



Perception of stakeholders to newspapers framing of farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examines the perception of stakeholders to newspapers framing of farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria. The study adopted mixed method approach of quantitative content analysis and qualitative in-depth interview to obtain data from three Nigerian national newspapers- The Punch, Daily Trust and The Guardian published between January 1, and December 31, 2018 and stakeholders including farmers, herders and traditional rulers, selected from the North-central/east and South-west of Nigeria. Systematic sampling and purposive sampling techniques were adopted to select 468 editions of the newspapers and 35 stakeholders from the population respectively. Coding sheet and interview guides served as the instruments to gather data from the two paradigms respectively. The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics while thematic analysis approach was used for the qualitative data. The findings showed that the newspapers adopted violence-induced strategies to frame the conflict and the stakeholders perceived the newspapers' framing of the conflict to have fueled the conflict by pitching one group against the other. The study concluded that newspapers framing of farmers-herders conflict escalated the conflict and animosity among stakeholders in some parts of Nigeria. The study, therefore, recommended that all stakeholders especially the mass media organisations (newspapers) and government at all levels should facilitate the promotion of national interest as this will prompt the newspapers organisations to be conscious of framing strategies that can trigger violence among various stakeholders in Nigerian society.

Keywords Farmers-herders conflict, stakeholders' perception, newspapers' framing, peaceful co-existence

1. Introduction

Since the return of democratic rule in 1999, particularly within the last decade, Nigeria has been engulfed in a series of conflicts which posed existential threat to national security and peaceful co-existence among various stakeholders in the country. The major ones among them are election-related violence, kidnapping, banditry, *Boko Haram*, communal clashes, ethnic conflicts, farmers-herders' conflicts (Akinrinde & Adegboye, 2018). Of all these conflicts, farmers-herders conflict has become the major conflict affecting almost all parts of the country and later resulted to humanitarian crisis (Leme, 2017). It is a

contemporary issue that extends beyond the shore of Nigeria (Search for Common Ground, SFCG, 2018). Meanwhile, the conflict predated the existence of Nigeria as an independent sovereign nation (Isacc, 2022). Initially, there used to be a symbiotic relationship between farmers and herders. However, the relationship was disrupted by increase in the population of human and livestock which consequently led to the scarcity of land for grazing and farming (*Daily Trust*, November 11, 2014) and this resulted to competition for natural resources between the two groups; hence, farmers-herders conflict. Prior to the advent of the fourth Republic, the generations of farmers

and herders have used traditional approach to effectively resolve the conflict (Isacc, 2022). However, since the return of democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999, the conflict has taken another dimension as it has heightened unwarranted attacks on both actors which have resulted to loss of lives and properties as well as retarded economic growth (Nasidi, 2019). Meanwhile, there is a mutual distrust between the two contending groups as each group apportioned blame on the government especially, the Federal Government for favouritism towards the other group. For instance, in March 2016, the Agriculture Minister proposed a bill to the National Assembly on prohibition of cattle from roaming the cities and villages. The Fulani herders opposed this decision as they believed the government supported the farmers (International Crisis Group, 2017). Similarly, in January 2016, there was a proposition by the government to map grazing areas in all States in order to proffer temporary solution for cattle rearers. Most states in the North-Central and South opposed the proposition as they termed it as favouritism for the herders (International Crisis Group, 2017).

Meanwhile, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development attributed the conflict to climate change, rapid rising in population, diminishing arable and grazing lands among others (Isaac, 2022). However, Olomjobi and Ajilore (2018) agreed that environmental degradation, especially climate change, is the major cause of this conflict. However, Omotosho (2019) averred that herdsman-farmers conflicts arise as a result of the trespass by the herdsman on the farmland rather than a conflict between both the farmers and herders. Omotosho (2019) added that the growth in population, loss of grazing lands to agricultural expansion, blockage of transhumance old pastoral route and the intensification of desertification in Africa due to climate change are responsible for the crises. Meanwhile, Ajibo, Onuha,

Obikeguna, Okafor and Oluwole (2018) submitted that the conflict became sophisticated as farmers-herders conflict was above Boko Haram since 2015. For instance, the conflict recorded 1041 casualties and 2,037 deaths between 2017 and 2018 in Nigeria (Campbell, 2018).

Meanwhile, the mass media, especially the newspapers, which are saddled with the responsibilities of surveilling societal events such as election, economy and conflict have been commended and criticised by scholars based on the coverage and reportage of farmers-herders conflict. Some media scholars such as Usigbe and Ilo (2019) hold that, media have thrived well in managing farmers-herders conflict. Others reported that media engage in sensational and bias coverage and presentation of news and views on conflict-related issues, thus, undermining constructive contributions of mass media role in conflict (Ahmad, 2015). Similarly, Ogu (2018) argued that media workers do display partisanship in their reportage of conflict by promoting certain interests especially in conflicts that revolve around ethnic and religious divides. The perceived media display of partisanship has undermined the roles of the mass media in conflict resolution (Ahmad, 2015). However, the manner of farmers-herders reportage by the newspapers is largely believed to have a corresponding effect on the general society (Odoh, Onwukwaloye & Chime, 2023). This has prompted several scholars to conduct researches on newspapers' reportage and farmers-herders conflict. For instance, Abdulbaqi and Ariemu (2017) revealed that newspapers focused more on war-oriented journalism by stereotyping the Fulanis. This finding corroborated the finding of Olomjobi and Ajilore (2018) that newspapers framed herders as the principal perpetrators of violence. Isola (2018) concurred to the findings of Abdulbaqi and Ariemu (2017) and Olomjobi and Ajilore (2018) that Fulani herdsman were being negatively portrayed in the Nigerian media. However,

there is an alleged bias of media reportage and the politicisation of the conflicts as seen in some news headlines in the Nigerian newspapers such as Benue *killings, continuation of 1804 Jihad-Ortom* (*Vanguard* December 12, *E-Newspaper*, 2018), *media fuels herders vs farmers clashes* (*NewAfrican Magazine*, 2018). This reporting patterns jaundiced audience comprehension of media effort in the coverage of the conflict. Hence, there is a need to examine the newspapers reportage together with its corresponding effect on stakeholders in Nigeria.

Besides, much of the extant studies on newspapers reportage of conflict are skewed along qualitative (in-depth interview and qualitative content analysis) or quantitative (survey) methodological praxes with little exploration of the phenomenon from quantitative content analysis. For instance, Adisa, Mohammed and Ahmad (2015) employed in-depth interview to gather data on newspapers, conflict management and ethnic behaviour. In a similar vein, Kajuru (2015) used survey as the data gathering instrument in mass media and management of election crises. Abubakre (2016) adopted quantitative content analysis to elicit data on mass media and farmers-herders crisis. Meanwhile, some scholars have advocated for the combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods in a single research project to gather or analyse data as they will enable the integration of research findings (Robtimans, Paul & Nilbron, 2019). In order to bridge this gap, this study employed mixed methods of quantitative (content analysis) and qualitative (in-depth interview) to examine stakeholders' perception of newspapers framing of farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

- i. Evaluate the strategies that newspapers adopt in the framing of farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria;

- ii. Investigate the perception of stakeholders on newspapers framing of farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria,
- iii. Examine the stakeholders' perceived consequences of the newspapers' framing of the conflict in Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

Farmers-herders Conflict and Newspapers Reportage

Farmers-herders conflict is a clash between sedentary farmers and nomadic farmers in Nigeria. Meanwhile, the conflict has become sophisticated and well-coordinated since 2015 (Ajibo, Onuoha, Obi-Keguna, Okafor & Oluwole, 2018) and the lethality and scale of the magnitude of the violence accounted for the ranking of Fulani herdsmen as the fourth most dangerous terror group in the world after *Boko Haram*, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria also known as ISIS or ISIL and Al-Shabaab (Buchanaan, 2015). This ranking can be ascribed to the annual average fatalities of more than 2,500 people between 2011 and 2016 from the farmers-herders conflict which often exceeds the death toll from *Boko Haram* insurgency (Global Terrorism Index, 2020). For instance, between 2017 and 2018, the farmers-herders conflict recorded 1,041 casualties and 2,037 deaths (Campbell, 2018). The *Boko Haram* terrorist activities resulted to a death toll of 2,016 people (Ilo, Jonathan-Chaver & Adamolehin, 2019). This corroborates the submission of the Institute for Economics and Peace (2015) that classified farmers-herders conflict as the fourth deadliest group of terrorists that had killed 1, 229 people in 2014. The Institute also personalised criminal gangs of bandits in South-West, North-West, and South-East Nigeria as Fulani extremists. For instance, the incessant crisis in Southern Kaduna was reported by some media organisations to have been perpetrated by Fulani herdsmen (Ayandele, 2021). Moreover, the conflict

was reported to have claimed over 10,000 lives over the past decades with more than 6,000 casualties in the past two years (Ilo, Jonathan-Chaver & Adamolehin, 2019; Kwaja & Ademola-Adellehin, 2018).

Meanwhile, the mass media especially the newspapers is critical at keeping members of the populace abreast of the happenings. Thus, in reporting events, newspapers are expected to promote peace and unity of the nation by tactically reporting issues that can elicit violence. In their submission, Oso (2017) and Ozohu-Suleiman (2013) reported that mass media especially newspapers have a greater influence on national security and this has led to interests in studying media roles in conflict. Such studies have revealed that the media are important organisations that can make or mar the peaceful co-existence in any society through their reportage (Guyen, 2018). However, the newspapers, through prompt discharge of their constitutional responsibilities, are powerful means of entrenching peace and mitigating conflicts in the society. For instance, the choice of words that the newspapers use in framing their reportage can be linked to a popular Yoruba adage which says “*oro nii yo obi la’po, oro niiyo ofa la’po*” which means that words can elicit positive or negative reactions which can subsequently resolve or instigate conflicts (Isaac, Olusola & Olusola, 2015). In the same vein, Guven (2018); Ozohu-Suleiman (2013) argued that the newspapers, through their choice of words in conflict reportage, have a greater influence on readers’ perception of such a conflict in the society. Hence, newspapers’ choice of words in reporting issues is a critical factor in determining audience perception of such issues.

Framing Theory

It is pertinent to discuss Agenda setting theory before delving into framing theory since framing theory is an offshoot of agenda setting theory. Agenda setting which was postulated in 1972 by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (Daramola,

2012) asserted that the relationship between news coverage and public perception of important issues. The theory added that the importance the media public attaches to an issue is predetermined by mass media attention to such an issue (Amenaghawon, 2015). Hence, agenda setting theory hinged on accessibility of an issue through the media reportage. Framing theory on the other hand, was propounded by Goffman in 1974 (Sometchukwu, Emeka & Uchenna, 2018). Framing theory can be traced to interpretive sociology, which says that people interpret reality based on definition (Ardevol-Abreu, 2018). The basic assumption of the theory is that the media do engage in framing by focusing on certain issues present them within a certain field of meaning (media framing). This consequently determines the choice of meaning people make from such issues (audience framing) (Griffin, 2012). That is, media do tell the audience what to think about (Agenda setting) and how to think about it (Second level agenda setting, framing theory). In relation to this study, the choice of words that media actors use to present conflict issues and the manner of their presentations (media framing) can determine the kind of frame (perceptions) that the audience ascribes to such news (audience framing).

3. Methodology

This study adopted mixed method research of quantitative content analysis and qualitative in-depth interview. The perception of stakeholders was explored through in-depth interviews (qualitative method) while the framing of farmers-herders conflict was obtained through content analysis (quantitative content analysis). The population of the newspapers comprised all the week days editions of *The Punch*, *The Guardian* and *Daily Trust* published between January 1, and December 18, 2028 which amounted to 780 editions; 52 multiplied by 5 multiplied by 3. These newspapers were selected because

they were listed among the major newspapers in Nigeria, with online versions, thus, can be accessed in any part of the world. The choice of 2018 editions of the newspapers were based on the renewed public attention on the farmers-herders issues in the media especially the newspapers, generating an increasing amount of public and private discussions among the citizenry. Similarly, the choice of newspaper was predicated on the influential role played by the newspapers in attracting global attention to a conflict. For instance, in the Arab Spring; Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, newspapers' coverage of violent scenes led to the agitation for the dislodgement of the sitting government of Libya in 2011 (Gambhir and Sign, 2019). Barde (2013) added that, newspapers contributed to the escalation of ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Thus, newspapers seemed to be the most appropriate for the study. However, the population of the stakeholders cannot be scientifically established, as there was no record for the traditional rulers, religious leaders, members of Non-Governmental Organisations, individual farmers and herders, as well as their executive members from South-West and North-Central/ East geo-political zones at the time of gathering data for this study.

For quantitative content analysis, systematic sampling technique; nth term was used to select three days per week which were Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays' editions. This was done in line with the submission of Tejumaiye (2017) that nth term can be used to select sample size by skipping one day. The sample size was arrived at by multiplying three by 52 which equaled to 156; 468 editions. For qualitative method on the other hand, purposive sampling technique was used to select 17 stakeholders; two farmers' executive, one herders' executive, three traditional rulers, two religious leaders, four farmers, four herders and one Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) and 18

stakeholders; two farmers' executive, two herders' executive, two traditional rulers, two religious leaders, four herders, four farmers and two NGOs from the South West (Oyo State) and North Central geo-political (Benue State) zones of Nigeria respectively which equaled to 35 stakeholders. The two geo-political zones were purposively selected because they are the greenest zones with abundant grazing fields for cows and fertile land for farmers. 17 and 18 stakeholders were selected from the two geo-political zones based on the assertion of Baker and Edwards (2012) that recommended between 20 and 50 informants for interview. However, the researchers encountered difficulties in assessing all the required stakeholders from Benue State. This propelled them to extend the stakeholders to Taraba State since both states are homogenous in nature. The choice of the stakeholders was based on their experiences in the intractable conflict and accessibility to the newspapers for information on the conflict.

Self-constructed coding sheet and coding guides were used for the collection quantitative data while semi-structured interview guide was used to gather qualitative data. Descriptive statistics and thematic analyses were used to analyse the data respectively.

Unit of Analysis

For this study, the unit of analysis was the newspapers' content in the forms of news, columns, features, cartoons and editorials that focused on the farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria in the selected national dailies within the period of study, i.e. between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018.

Content Category

The framing indicators that the selected newspapers used to report farmer-herder conflict was categorised as peace-induced; peace, people and solution and violence-induced: war/violence, elite and victory. The framing indicators were adapted from the 13-generic model of Johan Galtung's (2005) proposed peace journalism model.

4. Results and Discussion

Findings on Quantitative Method-Content Analysis

Objective 1: Strategies that the selected newspapers used to frame farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria

Conflict indicators was used to measure strategies that the selected newspapers used to frame farmers-herders conflict. The indicators comprise peace, people, solution for peace-induced and violence, elite and victory for violence-induced journalism. Table 1 presents the details of the findings.

Table 1: Indicators for Framing Farmers-herders Conflict Reportage in the Selected Nigerian Newspapers

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

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

It can be deduced from the table that the bulk of the reports on the farmers-herders conflict in *The Punch*, *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* newspapers focused on violence which is an indicator of violence-induced framing while *The Punch* newspaper had the highest number on reports on violence. Thus, the selected newspapers adopted violence-indicator as framing strategy to frame farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria. Hence, the selected newspapers adopted violence-induced strategies to frame the conflict.

Findings on Qualitative Method- In-depth Interview

The answers to objective 2 and 3 were based on the data gathered from the 35 selected stakeholders for the qualitative study. Hence, the findings presented stakeholders’ perception of newspapers framing of farmers-herders conflict was based on two themes and four sub-themes.

Theme one: Perception of Stakeholders on Newspapers Framing of Farmer-Herder Conflict in Nigeria

Words used in newspapers reportage can be likened to a sword as it has potential to generate different meanings from the same set of people especially on issue that is contending in nature. As Isaac, Olusola and Olusola (2015) submitted that the choice of words for message presentation is critical in meaning making. This is reflected in the analysis of the interview which indicated that stakeholders in farmers-herders conflict perceived the conflict through various lens. Thus, the analysis of theme one which answered the research question two was sub-thematically presented.

Theme 1 Sub-theme 1: Threat to Economy and National Security

25 of the informants perceived farmers-herders conflict framing as a threat to economy and national security as some of the informants submitted that the conflict has hampered the economic progress in Nigeria. One of the herders; informant one said, “It has hindered economic development as it affected both the farmers and herders from partaking in their daily activities which consequently affected the economy grossly. This has therefore, resulted to high cost of farm produce in Nigeria as currently witnessed by all residents”. Furthermore, informant five asserted that:

Farmers-herders conflict has taken a different dimension in the last two years ago in such a way that the itinerant Fulani has been preventing farmers from going to their farm for their daily activities and this has consequently, affected food supply especially in Benue State that is known as ‘Food Basket’ of the nation.

In addition, informant eight added, “The conflict between the two has drastically affected the economy. Similarly, informant SWHR4 stated “The farmers-herders

conflict is the violent conflict between nomadic Fulani and the farmer’s community in Nigeria which has caused loss of lives and economic devastation.”

In addition, informant nineteen submitted, “It is devastating because the farmers-herders conflict has taken critical dimensions of what we have today, like the issue of banditry, kidnappings, etc.” The Nigerian newspapers are even worsening the situation by amplifying the conflict” Based on the findings from this study, farmers-herders conflict is partly responsible for the present state of Nigerian economy and security.

Theme 1 Sub-theme 2: Instigation

In examining alleged instigation of newspapers framing on farmers-herders conflict, majority (27) of the informants submitted that the profiling strategies in the conflict reportage is an indication of instigation as it prompts other party to take law into their hands. For instance, informant nine said, “The alleged criminal profiling adopted by the newspapers to frame the conflict contributed immensely to the escalation of the conflict; hence, national unrest.” Informant eighteen added, “Newspapers do incite either the Fulanis or indigenes against each other and this consequently aggravates the conflict in the localities or rural areas.”

Similarly, informant twenty-two added,

The media especially the newspapers are not helping because they are championing their narratives towards violence; i.e. blaming one ethnic or one actor in the conflict and that has propelled people to take law into their hands. For instance, one Fulani man was killed while coming from Portharcourt largely because he was a Fulani. The killing was as a result of newspapers submission that the perpetrators of crime in Nigeria are largely the Fulanis.

In addition, informant four opined:

The Nigerian newspapers lack thorough investigative power. They hardly visit the grass root where they can gather authentic information. Most of the time, the story we read in the newspapers about farmers-herders conflict is hardly accurate. Hence, the newspapers do use their reports to instigate one tribe against another. The reports have made people to despise the Fulanis. Whereas, we need them and they need us too. Hence, newspapers need to have well-trained representatives at the grass root.

Corroborating the newspapers information on the conflict to be biased, Informant nineteen submitted:

In spite of the fact that newspapers created awareness about the conflict, they have contributed significantly to the conflict by being biased and sentiment in their reportage. This manner consequently escalated the conflict. The ownership as well, as politics made the newspapers to totally condemn the Fulani ethnicity; who is predominantly herder through their reportage. This has made people both in Nigeria and the Diasporas to see the Fulanis as criminals. Meanwhile, the newspapers regulatory body should emulate NBC (National Broadcasting Organisation) by regulating the content of newspapers reportage. This regulation will go a long way in mitigating the crisis.

The findings therefore, revealed that newspapers framing of farmers-herders

conflict instigated the two contending groups in Nigeria against each other.

Theme Two: Stakeholders Perceived Consequences of Newspapers' framing of Farmers-herders Conflict in Nigeria

Some scholars such as Adisa, Mohammed and Ahmad (2015) argued that media workers do display partisanship in their reportage of conflict by promoting certain interests especially in the conflicts that involve ethnic and religious divides. This has made people to conclude that the mass media especially the newspapers escalate conflict especially farmers-herders conflict (*E-African Magazine*, 2018). To examine this assumption, theme three which focuses on stakeholders' perceived consequences of the newspapers 'framing of farmers-herders conflict in Nigerian has two sub-themes.

Theme 2 Sub-theme 1: Provocative and Inciteful

Majority of the informants (27) submitted that the consequence of framing strategies most especially the use of ethnic profiling in the newspapers' is tearing the nation apart. They therefore, urged the Nigerian newspapers to facilitate orderliness in the society through their reportage. Informant three said:

The adoption of ethno-religious strategies for profiling the conflict is responsible for the state of anarchy that Nigeria finds itself as this has propelled victims to take law into their hands. There are copious examples to substantiate this especially the recent crisis in our state and other states in Nigeria. For instance, the ejection of some people in our state is consequent upon the framing strategies that the newspapers adopted while reporting farmers-herders conflict and other factors that I do not want to mention.

To informant twenty-five, “The consequence of the present strategy that the newspapers adopted is provocative and inciteful as it leads to disorderliness and disintegration. This is because it instigated one group against another.”

Informant thirty concluded:

Newspapers need to adopt peace-related approach to frame this conflict. Farmers-herders conflict is inevitable as they both struggle for their daily survivals through the same resource. The present strategy that the newspapers used in framing the conflict is inciteful as it instigates each group against other and it has resulted into disintegration and violence building in Nigeria as evidence abounds everywhere now.

In addition, informant six added:

If newspapers continue with the strategies that they are using, the consequence is national disintegration. At present, Nigeria is facing challenge of insecurity as a result of the agenda that newspapers set for people through the approach for reporting farmers-herders conflict and this dictates the direction that people follow. Hence, the newspapers should re-strategise their approach for framing the conflict in order to facilitate peace, unity and national development.

Informant twenty averred:

At present, there is no peaceful co-existence between farmers and herders. Some of the states that are dominated by farmers have ejected Fulani herders from the states in spite of the fact that herders were the one that paved ways for those states when they were thick bush.

Hence, the consequence of newspapers framing of the conflict has caused disorderliness and disintegration in the society.

To informant seven:

People believe that Fulani herdsman are responsible for the insecurity that is ravaging the country such as kidnapping, banditry, etc. at present. This belief is attributed to the choice of words that newspapers adopted in framing of farmers-herders conflict. Hence, the consequence of ethnic profiling for framing of the conflict is disorderliness and violence building.

Theme 2 Sub-theme 2: National and Economic Development

Five of the informants averred that the newspapers framing of the conflict has facilitated national development as it has made people to know whom to eject from the society. Informant two said, “The use of ethnic profiling to frame the perpetrators has brought those that have similar interest together. Hence, if the newspapers can continue to reveal the perpetrators, it can strengthen the national and economic development.” To informant one, the adoption of peace advocacy by some newspapers has to some extent brought us together now. “Our community is devoid of some elements at present and this has strengthened our relationship with peace loving individual. Thus, the consequence of peace advocacy in the newspapers is peaceful co-existence.”

The findings from theme two revealed that the newspapers framing is provocative and inciteful, thus, escalation of the conflict.

Discussion of the Findings

The study was set out to examine the stakeholders’ perception of newspapers framing of farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria. The findings from the two methods

quantitative method (Content analysis) and qualitative method (in-depth interview) were merged. This was done in line with the submission of Creswell (2018) that posited that mixed method enabled the researcher to compare, confirm and disconfirm the qualitative and quantitative results in the discussion section. Creswell (2018) added that this approach focused on how each datum supports each other. Therefore, this section embedded, compared and merged the results from both methods. This is in line with the submissions of Creswell and Plano-Clark (2018); Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017) that merging of qualitative and quantitative data enhances deeper understanding and interpretation of the results as the results from one method complements the other.

Strategies that the selected newspapers adopted in framing farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria and Stakeholders' perception of newspapers framing of farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria

Objective one of the study which examined the strategies that the selected newspapers adopted in framing farmers-herders conflict reportage showed that the Nigerian newspapers used violence-induced strategy to frame the conflict by adopting news as the most used story type for the reports. The corresponding findings on the qualitative in-depth interview in theme one; that is objective two which examined the stakeholders' perception on newspapers framing of farmers-herders conflict revealed that the selected newspapers instigated one group against another which eventually contributed to the escalation of the conflict.

Meanwhile, the findings from theme one; instigation, bias reportage corroborated the findings from research question one which revealed that the selected newspapers adopted violence-induced framing to frame the conflict. Therefore, the findings for the strategies that the newspapers adopted in framing the conflict corroborated

instigation since the findings revealed that newspapers adopted violence-induced strategies to frame farmers-herders conflict. This finding was supported by Adisa (2015) that discovered that newspaper framing is powerful as it has the tendency to direct the public to conflicts. In addition, the finding was in tandem with the views of Abdulbaqi and Ariemu (2017) that posited that newspapers used more of war-oriented journalism than peace-oriented journalism in farmers-herders conflict reportage. Furthermore, the finding corroborated the submissions of Usigbe and Ilo (2019) that opined that media bias was premised on pre-conceived notions among the media audiences. Therefore, the Nigerian newspapers framing of farmers-herders conflict partly contributed to the state of insecurity in Nigeria based on the stakeholders' perception of newspapers framing of the conflict.

Stakeholders' perceived consequences of newspapers' framing of farmers-herders conflict in Nigerian and Strategies that the selected newspapers adopted in framing farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria

In respect to theme two of the study which investigated the stakeholders' perceived consequences of newspapers' framing of farmers-herders conflict in Nigerian, the corresponding findings on the quantitative content analysis in the objective one which examined the strategies that newspapers adopted in framing of farmers-herders conflict revealed that the selected newspapers instigated one group against another which eventually contributed to the escalation of the conflict. The findings showed that the framing is partly responsible for the state of insecurity in Nigeria as the framing is perceived as inciteful and provocative which contributed to the escalation of the conflict and consequently facilitated disorderliness and disintegration among members of the Nigerian society. The informants'

submission was in line with Tersooubwa (2018) and Nasidi (2019) who posited that farmers-herders crisis is a threat to national security as it claimed many lives and properties in Nigeria. Thus, newspapers' framing of farmers-herders conflict is partly responsible for national insecurity.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

There is no doubt that farmers-herders conflict is a clog in the wheel of national security in Nigeria. Newspapers which are constitutionally recognised as a structure in promoting national unity and peaceful co-existence have been accused of fanning the ember of disunity through framing of farmers-herders conflict. This served as a motivational factor for the researcher to investigate the stakeholders' perception of newspapers framing of farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria in an attempt to establish the relationship between the newspapers framing and audience perception of the conflict. The analysis showed that newspapers report on farmers-herders conflict are violence-induced in nature as most of the reports adopted violence-induced framing and this stimulated escalation of the conflict in Nigerian society as it informed the perspectives of stakeholders towards the conflict. Hence, newspapers framing of farmers-herders conflict escalated the conflict and animosity among stakeholders in some parts of Nigeria. Based on the findings of this study, the study recommended that newspapers' regulatory body-Nigerian Press Council (NPC) and other professional bodies such as Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE), Newspapers Proprietor Association of Nigeria (NPAN), Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), etc. should engineer legal policy frameworks that would mandate adherence to ethical, socially responsible, conflict-sensitive coverage of issues like farmers-herders conflict that bother on national security. In addition, all stakeholders especially the mass media organisations (newspapers) and

government at all levels should facilitate the promotion of national interest as this will enable the newspapers organisations to be conscious of framing strategies that can trigger violence among various stakeholders in Nigerian society.

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