

**Assessment of African Conflict Resolution Strategies in Newspapers Framing
of Farmer-Herder Conflict in Nigeria**

by

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Abstract

The alleged sensational and bias coverage of news and views on conflict-related issues, especially farmer-herder conflict among the Nigerian newspapers has undermined the constructive contributions of newspapers' role in conflict. This has prompted scholars to advocate the adoption of African conflict sensitive instrument in reportage of conflict that affects socio-economic issues. Literature has examined farmer-herder conflict and mass media. There is a dearth of study on African conflict sensitive instrument and conflict reportage. In an attempt to fill the gap, this study assesses the adoption of African Conflict Resolution Strategies in framing Farmer-Herder conflict in *The Punch*, *The Guardian* and *Daily Trust* newspapers published between January 1, and December 31, 2018. The study was underpinned by Structural-functional theory. Quantitative content analysis served as the research method while coding sheet was used to gather data from 468 editions systematically selected from the newspapers. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that the newspapers' reportage tilted towards violence as more of assertiveness/ violence-induced strategy of Thomas Kilmann African Conflict sensitive instrument was predominantly used to frame the conflict. The study therefore, recommended that the Nigerian mass media organisations especially, the newspapers should strive to adopt peace-induced/cooperativeness strategy as against the prevailing violent-induced/assertiveness strategy in reportage of conflict that involves various tribes and religions. This can go a long way in de-escalating the resultant conflict situations and accompanying violence; thereby, promoting the achievement of peace and unity in the nation.

**Key Words: African Conflict Resolution Strategies, Newspapers Framing
Farmer-Herder Conflict, Peace, Violence**

Introduction

The African society recognizes conflict as part of human existence (Lawal et al., 2020). This is because factors that precipitated conflicts in any conceivable manifestation are inherent in man. This is manifested in the series of conflict that are confronting Nigeria as a country. Some of these conflicts include kidnapping, communal clashes, political crises, farmer-herder

conflict. Farmer-herder conflict has been in existence since colonial administration in Nigeria (Babale & Nasidi, 2019; Omotosho, 2019). However, the conflict is transnational as it extends beyond the shore of Nigeria. For instance, Ghana, Mali and South Sudan have recorded series of attacks which claimed thousands of lives and displaced ten thousand more (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2020). The menace caused by the farmer-herder crisis in Nigeria has significantly affected many lives and properties (Nasidi, 2019; Tersooubwa, 2018). For instance, in January 2018, 168 people died as a result of herders-farmers clashes in Benue State, Nigeria (Amnesty International, 2018). Also, Global Terrorism Index (2020) revealed that herdsman-farmers crisis was responsible for 26 percent of 1, 245 death recorded in Nigeria in 2019. Similarly, the International Crisis Group Reports added that the farmer-herder conflict had become Nigeria's gravest security challenge as it has killed six times more people than the *Boko Haram* insurgency by the first half of 2018 (International Crisis Group, 2018). Hence, the crisis is a threat to harmonious relationship and peaceful co-existence among various ethnic and religious bodies in a society (Idowu, 2016).

The government, community, faith-based organisations, as well as mass media organisations have made several peace initiatives towards addressing and resolving farmer-herder conflict. For instance, the Nigerian Government implemented the land use Act which gives States or Federal Government the right to assign, lease land and also give indigenes the right to apply and be given a Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) to claim ownership of their ancestral lands (Adeoye, 2017; Kingson & Gogo, 2016). Also, in September 2009 and April, 2017, the Federal Government carried out the demarcation of grazing routes running through the Central States of Nasarawa, Benue, and Plateau to South Western states. Other grazing routes also marked out and demarcated were in Katsina and Bauchi States and spanning across Abuja. Others were from Sokoto to Oyo State. Also marked was the 2000 km grazing route from Adamawa State in the North East to Calabar in the South-South region (*Premium Times*, April, 2017). In January, 2019, National Economic Council (NEC) launched a ten-year National Livestock Transformation plan to curtail the movement of cattle and boost livestock production in order to quell the herders-farmers conflict (International Crisis Group, 2021).

More so, the Nation Newspaper and Television Continental (TVC) news organised a two-day National Summit on farmer-herder crisis at the Air Force Conference Centre, Abuja, between 8th and 9th October, 2018. At the conference, it was resolved that the Federal Government should set-up a Federal Peace and Conflict Resolution Commission to address the prevalent

farmer-herder crisis (*Vanguard* E-news, October 10, 2018). All these were done to strengthen the positive relationship between farmers and herders.

Despite all these efforts, Nigeria still records cases of violent attacks as a result of farmers-herders conflict. For instance, on January 10, 2022, suspected herdsmen killed three and set community ablaze at Molege Community in Ose Local Government area of Ondo State (*Saharareporters*, January 10, 2022). In addition, John (2022) submitted that six killed in herder's attack on Benue community in Benue State on 3rd September, 2022. The *Vanguard* newspaper of October 20, 2022 added that armed herdsmen killed police officer and 22 others on 20th October, 2022 in Benue State (Duru, 2022). *Thisday* (January 8, 2023) added that suspected herdsmen attacked train station: Kidnapped passengers in Edo. In addition, *Daily Post* (February 6, 2023) reported that suspected herdsmen attacked Benue community, killed three and ambushed military. In addition, on January 25, 2024, Al-Jazeera reported that 30 people lost their lives in latest herder violence in Nigeria' Plateau State, etc. Meanwhile, the manner of the mass media reportage of the conflict may undermine the contributory role of the mass media in promoting peaceful co-existence as the media presented the herders as the principal perpetrators which contradicted the submission of Isaac (2022) who opined that the farmers and herders were perpetrators of the conflict in Nigeria. However, some media scholars such as Usigbe and Ilo (2019) hold that, media have thrived well in managing farmers-herders conflict. Others reported that media engage in sensational and bias coverage and presentation of news and views on conflict-related issues, thus, undermining constructive contributions of the mass media role in conflict (Usigbe&Ilo, 2019; Ronald, 2017).

In proffering solution to the lingering conflicts in Nigeria especially the farmer-herder conflict through the lens of the mass media, some scholars such as Lawal et al. (2020) recommended the adaptation of African conflict resolution techniques. Also, Sandro (2019) suggested that African conflict sensitive instrument should be used by the mass media to frame conflict that affect socio-economic issues in Africa. However, scholars such as Daramola (2012) opined that one of the cardinal roles of mass media is transmission of cultural heritage. Since African conflict resolution strategies are parts of African heritage, the Nigerian mass media especially the newspaper is expected to foster peace through adaptation of the strategies in conflict reportage. Hence, the study examines the role of newspapers in resolving conflict through adaptation of African conflict resolution strategies of Thomas Kilmann model of conflict management in newspapers framing of farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria. Thus, the study

establishes the African conflict resolution strategy that newspapers adopted in framing farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria and determine the implications of African conflict resolution strategy on newspapers' role in farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria between January 1, and December 31, 2018.

Empirical Review and Hypothesis Development

Herdsmen and farmers crisis

Kennedy (2018), in his study, *Political economy of herdsmen-farmers conflict in Benue State*, affirmed that the conflict is symmetric with cultural and structural presence in the State. Ogu (2018) examined Killer-herders and the nightmare in Northern Nigeria and averred that politics and ethnicity are sentiments that influence the conflicts. Furthermore, Beetseh et al. (2018)' studied *Herdsmen-farmers' crisis: A threat to democratic governance in Nigeria* and found out that conflict between farmers and herders has impacted negatively on economy, social and political stability in Nigeria. Similarly, Ngbea and Ngbea (2019) examined *Religious implications of Farmers-Herdsmen crisis in Nigeria*. Their findings showed that the ascription of religious identity and political affiliation to the crisis has made the crisis degenerate into an ethno-religious crisis. They discovered that the crisis has aggravated the inter-ethnic and inter-group conflicts that had been in existence for a very long time.

It can, therefore, be deduced from the above reviews that ethno-religious profiling has a relationship with farmers-herders conflict escalation. Hence, the researcher hypothesises that: **H₁**: There is no significant relationship between newspapers and African Conflict framing strategy for framing farmers-herders conflict reportage.

Newspapers and Conflict Framing

Weje and Alikor (2010) did an *evaluation of the role of mass media in conflict management: The Niger Delta experience*. They affirmed that media instigate ex-militants in the region against the Federal Government of Nigeria. Similarly, Asemah and Edegoh (2012) averred that the mass media contributed to the escalation of the Jos Crisis through their subjective reportage, in their study titled *Mass media and conflict resolution in Jos*. Also, Akpan (2013) studied the media and conflicts in Nigeria and observed that the Nigerian mass media are culpable in stoking conflict and making reconciliation difficult for the contending parties. More so, Kajuru (2015) studied audience perceptions of media coverage and management of the 2011 post-election violence. He discovered that the mass media played a significant role

in the escalation of the conflict through their sensational reports. Moreover, Ahmad (2015), in his study, *communication and conflict in Nigeria: What role for the media*, found out that sensational and bias coverage and presentation of news and views on conflict-related issues are among the factors that undermine the constructive contributions of the mass media in a conflict resolution.

Similarly, Chebbi (2014) averred that media negatively influenced the electoral conflict in Kenya. Ronald et al.(2017) investigated the role of the mass media in conflict resolution in Tuabodomand established that most conflicts in some parts of Ghana were caused by the media. In addition, Sandro (2019) examined *conflict management through media: Contributory and partisan frames in socio-environmental* conflict management, and discovered that partisan frame is predominant in the coverage of socio-environmental conflict. Conversely, Guven (2018) found that the media have the power to tame and escalate conflict through images and words in his study mass media' role in conflicts. Iroka (2016) in his study *the social media and conflict resolution* submitted that social media are pivotal to conflict resolution. More so, Riaz (2017) averred that the mass media are very significant in establishing peace and harmony in the modern societies by balancing their reportage on conflict-related issues.

Based on the above review, media have the potential to escalate and mitigate conflict in the society. Therefore, the following hypothesis is arrived at:

H^o2: There is no significant relationship between newspapers story types on farmers-herders conflict and peace-induced strategy of African conflict sensitive instrument.

Conceptual Review

African Conflict Sensitive Instrument, Farmers-herders Conflict and Newspapers

Many models of conflict management can be adopted to frame farmer-herder conflicts by the newspapers. Notable among them are the mutual gains model, concession-convergence model, Thomas-Kilman conflict mode of conflict management (Graystone, 2019). However, the most commonly used among them is Thomas-Kilman conflict mode instrument (TKI) and Johan Galtung model of peace and war journalism. This is based on the similarities among the dimensions that the two models used to present peace and violence/war. TKI was developed in the 1970s by Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann to handle conflict behaviour (Graystone, 2019).. Thomas-Kilmann mode identifies two dimensions in conflict management. These

dimensions are assertiveness and cooperativeness (Nischel, 2014). Assertiveness focuses on individual satisfaction while cooperativeness entails the interests of everybody that has one or two things to do with a particular conflict. These two dimensions have five styles of conflict management (Nischel, 2014; Graystone, 2019). The five styles are avoidance, accommodative, competitive, compromise and collaborative. The graphical representation of the conflict management mode is presented below:

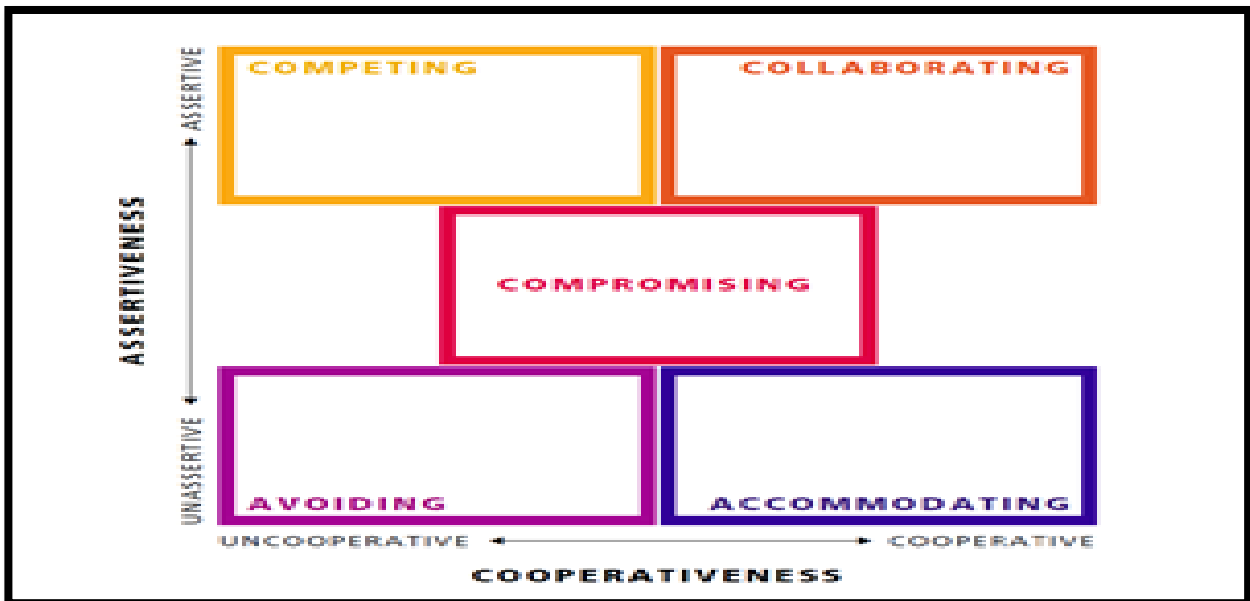


Figure. 1: Thomas Kilmann mode of conflict management (Aorough and Martin, 2012, p. 4; Nischel, 2014, p. 6)

Avoidance: Avoidance according to Nischel (2014); and Graystone (2019) is assertive. This implies that it focuses on the personal interest of the contending parties. Avoidance can be appropriate to manage interpersonal conflict and other conflicts at the latent phase. However, it may not be applicable to manage conflict at other phases such as the emergency phase, escalation phase, etc.

Competition: This mode focuses on a win-win resolution in conflict management (Graystone, 2019). This is related to one of the indicators of war journalism as stated in Galtung’s peace generic model in Lee and Maslog (2005).

Accommodation: It is a conflict management style that can be adopted by conflict mediators to encourage members of contending parties to meet the needs of others at the expense of

theirs (Nischel, 2014; Graystone, 2019). This style is assertive and cooperative in nature but its cooperative dimension supersedes the assertive nature.

Compromise: This kind of style focuses on a solution that will partially satisfy all members of the contending parties (Nischel, 2014). They will eventually cooperate to make the sacrifice although members of the contending parties may initially be assertive in nature. Hence, compromise entails assertiveness and cooperation, but the cooperative dimension is more pronounced (Nischel, 2014).

Collaboration: It incorporates the collaborative efforts of mediators and contending parties in order to meet the needs of all the contending parties as well as the needs of a society (Nischel, 2014 & Graystone, 2019). Members of the contending parties may be highly assertive, but this style has the tendency to make the contending parties cooperate effectively and acknowledge that everyone is important (Nischel, 2014).

Among all these five styles of conflict management styles as propounded by Thomas-Kilmann in 1970s, accommodation, compromise and collaboration seem to be the preferred instruments that can be adopted by the newspapers as strategies to frame farmer-herder conflict in order to enhance positive perception of the conflict among stakeholders. This is because the three styles are applicable at all phases of conflict and also related to the indicators of peace journalism in Johan Galtung generic model of peace such as peace, people, solution, among others. Therefore, the three modes or styles can resolve a problem; respect people's legitimate interests, and mend damaged relationships among all the contending parties in a conflict situation, thus, building peace in a society. Hence, in conflict framing, the newspapers can adopt accommodation, compromise and collaboration styles as strategies to frame conflict if peaceful co-existence forms the intellectual lens that the Nigerian journalists put on while reporting conflict-related issue, especially, conflicts that defy religious and ethnicity.

Theoretical Framework: Structural-Functional Theory

The theory that lends its credence to this study is Structural-Functional theory. Structural-Functional theory emerged in 1800s out of the work of French and British sociological philosophers: Herbert Spencer, Robert Merton and Emile Durkheim (Gomez-Diago, 2019). The theory sees a society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability (Best & Obateru, 2011; Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020).

The theory, therefore, looks at both social structure and social functions. Social structures, according to Kalu (2011), are the more static elements of a system such as government agencies, non-governmental organisation, media organisations, religious bodies, family, the community, traditional rulers, etc. Each social structure has a social function for the operation of a society as a whole (Fisher, 2018). Alfred Radcliff- Brown defined the functioning of any recurrent activity as part it played in social life as a whole (Kalu, 2011). Therefore, the contribution a particular social structure makes to social stability and orderliness in society refers to as function.

The mass media are part of the social institutions (Okunna& Popoola, 2017; Oso, 2017) in Nigeria and have their responsibilities to the society enshrined in the Chapter 2, Section 22 of the 1999 constitution, as amended: “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.” The import of this is that the mass media especially the newspapers can discharge their constitutional responsibilities in the country through coverage, volume of coverage, framing and non-coverage of events and this enables the media public to be aware and think of such events and also set agenda on them. Therefore, the newspapers, as a social structure (structural), while discharging their responsibilities (Functional), should uphold the tenet of the profession by being socially responsible to the society so as to achieve peace, orderliness and stability in a society as this can be achieved through the adoption of cooperativeness strategy of Thomas Kilmann mode of conflict management in framing conflict.

Relating the theory to this study, all the media channels especially the newspapers, are grouped as structural institutions and they are expected to discharge their functions in the society by upholding the virtues of objectivity, truthfulness, accuracy, completeness, balance and fairness (media framing). This should reflect a society’s diversity in culture, ethnicity, gender and religion. This can, therefore, bring about the conditions necessary for members of a society to perceive the coverage as messages that can enhance peaceful co-existence among various members in the society. This can consequently enhance stability and national development.

Methodology

The study employs quantitative content analysis to examine the edition of *ThePunch*, *DailyTrust* and *The Guardian* newspapers published between January 1, and December, 31, 2018 excluding weekend edition. This is because there was a renewed public attention on the farmers-herders' issues in the media during this period as a result of the emergence of other insecurity related issues such as banditry, kidnapping, etc. which have basis in farmers-herders conflict reportage of 2018. Hence, the population of the study is 780. The choice of the three newspapers was premised on their availability in the market nation-wide and availability to the researchers. A descriptive analysis of the extent of the newspapers coverage and framing of farmers-herders conflict is obtained for the period.

Systematic sampling technique was used to select sample size. Hence, the sampling process involved the selection of days within a week from the chosen period. The researcher systematically selected three days per week which were Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays' editions. Hence, 468 editions of the selected dailies were content analysed for this study. In carrying out content analytical research, self-constructed coding sheet was used as the instrument for the collection of data for the study. The researcher accessed all the selected editions of the newspapers from the newspapers morgues and coded them.

The unit of analysis was the content of the newspapers in forms of editorial, news, feature, column and cartoon that captured farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria. The content categories were the strategies; assertiveness, cooperativeness. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to present the findings. Hence, the study adopted Thomas Kilmann conflict sensitive instrument to analyse the data.

Results

RQ1. What is the African conflict resolution strategy that newspapers adopted in framing farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria between January 1, and December 31, 2018?

African conflict resolution strategies in Farmers-herders Conflict Reportage in the Selected Nigerian Newspapers

Newspapers	African conflict strategies		Total and (%)
	Cooperativeness	Assertiveness	
	Neutral		

<i>The Punch</i>	35 (6%)	45 (7.7%)	123 (20.9%)	203 (34.5%)
<i>Daily Trust</i>	110 (18.7%)	17 (2.9%)	94 (16%)	221(37.6%)
<i>The Guardian</i>	44 (7.5%)	37 (6.3%)	83 (14%).	164(27.9%)
Total	189 (32.1%)	99 (16.8%)	300 (51%)	588 (100%)

Source: Researcher (2024)

The African conflict resolution strategy that *The Punch*, *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* used to frame the conflict was measured by cooperativeness, assertiveness and neutral. Hence, table 1 displayed the findings there from. According to the findings, 189 (32.1%) items were dedicated to cooperativeness while 99(16.8%) items were based on neutrality and 300(51%) items focused on assertiveness. Out of the three newspapers, *Daily Trust* had the highest number of items on cooperativeness; 110(18.7%) followed by *The Guardian* with 44 (7.5%) while *The Punch* had the least with 35(6%) items on cooperativeness. Conversely, for the reports that were neutral, *The Punch* had the highest number with 45 (7.7%) items followed by *The Guardian* with 37(6.3%) and *Daily Trust* recorded the least with 17(2.9%). Meanwhile, for assertiveness, *The Punch* newspaper had the highest number with 123(20.9%) followed by *Daily Trust* with 94 (16%) while *The Guardian* had the least with 83(14%).

It can therefore, be deduced from the findings in table 1 that the bulk of the story tilted towards assertiveness/violence while *The Punch* dedicated most of its reports on Farmer-herder conflict to assertiveness. Hence, the reports were violence-induced in nature as they tilted towards assertiveness.

Furthermore, another construct that was used to measure strategies that the selected newspapers used to frame farmer-herder conflict is indicators of framing which comprises peace people, solution for peace-induced or cooperativeness and violence, elite and victory for violence-induced or assertiveness strategy. Table 2 presents the details of the findings.

Table 2: Indicators for Conflict Sensitive Strategies in Farmers-herders Conflict Reportage in the Selected Nigerian Newspapers

Newspapers	Cooperativeness/Peace Assertiveness/Violence					Total and (%)
	Peace people	solution	violence	elite	victory	

<i>The Punch</i>	39(6.6%)	3(0.5)	38(6.5%)	123(20.9%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	203(34.5%)
<i>Daily Trust</i>	122(20.7%)	0(0%)	5(0.9%)	94 (15.99)	0(0%)	0 (0%)	221(37.6%)
<i>The Guardian</i>	75(12.8%)	1(0.2)	5(0.9%)	83(14.1)	0(0%)	0 (0%)	164(27.9%)
Total	236 (40.1%)	4(0.7%)	48(8.2%)	300 (51%)	0(0%)	0 (0%)	588 (100)

Source: Researcher (2024)

Table 2: presented story indicators for framing farmer-herder conflict reportage in *The Punch*, *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* Newspapers published between January 1, and December 31, 2018. According to the findings, peace had 236 representing 40.1% items, people had 4 corresponded to 0.7%, solution had 48(8.2%), and violence obtained 300 (51%), while victory and elite recorded 0 (0%) item each. Specifically, *The Punch* newspaper had 39(6.6%) items on peace; *Daily Trust* had 122 (20.7%) while *The Guardian* had 75(12.8%) items. Moreover, for people, *The Punch* had 3(0.5%), *Daily Trust* had nil (0%) while *The Guardian* recorded 1(0.2%) item. In addition, for solution, *The Punch* had 38(6.5%) items; *Daily Trust* obtained 5(0.9%) items while *The Guardian* also recorded 5(0.9%) items. Furthermore, for violence, *The Punch* had 123(20.9%), *Daily Trust* had 94(16%) while *The Guardian* recorded 83(14%).

From the analysis in the table 2, it can be deduced that the bulk of the reports on the farmer-herder conflict in *The Punch*, *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* newspapers focused on violence which is an indicator of assertiveness while *The Punch* newspaper had the highest number on reports on violence. Thus, the selected newspapers adopted violence-indicator as another framing strategy to frame farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria. Thus, the reports were violence-based induced or assertive in nature.

RQ 2: What is the implications of African conflict resolution strategy on newspapers’ role in farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria

To determine the implications of African conflict resolution strategy on newspapers’ role in farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria between January 1, and December 31, 2018. story types- news, editorial feature, cartoon and column were used. Hence, story type that imply cooperativeness/peace and assertiveness/violence-induced framing strategy is used to

measure the strategies employed by the selected newspapers to frame the conflict. Table 3 presents the findings.

Table 3: Story Types that imply Cooperativeness and Assertiveness Strategies in Framing of Farmers-Herders Conflict in the Selected Nigerian Newspapers

Story Type	Cooperativeness			Assertiveness			Total and (%)
	<i>The Punch</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	<i>The Punch</i>	<i>Daily Trust</i>	<i>The Guardian</i>	
News	76(12.9%)	124(21.1%)	73(12.4%)	106 (18%)	90(15.3 %)	76(12.9%)	545(92.7%)
Editorial	2 (0.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6(1%)	1(0.2%)	2(0.3%)	11 (1.9%)
Cartoon	0 (0%)	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)	4(0.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (1%)
Feature	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)	7 (1.2%)	6(1%)	2(0.3%)	5(0.9%)	22 (3.7%)
Column	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)	0 (0%)	1(0.2%)	1(0.2%)	0 (0%)	4(0.7%)
Total	80 (13.6%)	127(21.6%)	81(13.8%)	123 (20.9%)	94 (16%)	83(14.1%)	588(100)

Source: Researcher (2024)

Table 3 presented the story types- news, editorial, cartoon, feature and column that focused on peace-induced (cooperativeness) and violence-induced (assertiveness) framing strategies. The table reveals that news story was predominantly adopted for both the peace-induced and violence-induced framing as news stories on peace-induced framing amounted to 273 representing 46.4% of the whole items while the news story on violence-induced framing was 272 (46.3%). Editorial had 2 representing 0.3% on peace while 5 (0.9%) were dedicated to violence. To cartoon, 2(0.3%) focused on peace while 7(1.2%) were directed towards violence. Feature had 9(1.5%) on peace and 15 (2.6%) on violence. Finally, column had 2 (0.3%) dedicated to peace while 1(0.2%) was directed towards violence.

Specifically, *The Punch* had 76(12.9%) news items on peace and 112(19%) on violence. *Daily Trust* recorded 24(21.1%) news items on peace and 93(15.8%) on violence. *The Guardian* presented 73(12.4%) news items on peace and 67(11.4%) on violence. Moreover, for Editorial, *The Punch* had 2(0.3%) each on peace and violence. *Daily Trust* obtained 0(0%) each on both the peace and violence respectively and *The Guardian* had nil on peace and

3(0.5%) on violence. For Cartoon, *The Punch* also recorded 0(0%) item on peace and 7(1.2%) on violence while *Daily Trust* presented 1(0.2%) item on peace and nil on violence and *The Guardian* had 1(0.2%) on peace and nil on violence. Similarly, *The Punch* had 1(0.2%) feature item on peace and 2 (0.3%) items on violence. To *Daily Trust* on Feature, 1(0.2%) item on peace and nil on violence were recorded. *The Guardian* presented 7(1.2%) feature items on peace and 13(2.2%) on violence. To Column, *The Punch* recorded 1(0.2%) on peace and nil on violence, *Daily Trust* also had 1(0.2%) each on peace and violence respectively while *The Guardian* had nil on peace and violence respectively.

Thus, it can be deduced from table 3 that *Daily Trust* had highest number of story types that focused on peace-induced (cooperativeness) framing followed by *The Guardian* while *The Punch* had the least. Conversely, *The Punch* newspaper had more stories on violence-induced (assertiveness) framing strategy in which most of its reports on farmers-herders conflict emanated from the news followed by *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* respectively. This therefore, implies that the conflict is significant and is capable of generating negative discourse as news story was predominantly used to report the conflict, thereby, contributing to the escalation of the conflict based on the story types and framing strategy that the selected newspapers adopted in the reportage..

Statistical Test of Hypotheses and Chi-square Analyses

The study advanced two hypotheses to establish the relationship between: newspapers and the strategies for framing farmers-herders conflict, newspapers stories types and peace-induced journalism, placement of story types on farmers-herders conflict and peace-induced framing; and newspapers framing of farmers-herders conflict and newspapers. Hence, for the inferential statistics, a Chi-square analysis was conducted to establish the relationship and significance among the variables. The decision rule of hypotheses adopted in this study was 0.05. Hence, the study rejects the null hypothesis if the P-value is greater than .05; $P > .05$. Thus, if the P-value is less than or equal to .05; $P \leq .05$, the study accepts the null hypothesis (Andrade, 2019).

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between newspapers and African conflict instrument strategy for framing farmers-herders conflict.

Table 4: Relationship between Newspapers and the African conflict instrument Strategy for Framing Farmers-herders Conflict in the Selected Nigerian Newspapers

Newspapers	Peace and Violence-induced framing		Total and (%)	x ²	df	P
	Peace-induced	Violence-induced				
<i>The Punch</i>	80 (13.6%)	123 (20.9%)	203 (34.5%)	6.000 ^a	4	.199
<i>Daily Trust</i>	127 (21.6%)	94 (16%)	221 (37.6%)			
<i>The Guardian</i>	81 (13.8%)	83 (14.1%)	164 (27.9%)			
Total	288 (49%)	300 (51%)	588 (100%)			

*Significant at p0.05

The data in the table 4 showed the Chi-square test statistics and its significance. The rule guiding the interpretation of Chi-Square test opines that if the p-value (Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) for Pearson Chi-square statistic is higher than .05 (p>.05), the study fails to reject the null hypothesis. However, if the p-value (Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)) for Pearson Chi-square statistic is lesser than .05 (p<.05), the study rejects the null hypothesis (Andrade, 2019).

Since the results showed that p-value (.199) is > 0.5; thus, rejecting the alternative. Hence, newspapers do not associate positively with the strategy for framing farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria.

H₀2: There is no significant relationship between newspapers story types on farmers-herders conflict and peace-induced journalism

The data in the table 5 presented the Chi-square test statistics and its significance.

Newspapers	Peace Story Type					x ² df	P
	News	Editorial	Cartoon	Feature	Column		
<i>The Punch</i>	76(12.9%)	2 (0.3%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)	108.000 ^a	6.095
<i>Daily Trust</i>	124(21.1%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)		
<i>The Guardian</i>	73(12.4%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.2%)	7 (1.2%)	0 (0%)		

Table 5: Relationship between Newspapers Story Types on Farmers-herders Conflict and Peace-induced/Cooperativeness strategy in the Selected Nigerian Newspapers

*Significant at p0.05

The rule guiding the interpretation of Chi-Square test opines that if the p-value (Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)) for Pearson Chi-square statistic is higher than .05 ($p > .05$), the study fails to reject the null hypothesis. But if the p-value (Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)) for Pearson Chi-square statistic is higher than .05 ($p < .05$), the study rejects the null hypothesis. Since the results showed that p-value (.095) is > 0.5 ; thus, rejecting the alternative. Hence, newspapers stories do not associate positively with the peace-induced/cooperativeness and violence-induced/assertiveness framing strategy.

Discussion of the Findings

The study assessed the adoption of African Conflict Resolution Strategies in Newspapers Framing of Farmer-Herder Conflict in Nigeria with specific attention to Thomas Kilmann Mode of conflict management. The findings revealed that the three Nigerian newspapers; *The Punch*, *The Guardian* and *Daily Trust* adopted more of violence-induced strategies which tilted towards assertiveness than cooperativeness/ peace-induced strategies to frame the conflict. This finding was supported by Adisa (2015) that discovered that newspaper framing is powerful as it has the tendency to direct the public to conflicts. In addition, the finding was in tandem with the views of Abdulbaqi and Ariemu (2017) that posited that newspapers used more of war-oriented journalism than peace-oriented journalism in farmers-herders conflict

reportage. Furthermore, the finding corroborated the submissions of Usigbe and Ilo (2019) that opined that media bias was premised on pre-conceived notions among the media audiences. Thus, the kind of frame that predominantly featured in the newspapers reportage of farmer-herder conflict is predicated upon the submission of some people that the Nigerian mass media especially, the Nigerian newspapers framing of farmer-herder conflict partly contributed to the state of insecurity in Nigeria based on he on the framing strategies for the reportage.

However, the findings also revealed that newspapers did not totally disregard peace stories as efforts were made to promote peace by adopting peace/cooperativeness strategy to frame the reportage. This finding is in congruence with the submission of Yahaya (2019) that established that the mass media have the potential to prevent and resolve conflict in Nigeria; hence, newspapers mode of reportage of farmers-herders conflict.

The implications of violence-induced/ assertiveness strategy on newspapers' role in farmer-herder conflict indicates that the conflict is significant and is capable of generating discourse as news story is predominantly used with violence-induced strategy, thereby, contributing to the escalation of the conflict. This finding is in tandem with the submission of Anyanwu et al. (2022) that posited that information dissemination is a cardinal obligation of the mass media. This is based on the views of Chuks et al.(2020) that news focuses on salient issues in a society. This perhaps, is responsible for the public discourse that has been trailing farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria most especially since 2018.

Conclusion

The study has demonstrated that while the Nigerian newspapers discharged their responsibility of keeping people informed about farmer-herder conflict, they do not consider the core objective of the nation which focuses on promotion of peace and unity as they do adopt more of violence-induced/assertiveness strategy to frame conflict especially conflict that cuts across ethno-religious bodies such as farmer-herder conflict. The development from this study contributes to knowledge about the need for the Nigerian mass media especially, the newspapers to facilitate the achievement of the core objective of the nation especially, while reporting contending issues that cut across ethnicity, religion and gender. Consequently, as a way forward, the Nigerian mass media organisations especially, the newspapers should strive

to adopt peace-induced/cooperativeness strategy as against the prevailing violent-induced/assertiveness strategy in reportage of conflict that involves ethnicities and religions. This can go a long way in de-escalating the resultant conflict situations and accompanying violence. Moreover, the Nigerian newspapers must embark on sensitisation of people to national harmony, peace and unity. This can be done by using framing strategy that constantly focus on the need for peaceful co-existence in the country irrespective of its residents' differences.

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