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Assessing Peace Journalism for Managing Herdsmen Conundrums in Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The spate of communal conflicts in Nigeria has become a nightmare for citizens. In Benue State, the farmers/herdsmen conflict has become a cause of concern as armed herdsmen continue to openly graze, destroy crops, maim and kill citizens on daily basis despite the implementation of the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law in 2017 which forbids open grazing in the state. Efforts by stakeholders to address this problem has failed to yield positive results. This study assesses the role of peace journalism in managing herdsmen conundrum in Benue State. Premised on the agenda setting theory, the survey research design was implemented with questionnaire to collect data for sample size of 120 respondents. Findings from the study indicate that herdsmen conundrum in Benue State is caused by encroachment and destruction of crops by herdsmen. Further findings indicate that the role of peace journalism in managing herdsmen conundrums in Benue State ranges from exposing the root cause of conflicts, encouraging parties involved in the conflict to shun violence and embrace peace. Also, the dissemination of truthful information can turn public sentiments towards peacefully resolving these conflicts despite the limitations of peace journalism in the form of inadequate information, language barrier and security reasons respectively. The study recommends that peace journalism should be employed in order to encourage the parties involved in communal conflict to shun violence. Additionally, security agents in the state should intensify efforts to prevent herdsmen from encroaching into farmlands to destroy crops.

Keywords: Benue State, Conflicts, Conundrum, Herdsmen, Mass Media, Peace Journalism

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Introduction

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation with peculiar culture, religion and economic interests to protect (Nsude & Elem, [2020](#)). The diversity of Nigeria is reflected in the existence of more than 250 ethnic groups and many of them do not have meaningful relationship with one another hence the persistent cases of conflicts and violence. One of the most common forms of conflict in Nigeria is the farmers/herdsmen clashes in different communities. The herdsmen activities constitute a great security threat to their host communities particularly farmers (Kajo, [2019](#)).

Conflicts between farmers/herdsmen usually arise when the herdsmen graze their cattle on farmlands and destroy crops while attempts by farmers to register their grievances over the destruction of crops are resisted and these generate into communal conflicts. It has been observed that there are several cases of herdsmen attacks on farming communities in various states such as Kogi, Benue, Plateau and Nasarawa among others across the country. This study tries to explain the spates of attacks by herdsmen on several communities in many parts of Nigeria and Benue State in particular.

The growing farmers/herdsmen crisis in Benue State has become a major cause of concern. This is because these conflicts pose a severe threat to human security (Sundberg et al., [2012](#)). Statistics from National Security Tracker clearly revealed that from 2013 to June 2021, about 1,500 persons in Benue State were killed from attacks by suspected herdsmen. This also resulted in the massive destruction of properties in 15 out of the 23 local government areas of the state. Similarly, Ajiye ([2019](#)) argues that about 2,500 people were killed in 2016 because the government did not pay close attention to the crisis.

As part of efforts to address the farmers/ herdsmen crisis, the Benue State government-initiated dialogue among traditional rulers, Civil Society Organizations and security agents as well as implemented the Open Grazing Prohibition and Ranches Establishment Law in 2017. Although the law prohibits open grazing, the herdsmen still graze openly in the state; destroying crops attacking and killing farmers without any provocation. This study therefore assesses peace journalism as a means to create harmony between farmers/herdsmen in Benue State. This form of journalism opens up the conflict and identifies the root causes of conflict, the parties involved; it explores the existing ideas and tackles violence and the invisible effects

of conflict such as trauma and hatred. Considering the gains of peace journalism, this study is designed to assess the role of peace journalism in managing communal conflicts and herdsmen conundrums in Benue State.

Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to assess peace journalism in managing communal conflicts and herdsmen conundrums in Benue State. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Assess audience understanding of the concept of peace journalism
2. Assess the role of peace journalism in managing herdsmen conundrums in Benue State
3. Identify the limitations of peace journalism in managing herdsmen conundrums in Benue State

Conceptual Clarifications

Peace Journalism

Peace journalism is conceptualized as a form of journalism which identifies the root causes of conflict with a view to create opportunities for the society and to consider non-violent response to conflict (Lynch & McGoldrick, [2005](#)). Peace journalism also strives to prevent conflict from growing from the latent to a manifest stage as part of efforts to avoid violence that is a significant characteristic of conflict. It should also be noted that it incorporates many fundamentals associated with traditional journalism.

Originated from the work of peace researcher Johan Galtung, peace journalism is a mode of responsible media coverage of conflict with the aim of contributing to peacemaking as well as changing the attitudes of media owners, professionals and the audience members towards war and peace (Shinar, 2007). Peace journalism also refers to selecting the choice of what to report, and how to report in the best possible way to create opportunities for the society at large to consider non-violent responses to conflict (Lynch & McGoldrick, [2005](#)). Peace/conflict journalism is a win-win orientation as it is truth-oriented, people-oriented, and solution-oriented (Galtung, [2006](#)).

Peace journalism usually identifies the parties involved in a conflict situation, their goals, issues and the different narratives which explain the nature of conflict beyond the conflict arena.

Galtung (2003) further avers that good conflict reporting serves to provision conflict transformation with a view to change the scrutiny of violent aspects of conflicts. Furthermore, this can be achieved through a transparent manner of handling conflict, information as well as a departure from the fact that conflict situation is in most cases limited to the key players. Scholars like McGoldrick and Lynch (2000) opined that with the aid of conflict analysis and transformation, peace journalism ensures equilibrium, equality and correctness in reporting. The peace journalism serves to define a road map to create a link between journalists, sources, the stories that are covered by them and the consequences of their reporting with regard to ethics of journalistic intervention. This enhances the knowledge about non-violence and ingenuity in perspective of everyday reporting and hence peace journalism is considered to be a clear and observable aspect of reality.

In essence, peace journalism uses the media to disseminate truthful information or alternative views that makes it possible to peacefully resolve the conflict. Generally, peace journalists or reporters are expected to be balanced and fair when describing the parties involved in the conflict situation. Irrespective of who is involved, they should avoid being passively observant and depict peace as a universal means of conflict resolution.

The Herdsmen Conundrum

Farmer-herdsmen conflict is a major conflict in Nigeria. The struggle for survival and economic livelihood is responsible for the incessant conflicts between farmers/herdsmen across many communities in Nigeria and Benue State in particular. Nyong and Fiki (2005) argues that the need to provide food for consumption, animals feed as well as raw materials for industrial use and export in order to meet the ever-growing demands is responsible for increase in land use which has resulted in hostilities in many parts of Nigeria. The conflict has taken dangerous dimension with the use of sophisticated weapons. This has resulted in the loss of lives and properties and such conflicts have potentials to increase insecurity and food crisis especially in the affected communities with reverberating consequences nationwide.

Though a personal business, cattle rearing is dominated by the Fulani people. Ibrahim (2018) argues that herding is a daunting task which the Fulani people undertake as a matter of necessity to earn a living and not a

matter of choice. Ibrahim (2018) in a survey study, observed that 75% of the respondents affirmed that cattle rearing is almost tiresome and is becoming increasingly arduous.

Communal conflicts between herders and farmers are common in the North Central Nigeria. Conflicts arise when there is failure to control the cattle on the part of the herdsmen or there is a deliberate attempt to graze on the farmland of the host communities. This argument is enhanced by Kajo's (2019) submission that attempts by farm owners to register their grievances is resisted by the herders. The implication is that the farmers/herdsmen conflict is caused by encroachment, destruction of crops and the loss of grazing land to expanding settlements.

Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical perspective for this study is agenda setting theory. Propounded by Shaw and McCombs (1972), and Salihu and Lawal (2021) argue that the core assumption of agenda setting theory is that the media often determines the issues regarded as important in the society. In other words, agenda setting theory explains the ability of the mass media to choose or influence the selection of important issues of discussion in the society.

The theory describes the influence of the media on issues of the public importance. The theory explains the media attempts to influence the audience and establish a hierarchy of news prevalence. In other words, the media does not tell the audience what to think, but the media determines what the audience thinks about through constant reportage of an issue in the media.

The relevance of this theory to the study is premised on the basis that peace journalism sets agenda to enable the audience identify the root causes of conflict, the parties involved in conflict and the effects of conflict on the society with a view to encouraging the parties involved to embrace peace. Peace journalism sets agenda in managing communal conflicts /herdsmen conundrums in Benue State by constantly discouraging violence among the parties involved through media reportage.

Literature Review

History of Peace Journalism

The history of peace journalism is traced to Johan Galtung - a professor of peace and director of the TRANSCEND Peace and Development Network, who coined the term “Peace Journalism” in the 1970s following the observation that part of war journalism has similar assumptions as sports journalism whereas winning is the only thing in a zero-sum game involving both parties. Furthermore, Galtung (2005) suggests that peace journalism is likened to health communication because a good health correspondent would define a patient battling with cancer cells eating away his body, reveal the possible causes of cancer such as lifestyles, environment, genetic use of make-up, etc. and the possible curative and preventive measures.

The history of peace journalism can be traced to news publication particularly in non-sectarian Christian peace movements and civilizations of the initial 19th century that were into the publication of periodicals. Most of the Sectarian publications emphasized on peace being an integral part of their proselytizing. Similar was the case with utopian communities during that period. From the 20th century, a prominent example of sectarian journalism focused on peace was Dorothy Day's *Catholic Worker* can be considered to be the important example of sectarian journalism highlighting the importance of peace.

Though a historical account, the idea of peace journalism is to identify the remote causes of violence with attendant effects on residents in conflict areas as part of the effects of violence in the society. Furthermore, peace journalism views conflict as an activity which consists of many parties pursuing different goals.

Peace Journalism and War Journalism: What is the Difference?

Peace journalism aims to identify the causes of violence as it affects residents in a conflict arena. Peace journalism was developed from research findings that news about conflict contains value bias toward violence. It also focuses on the best way to neutralize this bias by practicing journalists in all media outlets while with professionals, audience members and organizations in conflict situation.

Howard (2010) opines that peace journalism is also known as conflict solution journalism, conflict sensitive journalism, constructive conflict

coverage, and reporting the world. War journalism on the other hand is concerned with bias towards violence and violent groups respectively. This encourages the audience members to place value on violent responses to conflict while ignoring non-violent alternatives towards resolving the conflicts. This is based on the conventional reporting on physical effects of conflict. For instance, ignoring psychological impacts and elite positions which does not represent the actual parties and their goals.

Lynch (2008) argues that peace journalism aims to correct the inherent biases in conflict reporting with a view to give opportunities for the larger society to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict by picking up calls for, and articulations of, non-violence policies from different quarters and allowing them into the public sphere. Below is a tabular representation of the difference between peace journalism and war journalism.

Table 1

Difference between Peace Journalism and War Journalism

Peace / Conflict Journalism	War/Violent Journalism
Peace /Conflict Oriented	War/Violence Oriented
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peace journalism often identifies conflict formation X parties, Y goals, Z issues general win, win orientation • Peace journalism open space, open time, cause and outcomes anywhere, also in history/culture • Peace journalism make conflicts transparent • Peace journalism gives voice to the parties, empathy, understanding • Peace journalism see conflict/war reporting as problem while focusing on conflict creativity • Peace journalism humanizes all sides, more so the worse the weapons • Peace journalism is proactive: prevention before any violence/war occurs • Peace journalism focuses on invisible effects of violence (trauma and glory, damage to structure/culture) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • War journalism focus on conflict arena, 2 parties, 1 goal (win), war general zero-sum orientation • War journalism usually closed space, closed time, causes and exists in arena who threw the first stone • War journalism usually make wars opaque/secret • War journalism is a Us –Them’ journalism, propaganda, voice, for ‘US’ • War journalism see Them as the problem, focus on who prevails in war • War journalism is concerned with dehumanization of them, more so the worse the weapon • War journalism is proactive: waiting for violence before reporting • War journalism focus only on visible effect of violence (Killed, wounded and material damage).

Peace / Conflict Journalism	War/Violent Journalism
<p>Truth Oriented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peace journalism exposes any form of untruth on all sides/uncover all cover ups 	<p>Propaganda Oriented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> War journalism exposes ‘Their’ untruths/help ‘Our’ cover ups/lies
<p>People Oriented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peace journalism focuses on suffering all over; on women, the aged, children, giving voice to the voiceless Peace journalism gives name to all evil doers. Focus on people peace maker 	<p>Elite Oriented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> War journalism focuses on ‘Our’ suffering on able-bodied elite males being their mouthpiece War journalism gives name to their evil doers. Focus on elite peace making
<p>Solution Oriented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peace = non violence Highlight peace initiatives, also to prevent more war In peace journalism, the focus on structure, culture, the peaceful society Aftermath: resolution, re-construction and reconciliation. 	<p>Solution Oriented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peace= victory + ceasefire War journalism conceal peace initiatives, before victory is at hand War journalism focuses on treaty, institution, the controlled society War journalism leaves for another war, return if the old flares up again.

Note. Source: Galtung (2005) graphic representation of the differences between peace journalism and war journalism.

The Status of Herdsmen Conflict in Benue State

One of the challenging security issues faced in Nigeria today is the scourge of farmers/herdsmen clashes. The incessant attacks by the herdsmen on farming communities have grown beyond control. Uwa et al. (2019) assert that the danger posed by herdsmen in the society is alarming as the herdsmen constitute major security threat to the host communities. The propensity to graze on farmlands is increasing with the aid of highly sophisticated weapons. This has become a major security challenge in most communities and states in North Central Nigeria.

Scholars like Uwa et al. (2019) submit that the communal conflicts between farmers/herdsmen usually arise when there is failure on the part of herdsmen to control their cattle or a deliberate attempt to graze on the farmlands. Meanwhile, attempt by farmers to register their grievance on the destruction of their livelihood (food crops and cash crops) is always resisted and degenerates into communal conflicts. Some host communities usually

register their grievances by way of placing restrictions on grazing of cattle in designated areas and enforce compliance through coercive means decreed by law.

Both farmers and herdsmen suffer in what is regarded as ethnic cleansing. Ethnic cleansing refers to the systematic elimination of an ethnic, racial, and religious group from a particular area. The intention of ethnic cleansing is to make a region ethnically homogeneous through forceful means such as direct removal, extermination, deportation or population transfer. In other words, ethnic cleansing takes into consideration murder, rape as well as destruction of properties destruction by forcing the victim or group to flee in order to prevent its return (Baca, [2015](#)).

Nte ([2016](#)) rightly states that the incessant farmers/herdsmen crisis in Benue State resulted in the loss of 5,000 lives as far back as 2014. Furthermore, the herdsmen displaced more than 100 communities; throwing thousands of refugees into Internally Displaced Persons' camps located in Makurdi, the state capital. Adamu and Ben ([2017](#)) submit that a total of 853 people lost their lives in the period from January to March 2014. These killings have been indiscriminate regardless of age, gender or class. The herdsmen are armed with sophisticated weapons which give them the courage to attack the host communities, confront and attack constituted authorities without reprisal attack. A good example is the case where the convoy of the former Executive Governor of Benue State, His Excellency, Dr. Gabriel Suswam, was attacked in Guma Local Government Area when he went to commiserate with the victims of herdsmen attack in the local government area.

In the words of Isola ([2018](#)), some farmers cannot even go their farms anymore due largely to the fear of violence from herdsmen. This situation is worrisome as herdsmen hitherto known to walk with sticks now carry sophisticated weapons to raid villages and agrarian communities leaving a high death toll and massive displacement of citizens of attacked and neighboring communities in the wake of their attacks. Based on this fact, the Global Terrorism Index ([2015](#)) clearly states that the herdsmen group is the fourth deadliest militant group in the world.

Research Methodology

This is a quantitative study that relies on survey. The survey design is quantitative in approach and requires that a group of people or elements are

studied by gathering and analyzing data from only a few people considered to be a representative of the entire population. Ijwo and Tanko (2019) described the survey research design as the process of gathering data from a target population through the questionnaire or interview guide and subjecting it statistical analysis for the purpose of concluding on the subject being studied as well as providing solutions to identified problems

Population of the Study

The population of this study is Benue State which has a figure of 5,741,815 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The population was stratified into three senatorial districts namely Benue North West, Benue North East and Benue South Senatorial Districts while a sample size of 120 respondents (male & female) was purposively selected from Makurdi, Guma, Gwer West, Logo and Agatu local governments areas because of the cases of herdsmen crisis in the council areas. The choice of survey research design in this study is justified on the basis that the design enabled the researchers to sample the opinions of respondent on the role of peace journalism in managing herdsmen conundrums in Benue State.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data presented in this section is based on the responses generated from the field survey. 120 copies of the instrument were administered however only 113 were completed and returned useful. The remaining copies formed the mortality rate which was not enough to negatively affect the result of the findings.

Table 2

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	76	67
Female	37	32
Total	113	100

Note. Source: Field Survey, 2022

Available data on gender show that 76 respondents representing 67.3% respondents are male while 37 respondents representing 32.7% are female.

The implication is that most the respondents are male as affirmed by 76 respondents representing 67.3% respondents of the entire respondents.

On age, available data indicate that respondents between the ages of 18-25 are 9 (7.1%), 26-35 were 50 (44.6%) while respondents between the ages of 36 above were 54 with a percentage figure of 48.2%. The implication is that most of the respondents were 36 years above; so, mature enough to understand the subject matter.

On marital status, data indicate that 48 respondents representing 42.5% were single while 65 respondents representing 57.5% are married. This implies that most of the respondents were married as affirmed by 65 respondents representing 57.5% of the entire respondents.

Data on educational qualification indicate that 4 respondents representing 3.5% hold a Senior School Certificate in Education/Diploma, 58 respondents representing 51.3% hold Higher National Diploma/ B.Sc. while 51 respondents representing 41.1% hold Postgraduate certificates. The implication is that the respondents have a functional educational knowledge to understand the subject matter as affirmed by 51 respondents representing 41.1% of the entire respondents.

Data on occupation indicate that 34 respondents representing 31.5%, 54 respondents representing 50.4% are Civil Servants, 11 respondents representing 10.2% are self-employed, while 14 respondents representing 13% are business owners. The implication is that most of the respondents are civil servants as affirmed by 54 respondents representing 50.4% of the entire respondents.

Table 3

Respondents Knowledge of the Concept of Peace Journalism

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	95	86.6
No	18	13.4
Total	113	100

Note. Source: Field Survey, 2022

Data in Table 3 indicate that 95 respondents representing 86.6% are conversant with the concept of peace journalism while 18 respondents representing 13.4% hold divergent views. The implication is that most of

the respondents have a good knowledge of peace journalism as affirmed by 95 respondents which represent 86.6% of the entire respondents.

Table 4
Meaning of Peace Journalism

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Form of journalism aimed at exposing the root causes of conflict	24	21.2
The use of media to disseminate information that could turn public sentiments towards resolving conflicts peacefully.	46	40.7
Form of journalism aimed at preventing conflict from escalating to avoid the violence that is often the main characteristic of manifest conflict	32	28.7
The objective of peace journalism is to promote knowledge and of alternatives to violence as means to resolving differences	11	9.7
Total	113	100

Note. Source: Field Survey, 2022

Data in Table 4 sought to find out respondents' knowledge of peace journalism. Available data indicate that 24 respondents representing 21.2% affirmed that peace journalism is aimed at exposing the root causes of conflict, 46 respondents representing 40.7% expressed the opinion that peace journalism uses the media to disseminate truthful information that could sway public sentiments towards resolving conflict peacefully, 32 respondents which represent 28.7% affirmed that peace journalism prevents conflict from escalating to avoid the violence that is often the main characteristic of manifest conflict while 11 respondents representing 9.7% affirmed that peace journalism seeks to promote public knowledge and understanding of alternatives to violence as means of resolving differences. The implication is that peace journalism employs the resources of the media to transmit information that will turn public sentiment towards peaceful

resolution of conflict by exposing the root causes of conflict with the aim of encouraging harmony and unity in the society as affirmed by the entire respondents.

Table 5

Whether there are Cases of Herdsmen Conundrum in Benue State

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	112	99.1
No	1	0.9
Total	113	100

Note. Source: Field Survey, 2022

Data in Table 5 indicate that 112 respondents representing 99.1% affirmed that there are cases of herdsmen conundrum in Benue State while 1 respondent representing 0.9% had a divergent view. The implication is that there are cases of herdsmen conundrum in Benue State.

Table 6

Causes of Farmers/Herdsmen Conundrum in Benue State

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Encroachment/destruction of crops	92	82.1
Land Ownership	18	16.1
Struggle for Traditional Stool	1	0.9
Others	2	1.9
Total	113	100

Note. Source: Field Survey, 2022

Data in Table 6 indicate that 92 respondents which represent 82.1% affirmed that encroachment/destruction of crops is the cause of herdsmen conundrum in Benue State; 18 respondents representing 16.1% suggested land ownership, 1 respondent representing 0.9% affirmed struggle for traditional stool while 2 respondents representing 1.9% affirmed others. The implication is that the major cause of farmers/herdsmen conundrum in Benue State is encroachment on land and destruction of crops as affirmed by 92 respondents representing 82.1% of the entire respondents.

Table 7

Whether Peace Journalism has a Role in Managing Herdsmen Conundrums in Benue State

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	89	78.8
No	24	21.2
Total	113	100

Note. Source: Field Survey, 2022

Data in Table 7 sought to investigate the role of peace journalism in managing herdsmen conundrums in Benue State. Available data indicate that 89 respondents representing 78.8% responded in the affirmative and stated that peace journalism plays a crucial role in managing the conflict while 24 respondents representing 21.2% held divergent views. The implication is that peace journalism has a crucial role in managing herdsmen conundrum in Benue State as affirmed by 89 respondents representing 78.8% of the entire respondents.

Table 8

Role of Peace Journalism in Managing Herdsmen Conundrums in Benue State

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Exposing the Root Cause of Conflicts	34	30.0
Encouraging Parties to shun violence/embrace Peace	42	37.3
Disseminate truthful information that could turn public sentiments towards peaceful resolution of conflict.	37	32.7
Total	113	100

Note. Source: Field Survey, 2022

Data in Table 8 focused on the role of peace journalism in managing herdsmen conundrums in Benue State. Available data indicate that 34 respondents representing 30.0% suggested exposing the root cause of conflicts, 42 respondents representing 37.1% proffered that the parties involved should be encouraged to shun violence and embrace peace while 37 respondents representing 32.7% affirmed that the dissemination of information could turn public sentiments towards a peaceful resolution of

the conflicts. The implication is that peace journalism has numerous roles to play in managing herdsmen conundrums in Benue State such as exposing the root cause of conflicts as it encourages parties to shun violence and embrace peace with the dissemination of truthful information that could turn public sentiments towards peaceful resolution of conflict as affirmed by the entire respondents.

Table 9

Extent to which Peace Journalism has been used in Managing Herdsmen Conundrums in Benue State

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
To Some Extent	85	76.0
To a Large Extent	20	17.9
To a Very Large Extent	8	7.1
Total	113	100

Note. Source: Field Survey, 2022

Data in Table 9 indicate that 85 respondents representing 76.0% affirmed that peace journalism has been used in managing herdsmen conundrums in Benue State to some extent, 20 respondents representing 17.9% suggested to a large extent while 8 respondents representing 7.1% agreed it was to a very large extent. The implication is that peace journalism has been used in managing herdsmen conundrums in Benue State as affirmed by 85 respondents representing 76.0% of the entire respondents

Table 10

Limitations of Peace Journalism in Managing Herdsmen Conundrums in Benue State

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate Information	38	33.9
Language Barrier	32	28.8
Security Reasons	42	37.5
Others	1	0.9
Total	113	100

Note. Source: Field Survey, 2022

Data in Table 10 sought to identify the limitations of peace journalism in managing herdsmen conundrum in Benue State. Available data indicate that 38 respondents representing 33.9% recommended inadequate

information, 32 respondents representing 28.8% suggested language barrier, 42 respondents representing 37.5% affirmed security reasons while 1 respondent representing 0.9% admitted other reasons. The implication is that the limitations of peace journalism in managing herdsman conundrums in Benue State range from inadequate information, language barrier and security reasons respectively as affirmed by the entire respondents.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the study indicate that most of the respondents have a good knowledge of peace journalism. This was affirmed in Table 2 by 95 respondents representing 86.6% of the entire respondents.

The study also revealed that peace journalism has to do with exposing the root causes of conflict and the parties involved in a particular conflict. It is also the medium used to transmit information that could turn public sentiments towards peacefully resolving conflict in addition to preventing conflicts from escalating as part of efforts to avoid the violence. This was revealed by data in Table 3. This finding supports Lynch and McGoldrick (2000) argument that peace journalism is the use of media to disseminate information or alternate views that could turn public sentiments towards peaceful resolution of conflict.

Further findings from the study revealed that the major cause of farmers/herdsman conundrum in Benue State is encroachment and destruction of crops. This was affirmed in Table 5 by 92 respondents representing 82.1% of the entire respondents. This finding validates the submission of Uwa et al. (2019) that the conflict between farmers/herdsman usually arise as a result of failure on the part of herdsman to control the cattle in an attempt to graze on the farmlands of the host community while efforts by farmers to stop them is resisted.

It was also revealed in Table 7 that peace journalism has numerous roles to play in managing herdsman conundrums in Benue State. It helps in exposing the root cause of conflicts, encouraging parties to shun violence/embrace peace as well as dissemination of truthful information that could turn public sentiments towards peaceful resolution of conflict as affirmed by the entire respondents. This finding is in tandem with the submission of Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) that peace journalism is a form of journalism which identifies the causes of conflict in order to create

opportunities for the larger society to consider non-violent responses to conflict.

It is also obvious from the findings that peace journalism has been used in managing herdsmen conundrums in Benue State. This was affirmed by 85 respondents representing 76.0% of the entire respondents. This finding supports McCombs and Shaw (1972) agenda setting theory postulation that the media does not tell the audience what to think about but it determines what they think about through constant reportage or featuring of an issue in the media.

The study also found that peace journalism has been used in managing herdsmen conundrums in Benue State to some extent. This was affirmed in Table 8 by 85 respondents representing 76.0% of the entire respondents.

Finally, data in Table 9 indicates that the limitations of peace journalism range from inadequate information, language barrier and security reasons respectively. This was affirmed by 112 respondents representing 99.01% of the entire respondents.

Conclusion

In conclusion, peace journalism is crucial in managing herdsmen conundrum in Benue state particularly when the issues of inadequate information, security reasons and language barrier are properly addressed. This will help peace journalists to identify the causes of farmers/herdsmen clashes and provide opportunities for the parties in conflict to consider non-violent responses to conflict. Peace journalists will also strive to prevent the farmers/herdsmen conflict from escalating as part of efforts to prevent violence and encourage both parties to embrace peace.

Recommendations of the Study

1. Peace journalism should be employed in managing herdsmen conundrums in Benue to a large extent as it enables the parties involved in conflict to embrace peace.
2. Peace journalists should provide early warnings and encourage the parties to shun violence.
3. Security agents in the state should intensify efforts to prevent herdsmen from encroaching into farmlands and further destruction of crops as this will go a long way to minimize the cases of herdsmen conundrum in Benue State.

4. Security personnel and victims of herdsmen conflicts should always provide background information for peace journalists as this will enable them identify the parties involved
5. Peace journalists should get interpreters to help them interpret sources of information provided in languages other than English language as this will address the limitation of language barrier in peace journalism

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