

Newspaper Framing of Ethnic Issues and Conflict Behaviour in Nigeria

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Abstract

News framing impact on public opinion and behaviour formation have been severally established. However, its influence on conflict behaviour has remained elusive or has not been adequately examined and positioned. This study explored framing of ethnic issues and conflict behaviour in Nigeria through a mixed methods design of qualitative and quantitative. Findings revealed that conflict behavior impulses and structural factors such as poverty, domination, and inequality are helixes but occasional realistic trigger for the eventual action was traced to newspaper framing and ethnic group leaders' rheostat. The study concludes that the existence of ethnic groups in Nigeria is not a sufficient reason for hostility and ethnic conflict but for certain roles played by media and manipulation of some ethnic group leaders that cached in on government failure. This paper recommends further examination of social media influence on conflict behaviour and possibility of ethnic conflict triggering due to its wider reach and timeliness than conventional media.

Key Words: News Framing, Conflict Behaviours, Newspaper Frames, Ethnic Group Leaders, Multiethnic Society

Introduction

Nigeria development problems are partly linked to ethnic issues and conflict (Irobi, 2005), therefore the prevalent ethnic conflicts in some regions of the country has given rise to strong concern and at the same time stimulated new interest in ethnic conflicts research (Onwuzuruigbo, 2010). In view of this, the paper explored newspaper framing of conflicts and ethnic group leaders' conflict behaviours. This was important in order to establish the involvement of newspapers and the ethnic group leaders in the conflict that has set ethnic groups against each other and threatening the existence of Nigeria.

Though, in the past, the subject of political and religious conflict has received the attention of several Nigeria scholars (Adisa & Abdulraheem, 2012; Bagaji, 2010; Ebegbulem, 2011; Musa & Ferguson, 2013; Olubomehin, 2012; Onwuzuruigbo, 2010) but hardly do we have attention focused on the media involvement alongside ethnic group leaders' conflict behaviours. Therefore, one of the critical gaps, which this study has responded to, is what Hutchison (2013) describes as inadequate research attention that is devoted to ascertaining factors responsible for changes in individual attitudes and behavior that eventually lead to conflict.

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Media frames and audience frames

The concept of framing or frames has been one of the most abundant areas in recent research in communication, politics and sociology because framing can clarify and interpret the extent the media affect publics' understanding of politics (Lecheler & De Vreese, 2012). Previous studies of framing have concentrated much on political framing of candidates mostly in the western world during elections however, this research shifts attention to both newspaper framing of conflicts and ethnic group leaders' conflict frames in Nigeria. Kostadinova and Dimitrova (2012) submit that frames are significant because they sway people's understanding, sentiments and outlooks toward issues and events in societies. Also attesting to this, de Vreese, Boomgaarden, and Semetko (2011) disclose that news framings have the capacity to put forth a strong influence on public attitude. To Karnes (2008) framing is the practice by which a person decides what portions of information to present when conveying a story to the public. Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss, and Ghanem (1991) describe framing as shaping of idea for news content which creates a perspective and stimulates the issue through the use of selection, stress, exclusion, and amplification. In line with this submissions McQuail (2005) notes that news framing is set in agreement with some hidden structure of meaning through which the audience is prompted to seeing the world in a similar manner as the journalists do. Speaking in a similar tone, the social constructivists claim that the media make available frames of reference for the audience that directly or indirectly suggest certain meaning of events or even infer certain connections between issues (Kostadinova & Dimitrova, 2012).

Frames according to Lecheler and de Vreese (2013) are defined as forms of explanation that are used to categorize information and process it professionally to the audience. By so doing therefore frames emphasis certain features of reality and relegate others into the background. Also, Karnes (2008) describes framing as a vital and necessary part of human communication, which is done subconsciously most of the time. However, when used purposefully, framing can shape a message to the advantage of the communicator. In that light, Tankard (2001) defines a frame as a crucial organizing idea for news content that presents a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, exclusion, emphasis, and elaboration. This buttresses and is consistent with the ways in which scholars (De Vreese, 2012; Entman, 2010; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Schultz, Kleinnijenhuis, Oegema, Utz, & van Atteveldt, 2012) have defined and described frames. That what we know about and our understanding of the social world rests upon how we frame and interpret the prompts we receive about that world.

Ethnic groups and conflicts in Nigeria

Many factors often play a role in defining and shaping conflict however, ethnic groups constitute a substantial part to the emergence and escalation of ethnic conflict, if not the majority of all conflicts and wars since the late 1950s (Vorrath, & Krebs, 2009; Wimmer & Brian, 2006). Nevertheless, the role that ethnicity plays in stirring and influencing conflicts and civil wars remains an unsettled question, mainly due to the imaginary nature of ethnic groups and their

endogenous development during conflict (Vorrath, & Krebs, 2009). The reliability and response to this claim was however formed part of the discovery of this study's findings. Firstly, in Nigeria the activities of ethnic groups were not imaginary but physical and deep-rooted as confirmed by Osaghae and Suberu (2005). Secondly, ethnic groups emerged and operated peacefully in Nigeria to contest supposed ethnic rights, to correct perceived marginalization, political domination and restricted access to economic resources as well as social services (Guichaoua, 2007).

At various times in Nigeria ethnic groups activities which are detrimental to peace of the nation has been observed as a time bomb which if not addressed and checked will not only be a threat to Nigeria budding democracy but may be a serious threat even to the country (Akinyele, 2001). The ethnic group leaders most time believes in violence as means to settle scores with other groups or even citizens and also to fostering their parochial interests (Shittu, 2013). Therefore, the incessant impunity of these ethnic groups necessitated a number of questions from the citizens, politicians and scholars. For instance, the enormous illegal arms in the hands of most of the ethnic groups are part of the leverage of their impunity.

The most disturbing aspect of it is that these arms are not just in the hands of ethnic group leaders, but also with the violent prone youth's members, who constitute the majority membership. Corroborating this, Florquin and Berman (2005) revealed that the Niger Delta ethnic groups in Rivers state alone (before the amnesty programme) were in possession of arms arsenal that consist of assault rifles (Czech SA Vz. 58, AK-47, G3, FN FAL and FN FNC), as well as light machine guns, pump-action shotguns, in addition to home-made guns. In Jos Plateau State, another part of Nigeria already ravaged by prevalent ethnic conflict for decades, Florquin and Berman (2005) stressed that a field research carried out identified the following arms arsenal as the main weapon varieties used by the ethnic and religious groups in the protracted conflict: sub- machine guns, AK-47, double barrel shotguns, G3 assault rifles, pistols, revolvers, light machine guns, craft single- and locally made bombs.

Research design

Mixed method approach: This study sets out to explore the catalysts for ethnic group leaders' conflict behaviours and the extent that newspaper framing have played a part. In deciding on research design, this study follows researchers (Callanan, Benzing, & Perri, 2006) that indicated that studying conflict may necessitate the use of mixed methods. In view of this, the study combined both qualitative and quantitative methods. Mixed methods research approach is the type in which a researcher or group of researchers combines components of qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The perceptions of ethnic group leaders were explored through in-depth interviews while the examination of newspapers contents was carried out through content analysis to determine and predict the effects of content on ethnic group leaders. Mixed-method has demonstrated its efficiency in social sciences research (Creswell, 2012). Similarly, Morgan (2007) posits that combining qualitative and quantitative methods often enrich their strengths together in the same research study. For

these reasons, this study applied the approach because information derived from the in-depth interview especially on the indictment of newspapers framing role in conflict behaviour required confirmation through the content analysis of newspapers framing on ethnic issues.

Positioning the study within the right philosophical foundation, the study is placed on the constructivist-interpretive paradigm. Supporting this, De Lisle (2011), Mertens (2003), Wikiversity (2015) established that a viable single approach to conducting mixed methods research is constructivist-interpretive paradigm, claiming that the ultimate goal is to advance deeper levels of explanation and meaning. To achieve this, the following objectives were set as targets for this study:

1. To identify the indicators of conflict and peace framing that is the most salient on the ethnic issues framing by Nigeria newspapers.
2. To determine whether there is a significant differences between the Punch, the Sun and the Trust newspapers level of conflict and peace framing.
3. To discover the factors responsible for ethnic group leaders' conflict behaviours.
4. To know if and how the pattern of framing of ethnic issues by newspapers prompt ethnic group leaders' conflict behaviours.

Method of Study

This study's method was guided by the two concepts of framing- the media frames and the audience frames. According to Scheufele (1999), Colistra (2012) all patterns of frames need to be considered for both how media present news (news framing) as well as how the audience comprehend and apply news (audience frames or conflict behaviours). Therefore, it becomes imperative for researchers to distinguish, apply and investigate them (Colistra, 2012) especially in a study requiring to know the peoples' behaviour.

Sampling: For the qualitative interview, the sampling design was based on snowballing technique due to the difficulty of locating the participants (Creswell, 2012; Keyton, 2015). At the initial stage of the sampling, the two each of Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo community leaders and one Fulani that have been identified provided the links to locate the subsequent 19 ethnic group/community leaders interviewed. The sampling comprises of five Hausa, six Yoruba, six Ibo, four Niger Delta and five Fulani ethnic group/community leaders respectively. Therefore, all together, 26 ethnic group/community leaders were interviewed by the time saturation was reached. According to Keyton (2015), Yin (2011), snowball sampling techniques is appropriate when participants need to help researchers obtain samples by identifying other similar participants. Subsequently, the data were analyzed thematically using NVIVO 10 software.

As for the content analysis, three newspapers namely; the Punch, Sun and the Daily Trust were selected purposively to meet the following objectives which are germane to the study: circulation strength, and their wide range of coverage of political, ethnic, religious and national issues. Similarly, the three newspapers were chosen because of their different ideological posture. The initial general search across the three newspapers online achieves, with no specific dates, turned

out 1,020 articles. Following this was the stratification of articles into the study periods. This process necessitated the exclusion of 551 articles that were not published within the study stratified periods of December 2013 to May 2014 and December 2014 to May 2015. Further, from the remaining 469 articles, 24 articles published within the dates but with no close relevancy to ethnic issues were also excluded. Therefore, after all sorting, 445 articles published within the dates and contained issues relating to ethnic issues and conflicts were selected.

Unit of Analysis: The unit of analysis for the interview was every informant while the content analysis was individual article that contained either ethnic issues, conflict issues or socio-political issues within news stories, feature articles, news analysis, interpretative and investigative stories and editorial articles, while paragraph was treated as the measurement unit in locating both conflict and peace framing.

Coding Categories: The six coding classifications for both conflict and peace framing for this study were adapted from Lee and Maslog (2005) coding categories which was initially adapted from Galtung's conflict and peace indicators.

Coding Techniques: Based on the coding book and sheet designed, the coders classified the story as conflict framing or peace framing where the presence of a particular conflict framing indicator was marked yes and the absence marked as no in the conflict framing section of the coding sheet. Similar scoring was used on peace framing section in the coding sheet. This procedure was in line with Ibrahim, Kee, and Chwee (2012) coding sheet design and Kee, Ibrahim, Ahmad and Khiang (2012) answer selection scale where every category was scored YES or NO. Thereafter, for easy statistical analysis of the findings, the YES and NO coding were converted to numerical values. Similarly, in this study, every YES was converted and recorded as numerical (1) while every NO was converted and recorded as numerical (0) after which the total score was run on SPSS 20 for the frequencies, percentages and paired-samples test results. This is similar to the scoring pattern used by Lee and Maslog (2005) as well as Lacasse and Forster (2012) for peace journalism frames and war/conflict journalism frames.

Initially, as part of the coding procedure, all sampled articles were coded for their newspaper identity and date of publishing. Also, before scoring the categories, coders read the articles paragraph by paragraph. Similarly, the coding sheet design underwent several revisions to make it more suitable to this study and to attain an acceptable level of reliability. Most importantly, the coding book, adapted from Lee and Malsog (2005) containing instructions, technical and conceptual clarification was prepared in detailed and made available to the coders before commencement of the coding.

Findings

Perceptions on Newspaper Framing Role in Conflict Behaviour

Although, according to Kalyango and Vultee (2012) previous studies have improved understanding of how people use media in conflicts and how newspaper performance affects democratization, security, and other essential factors, however, much ground remains to be investigated and understood,

especially how citizens evaluate their media in times of conflicts/post-conflicts. This argument is equally amplified by Puddephatt (2006) that in spite of the increasing number of violent conflict in the world there is still little understanding of how modern internal conflicts are triggered. Therefore, from this study's findings emerged two main sub-themes: stimulation of ethnic differences and conflict interest establishing the media role in conflict behaviour as discussed below.

Stimulation of ethnic differences: Aggregation of the perceptions of ethnic group leaders from the findings showed that newspapers stimulate ethnic differences which buildup conflict behaviour in ethnic groups. Specifically, the stimulation creep in through the insensitive, bias and negative portrayal in manner of framing ethnic issues and conflicts. In a multiethnic country like Nigeria, the media can promote unity as well as create division among groups. Nigeria newspapers were found wanting in this regard based on what the Informants referred to as insensitivity in the framing. In this respect, the newspapers were accused of inflating and provocative framing that are detrimental to some other ethnic groups.

For instance, Informant IB5 claimed that newspapers, "exaggerate events and create tense environment". Similarly, Informant IJ25 stressed that "most of what lead to conflict in Nigeria are those that newspapers were not sensitive to instead the media will exaggerate them, and given them prominence unnecessarily".

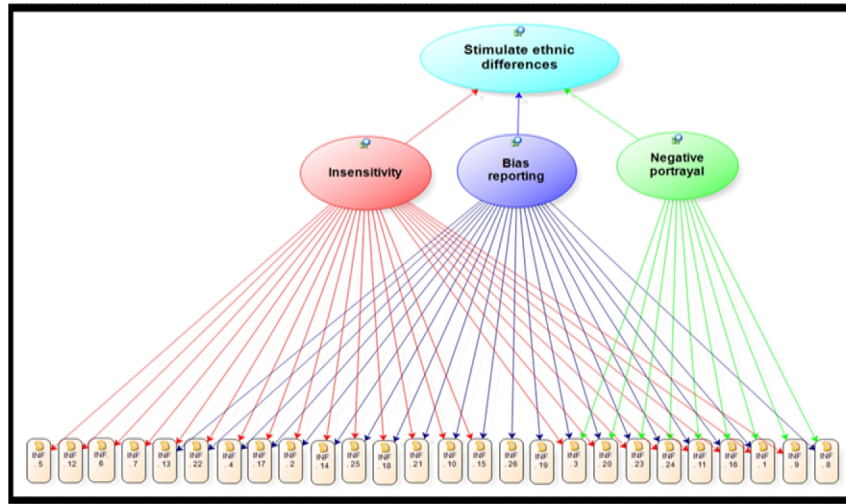


Fig. 1: Newspaper framing that stimulate ethnic differences

Also, in the course of playing the role of providing information on ethnic issues, the newspapers were viewed as biased by the Informants. Specifically, F26 disclosed that, "the practice of giving different treatment in the news to some ethnic groups at the expense of other negatively is infuriating". This accusation showed the enormous power of the newspapers which the Informants attested to as shaping their views about others negatively and rarely positively.

Conflict of interests

Emerging from this study's findings was the fact that newspapers are shrouded in multiple interests that are allegedly affecting their framing of ethnic issues. Though, what supposed to be the primary interest of Nigeria newspapers are fairness to all, objectivity and balanced framing however, the Informants alleged that secondary interests such as political, ownership, economic and ethnic interest sometimes influence the framing. The Informants specifically identified ownership, ethnic, economic and political interests as the situations through which newspapers get involved in ethnic controversies. Informants Y13 for example noted that, "what newspapers frames about ethnic issues always reflect the control of someone somewhere who could be the owners". Likewise, Informant IB7 observed that, "the structure of ownership of newspapers in Nigeria is also a problem. Most of these newspapers work for the interest of their owners and by extension work for a particular ethnic interest".

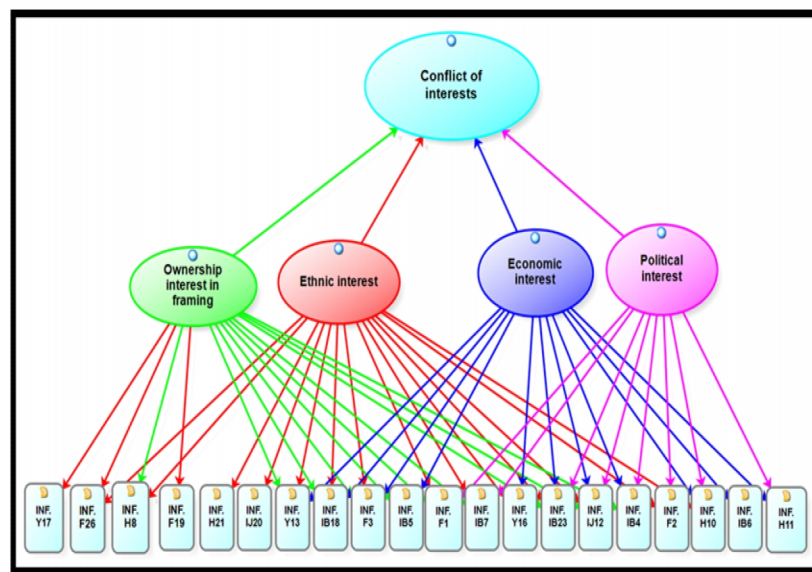


Fig. 2: Conflict of interest associated to newspapers framing of ethnic issues

It was alleged by the ethnic group leaders that most of the Nigerian politicians set up newspapers mainly for the purpose of protecting their personal interest at the expense of the communal interest.

Government failure as a factor for conflict behaviour of ethnic groups

Another factor that contributed to the ethnic groups' conflict behaviour, in response to this study's objective four, according to the Informants was the inability of the government to meet the needs of the populace. The study unveiled the depth of grievances of the ethnic groups against, and the intensity of their frustration with the government due to failure in several ways which consequently aggravated their reactions. Specifically, the study revealed the importance the ethnic groups attached to the Niger Delta issue, educational and

security problem in the North and perceived marginalization of the South West. Unanimously, the Informants blamed the government for the pervasive corruption, poverty, deficient amenities and insecurity which prompted their reliance on ethnic circle for salvation. This findings as shown in figure 3 below was supported by the structural conflict theory as noted by Ademola (2011) that when people are neglected, there is high probability for them to fight for their survival.

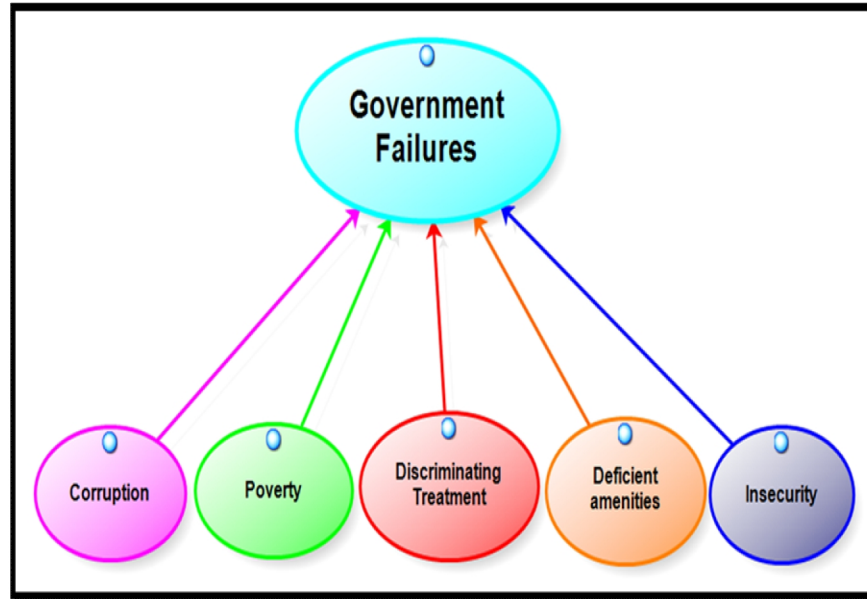


Fig. 3: Indices of government failure that impact conflict behaviour

The prevalent corruption among the elite has made it impossible to provide amenities therefore made the ethnic groups to be enraged and lose trust in government. The same corruption according to the Informants made impossible for sustenance of security and by implication regular conflict among groups. Essentially, this study discovered that effect of corruption brought about constant political hostility which metamorphosed into social and ethnic conflicts. Similarly, though among scholars (Draman, 2003; Justino, 2009) there are divergent opinion about whether conflict causes poverty or poverty causes conflict, however, the Informants stated expressly that poverty is a result of government failure and indirectly a reason for conflict. Some of the Informants linked poverty to frustration, desperation and consequently anger among ethnic groups in cause of survival. For instance, Informant H21 claimed that the "...political leaders are so corrupt and insensitive to peoples' needs", and as a result of that, another ethnic leader, Informant F17 concluded that, "...the fact that government too abandoned some ethnic groups also create problem of peace". This findings tally with the Frustration-aggression theory as well as Relative deprivation theory (Draman, 2003) which postulate that people can become aggressive when there is obstacle to their survival. Therefore, as the data

revealed, problem of poverty lead to frustration and eventually prompted conflict among groups.

Another stimulant of ethnic conflict discovered was the entrenched perceptions about discriminating treatment of groups. Many of the Informants cited this to be a reason for negative opinion about other groups. This was clearly expressed by some of the ethnic group leaders who claimed that some particular ethnic groups are being given preferential treatment at the expense of others. Informant, Y13 reveals that, “behavior of conflict emanates from unfair treatment being meted out to the minority ethnic groups. It is expected that someone who is unfairly treated will react irrationally” This incident was confirmed by Halirru (2012) that the observable high level of intolerance behaviours among ethnic groups were due to inequality of treatment that dominate the activities of government across level. The perceptions of the Informants were also proven by Agbakwuru and Opara (2013) that the ethnic prejudice and discrimination is one of the major obstacles to peaceful coexistence among ethnic groups. The Informants therefore overlaid their perceptions with a conclusion that hostility and conflict are inevitable among ethnic groups as long as some groups perceived themselves to be deprived of common resources, lack basic amenities and feel insecure relative to other groups. All these perceptions and scholars’ confirmations justify the categorization of government failure as a key factor, with many offshoots that were discussed, that prompt conflict behaviour. These findings are steps to understanding the right ways to tame the incessant ethnic conflict which has become a clog in the wheel of the country progress. Nigeria is expected to be a land where all groups irrespective of ethnic affiliate are equal and have access to the same opportunities without any form of discrimination however, these avoidable conflict stimulators have encouraged deep-rooted hatred and conflict behaviour among the ethnic groups.

Complementing findings from Qualitative Approach

Salient Indicators of Conflict and Peace Framing in Nigeria Newspapers

Framing involves salience (Bantimaroudis & Ban, 2008) however the frequency with which a frame or an issue is mentioned in news story is perhaps the most powerful framing device and determinant of saliency. Therefore, a careful examination of indicators of conflict and peace framing used in news articles will reveal which frames are most salient and consequently show how public perception are guided (Bantimaroudis & Ban, 2008). In order to determine the indicators of conflict and peace framing that are most salient in the coverage of ethnic issues in Nigerian newspapers (research objective one), this study aggregated 1135 measurement units from the three newspapers and across all the 12 indicators. The overall contrast showed that conflict indicators with 55% are most salient compared with peace indicators that showed 45% as displayed in table 1 below. Meanwhile, on average, each conflict indicator appears in 103 percent, whereas each peace indicator is present in only 86 percent.

Table 1: Indicators most salient across three newspapers

See landscape table

Differences in newspapers framing of ethnic issues

In answering the research objective two, the study employed paired-samples t-test to determine whether there is a significant differences between the Punch, the Sun and the Trust newspapers level of conflict as well as peace framing of ethnic issues.

Conflict Framing Comparison

Comparison one: The Punch and Sun newspapers conflict framing: Firstly, a paired-samples test was conducted to compare conflict framing in the Punch and Sun newspapers. The results as presented in Table 1 showed that there was a difference in the scores for the Punch conflict framing ($M=1.8$, $SD = .96$) and the Sun conflict framing ($M=2.7$, $SD= 1.20$), however, the significant difference between the two newspapers were revealed in Table 2 ($t(100) = -7.15$, $p = 0.000$).

These results suggest that there was significant difference between the Sun and the Punch newspapers in term of conflict framing. Specifically, the results suggest that the Sun newspaper frames more ethnic issues as conflict oriented which indirectly stimulates audience conflict frames.

Comparison two: The Punch and Trust newspapers conflict framing: The second paired-samples test conducted to compare the conflict framing in the Punch and Trust newspapers showed that there was no significant different in the scores for Punch conflict framing ($M= 1.8$, $SD = .96$) and Trust conflict framing ($M= 1.6$, $SD = 1.08$); $t(100) = .94$, $p=0.350$. (See Tables 1 and 2). Though, there are variations in the frequencies of frames count, however, these results showed that ethnic issues in both newspapers received same level of proportion.

Comparison three: The Sun and Trust newspapers conflict framing: The paired-samples test conducted to compare conflict framing in the Sun and Trust newspapers showed, as presented in Table 1, that there was a difference in the scores for Sun ($M= 2.7$, $SD = 1.20$) and Trust ($M = 1.6$, $SD = 1.08$) conflict framing, however, the significant difference between the two newspapers were identified in Table 2 ($t(100)= 6.60$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, the results from this comparison indicate that the Sun newspaper displayed high proportion for conflict framing than the Trust newspaper. Thus, this suggests that the Sun newspaper framing is conflict oriented with high tendency to promote conflict more.

Table 2

Comparison of total conflict framing in the Punch, Sun and Trust newspapers

See landscape table

Peace Framing Comparison

The study also went further to conduct a paired-samples test to compare the total peace framing in the Punch, Sun and Trust newspapers respectively.

Comparison One: Total Punch and Sun Newspaper Peace Framing: The results indicated that there was a difference in the scores for Punch peace framing ($M = 1.63$, $SD = 1.27$) and Sun peace framing ($M = 2.21$, $SD = 1.10$). The difference contrasts significantly between the two newspapers ($t(100) = -3.46$, $p = 0.001$). Therefore, based on the frames counts, the Sun newspaper used a higher proportion of peace framing on ethnic issues over and above Punch newspaper.

Comparison Two: The Punch and Trust Newspapers Peace Framing: A paired-samples test was carried out to compare the peace framing about ethnic issues in the Punch and Trust newspapers. Similarly, it was discovered that there was a difference in the scores for Punch peace framing ($M = 1.63$, $SD = 1.27$) and Trust peace framing ($M = 1.27$, $SD = 0.99$), however, the significant difference between the two newspapers was $t(100) = 2.30$, $p = 0.023$. Based on these results, it can be suggested that Punch gave priority to peace framing with a marginal level above the Trust newspaper.

Comparison Three: The Sun and Trust Newspapers Peace Framing: In the comparison of paired-samples test conducted to determine differences in the total peace framing in the Sun and Trust newspapers, the results showed that there was a significant difference. For instance, Table 3 showed the scores for Sun peace framing as ($M = 2.21$, $SD = 1.10$) and Trust peace framing ($M = 1.27$, $SD = 0.99$) however, the significance difference were ($t(100) = 6.66$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, the Sun newspaper here again displayed high propensity for peace framing on its ethnic issues coverage.

Table 3

Comparison of total peace framing in the Punch, Sun and Trust newspaper

See landscape table

Data merging: Qualitative and quantitative discussion

The study discovered that newspaper play a significant role in the buildup to behaviour that eventually result to conflict in Nigeria. This role, which matches the conclusion of literature, is specifically detectible and more penetrating to the ethnic group leaders through the inciting frames, double standard frames, name calling and ownership influence in the framing of the newspapers. When viewed by definition of conflict oriented framing which was given preference by the newspaper examined, then the inciting frames motivate the leaders' thinking and how they feel about other ethnic groups. Newspaper involvement is perilous in these conflicts because, given the multiethnic set up of Nigeria, there is hardly anything that provokes stronger feelings and greater outrage than preference for conflict oriented framing, provocation and attack on ethnic issues and interest, more so if they are perpetrated by an influencing force like newspaper.

The ethnic leaders regardless of their ethnic groups clearly emphasized the newspapers role as a factor in behaviour construction. The views as expressed by the Informants in the In-depth interview on the influence of the newspapers and the ownership linked equally called for concern given the average (103) of conflict oriented framing as against peace oriented framing average of (86) discovered in the content analysis. This was established as playing a negative impact in the overall ethnic group leaders' frames and eventually in the conflict scenario. Most of the groups always feel unjustly treated by newspapers whose owners have ethnic affinity with other groups. Given these perceptions, one important point to be understood is the fact that pattern of ownership of newspapers is a strong determinant of the role that newspaper play in ethnic issues and conflicts. This corroborated the reason why it was concluded that Information is now "power" comparable to money and authority. Therefore, Newspaper owner that exercise control over news framing to the masses has become a strong force that stimulate audience frames. No wonder that media ownership and its effects on different phases of mass media performance were the subject of many current studies (Adesoji, & Alimi, 2012; Baum, & Zhukov, 2012; Brown, & Udomisor, 2015).

Again, the newspaper framing was indicted for playing double standard on ethnic issues. Substantial numbers of the Informants pointed out the application of different level of attention and different tone of coverage for similar situation when it concerns different ethnic groups. Though, when conflict indicators (good/bad tagging and no good/bad tagging) were examined on the pages of newspapers, frequency of no good/bad tagging (82) was higher than that of good/bad tagging (79). However, given the negligible difference in the two, the concern of the Informants were justified because the results pointed to negative role being played by newspapers and eventual behaviours formation. The good/bad tagging or name calling frames as complained by the Informants, classified ethnic groups into either good or bad (Chandler, Clements & Combs, 2015; Coe, Kenski & Rains, 2014). This practice indirectly removes blames on one group and relatively passing it to other (Galtung, 1998; Siraj, 2008; Tehranian, 2002). Establishing the implication of this, Musa and Ferguson (2012) stressed that it affects the behaviours of groups in conflict.

Overall, data sets from the two methods employed have clearly shown that this is a catalyst that play a role in the formation of ethnic groups conflict behaviours. Aside the perspectives of the Informants, the evidences that supported this claim gathered from the newspaper contents were imperative in knowing the impact of news framing on the emergence and escalation of ethnic conflicts. These revelations from both the interview and content analysis should be a concern to all because it was the same insensitive role played by Rwanda media which culminated to the killing of over 800,000 lives.

Conclusion

The fundamental argument of this paper is to better understand the impact of newspaper framing on conflict behaviour and the eventual ethnic conflict and in the end to find possible solutions so that all stakeholders in conflict can better manage the dynamic of ethnic conflict. Therefore, it can be concluded by this study that newspapers framing of ethnic conflict issues is more likely to lead to more conflicts when the framing is conflict oriented such as being ethnic insensitive, emphasis and subtle encouragement on zero-sum option, frequent reference to groups' differences as well as focus on visible effects of conflicts. On the other hand, newspapers framing is more likely to promote peace and prevent conflict if it facilitates groups' agreement issues, stimulates mutual trust and tolerance, avoid good or bad tagging and reiterates consequences and invisible effects of hostility and conflict as well as win-win mindset.

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