

Media Strategies in Conflict Transformation: The Case of Cameroon Broadcast Media Coverage of the Anglophone Conflict

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Abstract: The African continent is encountering numerous armed conflicts, some of which have been blamed on mass media. In these numerous armed conflicts that Africa is experiencing, the media, in view of the roles it plays in a society automatically becomes a key player in either fueling the conflicts or resolving them. Since 2016, Cameroon has been the epicenter of intrastate conflict with devastating consequences. With the proliferation of the broadcast media, the deepening of the conflict is not unconnected to the media. The media has played and continue to play a major role in the ongoing conflict. This study explored the role played by the broadcast media and examined the media strategies put in place by the broadcast media to minimize the occurrence of violence. Social Responsibility Theory of reporting was used to anchor this study. The study employs a mixed research design (qualitative and quantitative). Surveys and 110 interviews were administered to the audience and journalists respectively in Bamenda, Buea on a face-to-face and self-administered basis. Key findings of this study reveal that majority of the respondents (60.4%) are of the opinion that the broadcast media played the role of conflict escalation and majority of the journalists interviewed also shared the same view. Over 60% of the respondents hold that restructuring the content of broadcast media is major strategy to be employed in times of conflict. Content restructure of broadcast media is also recommended by journalists interviewed. The implication of the findings of this study is that it will add to existing literature in the field of peace, conflict transformation and communication. The research will serve as a platform for journalists to understand how to communicate during conflict.

Key words: Media, Strategies, Conflict Transformation, Broadcast Media, Coverage, Anglophone Conflict, Cameroon

I. INTRODUCTION

Wars and armed conflicts have at least one thing in common: violence, which like no other means destroys everything from, people, crops, infrastructures and other material resources to institutions, including education, and political will, hope, and trust. Armed conflicts are parts of the root cause of poverty, which causes suffering, disaster for economic development and deprives people from basic needs. Although, it may often be tempting to generalize and assume that all conflicts are the same, the reality is very different. Particularly for those involved, as a British correspondent aptly expressed it, "All war is local" (Martin Bell, 2000: 13) even though the First World War (WW I) and Second World War (WW II) were not local wars.

Ahmad (2015:19) asserted that the mass media are very powerful instruments that inform, educate, enlighten, sensitize and entertain the public and society at large. The media have the capability to affect the society positively and negatively. Alternatively, the media in an attempt to educate, inform and entertain have some negative effects on the audience. This therefore, means that the mass media plays functional and dysfunctional roles. The news media is a curious instrument. It can be a weapon of war, or can uphold prospects for peace. In the hands of totalitarian interests, it can be a terrible device when it spreads messages of intolerance and disinformation which manipulate public sentiment... (Howard, 2005:207).

Ross Howard's statement highlights the double-edged sword nature of the mass media in any conflict situation. The negative role of the media in creating, escalating and directing conflicts is well documented (UPeace, 2005: 11). One appalling example that stands out in the publication of the University of Peace is the role played by La Radio-Television Libre Mille Collines in promoting genocidal impulses in Rwanda in 1994 (Ngange, 2019:209). Other examples include the ethnic hatred broadcast by the Serbian State in Bosnia and the ant-Thai violence of January 29-30, 2003 in Cambodia (Howard, 2005: 21). On the other hand, scholars agree that the mass media (old and new) have the potential to serve as instruments for peace-building and catalysts for development in the society (Bertot, Jaeger & Grimes, 2010; Guta, 2010; Langmia, 2010; Ngange & Tchewo, 2017; Nyamnjoh, 2005).

Conflict transformation is about the way that societies deal with conflicts moving them from violent to nonviolent means. Its goal is to build just, sustainable societies that resolve differences nonviolently. To achieve this, it must address the direct and structural causes of conflict. It assumes that conflict is inevitable aspect of social change same time it assumes that the way with conflict need not be violent reason violent conflict emerges or because parties do not have agreed mechanisms for resolving conflict nonviolently (Hoffman, 2007: 14).

Harold (1948) for instance observes that the media's contribution to conflict transformation can only be achieved if it plays the roles of surveillance, interpretation, and transmission of news relating to the history, values and way of the people who are their target audience.

The role of the media in Cameroon is to inform, create awareness, educate, entertain to the people and act as surveillance to democratic institutions. The audiovisual (AV) industry in Cameroon has been an outstanding communication tool in the country since the dawn of independence in 1960. According to Tanjong et al. (2012), radio broadcasting began in Cameroon in 1941, when the French government opened the first radio station in Douala, 'Radio Douala', also known as "A Child of War".

In many African countries media role in conflict transformation has been intensified. Countries like Burundi (Studio Ijambo) with slogan as "Dialogue is the Future" aimed at promoting peace messages that are all aimed at reconstructing the peace process (Gilboa, 2002: 12), Liberia (STAR Radio) "Broadcasting a peaceful future", DR Congo (Radio Okapi) "Radio as a Peace Builder" (Betz, 2004: 9), and Uganda, Mega FM promoted peace in Northern Uganda by encouraging the 'rebels' to come out of the bushes for dialogue (Okumu, 1997: 23). The broadcast media stations mentioned above were used as a tool to prevent the escalation of violence and to transform conflict from violence to non-violence. In Cameroon, with liberalization of the audio-visual sector in 2000 (decree No 2000/158) leading to the creation of many broadcast media organs, reports carried out by the broadcast media on the conflict seem not to be tailored towards conflict transformation or minimizing the violence. Since 2016, why has the broadcast media stations not focusing on peace journalism, conflict transformation and to minimize the ongoing conflict instead they have been used by the conflict parties to set their agenda. So, what media strategies have been put in place by broadcast media to transform the conflict from violence to non-violence? What is most worrisome is the fact that with the diversity in Cameroon media landscape, none of the broadcast media channels dedicate programmes on conflict transformation, peacebuilding and peace restoration. It is from the foregoing that the study examines the role played by the broadcast media in the Anglophone conflict and strategies put in place by the broadcast media to minimize the occurrence of violence.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the last decade, the African continent experienced several political uprisings in Arab countries. Some of these uprisings were claimed to be engineered and subsequently escalated by media. Using the Libyan civil war as a case study, (Viggo, 2011) explored the media's role in modern conflicts. Particular emphasis was placed on the media's shortcomings in its reporting and analysis of the conflict, highlighting the double standards that the media gave by drawing parallels between the wars in Iraq and Libya in an effort to illustrate the errors repeatedly carried out by mass media. Even though media managed to polarize the nation into the ruled and the political elites by use of 'oppositional metaphors' ('us' vs 'them'), its impact on social status, gender, age groups and other human variables was not clearly highlighted.

Osador (2001) cited in Orhewere and Kur (2004) writes that the most critical role of the media should be in helping to prevent or at least attenuate the severity of conflicts. Publicity is critical in exposing and checking vices. The mass media in every society are seen as agents of social change. This is because they carry out certain roles and functions, which help to develop the populace positively. It is generally agreed that the mass media set agenda for the public to follow. Any analysis of the role that media can play in conflict resolution and transformation starts with a simple question: what do we exactly mean by media?

Newbold (1995) points out that majority of scholars and researchers have concentrated on the role of media in economic, social and political issues affecting states with little attention being given to conflicts. Further, he posed that media impact on conflict management is an emerging area that has been under studied due to lack of multidisciplinary models and concepts that would view media's role from peace and conflict realm.

Some, such as Kaldor (2001) argue that it is the revolution in information technology during the 1980's and 1990's that has led to a particular type of globalization, which in turn, has led to the need for a redefinition of what we think of as media and conflict. Even though the media can give us the intensity of the violence, where they are fought, why, how and who does the fighting, the biggest problem of media influence on people which ultimately determines conflict direction has not been determined and addressed.

The media plays a vital role in the way people perceive a situation, a story or even an individual. The media must be able to give both sides of the story, attempt to be fair and present the events rather than making, exaggerating or changing a story in order to catch the people's attention. Mass media plays a crucial role in forming and reflecting public opinion, connecting the world to individuals and reproducing the self-image of society (IMS, 2004).

In an article entitled "Communication and Conflict in Nigeria: What role for the Media"? Auwal (2015: 12) records that a potential exists for mass media to serve as nuisance in reporting about conflicts. Thus, the author agrees is possible when the media take upon a sensational and biased angle of reporting conflicts, thereby narrowing constructive contributions of mass media in conflict resolution and transformation. The author recommends that the media must report with standard, report on the realities of conflicts as it obtains on the ground, curb the promotion of division, be responsible and avoid distortion of facts.

In addition, by corroborating with Auwal recommendation, Bratic and Schirch (2007) attest that the media professionals still have much to learn about why and when their work can contribute to preventing violent conflicts and building peace between groups. The scholars also agree that when the mass media are fully aware of their intervening roles during conflict reporting, that is the moment they can garner trust and

confidence from the public. In so doing, the media will be serving as institutions for peace and harmony.

Media has also been used in several cases to promote peace and transform conflict. For example, in Northern Uganda, media has been used to create the common good for the people to promote peace (Struges, 2007). Mega FM has promoted peace in Northern Uganda with positive effects since 2002. Evidence also suggests that the station played a major part in encouraging Lord Resistance Army (LRA) members to come out of the bush. Struges (2007) further noted that the LRA leadership was encouraged to listen to the station and on a number of occasions joined radio phone-in talk shows and held discussions with government and civil society representatives, a good step in peace building. Thus, mass media played a role in creating peace.

In Cambodia the UN successfully set up Radio UNTAC as an alternative source of credible news and information that “made the 1993 elections possible and led to a 95% turnout,” despite counter-measures to terrorize the populace into rejecting the polls (Neumann in Price 2000). In Rwanda, Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines, was a key instrument and catalyst to genocide and in Liberia (before it was forced to shut down) STAR Radio managed to successfully combine peace broadcasting in a post-violent conflict phase as well as promoting media development.

In February 2002, MONUC (the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo) and Hirondelle Foundation, a Swiss NGO, set up Radio Okapi as a means of promoting peace and reconciliation in DR Congo.

Auwal’s recommendation of media reporting during conflict is not a reality in the Cameroon Anglophone crisis. Facts about the Cameroon Anglophone conflict have been distorted by the broadcast media (CRTV, STV, LTM, CANAL2, Vision4, Media Afrique and Equinox TV). Many at times facts about properties destroyed, number of combatants and non-combatants killed are distortedly reported by these media. These wrong statistics (either a rise or fall) has escalated the conflict, thus a negative role played by the media.

III. THE PERCEIVED ROLE OF MEDIA IN CAMEROON ANGLOPHONE CONFLICT

Cameroon has all along been the envy of many countries in Africa due to its peaceful nature. It has in the past years been known as the pillar of peace in the Horn of Africa and hence has been strategic in the enforcement and brokering peace in the neighbouring countries and seen as the hegemon in CEMAC region. But the ongoing Anglophone crisis in Cameroon has subjected to an armed conflict that has left the entire world perplexed due to the harm it’s causing. The Cameroon media landscape has played a significant role in economic, social, political and educational issues affecting the nation thus contributing immensely towards development. However, this has come with disgust especially in reporting issues resulting to ongoing violent conflicts. The invisible role

of media in Cameroon cannot be assumed given its influential power. For instance, mass media could have played a positive role during the start of the crisis in late 2016 by supporting and preaching peace. In addition, mass media could have also played a critical role as a tool for education by supporting the civic education programs conducted by various civil society organizations.

With media practitioners especially practicing journalist suffering from the harsh socioeconomic and political existential realities in Cameroon (Ndimuh, 2018: 13), their reportage incidences particularly violent conflicts are informed by these harsh constricting conditions. The media profession like other professions in the society no doubt shares in the limitations and inadequacies inherent in the society. Ndolo (2011) itemize some of the constricting conditions affecting the media and practitioners in Cameroon to include:

- i. Cameroonian journalists are poorly remunerated and are usually owed salaries in excess of at times six months.
- ii. There is a high level of corruption in the media, with Journalist demanding money before they can write stories or give coverage. They collect “sandwich”, extort gifts and gratifications either directly or indirectly all in attempts to influence news judgment. We now witness a lot of “cash and carry” or “Cajun-pepper” journalism. For the same reason they become chatter boxes and sycophantic megaphones of government (or their sponsors).
- iii. Due to the systematic collapse of tertiary institutions, half-baked students are graduated without any academic content and as they enter the industry, they become un-trainable.
- iv. There is a decline of professionalism. Media owners are not interested in adding value to their human capital. So, more often than not, those who should be in training are now trainers. Moreover, since media owners do not want to remunerate well, they employ quacks.
- v. Journalists do not enjoy freedom of expression and are denied access to information.
- vi. Journalists are killed, jailed, horsewhipped, branded coup plotters, broken bottle used to shave their heads, their media houses closed, newspapers and magazines proscribed and licenses withdrawn even temporarily (in the current democratic dispensation, politicians use thugs and hired killers to carry out crime against journalists that expose their corruption or related sordid stories) (Ndolo, 2011).

The above conditions amongst many other negative tendencies affecting the media and its practitioners in Cameroon and most African countries make it inimical to reportage that are likely to promote peace and help society take positive steps capable of reducing conflict. Undoubtedly, any media that is faced with these conditions is more likely to

be owned by media proprietors that are strictly motivated by profit and the provision of propaganda mouth piece for parochial interest in society that tends to stoke conflict.

During the early stages of the ongoing conflict, the President of National Communication Council (NCC), Peter Esoka, cautioned users of both social and traditional media (most especially Newspapers, Radio and Television)

“not to say things whose depths they don’t know, or without verification and for media not to stir up sentiments....” (P. Esoka, The Rambler Newspaper Interview, p. 7, March 30, 2017).

His statement came on the heels of repeated concerns over media bias, inaccurate and sensational reporting. When the media whether old or new media play such a role, they generate “xenophobia and violent conflict” (Howard, 2005:207).

Since the Cameroon Anglophone crisis escalated in 2016, various media have come under spotlight through the kinds of messages they disseminate regarding the crisis. People have pointed fingers at the negative role the media have played in promoting violence while others believes that the media have exposed certain ills that were hidden.

The government on its part has been hard on the media; the closure of the internet in the Anglophone regions from January 17, 2017-April 20, 2017 is evident. People considered this move as a deliberate attempt to suppress freedom of expression and by extension, stifle and cripple socio-economic activities in these two Anglophone regions, the government saw it as an apt measure to curb the spread of further violence and misleading information.

Ideally, the Cameroonian media could pitch for peace by building local and international alliances with these advocacy groups to call for the release of the journalist. However, local journalists are often scared to be identified as accomplices to acts that propagate insurrection, which is heavily punished in Cameroon. The case of Mancho Bibixy therefore serves as a deterrent to daring journalists who eye the opportunity to be similarly critical of the state.

The government resorted to severe warning to media houses like Equinox TV, STV, LTM, The Guardian Post against what it termed bad journalism on the part of such media. Government officials have used the media to sell government propaganda, which has been seen as an attempt to escalate the crisis. A typical example is the outing of the Former Minister of Communication, Issa Tchiroma Bakery on Equinox TV being interviewed by Nfor Hanson Nchanji on September 30, 2017.

“.....and the military too should stop shooting.....”
Statement from Nfor Hanson Nchanji during the live interview with the Former Minister of Communication.

Response from the Former Minister of Communication

“the military does not, the military has never shot any, how can you say this...”(Issa Tchiroma interview on Equinox TV on September 30th 2017).

Public opinion holds that the statement by the former Minister of Communication angered the Anglophone communities given the fact other Non-governmental organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch had made publications on the excesses of the military on the civilian population.

“Government forces in Cameroon's restive Anglophone regions killed at least 170 civilians over the past six months (October-March)”, according to a new report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) published in 28 March, 2017.

The ongoing Anglophone crisis has fragmented mass media even further along private and public lines. While government construed public media like the CRTV and Cameroon Tribune as instruments for building peace and preventing the crisis from escalating, some private media were seen as threat to peace and stability (Ngange, 2019: 194).

Therefore, this article points out that the media are viewed as a source of power that influence, control and promote new standards in the society and reinforce the existing ones. Media are thus, the principal agents for societal development, democracy and good governance and a crucial element in areas of conflict. It can be suggested that media are both a friend and a foe to a peace process. Media can foster human security and there is evidence that media can reinforce motives for fueling wars. They can be instruments for peace and conflict management, which promotes messages and strategies that can lead to peaceful agreements and tolerant behaviour in a given society. Media can also be a weapon of violence that propagate biased information and manipulate societies or groups in conflict with divisive ideologies and harmful actions. Thus, the media have become pervasive and extremely influential in attitudes towards conflict. The role of media in conflict has increased its place in public attention. There are efforts to promote the use of media strategies to facilitate conflict transformation and peace media.

In 1963, Bernard Cohen expanded Lippmann’s view when he asserted that “the press may not succeed most at times to tell us what to think but they are stunningly successful in telling us what to think about” (Cohen, 1963). Considering this explanation by Cohen, one can assert that the ongoing Cameroon Anglophone crisis is a reality. Media reports about the crisis are also a reality. The difference could only be articulated in the nature, magnitude and direction of such reports and their ability to command public opinion. The stance taken by each media house is another pointer to agenda setting function of the mass media (Rogers, Dearing & Bregman, 1993). Since tribal, religious lines (Tanjong, 2012), it is evident that followers of a particular media will likely be influenced in the direction of coverage for such media.

There also exists a geographical gap in conflict studies in Cameroon. Most studies have concentrated on armed and cross border conflicts in north and Far-north part of Cameroon (Boko Haram insurgency) with little attention being given to other parts of the country like ongoing conflict in the North West and South West regions, which has led to severe killings, torture, arbitrary arrest and destruction of properties in just three years of existence. Despite the fact that these two regions have always been the epicenter or a time bomb since the introduction of a Unitary System in 1972. This study is also intended to address this geographical gap.

Also, despite the attention and importance accredited to the media, compared to other disciplines the connection between media and conflict transformation has been neglected. While the number of studies and the volume of research concerning this issue continue to accumulate, most researchers still complain of the lack of a concerted effort at creating a unified field of study. There has been an important increase in data availability but this has not been accompanied by an adequate improvement in theoretical, methodological, or even statistical quality. This is particularly true when it comes to the media in internal or intra-state conflicts.

The majority of studies focus on the role of international media in conflict, and comparatively rarely on national media. Furthermore, there is a flagrant predominance of research concerning specifically Western and international media even though a majority of these studies claim that the relevance of this media is greatly exaggerated. However, the 90's did produce research that focuses on non-Western media like the case of Rwanda radio in the Rwanda genocide. This study intends to address this gap.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical and empirical research investigating media strategies in conflict transformation anchored on the Social Responsibility Theory by Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilber Schramm in 1956. This theory creates a platform to make media reporting truthful, accurate and objective at all times. Credibility is the foundation of this theory, and to be credible, media practitioners try as much as possible to be socially responsible, transparent, fair and balanced in reporting while respecting the dignity, privacy and rights of all (Schudson, 2001). Under this theory, media reporting tends to highlight injustices within the community and enlighten people on their rights and privileges.

According to this theory, the media is driven to benefit the public. It expects journalists to answer society's need for truth; requires an open and diverse debate on public issues; and honest updates of current events (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, 1956). According to this, media influences how people thought about the issue. It was also used to demonstrate how the media participated in the Conciliation efforts after the conflict flared.

Regarding the relevance of the Social Responsibility theory, it applies to this study as a theory that binds the practitioners to report objectively, truthfully, transparently and can be achieved when media strategies are designed properly. The highlighted humanitarian crisis by media made the international community to intervene. As a result, this led to coming of many humanitarians Non-Governmental Organization into Cameroon. For example, several world personalities, including Patricia Scotland, Secretary General of the Commonwealth of Nations visited Cameroon and went into Buea during the heat of the crisis. Also, the visit of the United States Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Tibor Nagy, after his meeting with the head of state promised to open dialogue so as to find a solution to the conflict. Additionally, the Media has put out advertisements calling on both the Military and Separatists to shun violence and keep peace as well as calling journalists to adhere to ethical standards. These are some of the media initiatives that could be seen to promote peace under social responsibility theory.

V. METHODOLOGY

The study used a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods of research design. This research used these designs because the researcher carried out an in-depth investigation of the media strategies in conflict transformation by demonstrating the role broadcast media played in the ongoing Cameroon Anglophone crisis. The choice of the researcher to use a mixed research methods is because few studies carried out in the area like Ngange, 2019 and Moki, 2020 have focused more on the qualitative (content analysis) nature on the role of the mass media on the ongoing conflict limiting their research only to journalists and their reporting. Ngange, 2019 made an attempt to address the issues using a content analysis and observation focusing only on the mass media with some empirical statistics from the field without looking at the audience perspective. This is among the many reasons why the researcher focused on mixed method because the researcher looked at both the producers (Journalists) of a news article and the consumers (Audience) of this news article. Thus, it is imperative to look at this through a mixed research method lens.

Target population is that population to which the researcher wants to generalize the results of study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). The target population was divided into two main categories;

- i. The audience (those who watch/listen to broadcast media in Buea and Bamenda)
- ii. Media practitioners (those living in Buea, Bamenda,)

In this research purposive sampling and simple random sampling were used. Purposive sampling allows a researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the objectives of the study. The study employed purposive sampling technique in the choice of the broadcast media and journalist working for the broadcast media. The broadcast media organs (CRTV, Equinox Television, Vision 4

Television, Love Tom and Marthe (LTM TV), HI TV, Canal 2 International, Spectrum Television 1, Spectrum Television 2 (STV), CBS, My Media Prime, Media Afrique) were purposively selected because the researcher views these channels as having carried out and continues to carry out extensive media coverage of the ongoing conflict. Also, these channels have a high audience rating in the two regions.

Simple random sampling is defined as a sampling technique where every item in the population has an even chance and likelihood of being selected in the sample (Adam, 2019: 14). The researcher used the lottery method in getting the sampling. Since the towns of Buea and Bamenda have many neighbourhoods, the list all the neighbourhoods that make up the two towns. The researcher writes the names of the neighbourhoods on small sheet of papers of same size; the papers are folded and mixed up on the floor. The researcher intended to get 10 neighbourhoods in each town where the questionnaires were to be administered. The researcher gets a child of 8 years-old to make a blindfolded selection of 10 papers of neighbourhoods in Buea and Bamenda. The 10 picked papers having the names of the neighbourhoods become the target of that study. This means that it guarantees that the sample chosen is representative of the population and the sample is selected in an unbiased way.

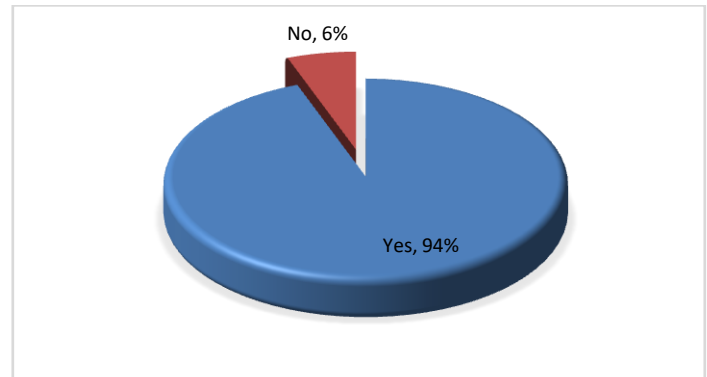
With regards to **Sample Size**, 250 respondents were sampled and 181 journalists were interviewed for the research. The questionnaire and interview guide were used for data collection. Questionnaires were administered for three months fourteen days that is from July to September 2020. Out of the 250, 150 questionnaires were administered in Buea and 100 questionnaires were administered in Bamenda. A total number of 211 questionnaires were received. With regards to the interview questions, journalists were targeted at their place of work. 186 media practitioners were interviewed for this study. All interview questions were administered face-to-face taken into cognizance the Covid-19 barrier measures put in place by the government. A total number of 100 journalists in Buea, 81 journalists in Bamenda,

After the data was collected, the quantitative data were analyzed using the descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The descriptive statistical tools used are frequency count, percentages and multiple responses set which aimed at calculating the summary of findings for each variable where applicable while the inferential statistical tool was used is the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test for hypothesis. Qualitative data derived from open ended questions and structured interview. Qualitative data was coded by the process of labeling and identifying different themes and the relationships between them. These labels were words and short phrases. Qualitative data was analysed using the thematic analysis approach with the aid of Themes, Thematic Explication, Grounding and Quotes.

VI. MAJOR FINDINGS

Out of the 211 respondents who filled the questionnaires, 199 respondents agree that the broadcast media played a significant role at the early stage of the conflict, accounting for 94% while only 12 respondents disagree that the media did not play a role at the early stage of the conflict, accounting for 6% as seen in the figure 1 below.

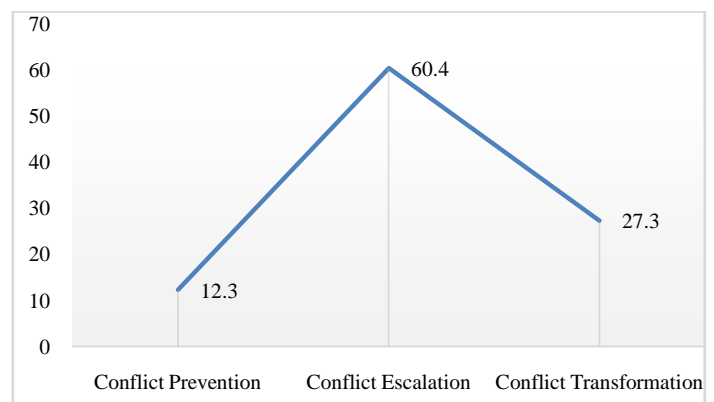
Figure 1: Media Role in Conflict



Source: field Research, 2020

The findings show that a majority of the respondents are of the opinion that the broadcast media played the role of conflict escalation at the early stage of the conflict accounting for 60.4%. Also, some respondents believe that the broadcast media played the role of conflict transformation in the ongoing conflict accounting for 27.3% while 12.3% of the respondents are of the opinion that the broadcast media played the role of conflict prevention during the early stage of the conflict. With this result, the research concludes that the broadcast media played the role of conflict escalation in the ongoing Cameroon Anglophone Conflict as shown in figure 2 below;

Figure 2: Role played by the broadcast Media



Source: field Research, 2020

Table 1: Respondents Opinion on how the Broadcast Media Escalated the Cameroon Anglophone Conflict

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Display of Unethical videos and pictures	40	19%
Sensational reporting	27	13%
Preaching hate speech	35	16.6%
Distorted facts/lies telling	25	11.8%
Supporting one party	30	14.2%
Name calling (terrorists)	20	9.5%
Blame game	19	9%
Fueled division and hatred	15	7.1%
Total	211	100

Source: field Research, 2020

Based on the respondent’s opinion on how the broadcast media escalated the Cameroon Anglophone Conflict, findings showed that the broadcast media escalated the conflict through the following as highlighted by respondents. 19% of the respondents said the showing of unethical videos and

pictures, preaching hate speech accounted for 16.6%, sensational reporting by journalists amounted to 13% escalated the conflict. Also, facts were distorted coupled with lies telling on the broadcast media accounted for 11.2%, some media organs supported one party in the conflict (14.2%) while others carried out name calling like terrorists (9.5%) led to the escalation of the conflict. The blame game tactics aired on the broadcast media accounted for 9% and lastly the division and hatred that was fueled on the broadcast media incited the people thus led to the escalation of the conflict. As argued by Wolfsfeld (2001), media sensationalizes conflict with simplistic reporting which reinforces stereotypes that reinforce elite consensus, and reflects its own environment of shared or isolated context. In comparison to other studies, the findings are in line with the findings of Dallaire (2007) in analysis of Media Dichotomy, Case of Rwanda, that the local media, particularly RTLM were literary used as a weapon to incite the killings of Tutsi.

H0: There is no significant relationship between broadcast media reports and media role in minimizing violence in the Cameroon Anglophone conflict.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) whether broadcast media have played a role in the ongoing conflict and what role did the broadcast media play

What role did the broadcast media play?	Df	SS	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	1.554	1.554	4.684	.000
Within Groups	209	69.356	.332		
Total	137	70.910			

Source: Field research, 2020

To examine the level of significant difference as stated in the hypothesis above, an ANOVA was conducted. There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < 0.05$ level in the types of role play by the broadcast media in the Cameroon Anglophone Conflict at $F = 4.684$ $p = 0.000$. The significance level of 0.000 is less than the threshold value of 0.05, hence the statistical data is sufficient to conclude that there is no significant relationship between broadcast media reports and media role in minimizing violence. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between broadcast media reports and media role in minimizing violence in the Cameroon Anglophone conflict is accepted. This is because the findings reveal that the broadcast media play the role of conflict escalation in the ongoing Cameroon Anglophone Conflict.

Table 3: Respondents Opinion on the strategies to be put in place by broadcast media to transform conflict

Strategies	Frequency	Percent
Stop the use of quack journalists in conflict coverage	35	16.6%
Restructuring media content and program during conflict	60	28.4%
Gatekeeping for peace sake	16	7.6%

Responsible reporting	40	19%
Investigative report	15	7.1%
Cautioning of guest speakers on hate speech during programs	25	11.8%
Expose root causes of conflict	20	9.5%
Total	211	100

Source: Field research, 2020

The data above depict that the greater proportion (60) of the respondents hold the opinion that restructuring the content and programs of broadcast media during conflict accounting for 28.4% is a major strategy to be employed by broadcast media during conflict. Also, 40 respondents hold the view that responsible reporting accounting for 19% is also a major strategy to be employed by broadcast media during conflict. In addition, avoiding the use of quack journalists in covering conflict (35) is an essential strategy to be put in place by broadcast media amounting to 16.6%. The need for guests to be cautioned on hate speech during live broadcast programs was also mentioned by respondents (25) as a strategy amounting to 11.8%. Other respondents hold that exposing the root causes of conflict (9.5%), investigative reporting (7.1%) and gatekeeping (7.6%) are among the strategies to be put in

place by broadcast media to prevent and minimize the escalation of violence in Cameroon.

Table 4: Journalists' Opinion on the strategies put in place by broadcast media to prevent, transform and minimize violence before, during and after.

Themes	Thematic Explication	Groundings	Quotes
Responsible reporting	The ability to do what is supposed to be done the right way	60	"just respecting the canons of journalism" "respect the norms of conflict sensitive reporting" "ensure the ABC of reporting is respected" "carryout reports on possible solutions to end the conflict" "balance reporting" "responsible reporting"
Peace journalism	The act of preaching harmony, love and living together by journalists	70	"the intentional practice of peace journalism and development journalism" "promote peaceful reporting as much as possible" "preaching peace to the people" "establishing peaceful path rather than laying more emphasis on the act perpetrated" "the news media can help in bringing hope and encouraging people to shun violence" "play its role as the media to inform and promote peaceful co-existence" "reiterating on the importance of dialogue, justice and peace"
Restructure content	The ability to change the content of broadcast media	30	"we need a total halt of the media content" "in times of conflict, I think media practitioners should revise their content" "the content of the media should reflect the current situation" "all media organs should modify their programs towards peace reporting" "media programs need adjustments"
Fact checking	The ability to get the right statistics, number of deaths, properties destroyed during conflict	30	"by fact-checking reports before airing" "fact checking should be taken very seriously so as not to mislead the news consumers" "have a better understanding of the item, check and double check facts before airing"
Awareness creation on the dangers of conflict	To make people to know the negative consequences of conflict	10	"by educating the population on the dangers of conflict, the consequences, the sufferings of displaced persons" "constant sensitization on the effects and consequences of conflicts"
Avoid side taking	Act of supporting one person against the other	10	"the media should avoid taking sides thus preventing yellow journalism" "media houses should be apolitical and non-partisan" "media practitioners should not support one party during conflict"

Source: Field research, 2020

From the above data, journalists have enumerated the strategies to be implemented to transform conflict at all levels (pre-conflict, during conflict and post conflict).

70 respondents interviewed reveal that the most important strategy to be put in place to transform conflict is for broadcasters to practice *peace journalism* during reporting. Also, 60 respondents hold that *responsible reporting* by journalists will go a long way to prevent conflict in the society. Moreover, *content restructure* and *facts check* as indicated by 30 respondents is also an important strategy to be put in place to transform conflict.

In addition, *creating awareness on the dangers of conflict* as indicated by 10 respondents' remains a prerequisite to prevent violence and conflict in Cameroon. Respondents (10) indicated that for the broadcast media to avoid conflict; broadcasters must avoid side taken and lastly, 5 respondents revealed that journalists must practice *investigative journalism* in other to transform modern day conflict. According to the respondents, once these strategies are designed by the broadcast media and implemented, the media will play a significant role in conflict transformation.

To support this finding, Osadolor (2001) cited in Orhewere and Kur (2004) maintains that the most critical role of the media should be in helping to transform or at least attenuate the severity of conflicts is to restructure its contents and to engage in responsible reporting. Publicity is critical in exposing and checking vices. The mass media in every society are seen as agents of social change. This is because they carry out certain roles and functions, which help to develop the populace positively. It is generally agreed that the mass media set agenda for the public to follow.

VII. CONCLUSION

Conflict is an inevitable part of the society today, the ability to prevent and manage it well is of importance as far as development is concerned. Conflict in its right is not evil but if not addressed with the keenest of attention can destroy developmental process. The media has a role to play in conflict and should be guided by the core ethics of its functions to handle conflict in the best interest of the society.

Conflict is an indication of disagreement and the media handling it will go a long way in explaining the situation to resolve the conflict or aggravate the situation. It is the duty of the media to ensure the authenticity of the information being

disseminated and convince the audience of the reality of the messages. The media has been seen or suspected of being involved in propaganda which in turn erodes its credibility. Media and journalism can be a great assistance in conflict management and peace building. However, the power they have is also limited, as they will never be able to eliminate armed conflicts altogether. The media can be a good tool in a healthy and functioning environment but more is needed than ethical and responsible reporting to ensure lasting peace and safety.

The research concludes that broadcast media greatly played a significant role in the ongoing conflict. These roles include prevention, escalation and conflict transformation. Among these roles, conflict escalation was the most significant role the broadcast media is playing in the ongoing conflict. Some of the roles included; displacement of unethical videos, pictures, sensational reporting, preaching hate speech, distorted facts/lies telling, supporting one party, name calling (terrorists), blame game and fueling division and hatred.

As Adam and Schoemaker point out, “access to information is a vital building block for lasting peace” (2010: 35). Despite this fact, there has been a large-scale omission of media as an instrument for conflict transformation and peacebuilding (Himelfarb, 2009). This research has demonstrated that there is a great untapped potential for intended outcome media to serve as a conflict preventive and peacebuilding tools.

Although each conflict is unique, it has been replicated in Cambodia, Rwanda, Kenya, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Colombia, Albania, Rumania, Russia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Sudan and Cameroon indicating the universality of the reasons for its success (Adam and Holguin, 2003: 15). From this follows that the role of media in preventing conflict should move beyond the strengthening of independent news media, to explore all the possibilities of intended outcome media, including new media technology. Media may not be able to solve conflicts, but there is certainly an important role for them in spurring debate, reconciling communities and changing behaviour towards peacebuilding. It should be remembered, however, that media interventions are not a “quick fix” (Adam and Schoemaker, 2010: 39).

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