

Separatist Agitations in Nigeria: War versus Peace Journalism



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By

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Abstract

The mass media are veritable tools for information dissemination, surveillance and correlation. Conflict reporting is one of the delicate areas of media practice. The type of agenda the media set on a conflict can either fuel or quell the crisis. Warring parties take their grievances to the media, with words as lethal as ballistic missiles. The Nigerian media, having been divided along ethnic lines since the colonial era, report separatist agitations with ethnic lens. With the trend, peace journalism, an emerging form of journalism that creates conducive environment for peaceful resolution of conflicts, seems elusive in Nigeria. This paper examined how the Nigerian media reported Biafra and Boko Haram, and how peace journalism approach can be adopted to improve media performance in this regard. Using desk review, descriptive survey, content analysis and personal interview methods, the study found that the Nigerian media adopted war journalism approach in reporting Biafra agitation and Boko Haram, amidst influencing factors. The paper recommends adoption of peace journalism approach by the Nigerian mass media, to be relevant in finding lasting solutions to the conflicts; integration of Nigerian media into the national security framework and domestication of Freedom of Information Act in States of Nigeria.

Keywords: Separatist, agitations, Biafra, Boko Haram, peace journalism

Introduction

Nigeria has had series of stormy separatist agitations from her early years as a sovereign country. The Politico-economic, cultural and religious configuration of Nigeria predisposes the country to ethno-religious rivalry, accentuating the desire and struggle for secession. The amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates to form a united Nigeria in 1914 appears to be a forced marriage between strange bed fellows, judging from the perpetual tensions among the amalgamated nationalities.

The Biafra movement produced the hardest separatist knock that culminated in the Nigeria-Biafra civil war between 1967 and 1970. The end of the war seemed to signal the end of Biafra movement. The resurgence of Biafra in recent years has created a new wave in the polity. The agitations of Niger Delta groups for resource control, secession calls by Oduduwa people and the Boko Haram have attracted huge attention

Various media platforms are awash with calls for secession by organized, anomic and amorphous ethnic and regional formations in Nigeria. The cacophony of separatist agitations is loudest in the social media. The trend is not unusual. Down the history lane, parties in major conflicts and wars have often used the mass media to propagate their ideologies, ventilate their grievances and vilify their opponents. The capacity of the mass media to prevent, fuel and/or quell conflicts have been recognized and adequately captured in literature. “The media have an important contribution to make to the strengthening of peace and international understanding and in countering racialism, apartheid, and incitement to war,” (UNESCO media development, 1979, Art 3, p. 102). The media are a double-edged sword. They can be frightful weapons of violence when they propagate messages of intolerance or disinformation; they can be instruments of conflict resolution when the information they present is reliable, respects human rights and represents diverse views (el-Nawawy and Powers, 2008).

Of all the separatist agitations in Nigeria in contemporary times, the Biafra movement and the Boko Haram insurgency are the major threats to the continued existence of Nigeria as a country. These two movements have conspicuous presence in local and international media, because of their enormous impact on peace, lives, properties and economy of the country.

This study examined the patterns of representation of Biafra and Boko Haram activities and government’s interventions, responses and approaches in the Nigerian mass media. It equally gauged the views of media audience on media reportage of Biafra and Boko Haram; and

articulated the conflict de-escalating features of peace journalism that can be adopted by the Nigerian mass media in reporting Biafra and Boko Haram.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to:

1. Find out the frames in mass media reports on Biafra and Boko Haram
2. Ascertain whether the media adopt war journalism or peace journalism approach in reporting Biafra and Boko Haram issues
3. Find out audience perception of media representation of Biafra and Boko Haram
4. Determine how peace journalism approach can be used to enhance media performance in reporting Biafra and Boko Haram

Research Questions

These questions were posed to guide the study:

1. What are the frames in mass media reports on Biafra and Boko Haram?
2. Do the media adopt war journalism approach or peace journalism approach in reporting Biafra and Boko Haram issues?
3. How does the audience perceive media representation of Biafra and Boko Haram?
4. How can peace journalism approach be used to enhance media performance in reporting Biafra and Boko Haram?

War Journalism versus Peace Journalism

Media scholars have attempted to categorize conflict reporting into war journalism and peace journalism. This is based on the frames created and agenda set by media reports on conflicts. War journalism is the brand of journalism that escalates conflicts, while peace journalism is the brand of conflict journalism that is presumed to de-escalate conflicts.

The advocates of peace journalism equate it with good journalism during conflict times as it offers a detailed, balanced and fairer approach. The prime concern of peace journalism is to enable all the stakeholders in a conflict to share their views on the situation. It calls for a multi-perspectival, contextualized and people-centric journalism. Peace journalism utilizes all the existing tools of journalism to responsibly inform the people about the conduct of wars, with a view to promoting peace and harmony (Iqbal and Hussain, 2017).

War journalism has four main features: it is oriented to violence and war; it is highly influenced by propaganda, it focuses on the opinion of the elites and it focuses on zero-sum

game, that is, one part wins all and the other part loses all (Galtung, 2002, cited in Gavilan, 2011, p. 2)

On the other hand, peace journalism is oriented to conflict transformation, to inform with veracity; it cares for the opinion of the victims of the conflict, and it understands peace as a solution of a conflict where all the parties involved get some benefits. Peace journalism requires the journalist to take an interpretative approach, concentrated on the stories that highlight peace initiatives; it tones down ethnic and religious differences; anticipates later conflicts; focuses on the structure of societies in conflict; and promotes the solution of the conflict, reconstitution and reconciliation (Galtung 1997, 1998).

Gavilan (2011, p. 2) summarised peace journalism model in four normative points:

- The journalist must analyse the conflict to be able to inform about violent facts. This analysis must include the roots and causes, the confronting parties and their objectives.
- The information should present an orientation to conflict solution, giving relevance to proposals, negotiations, agreements, etc.
- The journalists should pursue truth in a symmetrical manner, that is, reality-positive and negative-of the contending parties, not just from one side.
- The orientation of the information must be towards the voice of common people and not just for the elites.

All its presumed gains notwithstanding, Loyn (2003, 2007) strongly criticised peace journalism because of its “contempt for objectivity” and called for the more traditional values of journalism such as objectivity and balance, highlighting that “objectivity has to remain as a goal, the only sacred goal we have.” But Peleg (2007) responded to the criticism, stating that “the concept of objectivity has always been elusive,” adding that “a more realistic outline of the spirit of journalism holds that objectivity is simply unsustainable and that journalists should aspire to something much more like a neutral perspective on any controversial matter” (Peleg, 2007, p. 2). In this sense, Iggers (1998, p. 91) also pointed out that “though few journalists still defend objectivity, this remains as one of the greatest obstacles to perform a more responsible role in the building of public life.” The media are a third party in times of conflict and exist between the environment of the conflict situation and the audience, by facilitating communication, and arbitrating the situation. By being fully informed, the audience is brought inside the conflict, and

is mobilized into replacing “the ecstasy of combat with the harmony of concord” (Peleg, 2006; 2007, p. 5, cited Ciftci, 2014, p. 48)

Peace journalism can be identified as ‘*responsible journalism*’ and ‘*good journalism*’ as journalistic news coverage contributes to the process of making or keeping the peaceful settlement of conflict from a normative perspective. It is a new form of journalism that sees journalists as part of the solution rather than part of the problem (Loyn, 2007; Lynch, 2006; 2007a; 2007b). Galtung (2002) suggested that peace journalism might also be identified by the term *attachment* which means being attached with all actual and possible victims of conflicts in order to provide appropriate grounds for a peaceful settlement.

In his manual on conflict sensitive journalism, Ross Howard, cited in Buromensky, et.al (2016, p. 64) provides a number of such journalistic taboos when it comes to covering conflict. They include:

- Avoid reporting a conflict as consisting of two opposing sides. Find other affected interests and include their stories, opinions, goals.
- Avoid defining the conflict by always quoting the leaders who make familiar demands. Go beyond the elites and give to ordinary people who also have a stake in this conflict.
- Avoid only reporting what divides the sides in conflict. Ask the opposing sides questions that may reveal common ground. Report on interests or goals they may share.
- Avoid always focusing on the suffering and fear of only one side. Treat all sides’ suffering as equally newsworthy.
- Avoid words like devastated, tragedy and terrorised to describe what has been done to one group. These kinds of words put the reporter on one side. Only quote someone else who uses these words.
- Avoid emotional and imprecise words. Assassination, for example, is the murder of a head of state and no one else. Massacre is the deliberate killing of innocent, unarmed civilians.
- Avoid words like terrorist, extremist or fanatic.
- Avoid making an opinion into a fact. If someone claims something, state their name, so it is their opinion and not your fact.
- Avoid waiting for leaders on one side to offer solutions. Explore peace ideas wherever they come from. Put these ideas to the leaders and report their response.

But there are others as well:

- Avoid the tendency to favour official (government and military) sources.
- Avoid finding the point of coverage that fits only one side's narrative.

Cover the conflict in its entirety and all its complexity.

- Avoid inserting opinion into news coverage. News should present information that then allows the public to decide how it feels. Inserting opinion only serves to fuel distrust, misunderstanding, and resentment toward the media and between those involved in the conflict.
- Avoid oversimplification. Every conflict, even those between siblings, usually has some kind of history. Ensure that you and/or your media outlet provide a variety of coverage that can illustrate the bigger picture.
- Avoid resorting to mostly human interest stories that rely on emotion to illustrate weighty issues, or using a zero-sum debt approach that ignores the complexities of the situation.

One of the main problems with Conventional or War Reporting is that it is based on the faulty assumption that violence is a direct response to conflicts and crises, thereby leading audiences to value violence as a direct response to conflict rather than peace. But Peace Journalism conveys stories that showcase violent conflicts as opportunities for intervention and impels society to privilege nonviolent and inclusive responses. Jake Lynch, one of the founding thinkers of Peace Journalism, defined Peace Journalism as “when editors and reporters make choices – of what stories to report and about how to report them – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict” (Lynch and McGoldrick 2005, p. 5).

Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) describe four practical distinctions of peace journalism:

1. It takes an analytical approach to conflict, seeking opportunities to identify parties, goals, needs and interests.
2. It projects a multiparty conflict model rather than a Manichean “tug-of war”.
3. It finds room for perspectives from beyond the usual “official sources”.
4. It seeks out peace initiatives as well as “pegs” (or opportunities) to report on them.

Citing different authors, Peleg (2006, p. 3) explains that peace journalism (PJ) can mitigate tensions and exert favourable influence in all three dimensions:

1. Situation: Recounting the initial interests in contention in contextual manner, whereby all circumstances, environmental conditions, spectrum of availabilities and sequential background

are disclosed. Such a description does not present the parties to the conflict as hungry contenders vying for ascendancy and eager for the other's defeat. Describing the complexity of the scene: not two rivals trapped in an ultimate zero-sum-game of winning or dying but a complex arena of multiple players and options (Tannen, 1999).

2. Attitude: Laying out the gamut of psychological feelings and outlooks that are involved. Concentrating not just on the denigrating and condescending aspects of the dialogue between the sides, but also emphasizing fears, concerns, insecurities, mistrust, miscommunication, and ignorance to make the repertoire of dehumanization more human. Abandoning false and excessive polarization (Mnookin and Ross, 1995; Bar-Tal and Teichman, 2005) for a more reasonable and impartial study of mindsets under tension and duress.

3. Behaviour: Calling attention to the fact that violence is not the only form of activity in conflict. Most conflict accounts are fighting or aggression-oriented. They are formulated in competition parlance and underscored by images of vanquish or subjugation. But violence is not the only performance in conflict, and certainly must not be the obvious one. Attempts to negotiate or create contacts can be depicted alongside with the more palpable belligerency descriptions.

In a nutshell, war journalism approach fans the embers of violence in conflict situations by the use of inflammatory diction, projection of elite views and concentrating on the negatives that can trigger reprisal attacks, deepen animosities and hostilities; while peace journalism douses tension in conflict situations by concentrating on peace initiatives, contending issues, victims' views, thorough analysis of remote and immediate causes of conflicts and using more therapeutic/conciliatory diction. The Nigeria media can contribute more meaningfully to finding lasting solutions to Biafra and Boko Haram issues by adopting peace journalism approach in reporting the conflicts.

Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria: The Media Perspective

Boko Haram is an Islamic sect in Northern Nigeria (especially in the north east) that is opposed to western education. It uses violence, hostage taking, killing and bombing as strategies for achieving its secession agenda. Thousands of lives and properties worth billions of naira have been lost to the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.. Many media scholars have conducted studies to evaluate the nature, pattern and effects of media coverage of Boko Haram activities and government's response to the insurgency.

Obaje (2017) investigated newspaper coverage of Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria, with a view to identifying the frames in the stories published. A total of 120 editions of four selected newspapers were analyzed. Findings showed that straight news was predominant. The ineffective response of the government, in terms of its uncompromising behavior and inability to contain the insurgency, was widely reported. Findings also indicated that the newspapers dwelt so much inflammatorily on the impact of attacks by the sect and deemphasized messages that could help end the violence. This is a clear example of war journalism approach.

In a related study, Sabo and Salisu (2017) did a content analysis of pictorial framing of the Boko Haram insurgency by *The Daily Trust* and *The Nation* newspapers, covering January 1st, 2011 to December 30 2014. A total of 367 pictures on Boko Haram were generated from the 288 issues selected. Result showed that horrible themes constitute most pictures (61.4%) on Boko Haram. The study also found that most of the pictures could not communicate meanings to the readers without words.

Chioma and Ojomo (2015) conducted a study to comparatively evaluate the framing of government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency over three years (2012-2014) on the *YouTube* webcast channels of: *Aljazeera*, *Cable Network News (CNN)*, and *Channels Television*. Adopting the content analysis research design, 157 videos were purposively sampled and analyzed using a validated coding sheet and manual subject Cohen Kappa's inter-coder reliability test which revealed an almost perfect agreement (Kappa= Coder 1, 2 & 3: 0.9997, 0.997, and 0.818). Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that all three international televisions gave prominence to government's response to *Boko Haram* insurgency through its *Security Agency Operations* at 46% on *Aljazeera*, 36.5% on *Channels*, and 48.4% on *CNN*, while the analysis of the yearly trend in their framing presented a significant difference. *Aljazeera* and *CNN* adopted a more *critical* approach in their discourse, while *Channels* was mostly *Distance*.

However, Samuel (2016) investigated Nigerian Print media reportage of terrorism with a focus on Boko Haram activities. Three newspapers (*The Punch*, *Daily Sun* and *The Guardian*) were used in the study. Considering the media frames investigated in the study, 42.0% was in favour of rescue efforts, hopelessness was recorded low with 2.3% and conspiracy frame was 1.1%. The study also found that terror prevention and intelligent gathering were more reported as urgent actions that government needs to take.

Biafra Agitation

The agitation for the creation of a sovereign state of Biafra is the separatist agitation that has given the heaviest and rudest shock to Nigeria's unity. It resulted in the Nigeria-Biafra civil war between 1967 and 1970. The emergence of Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and, lately, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) marked the resurgence of Biafra agitation. The resurgent Biafra agitators have often declared adoption of non-violent approach in achieving their objectives, but there have been series of conflicts between Nigerian security forces and the Biafra agitators, resulting in loss of lives and properties. The Nigerian government proscribed the IPOB in September 2017, declaring it a terrorist organization. These developments have heated up the polity.

Duruji (2009, p.57) found that whereas imperative of security of the Igbos led to the first attempt at the declaration of the Republic of Biafra in 1967, the renewed demand for Biafra has to do with the perceived marginalization of the Igbos since the end of the Nigeria-Biafra civil war. According to him, "security imperative was the main determining factor for the declaration of Biafra at that time. But the resurgence of Igbo nationalism of the twenty-first century mainly revolved around the issue of non-full insertion of the Igbos into the Nigerian society."

Ibeano, Orji and Iwuamadi (2016) found that the recurring Biafra agitation has fundamental consequences including disruption economic activities – they rank disruption of economic activities as the most serious consequence of renewed agitation for Biafra, discouragement of investments in the South East, negative effect on regional and national security, an increasing break down of existing forms of inter-generational relationship, serious implications for political stability and democratic consolidation, and Inter-ethnic disaffection.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the framing theory. The theory explains how the pattern of media presentation of reports on issues and event can shape public opinion and perception on the events and issues. "Framing theory asserts that people use expectations of social world to make sense of that social world," (Baran and Davis, 2012, p. 42). Chioma and Ojomo (2015, p. 3) further explain that "mass media audiences make sense of their environment/events within their immediate and extended environments based on the manner in which the media project such issues."

This theory is considered appropriated for the study because, unlike Agenda-setting theory that emphasizes the degree of attention given to an issue or event by the media to make media audience see the importance of such issue or event, framing theory looks at how the pattern/manner of media presentation of an issue or event influences audience perception, understanding, interpretation and response to the issues. The theory helps to understand how pattern of media reports on Biafra agitation and Boko Haram influences audience's perception, interpretation and response to the issues and conflicts.

Methodology

Four research methods were adopted in the study. A thorough desk review of relevant literature was done to ensure proper conceptualization of the study and establishment of the gap in literature the study would fill. Content analysis method was used to analyse the reports of three Nigerian newspapers – The Sun, Daily Post and The Nation – on Biafra and Boko Haram activities and government responses. The content analysis covered a period of one year, August 2016 to September 2017. The period was selected because of the momentum gathered by the Biafra movement, following the arrest, prosecution, release of the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Mr. Nnamdi Kanu and the declaration of IPOB as a terrorist organization by the National Defence Headquarters; the release of some of the abducted Chibok school girls and renewed bombing of cities and villages by book Haram. Online editions of the selected newspapers were used due to their rich archives and frequent updates.

Descriptive survey method was also adopted to elicit the views of residents of four states in north east and south east geo-political zones of Nigeria on media representation of Biafra and Boko Haram issues. The states are Adamawa and Gombe (north east), Abia and Anambra (south east). The geo-political zones and states were selected as a result of the high intensity of the activities of either Boko Haram or Biafra in them or their neighbourhood. Borno and Yobe states that have witnessed the highest intensity of Boko haram insurgency were excluded due the huge security risk involved in administering questionnaire in the two states.

Personal interview method (using mobile phone) was equally adopted to generate data for the study. A total of 24 journalists from the six geo-political zones of Nigeria were interviewed. Four journalists were purposively selected from each of the six geo-political zones, giving a total of 24 journalists. The essence of the interviews was to ascertain the journalists'

understanding/awareness of peace journalism concept; and factors that have influenced Nigerian journalists' patterns of reportage of Biafra and Boko Haram.

Population of the Study

The population of this study has three parts: (i) population for the survey (questionnaire) comprised the populations of the four states selected from the north east and south east of Nigeria. The states are Adamawa and Gombe (north east); Abia and Anambra (south east). According to the 2006 population census, the total population of the four states is 12538011, distributed as follows:

(a) Adamawa – 3168101

(b) Gombe – 2353879

(c) Abia – 2833999

(d) Anambra – 4182032

(ii) The population for the content analysis segment of the study consisted of all the online editions of the three selected newspapers – Daily Post, The Sun and the Nation published between July 2016 and August 2017.

(iii) Population for the personal interviews comprised 24 journalists purposively selected from the six geo-political zones of Nigeria.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A sample size of 400 respondents was drawn for the survey (questionnaire) segment of the study, using Yamane's (1967) formula for sample size determination as shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n is the sample size; N is the population; 1 is Constance and e is error limit (which is 5% or 0.05).

$$n = \frac{12538011}{1 + 12538011(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{12538011}{31346.0275}$$

$$n = 400$$

Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted to select the 400 respondents for the survey (questionnaire).

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data generated for the study using different methods (questionnaire, interview and content analysis) are presented and analysed under the respective data sources.

Survey (questionnaire) Data

Out of the 400 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 384 copies were retrieved while 16 copies were lost. The retrieved 384 copies of the questionnaire were analysed.

Table 1: Respondents' Sex Distribution

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	209	54.4	54.4	54.4
Female	175	45.6	45.6	100.0
Total	384	100.0	100.0	

Data on table one indicate that 209 (54.4%) of the respondents were male while 175 (45.6%) of the respondents were female. This means that there were more male than female respondents.

Table 2 : Respondents' Age Distribution

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18-20	32	8.3	8.3	8.3
21-25	56	14.6	14.6	22.9
26-30	98	25.5	25.5	48.4
31-35	90	23.4	23.4	71.9
35 and above	108	28.1	28.1	100.0
Total	384	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows that 32 (8.3%) of the respondents were between 18 and 20 years old; 56 (14.6%) of them were between 21 and 25 years old; 98 (25.5%) of them were between 26 and 30 years old; 90 (23.4%) of them were between 31 and 35 years old; and 108 (28.1%) of them were 35 years old and above.

Table 3 : Respondents' Marital Status

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Married	282	73.4	73.4	73.4
Single	102	26.6	26.6	100.0

Total	384	100.0	100.0
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From table 3, 282 (73.4%) of the respondents were married, while 102 (26.6%) of the respondents were single. This means that a majority of the respondents were married.

Table 4: Respondents Occupational Distribution

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Civil Servant	96	25.0	25.0	25.0
Trader	133	34.6	34.6	59.6
Student	107	27.9	27.9	87.5
Others	48	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	384	100.0	100.0	

Data displayed on table 4 show that 96 (25%) of the respondents were civil servants; 133 (34.6%) of them were traders; 107 (27.9%) of them were students; 48 (12.5%) of them had other occupations.

Table 5: Respondents' Exposure to Mass Media Messages on Biafra

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	384	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 6: Respondents' Exposure to Mass Media Messages on Boko Haram

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	384	100.0	100.0	100.0

Data on tables 5 and 6 indicate that all the 384 (100%) respondents were exposed to mass media messages on Biafra and Boko Haram.

Table 7: Respondents' Means of Exposure to Mass Media Messages on Biafra and Boko Haram

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Radio	92	24.0	24.0	24.0

Television	66	17.2	17.2	41.1
Social Media	122	31.8	31.8	72.9
Newspaper	95	24.7	24.7	97.7
Others	9	2.3	2.3	100.0
Total	384	100.0	100.0	

From table 7, 92 (24%) of the respondents chose radio as their means of exposure to mass media messages on Biafra and Boko Haram; 66 (17.2%) of them chose television; 122 (31.8%) of them ticked social media; 95 (24.7%) of them chose newspaper; and 9 (2.3%) of them said they had other means of exposure to mass media messages on Biafra and Boko Haram. From the data analysed, social media is the respondents' most popular means of exposure to mass media messages on Biafra and Boko Haram.

Table 8: Respondents' Description of Media Messages on Biafra and Boko Haram

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Accurate	17	4.4	4.4	4.4
Sensational	103	26.8	26.8	31.3
Exaggerated	74	19.3	19.3	50.5
Full of lies	172	44.8	44.8	95.3
Can't Say	18	4.7	4.7	100.0
Total	384	100.0	100.0	

Table 8 indicates that 17 (4.4%) of the respondents described mass media messages on Biafra and Boko Haram as accurate; 103 (26.8%) of them described the messages as sensational; 74 (19.3%) of them described the messages as exaggerated; 172 (44.8%) of them said the messages were full of lies; and 18 (4.7%) of the respondents offered no opinion. From the foregoing analysis, most of the respondents were of the view that mass media messages on Biafra and Boko Haram were sensational, exaggerated or full of lies.

Table 9: How Media Messages on Biafra and Boko Haram Make Respondents Feel

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	Hopeless	106	27.6	27.6	27.6
	Helpless	71	18.5	18.5	46.1
	Hopeful	8	2.1	2.1	48.2
	Fearful	83	21.6	21.6	69.8
	Traumatized	116	30.2	30.2	100.0
	Total	384	100.0	100.0	

Table 9 indicates that 106(27.6%) of the respondents said that media messages on Biafra and Boko Haram made them feel hopeless; 71(18.5%) of them said the messages made them feel helpless; 8(2.1%) of them said the messages made them hopeful; 83(21.6%) of them said the messages made them fearful; and 116 (30.2%) of them said the messages made them feel traumatized.

Table 10: Respondents' View on Whether Media Messages on Biafra and Boko Haram Escalate Conflicts

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	246	64	64	64
No	94	24.5	24.5	88.5
Can't Say	44	11.5	11.5	100.0
Total	384	100.0	100.0	

Table 10 indicates that 246 (64%) of the respondents stated that media messages on Biafra and Boko Haram escalated the conflicts; 94 (24.5%) of them said that media messages on Biafra and Boko Haram did not escalate the conflicts; 44 (11.5%) of them offered no opinion. This implies that most of the respondents (64%) were of the view that mass media messages on Biafra and Boko Haram escalated the conflicts.

Content Analysis Data

Data generated from content analysis are presented and analyzed here. This segment of the study focused on three key issues that are relevant to the study. The issues are the frames in the newspaper stories, the language/diction of the stories and the sources of the stories.

Table 11: Frames in Newspapers Stories on Biafra and Boko Haram

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Response Frame	182	11.5	11.5	11.5
Hopelessness Frame	382	24.1	24.1	35.6

Political Frame	231	14.6	14.6	50.1
Human Interest Frame	92	5.8	5.8	55.9
Conspiracy Frame	123	7.8	7.8	63.7
Attribution of Responsibility Frame	152	9.6	9.6	73.3
Ethnicity Frame	93	5.9	5.9	79.1
Religious Frame	105	6.6	6.6	85.8
Economic Frame	84	5.3	5.3	91.0
Labeling Frame	142	9.0	9.0	100.0
Total	1586	100.0	100.0	

Table 11 displays the frames in the newspapers' stories on Biafra and Boko Haram. From the table, 182(11.5%) of the stories were response frame; 382 (24.1%) were hopelessness frame; 231(14.6%) were political frame; 92(5.8%) were human interest frame; 123(7.8%) were conspiracy frame; 152(9.6%) were attribution of responsibility frame; 93(5.9%) were Ethnicity frame; 105(6.6%) were religious frame; 84(5.3%) were economic frame; and 142(9%) of the stories were labelling frame. The analysis indicates that "Hopelessness Frame" had the highest score (24.1%), followed by "political Frame" (14.6%).

Table 12: Language/Diction of Newspapers Stories on Biafra and Boko Haram

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Therapeutic/Conciliatory	206	13.0	13.0	13.0
Inflammatory	954	60.1	60.1	73.1
Neutral	426	26.9	26.9	100.0
Total	1586	100.0	100.0	

Table 12 categorizes the diction/language of the newspapers' stories on Biafra and Boko Haram into therapeutic/conciliatory, inflammatory and neutral. From the table, 206 (13%) of the stories had therapeutic/conciliatory language/diction; 954(60.1%) of them had inflammatory language/diction, and 426(26.9%) of them had neutral language/diction. This shows that most of the stories (60.1%) had inflammatory diction.

Table 13: Sources of Stories on Biafra and Boko Haram

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Military	362	22.8	22.8	22.8
Police	161	10.2	10.2	33.0
Social Media	102	6.4	6.4	39.4
Personalities	94	5.9	5.9	45.3
Political Parties	134	8.4	8.4	53.8
Victims/Relatives	73	4.6	4.6	58.4
NGOs/Religious Organizations	174	11.0	11.0	69.4
Government Ministries/Functionaries	365	23.0	23.0	92.4
Biafra/Boko Haram	121	7.6	7.6	100.0
Total	1586	100.0	100.0	

Table 13 shows that 362(22.8%) of the stories came from the military; 161(10.2%) of them came from the police; 102 (6.4%) of them were from social media; 94 (5.9%) of them came from personalities; 134(8.4%) of them were from political parties; 73(4.6%) of them came from victims/relatives; 174(11%) of them came from NGOs/Religious organizations; 365(23%) of them were from government ministries/functionaries; and 121(7.6%) of the stories came from Biafra and Boko Haram. This means that an overwhelming majority of the stories originated from government, its agencies and ministries.

Interview Data

The data generated from personal interviews conducted in the study are analyzed here. A total of 24 journalists from the six geo-political zones of Nigeria were interviewed. Four journalists were purposively selected from each of the six geo-political zones, giving a total of 24 journalists. The essence of the interviews was to ascertain the journalists' understanding/awareness of peace journalism concept; and factors that have influenced Nigerian journalists' patterns of reportage of Biafra and Boko Haram.

The results of the interviews indicated a low level of awareness of the concept of peace journalism among Nigerian journalists. Ten of the journalists interviewed stated that they were not aware of the concept; eight of the fourteen journalists who claimed they were aware of the

concept of peace journalism could not explain what it meant. They only said they heard about it. The remaining six journalists were able to explain the concept of peace journalism.

When asked if they thought that the media should play the role of a mediator by reporting in ways that could deescalate tension and tilt towards conflict resolution, 19 of the 24 interviewed journalists (79%) said they did not believe the media should indulge in conflict mediation or write in any way to influence conflict resolution. One of the journalists said:

The primary role of the media in conflict situations is to report the facts the way they are; no addition, no subtraction. Journalism objectivity is sacrosanct both in conflict situations and peaceful environment. It should not be compromised for any reason. I don't believe in any advocated brand of journalism, whether it is called peace or war journalism that makes a journalist bend the rules and age-long ethics of the profession just to proffer solutions to conflicts.

Similarly, another journalist said: "The job of the journalist is not to resolve conflicts. He should just be objective in his reportage. There are security agencies, civil society groups, governmental and nongovernmental organisations that handle peace building, conflict prevention, mediation and reconciliation."

The entire 24 interviewed journalist identified some factors and challenges that influenced the patterns of their reportage on Biafra and Boko Haram. The key factors and challenges identified by the interviewees include:

1. Political interference (interference by government)
2. Intimidation and harassment by security agents
3. Idiosyncrasy/interests of media owners/operators
4. Non-compliance with the Freedom of Information Act
5. Editorial policies of media organizations
6. Patronage considerations

Discussion of Findings

The study has indicated that media audience in Nigeria is highly exposed to mass media stories on Biafra and Boko Haram. Data on tables 5 and 6 indicate that all the 384 (100%) respondents were exposed to mass media messages on Biafra and Boko Haram. This result shows that these two issues have been placed on the front burner by the Nigerian media. Over

time, the media audience access information on the two issues via different media platform. The outcome of the study revealed that social media (31.8%) was the respondents' most popular means of exposure to mass media messages on Biafra and Boko Haram, followed by newspaper (24.7%), and radio (24%).

The study found that most of the respondents were of the view that mass media messages on Biafra and Boko Haram were sensational (26.8%), exaggerated (19.3%) or full of lies (44.8%). As a result, a majority of the respondents stated that mass media messages on Biafra and Boko Haram invoked negative feelings in them. Table 9 indicates that 106(27.6%) of the respondents said that media messages on Biafra and Boko Haram made them feel hopeless; 71(18.5%) of them said the messages made them feel helpless; 8(2.1%) of them said the messages made them hopeful; 83(21.6%) of them said the messages made them fearful; and 116 (30.2%) of them said the messages made them feel traumatized. This is a pointer to the use of war journalism approach by the Nigeria media in reporting Biafra and Boko Haram.

In line with the foregoing observation, another pointer to the use of war journalism approach in reporting Biafra and Boko Haram by the Nigerian media is that data display on table 10 indicated that 246 (64%) of the respondents stated that media messages on Biafra and Boko Haram escalated the conflicts. Escalation, rather than de-escalation, of conflicts is a hallmark of war journalism. It is trigger-happy.

The results of the content analysis segment of the study confirmed and accentuated the results of the survey segment. Table 11 indicated that "Hopelessness Frame" received the highest attention (24.1%), followed by "Political Frame" (14.6%); while the "Human Interest Frame" received just marginal attention (5.8%). This means that the media concentrated on reporting the negatives and the bizarre, offering little or hope of resolution of the conflicts.

Similarly, the study found that 206 (13%) of the stories had therapeutic/conciliatory language/diction; 954(60.1%) of them had inflammatory language/diction, and 426(26.9%) of them had neutral language/diction. The implication is that most of the stories (60.1%) had inflammatory diction. This is another attribute of war journalism which escalates conflicts.

Another important determinant of the approach adopted in reporting conflicts is the source(s) from which stories/story ideas are received. Table 13 showed that 362(22.8%) of the stories came from the military; 161(10.2%) of them came from the police; 102 (6.4%) of them were from social media; 94 (5.9%) of them came from personalities; 134(8.4%) of them were

from political parties; 73(4.6%) of them came from victims/relatives; 174(11%) of them came from NGOs/Religious organizations; 365(23%) of them were from government ministries/functionaries; and 121(7.6%) of the stories came from Biafra and Boko Haram. This means that an overwhelming majority of the stories originated from government, its agencies and ministries. This accentuates that survey finding that stories on Biafra and Boko haram were full of propaganda by the government. Only paltry 4.6% of the stories came from victims and their relatives; the people that should have first-hand information on the conflicts.

The study found low awareness/understanding of the concept of peace journalism among Nigerian journalists. It also found that factor like political interference (interference by government), intimidation and harassment by security agents, idiosyncrasy/interests of media owners/operators, non-compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, editorial policies of media organizations, and patronage considerations influenced Nigerian media reportage of Biafra and Boko Haram.

Conclusion

The study has clearly indicated that the Nigerian media audience was highly exposed to messages Biafra and Boko Haram. This explains the huge attention given to the conflicts and the importance of the conflicts resulting from Biafra and Boko Haram. The findings of the study also indicated that the Nigerian mass media adopted war journalism approach in reporting Biafra and Boko Haram issues. This approach escalates conflicts and negates the media's possible role as a "mediator" to de-escalator conflicts.

Use of war journalism approach in reporting Biafra and Boko Haram was vividly portrayed in the use of inflammatory diction, frames and sources of story. For the Nigerian media to be relevant in de-escalating conflicts resulting from Biafra and Boko Haram, they need to adopt the peace journalism.

Recommendations

These recommendations are made in line with the findings of this study.

1. The Nigerian mass media should be integrated into the national security framework.
2. The Freedom of Information Act should be domesticated and strictly adhered to, in all the states of the federation to enable the media in their investigations of causes, impacts and possible solutions to separatist agitations in Nigeria.

3. The Nigeria Press Council Act should be effectively enforced to ensure proper regulation of media activities. Areas of conflict between the Act and the Freedom of Information Act should be harmonized.
4. Efforts should be urgently made to design and implement a national hate speech policy in Nigeria. Nigeria should learn from India, Rwanda, Kenya and Ghana that have implemented such policies.
5. The Nigerian media should adopt peace journalism approach in reporting Biafra and Boko Haram.
6. The Nigerian media should give more attention to those who are direct sufferers of the effects of the conflicts resulting from Biafra and Boko Haram
7. The Nigerian media should give more attention to stories that proffer solutions to the conflicts; rather than treasure oddity and hopelessness frame.
8. The Nigerian media should use more of therapeutic/conciliatory diction/language to de-escalate conflicts resulting from Biafra agitation and Boko Haram.

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