

**Barriers to Solutions-Oriented
Conflict Reporting: An Analysis of
The Nation And Daily Trust
Newspapers' Coverage of Farmers-
Herders Conflict in Plateau North**

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Abstract

The study analysed reports in The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers on the farmers-herders conflict in Plateau North between May and October 2018 to identify barriers to solution-oriented conflict reporting. The study employed a quantitative content analysis method and a purposive sampling technique to select news, editorials, comments, opinions, and feature stories from The Nation and Daily Trust. Framing theory of the media was adopted as the theoretical foundation for the research. Using thematic analysis, data from the newspapers were quantified and coded along the themes of peace, dialogue, responsibility, and victim frames. The findings revealed that 80% of The Nation newspaper's reports were solution-oriented, compared with 26.7% at Daily Trust. The research advocates that media organisations and journalists adopt solution-oriented reporting rather than merely fulfilling their social responsibility to inform the public about the conflict.

Keywords: solution Journalism, farmers-herders conflict and media framing

INTRODUCTION

The North Central has experienced a protracted farmers-herders conflict which has resulted in loss of lives and properties and has posed a threat to food security.

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The conflict has a critical humanitarian challenge rooted in government failure, competition over natural resources, and ethnic tensions, with mass displacement of people and collateral damages.

According to Okoli and Atelhe (2014), the dynamics of the conflict range from mere resource competition to a more complex web of identity, politics, long-standing feuds, and contested state legitimacy. Most of the states that comprise the Middle Belt are more affected by the farmers-herders conflict, including Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Niger, Kwara, and Kogi. The diverse nature of this North Central Region ethnically and religiously has exacerbated and made the region more vulnerable to escalating the conflict. For more than 20 years, clashes between the farmers and herders have resulted in thousands of deaths and destruction of livelihoods. Amnesty International (2018) reported that the farmers-herders conflict, from January 2016 to October 2018, has killed more than 3,600 people.

The International Crisis Group (2017) estimated that \$13 billion was lost due to the destruction of farms, cattle, and infrastructure.

The central role of media coverage and reporting is pivotal in shaping the populace's perception and influencing government policies and responses to

conflicts or clashes, most importantly in de-escalating or escalating the conflict. The media can be a barrier to solution-oriented reporting on events and developments in the ongoing crisis between farmers and herders if reporting is biased and imbalanced. Meanwhile, the media is saddled with the sole responsibility of providing solution-oriented reporting to prompt policymakers to take action on the conflict situation.

The public depends solely on the media for adequate information on crisis situations through their solution-oriented reportage. Since the inception of the conflict, questions regarding efforts to cope with or end it remain unanswered. It is necessary for journalists to channel more energy into solution-based reporting rather than mere reporting of the conflict. The concept of “peace journalism,” as proposed by Lynch and McGoldrick (2005), clearly pointed out how the media can report conflicts in ways that de-escalate tensions and foster reconciliation. The media actively relate to audiences' psyches regarding the conflict and possible solutions that are considered or deemed acceptable (Entman, 1993). According to Abdulbaqi

and Aremu (2017) and Albert (2019), media reports on farmers-herders conflict can sharpen or promote understanding and resolution, or fuel animosity and reprisal attacks.

Statement of the Problem

Plateau Northern zone has witnessed a persistent farmers-herders conflict which has remained one of the devastating conflicts and has posed a security threat to the region and Nigeria at large. The negative aspect of the conflict ranges from loss of lives, displacement of communities, religious and ethnic tensions and destruction of properties. The Nation and Daily Trust serve as media outlets providing the public with information on the conflict and shaping public perceptions of the farmers-herders conflict. There are concerns regarding the coverage of the conflict, which always focuses on casualties, blame, framing, confrontations, and reprisal attacks, without enumerating resolution initiatives, peacebuilding efforts, and practical responses that could contribute to lasting peace between the conflicting parties. These patterns contrast with solution-oriented or peace journalism and conflict-sensitive journalism, which are

based on the root causes of the conflict, devise multiple ways, and examine viable responses rather than solely relying on violence reporting. Research on media reports of the farmers-herders conflict has focused mainly on issues such as framing, bias, sentimentalism, and blame on both parties; there are few studies on the barriers preventing newspapers from adopting a solution-oriented approach to reporting the conflict in Plateau North. Barriers such as editorial policies, commercial influence, political factors, and a lack of training for journalists in peace journalism may affect conflict-sensitive and solution-based coverage. With the differences in the editorial policies of The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers, little is known about the extent to which the reportage of the Plateau North farmers-herders conflict incorporates solution-oriented reporting.

Therefore, the research seeks to examine the barriers to solution-oriented conflict reporting of both newspapers (The Nation and Daily Trust), expose the dominant patterns of reporting and assess the extent to which solution-oriented elements are portrayed in the reports. Journalism should be beyond record-keeping and reporting on conflict, but rather solution-

oriented mediation and education that help communities understand the problems and envision peaceful coexistence (Pate, 2011).

Objectives of the Study

The study set out to achieve the following objectives:

To determine the frequency of reports on The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers regarding the farmer-herder conflict in the Plateau Northern Zone.

To identify the Barriers to solution-oriented reportage of the farmer-herder conflict in The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers.

To find out the extent to which The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers report on the farmer-herder conflict in the Northern Zone of Plateau State in a solution-oriented manner.

Research Questions

How often do The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers report on solution-oriented coverage of the farmer-herder conflict?

What are the barriers hindering solution-oriented reports and coverage of farmers-

herders conflict in The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers?

To what extent do The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers report on the farmers-herders conflict in Plateau North in a solution-oriented manner?

Literature Review

The farmers-herders conflict has lingered for over 2 decades, and scholars in the field of sociology have characterised the conflict as politically motivated, attributing ethno-religious vices that have brought about underdevelopment (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005; Kempf, 2007; Lynch, 2008). Through its actions, the media change the entire unfolding nature, impact, and process of conflict (Galtung, 2002). The media contributes to and supports the notion of violence (Thompson, 2004), citing examples of the instability and fragmentation of Yugoslavia. Other literature blamed the media for inciting the 1994 Rwanda genocide (Metzl, 1997; Kalyango & Vultee, 2012). Also, Ahmed (2008), Odunlami (2017), and Omenugha, Uzuegbunam, and Omenugha (2013) agreed that the media is seen as an institution that sensationalises conflict, promotes prejudicial stereotypes about

particular groups or individuals, and instigates and sustains violent conflict in the country. There are situations where media reports take sides and cause panic in the country. The media commentaries and their representations of the herder-farmer conflict could engender mixed impressions and feelings in people's minds (either good or bad).

Media ethics, according to Christian, Fackler, Richardson et al. (2015), is not solely about telling the truth or avoiding harm but rather about promoting justice, fairness, and social responsibility. The media have played a significant role globally, both constructively and destructively, in conflict contexts.

The emergence of 'Peace Journalism', posited by McGoldrick (2005), introduces the concept as an alternative framework that encourages reporters to avoid demonising language and to give voice to all parties (either farmers or herders), exploring the roots of conflict rather than simply reporting on violence. Media coverage of the crisis tends to ignore the historical relationship between farmers and herders. The media's focus on isolated violent incidents without contextualising long-standing

cooperative relationships between communities erodes possibilities for peace journalism, which advocates for coverage of common ground and potential solutions. Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) advocate for reporters' and journalists' training in peace journalism for solution-oriented coverage and reporting. They also emphasised techniques such as de-escalation language, inclusion of all stakeholders, and contextual backgrounding. The practice is essential in complex conflicts like that of farmer-herders.

Concept Framework

Peace Journalism

Peace journalism can be regarded as a set of tools, both conceptual and practical, for building awareness of non-violence in the everyday craft of editing and reporting. It serves as a basis for rethinking news-making values and practices, with the intention of offering a better public service. When editors and journalists or 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 &

McGoldrick, 2005). Kempf (2007) noted that peace journalism should be thought of as a two-step process. In the first step, during the 'hot phase' of a conflict, the focus is on de-escalation-oriented conflict coverage, but this needs to be limited. Proposing solutions in this 'hot phase' is not advisable, for there is a risk that reportage will be rejected as unreliable or as hostile propaganda. The aim would be "to open the public's eyes to a detached standpoint and to deconstruct the polarisation of the conflict parties". A second step would then centre on solution-oriented coverage aimed at reconciling the opponents, seeking ways they can cooperatively resolve their differences. Only then can solution-oriented conflict coverage contribute to dismantling war discourse.

Conflict-sensitive Journalism

Conflict-sensitive journalism must be seen as a crucial element for building durable peace. Howard (2004) observes that conflict-sensitive journalism is when editors and reporters make choices that improve the prospects for peace. These choices, including how to frame stories and carefully select which words to use,

create an atmosphere conducive to peace and supportive of peace initiatives and peacemakers, without compromising the basic principles of quality journalism. Conflict-sensitive journalism empowers reporters to report conflicts professionally without feeding the flames of the conflict. It is premised on the assumption that journalists understand the conflict context in which they operate; understand the interaction between their operations and that context; and act on this understanding to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts on the conflict context and the intervention (Howard, 2004).

Solution Journalism

Solution journalism identifies and analyses the causes of a social problem to highlight responses, backed with evidence and past research. Solution journalism raises awareness of pressing issues through meaningful, lucid coverage. Solution journalism is evidence-based news on responses to social problems. Solution journalism investigates and explains in a critical and clear-eyed way how people try to solve widely shared problems. While journalists usually define news as 'what

has gone wrong', solution journalism is leading an effort to expand that definition; responses to problems are also newsworthy. By adding rigorous, evidence-based coverage of solutions, journalists can tell the whole story. Solution Journalism Network recommends using the four pillars to ensure a well-balanced coverage of solutions: response, insight, evidence and limitations.

Conflict Reporting and the Media

Conflict reporting is the professional practice of gathering and disseminating news about crises, conflicts, and non-violent socio-political disputes. It comprises timely event-driven accounts (hard news, casualty counts, and arrests), investigative accountability reporting (exposing actors or state failures) and longer-form analytical pieces that trace structural causes and policy options (Akpobo & Nwafo, 2013). The area of conflict spans a range of journalistic roles, from watchdog and witness to mediator and educator on policies and actions, and contributes to conflict mitigation (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005).

Onwuneli and Olimma (2015) studied how Nigerian newspapers covered the October 1st, 2010, Abuja bomb blast. They believed that the attack, allegedly carried out by MEND (Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta), noting that reporting domestic terrorism was new. They found the coverage to be prominent, objective, and balanced between sensational and non-sensational styles, in contrast to other studies.

Onwuneli and Olimma's study, however, did not align with some similar studies, such as Iwuchukwu (2001), which found that the local press was 'sensational' and 'explosive' in its coverage of the 1988 religious riots in Zaria, Kaduna State. It also contradicts Amenaghawon's (2015) work, which analysed the framing of the bombing of Saint Theresa's Catholic Church in the Daily Trust and The Guardian newspapers. The content analysis design was adopted for the study and found that a split still exists in the mass media along the north-south geopolitical divide. It, however, agrees with other studies that have found that media reports on terrorism and conflicts are information-laden but shallow in depth, lacking substantive conversations and analytical proposals for their

resolution. This evidences the need to adopt and integrate Nigerian media into peace journalism or conflict-sensitive communication.

Media and Conflict Solution-Oriented Reporting

The double-edged nature of media reporting, which emphasises victimhood, ethnic blame or criminalisation, polarises and undermines prospects for reconciliation (Inuwa & Aremu, 2026). Solution-oriented reporting/coverage (solution journalism or peace journalism) can encourage dialogue and reduce dehumanisation (Galtung, 2003; Olorunyomi, 2019; Emechebe et al., 2023; Nwafor et al., 2024).

Solution-oriented reporting is understood as coverage that foregrounds reconciliation mechanisms, policy responses, peacebuilding programs, or institutional remedies (e.g., calls for dialogue platforms, grazing reserves, compensation schemes, or legislative reforms). Media reportage on the farmers-herders crisis should focus on the above-listed solution frames for lasting peace.

As part of the initiative to solution-oriented reporting to cope with the farmers-herders conflict, Vanguard Newspaper report of 15th November, 2024, “Peace Initiative: Plateau’s Berom and Fulani now jointly cultivate farmlands”. The programme was initiated by a non-governmental organisation, Youth Initiative Against Violence and Human Rights Abuse (YIAVHA), a youth-driven NGO at Riyom local government. The NGO adopted a unique approach of jointly cultivating farmland by the Beroms and Fulani in violent-prone communities of Banghai, Riyom, Kwi, Fass, Jol, Mahanga, Ngyelgagare and Rim to drive the peace process.

Olomjobi and Ajilore (2018) argue that the media is selective in conflict reporting; that is, it pays more attention to certain issues and disregards others, treating them as less important. Certain conflict narratives receive extensive, often favourable framing, while others are downplayed and negatively framed.

Drawing on empirical studies of farmers-herders conflict coverage in Nigerian newspapers, the studies show a lack of solution-oriented reporting. Akanni (2017) found that more than 80% of

newspaper content focused mainly on straight news items, neglecting interpretative and analytical reporting. Findings from a study of Benue farmer-herder conflict by Gever and Essien (2017) align with Akanni (2017): straightforward news dominated (64%), with limited follow-up by victims and minimal front-page prominence (28.7%). The report on media coverage indicates minimal investigative solutions-oriented reporting, with no potential to build trust and promote peace.

Media Responsibilities and Duties in Conflict Reporting

According to Steve (1997), two key actors are outlined in conflict reporting: actors in positions of dominance, who are key players who always seek to hinder the media from reporting events. This is because of their position and power. The second key players or actors are the vulnerable ones who will seek media attention to raise global awareness of the conflict. The president of the United States once declared Nigeria a country of particular concern over Christian's genocide; a delegation arrived in Nigeria for further enquiries. The first actor, as Steve (1997) stated, is those in power and

in a position of dominance who try to hide from the media. The weaker and vulnerable made possible ways to attract world media to the conflict. When conflict affects another group or a particular identity, media reports tend to generate panic among the opposing side.

Adelabu (2015) gave five areas for reporting conflict situations by the media; the journalist or reporter should consider the following: (a) there should be fairness (that is, no taking sides), (b) victims of the conflict should be treated with dignity and respect, (c) all the parties involved in the conflict should be respected, (d) the views of the sources should be respected, (e) self-identity should be practised.

The duty of the media during conflicts is to provide undiluted truth that can help the process of reconciliation, thereby hastening development at any given time. If these duties of the media in reporting conflict events are not realised, there will be barriers to the process of reconciliation, which will further result in underdevelopment; progress cannot be achieved. The role of the media in reporting facts objectively in conflict-related coverage should not be overlooked, as it serves as a voice that

informs the public. They actually notice the direction of any conflict and, as such, should avoid any subjective reports that can pave the way for unnecessary and baseless propaganda to thrive on the conflict.

Theoretical Framework

Framing Theory of the Media

The media framing theory reiterates that journalists and news organisations select angles of perceived reality and make them salient, thereby giving preference to specific issue definitions, causal interpretations, moral evaluations and remedial recommendations (Entman, 1993). According to Borah (2011) and Tankard (2001), framing studies frequently distinguish between responsibility frames, which assign blame to individuals, parties/groups, or institutions, and remedial frames, which spotlight institutional or collective solutions.

Goffman's work in 1974, "Frame Analysis", posits that the manner in which information is structured and presented (the frame) significantly shapes audience interpretation and understanding (Wonuola & Adisa, 2023).

Media entities function as narrative architects, using selective emphasis to construct particular viewpoints (Asemah, Nwammuo, & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). While the agenda-setting theory established that the media dictates the importance of topics, framing theory posits that the specific lens applied to a story actively moulds public opinion and moral judgment (Ghanem, McCombs, & Chernov, 2009). Media framing is more than just a byproduct of influence; it is a calculated process driven by editorial priorities. News organisations act as gatekeepers, deciding which facets of a story to highlight and which to minimise (Brüggemann, 2014).

According to Entman (1993), framing is the intentional selection of specific facts to steer the audience towards a particular interpretation, moral conclusion, or proposed solution. It is not just about providing information, but about providing a specific context for that information. While news providers construct these frames, the audience is far from a blank slate. Media resonance depends heavily on the consumer's existing cultural and ideological beliefs; peoples naturally gravitate toward and

accept frames that validate their own worldview.

The framing theory serves as a foundational lens for this research, illustrating the media's power to steer public discourse on socio-political matters. Within the context of the Nigerian farmers-herders crisis, the specific language, themes, and narrative angles adopted by journalists play a pivotal role in moulding citizen perspectives and influencing governmental action. Because these media frameworks shift as events unfold, investigating their ongoing effects on public emotion is essential.

Research Methodology

The study adopts a quantitative content analysis approach to investigate media coverage of the farmers-herders conflict in Plateau North. The application of content analysis format or technique helps to systematically identify and interpret textual data within the context of the study, allowing for the examination of all patterns, meanings and ethical implications in media narratives (Schreier, 2012). Krippendorff (2018) posits, content analysis is “a research technique for making replicable and valid

inferences from texts to the contexts of their use”. In the context of this research, it facilitates a critical examination of the values and assumptions embedded in news reports concerning the farmers-herders conflict.

The selected newspapers are: The Nation and Daily Trust. The newspapers were selected for their wide circulation and prominence. The Nation represents the south, and Daily Trust represents the North. Another justification for selecting the national dailies was their national reach, ownership, editorial policy, and trajectory in reporting on security- and conflict-related matters. The newspaper reports were studied over a 6-month period (May to October, 2018); this was the period when the farmers-herders conflict was at its peak. The northern zone of Plateau State was considered as the area of study because it has a history of protracted farmers-herders conflict.

Population of the Study

The population of the study includes Vol. 13 and Vol. 46 of The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers published within the period of May to October, 2018 (6 months) with all news stories, features, editorials, opinion articles, interviews,

columns, letters to the editor and other relevant editorial content that report or substantially discuss the farmer-herders conflict in Plateau North. The population consists of stories of newspaper items published by the two selected newspapers during the study period that contain substantive references to the farmers-herders conflict in the study area.

Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select news articles published in both The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers between May and October 2018. The sampling frame for the study includes a comprehensive list of Vol. 13 of The Nation and Vol. 46 of Daily Trust, published over a six-month period, retrieved from the physical newspaper archives. The sampling frame is constructed through a systematic search of newspapers using relevant keywords and geographical identifiers, including search terms such as “farmers-herders conflict”, “farmer-herder crisis”, “Plateau Killings”, “Jos killings”, “open grazing”, “farmers”, and “herders”. Only stories that have a substantive connection with the farmers-herders conflict in Plateau North were picked for the sample

frame. The frames are organised according to: newspaper title, date of publication, headline/sub-headline, story genre, location of the referenced, and primary type of report.

Sampling Size Calculation: the sample size arrived at from the coding was thirty news articles from both newspapers. Simple percentage and frequency distributions were used to present the sample data in tabular format.

Coding Unit

Data generated from the coding was analysed using descriptive statistics: frequencies, percentages, and cross-tabulations. Cross-tabulation was used to compare The Nation and Daily Trust by frequency and prominence of coverage, types of conflict frames, and extent of solution-oriented reporting. The primary coding unit of analysis for this study was the individual newspaper story or editorial item. Each eligible news report, feature article, editorial, opinion article, interview or other substantive editorial item constitutes one unit of analysis. The coding categories of news reports from the newspaper are solution-oriented reporting and non-solution reports. The study used conflict frames: peace frame,

dialogue frame, responsibility frame, and victim frame

Inter-Coder Reliability (ICR)

Inter-Coder reliability (ICR) was assessed. According to Sanusi, Daniel, Zachariah, and Olanrewaju (2022), inter-coder reliability is a measure of how well various coders agree on how to code the same data. Thus, the method is used to ensure precision and consistency in content analysis. When many researchers code the same information, inter-coder reliability ensures you reach the same conclusions, making the coding sheet a valid instrument. Therefore, Holsti's ICR was adopted for the study.

Formula:

$$\text{Reliability (CR)} = \frac{2M}{N1+N2}$$

Where:

CR= coefficient of reliability

M= number of coding decisions on which both coders agree

N1= total number of coding decisions made by coder 1

N2= total number of coding decisions made by coder 2

Coder 1 coded 20 news items

Coder 2 coded 23 news items

We agreed on 15 news items for each newspaper coded

Therefore:

$$CR = \frac{2(15)}{20+23} = \frac{30}{43} = 0.70$$

$$CR = 0.70$$

An inter-coder reliability coefficient of 0.70 indicates acceptability.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Frequency of reports on farmer-herder conflict in The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers

Frequency of Reports	The Nation Newspaper		Daily Trust Newspaper	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Front page	15	55.6	2	11.1
Inside page	12	44.4	16	88.9
Back page	0	0	0	0
Centre spread page	0	0	0	0
Total	27	100	18	100

Table 2: Category of the reports

Category of the Report	The Nation Newspaper		Daily Trust Newspaper	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
News	20	74.1	14	77.7
Feature story	0	0	1	5.6
Special Report	0	0	2	11.1
Editorial	3	11.1		
Opinion	1	3.7	1	5.6
Comment	3	11.1		
Total	27	100	18	100

The first table indicates the frequency and prominence attached to the farmer-herders conflict in both newspapers. The Nation newspaper front page addressed the importance attached to the conflict with 55.6 percent of news featured on the front page. Daily Trust has only 2 (11.1%) featured on front page. In the inside pages, Daily Trust report most of the conflict inside pages 88.9% and 12 (44.4%) stories were reported inside pages of The Nation newspaper.

Table 2: news stories on the conflict were 20 (74.1%) on The Nation, editorial 11.1%, opinion 3.7%, and comment 11.1%. While Daily Trust news items were 14 (77.7%), feature stories

5.6%, and opinion 5.6%. More value was attached to news stories on both newspapers, 74.1% and 77.7%, respectively.

Table 3: Barriers to solution-oriented reportage of the farmers-herders conflict in The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers.

Barriers To Solution-Oriented Report	The Nation Newspaper	Daily Trust Newspaper
	Frequency	Frequency
Dominance of straightforward news	High	High
Interpretative analysis of reports	Moderate	Low
Minimal front page prominence	High	Low
Framing and inflammatory languages/selectivity	Moderate	Moderate

Based on table three above, the barriers to solution-oriented reporting are higher due to the dominance of straightforward news reporting. The Nation and Daily Trust

report limited follow-up of policy implementation. Table 4 recorded 80% solution-oriented reporting on The Nation newspaper, while Table 5 recorded 26.7% solution-oriented reporting on Daily Trust, which is lower. The interpretative nature of reports in The Nation newspaper was moderate, while Daily Trust recorded a low level. Akanni (2017) found that newspaper content focused primarily on straight news items, neglecting interpretative and analytical reporting. Minimal front-page reports: The

Nation placed greater priority on the conflict during the period of clashes on the front page, as clearly pointed out in Table 2. Daily Trust did not place emphasis on or prioritise the conflict in its report. These might reflect the editorial policies, ownership and region. Framing and inflammatory languages/selectivity: The Nation and Daily Trust used inflammatory language, and framing appeared minimal in the reports. Inasmuch as both newspapers tried to avoid such, it still appeared in some headlines. Examples can be seen in “Save us from Irigwe, Berom armed men, Miyetti Allah cries out”, “Curfew in Plateau as herdsmen killed 86”, Fulani: we’ve lost 300 cows”.

Table 4: Extent to which The Nation and Daily Trust newspapers report employ solution-oriented approaches to the farmer-herder conflict in the Northern zone of Plateau State.

Articles coded from The Nation Newspaper

S/N	Headline	Date	Genre	Sub-Headline	Primary Type of Report
1	Herdsmen/farmers clash: we're ready to broker peace	2 May, 2018	News		Solution-oriented
2	Save us from Irigwe, Berom armed men, Miyetti Allah cries out	26 May, 2018	News		Non-solution-oriented
3	Curfew in plateau as herdsmen killed 86	25 June, 2018	News	-Fulani: we've lost 300 cows	Non-solution-oriented
4	Anger over Plateau killings	26 June, 2018	News	-Buhari: justice'll be done -Osinbajo in Jos: stop killings -special forces deployed	Solution-oriented
5	Killings: Buhari to put more pressure on security chiefs	27 June, 2018	News	-Land grab will be reversed, says Osinbajo	Solution-oriented
6	Buhari to Shake up security	28 June, 2018	News	-President meets Saraki, Dogara -Jos protest turns violent -Troops parade three Plateau massacre suspects	Solution-oriented
7	Fresh Anxiety in Plateau as gunmen kill vigilante	1 st July, 2018	News	-Berom people demand return of 52 villages	Non solution-oriented report

				seized by herdsmen -We must defeat violence- Dogara -security agencies not doing enough, says Saraki	
8	Plateau: 10 die, four suspects held as gunmen strike again	2 nd June, 2018	News	-Troops move base -How to end killings by Ex- IG others -State police bill coming	Solution- oriented
9	Plateau: 21 suspects held	3 rd July, 2018	News	-Gowon to Buhari: deal with culprits -Adeboye calls for Better security	Solution- oriented
10	Police name Plateau, Benue Killing Suspects	4 th July, 2018	News		Solution- oriented
11	President: we're tackling killings	11 th July, 2018	News	-president can't be involved in killings, says Gowon	Solution- oriented
12	Gowon's stand	12 July, 2018	Editorial	-Plateau killers should be tried in Jos, not Abuja	Solution- oriented
13	The Nation/TVC discuss	4 th October, 2018	News	-Experts set to discuss herders/farmers clashes	Solution- oriented
14	How to resolve farmers/herders crisis, by Tinubu, Ribadu and Sani	9 th October, 2018	News		Solution- oriented
15	Summit recommends Commission to stop	10 th October, 2018	News		Solution- oriented

	farmers/herders clashes				
Solution-oriented report					80%
Non Solution-oriented report					20%

Table 5: Coded headlines from Daily Trust Newspaper

S/N	Headline	Date	Genre	Primary type of report
1	Herder, farmer clash: FG to restore peace in affected states-Osinbanjo	27 May, 2018	News	Solution-oriented
2	3 Killed In Plateau attack	3 June, 2018	News	Non-solution oriented
3	Plateau killings: Military, police deploy more troops, helicopters	26 June, 2018	News	Solution-oriented
4	CAN Condemns Plateau attack	26 June, 2018	News	Non solution-oriented
5	Plateau killings not religious-Buhari	27 June, 2018	News	Non Solution-oriented
6	Understanding the fresh wave of violence in Plateau	27 June, 2018	Opinion	Non solution-oriented
7	Inside Plateau's latest killing fields	30 June, 2018	Special report	Non solution-oriented
8	How to achieve peace in Plateau	30 June, 2018	Special report	Solution-oriented
9	Plateau killings: the tragedy of a nation	3 July, 2018	Opinion	Non solution-oriented
10	Farmers-herders clashes instigated- Al-Mustapha	16 August, 2018	News	Non solution-oriented
11	Miyetti Allah Petitions Osinbajo over 'annihilation' of Fulani in Plateau	5 Sep, 2018	News	Non solution-oriented
12	Farmers-herders crisis plot to embarrass Buhari –Sarki Fulani	10 Sep, 2018	News	Non solution-oriented
13	3 killed in Plateau attack	19 Sep, 2018	News	Non solution-oriented
14	19 killed in fresh Plateau attack	5 Sep, 2018	News	Non solution-oriented

15	Farmers-herders crisis: Forum demands resolution commission	10 Sep, 2018	News	Solution-oriented
Solution-oriented				26.7%
Non Solution-oriented				73.3%

From the newspapers report, it was discovered that The Nation Newspaper reports were more solution oriented and driven. Samples of 15 headlines are presented on the tables above with headlines as published in The Nation and Daily Trust Newspaper. From table 4-5

above, The Nation newspaper reports were proven to employ more solution oriented news, rather than non-solution-oriented. Daily Trust newspaper focused only on news reports with minimal solution oriented. The newspaper employed more straightforward news.

Table 6: Cross-tabulation on solution-oriented and non solution-oriented report

Newspaper	Solution-oriented	Non solution-oriented	Total
The Nation	80%	20%	100
Daily Trust	26.7%	73.3%	100
Total	106.7	93.3	200

From the samples derived from the newspaper reports for the period of study, solution-oriented report on The Nation was 80%, while non-solution-oriented report was 20%. Daily Trust has a low record of solution-oriented report with

26.7% and non-solution-oriented reports 73.3%. The data analyzed shows that The Nation Newspaper employed more solution-based oriented reports in reporting the farmers-herders conflict in Plateau North

Table 7: Distribution of conflict frames across the two newspapers

Newspaper	Peace	Dialogue	Responsibility	Victim	Total
The Nation	40	6.7	6.7	46.6	100
Daily Trust	20	6.7	13.3	60	100

Total	60	13.4	20	106.6	200
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Table 7 indicates how frames were distributed on both newspapers. Peace frames 40%, dialogue frame 6.7%, responsibility frame 6.7% and victim

frame 46.6%. Daily Trust Newspaper: peace frame 20%, dialogue frame 6.7%, responsibility frame 13.3% and 60% for victim frame.

Table 8: Relationship between report type and conflict frame by The Nation and Daily Trust newspaper

THE NATION NEWSPAPER						DAILY TRUST NEWSPAPER				
Report type	Peace	Dialogue	Responsibility	Victim	Total	Peace	Dialogue	Responsibility	Victim	Total
Straight news	40		20	33.3	93.3	6.7	6.7	13.3	46.6	66.6
Feature										
Editorial	6.7				6.7					
Opinion									13.3	13.3
Interview										
Special report						6.7			6.7	13.4
Total	46.7		20	33.3	100	13.4	6.7	13.3	66.6	100

Drawing from both newspapers on the relationship between report type and conflict frame, most of the reports on The Nation newspaper are straight news and they are peace frames with 40%, victim frame 33.3% and responsibility frame 20% making majority of the reports to be 93.3 % on straight news. Editorial is 6.7% of peace frame. In Daily Trust newspaper, straight news was 6.7% on peace and dialogue frame, while responsibility frame was 13.3% and victim frame was 46.6%, totaling 66.6% on straightforward news. Opinion story and victim frame was 13.3%, while special report on peace and victim frame was 6.7%. Meanwhile, straight news in The Nation reports peace with 40% and Daily Trust report of straight news centred on victim frame.

Discussion of Findings

The first objective clearly indicates that prominence on farmers-herders conflict on front page was reported more on The Nation newspaper which represents the south with 55.6% and less prominence on the conflict on the Daily Trust which represents the north (11.1%) was not sufficient on front page headlines. The report on Daily Trust and The Nation focused more on news stories. The Daily

was silent on projecting the conflict and did not give it more prominence on the front page.

Objective two of the study findings revealed barriers to solution-oriented report on the newspapers rages from dominance of straightforward news, which was on The Nation and Daily Trust, interpretative analysis of reports (moderate and low), minimal front-page prominence (high and Low) and framing and inflammatory languages and selectivity. Daily Trust editorial policy, ownership and region hindered emphases and priorities on the conflict in their report. Due to that reason, solution-oriented report did not reflect on the newspaper.

The third objective seeks to find how The Nation and Daily Trust employed solution-oriented report on the farmers-herder conflict in Northern Plateau. Findings revealed 80% of news reports on The Nation newspaper are solution-oriented and action driven, rather than focusing on news or informing the public on the conflict. The headlines expressed solution-oriented. Daily Trust newspaper focused on news and information driven to the public and left out their key social

responsibilities of proffering valuable solutions to cope with the conflict. Over 73% of the news was non solution-oriented. The news report emphasizes more on protecting the government, for example, “Farmers-herders crisis plot to embarrass Buhari- Sarki Fulani”, “farmers-herders clashes instigated”. Our findings corroborate Adams-Osigbemhe (2025) which reveals significant ethical lapses in reportage, including the use of inflammatory language, imbalanced sourcing, ethnic stereotyping, and sensational headlines.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The research focused on barriers to solution-oriented reporting on farmers-herders conflict using a quantitative content analysis as the methodology for the study, the newspaper reports on the farmers-herders conflict in some parts of Nigeria especially Plateau North has proven more solution-based in The Nation Newspaper from the content analyzed with prominence on the newspaper front page. Daily Trust newspaper has limited solution-oriented reports and does not place prominence on front page value to the farmers-herders conflict. The barriers to solution-oriented reporting are dominance of

straightforward news, interpretative analysis of reports, minimal front-page prominence, framing and inflammatory languages/selectivity. Solution-oriented reports are influenced by policy makers and ownership ideologies. The protracted farmers-herders conflict has led to the destruction of lives and properties, and newspaper reports has focus attention towards

The study therefore recommends:

Media organizations, journalism institutions and major professional organizations should institutionalize regular training and capacity-building programmes on peace journalism, solution journalism and conflict-sensitive journalism. Such training should be geared towards equipping the journalists with requisite knowledge and practical skills to report conflicts in ways that emphasize dialogue, conflict transformation, reconciliation, and peacebuilding rather than highlighting mere collateral damages. Continuing professional engagements should also expose journalists to best practices in conflict-sensitive reporting and ethical decision-making.

Newspaper establishments should develop standardized conflict-reporting guidelines that integrate the principles of peace journalism and solution-oriented reporting. These guidelines should be able to provide practical directions on sourcing, framing, language usage, verification, and the reporting of peace initiatives. If media organizations can establish solution journalism desk, and make the unit a specialized conflict unit, it will aid in producing in-depth reports that investigate the root causes of the farmers-herders conflict, highlight successful peacebuilding processes and explore sustainable solutions.

Promote greater editorial commitment to solution-oriented reporting. Editors should encourage reporters to move beyond episodic reporting of violent incidents by prioritizing stories that examine the underlying causes of the farmers-herders conflict, assess the effectiveness of the peace programmes such as dialogue, mediation, reconciliation, and community resilience. Editorial policies should recognize solution-oriented reporting as an essential component of quality journalism and public service.

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