Influence of media in the management of electoral violence:
An analysis of 2023 general elections in Bauchi metropolis - Nigeria

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Abstract
Electoral violence is one of the major challenges affecting peaceful coexistence across the globe. Since the independence, Nigeria has been witnessing the series of electoral violence in each election conducted in the country. In Bauchi metropolis in particular, since the rebirth of the democratic dispensation the town was experiencing high level of electoral violence to the extent of killing, wounding and displacement of properties. This study investigated the media function in the management of electoral violence in Bauchi metropolis. A survey research design was employed while stratified sampling technique was used to selecting 5 wards using simple random sampling technique in selecting respondents. The research instrument used for data collection in this study was a questionnaire designed. The reliability test was acceptable with 0.72. using frequency distribution tables, the study equally used inferential statistics of Chi-square tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study finding reveals that media organizations played a vital role in terms of media sensitization, the autonomy of the media houses, media regulation, and professionalism of the media houses addressed the electoral violence in the Bauchi metropolis. The study concludes that adherence to media regulation, autonomy, and high professionalism of the journalists manage the occurrences of electoral violence in the state. The study recommended that the media regulation should continue adherence all the time, the government should continue guarantee the media autonomy and lastly, the media houses should organize workshops to their respected staff to avoid reporting any news that will bring tension during election.

Keywords: Conflict Management, Electoral Violence, Journalism, Media regulation, Professionalism.

1. Introduction

Mass media played a vital role in escalating electoral violence through unprofessional journalism, biased reporting, criminal partisanship, deliberate falsification, manipulating publishers, favoritism, manipulation of access to news, and others. Accordingly, the Nigerian mass media is confronted with the problem of freedom, the freedom of information bill has been passed, and political officeholders who have the right to free speech sabotage press freedom by influencing journalists to fabricate stories and spread political propaganda. Furthermore, the political system of Nigeria has used a variety of strategies to deal with media political communication activities since the advent of the colonial period (Iruonagbe et al., 2013). The election is seen as a very vital and also essential means to the

democratization process and good governance across the globe. Accordingly, many scholars in the world expressed their position that any democracy without constant free and credible fair elections which means there is no good democracy (Alemika & Okoye, 2011). Generally, the electoral process in Nigeria helps in making smooth democratization and guide the country in good governance since the voters are expected to choose good leaders through the ballot papers.

Mass media can be used both positively and negatively to escalate or manage violent conflict and to support long-term peacebuilding initiatives (Amisi, 1997). Several pieces of research suggested that mass media contribute a lot to motivating violent conflict. Some of the journalists are taking part in killings, highlighting emerging violent conflicts, highlighting hat speech and downplaying genocide during conflicts as well as deliberately creating misleading reports that would provoke people' to engage in violence (Wairagu, 2003; Howard, 2003). In Cote d'Ivoire, during the 2010 general elections, the media participate in spreading some the misinformation which promote violence, while some the journalists engage themselves in conflicts and intimidation while some media films particularly the FM radio stations engaged in hate speech that would be brought hatred and also open post-election violence (Media Foundation for West Africa, 2011; BBC, 2008).

People must possess all the knowledge required to choose the best aspirants or candidates who can assure excellence in the administration. The media must take responsibility for the fact that Nigeria's elections have failed when such public awareness is missing (Iredia, 2007). This study sought to achieved the following objective: to examine the media functions in managing electoral violence in Bauchi metropolis.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the efforts made by certain media outlets to control electoral violence, others including unregistered media and Facebook, Twitter, and Whatsapp users involve manipulation in order to further their own agendas. Additionally, certain mass media outlets have been known to deliberately fabricate information in order to stir up unrest in a state or nation while also engaging in unprofessional and biased reporting. Media professionals invest trust in the audience members through media reportage, but the masses appear to view media reporting as unethical, unprofessional, and irresponsible media practitioners (Patrick et al., 2022). Numerous academics studied Nigeria's elections, electoral violence, media, and democracy (Alemika, 2011; Howard, 2003; Patrick et al., 2022; BBC, 2008; Iredia, 200; Iruonagbe et al., 2013; Arinze, 2022). However, none of the scholars cited above specifically address the role of the media in addressing election violence in Bauchi. Therefore, this paper sought to fill the following gap: to identify the media functions in managing electoral violence in Bauchi Metropolis. An analysis of 2023 general elections.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Conceptual Clarification
Media

To begin with, the media has been conceptualized in different terms. Media refers to a medium of transferring information from sender to receiver. This comprises traditional forms of electronic media (broadcasting, broadband, cable, or satellite), print media (newspapers, periodicals, or books), print advertising, traditional forms of publishing (movies, video games, or books), and traditional forms of publishing (books, music, or periodicals). It also covers traditional forms of publishing (Hoag, 2008). The medium via which information and messages are sent and received is known as the media.

The medium is what delivers a message, whether it takes the shape of a spoken word, a written word, a printed word, or any other indication (Salvin & Maheema, 2021). They also produce radio and television dramas, documentaries, current affairs programs, magazine shows, and other sorts of programming.

The media has a critical role in fostering social change and influencing people's beliefs and attitudes. In addition to producing drama programs, public service announcements, and other radio and television programming, the media also produces plays, documentaries, and current affairs programs. To this purpose, media play a significant role in people's daily life. Additionally, it enables the citizen to answer to their government. In other words, the value and goals of the nations can still be upheld while bridging the gap between distinct communities (Schramm, 1964; Alfrick, 2018).

Violence

Violence deals with Property damage and the destruction of lives (Stremlau & Price, 2009). In other words, according to Dewey (1980, p. 246), violence is a force gone awry or a force that is destructive and hurtful. In other words, "violence" refers to interpersonal acts of force that typically result in bodily harm being done (Vittorio, 2005). According to Kase and Neidhardt (1990), violence is a complicated phenomenon that involves two groups of people.

Electoral Violence

Electoral violence consists of assault, murder, attempted murder, malicious or willful damage to or destruction of property, arson, threats of violence, threats to kill, bombings, disruption of political campaign rallies, hooliganism, and fighting are only a few examples of how electoral violence has taken many different forms (Friedrich, 2001). Election violence, according to Alfrick (2018), is when individuals act violently to oppose the results of an election, engaging in fighting,

property damage, and even murder. Electoral violence may be viewed as all types of collective assault on the democratic system. Electoral violence, as advocated by Anifowose (1982), is the use of a physical act or threat by a person or group of people within a political system against another person or property with the intent to cause harm or death to people or damage to or destruction to property; and whose objective, choice of targets or victims, surrounding circumstances, implementation, and effects the political system (Iruonagbe, 2013).

Peace Building

According to Saleh (2020) defined peace building as the ability to create a social justice, cooperation among people, and equity within a conflict zone. Peacebuilding is defined as "action to strengthen in identify and support peace, which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace and elude conflict" by former United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992 (United Nations, 2019). The UN Secretary General's Policy Committee provided a more thorough and detailed definition of peacebuilding in 2007: "A range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of escalating into conflict by strengthening national capacities for conflict management at all levels and to lay the groundwork for sustainable peace and development. A carefully prioritized, sequential, and relatively small collection of actions should be included in peacebuilding strategies, and they should be based on national ownership and suited to the needs of the country in question. (UN, 2010). Galtung (1969) asserted that "one may object that frequent use of the word 'peace' gives an unrealistic image of the world" (Galtung, 1969). He said that the three basic principles will serve as the foundation for the idea of peace. "Peace is the absence of violence shall be retained as valid" is the most crucial of the three principles. Peace is the non-violent and creative resolution of conflicts. In other

words, peace is the absence or reduction of all forms of violence. Recognizing the ingrained nature of conflict and its connection to development, the concept of peacebuilding can be regarded as a reaction to some of the earlier, more simplistic ways of achieving peace. It was once believed to only apply in post-conflict settings, but over time, it has expanded to cover all stages of the conflict cycle, including conflict prevention (Necla, 2003).

Conflict Management

Conflict management refers to the first situation, the viewpoint of the so-called "third party" (a mediator, conflict advisor, conflict manager, or supervisor), which is to assist both conflict parties initially, and thereafter one of them (Reimann, 2005). Conflict management, according to USAID (2005), is "activities that promote the peaceful resolution of differences and establish a framework for peace and reconciliation to reduce the threat of violent conflict." According to Oachesu (2016), conflict management is a technique that reduces disagreement between two groups of people and results in positive change or the adoption of practical solutions when it arises. The goal of conflict management, whether it is carried out by the parties involved in the conflict or involves the intervention of a third party, is to alter the overall dynamics of a conflict situation to contain the destructive elements (hostility, use of violence) and assist the parties with divergent objectives in resolving their conflict (Digvijaysinh, 2013). Conflict management, in other words, "involves designing effective macro-level strategies to minimize the dysfunctions of conflict and enhancing the constructive functions of conflict to enhance learning and effectiveness in an organization" (Rahim, 2002). The practice of adopting chosen tactics to address a conflict with the objectives of limiting negative impact and improving positive impact is referred to as conflict management (Qi, 2015).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The libertarian theory known as the free press theory, which holds that a person should have the freedom to publish, was utilized in this study. According to the theory, there should be no restrictions on the import or export of media messages across national borders, and criticism of government policies should be welcomed when the fundamental and legal rights of journalists are upheld. Additionally, press ownership should be devoid of crimes, atrocities, improper behavior, and agitation during times of conflict (Siebert et al., 1972).

In this study, Libertarian Theory primarily allows the media to criticize the incumbent government if they want to manipulate the election result to promote peace in the state, media acts as a watchdog against the government. Press ownership or media autonomy helps them import and export media messages across the national frontiers. It highlights how factual reporting, encouraging open discourse, representing a range of viewpoints, and protecting individual rights work together to prevent government abuses of power (Siebert et al., 1972). According to libertarian ideology, media should self-regulate while adhering to a rigid code of ethics and professionalism. The Libertarian theory, on the other hand, supports real media independence in situations when the government has little to no influence over the media. When this is the case, the government apparatus is unable to exert editorial control or guidance to report on messages that are biased in its favor. Media professionals are free to work within the bounds of the law and objective reporting, preventing confrontations and encouraging peaceful cooperation as a result.

The Peace Building Theory also served as the study's guidance. There is considerable disagreement over which actors should be in charge of peace-building initiatives, but there is generally much more emphasis on the need for local ownership, leadership,

and meaningful engagement, leading to the cheaper and more long-lasting practice of creating peace from the inside out. According to Lederach (1998), the goal of sustainable mediation is to prevent, resolve, and transform conflict. By addressing the root causes of violent conflict, peace-building aims to establish a framework of peace based on justice, equity, and cooperation (i.e., positive peace), making violent conflict less likely to occur in the future. In the context of this study, Track Two diplomacy entails bringing together academics, senior journalists, opinion leaders, former government officials, or other politically significant individuals from opposing parties to collaborate in order to clarify enduring differences, explore potential solutions to them, and gain insight into how a collaborative

The study created the conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1 by analyzing two variables, conflict

process between the two could be facilitated (Hussein, 2003).

2.3   Conceptual   and   Theoretical Framework

To create the conceptual framework, the study concentrated on social responsibility, libertarian, and social contract theories. According to this social contract hypothesis, media reporting is influenced by race, religion, economics, and political forces. According to libertarian and social responsibility ideas, accurate media reporting is aided by educating people about their rights and encouraging truthfulness, fairness, transparency, and self-regulation. Additionally, it encourages open discussion, represents various points of view, guards against hate speech, and defends citizens' rights from abuse by the government.

management (peacebuilding) and media reporting, as independent and dependent variables.
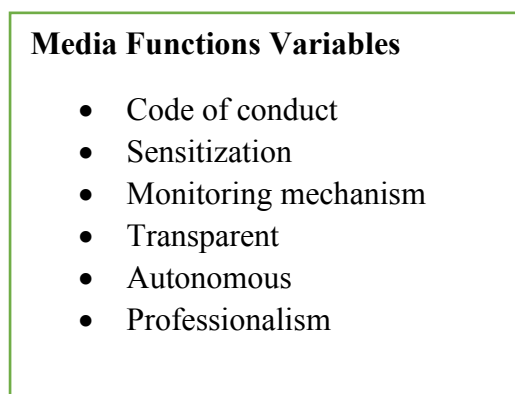
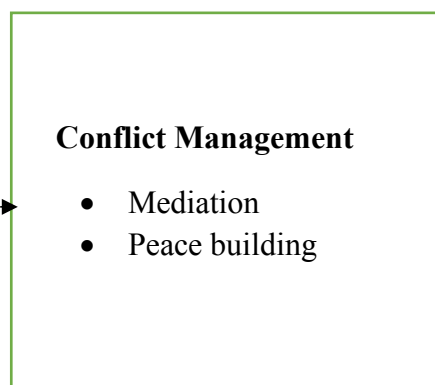**Independent Variables**   **Dependent Variable**

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework claims that several elements have an impact on media. However, it immediately impacts people due to things like low pay, hate speech, exaggerated or incorrect information, politics, pay, religion, and ethnicity. These elements, which stand in for the independent variable, decide how closely

the independent and dependent variables are related. The dependent variable is the root of all conflict. Escalation or de-escalation, mediation, and peacebuilding are the four outcomes that are presupposed and could be affected by the media report. The study was out to prove that media had an impact on conflict.

3. Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was used in the study. Description research design can be defined as a plan for collecting and utilizing information by administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. It also helped in obtaining more information about the study (Kothari, 2004). A cluster sampling technique was used to divide the Bauchi metropolis in to twelve (12) wards. A cluster simply put grouping of individuals in terms of villages, schools, towns, wards, streets, and households (Philip, 2013). Cluster sampling involved a random sample of two poling units within each ward. The probability of selection was proportional to the population size of the ward that is, larger ward had a greater probability of being selected than smaller ones. Within each chosen poling unit, a fixed number of residents were selected using simple random sampling. The residents were the unit of analysis. Residents of Bauchi Metropolis made up the population of the study's primary data, which were collected as hard copies.

The journalists reside in the city of Bauchi and are residents of the Bauchi State of Nigeria. The study population, as opposed to the sample, is the group of people within the community that the study is concerned with, according to Kumar (2011). The sample, on the other hand, is a subset of the population that will act as the study population's representative. The intended audience for the study was calculated as 444903. The sample size of 381 was established using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size calculation table. The information is displayed here on a three-point Likert scale. Secondary data were obtained via books, journals, theses, and other published and unpublished sources, whilst questionnaires were predominantly used to gather data. In contrast to gaining a thorough understanding, questionnaires, in the opinion of Rasmussen and Erik (2002), are effective for measuring the issues under inquiry. Ensuring the respondents' anonymity informed the usage of questionnaires. According to the National Population Commission (2016), there are 6,537,300 people living in Bauchi State (50.9% men, 49.1% women). The target demographic was the electorate of 444,935 people living in the city of Bauchi (INEC, 2022).

A straightforward random sample method was employed to choose the respondents for the survey. A subset of respondents from the target group is randomly chosen by the researcher using the probability sampling technique known as simple random sampling. There is an equal chance that each respondent from the target population will be chosen (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The sample size for this study, which was determined by applying the sample-size computation formula created by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), was 381 out of the 444935-target population. The sample size was calculated using the formula below.

$$N = \frac{X^2 NP(1-P)}{e^2(N-1) + X^2 \times P(1-P)}$$

$$N = \frac{3.841 \times 444935 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{0.00025(444934-1) + 3.841 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}$$

$$N = \frac{3.841 \times 444935 \times 0.25}{0.00025(444934) + 3.841 \times 0.25}$$

$$N = \frac{42724883375}{112.19375} \quad N = 381$$

In this instance, a variety of research tools were tested to guarantee the reliability and validity of the research findings. With the help of this investigation, the researcher was able to explain the parallels and variations in the main findings. The research questions and study objectives were in line to ensure the validity of this study. The questionnaire questions were measured in pilot research. For the piloting, fifteen (15) respondents from the study area were chosen. Simple percentages were used to evaluate the data to respond to the research questions, and Chi-square inferential statistics were used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The Chi-square test was used to evaluate the inferential statistics. The research subjects guaranteed informed consent. The participants' identities were kept private.

The table below shows that the reliability test falls within the acceptable region of 0.72.

Table 1 Pilot test: Reliability and Validity

Description	Values	Internal Consistency
Number of Items	12	
Sum of the item variables	4.54	
Variance of total score	15.54	Acceptable
Cronbach alpha	$\frac{12}{12-1}\frac{(13.54-4.54)}{13.54}= 0.72$	

4. Results and Discussion

This section is devoted to the analysis of the data gathered from the respondents based on the interview conducted.

Research Question One: To what extent did media employ its function in managing electoral violence in Bauchi State, Nigeria?

Table 2 Media Functions in Managing Electoral Violence

Media Functions	Agreed (F)	Disagreed (F)	Neutral (F)
Code of conduct	338(95.5%)	10(2.8%)	6(1.7%)
Media sensitization	337(95.2%)	11(3.1%)	6(1.7%)
Autonomy of the media houses	278(78.5%)	70(19.8%)	6(1.7%)
Professionalism	301(85%)	3(0.8%)	50(14.1%)
Transparent and truthfulness of the media houses	331(93.5%)	20(5.6%)	3(0.8%)
Monitory mechanism	346(97.7%)	6(1.7%)	2(0.6%)

Source: Survey, (2022)

Findings on media functions show that 95.5% of respondents agreed code of conduct within the media organizations played a vital role in addressing 2007 and 2011 electoral violence in the Bauchi metropolis, 2.8% disagreed, and 1.7% were neutral. 95.2% of the respondents agreed that media sensitization also played a significant role in mobilizing the electorate during the 2007 and 2011 elections, 3.1% disagreed and 1.7% are neutral. 78.5% of the respondents agreed that the independence of the media houses contributed to managing electoral violence, 19.8% disagreed and 1.7% are neutral. On professionalism 85% of the respondents agreed that media practitioners are professional in media reporting and contributed a lot in managing the electoral violence, 0.8% disagreed and 14.1% are

neutral. 93.5% of respondents agreed that transparency and truthfulness is one of the media functions that contributed to addressing electoral violence, 5.6% disagreed and 0.8% are neutral on the statement. On monitory mechanisms 97.7% of the respondents agreed that media

organizations played a vital role in organizing workshops and seminars as well as inviting religious leaders to the media houses to sensitize people during and after the election in order to promote the culture of peace, 1.7% disagreed and 0.6% are neutral on the statement.

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significance relationship between media functions and conflict management

Table 3: **Summary Table for Chi-square Test of Independence Analysis**

FO	FE	DF	Calculated X^2 Value	Critical X^2 Value (α=.05)
338	321.83			
10	20			
6	12.17			
337	321.83			
11	20			
6	12.17			
		10	311.61	18.31
278	321.83			
70	20			
6	12.17			
301	321.83			
3	20			
50	12.17			
331	321.83			
20	20			
3	12.17			
346	321.83			
6	20			
2	12.17			

The data in table 1.5 shows that the calculated X2 (311.61) is greater than the critical tabled value (18.31) for DF=10, at α=.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. Hence, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between media functions and conflict management in the Bauchi metropolis of Bauchi State, Nigeria. The above findings are supported by Patrick et al., (2022) who noted that it is the media censors Board that guides journalists in discharging their duties. Moreover, there is a need for the media houses to internally center their mechanisms to checkmate the moral conduct of journalists to avoid unprofessional media. Effective media policies continually change the media

environment in promoting the culture of peacebuilding (Collier, 2009; Nicole & Monroe, 2009).

In addition to the above findings, Mathias (2017) pointed out that media play a vital role in sensitizing voters to education beyond political news, engaging various programs with a political focus that aim to foster engaged citizenry for interactive post-election peace-building as well as platforms for dialogue and public debate between opposing political parties. Among the shows are Sunrise Daily, Politics Today, focus Nigeria's Kakaaki: The African Voice, and Africa Independent Television's Politics Today (AIT). These programs have a solid reputation for emphasizing social discussion. The programs use a strategic level strategy that

aims to get contending parties, important stakeholders, and election-related experts on air to stimulate political discourse and conversations. For instance, the debate program Sunrise Daily on Channels Television frequently invites two or more people from opposing political parties to an open discussion on election-related matters.

Discussion of Findings

The study finding reveals that monetary mechanism played a vital role in organizing workshops, and seminars as well as inviting traditional rulers and religious leaders to the media houses in mediating the warring parties. The above finding corroborated with the work of Mathias (2017) who opined that media organizations can mediate, negotiate and build confidence as well as facilitate and create a conducive environment. Moreover, media organizations help to promote and mobilize people in an organized manner, they also help in promoting peace-building through various mechanisms such as conflict-sensitive and peace journalism, media regulation to mediate the agitation between the warring parties, and also media promote the culture of peace promote people (Himelfarb & Chabalowski, 2008; Rupesinghe, 1995; Collier &Vicente, 2014).

Furthermore, access to reliable information supports community sustainability and permanent peace as well as social cohesion and economic progress (UN Millennium Declaration, 2000). The need to "protect the freedom of the media to play their critical role and the right of the public to have access to information" as a result was strongly stressed in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (Ibid). Dukor (1999) asserts that there has, nevertheless, been a democratic blooming of the free press, which has typically coexisted with initiatives to enhance democracy and respect for human rights. According to Adebanwi (2016), Nigeria's press environment is considered to be "partly free," and the bar for journalists is still very high. The aforementioned conclusions go against those of Hoglund (2009), who noted that while government manipulates and regulates media houses' operations, worldwide standards of media regulation uphold freedom of expression. For instance, in Ethiopia, certain newspapers were shut down during the time of electoral violence. Additionally, while the Freedom of information bill has not yet been passed in several African countries, the mass media encountered issues with freedom, legal restrictions, decrees, stringent regulation, and the silence of media organizations (Iruonagbe, 2013).

According to Earl et al., media outlets have a professional duty to present truthful and accurate information about electoral violence (2004). For individuals who are unable to observe or comprehend the events that have an impact on them, Nwaozuzu (1997) argues that electioneering campaign reporting should look for pertinent information and media transparency. The aforementioned findings were at odds with Alemika's (2011) observation that election violence in Nigeria is addressed through media goals and techniques. Mohammed (1994) also points out that little has changed regarding the media's impartiality in later democratic elections and electioneering campaigns. For him, political reporting has always been a vehicle for press partisanship. According to Dukor (1999), the state and media organizations in Nigeria harbor a mutual mistrust that has undermined the benefits of fundamental rights and the ability to disseminate information.

The study finding also reveals that professional media houses contributed immensely in the management of electoral violence in Bauchi metropolis of Bauchi State, Nigeria. The above findings supported by the work of Fidelis (2022) who noted that due to media professionals' impolite reporting of events and concerns, the journalism industry makes a detrimental contribution to the development of the

country. Moreover, professional media organizations make a significant contribution to reducing conflict-related problems and advancing peace-building through a variety of means, such as assisting societies in coming to terms with the past and forging a shared future, increasing public understanding of individuals living in peace and conflict, combating misinformation or propaganda from the biased media, and empowering individuals to address and resolve their problems (United Nations Peace-building Fund, 2019; Allen & Schaer, 2016; Bel-Molokwu & DeAguomba (1990).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper continued by identifying the strategies for combating electoral violence, including media regulation, media autonomy, media sensitization, monitoring systems, and professionalism, among others, by providing a framework for the media to uphold the highest standards of journalism and promote peace. The purpose of media functions is to promote transparency and truth-telling while defending people's freedom and access to information. By adhering to high ethical standards, the media can aid in the process of fostering peace and preserving public safety. This study recommends the following the government should continue strictly adherent the media code of conduct, the media houses should continue sensitize the people on electoral violence, media houses should engage workshops to their staff on reporting news concerning electoral violence and the media houses should continue transparent and truthfulness.

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