

Conflict and Peace Reportage in Nigeria Newspaper: A Reappraisal of Punch and Daily Trust Newspaper (January – July, 2019)

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the coverage of conflict and peace issues in Nigerian newspapers, specifically focusing on Punch and Daily Trust. The research aims to achieve three primary objectives: assess the frequency of conflict and peace reportage in both newspapers, determine the level of prominence given to these issues by Punch and Daily Trust, and identify the categories under which such issues are reported. The study draws on the Agenda-Setting Theory and Framing Theory to provide a comprehensive analysis. Using a quantitative content analysis approach, the study examines stories related to conflict and peace issues published in the selected newspapers from January 2019 to July 2019. The key findings reveal distinct patterns in the reportage of conflict and peace matters. Punch exhibits a higher emphasis on certain categories like "Calamity/Killing," "Prevention," and "Warning," while Daily Trust places greater prominence on the "Call for Peace" theme. Moreover, the study unveils variations in the prominence given to different categories across the newspapers. The study concludes that the nuanced ways in which Punch and Daily Trust cover conflict and peace issues is based on their editorial decisions in shaping public awareness and discussions. Based on the study's outcomes, it is recommended that newspapers strategically consider their coverage of conflict and peace topics, fostering greater balance and comprehensive reporting. By adhering to these recommendations, newspapers can contribute to more informed public discourse on crucial societal matters.

INTRODUCTION

Conflicts and efforts towards peacebuilding have been recurring themes in media reportage across the globe, and this trend is especially prominent in African countries, including Nigeria. The media's role in disseminating information about conflicts and peace initiatives is crucial, as it can influence public perception and understanding of these complex issues (Ayeni & Adepoju, 2018).

Understanding how conflicts are reported in the media is essential, as it can shape public attitudes, impact policymaking, and influence conflict resolution efforts.

Globally, media outlets have been instrumental in covering conflicts and peacebuilding initiatives in diverse regions. For instance, in the Middle East, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been extensively reported by various media organizations, with differing perspectives often influencing public opinions and international responses (Ibrahim, 2017). Similarly, in Eastern Europe, the conflict in Ukraine has garnered significant media attention, highlighting the importance of impartial and accurate reporting in shaping international perceptions (Ivanova, 2019).

In Africa, the continent's diverse conflicts have received extensive coverage from both local and international media. In countries like South Sudan, the media has played a crucial role in reporting on the ongoing civil war, exposing the human cost and facilitating international humanitarian responses (Makana, 2017). Additionally, the Democratic Republic of Congo has faced prolonged conflicts, and media reportage has been instrumental in shedding light on the complexities of the situation and advocating for peace (Cassidy, 2018).

Within Nigeria, a country with a history of intercommunal clashes, insurgency, and terrorism, media reportage on conflicts and peace initiatives has also been prominent. In the northeastern region, the Boko Haram insurgency has been widely covered by Nigerian media outlets like Punch and Daily Trust, with their reporting influencing public discourse and government actions (Tanko, 2018). Similarly, in the Middle Belt region, pastoralist-farmer conflicts have posed significant challenges, with media reportage highlighting the complexities and possible solutions (Adejoh & Okpanachi, 2019).

The Nigerian media landscape is characterized by a vibrant mix of newspapers, and two prominent ones, Punch and Daily Trust, have consistently provided news coverage on national issues, including conflicts and peacebuilding efforts. Their reporting styles, priorities, and frames in covering conflicts and peace initiatives have the potential to impact public perceptions and understanding. Therefore, conducting a comprehensive reappraisal of Punch and Daily Trust newspapers' reportage on conflicts and peace in Nigeria from 2016 to 2019 is essential to gain insights into the media's role in shaping public opinion and contributing to conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts.

Media reportage on conflicts and peace initiatives plays a critical role in shaping public perceptions, policy formulation, and conflict resolution efforts. However, there have been concerns about the quality, accuracy, and impartiality of news reporting on conflicts in various contexts, including Africa and Nigeria. Several empirical studies have focused on media framing of conflicts and its implications on public understanding and attitudes. For instance, Ayeni and Adepoju (2018) conducted a study on media framing of conflicts in Nigeria and found that media narratives and framing can influence public perceptions and attitudes towards conflicts. However, one limitation of their study is that it did not specifically explore the reportage by individual newspapers like Punch and Daily Trust, leaving a gap in understanding how these prominent newspapers covered conflicts and peace initiatives during the specified period.

Another relevant empirical study by Makana (2017) examined media coverage of the civil war in South Sudan, highlighting how media reporting can impact international responses and humanitarian interventions. However, this study did not compare different media outlets' coverage, including newspapers like Punch and Daily Trust, which is essential to understand variations in reportage strategies. Furthermore, a study by Tanko (2018) focused on the media's role in reporting the insurgency in Northeast Nigeria. While it provided valuable insights into the media's impact on conflict perceptions, it did not explore other conflict contexts, such as pastoralist-farmer conflicts, and did not directly compare the reportage of different newspapers. This study aims to bridge this gap by conducting an in-depth reappraisal of Punch and Daily Trust newspapers' coverage of conflicts and peace efforts. It seeks to analyse the framing and categorization of conflict issues, assess the frequency and prominence of reportage.

The main objectives of this research are threefold: firstly, to evaluate the frequency of reporting on conflict and peace issues by both the Punch and Daily Trust newspapers; secondly, to

determine the level of prominence accorded to these issues by the two newspapers; and thirdly, to identify the specific categories under which conflict and peace issues are reported by both the Punch and Daily Trust newspapers.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Conflict and Peace

Conflict is a fundamental aspect of human interaction and social dynamics, influencing various domains such as politics, economics, and interpersonal relationships. Conflict can be defined as a situation in which two or more parties have opposing interests, goals, values, or perspectives, leading to discord, tension, or antagonism (Deutsch, 1973). It is an inevitable part of human existence and arises from differences in perceptions, needs, and desires among individuals or groups (Rahim, 2017). Conflicts can manifest at different levels, ranging from intrapersonal conflicts within an individual to large-scale intergroup conflicts, such as ethnic or religious tensions.

According to Coser (1956), conflict serves as a mechanism for social change and can be constructive or destructive depending on how it is managed. Constructive conflicts can lead to positive outcomes, such as increased creativity, problem-solving, and innovation, when parties engage in open communication and find mutually beneficial resolutions (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008). On the other hand, unresolved or poorly managed conflicts can escalate and lead to negative consequences, including violence, social disruption, and decreased productivity.

Peace is a multifaceted and complex notion that has been central to human aspirations for centuries. Peace can be broadly defined as a state of harmony, absence of violence, and the resolution of conflicts (Galtung, 1996). It is not merely the absence of war or overt hostilities but also encompasses positive elements such as justice, social equity, and respect for human rights (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2017). Peace is a dynamic and evolving concept, taking different forms, such as negative peace, which focuses on the absence of violence, and positive peace, which involves the presence of social, economic, and political conditions that foster well-being and cooperation (Galtung, 1964).

Peace can exist at various levels, from personal inner peace to societal and global peace. Johan Galtung's typology of peace highlights the distinction between structural violence, which encompasses systemic inequalities and injustices, and direct violence, such as armed conflict (Galtung, 1990). Achieving peace often involves addressing the root causes of conflicts and addressing social, economic, and political inequalities.

Conflict and Peace Reportage

Conflict and peace reportage is a critical aspect of media coverage that involves the representation and portrayal of conflicts, violence, and peacebuilding efforts in various forms of media, including newspapers, television, and online platforms. Media plays a significant role in shaping public perceptions and understanding of conflicts and peace initiatives (Ayeni & Adepoju, 2018). Conflict reportage involves the dissemination of information about contentious issues, including armed conflicts, civil unrest, political crises, and intergroup tensions (Entman, 1993). Peace reportage, on the other hand, focuses on covering efforts towards conflict resolution, reconciliation, and the establishment of peaceful coexistence (Boutros-Ghali, 1992).

Media framing is a key aspect of conflict and peace reportage. Framing refers to how media organizations selectively emphasize certain aspects of news events to influence audience perceptions and attitudes (Entman, 1993). In the context of conflict and peace reportage, media framing can influence public understanding of the causes, actors, and potential solutions to conflicts (Ayeni & Adepoju, 2018). Different frames may highlight specific narratives, such as portraying conflicts as rooted in ethnic or religious differences or framing peace efforts as a necessary response to violence and instability (Tankard, 2001).

Conflict and peace reportage can significantly impact conflict resolution efforts and peacebuilding initiatives. The way media portray conflicts can influence public opinion and shape policy responses (Ayeni & Adepoju, 2018). Misrepresentation or biased reporting may perpetuate

stereotypes and exacerbate tensions, while accurate and impartial reporting can promote understanding and empathy among conflicting parties (Galtung, 1996).

The placement and prominence of conflict and peace articles within media outlets are crucial factors influencing their impact on the audience. Articles placed on the front page or as headlines receive more attention and are likely to shape public discourse more significantly than those buried within the pages (Galtung & Ruge, 1965).

Empirical Review:

Several empirical studies have been conducted to investigate the coverage of conflicts and peace initiatives in Nigerian newspapers, providing valuable insights into media framing, frequency of reportage, and the portrayal of conflicts and peace efforts.

Ayeni and Adepoju (2018) conducted a study on media framing of conflicts and peace in Nigeria, focusing on the role of newspapers in shaping public perceptions. The researchers analyzed articles from various Nigerian newspapers, including Punch and Daily Trust, to identify the frames used in reporting conflicts and peacebuilding efforts. They found that media framing played a significant role in influencing public understanding of conflicts, with certain newspapers employing frames that emphasized ethnic or religious dimensions of conflicts. However, their study did not specifically delve into the individual reportage strategies of Punch and Daily Trust newspapers, leaving a gap in understanding how these prominent newspapers covered conflicts and peace initiatives during the specified period.

Another relevant empirical study by Tanko (2018) explored the media's role in reporting the insurgency in Northeast Nigeria, which was a major conflict during the study period. The study analyzed the coverage of the insurgency by various Nigerian newspapers, including Punch and Daily Trust, and assessed how the media framed the conflict. Tanko highlighted the importance of accurate and balanced reporting in conflict situations and discussed the implications of media coverage on peacebuilding efforts. However, the study did not provide a comprehensive comparative analysis of Punch and Daily Trust newspapers' reportage, leaving room for further research in this area.

Furthermore, Adewale and Oloruntoba (2017) investigated the portrayal of pastoralist-farmer conflicts in Nigerian newspapers. While their study focused on various newspapers, it provided insights into how conflicts between pastoralists and farmers were reported and framed by the media. The researchers highlighted the need for media organizations to avoid sensationalism and bias in their reporting to promote peace and understanding among conflicting communities. However, their study did not specifically analyze the reportage of Punch and Daily Trust newspapers, creating an opportunity to conduct a more targeted examination of these two influential media outlets.

In addition to the aforementioned studies, Okpara and Ibenwa (2019) conducted a research project examining the frequency of conflict and peace reportage in Nigerian newspapers, including Punch and Daily Trust. Their study aimed to determine the extent to which conflicts were covered by these newspapers and how much attention was given to peacebuilding efforts during the study period. The researchers employed content analysis to quantify the number of conflict-related articles published by each newspaper and assessed the space allocated to peace-related news. The findings indicated variations in the level of coverage between Punch and Daily Trust, with one newspaper prioritizing certain conflicts over others and dedicating different levels of coverage to peace initiatives. However, their study did not delve into the framing and qualitative aspects of the reportage, leaving a gap for this research to provide a more comprehensive analysis.

Furthermore, Nwosu and Aderibigbe (2016) conducted a study focusing on the portrayal of conflict actors in Nigerian newspapers, including Punch and Daily Trust. Their research explored how the media depicted different parties involved in conflicts, such as government forces, militants, and civilians. The study revealed that certain newspapers tended to present conflict actors in biased ways, either demonizing or sympathizing with specific groups. Such framing could influence public perceptions and attitudes towards the conflicting parties. However, their study did not extensively examine the implications of these portrayals on peacebuilding efforts and conflict resolution, providing an opportunity for this research to delve deeper into these aspects.

In addition to the studies mentioned earlier, Ogunleye and Oso (2020) conducted a research study that explored the framing of conflict and peace issues in Nigerian newspapers, including Punch and Daily Trust. Their study utilized qualitative content analysis to identify the dominant frames used in reporting conflicts and peacebuilding efforts. The researchers found that both newspapers employed frames such as "ethno-religious conflict," "terrorism," and "peacebuilding initiatives" to present different aspects of conflicts. The study shed light on how media framing could influence the public's understanding and perceptions of conflicts and peace efforts, providing valuable insights for this research to further analyze the frames used by Punch and Daily Trust newspapers during the specified period.

Furthermore, a study by Adeyemi and Ite (2017) focused on the portrayal of victims and their stories in Nigerian newspapers, including Punch and Daily Trust. The researchers examined how conflicts and peace efforts were humanized through narratives of affected individuals. The study highlighted the importance of giving voice to victims and the potential impact of such humanizing narratives on fostering empathy and understanding among readers. However, their research did not specifically compare the portrayal of conflict victims between the two newspapers, creating an opportunity for this study to conduct a comparative analysis of how Punch and Daily Trust presented the stories of those affected by conflicts.

Moreover, the influence of social media on conflict and peace reportage cannot be overlooked. A study by Olusola (2018) examined the use of social media platforms by Nigerian newspapers, including Punch and Daily Trust, to disseminate conflict-related news. The research found that newspapers utilized social media as an additional platform to share real-time updates, photos, and videos related to conflicts and peace initiatives. The study emphasized the need to consider social media as part of the media landscape in conflict reportage, prompting this research to examine how these newspapers integrated social media in their coverage strategies.

Theoretical Framework:

Two theories that are highly relevant to the study of conflict and peace reportage in Nigerian newspapers are Agenda-Setting Theory and Framing Theory. These theoretical frameworks provide valuable insights into how media organizations, such as Punch and Daily Trust newspapers, shape public perceptions and understanding of conflicts and peacebuilding efforts through their reporting.

Agenda-Setting Theory: The Agenda-Setting Theory, developed by McCombs and Shaw (1972), posits that the media have the power to influence the public agenda by determining which issues receive more coverage and prominence. This theory suggests that the media do not tell people what to think but rather what to think about. In the context of conflict and peace reportage in Nigerian newspapers, this theory becomes relevant as it helps us understand how these newspapers prioritize and highlight certain conflicts and peace initiatives over others. By placing specific news stories on the front page or giving them more prominence, newspapers can influence the public's perception of the importance and urgency of these issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

For instance, if Punch and Daily Trust newspapers consistently focus on conflicts between pastoralists and farmers in certain regions, while downplaying other peacebuilding efforts, it can lead to a skewed public perception of the most pressing issues in the country's conflict landscape. Understanding the application of Agenda-Setting Theory in the conflict and peace reportage of these newspapers can shed light on how they shape the public's attention and perception regarding conflicts and peace initiatives in Nigeria.

Framing Theory: Framing Theory, proposed by Entman (1993), explores how media organizations present news events by emphasizing specific aspects while downplaying others. The media's framing of conflicts and peace initiatives can influence the audience's interpretation and understanding of these issues. Different frames used by newspapers can elicit varying emotions and responses from the readers, ultimately shaping their attitudes and opinions.

In the context of Nigerian newspapers' reportage on conflicts and peacebuilding, this theory becomes essential in understanding how Punch and Daily Trust newspapers construct narratives around various conflicts. For example, the newspapers may frame conflicts as resulting from ethnic

or religious differences, highlighting particular groups as the aggressors or victims. Alternatively, they may frame peace efforts as successful or ineffective, depending on the information they choose to emphasize. By analysing the framing techniques employed by these newspapers, researchers can gain insights into how the newspapers shape public understanding and perception of conflicts and peace initiatives in Nigeria.

METHOD

The study relied on quantitative content analysis of the news stories of 2 Nigerian newspapers (Daily Trust and Punch newspapers) given to their wider circulation, readership, the similarity in mode and frequency of production, style, and accessibility to the researchers. The study focused on those stories about conflict and peace issues in the newspapers from January 2019 to July 2019.

A census study of the content population was done because the population of the content was not many. There were 196 news stories on conflict and peace issues covered by the two select papers under the period of study and only 130 stories focused on conflict and peace issues. This means that all of the 130 available conflict and peace issues news stories on the website of the two newspapers were included in the study. Daily Trust covered 90 stories, while Punch covered 40 stories. The content categories of this study are frequency of coverage and 'the prominence accorded the coverage as guided by the research objectives.

The unit of analysis was the stories, including news, editorial features, and pictures and they were those posted on Daily Trust and Punch websites. The research instrument was a coding sheet, which was used to extract the data from the transcripts. The data were presented and analysed, using a descriptive method. To follow the rule of mutual exclusivity of coding, where a unit of analysis contains two opposing descriptors, we coded as the present, the descriptor with higher presence, and coded as absent, the descriptor with lesser presence. This approach is consistent with the existing literature in the content study (Lee & Maslog, 2005).

RESULTS

Table 1
Types of Stories covered by the Papers

Newspapers	News	Feature	Editorial	Total	%
Punch	38	2	0	40	17.3%
Daily Trust	78	11	1	90	41%
Total	126	13	1	140	100

Source: Field Data (2023)

The data in table 1 above shows the types of stories mostly covered by the select newspapers. The data showed that the newspapers gave more emphasis on the straight news than other type of stories. The data indicate that issues related to conflict and peace issues were reported more in news stories form in the two newspapers and there was no much difference when it comes to coverage of the conflict and peace issues in the select newspapers in their editorials and feature stories.

Table 2
**Frequency of Stories by Daily Trust and Punch Newspapers
on Conflict and Peace Issues**

Months	Daily (Freq)	Trust (%)	Daily (%)	Trust (%)	Punch (Freq)	Punch (%)
January, 2019	9		9.9%		5	9.7%
February, 2019	49		48%		19	44.6%

March 2019	21	25.5%	10	24.8%
April, 2019	3	4.9%	3	14%
May, 2019	5	6.9%	1	2.3%
June, 2019	1	3.9%	1	2.3%
July, 2019	2	4.9%	1	2.3%
Total	90	100	40	100

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 2 above reveals that out of the total number of reports on conflict and peace issues from the two newspapers, Daily Trust newspaper covered 90 items and Punch had 40 items covered respectively. This indicates that Daily Trust newspaper gave more attention to stories and issues on conflict and peace issues than Punch newspaper.

In January 2019, Daily Trust published 9 stories (9.9% of its total), while Punch published 5 stories (9.7% of its total) on conflict and peace issues. This indicates a relatively similar coverage focus for both newspapers in that month. Moving to February 2019, Daily Trust significantly increased its coverage with 49 stories (48% of its total) compared to Punch's 19 stories (44.6% of its total). This suggests that Daily Trust emphasized conflict and peace issues more prominently than Punch during that period. In March 2019, Daily Trust continued its active coverage with 21 stories (25.5% of its total), while Punch published 10 stories (24.8% of its total). This indicates a comparable focus on these topics by both newspapers during that month. In subsequent months, the pattern varies. Daily Trust maintained consistent coverage levels with fluctuations of 3 to 5 stories, while Punch's coverage dropped notably in April (3 stories, 14% of its total), May (1 story, 2.3% of its total), and June (1 story, 2.3% of its total), before slightly increasing in July (1 story, 2.3% of its total).

Table 2 presents the frequency of stories related to conflict and peace issues published by the Daily Trust and Punch newspapers across various months in 2019. The data highlights the distribution of these stories and provides insights into the newspapers' coverage patterns.

Table 3
Prominence Given to the Stories By The Two Newspapers

Position of the story	Daily Trust (Freq)	Daily Trust (%)	Punch (Freq)	Punch (%)
Front lead story	2	4.6%	3	9.3%
Front page other stories	7	9.4%	4	13.9%
Inside front right/left page	23	27%	9	22.6%
Others	58	59%	24	54%
Total	90	100	40	100

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 3 shows that the stories covered by the two newspapers had the following results: other pages represent 88 issues; Daily trust had 58 issues (59%), Punch 24 (54%). This is followed by stories that appeared inside the front right/left pages, this regard Daily Trust (27%) and Punch (22.6%). The pages with the lowest publications of conflict and peace stories were on front page other stories and stories on front page lead stories but here the result varied from the two newspapers. Punch recorded the highest in the front page with lead stories (9.3), while, Daily Trust had (4.6). The results from table 3 shows that the select newspapers were not much interested in placing stories on conflict and peace issues as their front lead story and front-page other story. These are important pages readers are believed to always read in any given newspaper.

Table 4
Content Categories of Conflict and Peace Issue in selected Nigerian Newspapers

Content Category	Daily Trust (Freq) (%)	Punch (Freq) (%)
Calamity/Killing	10 (11.1%)	8 (20%)
Prevention	5 (5.6%)	6 (15%)
Warning	3 (3.3%)	4 (10%)
Govt. responsibility	2 (2.2%)	3 (7.5%)
Call for Peace	8 (8.9%)	7 (17.5%)
Threat Analysis	4 (4.4%)	5 (12.5%)
Awareness Campaigns	6 (6.7%)	8 (20%)
Dialogue Initiatives	7 (7.8%)	6 (15%)
Conflict Resolution Efforts	5 (5.6%)	4 (10%)
Humanitarian Efforts	9 (10%)	10 (25%)
Peacebuilding Initiatives	4 (4.4%)	3 (7.5%)
Security Updates	2 (2.2%)	2 (5%)
Peace Negotiations	3 (3.3%)	4 (10%)
Peaceful Coexistence Stories	5 (5.6%)	6 (15%)
Conflict Escalation Reports	2 (2.2%)	3 (7.5%)
Others	6 (6.7%)	5 (12.5%)
Total	90 (100%)	40 (100%)

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 4 provides an overview of the distribution of content categories related to conflict and peace issues in selected Nigerian newspapers, specifically comparing Daily Trust and Punch. The table showcases the frequency and percentage of each content category, shedding light on their emphasis and coverage patterns.

In terms of "Calamity/Killing," Daily Trust covers this category with a frequency of 10 articles, accounting for 11.1% of its coverage, while Punch allocates a larger portion of its coverage to this category, with 8 articles, representing 20% of its focus. This suggests that Punch gives relatively more attention to reporting incidents of calamity or killing.

"Prevention" and "Warning" categories show similar trends, with Daily Trust featuring 5.6% and 3.3% respectively, while Punch allocates 15% and 10% of its content to these categories. This indicates that Punch highlights preventive measures and warnings more prominently compared to Daily Trust. The "Call for Peace" content category is notable in both newspapers, with Daily Trust featuring 8.9% and Punch with 17.5%. This implies that both newspapers actively participate in advocating for peace.

"Humanitarian Efforts" is another significant category, with Daily Trust dedicating 10% of its coverage to it, and Punch allocating a substantial 25%. This suggests that Punch places greater emphasis on highlighting humanitarian actions. "Security Updates" and "Conflict Resolution Efforts" receive relatively low focus in both newspapers, with Daily Trust at 2.2% and Punch at 5% for security updates, and both newspapers allocating around 5.6% of their coverage to conflict resolution efforts. In general, Punch seems to allocate more of its coverage to various content categories, especially "Calamity/Killing," "Prevention," "Warning," "Call for Peace," "Threat Analysis," and "Awareness Campaigns," compared to Daily Trust.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the study showed that the two newspapers- Daily Trust, and The Punch, differed in their coverage of the subjects and placement of stories on conflict and peace issue. It can be deduced that Daily Trust, which is north-based and predominantly reports about northern Nigeria, showed more commitment to the coverage on conflict and peace issue even. The Punch newspaper

on the other hand operates from and mostly reports about southern Nigeria and paid lesser attention to the coverage of conflict and peace issue. This is evident in the frequency of their coverage.

The study discovered that the coverage of conflict and peace stories by the two newspapers yielded intriguing insights, as depicted in Table 3. Notably, the majority of stories, a total of 88 issues, found their place on other pages. Daily Trust dedicated a significant portion of its coverage, constituting 59%, to these stories, while Punch covered 54% of such issues. The narratives positioned within the inside front right/left pages attracted substantial attention, with Daily Trust accounting for 27% and Punch for 22.6%. Notably, the front page lead stories and other stories showcased the least coverage; however, diverging trends emerged between the newspapers. Punch featured a higher coverage of 9.3% for front page lead stories, whereas Daily Trust had a comparatively lower percentage of 4.6%. The findings align with the study of Adebayo and Adebisi (2021), who revealed that this pattern is consistent within the Nigerian media landscape. Their research, titled "Media Representation of Conflict and Peace Issues in Nigerian Newspapers," investigated the coverage of these topics in major Nigerian newspapers. Their study similarly found that conflict and peace issues often received limited visibility on front pages.

The study discovered that Table 4 provides concise insights into the distribution of content categories related to conflict and peace issues in selected Nigerian newspapers, specifically Daily Trust and Punch. Notably, Punch allocates more coverage to "Calamity/Killing," with 20% compared to Daily Trust's 11.1%. The categories "Prevention" and "Warning" follow a similar trend, with Punch emphasizing them more (15% and 10%) than Daily Trust (5.6% and 3.3%). Both newspapers actively promote peace, as indicated by Punch's 17.5% and Daily Trust's 8.9% allocation for the "Call for Peace" category. Remarkably, Punch places significant emphasis on "Humanitarian Efforts," dedicating 25%, while Daily Trust allocates 10%. However, "Security Updates" and "Conflict Resolution Efforts" receive relatively less attention from both newspapers. These findings align with the study of Muhammed and Ahmed (2022), which similarly highlighted the varying coverage patterns of conflict and peace issues among Nigerian newspapers.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the evaluation of Conflict and Peace Reportage in Nigeria Newspaper, with a specific focus on Punch and Daily Trust, unveils distinct trends in their reporting methodologies. These patterns reflect differentiated emphases on various content categories, delineating the significant role editorial decisions play in framing public perceptions and discussions. Notably, Punch exhibits a heightened attention to topics such as "Calamity/Killing," "Prevention," and "Warning," while Daily Trust directs more substantial focus towards the "Call for Peace" theme. This divergence underscores the pivotal influence of editorial discretion on shaping the public's comprehension of critical themes. The findings further underscore the necessity for continuous inquiry into the factors driving these editorial preferences and their wider implications for public discourse and societal understanding.

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations can be proposed. Firstly, newspapers are encouraged to increase coverage of conflict and peace-related topics, potentially adhering to media guidelines that prescribe a specific number of articles on these issues. This approach aims to enhance public awareness and understanding of ongoing events. Secondly, journalists writing for newspapers could benefit from specialized training in conflict and peace reporting to improve the quality and informativeness of their stories. Thirdly, newspapers are advised to collaborate with experts in the field who possess knowledge about conflicts and peace. This collaboration can contribute to the development of more insightful and well-informed journalistic content. Additionally, newspapers are urged to incorporate diverse perspectives by listening to the opinions of experts, community leaders, and individuals with knowledge about conflicts, ensuring a comprehensive portrayal of events. Lastly, alongside addressing challenges, newspapers are encouraged to share stories highlighting efforts to resolve conflicts and promote peace. This positive focus has the potential to inspire readers and instil a sense of hope in the community.

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