Media Coverage of Conflicts in Nigeria:
Comparative Analysis of Two Nigerian Newspaper

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ABSTRACT

The mass media serve as important players in peace building during conflicts. With their ability to pervade spaces and direct people's attention on important issues, they can either play a key role in escalating or de-escalating conflicts. This research is conducted to compare the coverage of conflict between two national dailies in Nigeria within a 12 months period in 2018. The issue of conflict is an important one in Nigeria. Being a large country with two main religions and multiple ethnic groups, Nigeria has experienced different forms of conflict since the 1960s. These conflicts have caused a breakdown in society, loss of lives and property and have heavily affected how the various tribes and ethnic groups in Nigeria relate with each other. A sample of 46 newspaper edition was systematically selected for both newspapers (n = 92).

Three questions guided this research; what themes are dominant in the coverage of conflicts in the Punch and Thisday newspapers between January and December 2018? Do the Nigerian press aggravate conflict by reporting winners and losers in a conflict? Do the Nigerian media assign blames in their coverage of conflict in Nigeria?

The study is theoretically situated within agenda setting theory and peace journalism. The findings of the research determined that the Nigerian media exercised restraint in their coverage of conflict in the period of research. It was not clear if the observed restraint was a deliberate attempt at practicing peace journalism. In the future, research should be conducted to determine the perception of journalists on peace journalism in Nigeria.

Keywords: Mass media, Conflict, Peace Journalism, Peace Building, Nigeria.

ÖZ

Kitle iletişim araçları çatışmalar sırasında barış inşasında önemli oyuncular olarak hizmet ederler. Mekanları kullanma ve insanların dikkatini önemli konulara yönlendirme yetenekleri ile, çatışmaları tırmanmada veya tırmandırmada kilit rol oynayabilirler. Bu araştırma, 2018'de 12 aylık bir süre içinde Nijerya'daki iki ulusal günlük gazete arasındaki çatışmanın kapsamını karşılaştırmak için yapılmıştır. Çatışma konusu Nijerya'da önemli bir konudur. İki ana dine ve çok sayıda etnik gruba sahip büyük bir ülke olan Nijerya, 1960'lardan beri farklı çatışma biçimleri yaşamıştır. Bu çatışmalar toplumda bir bozulmaya, can ve mal kaybına neden oldu ve Nijerya'daki çeşitli kabilelerin ve etnik grupların birbirleriyle ilişkilerini büyük ölçüde etkiledi. Her iki gazete için sistematik olarak 46 günlük Orrehlem olarak gazete seçildi (n = 92).

Bu araştırmaya üç soru yön verdi; Ocak ve Aralık 2018 tarihleri arasında Punch ve Thisday gazetelerinde yaşanan çatışmaların kapsamına giren konular nelerdir? Nijerya basını, bir çatışmada kazananları ve kaybedenleri bildirerek çatışmayı ağırlaştırıyor mu? Nijerya medyası Nijerya'daki çatışmaları kapsamakla suçluyor mu?

Çalışma teorik olarak gündem belirleme teorisi ve barış gazeteciliği içinde yer almaktadır. Araştırmanın bulguları, Nijerya medyasının araştırma döneminde çatışmaları kapsama konusunda kısıtlama kullandığını tespit etti. Gözlemlenen kısıtlamanın barış gazeteciliğini uygulamak için kasıtlı bir girişim olup olmadığı belli değildi. Gelecekte, gazetecilerin Nijerya'da barış gazeteciliği hakkındaki algılarını belirlemek için araştırmalar yapılmalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kitle iletişim araçları, Çatışma, Barış Gazeteciliği, Barış İnşası, Nijerya.

DEDICATION

To my daughter, Britney. The world is your oyster! I want you to know there is greatness in you and the world is waiting to experience everything you have to give it.

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INTRODUCTION

Although religion itself is a complex phenomenon with scholars struggling to establish a universal definition of the concept (Ebhomienlen & Ukpebor, 2013), it is still arguably one of the most important issues in post-colonial Nigeria. In Nigeria, religion is identified within the two major religious lines of Islam and Christianity although a percentage of the population practices African traditional religion (Fatima, 2014; Paden, 2015; Ushe, 2015).

These two major religions are almost evenly distributed within the 36 states (including the federal capital territory) in the Northern and Southern geo-political regions in the country. While the core northern states are largely filled with Nigerians that practice Islam, Christians largely occupy the southern states. In the north-central and south-west geopolitical regions of the country however, the people are religiously and politically mixed. This would suggest "Nigeria is by far the largest country in the world with religious identities evenly divided between Muslims (90 million) and Christians (90 million)" (Omotosho, 2014; Paden, 2015). With this much difference among the population, conflict becomes inevitable. In this study, we are going to explore how two newspapers in Nigeria – Thisday and Punch newspapers –cover conflict based on human interest, consequences, morality and responsibility. These will be done within the agenda setting theory and peace journalism model.

1.1 Background of the Study

The present study seeks to explore press coverage of conflict that occurs between Nigeria's two dominant religions and multiple ethnic groups. In Nigeria, a common manifestation of violent conflicts is the one tied to religious differences. This religious violence is predominant in the Northern region of the country (Nwaomah, 2011). One of the major causes of religious conflict in Nigeria is connected to the "uncompromising Muslim and Christian activism" among adherents of the two religions and this has led to frequent clashes between both sides as witnessed in contemporary Nigeria, especially in the northern region.

Before Islam and Christianity in Nigeria, African Traditional Religion, which involved different forms of worship to the Supreme Being, was the norm in Africa (Afolabi, 2016).

Over hundreds of Nigerians have lost their lives to violent religious clashes since the advent of democracy in the country. Not only that, the number of those injured could be said to be thrice the number of those whose lives were lost while the internally displaced persons run in a million (Apuwabi, 2018).

According to Olojo (2014), while it is important to recognise religion as an important factor in conflicts thereby leading loss of lives in Nigeria, it is also important to juxtapose it with other causes of violent deaths in the country. Some of these other causes include; conflicts on land issues and territorial claims, ethnicity, politics & elections, community violence, crimes involving Muslims and Christians etc. Going further, Olojo writes that between June 2006 and May 2014, religious conflicts accounted for eleven thousand, three hundred and eighty four deaths in the country

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(11,384). In 2014 alone, religious conflicts were responsible for nearly half, the number of violent deaths in Nigeria within the space of five (5) months).

Although religion on its own is a common factor in conflicts in Nigeria, it is important to note that political issues are manipulated to sow discord among the adherents. Politicians who take advantage of the poverty, illiteracy and ignorance of their supporters do this. As this became normalized, it became common for Nigeria to encounter religious friction among Nigerians (Afolabi, 2016).

Because conflict hinders the economic progress and stability of a society (Apuwabi, 2018), it becomes imperative for measures to be quell/prevent reoccurrence (Omotosho, 2014). The role of the media in resolving conflict has been a widely debated issue (Gilboa, 2009). This is because the media, being the fourth estate of the realm (Felle, 2016), in addition to possessing an immense capacity to reach and influence large numbers of people, they have successfully been able to establish themselves as the middle ground between opposing sides (Mensah, Boasiako, & Acquah, 2017).

With this position, they are able to mediate between conflict sides. However, there has also been much debate on how well the media have been able to perform this function. Questions have been asked about how far the media can go, how responsible they are in their coverage of conflicts and if they minimise or exacerbate conflicts (Gilboa, 2009; Mensah, Boasiako, & Acquah, 2017).

1.2 Problem of the Study

The purpose of this study is to establish if the press in Nigeria creates an "us" versus "them" narrative when conflict occurs in Nigeria. This narrative would be situated within the coverage of conflict with a religious angle.

In the advanced time of correspondence, social orders rely upon the media for data and the web has introduced another rush of non-state on-screen character who mine data. This overdependence makes the media all the more dominant in forming popular sentiment. Newspapers are viewed as one of the most dominant wellsprings of data and disseminators of information. By and by, the negative depiction of Islam probably won't be detached with the outlandish relationship of Islam with viciousness in the media, and this is by all accounts considered less significant in the open discussions.

Hence, this research plans to look at how Nigerian papers depict conflicting groups in their conflict reportage.

1.3 Aims of the Study

The aim of this research is to compare the coverage of conflict between two national dailies in Nigeria within a 12 months period in 2019. The goal of this is to determine how the Nigerian press set agenda using the peace journalism framework.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the dominant themes in the coverage of conflict in Punch and Thisday newspapers between January and December 2019?

2. Did the Nigerian press aggravate conflict by reporting winners and losers in a conflict in their reports between January and December 2019?

3. Did the Nigerian press assign blames in their reports of conflict between January and December 2019?

1.5 Motivation for the Study

This study is an important study in the field of communication and media studies. Since the media plays a role in the portrayal of a group and also present a narrative that becomes a stereotype about the group, it is important to consider this study.

As a Nigerian who is interested in the growth and progress of Nigeria, the researcher conducted this study because she wanted to explore and understand how the Nigerian newspapers report conflict matters by using selected themes.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The review of the existing literature on the representation of Islam and Muslim especially after the events of September 11 in the U.S.A constitutes an extensive examination and assessment of the historical representation of Islam and Muslims in the fields of art and communication. While a large number of studies have been conducted on the framing of Islam in western media, little study or no study have been conducted on the framing of Islam in Nigeria, particularly after the raise of Boko Haram hence it is imperative that this study is carried out.

This study will not only add to the existing body of literature, it will also help further researches understanding the framing of Islam in Nigeria by Nigerian newspapers.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The present study focuses on newspaper coverage of conflicts by using the peace journalism approach to determine if the Nigerian press worsen to mediate conflicts in Nigeria. To this end, the newspapers used for this study will be purposely based on

their national circulation and longevity in Nigeria. The study will be limited to publication in these newspapers between January and December 2019. Themes will be given based on the perceived sentiments in the news reports. These themes will be adopted from previous studies.

1.8 Potential Limitations

By the end of this study, the goal is to have been able to determine the rate at which newspapers frame religious issues in Nigeria with specific emphasis on Islam and conflict.

However, it is important to note that each research comes with its own challenges and it will be important to note the challenges that may arise in the course of this research. Potential challenges that might hinder this research study include:

- Getting the secondary data required for this study – because the analysis in this study is to be conducted on Nigerian newspapers, one challenge that might make this difficult is getting the secondary data for the study. The researcher will have to get all the newspaper editions required for this study online. Although the researcher does not hope to encounter this problem, there is a high chance that not all editions listed for the analysis would be traced.

- Another challenge that may come up is the paging of the newspapers. This paper would ordinarily not come up if the researcher was in possession of hard copies of the newspapers are pages would be easily retrieved. Online editions might be structured and designed differently. In the event that this problem comes up, the researcher will mitigate this problem by adding some changes to the identifier categories.

1.9 Definition of Terms

In other to put certain aspects of this research into perspective for the reader, I will attempt to define some relevant key terms in this research. My definition for these terms is for the contextual understanding of how the terms are used in this research.

CAN – this is an abbreviation for Christian Association of Nigeria. Like JNI, it is the umbrella body for large population of Nigerians who identity as Christians. It also takes a political approach to dealing with conflict matters in Nigeria by politicizing the religious affiliation of victims in relation to government response.

Conflict – this refers to prolonged disagreement that results in violent confrontations and leads to a national crisis. For this research, conflict is used to describe violent confrontations that have the capacity to negatively impact Nigeria's political and economic stability.

Conflict resolution– this refers to the processes in which all the various conflicts in Nigeria could be resolved. Specifically, this study looks at conflict resolution from the angle of media intervention through agenda setting and peace journalism.

JNI – this is an abbreviation for Jama'atuNasril Islam which in English means Society for the Support of Islam. It is the umbrella body for the Muslim community in Nigeria. It sometimes dabbles in political matters that have to do with Muslims. It is an important player in conflict matters in Nigeria.

Miyetti Allah – this is the umbrella body for Fulani pastoralists in Nigeria. Because recent conflicts in Nigeria's middle belt have manifested in the form of violent confrontations between local farmers and pastoralists and Fulani ethnic origins, Miyetti Allah has been a voice of defense for the cattle breeders. This makes them important players in this research.

Nigeria – with an estimated number of 180 million people, Nigeria is the largest country in Africa and world's most populous black nation. It has a variety of ethnic groups which have distinct qualities. This distinctness is a major reason for continues conflicts in the country.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explores the key issues peculiar to conflict in Nigeria and their relationship to the overall research. Also, the chapter discusses the theoretical framework adopted for the research. To meet this end, the chapter includes information on Nigeria, conflict and conflict resolution, focus on Nigeria, drivers of conflict in Nigeria, empirical studies on press and its role of conflict in Nigeria, research into conflict, conflict resolution in the press, agenda setting and related research.

2.1 Nigeria

Nigeria is Africa's most populated country with more than 250 ethnic groups. Besides the three major tribes Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, there are additionally over 300 tribes in the country. Modern Nigeria officially started existingafter an amalgamation between the North and South of the country happen in 1914 (Falola & Heaton, 2008). The country gained independence on 1st October 1960 and initially adopted the British constitution. The country's independence was marred by successive coup which interrupted the country's young democracy. However, a peaceful transition to democracy was instituted in 1999 after the death of a former Head of state, General Sani Abacha in 1998. A new constitution was soon adopted in 1999. More information on Nigeria will be provided later in the chapter.

Figure 1: Map of Nigeria
Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica

2.1.1 History of Nigeria

In 2014, Nigeria's existence as a sovereign state became a hotly contested debate. It was the year that Nigeria marked its 100 years anniversary as a unified country. Many regarded this more as a failure than an achievement because historically, Nigeria's first class of leaders themselves called the union a mistake (Oluwatobi, 2018; Eric, 2016).

The history of Nigeria is tied to its colonial past and political liberation from its colonial masters. It is also tied to its struggle for dominance by the different ethnic groups that would make up the geographical component now known as Nigeria.The British columnist Flora Shaw authored the expression "Nigeria" which was to turn into the name of the nation. During the 1890s she took the term from the Niger River to apply it to the area during the time of provincial principle(Press Reference, n.d).

Prior to Nigeria, the various ethnicities existed as separate entities. One of Nigeria's founding fathers, Obafemi Awolowo himself called Nigeria a geographical expression because each individual identified with their ethnic origins before they identify as Nigerians. In 1914, the Northern and Southern protectorates that existed apart from each other were merged together as one. This ushered in the era of the Nigerian project. It is important to know that that Northern and Southern Nigeria are culturally, politically and ideologically different. Africa had always been a religious space. Before the colonial masters, the different and scattered peoples of Africa worshipped different gods for various purposes. The colonial masters along with their missionaries brought education and religion with the sole aim of conquering the people. The amalgamation of the ethnically diverse and ideological different protectorates is regarded by some as the mistake of 1914 (Akinola, 2013; Obi-Ani, Obi-Ani, & Isiani, 2016). For some, Nigeria was never meant to be. If there was any proof for their claims, one would look no further from the various conflicts that have plagued the Nigerian state since its creation. Interestingly, Oluwatobi (2018) suggests that the reason why Nigeria has not worked up until now is because it was never meant to work because while the regions were forced to merge, the people themselves were never merged as one. Thus, each ethnic group maintained its identity and pledge within the Nigerian state. Perhaps, this would explain the repeated conflicts that have plagued the country since it came into existence. Furthermore, he suggests that another reason why Nigeria does not function like a democracy is because it came into existence to satisfy the capitalist ambitions of the Western world. For this reason, the country was not conditioned to work by default.

Nigeria turned into a Nation-State on January 1, 1914 with the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorates, after numerous long stretches of provincial

standard, on first October, 1960 Nigeria gained its freedom from Britain. The primary republic was brief, finishing with the upset d'état of January 15, 1966 (Ojo, 2014).. Between 1966 and October 1, 1979 the young nation was under military control. The return to democracy ushered in a federal system of government which was marked by the existence of political parties, judicial autonomy and other components of democracy. This experience was, however, interrupted again by a military coup on December 31, 1983 wherein widespread corruption was blamed for this intervention. The nation remained under military control until May 29, 1999 when a peaceful democratic transition was re-introduced to Nigeria (Obi-Ani, Obi-Ani, & Isiani, 2016).

With the unending debate that surrounds Nigeria's unity or lack of it, it therefore comes as no surprise that Nigeria suffers from snippets of conflicts in all parts of the country.

2.2 Conflicts in Nigeria

Conflict as a phenomenon can be defined as an existing hostility between two or more people (Folarin, 2013). It can go beyond individuals to groups, communities or even countries. Politically, Jeong (2000) defines conflict as a struggle by individuals or groups over claims to status, power and resources where rivals groups have every intention to fully destroy their opponents. When conflict occurs, there is usually interest involved (Steele, 1976).

There are different types of conflict; intra-personal conflict where the individual experiences an implosive state of mind; inter-personal conflict where an individual physically confronts another individual; man against society/nature where an individual opposes state institutions and practices; family conflict which can also be

described as intra-unit conflict; inter-group conflict which is the type of conflict that occurs between groups (for example Christian and Muslim groups in Nigeria); intra-state conflict which is the type of conflict confined within the borders of a sovereign state (the Cyprus issue can be liked to this kind of conflict); inter-state conflict which is also described as an international conflict (for example the US and Iran tensions); global conflict which can go beyond two sovereign states like World War II (Folarin, 2013).

Conflict in Nigeria has been a part and parcel of the sovereign state since it gained independence. The country is said to be synonymous with tensions, which cause major political crisis, which escalate into religious, ethnic and regional conflicts (Canci&Odukoya, 2016).

Conflicts in Nigeria manifest into the breakdown of law and order, attempted secession which led to the Nigerian civil war in which over 2 million babies died, minority threats and violent clashes. Although these are unusual circumstances, they all manifest in Nigeria and have been the cause of loss of lives and destruction of property (Osaghae&Suberu, 2005).

Currently in Nigeria, there are different facets of conflicts occurring at the same time. For example, there is still ongoing Boko Haram conflict in the North Eastern part of the country, snippets of violent clashes between farmers and herders in North central part of the country, separatist's protests in the South Eastern part of the country and environmental conflicts in the Niger-Delta (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

2.3 Various Factors Leading to Conflict in Nigeria

There are different factors that lead to conflicts in Nigeria. Some of these factors include; environmental factor, religion, socio-economic, socio-cultural, political factors etc.

2.3.1 The Environment

With increasing impact of climate change felt particularly in green areas of Nigeria (South-East and Middle Belt regions), struggles over scarce land and water have been on the rise thereby threatening the peace and stability of these regions. When joined to ethnic issues (indigene-settler relations), the struggle for scarce land and water has the potential to escalate (NSRP, 2017). In North Central Nigeria (also known as the middle belt), part of the re-occurring conflict between farmers and herders is a struggle for land.

Another environmental issue that has been known to cause conflict in Nigeria is the oil spills and gas flaring that has depleted the ecosystem in the Niger-Delta thereby depriving fishermen their primary means of livelihood. This resulted increased poverty caused joblessness and introduced health problems to those communities. Essentially, this gave birth to the Niger-Delta militants.

2.3.2 Religion

It would appear that every conflicting matter in the North-Central region of Nigeria has a religious undertone. During or after every conflict, there is always Jama'atuNasril Islam (JNI) and Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) coming out to defend their people and attack the other side. The Sunni Muslims account for majority of Nigeria's Muslims with an estimation of ninety five percent. JNI is the largest umbrella Islamic organization in Nigeria supporting a network of activists

around the region. Similarly as the Muslim people group has made bodies to help its interests, so have the Christian groups in the country. The noticeable being the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) which was shaped in 1976 which is the major Christian association with a solid national system in Nigeria that endeavors to speak to the common concerns of all churches across the country. CAN and its members take part in a wide range of activities. In some cases, they reach out to other Muslim associations and try to engage in grassroots peace building. However, in the mid-1980s CAN began taking an increasingly activist and political position by buying into the "us" versus "them" narratives. This they do by monitoring the balance of government appointments and laws made the favor one group or the other (Karu 2011).

2.3.3 Socio-economy

Literature widely argue that Nigeria's overdependence on oil which was mostly gotten from the Niger-Delta and the rising fall of crude and oil prices were some of the resulting bad effects from the adoption of the structural adjustment policies that were fully adopted during Former Head of State Babangida regime (Asfura-Heim &McQuaid, 2015).

Between 2016 and 2017, after a decade of positive economy forecast, Nigeria hit its first economic recession in 25 years. However, the recession was also preceded by rising fall of crude oil prices globally (Barungi, Odhiambo, & Asogwa, 2017). Because of the huge profits the country has generated from oil, the country's overdependence on oil led to a "mono-product economy" thereby making the Niger-Delta the revenue hub of the country as oil and gas products account for 90% of Nigeria's exports and 75% of the country's budgets (Maitland & Chapman, 2014). Ignoring the need to develop and diversify the economy so that one sector doesn't burden the others,

national and international elites have instead focused on expanding their access and control over Nigeria's resources (Schultze-Kraft, Okonta, Biggs, & Unaeze, 2013).

The resulting effect of this type of political arrangement where the needs of the elites are prioritized over the collective needs of the Nigerian people is that, the political system will be delegitimized and economic inequality will be on the rise as it has in Nigeria. About 80% of Nigeria's energy revenues benefits only 1% of Nigeria's growing population of almost 200 million people.(Asfura-Heim & McQuaid, 2015)**.**

Conversely, this rising economic inequality has resulted in decades of conflicts all over the country particularly starting in the oil-rich region of the Niger-Delta as there have been registered conflicts between global oil corporations and political elites (Herbert & Husaini, 2018). Furthermore, there have been grievances about the allocation or non-allocation of the oil revenues and these grievances have also exacerbated regional, ethnic and religious conflicts in the country (ibid).

Due to its large size and population, Northern Nigeria is almost half the size of the Southern region in terms of GDP per capita. The stark economy different between both regions is wide with poverty rates in the North going as high as 72% in contrast to 27% in the South and 35% in the Niger-Delta (Asfura-Heim & McQuaid, 2015). In the North-East where Boko Haram has dominated for almost 3 three decades now, poverty rate is higher than all the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. Unfortunately, the government in the North East has been incapable of securing the lives and property of the people neither have they been able to provide basic amenities like roads, water, health care, education etc. (ibid).

Furthermore, there are huge infrastructural problems in Nigeria. Power is epileptic, the roads and rail networks are poor. Low agricultural production is also causing food insecurity in the country. The race for land, which is enhanced by poverty, encounters the problem of land degradation. These factors combined together led to the rise of armed militants in the Niger-Delta in the 1990's.

2.3.4 Socio-culture

In Nigeria's enormous and heterogeneous populace, covering ethnic, strict, territorial, phonetic and sub-ethnic (collective) characters mark the separation points along which political cases and fierce clashes are made. There are over two hundred and fifty ethnic identities and approximately five hundred unique dialects and tongues (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2017). Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, which form the major ethnic groups, cover around 66% of the populace, and overwhelm the political framework. In terms of percentages, the Hausa and Fulani in the far north roughly account for 29 percent of the population; the Yoruba in the southwest account 21 percent; and the Igbo in the southeast account for 18 percent. Ethnic identity is a social development and is liable to change and political control, particularly during races; it's anything but an early stage ("innate") personality (Lewis and Watts, 2013; Fearon and Laitin, 2000). A portion of the ethnic gatherings in fringe districts is comparable or indistinguishable from minority ethnic gatherings in the neighbouring nations (for example Niger and Cameroon).

Power tussle usually flips along the north-south local gap, and this additionally covers with the greater part ethnic divisions, and the strict split of the prevalently Sunni Muslim north (around 50 percent of the populace), and Christian south (48 percent) (Agbiboa, 2013). Between ethnic clash between bunches is normal – for example

between the Kanuri (of which most Boko Haram warriors are individuals) and the Hausa-Fulani greater part (Asfura-Heim and McQuaid, 2015, p.8-9).

These crevices are established in the pioneer arrangement of administration and have solidified all through the postcolonial period. Following the combination of the three regulatory locales of Nigeria at freedom, 'the gigantic regional, populace, and monetary force asymmetries among these districts immediately demonstrated politically incapacitating' and 'political assembly drawn along politicized ethno-strict lines has blocked the development of a genuine national personality in Nigeria' (Agbiboa, 2013, p.14, 3). This has happened at the everyday small scale level of resident relations – with elevated levels of social fracture prompting solid holding inside gatherings, and frail crossing over between gatherings (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005; Francis, et al., 2014). This has encouraged profound sentiments of complaint, doubt, and hostility, particularly when populaces accept that they are by and large purposively avoided from the advantages that others are getting (NSRP, 2017b, p.2; Aghedo and Eke, 2013, p.113; Agbiboa, 2013).

2.3.5 Politics

In their chronicle of Nigeria's history, Barungi, Odhiambo&Asogwa (2017) explain that securing independence in 1960 started a turning point in Nigeria as it sowed divisions witnessed in the country today. The country was divided into three regions. The Northern region of Nigeria (which was/is predominantly Muslim), led by the first Premiere of the region, Sir.Ahmadu Bello was a predominant power in the alliance running Nigeria as a whole. The newly independent country was marked by strife and serious challenge between the regions. While northerners wished to improve their impact and maintain their religious identity, the south pursued an ideologically different route. In this manner, Ahmadu Bello and his party (Northern People's

Congress) determined to solidify the North as a unified entity. This was to help the region maintain dominance at the national level. This was reflected in the common mantra at the time, 'ONE NORTH, ONE DESTINY'. In this regard, only Nigerians of northern origins were favored in work places.

2.3.5.1 Election Violence in Nigeria

Elections in Nigeria aremarred by difficulties.During each election period, the sovereign will of the people is expected to prevail. This is seen in the peaceful transfer or continuity of power as long as the people's mandate legitimately given (Ashindorbe, 2018). Yet, this is one of the highlights of democracy. Except for the 2015 elections which international observers witnessed some significant progress, violence is arguably a permanent manifestation of elections in Nigeria (Edet, 2015). Due to the electoral violence that have plagued Nigeria's elections since the country's return to democracy in 1999, thousands of lives have been lost with property being destroyed and mutual suspicion rising among religious and ethnic adherents(Angerbrandt, 2018). Violence has consistently greeted Nigeria's general elections. Electoral violence does not just occur during elections in Nigeria. Rather, Martinluther (2017) explains that electoral violence in Nigeria occurs in three phases, before the elections, during the elections while polling is going on and after the elections when results are being collated and announced. She suggests the adoption of early warning systems that can effectively curb the outbreak of violence. Electoral conflicts typically start from physical assault on candidates during campaigns. Usually, the ruling party employs thugs to carry out their attacks. Also, opposing candidates get threats of violence or assault by members of the security forces that are funded with tax payers money. Furthermore, when election dates are chaged at the last minute after most people have closed down their businesses and travelled down to their villages to vote could be seen

by most as deliberate voter suppression thereby leading to angst among some members of the electorate (ibid). Electoral malpractice has also been a major determinant of election violence in Nigeria as godfatherism which leads to 'do or die' politics is a serious problem in Nigeria's politics(Cohen, 2016). In suggesting how to manage electoral conflicts in Nigeria, Okeyim, Adams, & Ojie(2012) proffer that mass education of citizens, the reformation of electoral laws, providing the dividends of democracy in form of good governance, establishing courts and enhancing the nation's security will go a long way in curbing electoral violence..

2.4 Conflict Resolution in Nigeria

Conflict resolution requires various forms of de-escalation processes. Conflict resolution can be regarded as an integral part of social justice and social transformation during conflicts It includes not only mediation between conflict parties but also seeks to address conflict on a wider level where non-state actors, domestic groups and intra-party strife sustains armed conflicts (Rambostham, Woodhouse, &Miall, 2011).When initiating the processes to resolve conflict, one element that cannot be ignored is communication.

According to Krauss &Morsella, (2006), 'when neighbors feud, lovers quarrel or nations war, the predicted remedy prescribed by the voices of reason is communication' (p.1). This statement explains the relevance of communication in any conflict matter.

Research has indicated how social orders utilize broad communications to further their potential benefit (Singh and Pandey, 2017; McQuail, 1979). The broad communications in liberal social orders champion the standards of the social orders by

setting plan (ibid). Nonetheless, it isn't just in western liberal popular governments that the broad communications is utilized to set motivation. In governments, military tyrannies, one gathering police state or other dictator systems, the broad communications is an expansion of government, reflecting government beliefs, government strategies and by and large the initiative's perspective. In social orders with paternalistic frameworks like theocracies, the broad communications is guided towards moral obligation as dictated by the state religion. The fourth situation is increasingly perfect in spite of the fact that not constantly sensible. This situation which can to a great extent be clarified inside the limits of the Social Responsibility Theory is where the broad communications fills in as reflection of society just as socially responsive, philanthropic help arranged and expertly managed by socially mindful media specialists (McQuail, 2010).

The possibility that media could contribute toward the elimination of violent conflicts is challenging but not an impossible proposition. This is made possible through the power it wields as described by Reuben (2009) who argues that media research has successfully documented the huge impact that the media have in shaping the public's attitudes about a given issue, such as conflict. It is also backed by the fact that the media can become an active participant in a conflict thereby escalating it or they could stay out of the conflict and contribute to its peaceful de-escalation (Puddephatt, 2006). The media has developed into a channel for rapid distribution of scenes of war, terror and violence among other things as they occur in real time into almost every living room. One of the effects of this swift transfer of information is to produce increased involvement in the conflicts of others (Carruthers, 2000).

Specifically, this proposes that any coverage of conflict by the media could yield constructive or destructive outcomes (Bratic and Schirch, 2007). Since the potential individual, monetary and social expenses of contentions are significant, it likewise recommends that the communities – regardless of whether local, national or global – are ideally served by conflict coverage that are helpful and that reduce the call to escalate tensions (Reuben, 2009).

Nigeria's 1999 constitution allows the press freedom to operate without interference. Section 22 of the constitution states that, "the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people" (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, p. 10).

A fundamental right of the people as defined by the constitution is the right to life including the right to peaceful assembly and association and right to freedom of movement. However, since conflicts became a common experience for Nigerians with more occurrences in Northern Nigeria, these rights are under attack and it is the duty of the press to defend these rights on behalf of the people.

2.4.1 Research into Conflict Resolution in Nigeria

Because of the various conflicts that have occurred in Nigeria since the country's independence in 1960, conflict resolution has been an important area for Nigeria's growth and development. The starting point for any attempt to look at research into conflict resolution in Nigeria should be the reconciliation processes that were initiated after the Nigerian civil war which happened between 1967 and 1970. After the civil war, the strategy the federal government at the time employed was to declare that the

war had neither winners nor losers. Even though one can argue that this strategy can be argued to be peace oriented, Anthony(2014) argues that this strategy was employed as a means to pretend the war never happened. It expected everyone to forget the war. The result of this strategy is that the successful re-integration of the Igbos (who happen to be the victims of the war) could not be accomplished (Achebe 2012, cited in Lodge, 2018). Revealing the various paths to peace after civil wars, Lodge (2018) states that repression, systemic amnesia (pretending the war did not happen), retributive and restorative justice have all worked at different instances. However, in Nigeria, the federal government strategy was to embark on a reconstruction, reconciliation and rehabiliation campaign (Lodge, 2018).

Speaking on the conflict between pastoralists and farmers in North-Central Nigeria, Eke, (2018) admits that previous attempts at conflict resolution in the region have been unsuccessful. However, he suggests that successful intervention ought to consider the actors in the conflict, the issues and the dynamics of the conflict.

Taking the gender approach, Ani & Opara(2017) argues that the patriarchy that dominates African society negatively affects the effective measures of conflict resolution. However, they also reveal that the traditional women's group, Umuada in a community in South-East Nigeria is sometimes involved in conflict resolutions with positive results. As such, they argue that women who are usually the biggest victims of conflict have a role to play in determining how conflict is resolved.

Kolade (2018) looks into the possibility of mitigating conflict through entrrepreneurship education and venture creation for youths in Maiduguri in North-East Nigeria which is where Boko Haram originated. He suggests that this approach

will socially impact on the society by triggering venture creationand reduce poverty among youths who might easily be lured into terrorism.

According to Williams(2016), military interventions for resolving conflict are not the best option because experience from movement from the emancipation of Nigeria Delta (MEND) and Boko shows that there are underlying factors that must be taken into consideation. For Nigeria, the factors to consider are the domestic issues that gave birth to home-grown terrorism on Nigerian soil. He suggests that one of the best way to prevent further recruitment and mobilization of youths for terrorism acts in Nigeria is to adopt measures that elevate the principles of justice, equity and peacebuilding.

2.5 Review of Empirical Studies

Studies on media report of conflict take different dimensions. Some studies make comparisons between coverage in different contexts (Kepplinger, 2016); how conflict is personalized in reports (Pantti, 2019); reports on sexual and gender based violence in conflicts (Davies, 2017); how the citizen is reporting conflict (Bahador&Tng, 2010)how digital media covers conflict in contrast to traditional media (Cristea, 2014); the role of the mass media in conflict resolution (Imtihani, 2014).

The history of the Nigerian press can be traced back to the history of the nation's fight for independence. The press was often filled with vitriolic comments about the policies of the British administrators. Sambe (2005) suggests two factors responsible for the establishment of the Nigerian press. These are; the missionary factor and the freed slaves' movement factor. On the missionary factor, Sambe explains that the publishing of Nigeria's first newspaper, the IweIrohin by an Anglican Reverend, Rev. Townsend from the Anglican Church began the publishing of IweIrohin in Abeokuta on

December 3rd, 1859. By 1866, the paper was publishing two separate editions for its English and Yoruba speaking audiences'. Under the freed slaves movement factor, Sambe also says, 'those parliamentary acts had significant implications on the development of the legitimate trade, the evangelization of West Africa and the development of the print media in Nigeria'. The parliamentary acts being referred to here are the Act of Parliament of 1807 outlawing slave trade by the British subjects and that of 1833 abolishing the trade in areas under British jurisdiction.

While the British rule was still in force, the Nigerian press was steadily growing. By the beginning of the 20th century, the various administrations in Nigeria had enacted series of repressive laws to stem the growing power and popularity of the Nigerian press. The more they enacted the laws, the more the press became more aggressive. Looking at the history surrounding the Nigerian press, it is easy to discern that the press had one thing in common at the time. They attacked anything that stood contrary to their interest and colonialism was seen as the enemy then.

Today's press has can be said to have evolved as colonialism is long gone. With colonialism gone, the common enemy was gone. They soon focused on differences. With different sides to take, there are many enemies to fight now but one that begs for attention is the growing disunity among Nigerians which is bring about incessant conflicts. That the media is a catalyst for national development is a fact that cannot be brushed aside. This is because it has the opportunity of representing the views of both the dominated class and the dominant class. The African development Bank implies that conflicts lead to a steady decline in development as development matters are pushed aside. Based on the definition of conflict in the previous chapter, there are usually parties involved in a conflict and these parties are usually in disagreement

because they feel threatened. The social responsibility theory of the mass media recommends that the press should be a platform for expressing of diverse opinions and should be common carriers of public views. It also recommends the press to represent all groups within a society. Jimada (2006) reinstates this representative aspect by saying; "it promotes a duality of purpose first by giving a voice to those disenfranchised by the mainstream as well as an opportunity for them to paint their own development portrait".

The above statement suggests that every individual or group within a society has his/their own peculiar problems that ought to be explained one should always remember that 'communication is the cement that binds society together'. Having this in mind, it would be completely acceptable to believe that the press can help prevent conflicts as they are seen as the frontiers of knowledge and information and they possess the power to reach a large number of people with messages that encourage dialogue and negotiation instead of taking the violent alternative. As the cement that binds society together, it is only communication that can bridge the gap between the informed and uninformed and also aggrieved parties. Conflict can be prevented if the press step into their role as watch dogs. Lasswell (1968) opines that man has always needed something to watch over his environment and report to him on the dangers, discoveries, opportunities, opinions, facts, decisions, changes and current trends, something to entertain people on broad scale, something to broaden trade and commerce. Recognizing the role of the press in conflict management, organizations like the International Federation of Journalists now require journalists to be trained in conflict resolution with the promotion of peace as their main goal (Singh 2013).

Although there are numerous studies that deal with media and conflict, Gilboa (2009) keenly observes that most of these studies focus on the negative role played by the media in conflict escalation while ignoring ' the actual or potential media contributions to conflict resolution and reconciliation'. He concludes that the media has both positive and negative impact in conflict in that they can both help and hinder conflict resolution and it is important to uncover the conditions determining the outcome. Exposing these conditions would ease the process of maximizing the negative contributions of the media in conflict.

In conflicts of ethnic hostilities, Roluahpuia (2017) suggests that the media can either increase the hostilities or advance peace. Placing media as a frame within local politics, Roluahpuia argues that there is the possibility that the media in an ethnically polarized region would be influenced by local politics. In another study, Imtihani (2014) discovered that during conflicts, the media was influenced by the situations that revolved around the conflict. For example, when violence escalates, media reports centered around the violence but when conflicting parties decided to dialogue, the media changed their reports on conflict into the pursuit for peace.

In another study on electoral violence in Nigeria, Demarest & Langer (2019) observed that during electoral violence, the press in Nigeria generally reported the facts with limited bias however, their editorial pieces showed some degree of bias when there is political pressure.

2.5.1 History of Nigerian Mass Media

The Nigerian media mirrors the Nigerian society.Since the fight for independence in which the Nigerian press bravely led the struggle for liberation, the Nigerian mass media has been hailed as a leading institution in Africa (Santas& Ogoshi, 2016; Ojo,

2018). Thus, the history of the Nigerian press is also tied to the history of Nigeria's nationalist struggles (The Nigerian Observer, 2015).

Like different sections of society, media in Nigeria typically mirrors the Nigerian society (Press Reference, n.d). The first media entity in the country was the IweIrohin newspaper in 1859. This paper existed before Nigeria came into existence and the paper was founded by an Anglican missionary with the sole purpose of representing the Egba people (Oduntan, 2005). It is important to stress that the foundation of the Nigerian mass media was dipped in ethnic identity. Nigeria has more than 250 distinctive ethnic orientations. As Africa's most populous nation, tribalism and ethnocentrism are delicate issues in the Nigerian polity and this reflects in the Nigerian media system. The structure of the Nigerian mass media is tied to its colonial history.

During the struggle to end colonialism, a few newspapers sprung in different parts of Nigeria whose purpose was to condemn colonial rule. These newspapers had national tones even though they represented the ethnic perspective of their owners. Examples of such newspapers include Lagos Daily News, Nigerian Tribune etc. which were established by young Nigerians who had just returned from Europe and America following the end of their educational pursuits (Akpe, n.d). While pushing for an end to colonial rule, these newly established newspapers also promoted Nigerian patriotism (Omoera, 2014).

As colonial rule ended, the common enemy was gone. The years that followed the end of Nigeria's colonial rule were marked by deep divisions and violence which led to the first military coup in January 1966 and several other coups until the country eventually went into a three years civil war when South East Nigeria demanded to part ways with the rest of Nigeria (Okoro, 2012).

After Nigeria's civil war, the then military Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon determined to promote nationalism through the media. First, private individuals were banned from owning broadcast media. Next, the military government established the Nigerian Television Authority, the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria and the News Agency of Nigeria.

Although private individuals were allowed to own print media, this aspect of the media was still regulated through various laws, decrees and edicts. This situation continued until 1992 when another military Head of State, general Ibrahim BadamosiBabangida decided to deregulate the broadcast media to allow private ownership (Idachaba, 2018).

2.5.2 Nigerian Media Structure

Broadcasting in Nigeria is regulated by the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC).Broadcasting in Nigeria is regulated by the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC). The NBC was established by the NBC Act in 2004 and is charged with the responsibility of controlling the broadcasting industry in Nigeria (NBC.gov, n.d). Issuing of licenses to private individuals is done with the approval of the president. Sometimes, licenses are issued as privilege to individuals who are favored by the President in charge (Akpe, n.d). By NBC rule, private broadcast stations in Nigeria must operate a 60/40 format where 60 percent of content is local while 40 percent is foreign for TV while radio operates on 80/20 with 80 being local content and 20 is given to foreign content. This is to promote Nigeria's local heritage(Jibo and Okoosi-Simbine 2003).

The broadcast media is spearheaded by the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) which are under the financial and

political control of the Federal government. Because they are funded by the government, they act as the mouthpiece of the government. They are financed through national budgetary distributions. Additionally, they generate income through advertising and other corporate funding. As the national TV station, NTA outreach spans across Nigeria with each state in Nigeria's federation operating its own license. Currently, there are about fourteen private stations in Nigeria within African Independent Television (AIT), Channels Television and Silverbird Television being the most popular.

Because English is the official language in Nigeria, the primary language for dispersing information on Nigeria's broadcast media is English although local stations and community radio have the liberty in the local dialect of the area in which they are broadcasting Oso (2013).

It is believed that there are over 250 radio stations in Nigeria (Michael O. Mojekeh, Egbeh, Nwangene, & Dim, 2019).

There are up to 294 newspapers in Nigeria (Akpe, n.d) although the Nigerian Press Council only lists about 28 as national dailies. The News Agency of Nigeria is the only news agency of the country and it serves as a major source for the various media organizations in the country. Majority of the papers are local newspapers catering to either states or local communities. This diversity in publishing has also served to further divide Nigeria along ethnic and religious divisions (Jibo and Okoosi-Simbine, 2003). The diverse newspapers also emphasize Nigeria's growing differences. Thus, the opportunity for a unified Nigeria seems more idealistic than realistic.

The Nigerian mass media has in general endured a turbulent history from oppressive laws enacted by the then colonial masters to decrees and edicts passed by the successive military Heads of State. In 1977 Newbreed was shut down. In 1984 the military administration of General Muhammadu Buharishut down the Tribune and after four years in 1988, Newswatch magazine was seized by the government of General Babangida. Likewise during this time span, government officials harassed newspaper columnists. In 1971 MinereAmakiri, a journalist for the Nigerian Observer, was kept and had his hair shaved. Perhaps, the most known case of media harassment and bullying involved the murder of the founder of Newswatch, Dele Giwa whose death was as a result of a letter bomb delivered by hand through BubaMarwa who was a former military administrator of Lagos state (Adenle, n.d).

Unpacking the reason for the brutality would involve the unravelling of layers of ethnic divide as that is always a catalyst for every Nigerian problem.

2.5.3 Press Laws in Nigeria

The regulation of the press in Nigeria can be traced to the colonial history of Nigeria. Early laws were set to not only protect the colonial masters but to also silence the vibrant journalists. Laws such as the Libel and Sedition laws and also the Newspaper Amendment Act criminalized free speech and would later serve as the basis for the now infamous Decree no. 4 of 1984 which was tagged Protection against False Accusation (Ogbondah & Onyedike, 1991).

Media and government relations in Nigeria were marked by hostilities as there were more laws to oppress the media than to liberate them. A summary of these laws are;

- Newspaper prohibition of circulation Decree of 1967.
- Public officers protection against false accusation Decree of 1976

- Newspapers prohibition of circulation decree no 12 of 1978

- State security detention of persons decree no 2 of 1984

- Decree no 4 of 1984.

All of the above decrees mentioned put stringent conditions of media practitioners whereby offending individuals were either imprisoned, fined or publicly humiliated (Iredia, 2015). This continued until Nigeria became fully restored to democratic rule in 1999. However, it wasn't until Freedom of Information bill was signed into law in 2011 that the press started enjoying the dividends of democracy. In spite of this, there are new laws put in place that have the capacity to stifle and prevent journalists from fully carrying out their function (Freedom House, 2017).

2.5.4 Profile of Newspapers

In Nigeria, there are over 20 news dailies. During the selection of newspapers, the website of Nigerian Press Council was consulted. The site lists 28 national newspapers (Nigerian Press Council, 2020). Next, it was important to choose two national dailies out of the 28 that were listed on the site. Longevity and circulation were considered because of Nigeria's large population. This narrowed the number down to six newspapers. These are; Guardian, Vanguard, Punch, The Sun, The Nation and Thisday newspapers. The names of the six newspapers were written on separate papers and folder and a random selection was done. Punch and Thisday newspapers were then randomly selected after limiting the papers to five. Wale Aboderin currently owns Punch Newspaper. The paper was established by two friends, James Aboderin and Sam Amuka who first started the paper as a weekend paper with its first edition published on Sunday, March 3rd 1970. In 1976, the newspaper stopped being a weekend paper as its daily paper started coming out. The paper has remained arguably

one of the best newspapers in the country as it has possesses up to date technology which give it an edge over other papers in terms of production quality and innovativeness. It is also said to be Nigeria's leading paper in terms of wide circulation. The paper which initially sustained itself by dealing with issues which not necessarily political has since the Second Republic taken a political stance with a range of other issues.

The newspaper is one of the highly circulated national dailies in Nigeria with a circulation of 80,000 copies.

Figure 2: Front page cover of Punch online (Punch NG, 2019)

NdukaObaigbena founded THISDAY newspaper on 22, January 1995. It is a national daily in Nigeria with headquarters in Lagos state. It boasts of daily circulation 100,000 copies. Because of its high demand, the newspaper has two printing plants in Nigeria; one in Abuja, the nation's capital and one in Lagos where the newspaper's headquarters is located. It is the first newspaper to begin colored printing in Nigeria. The newspaper has been at the forefront of some major news events in Nigeria. The

newspaper survived a terrorist incident in 2011 when two of its offices were bombed in Abuja and Kaduna. The paper lost 6 journalists to these two separate incidents – three in Kaduna and 3 in Abuja (BBC, 2012). The newspaper has offices and reporters in all the 36 states of Nigeria.

Figure 3: Front page cover of Thisday Online(Thisday Live, 2020)

2.6 Research into Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria

Researchers have tried to analyse the apparent failure of the Nigerian project (Kinnan, Gordon, DeLOng, Jaquish, & McAllum, 2011; John, 2008). Some may go as far as calling it the mistake of 1914. While demanding for apologies on behalf of Nigerians in a newspaper publication in 2010, Olatunji Dare stated that "Dr.Jonathan has no reason for sparing the architect of our continuing grief, Frederick Lugard. It is not enough to say a loud Amen to every line of OgagaIfowodo's poem, "God punish you, Lord Lugard." His descendants should be smoked out and compelled to atone in cash and kind. The institution in whose name Lugard committed the mistake of 1914, the British Crown is alive and well. So, when will Dr. Jonathan summon the British High Commissioner to Aso Rock and ask him to convey to Her Majesty Nigeria's non-

negotiable demand for an immediate and unconditional apology with reparations compounded, for the pain and misery that have trailed that mistake to this day?"

The poem being referenced in this sentence bears no connection to the context of the message besides the obvious God punish you, Lord Lugard. The poem itself passed this obscenity at the former Governor-General who played a huge role in the amalgamation of Nigeria for the bad English a street beggar spoke. However, because it said, 'God punish you, Lord Lugard,' which literally means that one is asking God to deal with Lord Lugard, Dare Olatunji used it to express his disdain for Nigeria's forced amalgamation.

Although it is still on going, the debate about Nigeria being a failed state has been a part of Nigerian discourse for a long time. Turaki (1982) goes short of calling Nigeria a failed state. Arguing that, "the frequency of religious and communal clashes, riots, conflicts and violence since 1980 to the present has reached endemic proportions", these frequent conflicts truly presents a reflection of Nigeria's 'national crisis, a nation at the brink of collapse, and a nation in search of its own soul.' Some arguments trace the democratic crisis and the causes of the ethno-religious conflicts to misrule by the three regionally based elites; Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. Explaining this, Karu (2011, p. 11) stated that;

> "The argument is that these elites have devised effective methods for subjugating the minorities to their hegemonic hold. Some of the most vociferous critics are of these oligarchies are the intellectuals from the middle belt who complain about the hegemonic stranglehold of the Hausa-Fulani elite over them".

The middle-belt being mentioned in Karu's statement refers to North-Central Nigeria, which is diverse in both culture and religion but is at the same time the centre for most conflicts in Northern Nigeria. Explaining further, Karu lists the usual arguments as;

1. Northern Nigeria's political problem is largely due to the Hausa-Fulani's persistent hegemonic hold over the ethnic minorities of the Middle Belt.

2. Because of the above reason, effective measures have been put in place to sustain this hegemony.

3. This history of domination has resulted in depriving the people of the Middle Belt access to political power, which in turn also threatens their religious rights. The fear that Islam will be imposed on the minority in turn leads to clashes.

The arguments presented by Karu have over time being recycled into most conversations about conflicts in Northern Nigeria with religion at the centre of every issue. Unfortunately, existence of conflict or strive in a society affects people's daily lives.

African Development Bank (2009, p. 11) reports a gory picture about the consequence of conflict in any society especially Africa; "Conflict also has economic consequence. It leads to unemployment and loss of income owing to disruption of economic activity, destruction of infrastructure, uncertainty, increased cost of doing business and capital flight. Furthermore, social spending is cut to accommodate military spending and the economy undergoes structural changes".Furthermore, the report explains how governance is affected badly during conflict as policies are made hastily to accommodate the situation, which also relegates people related policies to the background.

The need for peace cannot be over-emphasized. Towards the end of the 20th century and the start of the 21st century, peace had become so scarce a commodity that world leaders took the campaign for peace to every platform they can get. Former US President Obama, while speaking to about 600 Israeli students reiterated his belief that peace was the only path to true security (CBS News, 2013). Arguably, a nation cannot steadily develop when it is constantly at war within itself. Nigeria's major setback is that it is plagued with different ethnic groups who have still not found a way of accommodating each other (Kinnan, Gordon, DeLOng, Jaquish, &McAllum, 2011).

Before the creation of Nigeria in 1914, the people that made up today's Nigeria were consisting of four different empires, some of them extended into Ghana and Cameroon. However, the four major empires were the Calabar kingdom, Northern Empire (Sokoto Caliphate), the Oduduwa Empire, the Benin and Kingdom.TheCalabar Kingdom, which happens to be the oldest kingdom, had the privilege of having the first contact with the Europeans. Before colonialism, the Kings of this Empire had been known to trade with Europeans (Afaha, 2014). The empire is believed to have been founded in 1000AD and houses the oldest church built in the country, which dates back to 1850.

The Northern Empire which is occupied by Hausa peoples and other smaller languages is composed of Borno Empire, Sokoto Caliphate, other Hausa states; Zazzau, Gobir, Kano, Katsina, Birori, Daura and some other groups; Gbagyi, Kebbi, Nupe and Yelwa (Munir&Odeh, 2014).

The Oduduwa Kingdom consisted of two main groups. One of them consisted of the indigenous Yoruba people with both cultural and central religious center at Ile-Ife. The

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other group, called the Berbels formed the Borno and Hausa states (Karu, 2011). The Yoruba people believed Oduduwa to be the creator of the earth and therefore the ancestor of Yoruba Kings. The Benin Empire was well known for its African Sculpting. In the 1800s, it was also very powerful and stretched to some parts of present day Ghana (Ekeh, 2016).

In the 1800s, the British who had come to rule these lands during the famous struggle for Africa started residing in parts of these kingdoms. These four kingdoms had systems peculiar to them (Karu, 2011).They each had their own religion and form of rule. The Northern Empire was particular famous for its centralized system of governance which made indirect rule easy for the British Government. These peculiarities would come to serve as a factor for these four Empires, which were merged together in the 1914 amalgamation.Prior to the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorate and the Colony of Lagos, the Nigerian press had emerged and made themselves a strong opposition to the British rule.

2.6.1 Theoretical Framework

The present study is ultimately based on two theories. These are, agenda setting theory and peace journalism.

2.6.2 Agenda Setting Theory

This theory in essence validates the argument that the press has the power to influence people's thoughts on issues in society. It has predictive power in the sense that people who are exposed to media are said to prioritize the issues prioritized by the mass media (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2007). The basic argument of this theory is drawn from Walter Lippmann's classic, Public Opinion which describes the ability of the media to paint pictures in our heads (McCombs, 2011). In addition, the mass media goes a step further by giving a broader perspective of issues in order to aid our understanding of

those issues. They achieve this after building prominence over time (McCombs, Chyi, &Kiousis, 2004). This prominence is gained by constantly reporting the matter. According to Asemah&Adegoh (2012), the main argument of the theory is salience transfer. This essentially refers to the ability of news media to transfer issues that are deemed importance from news media agenda to public agendas.

The relevance of this theory to this research is drawn from the importance of the media in conflict matters. As stated earlier in the literature, media's report of conflict can escalate or de-escalate conflict.

Since its inception, agenda setting theory has been fundamental in the expansion of public opinion research by drawing attention to the role the media play in influencing public opinion. This they do by deciding the issues that become the centre of public discourse (Takeshita, 2005).

2.6.3 Related Research

In research the mass media agenda and the coverage of the Jos crisis, Asemah&Edegoh, (2012) concluded that the mass media escalated the Jos conflicts by not giving objective reports.

Agenda becomes necessary here because it assumes the power of the media to transfer issues of salience from their agenda to the public. As such, if media emphasise peace as their agenda, it will soon become the public agenda.

In a handbook for conflict transformation, Melone, Terzis, &Beleli (2002) use findings from conflict management projects that were done in Angola, Burundi, Greece, Turkey, Iran etc. to conclude that the media's ability to break barriers and reach large

audiences gives them the power to set the agenda in conflict. Usually, the agenda is set negatively. They explained that the media negatively influence conflict by creating and advancing factors that could both facilitate and trigger more conflict. For example, us versus them narratives is usually created and advanced on the media.

To address the issue of media agenda setting power and conflict resolution, Williams (2017) states that there is more evidence to portray media as a conflict instigator rather than a driver of peace. However, she suggests that any attempt to use media an intervening vehicle during conflict should focus on understanding the changing cycle of conflict, which is now dynamic. For example, due to the complexities of modern conflicts, peace can no longer be achieved through traditional means of resolution. Rather, the process employs a cycle of treaties; agreements and monitoring of agreements to prevent a relapse should be media agenda in conflict prevention and intervention. Thus, media agenda can be geared towards peace building.

2.6.4 Research into Agenda Setting and Conflict

Because of the media's ability to draw attention to issues they deem important, how they set agenda I conflicts has been problematized in research. In Western democracies, research has shown that the media insert themselves in political processes by gathering information about violent conflict in other countries for members of parliament which could eventually influence important decision (Herrero-Jimenez, Carratala, & Berganza, 2018). As such, mass media are actors that determine how European parliamentarians set agenda particularly in issues like the Syrian war. According to Sevenans & Vliegenthart (2016), conflict is a central theme in politics and the media play a vital role in determining how agenda is set. For example, during political debates, questions asked by the media re-direct attention and end up framing

agenda. As such, when the media draw attention to and frame conflict, they set the political agenda.

In protest, the agenda setting function of the media is time structure. For example, when violence happens, this gain increased media attention and as attention is increased as it occurs. This sets agenda short-term (Jennings & Saunders, 2019).

2.6.5 Peace Journalism

As unprofessional reporting brings about the question of how journalists have performed in covering conflict and particularly religious conflicts, the searchlight has been placed in academic research on the role of the media in conflict resolution. The fundamental guidelines of truthful, reasonable and adjusted news reporting have been incited to highlight the rising worry over the media's job in replicating dread, bias, stereotypes and scorn. One of the implications of these kind of media report not only includes an emphasis on the difference between "us" and "them" but also it promotes fear and creates tension instead of propagating peaceful co-existence (Rupar, 2012). Media outlets with biased mind-sets often become propagandists of their personal opinion by using their platform to promote their cause. Media assume an important job in shaping beliefs and opinions and also depicting a specific picture of the real world. As indicated by Jacobsen, Jensen, Vitus, &Weibel (2012), negative depiction of certain groups in the media has a twofold capacity for identity. Initially, the negative depiction will in general aggravate the uniqueness and principles of identity among media audiences. Second, the consistent delineation of certain groups as far as a problematic, practical, and hybridized danger to the ethno-national society may endanger that group. That is to say, if media keeps painting a group as dangerous or problematic, their survival may be at risk. For example, reports concentrating on Islam and Muslims are contrarily surrounded in the media and restricted to particular sorts

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of points, for example, psychological oppression, radicalism, and mastery of ladies. However, positive activities and basic subjects like bigotry and victimization are moderately missing in the media inclusion. For example, news inclusion for the most part depicts Muslim culture and Islam as representing a danger to popular government and the right to speak freely of discourse and need is for the most part given to themes that stress the improper activities of Muslims as opposed to the great ones.

Peace journalism is an emerging area of media studies that seeks to restructure the reporting of war and strife from war-oriented journalism that records military prowess and politics to peace-oriented frames in news reports (Gershberg, 2019). As a theory, the peace journalism is situated within normative theory, which supports the role of the mass media in society as advancing the course of peace (Lukacovic, 2016). Situating peace journalism within normative theory is indicative of its collaborative, motorial, facilitative and radical roles in speaking up against conflict (ibid).

As an approach, the concept uses conflict analysis and transformation to introduce balance, fairness and accuracy in reporting conflicts (McGoldrick& Lynch, 2000). Galtung who introduced the concept in the 1960s defines it as a departure from war journalism, which follows the model of sport, related activities and ascribes winners and losers to every endeavour. In contrast, peace journalism takes a holistic approach to conflict with the aim of finding creative paths to peace (Galtung, 2013). The difference between peace journalism and war journalism is clearly illustrated on the next page;

War Journalism	Peace Journalism
APPROACH	
1. Reactive (waits for war to break out, or about to break out, before reporting)	1. Proactive (anticipates, starts reporting long before war breaks out)
2. Reports mainly on visible effects of war (casualties, dead and wounded, damage to property)	2. Reports also on invisible effects of war (emotional trauma, damage to society and culture)
3. Elite-oriented (focuses on leaders & elites as actors and sources of information)	3. People-oriented (focuses on common people as actors and sources of information)
4. Focuses mainly on differences that led to the conflict	4. Reports the areas of agreement that might lead to a solution to the conflict
5. Focuses mainly on the here and now	5. Reports causes and consequences of the conflict
6. Dichotomizes between the good guys and bad guys, victims and villains	6. Avoid labeling of good guys and bad guys
7. Two-party orientation (one party wins, one party loses)	7. Multiparty orientation (gives voice to many parties involved in conflict)
8. Partisan (biased for one side in the conflict)	8. Nonpartisan (neutral, not taking sides)
9. Zero-sum orientation (one goal: to win)	9. Win-win orientation (many goals and issues, solution-oriented)
10. Stops reporting with the peace treaty signing and ceasefire and heads for another war elsewhere	10. Stays on and reports aftermath of war—the reconstruction, rehabilitation, and implementation of peace treaty
LANGUAGE	
11. Uses victimizing language (e.g., destitute, devastated, defenseless, pathetic, tragic, demoralized) that tells only what has been done to people	11. Avoids victimizing language, reports what has been done and could be done by people, and how they are coping
12. Uses demonizing language (e.g., vicious, cruel, brutal, barbaric, inhuman, tyrant, savage, ruthless, terrorist, extremist, fanatic, fundamentalist)	12. Avoids demonizing language, uses more precise descriptions, titles, or names
13. Uses emotive words, like genocide, assassination, massacre, systematic (as in systematic raping or forcing people from their homes)	13. Objective and moderate. Avoids emotive words. Reserves the strongest language only for the gravest situation. Does not exaggerate.

Table 1.1: Coding categories for peace and war frames (Source: Lee & Maslog 2005)

Peace Journalism	War Journalism
PEACE/CONFLICT ORIENTATION	**WAR/VIOLENCE ORIENTATION**
1. Proactive; reporting on causes and consequences	1. Reactive; focus on here and now
2. Reports also on invisible effects of war	2. Reports mainly on visible effects of war
3. Avoid dichotomous labeling and partisan reporting	3. Dichotomizes between the good guys and bad guys; partisan reporting
4. Avoids victimizing, demonizing, and emotive language	4. Uses victimizing, demonizing, and emotive language
5. Win-win orientation	5. Zero-sum orientation (one goal: to win)
PEOPLE ORIENTATION	**ELITE ORIENTATION**
6. Giving a voice to the voiceless	6. Giving voice to elite sources of information
7. Multiparty orientation (gives voice to many parties involved in the conflict)	7. Two-party orientation (one party wins, one party loses)
SOLUTION ORIENTATION	**VICTORY ORIENTATION**
8. Seeking solutions (report on the areas of agreement that might lead to a solution to the conflict)	8. Focuses mainly on differences that lead to the conflict
9. Stays on and reports aftermath of war – the reconstruction, rehabilitation, and reconciliation	9. Stops reporting with the peace treaty signing and ceasefire and heads for another war elsewhere

Figure 4: Proposed Peace Journalism Model (Galtung, 2003, p. 178)

In practicing peace journalism, scholars offer the peace journalist different choices; Galtung (1998) states that the goal of the peace journalist is to research how conflict is formed and to give all sides in the conflict a voice; McGoldrick (2006) rejects the concept of journalistic objectivity while Kempf (2008) suggests the adoption of

truthful, objective and unbiased reporting during conflicts/crisis. According to Shehu&Alhassan (2018), peace journalism is guided by five (5) principles;

It takes a comprehensive approach to conflict by exploring the backgrounds of and gives contexts of conflict formation on all parties involved in the conflict. In doing this, it departs from the usual mainstream media's practice of showing two sides of conflicts;

1. It allows all rival parties involved in conflict to give their views.

2. It seeks and offers creative pathways for conflict resolution, development and peace.

3. It does not cover up lies. Rather, it exposes lies and cover-up attempts by culprits on all sides involved in a conflict and also reveal the parties who have committed excesses in a conflict and the consequences of actions taken by parties in a conflict.

4. It seeks peace stories and new developments that emerge after wars.

The purpose of peace journalism is to provide a comprehensive understanding of conflict (Kelling &Horvit, 2017). Peleg (2006) provided a framework for the application of peace journalism when he proposed that peace journalism can make meaningful impact when it is applied through the lens of conflict theory. Galtung (1998) proposes a triangle through which conflict should be analysed. The triangle includes the situation, attitude and behaviour surrounding a conflict situation.
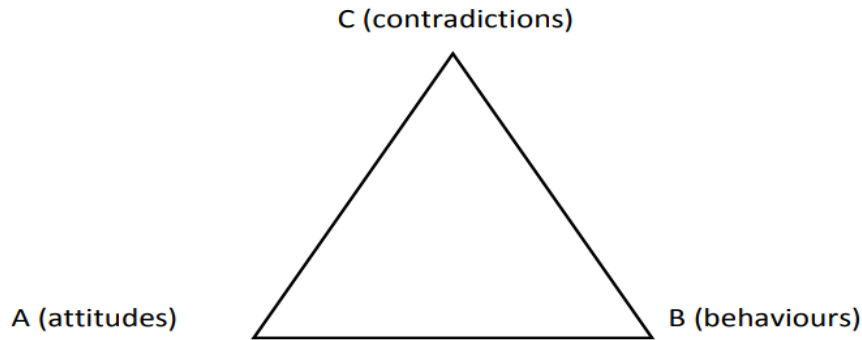
Figure 5: Conflict Triangle

Within this context, situation points to the reality of conflict, attitude points to the hateful language used by opponents in a conflict in other to stigmatize or delegitimize each other while behaviour points to the actions and reactions of parties involved in the conflict.

2.6.6 Related Research on Peace Journalism

Although the ideology behind peace journalism makes it the ideal practice for journalists, peace journalistic has had some challenges. The dynamic nature of conflicts hinders the successful application of peace journalism because contributing factors to conflicts play a role in influencing news coverage. For example, a study found that the Pakistani press regarded conflicts with India, Afghanistan and Taliban as high threats to national security and therefore used strong escalatory frames to report the conflicts. On the contrary conflicts Pakistan cities, Balochistan and Karachi were regarded as moderate security threats therefore the press did not use escalatory frames to report the conflicts (Hussain, 2019).

In West Africa, it is hindered by political determinants, economic imperatives, newsroom structures and working routines (Shehu & Alhassan, 2018). Researchers argue that peace journalism could benefit from a further simplification which could

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enhance its application (Kelling & Horvit, 2017). Also, combining peace and conflict within the concept of peace journalism is not contradictory. Rather, it seeks to establish that for journalists to understand peace journalism, they must first accept that conflict exists (Lee, Maslog, & Kim, 2005). Furthermore, peace journalism expects the peace journalist to recognize the signs of conflict before it occurs (Kelling & Horvit, 2017).

In a report that looks into gender imbalance in conflict reporting, Ahlsén (2013) draws a connection between peace journalism and women's movements by highlighting their criticim of gender imbalance within media space. The argument is that the gender imbalance in the media is connected to peace and sustainable development. Bceause peace journalism seeks to establish alternative sources of information that can provide deeper understanding of conflict, there is need to give as much opportunities to women who happen to be the biggest victims of conflicts as men are given. These opportunities will provide divergent opinions to conflicts and also enhance peace initiatives.

In a research to examine how Turkish newspapers covered the Gezi park protests, Aluc & Ersoy (2016) found that both conflict and peace frames occupied the same dominance in news coverage. They also found that the media used more information from elite sources than alternative sources. As such, there was no diversity in the information sources.

In his assessment of Cypriot media in 2010, Ersoy concluded that the principles that influenced Cypriot journalism serve to prommote more conflict as opposed to peace.

While determining how social movements influenced peace journalism, Aluc (2017) investigated the news framing of the protests in Gezi park. Findings from his study

suggest that more conflict frames were used in the study than peace frames. He developed a novel peace journalism model that would be consistent with social movements in Turkey with an emphasis on freedom of the press.

In suggesting how to implement peace journalism in the media, Ersoy (2017) suggests that for peace journalism to be successfully implemented, there is need for a 'non-politicized, non-polarized, non-monopolized, alternative media' that does not have commercial problems that conventional media organizations normally have. He also suggested that non-governmental organisations should coordinate activities that teach and enhance the culture of peace which would essentially reduce conflicts.

Mensah, Boasiako, & Acquah (2017)found that the media escalated conflicts by way of wrong reporting, stereotyping and unwholesometalks. Wrong reporting, stereotyping and unwholesome talks are attributes of war journalism because these serve to delegitimize or stimatize actors in a conflict.

In *Dominant Peace/Conflict Frames of Opinion Articles in the Turkish Cypriot Press*, Ersoy (2013) who considers cmedia columnists as opinion leaders called on columnists to enlighten their readers with positive messages. From the findings of his study, he found that Turkish Cypriot columnists gave more attention to official government sources and silenced unofficial sources. This tended to go against the principles of peace journalism.

In a study on journalists' role in fostering peace in Nigeria, professional journalists who participated in the research conceded that their sensitivity to peace journalism was hindered by overbearing owners and 'draconian government policies' (Adebayo,

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2016). Thus, to avoid government clampdown, they avoid conflict sensitivity. In a similar study, Demarest & Langer (2018) found that while Nigerian media did not expressly use language that would escalate conflicts, their reporting did not seek to uncover structural causes of conflicts either. Based on the findings, it could be said that Nigerian media do not engage in either war journalism or peace journalism.

While exploring the difficulties in fully implementing peace journalism in North Cyprus, Ersoy (2006) opines that the current structure of journalism practice is in itself a hindrance to the successful implementation of peace journalism and the refusal of journalists to accept some responsibility and enlightenment about alternative methods of report can hinder peace journalism.

However, implementing peace journalism has its own benefits. By embracing peace journalism, the mass media is essentially purposely setting the stage for peace in the country. This is essentially setting the agenda for news. Because the mass media is successful in giving the people what to think about, the responsibility should not be taken lightly. Media are generally expected to depict a decent picture on any issues or circumstance happening both at their immediate environment and worldwide level. In any case, in depicting some groups in society (for example, the depiction of Muslims after 9/11) can be more harmful than helpful to society. Various analysts found that mainstream media will in general adversely portray Islam by associating it with psychological oppression (Abdulla, 2007; Sikorski, Matthes, and Schmuck, 2018; Yusof, Hassan, Hassan, and Osman, 2013).

2.7 Conclusion of Chapter

This chapter has been able to conceptualize conflict and discuss conflict in Nigeria. The role of the press in conflict resolution was extensively discussed. It listed and discussed socio-economic, socio-cultural, political, environmental and religious factors as some of the major drivers of conflict in Nigeria. The essence of this is aid in the understanding the structural causes of conflict in Nigeria with a view to solving them. Agenda setting theory and peace journalism model were discussed as important elements in conflict reporting. By applying this to newspaper coverage role in conflicts in Nigeria, this study is bridging a gap in knowledge because this is still a silent area in Nigerian media research.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

According to Reuben, (2009), there is significant impact of newspaper coverage on conflict issues because of the power media holds in shaping people's attitudes on key issues. Since, conflict is inevitable, it is therefore necessary to investigate the media cover it.This chapter covers the research methodology adopted to fulfil the objectives of this research.

This research set out to reveal the major themes used by selected newspapers in Nigeria in their coverage of religious conflicts in Nigeria. To undertake this, it is important to identify the various factors that shaped newspaper coverage of issues in Nigeria. Generally, the prevailing political systems, the economic strength and freedom the press enjoys, the ownership structure and professional training of journalists are some of the factors that influence press coverage of issues (Edeani, 1994). In Nigeria, all newspapers are privately owned. Therefore, it is safe to assume that their coverage of issues will be patterned after the concerns of their owners.To achieve the purposes of this chapter, it covers research methodology, method of data collection, population and sample and a thematic method of data analysis.

3.1 Research Methodology

This research adopts a quantitative methodology, which falls under the positivist paradigm. It is comparative study that seeks to investigate the coverage of violence and other related issues in Nigerian news media by making comparisons between a

minimum of two macro-level cases in order to describe the differences or similarities (Esser&Vliegenthart, 2017). In this research, comparisons will be drawn between two newspapers. According to Akhtar &Islamia (2016), the validity of a research is justified when its conclusions are accurate and the research design has provided a conceptual blueprint, which the research follows. A research methodology thus becomes important because it guides the researcher on how to conduct her study. When designing the research, the scholar prepares a plan of attack, which constitutes the methods of collecting, measuring and analysing data. This will also aide in determining if the research is a descriptive research or an explanatory research. Preparing the research design therefore enables the research to be conducted as efficiently as possible while also yielding maximal information (Kothari, 2004). According to (Akhtar &Islamia, 2016), a research design will sufficiently attempt to establish what the research is about and what type of data will be need, the purpose of the study, the sources of data needed, the area of study, the frame of the study, the number of cases of the study, the sampling method to be used, the right data collection method, how data will be collated and analysed and the nature of the study. Establishing these will also guide the researcher in determining if the research is descriptive or exploratory. Research design is comparative because it gives room to compare two different newspapers using the application of research procedures. It also helps in testing of reliability and validity of your research.

3.2 Method of Data Collection

Content analysis is used to collect data for this research. Anytime content analysis is used, reference is made to Berelson (1952) who defines content analysis as "a systematic and replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding and Holsti (1969) who describes

content analysis as any technique for making references by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of message'. From both definitions, it follows that content analysis uses secondary data (media texts) to draw conclusions. As a scientific study of the contents of communication, content analysis is the study of contexts, meanings, subtexts and intentions in a message (Cole, 1988). It can also be described as a "set of procedures used to transfer discrete information into organised format" which enables analysts to make inferences. As a research technique, it involves coding and interpretation of texts to draw valid and replicable conclusions (Parveen&Showkat, 2017). For this research, content analysis will be conducted on two national dailies namely; Punch and the Thisday newspapers. These newspapers were purposely selected based on their wide circulation, consistency in news coverage and their presumed editorial independence.

3.3 Population & Sample

Statistically, population refers to all possible objects, subjects or members of a study (Pilot &Hungler, 1999). In the context of this research, the population refers to all the newspapers categorised for the study.

When conducting research, a researcher must be carefully in selecting the target population from which she wants to collect data (Bhattacherjee, 2012). In a research, it is as fundamental strategy as sampling because they go hand in hand. This is because before determining your sample size, you have to first determine your population (Kothari, 2004). The research population may be referred as all items being considered in any scientific inquiry (ibid). It includes all objects/subjects/individuals whose properties are to be analysed in research. The need for sampling arises due to certain factors; size of the population or universe and inadequacies of resources like

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manpower, expertise, finance, materials and logistics for maximum execution of the research. In this regard, sampling will then help the researcher to save time and money (Kothari, 2004). Sampling design is done before data is collected for the research. Population can be classified into two; finite and infinite population. According to Kothari, the number of items to be counted in a finite universe is certain while the number cannot be counted in an infinite universe (Kothari, 2004). Going by the distinction between finite and infinite, the population for this study falls under the finite universe because the study would deal with the numerical data and would use such to draw inferences.

Cost and time are usually factors that can influence the amount of items a researcher selects from the entire population study. As stated above, the method chosen for this research is content analysis. From the above, it follows that a researcher is at liberty to restrict her search to a convenient but realistically objective size. As content analysts now face larger contexts, Krippendorf (2004) suggests three approaches through which a researcher can arrive at an appropriate sample size;

- Simplifying the research question;
- Experimenting with the accuracy of different sampling techniques and sample size in order to find the combination relevant to their research questions;
- Applying the split-half technique, which divides the population into two.

From the research questions stated in chapter 1, it can be gathered that this research aims to determine how media set themes on violent conflicts and terrorist acts in Nigeria with emphasis on how they assign blame in their reports on conflict. To fulfil the objectives, a content analysis will be conducted on two newspapers. The selection of these newspapers was done purposely. That is to say, the researcher purposely

selected them because they are not only national newspaper and have high circulation. Consequently, the study will analyse both newspapers in the year 2019. A purposive non-random sampling will be used by selecting every 10th day of the newspaper's edition within a 12 months period. That means that 4 editions will be analysed for each month making it 46 for each paper. In total, about 92 editions will be analysed. An example is presented on how the newspaper editions will be systematically sampled;

Jan 10th	Jan 20th	Jan 30th
•1st sampled edition	•2nd sampled edition	•3rd sampled edition
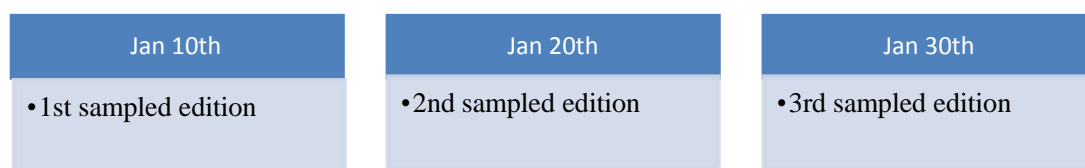
Figure 6: Month and Edition

This pattern will follow the remaining months until December. Thus, the sample size for this study will be 72 editions of the newspapers selected for the study. This is better presented below;

Table 1: Names of Newspapers

Punch Newspapers	46
Thisday Newspaper	46

Krippendorff (2004) suggests that researchers need a sampling plan to ensure the textual units selected for the study do not distort the results. He describes five sampling techniques that will aide a researcher in arriving at a relevant sample; simple random sampling where a researcher lists all the attributes that would be included or excluded in the analysis; systematic sampling where the researcher randomly determines the starting point and the proceeds by selecting the nth unit from the list (Krippendorff explains that this technique is usually preferred when analysis texts from regular

publications, newspapers/magazines, televisions series, radio programmes etc.); strata sampling which separates distinct sub-groups within a population into a single stratum and the researcher carries out random or systematic sampling for each stratum separately; cluster sampling which is selected when researchers are unable to list all units in the analysis but are able to find lists of larger groups of such units; snowball sampling where researchers start with an initial sampling sample of units to which they repeatedly apply a given set of sampling criteria; relevance/purposive sampling which deviates from the other sampling techniques because texts are deliberately selected according to their relevance to the research questions. Thus, the researcher with respect to the analytical problem at hand purposely selects them.Irrespective of the sampling technique, a good sample should portray the same characteristics of the population represented. In other words, sampling considers the basic details of all members of the population from which samples were drawn.

Following this and as stated in the previous item, this study adopts both the purposive and non-random sampling methods. This systematic sampling is evidenced in the selection of the 10th edition of each publication making it three editions for each month for the period of study. Below is a presentation of the themes that will analyse in this research;

Table 2: Questions to Measure the Themes As Would Be Reflected in the Coding Sheet

Themes	Questions to measure the themes as would be reflected in the coding sheet	Answer
Conflict	• Dispute between individuals, groups or parties • Story covers fights and riots or confrontations • The story gives two sides or more than two sides of the conflict issue. • The describes winners and losers	Yes/No
Human interest	• The story gives a human side • The story makes use of adjectives for emotional reaction. • The story describes the impact of conflict in individuals • The story explores the private lives of the actors	Yes/No
Theme showing economic consequences	• There is mention of financial impact • There is a mention of costs or expense • Economic consequences of not taking an action is mentioned	Yes/No
Morality	• Moral responsibility is mentioned • God, Allah or other religious tenets are mentioned • The story suggests how to behave	Yes/No
Responsibility	• Government has some responsibility in solving the problem • Blame is assigned to the government It is suggested that an individual or group (rebels) is responsible for the issue/problem • It is suggested that solution to the problem • The story suggests that the problem requires urgent action	Yes/No
Nationalisation	• Politicians who are active at the national level are quoted or cited in the story	Yes/No

3.4 Definition of Analytical Categories

The media text selected for this research will be classified according to pre-determined dimensions;

First, the text characteristics that apply to the research questions stated at the beginning of this chapter will be singled out for analysis. Secondly, standardised categories will be created to retrieve information that would provide little or great insight into the news article under review. After this, conclusions will be drawn as they relate to the research questions. To this end, the categories contained within the analysis of this study are presented below;

Identifier Categories

- Date of publication: Day/Month/Year.

- Position within the medium – this will reveal the page on which the publication appeared in the newspaper.

- Size/Length of item: This would help in classifying the prominence given to the news article.

- Genre classification – the parameters for identifying this are; straight news articles, editorial, letters to the editor, op-ed, feature article, comment, or columnist.

- News sources - reporters, academics, government sources, legal sources, private sector sources, individuals not representing agencies or institutions, and unspecified sources referenced (are the individuals directly affected?) through non-specific terms such as analysts, observers, and terms of a similar nature.

- Subject of text – e.g. violence, riots, clashes, consequences etc. This list may reduce or increase during the course of analysis.

- Value Dimension/Stance – positive/negative/neutral

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected for any study can only be meaningful if they are analyzed and interpreted to the understanding of the readers. An analysis would perform the following:

a) Bring the new data into measurable order

b) Summarize the data

c) Apply the analytical method to manipulate the data so that their interrelationships and quantitative meaning become relevant.

In pursuance of the above objective, this research conducts a thematic analysis using statistic tools. The analysis will be performed in line with the themes presented above. The goal of this is to describe the dominant themes uncovered in Nigerian media coverage of conflicts. Accordingly, descriptive statistical tools like charts, percentages, average and frequency distribution will be used to provide visual description of the analysis.

The will be in addition to simple tables which would make for better understanding of the figures presented. By so doing, the findings will be presented with the goal of achieving the study's content categories.

3.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter was able to highlight the research design, study population, sample size and sampling techniques to be adopted in this study. It gave a comprehensive description of how the researcher intends to answer the research questions by identifying the themes that will be adopted in the study. It also listed the identifier categories for the study.

Chapter 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the data coded for this research will be presented and interpreted. The chapter also covers the thematic analysis of the data and discussion of findings. The thematic analysis will be done using the themes highlighted in the second chapter. The themes in this research are; conflict, human interest, economic consequences, morality, responsibility and nationalization. For easy understanding, the data will be presented in tables.

4.1 Presentation of Findings

Before going on to determine how the newspapers chosen for this research covered conflict, it was important to determine if they covered conflict matters during the period of research. For clarity, all issues regarding Boko Haram/ISWAP, Fulani herdsmen and IPOB were coded under terrorism. Also, stories about confrontations between Fulani pastoralists and farmers, ethnic clashes, unidentified gunmen attacks, communal clash, religious clash, Niger-delta militants, confrontations between the Shiites and the Nigerian government were coded under conflicts.

Table 3: Inter-coder Reliability

Coding Units	N	KALPHA
Prominence	92	1.
Terrorism	92	.935
Violence	92	.903
Winners and losers	92	.632
Aggressors and victims	92	.913
On individuals	92	.770
Human side	92	.700
Use of adjectives	92	.747
Private lives of actors	92	.783
Financial consequences	92	.936
Economic consequences	92	.949
Cost and effects	92	.928
Moral message	92	1
Tenets of God/Allah	92	.824
Govt responsibility	92	.899
Solution	92	913

The results in the inter-coder reliability for the sixteen coding units revealed an agreeable Krippendorff's alpha coefficient ranging from .632 to a perfect 1.Hayes and Krippendorff (2007) recommend KALPHA=.6 as acceptable therefore the results show a high level of agreement between the two coders

Table 4: Newspapers Reporting on Terrorism

			Terrorism		
			Yes	No	Total
Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	20	26	46
		% within Newspapers	43.5%	56.5%	100.0%
	Thisday Newspaper	Count	23	23	46
		% within Newspapers	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	43	49	92
		% within Newspapers	46.7%	53.3%	100.0%

The results in the table above show that 43.5% of reports in Punch newspaper were terror stories while Thisday newspaper had 50%. This means that Thisday newspaper had more stories about Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen or IPOB in their reports than Punch newspaper.

Table 5: Newspapers Reporting on Violence

			Violence		
			Yes	No	Total
Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	36	10	46
		% within Newspapers	78.3%	21.7%	100.0%
	Thisday Newspaper	Count	35	11	46
		% within Newspapers	76.1%	23.9%	100.0%
Total		Count	71	21	92
		% within Newspapers	77.2%	22.8%	100.0%

Both Punch and Thisday newspapers had high percentage of stories on violence. Punch had 78.3% of stories about violence in contrast to Thisday newspaper which had 76.1% of stories about violence.

Table 6: Cross-tabulation of Newspapers Coverage Based on Prominence

		Story prominence				
		Front page	Back page	Inside page	Middle page	Total
Punch Newspaper	Count	8	2	32	4	46
	% within Newspapers	17.4%	4.3%	69.6%	8.7%	100.0%
Thisday Newspaper	Count	3	0	35	8	46
	% within Newspapers	6.5%	0.0%	76.1%	17.4%	100.0%
Total	Count	11	2	67	12	92
	% within Newspapers	12.0%	2.2%	72.8%	13.0%	100.0%

Prominence of the news article on conflict matters was determined based on the position of the news articles in the newspapers analysed for the study. The front page, back page, inside page and middle page, defined this. 17.4% of stories about terror and violence in Punch newspaper were placed on the front page; 4.3% of the stories were placed on the back page; 69.6% were placed in inside pages and 8.7% of them were placed in the middle spread. On the other hand, only 6.5% of stories about terror, violence and other forms of conflict were placed on the front page in Thisday newspaper; they had none on the back page; 76.1% of the stories were placed in the inside pages and 17.4% were placed in the middle spread. In terms of prominence, Punch newspaper gave more prominence to stories about conflict than Thisday newspaper.

Table 7: Cross-tabulation of Newspapers Coverage about Aggressors and Victims

			Story defines aggressor and victim		
			Yes	No	Total
Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	22	24	46
		% within Newspapers	47.8%	52.2%	100.0%
	Thisday Newspaper	Count	24	22	46
		% within Newspapers	52.2%	47.8%	100.0%
Total		Count	46	46	92
		% within Newspapers	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

One of the key differences between war journalism and peace journalism is how language is used. It was therefore important to determine if the papers painted any of the sides involved in the conflict as aggressors or victims. Table 7 shows that 47.8% of the stories in Punch newspaper defined aggressors and victims while 52.2% of the stories in Thisday newspaper defined aggressors and victims.

Table 8: A Cross –tabulation of Newspapers use of Adjectives and Portrayal of Human Side to Evoke Emotional Response

				Use of adjectives		
Human side				Yes	No	Total
Yes	Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	22	19	41
			% within Newspapers	53.7%	46.3%	100.0%
		Thisday Newspaper	Count	16	23	39
			% within Newspapers	41.0%	59.0%	100.0%
	Total		Count	38	42	80
			% within Newspapers	47.5%	52.5%	100.0%
No	Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	2	3	5
			% within Newspapers	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
		Thisday Newspaper	Count	3	4	7
			% within Newspapers	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
	Total		Count	5	7	12
			% within Newspapers	41.7%	58.3%	100.0%
Total	Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	24	22	46
			% within Newspapers	52.2%	47.8%	100.0%
		Thisday Newspaper	Count	19	27	46
			% within Newspapers	41.3%	58.7%	100.0%
	Total		Count	43	49	92
			% within Newspapers	46.7%	53.3%	100.0%

Table 8 shows a cross-tabulation of the news stories using adjectives and presenting a human side in the conflict. The purpose of this is to determine if they tried to evoke emotional response to their stories. For Punch newspaper, the 53.7% of the stories with a human side used emotional adjectives while 46.3% of the stories that depicted a human side did not use adjectives. For Thisday, only 41% of the news stories with a human side used adjectives to evoke emotions while 52.5% stories which depicted a human side did not use adjectives.

Table 9: Cross-tabulation of Newspapers Depiction of Winners and Losers

			Winners and losers		
			Yes	No	Total
Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	6	40	46
		% within Newspapers	13.0%	87.0%	100.0%
	Thisday Newspaper	Count	1	45	46
		% within Newspapers	2.2%	97.8%	100.0%
Total		Count	7	85	92
		% within Newspapers	7.6%	92.4%	100.0%

War journal thrives on reporting victories and losses. This means that winners and losers are also a part of warn journalism. As such, determining the coverage of winners and losers was important. Punch newspaper described winners and losers in 13% of their news stories while Thisday newspaper only had 2.2% of news story that described winners and losers. Majority of the news stories did not describe winners and losers.

Table 10: Cross-tabulation of Newspapers Description of Consequences on Individuals

			Consequences on individuals		
			Yes	No	Total
Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	40	6	46
		% within Newspapers	87.0%	13.0%	100.0%
	Thisday Newspaper	Count	42	4	46
		% within Newspapers	91.3%	8.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	82	10	92
		% within Newspapers	89.1%	10.9%	100.0%

87% of news stories about conflicts in Punch newspaper described the consequences of conflicts on individuals while 91.3% of stories about conflict in Thisday newspaper described consequences on individuals.

Table 11: Cross-tabulation of Newspapers Description of FinancialConsequences of Conflicts

| | | | Financial consequences | | |
			Yes	No	Total
Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	13	33	46
		% within Newspapers	28.3%	71.7%	100.0%
	Thisday	Count	6	40	46
	Newspaper	% within Newspapers	13.0%	87.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	19	73	92
		% within Newspapers	20.7%	79.3%	100.0%

Table 11 shows that 28.3% of stories in Punch newspaper described financial consequences of conflict. This was in relation to destruction of property and business and how it would stunt financial growth of society in general. In Thisday newspaper, only 13% of their stories discussed the financial consequences.

Table 12: Cross-tabulation of Newspapers Description of Cost and Expenses

| | | | Cost and expenses | | |
			Yes	No	Total
Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	11	35	46
		% within Newspapers	23.9%	76.1%	100.0%
	Thisday Newspaper	Count	6	40	46
		% within Newspapers	13.0%	87.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	17	75	92
		% within Newspapers	18.5%	81.5%	100.0%

Table 12 shows that 23.9% of conflict stories in Punch newspaper discussed the cost and expenses of conflict. This was in terms of military equipment, remuneration of security agencies and all other things needed for defence. For Thisday newspaper, only 13% of their stories discussed cost and expenses.

Table 13: Cross-tabulation of Newspapers Description of Economic Consequences

			Economic consequences		
			Yes	No	Total
Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	17	29	46
		% within Newspapers	37.0%	63.0%	100.0%
	Thisday Newspaper	Count	10	36	46
		% within Newspapers	21.7%	78.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	27	65	92
		% within Newspapers	29.3%	70.7%	100.0%

A holistic approach of conflict reporting would require coverage of economic, financial and social consequences that could happen if a particular course of action is not taken. Thus, table 13 shows that Punch newspaper had 37% of news stories thatdescribedeconomic consequences while Thisday newspaper had only 21.7% of stories that described economic consequences of conflicts in Nigeria. Economic consequences in this context refer discussions on how continuous conflicts would scare off foreign investors, how the economy suffers when there is inactivity as a result of conflict.

Table 14: Private lives of actors * Focus on politicians * Newspapers Cross-tabulatio

Private lives of actors				Focus on politicians Yes	No	Total
Yes	Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	3	2	5
			% within Newspapers	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
		Thisday Newspaper	Count	1	0	1
			% within Newspapers	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Total		Count	4	2	6
			% within Newspapers	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
No	Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	5	36	41
			% within Newspapers	12.2%	87.8%	100.0%
		Thisday Newspaper	Count	12	33	45
			% within Newspapers	26.7%	73.3%	100.0%
	Total		Count	17	69	86
			% within Newspapers	19.8%	80.2%	100.0%
Total	Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	8	38	46
			% within Newspapers	17.4%	82.6%	100.0%
		Thisday Newspaper	Count	13	33	46
			% within Newspapers	28.3%	71.7%	100.0%
	Total		Count	21	71	92
			% within Newspapers	22.8%	77.2%	100.0%

Table 14 describes if the newspapers focused on private actors during the conflict period. This was also cross-tabulated with their focus on government officials. The study specifically focused on politicians at the national scale. For example, senators, House of Representatives or ministers. This is because Nigeria is operates a federal system where security is usually a central matter. It was therefore to establish the focus in the newspapers. Both Punch and Thisday newspapers covered 6 politicians each.

Actors in this sense refer to groups within the Nigerian federal system that have vested interest in the various forms of conflict. The private actors studied in this research include Jama'atuNasril Islam (JNI), Christian Association of Nigeria, Miyetti Allah, Northern Elders Forum, Ohaneze etc. These are groups that represent various sections and interests in Nigeria. Punch newspaper only 4 new stories that went into the private lives of actors while Thisday newspaper did not have any.

60% of Punch news stories that went into the private lives of actors also focused on politicians while 100% of Thisday stories on private actors also focused on politicians at the national scale.

Table 15: Cross-tabulation of Newspaper Having a Moral Message in the News Stories

| | | | Moral message | | |
			Yes	No	Total
Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	5	41	46
		% within Newspapers	10.9%	89.1%	100.0%
	Thisday Newspaper	Count	5	41	46
		% within Newspapers	10.9%	89.1%	100.0%
Total		Count	10	82	92
		% within Newspapers	10.9%	89.1%	100.0%

Majority of the new stories studied for this research did not contain a moral message. Both newspapers only had 10.9% of new stories each that contained a moral message.

Table 16: Cross-tabulation of Religious Stories in Newspapers

			Religion		
			Yes	No	Total
Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	6	40	46
		% within Newspapers	13.0%	87.0%	100.0%
	Thisday Newspaper	Count	4	42	46
		% within Newspapers	8.7%	91.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	10	82	92
		% within Newspapers	10.9%	89.1%	100.0%

13% of news stories in Punch had a religious direction while 8.7% of stories in Thisday had a religious tone. Religion is a sensitive issue in Nigeria. As it was stated in the literature, it is one of the causes of conflict in Nigeria. It was therefore important to determine if the news stories took a religious angle. As such, table 14 shows that majority of the stories in both papers did not have a religious angle.

Table 17: Cross-tabulation of Newspaper Attempt to Offer Solution

			Assigning blame		
			Yes	No	Total
Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	25	21	46
		% within Newspapers	54.3%	45.7%	100.0%
	Thisday Newspaper	Count	6	40	46
		% within Newspapers	13.0%	87.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	31	61	92
		% within Newspapers	33.7%	66.3%	100.0%

Table 17 shows that Punch newspaper had 60.9% of stories that offered solutions to the problem while Thisday newspaper had 41.3% of stories that offered solutions.

Table 18: Cross-tabulation of Newspapers Assigning of Blame

| | | | Assigning blame | | |
			Yes	No	Total
Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	25	21	46
		% within Newspapers	54.3%	45.7%	100.0%
	Thisday	Count	6	40	46
	Newspaper	% within Newspapers	13.0%	87.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	31	61	92
		% within Newspapers	33.7%	66.3%	100.0%

Usually, conflicts in Nigeria usually have different groups assigning blame on each other. In line with war journalism, the press also takes sides. This study therefore wanted to determine if the news stories on the conflicts covered within the period of study gave any responsibility to any individual or group. For Punch newspaper, 54.3% of stories assigned blame. For Thisday newspaper, only 13% of stories that assigned some blame to individuals or groups. In this regard, Thisday practiced more restraint than Punch newspaper.

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Table 19: Cross-tabulation of News stories where Government is Blamed for the Problem and Responsibility for Ending the Problem is Given to Government

Government is blamed for problem				Government's responsibility		
				Yes	No	Total
Yes	Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	7	1	8
			% within Newspapers	87.5%	12.5%	100.0%
		Thisday Newspaper	Count	7	2	9
			% within Newspapers	77.8%	22.2%	100.0%
	Total		Count	14	3	17
			% within Newspapers	82.4%	17.6%	100.0%
No	Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	25	13	38
			% within Newspapers	65.8%	34.2%	100.0%
		Thisday Newspaper	Count	33	4	37
			% within Newspapers	89.2%	10.8%	100.0%
	Total		Count	58	17	75
			% within Newspapers	77.3%	22.7%	100.0%
Total	Newspapers	Punch Newspaper	Count	32	14	46
			% within Newspapers	69.6%	30.4%	100.0%
		Thisday Newspaper	Count	40	6	46
			% within Newspapers	87.0%	13.0%	100.0%
	Total		Count	72	20	92
			% within Newspapers	78.3%	21.7%	100.0%

In line with table 18, table 19 sought to establish if the newspapers assigned any blame to the government and if responsibility was given to the government. For Punch, 87.5% of news stories that blamed government for conflicts expected government to take responsibility for ending the conflict while 77.8% of news stories in Thisday that blamed for the government for the conflicts expected government to end the conflict.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

This study was guided by 4 themes; human interest, economic consequence, morality, responsibility and nationalisation. These themes were adapted from Godefroidt, Berbers, &d'Haenens (2016) who compared news reporting from the United States, France, Russian and United Kingdom of the Syrian war before and after a chemical attack in 2013. The research established relevant patterns of conflict reporting.

Jameson &Entman's (2006) assertion that the media clarifies stakes during conflict in order to prevent further de-escalation is established in this study. This is why it was necessary to establish if the newspapers analysed for this study gave a fair coverage of events. Fairness in this regard refers to neutrality in tone by withdrawing the context of winners and losers or victories and losses. Neutral communication is necessary because it helps to create an environment that is suitable enough for conflict resolution. This further enhances Krauss &Morsella's assertion that communication is the most preferred remedy for conflict prevention.

Certain facts were considered during this study. These are;

1. In order to establish relevance to issues, one newspaper was not enough. As such, 2 newspapers were chosen for this study.

2. The period of coverage was also important. 2019 was specifically chosen because it was a period of electioneering in Nigeria. Generally, elections come with their own violence in Nigeria as various groups stake claim to power.

3. The front page was regarded as the most important page in a newspaper. This is because it is the first thing readers' come across when they pick up a paer. Zubiaga (2013) supports this by arguing that passers-by have access to front page of newspapers without reading it. This may influence whether or not some of them will buy the paper. This fact influenced the decision to ascribe prominence to position of the story within the paper's pages.

Thus, the results of this study will be discussed through the lens of the themes adapted in this study.

4.2.1 Themes Highlighted in the Study

This study was guided by 5 themes; human interest, economic consequence, morality, responsibility and nationalisation. These themes were adapted from Godefroidt, Berbers, &d'Haenens (2016) who compared news reporting from the United States, France, Russian and United Kingdom of the Syrian war before and after a chemical attack in 2013. The research established relevant patterns of conflict reporting.

4.2.1.1 Human Interest

To determine if the newspapers covered conflicts with human interest, the use of emotional adjectives was noted in the research along with focus on people. In this regard, only 23% of the stories carried a human interest angle with Punch newspaper having 16% in contrast to Thisday newspaper who only had only 7 stories with human interest angle. An example of a human interest story that focuses on people is copied from Punch Newspaper and presented below:

Figure 7: A headline of Punch Newspaper Showing a Human-interest Story

From the percentage of stories devoted to human interest, it can be concluded that Punch and Thisday newspapers did not give much attention to human-interest stories.

This contradicts one of the tenets of peace journalism, which promotes a holistic approach of covering conflicts (Galtung, 2013). Taking a holistic approach to conflict is necessary for creating lasting paths for peace. Thus, paying little attention to the people affected by conflicts, particularly women and children will take away the severity of the conflict. This will in turn limit the need for urgency in finding permanent solution to conflict.

4.2.1.2 Reporting on consequences

From the findings, 28% of the conflict stories in Punch newspaper reporting on the consequences of the Nigeria's continuing conflicts. Thisday had a higher percentage than Punch at 32%. However, both newspapers seemed to have a unified stance against Nigeria's disintegration. This was mostly what they focused on in their analysis of the consequences of Nigeria's conflicts.

4.2.1.3 Morality

In this study, it was gathered that moral values were not the ultimate concern of the newspapers chosen for this study. Only 3 news articles were devoted to moral values in each of the newspapers. From the peace journalism perspective, the results show that the stories about conflict, which were published in these newspapers, did not promote the idea of opposing all forms of violence. According to Lukacovic (2016), as a normative theory, peace journalism facilitates democracy. The little commitment to the pursuit of moral issues in both Punch and Thisday newspapers show that if peace journalism is being practiced in Nigeria, it is still in its early stages of implementation.

4.2.1.4 Responsibility

In trying to assign blame, 12% of Punch newspapers described aggressors and victims while 17% of Thisday articles on conflicts identified aggressors and victims. From the proposed model of peace journalism stated in chappter 2 of this research, it can be seen

that this approach is war journalism. Also, both newspapers in this research did not assign much responsibility to the government in the period of the study. While Punch only had 3 stories, which assigned some responsibility of ending the conflict to the government, Thisday had 2.

4.3 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter was able to present the findings of the study. From the findings, it can be concluded that the two newspapers chosen for this study took more of the journalism approach than peace journalism. However, it cannot be claimed that the Nigerian press escalates conflict through their reporting. Restraint was observed in their reporting. For example, religion was not a major factor in their reports even though religion has been known to cause incessant conflicts in Nigeria. This chapter concludes by noting that it may not be difficult for peace journalism to be fully practiced in Nigeria because of the restraint observed in the two newspapers chosen for this study.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will summarise the main arguments of this study and make recommendations where necessary.

5.1 Summary of the Study

In trying to assess media coverage of conflicts in Northern Nigeria, this study gave an insight into conflict in the region. In chapter One, the researcher gave a background to the study and giving reasons why this study is relevant today. Nigeria, particularly Northern Nigeria has suffered many conflicts that have divided the country along religious, ethnic and political lines. This has resulted in a high level of distrust among Nigerians.

In Chapter Two, a general overview of conflicts in Northern Nigeria is given by discussing different factors that may cause conflict in Nigeria. Some of the factors discussed in the chapter are; environmental, religious, political, economic and socio-cultural drivers of conflict in Nigeria. Some of the factors discussed in the chapter are; environmental, religious, political, economic and socio-cultural drivers of conflict in Nigeria. The newspapers chosen for this study were discusse3d and justification for their selection was given. Agenda setting theory and peace journalism model of communication were extensively discussed as the framework of the study. Studies that

have been done in relation to both theories in conflict matters were also reviewed and discussed.

Chapter Three discussed the research method as well as the population of the study, period covered, the data instrument and justifications for the methods used while Chapter Four launched into the findings of the study which were presented in simple and statistical tables.The study found that while Punch and Thisday newspapers covered conflict matters between the periods of January 2019 to December 2019,both newspapers were observed to practice restraint in their reporting. For example, there were limited number of stories that defined aggressors and victims or stories that discussed winners and losers. However, the findings of the study also showed that both newspapers did not fully practice peace journalism.

5.2 Conclusions Drawn from the Study

This study was conducted to answer questions with regards to how the media cover conflict matters in Nigeria. The questions answered in this study were;

1. What are the dominant themes in the coverage of conflict in Punch and Thisday newspapers between January and December 2019?

2. Did the Nigerian press aggravate conflict by reporting winners and losers in a conflict in their reports between January and December 2019?

3. Did the Nigerian press assign blames in their reports of conflict between January and December 2019?

By asking the dominant themes in the coverage of conflict in the newspapers studied in this research, the findings of this study was able to determine whether or not the news media in Nigeria promoted peace or conflict in their conflict reporting.

For Galtung (POIESIS, 1997), it was important for the media to cover suffering on all sides particularly on women and children as this evoke emotional reaction from the public. In doing this, the mass media would be giving a voice to the people who ordinarily would not have a voice. To determine if the newspapers covered conflicts with human interest, the use of emotional adjectives was noted in the research along with focus on people. The fact that only 23% and 16% of human interest stories were found in Punch and Thisday newspapers is in itself significant. This contradicts one of the tenets of peace journalism, which promotes a holistic approach of covering conflicts (Galtung, 2013). Taking a holistic approach to conflict is necessary for creating lasting paths for peace. Thus, paying little attention to the people affected by conflicts, particularly women and children will take away the severity of the conflict. This will in turn limit the need for urgency in finding permanent solution to conflict.

5.2.1 Reporting on Consequences

Every conflict has consequences. It can affect the physical and psychological health of children across generations (Devakumar, Birch, Osrin, Sondorp, & Wells, 2014), it can increase human rights abuses, destroy democratic potential of society and render the society fragile (Gates, Hegre, Nygard, & Strand, 2010). The world is witnessing the impact of the Syrian and Yemen wars on the people. Also, millions of people have been displayed due to wars and mass migration is on the rise (Guéhenno, 2016). Only 28% and 32% of reports in Punch and Thisday newspapers touched on the consequences of the incessant Nigerian conflicts. This is important because the repeated conflicts in Nigeria signal a deep fracture in the Nigerian polity. There have been expectations of disintegration but going by Nigeria's history where the first attempt to disintegrate led to a bloody civil war for nearly 3 years, it becomes an utmost responsibility of the Nigerian press to caution the Nigerian public. This would form

part of the early warning systems suggested by Martinluther (2017). The benefits to be gained from this strategy are endless because the press has information at their disposal and have the means to trace the patterns of conflicts in Nigeria's history. Doing this would ensure that Nigeria's cycle of repeated conflicts would be brought to the barest minimum.

One important factor to consider in Nigeria's endless conflicts is the issue of development. Considering the issue of development in the discourse of Nigeria's endless conflicts is backed by the fact that every conflict has its own peculiarities and Nigeria's development problem creates a convenient environment for conflict. To summarise all the factors, development or the lack of it is the reason for Nigeria's repetitive conflicts. Gates, Hegre, Nygard, & Strand (2015) argue that is essentially a product of development issues. Seeing as conflicts contradict millennium development goals which seek to end hunger and poverty, stop infant and maternal mortality, ending diseases like HIV/AIDS, providing easy access to universal education, improving gender parity and achieving environmental sustainability, they suggest that war is development in reverse because it leads to an increase in all of these issues. Drawing attention to this in reference to finding peaceful solution to Nigeria's conflict is important. This is where agenda setting and peace journalism form a partnership. The power of the media to determine what the public thinks should be regarded as an important catalyst for peace journalism. As stated in the literature, there are various factors that lead to conflict in Nigeria.

In reporting conflicts, it is important for the news media to direct people's attention to these vital aspects of war. However, war journalism does not concern its practice with

this kind of reporting. It is left to peace journalists and peace activists to report on the consequences.

From observation noted in this study, it was noted that while Punch and Thisday newspapers did reported on consequences of conflicts in Nigeria, they did not direct their readers' attention to the long-term consequences of conflicts for Nigeria's welfare.

5.2.2 Morality

One of the important highlights of peace journalism is that it complements the moral values of democracy. (Lukacovic, 2016).Democrative values promote peace because the essence is to see people in democratic societies thrive (Lind, 2006). In this study, it was gathered that moral values were not the ultimate concern of the newspapers chosen for this study. As stated earlier, only 3 news articles were devoted to moral values in each of the newspapers. From the peace journalism perspective, the results show that the stories about conflict, which were published in these newspapers, did not promote the idea of opposing all forms of violence. According to Lukacovic (2016), as a normative theory, peace journalism facilitates democracy. The little commitment to the pursuit of moral issues in both Punch and Thisday newspapers show that if peace journalism is being practiced in Nigeria, it is still in its early stages of implementation.

5.2.3 Responsibility

To determine if the newspapers assigned responsibility in any of the conflicts they reported, the study also attempted to establish the placement of blames because assigning blames and responsibility go hand in hand. However, peace journalism tries to avoid blaming parties in a conflict because this could escalate the conflicts. The findings in the previous chapter of this study show that 12% of Punch reports identified

aggressors and victims in their reports while 17% of Thisday news reports did the same. From the proposed model of peace journalism stated in chapter 2 of this research, it can be seen that this approach is war and not peace journalism. Also, both newspapers in this research did not assign much responsibility to the government in the period of the study. While Punch only had 3 stories, which assigned some responsibility of ending the conflict to the government, Thisday had 2.

5.3 Conclusion

Although press freedom ensures that the press is free to communicate their ideas and opinions to society because the media is seen to plan an important function in society, there are still some challenges the press in discharging their duties. For example, legal pressure, secrecy, direct threats and censorship are among some issues that challenge the successful performance of the press in Nigeria (Apuke, 2016). Since the colonial era, the Nigerian press has faced challenges starting with the repressive media decrees which were enacted in 1903 by the then colonial masters. The newspaper ordinance law, the sedition ordinance of 1909 and the press gag act of 1917 were all designed to scare off the press from challenging the Colonial government (Nwanne, 2014). In spite of the oppression, the Nigerian press were instrumental in the fight for independence. However, shortly after independence, the Nigerian press soon encountered challenges with the military dictatorships that overthrew democracy in the country. There were such decrees like Newspaper Prohibition from Circulation Act of 1967, Public Officers Protection against False Publication Decree number 11 of 1976, Public Officers Protection against False Publication Decree number 4 of 1984 (Suntai, Agbu, & Targema, 2018).

The return to democracy however ushered in the hope that press freedom would be guaranteed. This was furthered strengthened when the freedom of information bill was signed into law in 2011. This freedom has not come without its own challenges. For example, the coverage of an issue can put journalists in danger. Thus, while the freedom of the press is guaranteed in Nigeria, the lives of journalists can still be in danger. For example, in 2002, a write up by a Thisday newspaper reporter about the Miss World contest that was expected to hold in Nigeria was considered blasphemous by Muslims and this led to outrage in the city of Kaduna and some parts of Nigeria. This led to the burning down of Thisday newspaper house in Kaduna and the cancellation of the Miss World event from holding in Nigeria (Issa, 2016).

As hate speech rises, there are claims in some quarters that the mass media abuse the power they have in society. Soola (2007, p. 27) accuses the mass media of using crime and violence to their own advantage. He puts it this way, "media operators, and by extension the media especially television...generate revenue from coverage of savour and feed on crime and violence". He cites Dorfman&Thornson (1998) who observe that reporting on crime and violence have been a constant ingredient in newspaper diet since before the penny press and also goes further to add that violence help the media to sell their stories. Despite these accusations, the mass media plays a vital role in society. Literature used in previous chapters makes it safe to confer the most-powerful-tool-in-society status to the mass media. The right of the people to know can never be under estimated. It is against this backdrop that Article 19 came forth as well as the clamour for the Freedom of Information bill back here in Nigeria. Sorenson et al (1998) makes a case for the mass media as they strongly argue that, 'an informed public is key to the prevention of violence and to other policy arenas in which substantial public cooperation is required to achieve optimal results. For the public to

be well informed, the main channels of information need to provide adequate and accurate information. The news media are a critical source of the public's information about crime and violence'.

The agenda setting function of the media asserts its ability to direct people's attention to vital issues in society. This suggests that if the media decides to practice responsible journalism through peace journalism during conflict, the public can be persuaded to embrace peace. This argument reiterates the position of the mass media as society's saviour. This role is generally defined along the title, 'watchdog of society'.

Literature used in previous chapters reveals that Nigeria has suffered conflicts for decades since the civil war. Facts point that conflicts have religious, economic, ethnic or political causes and sometimes a blend of two or all of the factors. Exploring some of these facts were done in other to provide deep background to conflicts in Nigeria particularly in the Northern region for it is believed that understanding an issue goes a long way in tackling it. Sometimes the answers lie in the problem but people are too busy with the problem to look inwards. This has been recurrent trend in the Nigerian polity.

However, findings from this study reveal that some problems in how the Nigerian press report conflicts in Nigeria. From the study, the following were observed;

a).Both Punch and Thisday newspapers covered conflict matters on each of the days of study. This confirms the claims that conflicts help the media sell their content.

b). There were elements of humaninterest stories that may have been sensationalised.

c).Both Punch and Thisday newspapers did not take moral standpoints in their reports on conflict.

d).While both newspapers studied in this research reported on the consequences of Nigeria's repetitive conflicts, it was noted that these stories did not report on how these conflicts affected the affected people. Rather, consequences were measured on how the conflicts directly affected Nigeria.

Nigeria and indeed, some parts of sub-saharan Africa who are plagued by unending conflicts need peace journalist. Except for the middle East, there is more potential for peace journalism in Africa than there is in other parts of the world. However, this practice seems to be an alien concept to the profession in Nigeria. Perhaps, like Ersoy (2017) suggested, non-governmental organisations or civil society organisations can mitigate this problem by carrying out nationwide orientation for journalists in Nigeria. This orientation should be done in line with the principles of the agenda setting function of the media which ascribes some influence to the media over society. In recognising the potential of these two principles when used together, peace journalism may be the solution to Nigeria's endless conflicts.

5.4 Limitations & Recommendations

The website for Nigerian Press Council lists the following newspapers as national dailies in Nigeria; Abuja Inquirer, Blueprint, BusinessDay, Champion, Compass, Complete Sports, Daily Independent, Daily Times, Daily Trust, Desert Herald, Fresh Angle, FreshFacts, Guardian, KickOff-Soccer, Leadership, National Daily, National Mirron, National Observer, New Nigerian, Newsday, Niger-Delta Standard, Peoples Daily, PM News, Punch, The Nation, The Sun, Thisday, Tribune and Vanguard. Due to time constraint, it became necessary to select two newspapers from this list. A justifiable criterion was therefore important to select the newspapers that would be used for this study. Thus, longevity and circulation were decided as the selection

criteria. This therefore limited the newspapers to Guardian, Vanguard, Punch, Thisday, Nation, The Sunand the Nation newspapers. Thisday and Punch newspapers were randomly selected out of the final six newspapers.

The original idea for this research was to establish the framing of religion with particular emphasis on Islam in Nigeria. This idea was conceived for two reasons; first, although Nigeria is constitutionally a secular state, it is also a deeply religious country with decades of confrontations between Islam and Christianity in the country. Secondly, with the global rise in Islamophobia, it was important to conduct a study to determine if this was reflected in press framing of Islam in Nigeria. However, this original plan changed because initial coding of news articles showed that religion was hardly problematized in the newspapers. This therefore led to a shift in focus. As such, the research changed focus to conflict in general with more emphasis on Northern Nigeria.

The year 2019 was purposely chosen for this research because this was an election year for Nigeria and the general sentiment in the country was that of expectation of violence. There had been widespread kidnappings, attacks and confrontations among different groups in society. With elections usually marred by conflicts in Nigeria, it was important to investigate how the media reported the Nigerian situation. Because of the constant occurrences of electoral violence, Martinluther (2017) suggested that early warning systems be put in place to detect signs of electoral conflicts in order to curb it. With peace journalism approaching conflict with the intention to prevent and curb it, it therefore became important to investigate if the press in Nigeria attempted to promote peace during the election year and to what extent.

To conduct the research, certain objectives and research questions were set. The research questions are;

1. What are the dominant themes in the coverage of conflict in Punch and Thisday newspapers between January and December 2019?

2. Did the Nigerian press aggravate conflict by reporting winners and losers in a conflict in their reports between January and December 2019?

3. Did the Nigerian press assign blames in their reports of conflict between January and December 2019?

Through these questions, it was determined that the media fairly practice peace journalism in their reporting. It may be important to conduct a cross sectional study on journalists in Nigeria to determine if they have sufficient information on the practice of peace journalism. This study views the agenda setting theory as an important drive for peace journalism. This is because; the media's ability to sway people's thoughts can be instrumental in peace building.

Being the only tool that can bridge the gap in society, it is important to the media should take this into consideration;

1. Carrying out media campaigns against conflicts ought to be a major focus of the media.First of all, the newspapers need their audience alive to buy their papers. Thus, dedicating space in form of advertorials to call on stakeholders (youths, clerics, politicians) to shun conflict of whatever form would not be amiss. This is because advertorials are catch and easily draw attention to their messages. It is true that space is everything in a newspaper but it also true that a newspaper exists as a public service. This public service is largely explained

within the confines of the social responsibility theory which in essence means it involves putting society first at all times.

2. The study recommends that the news media should make peace related messages a priority. Peace campaigns were not observed in this study but restrained was observed. This is commendable. However, peace cannot be achieved easily but it has a chance if the mass media make it a duty to promote it. To achieve this, all the representative groups in society should be involved, dialogue should be promoted, tolerance for religious differences should be preached not used to fan the embers of war, and interviews should be with peace oriented members of society not instigators of conflicts.

3. It was noted that the newspapers could have sensationalized human interest stories in order to further exploit conflict and drive sales. The study therefore recommends that patterns of sensational reporting should be investigated in a further study. This will help in determining how peace journalism can be taught to news reporters in Nigeria.

4. Nigerian press operates on a Lagos-Abuja axis with both Northern and Southern ideologies reflected in the messages. This study did not consider this factor in the selection of newspaper. A future research could compare how Lagos newspapers, which represent the Southern axis, differ from the Northern newspapers in their reports on conflicts.

5. This study was not conducted to establish if peace journalism was practiced in Nigeria. Rather, its aim was to compare how two newspapers in Nigeria reported conflict matters in Nigeria with the goal of measuring if the newspapers promoted peace in their reporting. As such, the study recommends a comprehensive study on peace journalism practice in Nigeria using either

selected national newspapers or the staff of national newspapers in the country to measure their understanding of peace journalism as an alternative approach.

6. It was observed that both newspapers refrained from giving the responsibility of ending conflicts to the government. A research could be conducted to provide understanding into this phenomenon.

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