of research-related injury or if you have any further questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact:

UNIMAREC Chairperson: Dr. Victoria Ndolo Chairperson, University of Malawi Research Ethics Committee (UNIMAREC) P.O. Box 280, Zomba Phone: +265 995 0427 60

Your consent to participate in this research study indicates that you have read and understood the information provided above. By continuing with the study procedures, you voluntarily agree to participate.

Please retain a copy of this consent form for your records.

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____



Appendix 3: List of Consenting Participants in Study

Below is the list of participants of the study that allowed their comments to be used together with either their names or names of their facebook pages exposed. They consented for either their faces or image used as their Facebook profiles to be visible in the study. Those that do not appear on the list only allowed for their comments to be used, while their true identities concealed, and a pseudonym used instead:

Peter Shalom Dzingomvera Bamusi Jr.

Davie Mwangonde

Inan Mongea

Esther Yankho Ntchafu

Blessings Vasco Kakusa

Lwitikano Ngosi

Blessings Robert

Fourthie Ngoni Chimbamba

Deborah Kalemera

Steve Mzembe

Perfectionist Emie

Edith Lloyds

Tu Li

Peter Mathew Chalemera

Bernadettar Phiri

Trevor Mahame

Baye Mvuwu

Frank Mefra Banda

Jane Nine

Goodson Kapalamula

Harrison Gama Nastazio

Ruru Jones

Chisomo Ntaba Nkhata

Wlford Evans Zachariah Mngulu

Ndadza Mtalema

Shabbir Mickdad

Priscilla Rice

Mervis Makonyola
Komani Mkandawire
Saiti Sangala
Ayuthe Banda
Griffin Johannes
Sue Alufandika
Henry Mkalapa
Moffat Armstrong Edison Mbale
Honour Make
Fatsani Mbuna
Dya Kartel
Patuma Mtogolo
Stewart Chawachi
Smart Allan Ngómbe
Dora Chiweza
Phillip Chilingulo
Alinafe Gama
Kate Molly Maiden
Zamie Sanga
Nikita Aman Osman
Rebecca Mtungama Abubakar
Alfred Mwanyama
Thabie Onycha Jere
Flavia Silia
Barbra Kim Makeda
Kim Leften
Mfumu Mbedza
Pey Darius