UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

AN ANALYSIS OF FRONT-PAGE CONFLICT STORIES OF THE GHANAIAN TIMES NEWSPAPER

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A Thesis in the Department of Communication and Media Studies, Faculty of Foreign Languages Education and Communication, submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial Fulfilment

> of the Requirement for the Award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy (Development Communication) in the University of Education, Winneba

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **David Yarboi-Tetteh**, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotation and references contained in published works have all been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:	•••••	
DATE:	••••	

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of this thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

DEDICATION

In memory of my late father, to my mother, sisters, brother, my lovely wife and son.



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ABSTRACT

Conflict has remained a shackle that deters the progress of countries, especially developing nations and the media have a role to play in de-escalating conflict situations. The study examines the coverage of conflict by the media, specifically the print media, the frames and tones used to report issues of conflict and the reasons for the publication of such stories in line with the challenges of journalists and editors. Newspaper content analysis and interviews are methods used to collect data for the study. Premised on structural conflict, framing and gatekeeping theories, the contents of the Ghanaian Times, a state-owned newspaper, published from January 2016 to December, 2020 were analysed, and 179 conflict-related stories were identified. The analysis of these stories established that the media in Ghana, particularly newspapers give little attention to the promotion of peace journalism when reporting conflictrelated issues. Four frames-consequence, responsibility, solution and conflict emerged from the data analysed. The newspaper from the data dominantly used neutral tone in reporting conflict related issues. Journalists and editors argued that sources of conflict news, media ideology, resources and logistics, personal values of journalists and the safety and security of journalists are the challenges during their reportage on issues of conflict. The study recommends, therefore, that the media, especially the print media pay more attention to and report issues of conflict with the use of peace journalism due to the devastating effect of conflict, especially in a country surrounded by nations experiencing terrorism and other forms of violence.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

The media has been categorised as an important tool in the development of societies around the globe including the promotion of social cohesion (Galtung, 2010; Puddephatt, 2006). This has resulted in researchers arguing that such beliefs are key in achieving the desired transformation of a peaceful and prosperous people (Galtung, 2000; Gilboa, 2009; Lynch, 2014). It is in this light that the coverage of conflicts by the media has been criticised based on unprofessional decisions and insensitivity in reporting conflicts (Wolfsfeld, 2004; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005; Mensah, Boasiako & Acquah, 2017; Zebulon, 2017). Consequently, some scholars have accused the media of being masterminds of the problem by focusing on sensationalism, over simplification and under-representation of certain issues. Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) posit that it is reporters and editors that make choices regarding the gathering, presentation and publication of news articles in newspapers and other media outlets. Thus, the coverage of conflict by the media is a collaboration among the editorial team involving reporters and editors.

According to Lynch (2014), coverage and representation of conflict constitute a critical aspect of conflict reporting as they can influence in various ways how conflicts are perceived. Several researchers (Mensah et al., 2017; Galtung & Lynch, 2010; Wolfsfeld, 2004) mention the media's contribution to fuelling conflicts, distorting public understanding and outlining replies to conflicts. According to Galtung (2012), these concerns associated with conventional conflict/war reporting necessitated the development of a peace journalism approach. Galtung (2010) holds the view that peace is an important catalyst for the

development of societies around the globe as it creates a sense of belonging where individuals and nations feel safe thereby situating their visions and aspirations within that context.

Francis (2008) states that peace has remained elusive in the history of many African states after independence from colonial rule. He explains that the aspirations and hope of a continent as regards the promotion of peace and achievement of development have not materialised due to some local and foreign factors. In Sub-Sahara Africa, governance, resource allocation and power, ethnicity, religion, and boundary demarcation have been contributory factors towards the ravaging of countries within the sub-region (Francis, 2008; Kendie et al., 2017). The various conflicts recorded in Sub-Sahara Africa, have caused staggering loss of lives, destruction of properties and environmental degradation (Francis, 2008; Kendie et al., 2014, Tonah, 2006).

A salient point observed by the Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP) in its 2021 Global Peace Index, explains that the world has witnessed deterioration of its peacefulness by 0.07 (IEP, 2021). Despite the improvement in peacefulness among 87 countries, a total of 73 nations saw a decline in their peacefulness out of which 22 are within the Sub-Saharan Africa (IEP, 2021). The report on measuring peace in a complex global arena mentioned that despite the fact that conflicts around the world are declining, tensions and anxiety associated with the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to its rise. The report ranked Ghana as the 38th most peaceful country in 2021 with a score of 1.715 out of 163 countries, a slight decrease from its 2020 ranking (IEP, 2021). In the same vein, the Institute of Economic and Peace hints that, the Sub-Saharan Region recorded a less peaceful environment than the global safety and security average. The report further explained that the Sub-Saharan Region

recorded some disputes over presidential and parliamentary election results, and public agitation against corruption in society instigated civil unrest and political instability (IEP, 2021).

The incidence of competing interests results in the emergence of conflict, if not managed properly, can get violent (UNDP, 2018). Francis (2006) as cited in Kendie (2014) views conflict as the chase over irreconcilable interests by people with diverse interest. In assessing the issue of social conflict, Coser (1956) notes that conflict is a struggle between individuals or groups in relation to values and entitlements to scarce status, power and resources. The intentions of the struggle and opposition, according to Osei-Kufour and Bukari (2022), are to harm, eradicate and neutralise the attack of the other. Galtung (2000) notes that factors such as ethnic identities and hatred are causes of violent conflict. He further argues that conflict is the irreconcilability of goals among two or additional parties due to diverse perception or standards which subsequently generate into strain, catastrophe and occasional violence among the contending parties, individuals or societies. Instructively, the fundamental problems can erupt into chaos and anarchy in a state when not resolved or managed in good time.

Kendie, Osei-Kufuor and Boakye (2014) observe that conflicts in Ghana are complex and are the result of varied causes raging from religious differences to land, chieftaincy and ethnic differences, and political and economic marginalisation. Several parts of Ghana, according to scholars (Kendie et al., 2014; Tsikata & Seini, 2004) have been plagued with communal strife, particularly land and chieftaincy related conflicts. Armed conflict, as explained by Kendie et al. (2014), is one of the main reasons of conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa as it has caused death and destruction, uprooting of population and erosion of social capital. Tsikata and Seini

(2004) are also of the view that, political violence between factions of different political parties precedes Ghana's independence.

Statistics on the effect of violent conflict in the world by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC, 2021) indicates that 9.8 million people were displaced due to a number of conflict and violence in the world in 2020. The report explained that most of these new cases occurred in North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and Middle East. Violence according to the report, increased sharply in areas such as Burkina Faso, Mozambique and Central African Republic (CAR), resulting in displacement of a number of people from their home (IDMC, 2021). This may present a daunting challenge for the United Nations (UN) in achieving the target as stipulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which countries around the globe ascribe to.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2016-2030, follows the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agenda which ended in 2015. The SDGs agenda seeks to provide grounds for intergovernmental negotiations to constitute a set of plausible and holistic SDGs which are anchored on the principles of UN charter and respect for international law (Olsen et al., 2014). As captured, SDG 16 is strategically crafted in reducing all forms of violence while working with communities and heads of states towards ending conflict and insecurity. It also aims at ensuring the promotion of rule of law and human rights which are key in strengthening participation of countries towards global governance as well as checking the flow of illicit arms.

The SDG 16 seeks to reduce violence of any form and its associated death rates globally in a significant manner. It stands to reason that the adoption of the SDGs is expressed perhaps in attention towards amplifying the rate of conflict on the

international stage and the need for additional approaches in halting its devastating effects. The global stage has been inundated with conflicts as recorded in Nigeria, Gambia, Liberia, Libya, Syria, Sierra Leone and Lebanon among others (IDMC, 2021). According to IEP (2021), other forms of conflicts including communal clashes, land disputes, political violence have been increasing daily. It therefore suggests the inescapability of skirmishes in human society.

In the view of the Institute for Economic and Peace, the economic development and increase in foreign direct investments of countries have been greatly affected due to higher levels of violent conflicts experienced in a number of countries (IEP, 2021). According to the Institute, indicators necessary for enhanced development in the area of infant mortality and access to services as well as poverty, life expectancy, education and economic development are affected by the incidence of conflict. The Rwandan genocide for instance, resulted in loss of lives and destruction of resources (Adisa, Mohamed, & Ahmad, 2016; Ibrahim et al., 2011). The impact of conflict in a society is linked to the fight for acceptability, politics and control over natural resources (Kendie et al., 2014; Tonah, 2006; Tsikata & Seini, 2004).

Several scholars (Galtung, 2010; Howard, 2009; Keeble, 2010; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005) have related to peace journalism concept as a method towards reporting conflict in the global arena arguing generally in favour of the concept. Galtung (1998) states that war journalism is more tilted towards violence and this biasness in the reportage focus on details involving physical particulars in a conflict situation such as the loss of lives or the type of weaponry used. He hinges his argument on historical facts and existing research works which indicate the media's role as a social institution towards peace-building efforts while acknowledging its

destructive nature. The emphasis on war journalism is defeat or victory for either side as it does not focus on the historical antecedents or causes, outcomes or impact of the conflict (Galtung, 2002; Lynch, 2010; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005).

Galtung (1968) further posits that peace journalism presents an opportunity for a substitute approach to reporting conflict by journalists with the focus not only on the physical accounts of the conflict but on the structural and cultural aspects of the conflict due to its effect on people. Thus, news articles under this paradigm are geared towards the creation of a stage for discussion among all conflicting parties and at the same time come up with probable alternative to lessen the degree of the conflict. Advocates of the peace journalism model therefore call for a change in the traditional journalism norms associated with conflict by developing fresh frames that encourage shared ground and communal harmony (Galtung, 2010; Howard, 2009; Lynch, 2010; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2010).

Peace journalism is seen as having the features and competences of inspiring positive communication as an initiative for peace with the aim of ensuring depolarisation and de-escalation of conflict situations (Galtung, 2000). It can therefore contribute significantly in a role that will inspire journalists to portray disputes in a diverse way than that to which they frequently ascribe. Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) however note that there should be a conscious effort towards selecting and reporting on issues with the mindset of creating opportunities for society to contemplate and appreciate non-violent responses to conflict. They contend that the adoption of peace journalism approach in conflict should be done using conflict analysis and transformation with the view of ensuring balance, fairness and accuracy in reporting; and the provision of a different route map tracing the

connections between journalists, their sources, the stories they cover and the consequences of their journalism.

According to Adeyanju (2018), the media have the capability of facilitating diffusion of tensions before such issue reach breaking points as well as ensuring a check on government, opposition and the society. He further claims that the publication of credible information by the media promotes democratic principles. Although journalists and media practitioners are seen as agents for national transformation, their actions or inactions can also serve as a conduit that will fuel violent conflicts which will ultimately lead to the destruction of stable economies. In the field of media studies, it is argued that the fortunes of journalism in the Sub-Region are mixed due to social environment making the practice tough in spite of it being key in the development of the nations (Pato & Jibril, 2018). According to Howard (2002), financial nature and professional culture can influence the media's opinions in a socially destabilizing way. Francis (2006) posits that the instability and continuous conflicts in the sub-Sahara African region do not have any evidence of concrete solutions for lasting stability. These conflicts, he explains, often lead to enormous death and destruction, including billions of dollars in costs deriving from negative economic influences.

In Ghana, there has been complaints about the way the media report violent incidents comprising; political violence, land disputes, chieftaincy disputes, demonstrations, and community-herdsmen clashes among others (Mensah et al., 2017; Tsikata, 2020). Mensah et al., (2017) contend that, one area which most people expect the media to work effectively, is in the area of promoting peace and development of the country. Reporters Without Borders in its 2022 World Press

Freedom Index referred to Ghana as one of Africa's most democratic nations with a vibrant and pluralist media environment (Reporters Without Border, 2022).

Using the concept of peace journalism, this study focuses on an analysis of how the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper reports incidence of conflicts comprising: communal clashes, demonstrations, chieftaincy disputes, land disputes on among others on its front-page from January 2016 to December 2020. According to Amihere (1996), the *Ghanaian Times* is seen as a national newspaper whose readership cut across the entire state.

1.1 Concept of Conflict

Several experts in the area of communication as well as conflict and peace studies have postulated various definitions of conflict and how they impact on the affected communities. A conflict, according to Putman and Shoemaker (2007), is differences and tensions involving opposing sides, irreconcilability of viewpoints, and can also be seen in the light of politicians attacking one another on media platforms. In assessing the issue of conflict, Farmers et al., (2007) posits that the aims of conflict involving rivals are to harm, eradicate and defuse the attack of the other during a scuffle over values and entitlements to scarce status, power and resources. Galtung (2000) explains that factors such as ethnic identities and hatred are causes of violent conflict.

Francis (2006) also contends that conflict is the pursuit of irreconcilable goals and interests by groups with diverse interest. Galtung (2000) avers that conflict is the irreconcilability of goals between two or more parties due to diverse perception or ideals which subsequently generate into tension, crisis and sometimes violence among the contending parties, individuals or communities. Instructively, the fundamental problems can erupt into chaos and anarchy in a state if such issues

are not resolved or managed in good time. Satapathy (2001) compares conflict to a stage where identifiable group of human beings (regardless of their religious, socio-economic, ethnic, partisan or other) is embroiled in conscious disagreement to another group or individual due to the incompatibility of their goals. He also refers to conflict as an aspect of the human nature and how it is handled.

According to Rai (2014), conflict is a deliberate competition where those who engage in it are aware of their—enemies or opponents and naturally occurs as humans interact with each other in order to satisfy their diverse needs. Thus, conflict situations in a society are as a result of antagonism, clashes, economic and social inequalities, religious, ethnic factionalism, intolerance and clash of economic interest. Bujra (2010) however states that any attempt to conceptualise conflict should put emphasis on disagreement between wider aggregate of society (either between states or tribes) as well as violence injury. Debrah, Alidu and Owusu-Mensah (2016) note that conflict associated with a group sometimes is related to social psychology where discussions which result in ethnic discrimination provide reasonable explanation towards an insight into recurrent of conflict. The perceived invectives and rude conduct during such discrimination according to them, can lead to threats to individuals and group status and will therefore allow for the justification of conflict.

Conflict and peace scholars' postulate that violent conflict result in destruction of assets through fighting and looting and also serve as a threat to peace. Haider (2012) mentions that violent conflicts result in loss of human lives, affects social systems, impact negatively on the political governance, has socio-economic costs, weakens social capital and has pervasive societal psychological effect. According to Awedoba (2009), violent conflict results in loss of life, injuries,

destruction of public and private property. He further states that the situation may affect the environment and also result in the crumbling of social relations, polarization and fictionalisation of every aspect of social engagements.

Kendie and Akudugu (2010) posit that diverse situations may lead to violent conflicts resulting in deaths, destruction of assets, truncation of development initiatives and a halt in social activities. Collier and Hoeffler (2004) contend that economic and political issues utilize hostilities and marginalization between groups to promote conflicts activities inside any given nation. According to Collier and Hoeffler (2004), greed and grievance as a result of mismanagement of resources leading to inequality and deprivation can lead to the occurrence of conflict.

1.1.2 Conflict in Africa

Conflict has been part of human existence for centuries and its occurrence in Africa is no exception as the continent has and continue to experience protracted conflict thereby affecting the political, social and economic development negatively (Kendie et al., 2014). The African continent for years has witnessed various types of conflict including intra and inter-state violence and the situation has led to the reference of the continent as the abode of instability and violence with no radical solution towards addressing the conflict (Annan, 2014; Francis, 2008; Tonah, 2006). Alabi (2006) states that the history of Africa is replete with conflict while Okunlola and Okafor (2022) aver that Africa has experienced other forms of crisis ranging from ethnic wars and violence, insurgency and banditry. Annan (2014) however avers that sub-Saharan West Africa has and continue to experience intra-state conflicts derived largely from ethnic and religious causes making the security environment precarious and unstable. Enu-Kwesi and Tufuor (2010) mentioned identity, participation and legitimacy as some of the factors that fuel the continuation

of conflict in the African continent. Kendie (2010) similarly explains that the structure of production and power relations tend to be among the factors that inform the nature of conflicts in Africa.

Olanrewaju et al. (2020) also posit that structural inequality regarding the allocation of resources increase the desire by resource managers who are in the minority to own and benefit from it thereby denying majority of the people or some groups resulting in discontent and rebellion. Aremu (2010) identifies corruption as one of the main factors that contribute towards fuelling internal conflicts in Africa and also raised agitation among the population against leaders for badly managing the affairs of the communities or country. This situation, he explains can lead to the adoption of militant nationalism against African leaders. Canterbury and Kendie (2010) explain that one of the major effects of conflicts on the regional economy is the fact that scarce resources (both private and public) are diverted from development and channelled to security.

Alabi (2006) contends that the coming of the Europeans and further colonisation of Africa in the 19th century necessitated the division of the continent thereby affecting the various communities due the creation of certain political units as well as the merging of ethnic groups and the build-up of rival groups. Aremu (2010) however posits that demarcation of the African continent was carried out with most African states having their boundaries indiscriminately done without recourse to the ethnic and cultural differences as well as the ethnic and cultural dynamics. Thus, boundaries created by the colonialists where various ethnic groups including rival cultures were mandated to cohabit within the borders of a single unit created a fertile ground for some of the conflicts the continent is experiencing.

1.1.3 Conflict in Ghana

Ghana, since independence according to Scholars, has enjoyed relative peace unlike other African states but conflicts such as ethnic, economic, religious and political do occur intermittently in the country (Agyeman, 2008; Kendie et al., 2014). Debrah et al. (2016) affirmed that the conflicts in Ghana are linked to social and economic standings vis-a-vis economic opportunities, explaining that, conflicts can also be seen to occur around ethnic identity, group history and rights. They further note the pursuit for land and other natural resources are the fundamental inducement for most inter-ethnic conflicts in Ghana as there have been effort to subdue minority groupings by the majority. Kendie et al. (2014) argue that conflicts recorded in Ghana are multifaceted with varied reasons ranging from chieftaincy and ethnic differences, political, economic marginalisation, religion and land issues. They further state:

Several parts of Ghana have been plagued with communal strife, particularly land and chieftaincy related conflicts in the past two decades or more. Some of these conflicts easily engage the attention of the country as a whole, and in some cases 2the international community (p. 3).

Tsikata and Seini (2004) indicate that the desire to control land and other resources coupled with the issue of sovereignty. They explain that, issues of chieftaincy succession; land for the building of offices of institutions and services are some of the factors that influence inter-state or intra-state conflict in the Ghanaian society. Tsikata and Seini (2004) further state that, conflict among two state institutions, the security agencies and communities, enforcement of law and order by the police result in communal clashes as well as inter-personal clashes. According to Debrah et al. (2016), the conflict in the northern part of Ghana truncate development

progress made over the years due to the destruction of resources and development projects.

Farmers-herdsmen conflict linked to the occasional destruction of crops by cattle is an aspect of resource conflict that recur in the Ghana as the pastoralists are accused of not attending to the cattle resulting in the cattle wandering into people's farm lands to cause destruction of farm produce (Bukari & Schareika, 2015; Tonah, 2006). Various studies (Alhassan, 2017; Tonah, 2006; Tsikata, 2020), confirm that the drought in the Sahel regions resulted in the migration of herders into the peripheries of forest zones of West Africa in fighting for their economic livelihood and that has resulted in an increase of the incidence of conflict between farmers of local communities and herders. Tsikata and Seini (2004) explain that the usage of land has resulted in violent confrontations between herdsmen and farmers of local communities which sometimes take the form of ethnic conflict between migrants and their Ghanaian counterpart.

In assessing the land use conflict between settler farmers and Fulani herdsmen in the Kwahu East District of Ghana, Alhassan (2017), posits that there is a complex dimension of conflict between Fulani-herdsmen and farmers in Ghana because of the way the herdsmen have been portrayed as necessarily violent and guilty whenever a case involving herdsmen-farmers conflict are brought to the fore. He argues that stereotyping the Fulani-herdsmen as primordially violent is counterproductive as it puts the herdsmen on the defensive which may result in attack towards them.

Kendie and Akudugu (2010) mention that cultural and spiritual identity that communities attach towards land in Ghana have resulted in most rural communities being mindful of such identity when extracting the land for their socio-economic

livelihood. Thus, an individual who attempts to dispossess their land from them is viewed as making a deliberate attempt to deprive them of their identity. Tsikata and Seini (2004) further explained that communities also make an attempt to prevent people from other communities from accessing services such as markets or hospitals from their land by mounting road blocks.

According to Tsikata and Seini (2004), Ghana has not recorded any major religious violence between Christians and Muslims but recalled occasional violence between members of the same religious body. They mentioned clashes between a section of the Muslim community- Tijaniyya and Al Sunni. Another religious violence recorded in the country as indicated by Tsikata & Seini (2004) involves Ga traditionalists and some Christian churches over the annual ban on drumming and noise making, a sacred customary rite, to herald the celebration of the Homowo festival by the chiefs and people of the Ga Traditional Area.

Tsikata and Seini (2004) in looking at political conflict, argue that such conflict predates Ghana's independence but under the Fourth Republic, violence witnessed on the political front has been found to be between members of the two leading political parties- National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New patriotic Party (NPP). They further posit that sometimes political violence recorded in Ghana is between members of the same political party.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Media coverage of matters around the globe are of significant importance to scholars. A number of studies have been undertaken by communication scholars on how media cover or frame issues (Agyekum, 2014; Anipah, 2017; Evers, 2016; Ofori-Birikorang, 2009). The escalation of conflict due to the impact of the media is more extensively known than the media's impact on peacebuilding (Galtung, 2010).

There have been a number of studies which have corroborated that the impact of the media on conflict exceeds that of conflict prevention and peacebuilding (Hamelink, 2002; Wolfsfeld, 2004; Puddephatt, 2006). According to Demarest and Langer (2021), the exacerbation or mitigation of inter-group division actually depends on how the media in a country carry out that task as it can be seen, from the level of media independence or from political interference or level of professionalism and training by the media organisation.

Yousaf, Alahi and Aden (2018) in a study on war and peace frame in India-Pakistan relations, have established that war journalism frames are dominant in the elite press of Pakistan and India. They argue for the provision of balanced information since the media is an important medium in any society and can play a vital role in information sharing. Yousaf et al. (2018) further argue that the media constitute a critical aspect in terms of peace journalism as they can play a useful part in promoting peace among two combatants.

Also, Gever (2019) in a study on frames and tones of the anti-open grazing law of Benue State in Nigeria in two print media (the *Punch* and *Leadership* newspapers) as well as two broadcasting channels (*Channels TV* and the *Nigeria Television Authority*) from June 2016 to November 2017, established that journalists in their framing of conflict are influenced by traditional news values of human interest (extrinsic factors) and desire for the resolution of the conflict (intrinsic factors). Additionally, the study revealed that the tone of coverage was largely positive in support of the anti-open grazing bill while horror and hope frames were dominant frame (Gever, 2019).

Adisa, Mohamed, and Ahmad (2016), in analysing the consequences of newspaper framing of conflicts among ethnic groups in Nigeria found that

newspapers' framing on ethnic issues, especially on inter-ethnic relations and politics, culminated to inciting, double standards, name calling, all stemmed from ownership interest, and were some of the major factors that widen ethnic differences and eventually stimulated ethnic groups into conflict. The study further states that newspapers address some ethnic groups with bad names culminating in them getting angry, irritated and unhappy.

In Ghana, Tsikata (2020) explains that the media has been contributing towards the escalation of farmers-herders conflict by regularly referring to the conflict as 'Fulani menace' and has unsuccessfully highlighted the class or resource dimension of the conflict, preferring to stress the ethnicity and foreign status of the herdsmen. Sedentary farmers-migrant herdsmen tension, according to Tsikata (2020), is a serious resource conflict in Africa. Bukari and Schareika (2015) contend that the coverage of the herder-farmers' conflict by the Ghanaian media lead to reprisal attacks and justification by communities against Fulani herdsmen as they have been portrayed as security threat and continue to suffer negative stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination.

In assessing the role of mass media to conflict resolution, Mensah, Boasiako and Acquah (2017) established that the conflict in Tuabodom was aggravated through reportage of the media. The authors investigated the role the mass media played in conflict management by looking at Tuabodom conflict in Ghana as well as residents' perceptions the media's role in managing the conflict by using framing theory. The study established that lack of decorous expressions used by the panel of programmes during discussion of the conflict was a contributory factor in escalating the conflict and not its resolution. Mensah et al. (2017) further mentioned that the

media framed the Tuabodom conflict with some level of biasness towards the conflicting communities.

The Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) in its monitoring report in 2016 states that abusive language in the media have the potential to provoke or incite others to anger and or violence and must be avoided in all arrangements of political discourse to avoid any form of elections related violence before, during and after the elections (MFWA, 2016). A study conducted by the Foundation identified a number of comments ranging from insulting and offensive, unsubstantiated allegation and inciting violence which had the tendencies to create conflict in Ghana (MFWA, 2016).

Prof Kwame Karikari, a former Executive Director of the Media Foundation for West Africa, is reported in the *Daily Graphic* to have refuted the suggestions that the media in Ghana are promoting tendencies that could plunge the country into chaos or unrest (*Daily Graphic*, July 11, 2021). He was quoted by the newspaper as saying "Wherever the media have been instrumental in creating unrest, there is always a political force using a section as instrument and a tool to carry out a systematic agenda" (*Daily Graphic*, July 11, 2021; pp 1, 3). The immediate Past President of the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), Roland Affail Monney in advocating for the adoption of peace journalism model in Ghana is quoted by the *Daily Graphic* for a change in the narrative of pitching one person against the other or issues that will incite people to violence by embracing peace and conflict resolution journalism in the Ghanaian media landscape (*Daily Graphic*, April 12, 2022). He further posits that:

The media must tell stories, shape programmes and tailor programmes in a non-violent manner to ensure that peace is sustained. This is not to argue that critical media must be shut down; we must continue to investigate issues and hold government officials accountable, but we must do it with the utmost respect for peace (*Daily Graphic*, April 12, 2022 p.7).

It is evident that media coverage of conflict using peace journalism approach has received research consideration worldwide, but not in Ghana specifically. Studies on media use of peace journalism in the coverage of conflict has received little scholarly attention in Ghana. The available studies are related to media reportage of conflict in Ghana. This gap in the literature concerning the use of peace journalism approach in the Ghanaian media is what the study seeks to fill.

Therefore, the essence of this study is to examine the coverage of conflict situation in the Ghanaian newspapers; study the frames adopted, and tones used to report conflict in the selected newspaper, *Ghanaian Times*. The factors that contribute to such selection are explored from the perspectives of journalists and editors. The study was conducted through a qualitative content analysis of selected editions of the *Ghanaian Times* from January, 2016 to December, 2020, and anchored using social representation theories.

1.3 Objective of the Study

Ofori-Birikorang (2009) argues that the *Ghanaian Times* is among the newspapers that widely report and frame news articles based on the dynamics of national political economy. He further posits that newspapers can be chosen based on their longstanding popularity in the publishing history of a nation and the Ghanaian Times has published consistently since independence. Amihere (2010) avers that the *Ghanaian Times* is among the most dependent print media source of information in Ghana. Nyarko (2016) also argues that the *Ghanaian Times* is seen as

the standard and symbol for research purposes as well as newspaper review programmes on radio and television stations across the Ghana.

The main objective of the study is to look at conflict related stories on the front pages of the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper and show and/or critically discuss how the newspaper cover such stories on its reportage. Specifically, this research will tackle the following objectives:

- To examine the front-page coverage of conflict stories in in the Ghanaian Times newspaper.
- 2. To identify the frames the *Ghanaian Times* used to report issues of conflict in Ghana on its front page.
- 3. To investigate the tone of conflict stories used on front-page stories in the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper.
- 4. To explore the challenges of reporters and editors of the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper on the coverage of conflict stories on the front-page.

1.4 Research Ouestions

- 1. How does the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper cover conflict stories on its front page?
- 2. What are the frames the *Ghanaian Times* use in reporting conflict on its front-page?
- 3. What is the tone of coverage of conflict stories on the front page of the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper?
- 4. What are the challenges of reporters and editors of the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper on the coverage of conflict stories on the front page?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The essence of this study is to examine the coverage of conflict situations in Ghana with specific reference to the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper. It is based on scholarly works regarding the influence of the media in the escalation of conflict and the promotion of peace-building efforts in conflict situations at the national and global stage. The importance of peace journalism relates to calming down tension in conflict situations as war journalism is seen to escalate conflict situations with its attendant destruction of properties and loss of lives.

This study contributes to the framing of conflict stories through the adoption of peace journalism or conflict sensitive reporting approach (Galtung & Ruge, 1965) in contributing towards addressing the conflict in Africa. The media in Ghana have been cited for contributing towards aggravating conflict situations in the country (Mensah et al., 2017; Tsikata, 2020). With the existence of guideline on conflict reporting, code of ethics for journalists and documents, the media in Ghana is expected to play critical roles in contributing towards de-escalation of conflict through its reportage. An examination of how the media report conflict will help in analysing the concept of peace journalism in a critical, buoyant and polarized media landscape like Ghana.

The study looks at the war journalism and peace journalism frames used by journalists as identified by scholars of communication as well as peace and conflict studies (Galtung 2010; Howard, 2009; Lynch, 2010; Tehranian, 2002). It therefore contributes to the adoption of peace journalism/conflict sensitive reporting by reporters and editors as the concept focuses on conflict transformation and makes an attempt to artistically change the trend of conflict for the parties to work towards peace (Galtung, 2002). It also deals with the conscious efforts by editors and

reporters in selecting certain aspects of conflicts and making them salience in their publications- to create a common ground for the various publics to deliberate on a non-violent answer to conflict (Lynch, 2008).

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focused on the coverage of conflict related issues by the media in terms of war journalism and peace journalism approaches, the frames and tones used as well as the perspectives of journalists and editors. The study however was limited to conflict situations in Ghana and how the media report such issues. The study was limited to the print media, especially one newspaper: *The Ghanaian Times*. The newspaper was chosen for the study because it is a state-owned and have obligation to present issues without biases. It is also limited to only conflict related news stories captured on the front-page of the newspaper.

Additionally, in selecting respondents for the study, only four respondents, comprising three journalists and the editor were selected to establish the reasons the print media report on conflict related issues in Ghana. The study focused on journalists who report for the print media and excluded those who report for the broadcast media (radio and television). This facilitated the collation of data from the very reporters of the news articles that constituted the data set.

1.7 Organisation of the Study

The study is grouped into five main chapters. The first chapter focuses on the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study and limitations in carrying the research. The second chapter covers the theoretical framework, conceptual framework and review of related literature. The third chapter

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focus on the research design, sample and sampling procedure, data collection and data analysis procedure, data management as well as ethical consideration. Chapter four focuses on the presentation, analysis and discussion of findings within the theoretical, comparative and empirical literature. The fifth chapter concentrated on summary, conclusion and recommendations.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the views of researchers in the field of conflict and peace as well as communication studies. It focuses on news values, media content and organisational influence, concept of front page, importance of front page, concept of conflict, conflict in Africa and conflict situation in Ghanaian society. It looks at the role of media in conflict situations, safety and security of journalists and the concept of peace journalism. The theories that underpin this study-structural conflict theory, framing and gatekeeping, are also discussed in this chapter.

2.1 News values

Certain factors according to media researchers influence the conventional news reporting style as journalists tend to rely on these aspects- news values to enable them to decide on what news is or the issues they should report on (Harcup & O'Neil 2016; Serwoonoo, 2021; Strömbäck & Hopmann, 2012). Serwornoo (2019) contends that journalists are guided fundamentally by mechanistic rules that knowingly evade objective selection of the event of the day. He further states that beyond these mechanistic rules of journalism, ownership, society and cultural setting influence the selection of news stories by the media. The theoretical distinct nature of news and news worthiness are made clear by Shoemaker and Cohen (2006) as they rejected the claim that news articles make it out to publication based on certain news factors.

According to Serwornoo (2019; 2021), journalists are involved in special translation of event into stories as the translation hardly accommodates the pre-event circumstances which significantly determines why events are occurring and with

which severity. Galtung and Ruge (1965) identified nine factors namely; time span, intensity/ threshold, clarity, proximity, consonance, continuity and unexpectedness as factors that influence the flow of news with reference to structure and socio-cultural values of the society or gatekeepers. Shoemaker and Reese (2014) however state that the different level of influence should be looked at when assessing the motivation behind journalists' selection of news by coming up with the hierarchy of influences. In the views expressed by Serwornoo (2019), the decision of journalists in ascertaining the newsworthiness of an event takes a number of factors into account based on decisions over specific qualities of an event.

Serwoonoo (2021) further argues that news values involve the selection of specific qualities of events regarding newsworthiness of the event. He further says that the concept of news value is influenced by the organizational and professional procedures as found within the practice of journalism. Spencer-Thomas (2005) also avers that news values are guidelines that enable the media including newspapers, television and radio to define the kind of premium or attention to be placed on publication of a news item and an insight into the selections the editorial team are confronted with when deciding whether a story is newsworthy or otherwise.

Kisuke (2004) also posits that news values play a key role in story selections as not all stories can get space in the newspaper. Harcup and O'Neil (2016) constituted a set of news values by exploring foreign news articles to ascertain the reasons that lead to its placement as the topmost of news agenda at the global front. They recommended that events become news as they are influenced by factors such as frequency, intensity, meaningfulness, proximity, unexpectedness, and negative events.

Harcup and O'Neil (2016) further explain that news values appear as saleable aspects which satisfies an extensive target audience and superiority aspects that focus on essential features of a news article's standing. Popular newspapers, according to Strömbäck and Hopmann (2012) are strongly market driven and aim to reach out to a large audience as possible and might focus on profitable news standards. Shoemaker and Reese (2014) in looking at the hierarchical level of influence posit that journalists at the individual level are guided by their professional values in making decisions as regards to news values, professional roles and demographic. These characteristics they explained affect the way journalists report issues.

On the routine level, Shoemaker and Reese (2014) explain that, there is an emergence of content from the way and operations of the media as well as how it is organised. They argue that, the routine level is the immediate limiting structure of the individual. Shoemaker and Reese (2014) further state that, "routines are most imperative because they affect the social reality portrayed in the media content" (p. 168). According to them, routines reveal the difficulties faced by journalists in their line of duty ad they are faced with insufficient resources.

Shoemaker and Reese (2014) further posit that, the organisational level has some similarity with the routine level, but are more different from those at the individual level. This level of influence they explain, focus on "ownership, policies, organisational roles, bureaucratic structures, economic viability, membership and stability" (p. 130). In looking at the social institution level, Shoemaker and Reese (2014) state that, the social system level constitutes the foundation on which the other level resides due to its attention on social construction and unified leanings. Thus, despite the importance of the level of influence, the routine and organisational

levels are key in terms of news selection for publication in the newspapers, particularly on the front-page.

The front-page of every publication within the print media gives an overview of the newspaper, and most importantly an extension of the essential values of the newspaper's staff (Kim & Chung, 2017). Thus, the presentation of news articles on the front page of a newspaper may be influenced by certain factors within the organisation as the editors and journalists present the stories for the day. Researchers have argued that internal and external factors may sway the construction of news and its selection (Serwornoo, 2021; 2019; Shoemaker & Reese, 2013).

According to Lowrey (1999), the gathering, manufacturing and presentation of news based on productivity and profitability may be linked to the routines of the media organisation. In the views expressed by Tuchman (1973) and Schudson (2012), news is a manufactured product; news organisations follow routines for efficiency; external forces impact the news product; journalists suppress personal values and embrace professional values to serve organisational routines; and routines largely determine news content and subsequently the way the world is portrayed to the public (Lowrey, 1999). Hence, the selection of conflict related news article on the frontpage is an important aspect to consider during the selection of stories. In the view of Shoemaker & Reese (2013), organisational politics, such conflict may have an impact on how news articles are selected on the front page.

Additionally, the influence of a media organisation may be linked to contemporary trend being adopted by many newspapers due to dwindling market share within the print media landscape. According to Picard (2014), a number of newspapers have turned to wire services for content as a result of steps taken such as lay-offs of seasoned reporters, editors, and photojournalists to save-cost. Shoemaker

& Reese (2014) mentioned ownership, policies, organisational roles, membership, bureaucratic structures, interorganisational structures and economic feasibility and stability" (p.130) as the factors that influenced content by a media outlet. The idea of news values is of importance to the study as it facilitates understanding of indicators that may have contributed in the selection of conflict stories by the media especially on the frontpage of the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper.

2.2 Newspaper and Concept of Front Page

At the various news-stands, newspaper vendors display the first page of the newspaper to attract patronage. The attention readers of newspapers give to the front-page serves as an influencing factor for a team of editors at editorial conferences to devote much time and seriousness in coming to terms on the publication of specific news articles (McQuail, 2010; Singer, 2001). Reisner (1992) also posits that the story selection is critical since there are a number of issues at play when working on the front page. Thus, it functions as a motivating factor for the media house to maintain a certain share of the newspaper industry or increase sales thereby meeting the ever-changing phase of the media landscape. According to Utt and Pasternack (2003), newspapers present a selection of the events of the day to members of the public and this action is a critical function from the standpoints of the media. That is, the front-page provides an opportunity for people to locate the most critical events.

The front page obviously features the most important stories which is conspicuously aimed at getting the consideration and curiosity of readers (Kim and Chung, 2017; McQuail, 2010). Besides the stories, there are a number of elements in the design and these elements include headlines and photos in addition to typographical decisions and graphic features highlighted in all the stories. It is

instructive that a newspaper's ideals for what it believes to be most important stories of the day may be reflected with the decision made in terms of the design (Shoemaker & Reese, 2013). The stories that are highlighted on a news outlets' front page, like the *New York Times*, are deemed to be the most significant according to Kim and Chung (2017). In order to de-escalate the conflict or promote peacebuilding, it is important to examine how the print media presents tales about conflict situations on the front-page.

Newspapers come up with a demonstration of codes-linguistic, graphic and typographical that will aid in the provision of information with regard to the world to readers (Carter, 2000). According to Althaus and Tewksbury (2002), newspapers play a vital purpose in a society of democratic practice by sharing collective experiences, shared symbolic anchors, and representations of the people to its publics. As argued by Reisner (2002), the front page of the newspaper constitutes an important aspect of the publication as it brings out the day's important stories. It is normally seen as a way to "get attention of readers, set reader's agenda and also inform them" (Pasternack & Utt, 1986, p.29).

In looking at front-page content, timeliness, prominence, proximity, magnitude, conflict, impact and oddity which are part of news values, constitute an important aspect of front-page attributes for an analysis (Bridges, 1989). The studies of Bridges and Bridges (1997) and Bridges, (1989) reveal that hard news is more on the front pages and that there have not been much changes over the years. The authors are of the view that, certain unwritten standards may have served in guiding the attention to certain pressures, interest, or a machine-like approach to play when choosing the news (Bridges & Bridges, 1997). The importance of the front-pages

according to Kim and Chung (2017), contributes significantly in shaping opinion and offering divergent representation on issues.

McQuail (2010) suggests that a number of people read the front-page stories without necessarily reading the rest of the stories on the other pages. It therefore stands to reason that a story may be overlooked or denied prominence and attention especially if it is buried in the rest of the pages. Clayman and Reisner (1999) are of the view that the front page of the newspaper has a distinct significance as stories selected there exercise an impact on stories that appear in other pages of the newspaper. According to them, front page stories attain greater revelation and can easily come to the attention of readers. Additionally, the authors contend that the front-page stories may be professed more significant than other stories.

Kim and Chung (2017) further state that the front page of a newspaper generally forms part of the core values of the journalists working with a newspaper. They argue that certain factors within the organisation may stimulate the content of news that is published by the newspaper. As cited in Kim and Chung (2017), Shoemaker and Reese (2013), explained that different authorities have given an explanation to the construction of news, or the inside and outside forces that may influence news selection. Lowrey (1999) posits that news organisations and the procedures tied to organizational life point to the publication of news based on cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

Kim and Chung (2017) further argue that the procedure for selecting what constitutes news- especially the front-page of the newspaper- is an important issue to assess. From the perspectives of (Gans, 2004; Schudson, 2012; Tuchman, 1973) news is a product by news organisations and it follows rigorous routines for efficiency, suppression of personal values by journalists while embracing

professional values in line with organisational routines which will determine news content based on the routines on how to portray the world to the public and the impact of external forces.

2.3 Role of the Media in Conflict

Researchers within media, conflict and peace studies have acknowledged the contribution of the mass media in escalating conflict as well as promoting peace-building efforts during conflict situations (Galtung, 2012; Jakobsen, 2011; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). Akpunonu (2010) posits that the use of radio, television, print and internet though delightful creations, wield the power of effecting negative and positive tendencies, revenge based on human hatred, dissatisfaction, war and violence. He avers that the mass media can also help in bridging confusion, reconstruct war narratives and promote speedy settlement of conflict. Jakobsen (2011) contends that the media give a lot of attention to occasional violent event when reporting conflict in the society. According to him, the media during conflict situations, do not give attention to the vulnerable and marginalised who have been affected by the conflict. He further notes that in the media's quest to report conflict, they often do not explain the ongoing processes, contexts or backgrounds in which the events occurred. Such reportage may have the potential in affecting the understanding of the conflicts being covered.

Jakobsen (2011) therefore suggests the adoption of peace journalism as a tool for journalists in order for them to understand conflicts in a larger context. According to the author, the choices made by journalists when reporting conflicts in society affect not just other people's understanding, but importantly, what is perceived to be the solution to the conflict. He argues that not giving a background and context in which a conflict occurs affect the conflict and its outcomes.

Abdulbaqi and Ariemu (2017) in analysing newspapers framing of herdsmenfarmers conflict in Nigeria found that the newspapers pattern the conflict as
particular event and occurrence instead of focusing on the historical dimension. They
argue that the selected newspapers in Nigeria used war journalism approach in the
coverage of the conflict. According to Abdulbaqi and Ariemu (2017), the selected
newspapers mostly used solution frame in the coverage of the farmer-herders'
conflict, a shift from the position of Adisa (2012). They further established that the
newspapers in Nigeria dominantly framed the conflict by using responsibility,
solution and human-interest frames than consequence, economic and conspiracy
frames. Abdulbaqi and Ariemu (2017) also found that the newspapers focused on the
ethnic and religious dimension than resource dimension in reporting the farmerherders' conflict.

Melon (2002) also acknowledge the potential of the media in shaping the course of violence in a society. He notes that the media is very influential in society as a result of their ability to give their audience information about the society. Melon (2002) further argues that the media in the situation of conflicts, may either play an active role in increasing violence in the conflict or stay independent of the conflict thereby making contributions to the determination of the conflict. Shoemaker and Stremlau (2010) support the stance by other researchers of the critical role of the media in managing and resolving violence or conflicts by explaining that the lack of background to the conflicts may affect how the media audience recognise and infer the cause of conflict and possible solution to adopt. The realities that reinforce conflict situations were inadequately explored and understood- the media did not provide ample background to the conflict thereby affecting media reportage on the conflict (Shoemaker & Stremlau, 2010).

In assessing the contribution of the mass media in resolving the conflict in Tuobodom, Mensah et al. (2017) found that the conflict was aggravated through the reportage from the mass media. The study conducted by the researchers was to evaluate the media's role during the Tuobodom conflict as well as the perception of residents regarding the media's role in managing the conflict. Mensah et al. (2017) used questionnaires and interview as data collection instrument in the gathering of data for the research. They used media framing as the theory underpinning the study. Most of the respondents according to the study highlighted wrong reportage, stereotyping and unwholesome talks as the main influential ways the media cause conflict. Their study established that lack of decorous expressions used by the panel of programmes during discussion of the conflict was a contributory factor in escalating the conflict and not its resolution.

Mensah et al. (2017) also argue that 40 out of the 50 respondents were of the view that the media, both electronic and print, can help in the resolution of conflict. This confirmed the position of Jacobsen (2011). The remaining 10 respondents however, expressed otherwise on the premise that most people do not have television and cannot afford newspapers and therefore major issues of discussion to help solve the conflict could not reach their end. The authors further said the 10 respondents also explained that though most people have radios, they only listen to musical programmes on the radio station and not specifically talk shows and newspaper reviews. The respondents, according to Mensah et al. (2017) were unhappy with how the media framed the Tuabodom conflict and pointed out that the kind of information given by the radio, for instance, was biased towards the conflicting communities.

Tsikata (2020), in assessing the media coverage of herdsmen-farmers' conflict in Ghana, argues that the media landscape is replete with the use of a term

'Fulani menace' that prejudice herders in the country. According to the researcher, the media has not been able to correctly highlight the class/ resource dimension as the cause of the problem by stressing on the ethnicity and migrant status of the herdsmen. Bukari and Schareika (2015) also explain that the media in Ghana through its reportage blame Fulani herdsmen as the instigators of farmers-herders conflict by focusing on some negative activities of the herdsmen against local communities rather than the local communities' attack on the herdsmen. They further claimed that the coverage of the herders-farmers conflict by the media lead to reprisal attacks and justification by communities against the Fulani herdsmen as they have been portrayed as security threat and continue to suffer negative stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination.

2.4 Safety and Security of Journalists

Media coverage of conflict related issues centre on information that is appropriately delivered with the adoption of well-defined tools in order not to escalate the conflict situation. The coverage of conflict situations by reporters is therefore very precarious (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). Saddiqua, Latif and Muslim (2020) in a study on the safety and professional challenges faced by field journalists in Pakistan found that information from state actors in covering conflict is very high. They argue that journalists covering conflict situations in Pakistan are faced with the challenge to self-censor their story and editorial judgement. Reporters Without Borders (2022) in its Press Freedom Index, mention attack of journalists in Ghana by security forces during coverage of the protest of anti-covid measures by some journalists in 2020.

Nyarko and Akpojivi (2017), in looking at intimidation, assault and violence against media practitioners in Ghana maintained that media practitioners are

susceptible to different forms of violence because of the nature of the profession which include the coverage of conflict situations. Thus, the coverage of conflict related issues further exposes journalists to violent attacks as they move to the field to gather information for presentation.

Saddiqua et al. (2020) explain that threat to the life of field journalists, cameramen, and technical staff in addition to damage of channel premises as the reason for electronic media broadcasting selective information. They further explained that field journalists in Pakistan revise information on conflict related issues for the sake of refraining from aggravating the violence. Attacks on media practitioners according to Nyarko and Akpojivi (2017), are based on the precarious nature of the profession in especially, conflict situations. According to them, people have the perception that, the media as an institution is a spy that meddles in the privacy of others which exposes them to attacks especially in conflict situations. Alhassan, Odartey-Wellington and Shaibu (2018) in looking at the attack on media practitioners in Ghana's Northern Region, posit that media practitioners in Tamale are compelled to engage in self-censorship due to attacks by some individuals within civil society organisations regarding the coverage of conflict in the Northern. Thus, in covering conflict or other events conflict, journalists are exposed to attacks in their line of duty by factions engaged in violent activities or people who are aggrieved about activities of the media.

Reporters Without Borders (2022) affirms the position of Alhassan et ai., (2018) and Nyarko and Akpojivi (2017) as it argues that journalists in Ghana increasingly resort to self-censorship to protect their jobs and security. The report however mentioned that the attack on the media is due to the intolerance of the government to criticism. The report further indicates that nearly all cases of law

enforcement officers attacking journalists in Ghana are not pursued (Reporters Without Borders, 2022). According to Nyarko and Akpojivi (2017), attacks on media practitioners in Ghana involve local communities and individuals, loyalists of political parties and security agencies. They mentioned some excesses such as traces of provocation/ unsubstantiated issues that offend individuals and/or contravene societal norms and values by panellists, obstruction of security measures by the media and the belief that the media is partisan on the part of the media as what result in violence against the media. Alhassan et al. (2018) also contend that provocation is often the underlying cause of intimidation and attacks on the media in Ghana.

2.5 Peace Journalism

For three to five decades now, communication educators, professional media associations and media critics have been advocating the adoption of peace journalism model by journalists with the idea of peace building, reducing tension, de-escalation of conflict and reconciliation (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). The peace journalism concept is based on the problem associated with conventional way of reporting conflict which researchers note result in escalating conflict situations (Galtung, 2002; Mensah et al., 2017; Tsikata, 2020). Galtung (2010) therefore mentions the exacerbation of conflict by the media and argues for journalists to make conscious decision for the audience. The history of peace journalism approach dates back to the period 1965, when Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge carried out a study on what makes foreign news newsworthy (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). In their analysis, they advocated for a change in the traditional media's approach to zero-sum game framing of conflict which in itself promotes conflict to one that favour promoting a culture of peace. They further explained that the media put more emphasis on conflict manifestations such as death, injuries, destruction of property, stereotyping

and use demonising language while ignoring circumstantial and context of such conflicts.

Lynch and Galtung (2010) argue that peace journalism differs from war journalism as the latter focuses on the visible aspect of violence, is reactive, makes conflict opaque, adopt use of propaganda and embrace the "us versus them" mentality. Peace journalism, according the researchers, focusses on the invisible aspects of conflict, it is proactive, makes conflict transparent and truth oriented. Lynch and Galtung (2010) further state that peace journalism gives voice to the voiceless and as such is people oriented rather than elite oriented. Thus, peace journalism advocates the need for journalists to go beyond official sources in the coverage of conflict situations by seeking alternative sources in their news presentations.

In the view of Schuck et al. (2014), one's encounter to conflict frames can inspire people to have an idea of what they should expect or why certain decisions have been made and to know the reason behind the taking of certain political decision. Conflict frames can be referred to as the adoption of a slant of news item that tend to project conflict among individuals, groups, or organisations and it is done to capture the interest of audience (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). War journalism and peace journalism, according to Lynch and Galtung (2010), are two different ways of reporting a conflict or the same event. Galtung (1998) in assessing war and peace journalism posits that war journalism tends to be violence inclined as there is a commitment towards focusing on the events taking place in a conflict with the description of details like the weapons being used and the number of people reported to have died. According to him war journalism does not take into account the antecedents that led to the conflict including its causes, outcomes and impact on

human lives. Also, war journalism looks at the conflicts in terms of victor or vanquished. On the other hand, peace journalism makes a proposition for an alternative approach to journalists (Galtung, 2010).

Demarest and Langer (2018) explain that foreign conflict reporting by journalists has been researched into over the years as attention given to the representation of conflict at the local level has been comparatively less in developing areas. Demarest and Langer (2021) aver that the level of independence from political interference or media outlets level of professionalism and training contribute to the aggravation of conflict or mitigating division among inter-groups. Galtung (2002) also contends that traditional conflict reporting or war journalism can be put within the scale of sports journalism which tend to give premium or attention to either win or loss.

Peace journalism therefore endorse common ground and communal harmony by promoting the reframing of conventional reporting models that until recently favour conflict/ violence; (Galtung, 2010; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2010; Howard, 2009; Wolfsfeld, 2004). Tehranian (2002) posits that peace journalism concept is in tandem with attempts by the media to transform conflicts from violent conduits by conceptualising news, giving voice to the voiceless, and keeping common grounds that promote unity rather than dividing them. He therefore came up with instructions of peace journalism by asking journalists to refrain from reducing parties in human conflict to two; identifying the views and interests of all parties to the conflict; not using one source, particularly those of government that control source of information; and developing a good sense of doubt.

Shinar (2007) also developed four indicators of peace journalism comprising: promoting ethical and moral values in the media; improve professional attitude and

performance; broaden academic and professional horizons; and provide better service. According to the author, journalists in covering conflict, must focus on the following:

"exploring backgrounds and contexts of conflict formation, and presenting causes and options on every side so as to portray conflict in realistic terms, transparent to the audiences; giving voice to the views of rival parties; offering creative ideas for conflict resolution, development, peace-making and peacekeeping; exposing lies, cover ups attempts and culprits on all sides and revealing excesses committed by and suffering inflicted on people of all parties; paying attention to peace stories and post conflict development" (Shinar, 2007 p.200).

Researchers back their claim for the adoption of peace journalism approach due to the potential of the mass media in promoting peace-building efforts by presenting historical facts to inform the audience of the destructive features of conflict (Chalk, 2007; Dallaire, 2007; Thompson, 2007). According to Lynch and McGoldrick (2005), peace journalism constitutes "a conscious selection of conflict related issues and presentation of such stories in a manner that creates prospects for society to deliberate and value non-violent responses to conflict" (p.5). Thus, an examination of the coverage of conflict in this study can be viewed from the decisions made by editors and reporters on what they report in the newspaper.

Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) further state that peace journalism presents an insight to conflict analysis and transformation by focusing on concepts of balance, fairness, and accuracy in reporting; and provides a new route map tracing the connections between journalists, their sources, the stories they cover and the consequences of their presentations. The media, according to Adeyanju (2018), is capable of deactivating tensions or near confrontation before it reaches a point where it can degenerate into violent conflict and also have a role towards its observation.

He argues that further supply of the needed unbiased information promotes democratic principles among the citizenry.

According to Galtung (2002), peace journalism can be seen to have the semblance of health journalism in which the focus of the media is not only on the actual causes of the disease but also come up with its causes as well as preventive procedures. Galtung (2002) explains that peace journalism focuses on conflict transformation as it makes an attempt in finding ways and means to artistically alter the conflict. Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) define peace journalism as the conscious efforts by editors and reporters in making choices of what to report and how to report it- that creates opportunities for society at large to consider a non-violent response to conflict. Lynch (2014) however reasons that peace journalism has a superior argument over war journalism because of its role in promoting a more focus and proactive reporting and asking critical questions from the elites about the conduct of war.

Lee (2010) also avers that peace journalism by Galtung and Lynch (2010) provide a unique journalistic approach in highlighting peace initiatives while focusing on the range of ethnic and religious variances and focusing on structures of society to resolve conflict. Galtung (2010) however posits that the majority of stories on conflicts can be said to be between both conflict and peace journalism. This therefore gives an indication of the professional nature of journalists to sometimes report conflicts as they occur without necessarily taking sides in either pushing for a peaceful resolution of such conflict or contributing to its escalation.

Hussain and Ahmad (2021) in assessing the perspectives of journalists in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, contend that the probability of journalists reporting on the visible or manifest aspects of conflicts such as loss of lives and injuries is low

because they have the belief that such reportage in terms of socio-cultural and psychological conditions is important. The authors noted that the perceptions of journalists are spread within wartime and peacetime journalism approaches. The study further established that journalists would give prominence to the views of elite sources despite their thinking of including the voices of those who are not part of the conflict or the public. Journalists are said to have the possibility of looking at different options in terms of gathering and presentation of conflict related issues with the potential of bringing feuding factions nearer; and to view conflict with the angle of winning as the only choice (Hussain and Ahmad, 2021)

There are however contrary views regarding the role of journalists in using war journalism approach as against peace journalism approach and this is seen in a number of ways where journalists through experiences make conscious decisions to use the peace journalism technique in conflict situations (Hanitzsh, 2008; Loyn, 2007). Lynch and Galtung (2010) however state that journalists better appreciate the complexities and nature of conflict situations, which enables them to be more inclined towards the adoption of a peace journalism approach per years of practise in the profession and the extensive period spent in the conflict environment facilitate their role in becoming influential within the media organization.

Onyebadi and Oyedeji (2011) in analysing media coverage of the 2008 Kenyan elections aver that the newspapers in Kenya published stories of peace and unity. This assertion is contrary to the role played by the media as a contributory factor in violent conflict, as witnessed during the Rwandan Genocide where fake news was published to cause fear and distrust of the Tutsi people, who were referred to as "cockroaches" by the Radio Libre des Mille Collines. The coverage of conflict by the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper is therefore pertinent in looking at a shift from

the conventional war journalism approach to peace journalism approach. This has become relevant due to the incidents of conflicts within some communities in the country as well as violent conflict in neighbouring Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

A theory is defined as a set of systematic generalizations which are based on empirical observation (Severin and Tankard, 2001). Trifiletti, Sleet, Gielen and Hopkins (2006) posit that theories are useful in providing a guide to research studies and planning, implementing and evaluating interventions. The study employed the Structural Conflict Theory, Framing Theory and Gatekeeping Theory in the analysis of front-page conflict stories of the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper.

2.6.1 Structural Conflict Theory

The increasing complexity of violent conflicts make such conflicts prolonged, fatal and destructive (Osei-Kufour & Bukari, 2022). Galtung (1969) explains that, most conflicts are due to the structures within the society. Structural conflict theory which is also be referred to as conflict theory, is a sociological perspective that looks at society through the lens of power, inequality and conflict (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Yelyang, 2016). The structural conflict theory examines the way societal constructions, establishments and systems perpetuate disparity and create conflict among diverse groups (Galtung, 1969). Thus, the eruption of conflict can be linked to the structures within a society which compels people into conflict due to inequality or perceived discrimination against them.

The structural conflict theory has received a lot of attention from researchers (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Farmer, 2003; Galtung, 1969; Ho, 2007). According to Farmers et al., (2007), structural conflict deals with conflicts that are structurally

embedded within the society with the potential of causing harm to people. Galtung (1969) explains that, structural conflict is a form of injustice built into social structures which causes injury to people and prevents them from achieving their aims. Ho (2007) contends that, structural conflict shows how structural arrangements restraint individuals and groups from having access to what they perceive to be theirs.

Farmers et al., (2007) further state that unequal access to resources, power and education are indicators of structural conflict. Yelyang (2016) posits that, the root causes of conflicts in Ghana are structural and that, the desire for political autonomy and the impartial distribution of socio-economic power against the marginalise groups. Such acts therefore result in the promotion of culture of disrespect and condescension leading contrarotations among parties.

Collier and Hoeffler (2004) explain that, economic and political issues utilize hostilities and marginalization between groups to promote conflicts activities inside any given nation. They argue that, greed and grievance as a result of mismanagement of resources leading to inequality and deprivation can lead to the occurrence of conflict. In terms of inequality and power imbalances, Collier and Hoeffler (2004), explain that, social inequality and power imbalances are critical aspect of any social system. Thus, conflict can occur when certain groups or individuals have unequal access to resources, decision making process resulting in some level of marginalization

Galtung (1969) posits that, the structural conflict theory demonstrates the difference between the real and probable since structures can be violent, and can play a change in restricting an individuals or group's potential. According to Galtung (2007) and Ho (2007), power inequalities are inherent in the structures leading to

conflict. The structures inside the society, Ho (2007) explains, result in acts of conflict since they are not just conflict in nature. In the terms of conflict in the area of access to education and food for instance, Farmer (2003) demonstrates that, conflict occurs in how the society is structured.

According to Best (2006), the key thrust regarding the structural conflict theory is based on how conflict has been programmed to occur due to the structure and organisation of the societies involved. It therefore focuses on social problems such as injustice, poverty, exploitation and inequity, economic and political discrimination as contributory factors to conflict. Best (2006) further posits that, structural conflict can be linked to the exploitative and unjust nature of societies due to the domination of one group by the other.

A number of state-led involvements in addressing conflict over the years, fail to sufficiently deliberate the deeper structural, cultural and long-term relational aspect. State-led involvement in resolving conflicts that are rooted in structural and immaterial matters, and reinforced by hostility has been poor (Annumel, Kendie and Osei-Kufour, 2021; Braithwaite & Licht, 2020; Eze, 2016; Osei-Kufour & Bukari, 2022).

In analysing Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), conflict prevention and in Northern Ghana, Osei-Kufuor and Bukari (2022), posit that the complexity, scale and diversity of violent conflict, makes it impossible for only one entity, to guarantee sustainable harmony. They explain that civil society organisations incline towards using reactional approach in responding to the eruption of conflict with humanitarian and relief services. The CSOs according to Osei-Kufuor and Bukari (2022) were involved in all phases of conflict sequence, playing roles in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. According to Osei-Kufuor and Bukari (2022), transformation of

conflicts includes changes in the framework and structural matters supporting the conflict in addition to the attitude and behaviour of parties in conflict.

Among the non-state actors, the media is considered a critical partner in deescalating conflict and peace-building efforts (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005; Galtung, 2012). According to Lynch (2014), coverage and representation of conflict constitute a critical aspect of conflict reporting as they can influence in various ways how conflicts are perceived. Structural conflict theory is a critical part of this research as it delves into the nuances that contributes towards conflict situations. It also offered an opportunity to interrogate the various types of conflicts covered by the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper on its front-page.

2.7 Framing Theory

Every day, media organisations receive a lot of stories from reporters and other sources (both local and international). There are certain news stories which receive attention in the media. The mass media through framing determines the salience of issues on how the news story is told or written. The media in performing such task have been identified to ratify a design of reportage concerning active choice of some issues and making them prominent consciously or unconsciously in their presentation (Ofori-Birikorang, 2009). According to Scheufele and Tewskbury (2007), framing can be said to be hinged on the assumption that the coverage of issues in news reports affect how it is understood by audiences. Dedzo and Ofori-Birikorang (2020) in analysing the coverage of female spouses of presidential candidates in online news, aver that framing is when the media frame issues in particular ways by playing a fundamental role in not only what issues the public must be conscious of, but also how these issues are perceived.

Philosophy of media faming theory is the belief that the media puts premium on a particular aspect and frames such news in a way that people can view in a particular manner. Erving Goffman in the 1970s, described frames as "scheme of interpretation that allow individuals to trace, identify, perceive and label" the issues covered by the media (Goffman, 1974, p. 21). According to Goffman (1974), the interpretation by individuals of what goes around their world through their primary framework is often taken for granted by the user. He postulates that people are skilled with the use of these frame daily, whether they are conscious of them or not.

In the argument put forward by Cissel (2008), framing may be considered as a "scheme of interpretation" that enable individuals to determine, perceive, identify and make occurrences of life experiences. Entman (1993) define framing as a way of communicating text or message which is supposed to promote certain sides of 'perceived reality' and make them more salient in a manner that ratifies a specific problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and or treatment recommendation (p. 52). Gitlin (1980) defines frames as the measures involve in the selection, emphasis, and presentation about what exists, what happens and what matters. Entman (1993) gave a vivid account of how media offers audiences with schemes for interpreting events.

According to Gitlin (1980), frames are "insistence patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual" (p. 64). Entman (1993) and Pickle (2002) posit that the contents of news stories include concealed unintended questions for which frames provide answers. Entman (1999) avers that frames give responses to the implied questions by: defining and

identifying a problem; recognizing a source or cause; providing judgement; and justifying a solution for the problem.

Gross (2006) also contends that framing allows for a variety of positions and does not give the whole picture of an event. According to him, frames result in giving prominence to some features of an incident or policy, and direct audience member's judgements about the occurrence or issue in foreseeable ways to expectable conclusion. Severin and Tankard (2001) argue that framing of news stories is recommended by specific tools such as headlines, subheads, pictures, picture descriptions, leads, pull quotes, selection of quotes, nut graphs, and logos. Corolel (2004) contends that it is difficult to find a piece of journalism that offers no interpretation of the facts it contains.

Corolel (2004) further states that it is tempting to say that there could be no reporting without framing of truthful description, since the stories could not be written without signifying a storyline. This assertion is also given premium by Nelson et al. (1997), that "frames act like plot of storylines, lending coherence to otherwise discrete pieces of information" (p. 568). Framing therefore has a unique influence on audiences as it affects their acknowledgment and understanding of social problems and political issues (Entman, 1993). Entman (2004) posits that framing is a daily life of people and it exist anytime a message is coded. Tuchman (1974) defines news as a window whose frame confines the perception of authenticity, by restricting the insight of different realities and focusing on a specific piece of it.

According to Gever (2019), the framing of conflict situation by the media is crucial to the resolution or aggravation of the conflict and argues that the media's adoption of a particular frame can result in providing a solution to conflict situation

or aggravate the situation. Thus, the power of the media is seen by the way it is used to influence how the conflict should progress, either to resolve it or ensure the escalation of the conflict situation. It is therefore seen as a repair and a destruction tool in any society. Gever (2019) further upholds that the framing of conflict by the media constitutes a vital way of examining media contribution to conflict resolution due to the approach the media use in framing issues that have corresponding likelihood of determining public responses and perceptions about such issues. Peace-oriented frames focus more on the solutions in reducing tension between disputing parties. The media, according to Zahid et al. (2018), can create a devastating effect when the media adopt hate frames in war journalism. The media can be seen to be an avenue for possible accomplice towards resolution of conflict (Lynch & Galtung, 2000).

2.7.1 Media Frames

The technique used by the mass media to frame news articles mostly illustrates how people comprehend the essence of the story. There have been different definitions by scholars regarding the idea of media frame. Frames can be related to "organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world" (Reese, 2001, p.11). Baran and Davis (2006) claim that frame analysis is based on the premise that "people use expectations to make sense of everyday life" (p. 64). Reese (2010) describes a frame as an organisation of ideologies which can be said to be shared socially and are persistent over time as they can be said to be working symbolically and meaningfully to structure the social world. A frame according to Azanu (2011), is the manner the media and media gatekeepers organise and present the coverage of events and issues, and the way audiences construe what they are provided. Frames

are mental ideas that serve to organize or structure social meaning. Frames in the news may affect learning, interpretation, and appraisal of issues and events (Azanu, 2011).

According to Dan and Raupp (2018), frames are schemes of explanation that guide journalists and audiences in coming up with sense of their experiences though categorisation, organisation and interpretation of incoming information. This theoretical position is pertinent in this study based on the fact that, framing permits the definition and determination of issues on hand and allow the exploration of links between media coverage of events, issues and individual views (Valeda, 2002).

Frames therefore becomes the principles surrounding the selection of news as the subject that is being framed must be timely, relevant, perceived as being in the interest of the public, and meet other imperative news reporting criteria (Ofori-Birikorang, 2009). According to Gever (2019), the tone distinguishes the viewpoint of the issue being carried by the media with equivalent opportunity for inducing the public through media framing. He argues further that, what influences framing tone is another aspect of media framing. Pavelka (2013) argues that media tone relates to the way the media presents issues to the public by the frequency of presenting particular subjects in the media and the ways the media deals with such subjects. News articles therefore have positive, negative and neutral tone in relation to the subject being reported as regards to the interpretations the media give to the issues they cover and repetition of such frames. The study looks at the presentation of conflict stories by the *Ghanaian Times* in a negative, positive and neutral tone.

2.7.2 News Sources

News coverage of daily events by the media also centre on the gathering of data from sources by reporters who then present the information received in their

reportage to the audience. Serwornoo (2021) posits that sources demonstrate a critical component of news construction because news hardly allows journalists to change the narrative with respect to information provided by their sources. Discounting the effect of sources on decision-making of news presentation correspond to proclaiming that there is no relationship between media frames and their sources (Serwornoo, 2021). Gever (2019) acknowledges the importance of sources cited in media contents due to its likely influence on the nature of framing. He argues that the sources of media contents have some level of importance on the effect of its frames. When a journalist access information from feuding factions in conflict situations for instance, the framing is likely to be dissimilar to when such information is sourced from the security agencies, people affected by the conflict or government officials. The source is therefore seen as the frame since it mostly determines the framing. Journalists who want to escalate conflict situation therefore use the source from the feuding factions with a biased reportage.

Ibrahim, Pawanteh, Kee, Basri, Hassan and Mahmud (2011) also mentioned that sources constitute a vital aspect of news gathering and production due to the association of the kind of news stories published on a regular basis. They argue that the source contributes significantly as journalists analyse their news in terms of accountability, quotability, accessibility and reliability. Ofori-Birikorang (2009) contends that the media in Africa rely on official sources for their news production on the premise that such sources of information have a high degree of reliability. The dependence on official sources, including government sources, according to Ofori-Birikorang (2009), is a sign that newspapers facilitate the preservation of the status quo and legitimise the dominant ideology by articulating the ideas of the elite including the ruling class. Herman and Chomsky (1998) in their Propaganda Model

equates official sources to 'filters' in terms of structural constraints. Available literature regarding sources revealed that the media in Ghana focus more on the elites and political actors than the masses (Baah-Achamfour, 2020; Ofori-Birikorang, 2009; Serwoonoo, 2021).

Ignoring non-official sources in reporting conflict, according to Lynch (2008), creates a false impression that the conflict is not contested in from within the communities or the parties involved in the conflict. Wolfsfeld (2004) argues that access to sources particularly in conflict zone is one of the major hindrances to moving outside the official sources. According to Lynch (2008), people are often neglected as sources in journalistic context because they are perceived as being too biased or too neutral personally. Ofori-Birikorang (2009) however says that dependence on other independent news sources gives an indication of the newspapers giving voice to individuals or institutions outside that of the official sources thereby creating a varied fields for public discourse.

2.7.3 Media framing of conflict

The framing of conflict by the media constitutes a vital way of examining media contribution to conflict resolution due to the fact that the approach the media use in framing issues have corresponding likelihood of determining public responses and perceptions about such issues (Lynch, 2014). UNESCO (1980) in its report, 'Many Voices, One World', emphasised the inequalities in the publication of information with respect to peace dialogues. The report indicates that the media ought to be mindful of the essence of peaceful resolutions and that, the focus should not only be on reporting disturbing facts and unpleasant events (UNESCO, 1980).

Peace-oriented frames focus more on the solutions in reducing tension between disputing parties. Zahid et al. (2018) suggest that the media can create a

devastating effect when the they adopt hate frames in war journalism. The media can be seen to be an avenue for possible accomplice towards resolution of conflict (Lynch & Galtung, 2000). According to Gever (2019), journalists as part of their work play a vital part in reporting conflict situations through their framing as the frame can help in providing solution to a conflict or exacerbation of the condition. He notes that media framing of conflicts is an important way of exploring the contributions of the media to peacebuilding or conflict resolution. Thus, the frame the media deployed in conflict circumstances have an equivalent likelihood of shaping public reactions and perceptions about conflicts.

El-Nawawy and Shawn (2010) further postulate that the media have the potential of calming down conflict by offering space for underrepresented groups; provision of numerous viewpoints on a variety of antagonistic issues; and the determination towards resolution rather than escalating conflicts. Other factors they mention are avoiding the use of demonizing tags unless attributed to a dependable source; avoiding opinions that are unsubstantiated by credible evidence and providing background. In probing foreign and local broadcast media coverage of the insurgency of Boko Haram in Nigeria, Gever and Nwabuzor (2016) identified fear and war (war journalism) and peace, hope and unity (peace journalism) as the frames generated based on language used.

Nelson (2019) in analysing how *Russia Television* (TR) and the *Voice of America* (VoA) framed the conflict involving Russia and Ukraine in 2011 and the Arab Spring of 2011 respectively, explain that the coverage produced frame effects that were supportive of foreign policies of the two countries. By using Galtung's concept of peace journalism, Nelson (2019), identified the framing of news stories based on editorial synchronization not only between *Russia Television* and the

Russian government, but also between *Voice of America* and the United States of America.

Ezegwu, Udoyo and Chime-Nganya (2017) in examining the coverage of Gambian political conflict established that newspapers in Nigeria used several frames during reportage of the conflict. They contend that the newspapers' reportage on the Gambian conflict influenced the perceptions of their audience as 74% of the respondents indicated that the reports on the Gambian conflict were simple and interpretive thereby aiding the audience to have an appreciative understanding about the conflict. The findings affirm the assertion by Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007), that framing theory is premised on the manner and way issues are presented in news articles to influence how the audience understand the issues. Ezegwu el al. (2017) further argue that the dominant frames used were the rescue frame accounting for 65% of the issues reported by the newspapers followed by political frame, 22% and economic frame, 12%. The study further found that the newspapers used the rescue frame to influence the audience as the respondents of the study opted for military intervention by West African states and other foreign governments in dealing with the Gambian conflict.

Adisa et al. (2016), in analysing newspaper framing of ethnic conflict in Nigeria, established that there is direct and indirect newspaper framing which resulted in people using inciting language, double standard, name calling and other factors that stimulates the group into conflict as they serve a catalyst in widening ethnic differences. The research which was a qualitative study notes that the ownership of a newspaper is important in determining the influence of newspapers in conflict situations. According to the authors, newspapers' use of name tags contributes towards the use of conflict frame in reporting leaders of an ethnic groups.

Adisa et al., (2016) further assert that when newspapers stereotype certain ethnic group, the people get infuriated and exasperated. According to Adisa et al. (2016), the affected groups have the notion that the newspapers are used to discredit them by the use of name tags resulting in widening the differences existing between the two groups.

In an unpublished MPhil thesis, Ofori (2020), explains that news sites in Ghana dominantly adopted conflict frame in reporting the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) crisis as a total 388 paragraphs out of 1,220 paragraphs representing 31.80% are seen to have used the conflict frame. The study established that the online news sites, in reporting the UEW conflict, did not give much focus to decisions that led to the conflict but focused on issues about personalities/parties who were involved in the power play that resulted in the conflict.

The conflict according to the study was framed as a struggle between the immediate past Vice Chancellor and the then Vice Chancellor, Prof Mawutor Avoke and Rev Father Prof. Anthony Afful-Broni respectively at the time. On the issues of tones used by the news sites during the reportage of the UEW conflict, the researcher explains that issues framed with conflict, morality and consequences frames had negative tones because framing the conflict around issues of power struggle between parties; disregard for accepted procedures and statutes; and action that protracted the conflict painted the university in an undesirable light. The study further notes that issues framed with the responsibility frame also had positive tones because they focused on attempts towards conflict resolution whereas issues with human interest frames drew attention to issues without casting the university in a negative or positive light.

In a comparative study on the framing of peace and war news by the Malaysia TV Stations and Global Media, Ibrahim (2010) found that war news coverage is more prominent with a total of 78% (103) compared to 21.7% (30) of peace coverage. According to the study, *CNN* had more war and peace coverage which represent 37% (51), *Aljazeera's* coverage was 30% (42), while *TV3* and *RTMI* had 25.4% (35) and 7.2% (10) respectively. The study further states that the media have their own way of framing war and peace news and that several dominant issues framed by the media under the war news category include instability, confusion in leadership, economic as such negativities do not help warring states to negotiate peace. Ibrahim (2010) explains that the use of war frames will intensify animosities that will make the winning party to take advantage of the vulnerabilities.

Fong and Koon (2019) in a content analysis on the framing of a Malaysian newspaper, *The Star* on the South China Sea Dispute established the dominance of war journalism frame in the reportage of the dispute. The study established that indicators of war journalism used were "elite-oriented", "difference-oriented" and "focuses on here and now" (p. 24). The newspaper according to the study, frequently used episodic framing approach with little contextualization. The study mentioned "avoid victimizing/demonizing/ emotive language," "multiparty orientation," and "avoids labelling of good guys and bad guys" as some of the features of peace journalism (p.28). According to the study, a well thought out scrutiny of the newspaper discovered the use of mostly neutral tones in most of the framing of the South China Sea dispute.

2.8 Gatekeeping Theory

The gatekeeping theory is among the initial concepts in the area of mass communication and it relates to the procedure by which a range of possible stories

are transmitted by the media after they have been scrutinised, shaped, and prodded (Shoemaker, 2001). Thus, all the news messages have to strictly pass through several gatekeepers such as reporters and editors before making it to publication. The term, gatekeeping is a social scientific concept relating to social planning which Lewin (1947), referred to as an effectual method of achieving widespread social change as it focuses on concentrating on persons in significant positions and functioning as "gatekeepers" as regards to the movement of things and ideas through the society.

According to Lewin (1947), objects have "forces" which can enable or compel their passage as the process proceeds. Linked to journalistic determinants such as newsworthiness and trustworthiness, such forces can be good or bad and may differ in intensity (Shoemaker, 2001). White (1950) came up with the idea of 'gatekeepers' during the study on the selection and publication of front-page stories. He posits that gatekeeping involves gatekeepers' selection of news articles and/ or visual images for publication by the media and that the rejection of news items may be premised on the fact that the gate keeper's role is subjective (White, 1950).

The decision by the gatekeeper, according to White (1950), can be said to be from the set of experiences and attitudes. Galtung and Ruge (1965), aver that there are structural factors that leads to the taking of certain decisions in the newsroom and can be said to be based on the interest of the organisation vis-a-vis the influence of individual journalists as gatekeepers. According to Shoemaker (1991), gatekeeping theory as a procedure "by which billions of messages that are available in the world get cut down and transformed into hundreds of messages that reach a given person on a given day" (p. 1). Ifeoma and Okafor (2016) however argue that gatekeeping has over the years been used traditionally to control the news in the media and to establish news agenda for the public. They argued that gatekeeping brings to fore the

complexities of hierarchal influences and control of the media by the gatekeepers. Ifeoma and Okafor (2016) explained that not all makes it as news no matter their importance as the news article goes through a conscious selection procedure based on the conventional news values and organizational influence. Reese and Billinger (2001) in looking at the study by White, contend that the research focused on distinct gatekeepers' traits and decisions as the appropriate process of each gatekeeper would result in unbiased news, putting extra power on the gatekeeper than the story's "forces".

McCombs (1976) also posits that professional, cultural and organisational influences are factors that enhances news judgement and selection. These influences according to Shoemaker (2001) can stem from two forces- individual or routine. The individual forces he states are the most basic form which can be linked to individual views as regular schedules comprise several assignments by journalists and editors, schedules, bodies, outside gravities, and principles. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) explain that political and ethical considerations, news values, culture, individual judgement and beliefs are some of the issues that affect the decisions of gatekeepers.

Gatekeeping is a key component of this research as it looks at the perspectives of journalists and editors of the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper by offering an insight in understanding what influence them in covering conflict situations as well as the placement of such stories on the front page. It also provided an opportunity to interrogate the newspaper's position as a state media and the need to providing an opportunity for national cohesion as well as meeting the challenging media landscape in Ghana in terms of business and profitability. Thus, through the gatekeeping functions by the editors and journalists, certain aspects of conflict are

deleted or shoed to suit the editorial policy of media outlets. This is done to prevent further escalation of conflict situations.

2.9 Relevance of the theories

An examination structural conflict theory is critical for this study as it gave an overview of factors that can result in violent conflict in a community and how to tackle such conflicts. The structural conflict theory makes an attempt in discussing social structures facilitate conflict through inequality that results in confrontation. A number of state-led involvements in addressing conflict over the years, fail to sufficiently deliberate the deeper structural, cultural and long-term relational aspect. Among the non-state actors, the media is considered critical in the de-escalation conflict and peace-building efforts (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005; Galtung, 2012). Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) posit that it is reporters and editors that make choices regarding the gathering, presentation and publication of news articles in newspapers and other media outlets. The structural conflict theory contributed in understanding the link between society and conflict and media's role in contributing towards peace building efforts.

Analysing media content with respect to use of war journalism and peace journalism approaches warrant the use of such theories when the literature reviewed demonstrate that conflict sensitive reporting or peace journalism approaches are rarely used during the coverage of conflict situations. The framing helped in looking at the way the *Ghanaian Times* cover conflict issues with the use of war journalism or peace journalism approaches in Ghana. Kimet (2014) argues that framing news aids in the packaging process of news, as it includes choosing some features of reality and making them more striking. Galtung and Ruge (1965) mentioned that the determination of newsworthiness of an event, is based on 'threshold, frequency,

negativity, unexpectedness, ambiguity' and these factors explain the media's preference for bad news over good news because the former is more unexpected. The theory offered guidance in analysing the interview data regarding the perspectives of editors and journalists.

According to Ofoi-Birikorang (2009), framing focus on the selection and salience done by gatekeepers (reporters and editors) as they make the choice and produce such salience. Reporters and editors can therefore select either positive or negative side of the news and make it more salience. The gatekeeping theory helped in ascertaining the way editors and reporters of a state-owned media house in Ghana cover conflict situations having in mind the media's role in calming down tensions in a country especially, during conflict situations. Ifeoma and Okafor (2016) state that gatekeeping is an enduring concept to control the publication of news by media outlets by coming up with news agenda for the society. They explained that not all makes it as news no matter their importance and that news articles go through a methodical selection procedure involving editorial decisions, news norms and societal values. Galtung and Ruge (1965), mentioned certain structural factors influence the taking of certain decisions in the newsroom which can be said to be based on the interest of media outlets and the influence of individual journalists as gatekeepers.

2.10 Chapter Summary

Chapter two sets out to examine the literature on the definition of conflict and peace, media reports about issues of conflict, and the use of peace journalism in reporting conflict situations. Many studies on media coverage of conflict and application of peace journalism approach were carried out outside Ghana. There is minimal scholarship attention on issues of peace journalism in Ghana as available

studies were carried out by researchers from other countries including Nigeria, Kenya and Pakistan among others. It is established from the review that the media play a role in escalating conflict rather than peace building efforts. In reporting conflict situations, the literature reveal that the media use more war journalism frame than peace journalism frame.

It is established from the review that the media, in all its forms, has the potential to promote peace building efforts around the world. It can contribute in reducing conflict situation in Ghana and Africa generally by ensuring the adoption of responsible news frame in the coverage of conflict situations. Two theories-framing theory and gatekeeping theory- underpin this study and their significance to the study is recognised in this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter gave attention to the methodological steps and measures used in the gathering and analysis of data for this study. Thus, it provided the direction and approach used by the researcher in addressing the specific questions. The crux of this study is to establish the coverage of conflict situations and how it is framed. It highlights the research approach, research design, sampling techniques, data collection methods and data analysis techniques employed by this study. The steps are in agreement with the position of Powel and Connaway (2004) that the research methodology is an aggregation of multiple steps a researcher employs in a study with the aim of attaining higher levels of validity and reliability. It also contains procedures for analysis of data and ethical considerations at various stages of the study.

3.1 Research Approach

The research approach to this study as regards to the three approaches (Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Method), is qualitative. Qualitative research approach which is distinct to quantitative research method, is theoretical and interpretative in nature (Brennen, 2017; Creswell, 2013). It focuses on understanding complex ideas and making sense of language which is usually grounded on human experiences and their relationships (Brennen, 2017). Qualitative studies, for instance, highlight latent meanings other than the quantity of events (Hancock, 2002). Creswell (2013) argues that qualitative research is mainly concerned with examining or exploring the meanings people attach to social phenomenon rather than measuring a situation using predetermined yardsticks.

Creswell (2013) further states that social realities are individually constructed based on preconceived thoughts and personal experiences. Qualitative research approach hinges on exclusive stages in analysing data by focusing on the various deigns and texts and images (Creswell, 2013). The definition is linked with the objective of this work as the research is aimed at analysing the content of newspapers to look at the framing of conflict related issues found on the frontpage of the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) qualitative approach is conducting research in its natural sense. With reference to the definition by Creswell (2014), the researcher engaged in a content analysis of newspapers which are in their natural or original states without any bias or likelihood of external influences. This study set out to examine how the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper framed conflict related issues on the front-page of the newspaper.

3.2 Research Design

Research design is critical to every study process due to its role in providing the route for the researcher to carry out a study. The path provided by the design guides the scrutiny and clarification of the data after the researcher has gathered the data. According to Creswell (2014), research design provides procedural route regarding the design of study, whether with qualitative, quantitative or mixed method approaches while Denzin and Lincoln (2011) define it as strategies of enquiry. Yin (2009) explains that a research design is the sense that links the data to be gathered (and the conclusions to be made) to the initial questions of study. Some scholars also refer to research design as strategies of inquiry.

In the view of Cooper and Schindler (2002), a research design is the route researchers follow in carrying out their study. It basically provides the strategies that the researcher adopts to develop information that is precise and interpretable. The

research design is a case study. Lindolf and Taylor (2011) argue that qualitative research is anchored on the investigation of situated form, content and lived experiences of social actors in words without subjecting them to mathematical or formal transformation. Creswell (2013) argues that qualitative research is interpretative. Research designs, especially in qualitative arena, comprise narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study. The research design employed for this study, is case study.

3.2.1 Case study

The researcher employed the use of case study research design as appropriate tools for the data gathering and data analysis in assessing the adoption of peace journalism model in conflict reporting by the media in Ghana. The case study method focuses on a real-life existing bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, with gathering of in-depth data involving various sources of information. Qualitative case study researchers therefore, back detailed strategies such as 'thick rich description' and 'process tracking' and they opt for a 'case focussed approach rather than 'variable focussed' one (Given, 2008). Yin (2009) gives two different definitions regarding a case study. He argues that a case study is an in-depth inquiry that considers current phenomenon within a real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and settings are not clearly evident. He also said:

[...] the case study inquiry copes with technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one results relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in triangulating fashion, and as a result benefits from prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (p.18).

According to Yin (2009), a case study design ought to be well-thought-out for research and that direction of the study seeks to answer "how" and "why" interrogations; in the same line, one of the questions to this study sought to answer how the *Ghanaian Times* report conflict related issues in line with peace journalism or war journalism concepts.

3.2.2 Subject of study

The selection of newspaper for this study is conversant by a number of considerations. Firstly, the newspapers are major sources of information for newspaper review shows on radio and television in Ghana (Nyarko, 2016). Secondly, newspapers are one of the most accessible and inexpensive sources of information and found to be a strong source of information in shaping the opinions of society, are widely used and acceptable by researchers (Dhanushka, 2010). Thirdly, newspapers are hands-on and are substantive value to research in framing (Kim and Chung, 2017).

Ofori-Birikorang (2009) also acknowledged that the interest of the general public in connection with newspapers in Ghana has been heightened by radio stations as morning shows on television and radio stations discuss headlines and other topical issues in the newspapers. By inference, one can say that newspapers affect the views of people and encourage public discourse among Ghanaians. Other broadcast programmes such as late-night talk shows, weekend talk shows and afternoon drive-time shows, discuss issues published in the newspapers. Researchers in communication, conflict and peace studies (Adisa et al. 2016; Galtung, 2010; Fong & Koon, 2019) used newspapers for their studies. Since the current work looks at how the media report conflict related issues, newspapers are accessible as the suitable type to be used for the study.

The Ghanaian Times is a daily newspaper and the flagship newspaper of the New Times Corporation, a state-owned media house in Ghana. Birikorang (2009) explains that with a nationwide circulation, the newspaper's publications frequently serve as a subject of daily newspaper reviews and discussions on most media platforms. The paper has regional offices nationwide with regional editors and journalists. The New Times Corporation also publishes the Weekend Spectator, a weekly newspaper. The newspaper has gone through different stages in line with the nation's history after its establishment in 1957 by the late Dr Kwame Nkrumah. From its inception, it was identified as the Guinea Press Limited and served as a printing press belonging to the Convention People's Party (CPP). The motive behind the establishment of the paper was for the paper to run parallel in breaking the unchallenged dominance of the British owned Daily Graphic. The CPP could not hold on to the newspaper when the leader of the country, Dr Nkrumah was overthrown during a coup d'état orchestrated by the Military in 1966. The Guinea Press was later confiscated by the National Liberation Council Decree 130 of 1968 and taken over as a state asset.

The Instrument of Incorporation, Act 263, 1971 facilitated the change of the company's name from the Guinea Press to what is now known as the New Times Corporation. The newspaper appears on the newsstands six times a week (Monday-Saturday) and it is seen as a dependable print media source for information in Ghana (Amihere, 2010). The newspaper was selected for this study due to its large circulation rate of 35,000-75,000 daily as well as its high reputation of being relied on by policy makers in the country (Amihere, 2010). The Geopoll's audience research for the first quarter in 2017 for instance, mentions the Ghanaian Times as

the third newspaper. The mobile service platform puts its audience share at 13.8%, with readership of 872,000.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Procedures

The core aspect of sampling in research is to get a representative sampling that gratifies the methodical approach to reviewing media content (Serwornoo, 2021). Lindolf and Taylor (2002) posit that qualitative researchers implement sampling to direct their selection, observations and characteristics of respondents to consider. The data for this study were front-page conflict news articles from the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper- a state-owned newspaper. A total of 179 conflict related news stories were identified and sampled for the study. Qualitative studies often adopt a purposive sampling strategy. This research makes used purposive sampling method since it involves the choice of subjects who possess the information the researcher needed: front-page conflict stories as well as the perspectives of reporters and editors of the *Ghanaian Times*.

The selection of the print media for the study is adopted with the knowledge of the Ghanaian media landscape. Ofori-Birikorang (2009) posits that the print media is regarded as a key information source for Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), opinion leaders, and public policy makers lean towards the print media instead of television or radio broadcasts for trustworthy information. Nyarko (2016) and Ofori-Birikorang (2009) argue that newspapers command an essential role in social discussions of Ghanaians due to the spread of radio and television stations that have heightened the interest of the public in newspaper content.

According to Patton (1990), the decision to adopt a sample size for qualitative study/inquiry procedures can therefore be said to be more difficult.

Malhotra and Birks (2007) stipulate that the selection of a sample deals with the

usage of a sub–group of the population chosen for participation in a study. Creswell and Creswell (2018) state that researchers in adopting purposive sampling, deliberately select persons and sites to study or comprehend a phenomenon. Thus, a sample can be said to focus on cautiously selected subset of the units that include the population. Therefore, one can make positive assumptions from the characteristics of the population by observing critically the characteristics of the sample.

As the study proposed to use only documents from the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper, the purposive sampling technique was deemed appropriate. The use of the purposive sampling method was to ensure that the essentials which satisfy some predetermined criteria were selected (Nworgu, 2006). In addition to that, the sample size for a study is determined by the scope of this work, the complexity of research questions and the availability of needed resources and data (Lindolf & Taylor, 2002). The study covers front page conflict stories from January 2016 to December, 2020.

According to Kim and Chung (2017), the selection of stories and publication in the newspaper offer the perspectives of the newspaper in terms of the most important happenings in the communities to their public. McQuail (2010) provided clarity by arguing that even though the newspaper is important, the frontpage provides the space to locate the representations of society's utmost important happenings which is arguably the front page of the newspaper. Kikuke (2004) indicates that what gets published largely depends on news values with editors, organizational policies and interest playing crucial roles in the gatekeeping process.

The *Ghanaian Times* was chosen based on its commitment towards national cohesion and a platform for Ghana's development (New Times Corporation). Ofori-Birikorang (2009) contends that the selection of newspapers can be anchored on their longstanding acceptance in the publishing history of a country and the Ghanaian

Times since independence, has constantly published and has become beneficial for research. It is also selected on grounds of credibility and circulation. The newspaper has been identified as among Ghanaian newspapers with the largest daily circulation in the country (Geopoll Survey, 2017). The *Ghanaian Times*, a state-owned newspaper enjoys 30% of the market share (New Times Corporation).

Due to its national orientation, the newspaper is more likely to publish news articles from the various parts of the country, particularly when the stories are germane to the local and national outline (Ofori-Birikorang, 2009). As a state-owned newspaper, the Ghanaian Times has the mandate to give equal space for presentation of dissenting opinion (1992 Constitution of Ghana) and report on different national issues without ethical, social and political biases. The Ghanaian Times has a readership that cuts across the entire country (Amihere, 1996).

3.3.1 Sampling of journalists and editors

Understanding the frames, the newspaper used to report issues of conflict, and in answering the fourth research question, four journalists including the editor of the newspaper were sampled. The choice of the journalists was based on some considerations. To start with, the journalists were print journalists and reports for the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper. Thus, broadcast journalists and other journalists who report for other newspapers in Ghana were excluded from the sample. The editor of the newspaper was also interviewed to bring clarity on the direction of the newspaper with respect to the newspaper's coverage of conflict. This therefore provided an insight into the collation of data from the very reporters of the news stories as well as the editor which constituted the data set for the study.

. Since this study seeks to establish framing of news articles in conflict situations in the newspapers, an in-depth interview is chosen in the gathering of data.

These interviews are pertinent since it contributes in establishing the ideas and reasons behind the adoption of war journalism and peace journalism approaches in reporting issues of conflict. Additionally, the interviews provided different voices and perspectives to be included in the study. The researcher's interpretation of newspaper stories is reinforced by the meanings the journalists give to the news articles and their reasons for telling the stories the manner they have been told. It therefore helps collate data from the very reporters of the news articles that constitute the data set for the study.

Those selected for the study were journalists who reported conflict related news articles as captured in the data set. The contacts and identities of the journalists were taken from the by-lines of the front-page conflict related news stories. The journalists and the editor were willing and gave their consent to serve as respondents. The sample size for collecting the interview data was justified by the fact that sample sizes are not material to qualitative studies (Mashud & Ofori-Birikorang (2018) since they do not allow generalization to be made (Lindolf & Taylor, 2002).

3.4 Data Collection Method

The study employed qualitative content analysis and interview as procedures for gathering the data. The choice of the two methods is because the use of multiple data sources in research enhances credibility of data and findings. The methods provided the researcher the means to gather appropriate data that can help in analysing the phenomenon under study. Qualitative content analysis of the newspaper facilitated the collection of needed data that will help in answering the first three research—questions of the study. The interview was used to gather the needed data that will aid in responding to the fourth research question of the study.

3.4.1 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher personally went through hard copies of newspaper archives at the Sam Jonah Library located within the University of Cape Coast (UCC). The researcher designed a data coding guide that was used to identify selected newspaper publications under consideration. The data collation sheet helped to ensure that none of the issues of the selected newspaper was left out. Those issues of the newspaper that were not found in the Sam Jonah Library were traced to the New Times Corporation's Library in Accra. All issues by the newspaper from January 2016 to December 2020 were considered for the study. It is imperative to indicate that the newspaper does not publish on Sundays and occasions such as Christmas, Easter and New Year Day.

The data for the study were assembled through a careful scrutiny of front-page stories of the newspaper as the researcher read the articles captured from January 2016 to December 2020, analysed and interpreted them as stories that captured issues of conflict as their subject matter. Every story captured on the front-page of the newspaper was carefully examined and stories that were applicable directly or indirectly to conflict were sampled. The researcher searched the news stories on the front page to identify wide-ranging and indicative terms that links the story to the issues of conflict. Examples of wide-ranging terms recognised included: communal clashes, violence, mob attack, destruction, demonstration, protests and property touched. These terms and general themes of news stories give an indication of the succeeding segment of the data analysis, in which the news stories were sorted into conflict relevant articles. Criteria for addition were that the article's subject matter was explicitly or implicitly as deemed by the rate and/ or conversant by existing literature.

All news articles that featured in the selected newspaper and the stories that were germane, directly or indirectly to conflict situations were sampled. The researcher searched through all the stories to recognize overall and investigative terms that alluded to issues of conflict and peace. Examples of the general terms identified included the following ones: conflict, destruction, factions, disagreement, violence, and peace. Examples of investigative terms comprised the following terms: loss of lives, destruction of properties, killed, displaced, suffering and survival.

These terms and overall themes of the news articles were used to update the succeeding phase of the data analysis, in which the news items were arranged into conflict relevant and irrelevant stories. Criteria for inclusion were the news item's subject matter. After the initial process, the researcher then engaged in a carefully organized data census process- reading of the news articles published in the selected newspaper in Ghana, one story after the other. The heading of each news article was read and analysed. If the news heading analysed carefully does not show that the content of the news items has issues of conflict, it was abandoned. Thus, in analysing the data, the researcher then "winnowed" the data (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012), a procedure of neglecting some part of the data and concentrating on other parts of it.

Subsequently, the headlines that were analysed and found to relate to issues of conflict were probed further or read closely and rigorously. At this stage, the researcher focused on noticing underlying meanings of the words or content of the news item that relates to the issue of conflict. A number of factors influenced this stage. Firstly, the extensive reading helped to established whether the news item's subject matter is related (directly or indirectly) to conflict situations due to the subjective explanation of text data through the procedure of coding and identifying

themes or patterns (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Secondly, this step helped to find themes the news articles addressed. The processes were followed prudently in analysing the content of each news story in the newspaper. The stories found in the newspaper and included in the data for the study were coded with the issue date, the subject matter of the story, the author as well as the content of the news article.

Content analysis place premium on "characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual; meaning of the text" (Hseih and Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Walizer and Wiener (1978) also describe content analysis as an orderly procedure created to scrutinise the content of recorded data. In terms of this work, the focus is on the conflict reporting content and how it is framed on the front pages of the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper. Wimmer and Dominik, (2011) note that the use of content analysis to look at different phenomenon which include media content has been highlighted in recent years by researchers.

3.4.2 Unit of Analysis

In providing an examination of the coverage of conflict by the newspaper, conflict related news stories found on the front page were included in the data set and it therefore constituted the unit of analysis. This support the stand of Tankard (2001), that means of recognising and measuring news frames are headline, leads, photographs, photo captions, source selections, quotes, statistics, pull quotes and logos. On the other hand, Wimmer and Dominick (2003), note that the unit of analysis consists of lowest component of content analysis and it is the rudimentary part of the text to be classified by means of content analysis. The news articles in the study are related to only front-page conflict stories. It excludes editorials, opinion piece, foreign conflicts stories sourced from other media organisations or stories captured in other pages of the newspaper. It involves 179 conflict stories published

between January 2016 to December 2020, sampled and content analysed to established their inclusion.

3.5 Coding Protocol

The researcher first established and validated a coding scheme during the initial process. The researcher read the stories and then proceeded in analysing the samples of data to develop a coding scheme. This coding scheme was tentative, bearing in mind that other themes may occur from the larger data. The researcher, from the onset of the process of content analysis, categorized the news articles related to conflict. The analysis focus on the placing of news stories on conflict situations only on the front page of the newspaper. The coding protocol guided the categorization of only conflict related news stories. Editorial and opinion piece as well as conflict related stories in other foreign media outlets were excluded from it. Among the categories of the conflict stories are:

Communal clashes: Conflict stories related to a confrontation among members of communities. It can be members of the same community or between two communities.

Education conflict: This relates to conflict or violent activities in educational institutions within the country. It involves clashes among students, students and management and disputes between staff and management of educational institutions.

Economic conflict: It deals with conflict involving business activities in business organisations and trading centres. It relates to disagreements within the business environment resulting in attacks and counter attacks.

Mob attack: This refers to attacks by group of people on establishment such as security installations and individuals. This is in connection mob action leading to the attack on institutions or an individual.

Natural resource conflict: It focuses on litigation over lands resulting in violence, struggle of land resources for by individuals and farmers-herders conflict over grazing land and efforts aimed at addressing such conflict.

Chieftaincy: This is in relation to conflict from the various traditional areas in terms of rightful occupant of a skin/stool, issues bothering on traditional values of the land and funeral rites for a late traditional ruler.

Demonstrations/Protests: It highlight stories on series of activities on demonstrations and protests by individuals, groups of people and political parties against the happenings in the society. It relates to disagreements over issues which sometimes can result in the destruction of property and injury to the protestors/demonstrators due to a clash with the police.

Separatists: This refers to stories involving the Homeland Study Group, an association calling for the independence of the Trans-Western Togoland.

Gender-Based Violence: It relates news stories involving gender-based violence reported by the newspaper. Violence against a gender based on the action of the other.

Attacks against media personnel: It refers to attacks against media personnel which the newspaper gave premium on its frontpage. Manhandling or sometimes physical attacks on journalists in the performance of their duties by some sectors of the society such as the police.

The researcher further categorized each conflict related story into two groups-war journalism and peace journalism approaches. Under this step, the data gathering procedure is to ensure the provision of answers to the initial objective of this study; to examine the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper framing of conflict stories on

its front pages. Stories that had the headline appearing on the front page and the corresponding story appearing on the other pages were coded as the same.

In establishing the newspaper's use of war journalism and peace journalism approaches, four coding categories each were used for war and peace journalism in line with guidelines established by Galtung's model (Galtung, 2002). The indicators for war journalism include: conflict effect-death, destruction of properties, injuries; present information; elite orientation-police, government officials, heads and spokespersons of institutions; victimizing language/ stereotyping. For the peace journalism frame, the indicators were hidden conflict effect- vulnerable, destruction of society and culture; highlighting the causes and consequences- factors leading to the conflict and its aftermath; use of different sources; avoid stereotyping, victimizing language. When the war journalism indicators are more than the indicators for peace journalism, the researcher indicate "1". When the peace journalism indicators are more than the indicators of war journalism, the story is credited as peace journalism and therefore, has "2" assigned to it. If the indicators for peace journalism and war journalism are the same, the researcher indicate "3" (that is, neutral story).

The data for the study were coded with the issue date, nature of conflict story and the writer of the news story. To ensure coding consistency of the data, the researcher checked the data. It is based on the fact that with the adoption of human coding system, there are elements of fatigue and the likelihood of mistakes due to emergence of new codes in line with initial consistency check (Zhang & Wildermuth, 2009). Entman (1993) posits that there were certain places from where the frames could be identified and they included keywords, graphics, symbols, sources, and story structure. Tankard (2001), further mentions headline, subheads,

photographs, leads, photo captions, source selections, quotes, statistics, pull quotes and logos as the key element in identifying and measuring news frames. The coding also looked at sources and it looked at official sources, security, parties in conflict, opinion leaders, residents and others. The assumption is that the more sources available to the journalist, the more balanced the story. In answering questions two and three of the research- what are the frames and tone of front-page conflict stories of the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper, the researcher used thematic analysis.

3.5.1 Interview

The researcher carried out interviews with journalists and the editors to ascertain why the newspaper or journalists framed conflict stories in a certain way. The interviews were done after an analysis of the newspaper documents. The interviews were done in a face-to-face manner and also through a phone call since the participants were mostly outside the Cape Coast Metropolis. It ensured that the researcher obtains dependable, effective and accurate responses from the participants. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the journalists and editors where the participants were encouraged to be detailed about the topic under study without the researcher by means of prearranged, focused, short-answer questions (Given, 2008).

The researcher, through careful and extensive analysis of data was aware of the main domains of experience likely to be deliberated by the participants and was able to investigate how these issues relate to the topic under study (Given, 2008). This enabled the respondents to give their extensive view on the motive for the frames used to report issues of conflict with reference to the adoption of peace journalism approaches without any interference. Interview assist us "to understand the social actor's experience and perspective" Lindolf & Taylor, 2002 p. 173).

Journalists and editors of the newspaper, who were social actors in the coverage of conflict were interviewed with reference to this study. Their perspectives on the way they report conflict related issues in Ghana gave an understanding of the overall behaviour of the media and the Ghanaian citizenry towards the issue of conflict. The interview facilitated in providing validity and dependability to the study.

This part of the study was paramount since dependence on a thorough scrutiny of the news stories by the researcher has a possibility of some degree of subjectivity (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). It is therefore critical that the study examine the individual interpretive explanation of the data and not to offer exclusive interpretation of stories published by the newspaper (Ofori-Birikorang, 2009). The interview allows for varying voices and perspectives to be included in the study.

3.5.2 Thematic Analysis

The data gathered through the newspaper content analysis and the interview conducted with journalists and editors were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. It was done by coding the data collected into clusters of similar entities inductively, and identifying constant patterns and links between themes in the news stories. This contributed in creating a realistic and logical chain of evidence in the news stories about issues of conflict situations and how the newspaper reported such stories in relation to peace journalism approach.

The researcher condensed the data after coming up with general codes. To accomplish it, the researcher read the texts continuously to establish agreements between and among the themes and then proceed in merging comparable themes. Thematic analysis was used in answering the four research questions for the study. Thematic analysis was used since in the view of Marks and Yardley (2004), it

constitutes the greatest appropriate way of determining human behaviour using interpretations and also gives a methodical element to data analysis.

3.6 Trustworthiness

The recorded interviews were played back to the respondents and transcripts of the interview were given to the respondents. This was done to ensure the correction of necessary mistakes and present a valid data. The researcher also took time to give thick, rich description of the steps leading to the collection of data, analysis and interpretation.

The researcher ensured that, the collection and analysis of data was done using appropriate methodology and techniques. The use of methodological approach helped in minimizing biases. Additionally, the researcher used recognized research guidelines to ensure integrity of the findings.

Being aware of potential biases, the researcher took appropriate steps to minimize the impact by conducting ethical and credible research. The researcher engaged in self-reflection to ensure that his biases did not pre-empt the outcome of the research. Thus, the regular evaluation of assumptions or perspectives did not unduly influence the outcome of the research.

3.7 Ethical consideration

The data obtained for this study were collected from the hard copies of the newspaper. Thus, there was no breach of privacy or laws. The findings are a true representation of the newspaper which enabled the researcher to proceed with the interview of reporters and editors of the *Ghanaian Times*. The researcher first called the journalists and editor chosen as participants on phone and then followed up with an introductory email. They were made to understand that the interview was purely

for academic purpose. The participants consents were sought to record their voices on tape. This was done only after the required consent was given. The recorded voices were played to the participants and the transcription was also given to the participants. Additionally, participants were assured of the confidentiality of research participants.

The researcher treated the information shared by participants with utmost privacy, especially at the data analysis stage of the study. The researcher did not use names of participants but in its place, specific codes such as (Respondent One) were employed as a way of protecting the identities of the participants. With the view of ensuring the minimization of any harm to participants regarding the research, the researcher duly informed participants of possible harms that may arise in the course of the research. This actually enabled the participants to adjust their time and chose a convenient time that would favour them during the interview.

3.8 Chapter Summary

Chapter three gave features of processes and measures adopted for the research. Using a qualitative approach and case study as a design, the data for the research was put together using newspaper content analysis and interviews. A state-owned newspaper, the *Ghanaian Times* was purposively sampled and used as a case for the study. News stories published with January 2016 to December 2020 in the newspaper were content analysed and four journalists including the editor were sampled and interviewed for the study. Data analysis procedures used qualitative content analysis, thematic analysis, and percentage tables, while measures were taken to ensure qualitative validity and reliability. The next chapter concentrate on the analysis and discussion of findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study. The analysis hinges on the objectives of the study, relevant literature, and theoretical framework that support the study. Qualitative content analysis, thematic analysis, and tables were used as analytical and descriptive tools for the presentation and discussion of the findings. The purpose of this research is to establish how newspapers covered conflict situations in Ghana. This is critical because the media have been cited for escalating conflict through the use of war journalism approach than de-escalation of conflict by the use of peace journalism approach (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005; Mensah et al., 2017).

4.1 RQ1. How does the Ghanaian Times newspaper cover conflict stories on the

front page of the newspaper?

To answer this question, newspaper articles regarding content of conflict stories on the front-page of the newspaper were qualitatively analysed. This was to get the path of the print media's presentation of conflict/violence due to the portrayal of the media as avenue for escalating conflict.

4.1.1 War Journalism and Peace Journalism Approaches

The study established that the newspaper used both war journalism and peace journalism approaches in reporting conflict situations. According to Lynch and Galtung (2010), Lynch (2014) and Tehranian (2002), there are two different ways of reporting conflict-war journalism and peace journalism. The *Ghanaian Times*' role in the framing of conflict using peace journalism approach on the front-page,

according to the study is minimal, considering the number of war journalism approach employed in coverage of conflict related issues. The findings on approaches used in coverage of conflict by the newspaper is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: War journalism frame and peace journalism frame of conflict stories

Approaches	Frequency	Percentage
War journalism	109	61
Peace journalism	70	39
Total	179	100

Source: Field data (2022)

Findings in Table 1 revealed that a total number of 179 stories published within the period of study were conflict related out of which 109 used the war journalism approach. The *Ghanaian Times* newspaper recorded 70 peace journalism stories out of 179 conflict news stories that found space on the front-page. The findings suggest the direction of the *Ghanaian Times* towards the use of war journalism approach associated with conventional mainstream conflict reporting. The study found that the *Ghanaian Times* reported 106 out of 179 stories representing 61% using the war journalism approach. According to the data, the newspaper's approach in reporting conflict related issues framed the stories on physical manifestations of conflict including the number of people injured, death toll, weapons used and destruction of property The focus on these areas is demonstrated in the following excerpts:

A total of 13 people have been killed in violent clashes, in the past two weeks, between Fulani herdsmen and Konkomba farmers in the Kintampo North municipality of the Brong Ahafo Region. The death occurred during attacks and reprisal attacks over the alleged destruction of farms by cattle, belong to the herdsmen... (*Ghanaian Times*, 2017, September 19).

Supporters of the New patriotic Party (NPP) and the National democratic Congress (NDC) yesterday attacked each other at jamestown in the Odododioodioo Constituency, leaving a number of the injured ... (*Ghanaian Times*, 2020, October, 26, pp. 1, 3).

The above excerpts highlight the newspaper's disposition towards concentrating on issues of deaths, injuries and destruction to property. Thus, it suggests the newspaper's discretion of getting attention of readers and shelving any attempt at offering an avenue for a resolution of the conflict. The focus on death toll, injuries, and destruction of property, therefore gives an indication of an indirect attempt towards providing fertile grounds for reprisal attacks which may lead to further escalation of the already volatile situation. It therefore agrees with other findings which established that the focus on the physical manifestations of conflict can result in further escalation of a conflict situation (Lynch, 2014).

The study also established the use of elite-source(s)-police, government officials and heads and spokespersons of institutions by the *Ghanaian Times* without considering the views from combatants in conflict, the vulnerable including women and children, and opinion leaders in terms of soliciting their views regarding the issue under study. The study revealed the newspaper used 161 elite sources in covering 179 conflict stories during the period of study. According to Lynch (2008), overlooking non-official sources in reporting conflict creates a false impression that the conflict is not contested in from within the communities or the parties involved in the conflict. The following excerpts gives an indication of how the newspaper used elite sources in the coverage of conflict situation in Ghana:

...Confirming the issue to *The Ghanaian Times*, the Regional Crime Officer, Sup. Maama Arhin, said two suspects have so far been arrested in connection with the disturbance... (*Ghanaian Times*, 2016, March, 31, pp. 1, 3).

.... Brong Ahafo Regional Police Commander, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCOP) Kwaku Techie-Poku who confirmed the deaths to the Ghanaian Times yesterday, indicated that the victims include nine herdsmen and four Konkombas. (*Ghanaian Times*, 2017, September 19).

The above excerpts are indication of the media's reliance on elite source-police/ heads and spokespersons of institutions in gathering and presentation of news without contacting other sources to ensure that the report cover different grounds that can serve as a point of reference for peacebuilding efforts. This agrees with Ofori-Birikorang's (2009) claim that African media tend to rely heavily on government and official sources for the publication of their news. However, an elite source such as the police may give out an aspect of information, they consider necessary to the public by withholding certain information that may enrich the news article. According to Lynch (2014), the presentation of only elite source in conflict reportage gives an indication that, the conflict was not contested at all. It may also present an opportunity for feuding factions to counter the position of such official sources leading to further escalation of the conflict. Thus, the presentation of information by elite source(s) may skew the news item and in some cases, lead to entrenched position by the factions involved in the conflict.

The newspaper, according to the study, covered certain conflict related issues by attributing the conflict to a faction through the presentation of the information gathered. In the coverage of farmer-herders' conflict in the March 21, 2016 edition for instance, the study established that the *Ghanaian Times* referred to the herdsmen as 'architects' of the conflict through its reportage and also focused on the ethnic dimension of the herdsmen. This is represented in the excerpt below:

Fulani herdsmen have allegedly attacked some farmers at Kowereso in the Asante Akyem North of Ashanti resulting in the death of one person and another being seriously injured in the late hours of Friday. Police identified the deceased as 35-

year-old Kwame Ofiri, and the injured as Kofi Amoako. ... (*Ghanaian Times*, 2016, March, 21, pp 1,3).

The above excerpt, therefore corroborates the position of Alhassan (2017) and Tsikata (2020) that there is a complex dimension of conflict between Fulaniherdsmen and farmers in Ghana because of the way the herdsmen have been portrayed as necessarily violent and guilty whenever a case involving herdsmenfarmers conflict are reported in the media. The *Ghanaian Times* according to the data however did not label the conflict "Fulani menace" as argued by Tsikata (2020) that the media in Ghana prejudice herders by referring to farmers-herders conflict as Fulani menace. This view is captured in the following except:

The farmers and herders were framed as episodic and this affirms the position of Abdulbaqi and Ariemu (2017) that newspaper in Nigeria framed the herdsmenfarmers' conflict as specific event and occurrence rather than historical antecedents. Thus, the *Ghanaian Times* like the newspapers in Nigeria framed herdsmen-farmers' conflicts more on war-oriented journalism than peace-oriented journalism. The newspaper according to the study also focused on the resource dimension of the conflict which is in contradiction of the position espoused by some scholars (Tonah, 2006; Tsikata, 2020) that the media in Ghana have not been able to correctly highlight the class/ resource dimension as the cause of the problem by stressing on the ethnicity and migrant status of the herdsmen. The focus on the resource dimension of the conflict is illustrated in the following excerpts:

Severe food crisis is looming in the Central Tongu District, and other parts of the Volta Region as returnee Fulani herdsmen have let their cattle loose on farms in the various communities to devour the crops. This is particularly evident in Seva, where most farmers have lost their cassava and maize crops to the cattle. ... (*Ghanaian Times*, 2016, March, 8), pp. 1,32.

A total of 13 people, have been killed in violent clashes in the past two weeks, between Fulani herdsmen and Konkomba settler

farmers in the Kintampo North municipality of Brong Ahafo Region. The death occurred during attacks and reprisal attacks over alleged destruction of farms by cattle belonging to the herdsmen. The trouble communities are Jatokura, Kawunpe, Yawbofourkura, Dawada and Kadriso (*Ghanaian Times*, 2017, March, 19).

The above excerpts focused on the destruction of farm produce by the cattle as the stories captured portrayed the herdsmen as the ones responsible for the destruction of food crops based on the fact that, they did not attend to the cattle. This view is backed by Tonah (2006) who argued that the conflict involving farmersherders was over the destruction of farm produce as farmers attack the herdsmen for not attending to the cattle resulting in the destruction of their farm produce.

Notwithstanding the dominance of war journalism approach, the study established that the *Ghanaian Times* covered 70 out of 179 conflict stories representing 39% with the adoption of peace journalism approach. The newspaper according to the study, covered diverse grounds in relation to the conflict and also citing multiple sources in reporting conflict related issues. An example of multiple sources is captured in the excerpts as follows:

Dr Chambas, therefore, entreated all in the north to resolve to dialogue anytime the was disagreement or misunderstanding... Prof Emmanuel Asante, Chairman of the National Peace Council stated that absolute peace was needed for transformation of the area...Mr Salifu Saeed, Northern Regional Minister, on his part, commended all stakeholders who had contributed in diverse ways towards resolving conflict in the north... (*Ghanaian Times*, 2016, November, 14).

The use of multiple sources in the coverage of conflict related issues contribute towards unearthing other scopes of the conflict which will lead to further resolution of the conflict as those affected by the conflict can serve as catalysts for peace building.

Additionally, the study revealed that the newspaper covered conflict related issues by focusing on calls by individuals and groups affected by the conflict urging feuding factions to use dialogue in resolving their differences. The call on the feuding factions is for them to give peace a chance since violent conflicts can be seen as a panacea to underdevelopment. This is captured in the following excerpts:

Some chiefs in the Northern Region have affirmed their readiness to cooperate with the government and other stakeholders, to bring lasting peace to Dagbon. They made the pledge when the chiefs from the Abudu gate in the Dagbon Traditional Area called on the Northern Regional Minister, Salifu Saeed, at his office in Tamale. (*Ghanaian Times*, 2017, April 3).

The excerpt above indicates the role of the media especially, the *Ghanaian Times* in using its platform to call on both Abudu and Andani royal gates involved in the Dagbon conflict to return to the negotiation table and adopt the road map proposed by the Eminent Chiefs with respect to the resolution of the conflict. The adoption of this frame is to rely on the invisible aspect of conflict such as 'peace', for the factions involved in the conflict to return to the negotiating table and also extend an olive branch to each other.

Similarly, the study revealed that the *Ghanaian Times* explored the use of background in the coverage of conflict related issues across the country. According to Shinar (2007) peace journalism must demonstrate commitment towards exploring backgrounds and contexts of conflict formation, and presenting causes and options on every side so as to portray conflict in realistic terms, transparent to the audiences; and giving voice to the views of rival parties. It also agrees with the position of Lynch (2014) peace journalism gives voice to all parties in conflict situation.

Analysis of the data therefore suggests that the media in Ghana including the Ghanaian Times use more war journalism frame than peace journalism frame in covering conflict related issues. The study established that the reporters and editors of the newspaper framed majority of conflict news stories based on the conventional mainstream reporting. It suggests the reliance on laid down approach in reporting conflict without further delving into the nuances of the conflict. Serwoonoo (2021) for instance argues that news values involve the selection of specific qualities of events regarding newsworthiness of the event. The study suggests that the media select certain indicators of conflict such as injuries, death toll, destruction of property, confrontations and blame game to make them more salient in the coverage of conflict situations.

Promoting conflict resolution/peacebuilding efforts through peace journalism approach is minimal in the newspaper's coverage due to concentration on certain aspect that has the tendency of escalating the conflict. According to Serwoonoo (2021), the concept of news value is based on the organizational and professional procedures found within the journalistic practice. The attention given to death, destruction of property and injuries sustained during conflict situations by the newspaper therefore affect framing of peace. Serwornoo (2019) however observes that journalists are guided fundamentally by mechanistic rules that knowingly evade objective selection of the event of the day. This therefore make the use of peace journalism approach a daunting task for journalists covering conflict situations.

In an exposition, Serwornoo (2019; 2021), explain that journalists are involved in special translation of event into stories noting that the translation hardly accommodates the pre-event circumstances which significantly determines why events are occurring and with which severity. Accordingly, the study notes that the *Ghanaian Times* gave attention to the time of the conflict rather the pre-event circumstances leading to the escalation of the conflict. Lynch and McGoldrick

(2005, p.5) argue that peace journalism involves the application of insights to conflict analysis and transformation and also use concepts of balance, fairness, and accuracy in reporting; and provides a new route map tracing the connections between journalists, their sources, the stories they cover and the consequences of their journalism.

4.1.2 Subject of conflict covered on the frontpage of the Ghanaian Times

This refers to the different types of conflict stories covered by the newspaper. The result is to look at the trend of conflict related issues covered by the *Ghanaian Times*. The subject of conflict stories published by the newspaper is presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Subject of conflict stories

Categories	Frequency	Percentage	
Chieftaincy	35	19.6	
Political	3000	16.8	
Communal clashes	24 MON FOR SERVICE	13.4	
Resource	23	12.8	
Mob attacks	18	10.1	
Education	16	8.9	
Demonstration/Protest	14	7.8	
Economic	7	3.9	
Religion	4	2.2	
Separatists	3	1.7	
Gender-Based Violence	3	1.7	
Violence against media	2	1.5	
Total	179	100	

Source: Field data (2022)

Analysis of the 179 stories on conflict situations on the front page of the newspaper within the period of study as seen in Table 2, revealed that the most dominant conflict story relates to chieftaincy dispute with 35 out of the 179 stories representing 19.6% across the country. The number of conflict stories involving chieftaincy suggests the continuous contestations involving claims of legitimacy over the rightful occupant of a stool or skin in a number of traditional areas as well as control of resources. This supports the position by Kendie et al. (2014), and Tsikata and Seini (2004) that chieftaincy disputes in Ghana are linked to legitimacy and control of resources. Additionally, 30 out of the total number of 179 stories representing 16.6% were on political conflict. The study found that political violence incidence captured on front page of the newspaper were confrontations between members of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New patriotic Party (NPP) or sometimes between members of the same political party-NDC or NPP. The years 2016 and 2020 (two election years) according to the data, captured 14 and 7 political violence related issues respectively.

It is worth noting that the *Ghanaian Times* during the period of study did not capture any conflict story relating to other political party in the Ghanaian political landscape on its front-page apart from that of the NPP and NDC. The finding corroborates the position espoused by Tsikata and Seini (2004) that political conflict in Ghana under the Fourth Republic involves members of the NDC and NPP. This, therefore shows the level of intolerance between members of these two political traditions under Ghana's Fourth Republic especially during election years and more importantly, the quest to assume political power and also control resources.

According to the study, 24 conflict related stories representing 13.4% involved communal clashes which occurred between communities during the period

under study. One of the communal clashes reported by the newspaper is Konkomba-Chokosi clashes (March 21, 2019).

Resource conflict involving land dispute, farmer-herders conflict, and mining were also captured on the front-page of the *Ghanaian Times* with 23 stories constituting 12. 8 %. Mob attacks which relate to individual/community attacks on security personnel and security installations as well as group attacks against individuals recorded 18 stories representing 10.1 % were captured on the frontpage of the newspaper. The representation of the stories by the newspaper suggests that the attacks on the security agencies were masterminded by individuals who were unhappy about certain decision by the police in terms of arrest of suspects or sometimes killing of a person by the police.

A total of 16 stories representing 8.9% occurred within the various educational institutions (senior high schools and tertiary institutions) and were coded as educational conflict. The stories comprise confrontations between students and management of educational institutions, clashes between members of halls of residence, lecturers/staff and management, and clashes between two schools. For conflict involving demonstrations and protests, the newspaper recorded 14 stories representing 7.8% while that of religious conflict witnessed 4 stories representing 2.2%. It is worthy to indicate the newspaper did not record any major religious violence between Christians and Muslims. Religious conflicts per the data gathered were between two Muslim sects or the same sect as well as between members of the same Christian denomination. The findings corroborate the position of Tsikata and Seini (2004) that Ghana has been spared a full-blown religious conflict between Christians and Muslims and that what the country experiences were religious conflict between members of two Muslim sect or the same sect.

The study also found that the *Ghanaian Times* gave front page coverage to gender-based violence, 3 representing 1.7%, separatists activities, 3 representing 1.7% involving members of the Homeland Study Group Foundation over the successionists activities of the Trans Western Togoland and violence against media personnel, 2 representing 1.5%.

From the findings, the type of conflict that found space on the front page from the gathering of information by reporters to decisions taken at the editorial conference through the publication by the newspapers focus on politics, chieftaincy, land resource use, education, communal clashes, mob attacks, economic, religion, demonstration/protests secessionists activities, gender-based violence and violence against media personnel. The data showed that the *Ghanaian Times*, a national daily covered different dimensions of conflict situations across various Ghanaian societies. It confirms the diverse nature of conflict in Ghanaian society as articulated by Kendie et al. (2014) that conflicts recorded in Ghana are multifaceted and have diverse causes raging from chieftaincy and ethnic differences, political, economic marginalisation, religion and land issues. The findings therefore suggest the complexities of conflict in the Ghanaian society as a result of wide-ranging causes raging from religious differences, land, chieftaincy, ethnic differences, political and economic marginalisation.

4.1.3 News Sources

News sources according to researchers play an important role in news gathering and production of news articles in conflict situations (Galtung, 2002; Lynch, 2014). Serwornoo (2021) posits that news coverage of events by the mass media also centre on the gathering of data from sources by reporters who then present it without taking sides during their reportage of the issues. Gever (2019) also

affirms the importance of sources cited in media contents due to its likely influence on the nature of framing in conflict situations.

According to Serwornoo (2021), sources demonstrate an important role in news construction due to the fact that ideology of news scarcely allows journalists to change significantly what their sources say, especially when the source is another journalist. Ofori-Birikorang (2009) posits that African media tend to rely heavily on government and official sources for the publication of their news. The reliance according to him focuses on the assumption that government and official sources have high degree of credibility. The findings on news sources are captured in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Sources used by the newspapers

Sources	Frequency	Percentage	
Officials	62 60 3	21.7	
Security agencies	99	34.6	
Parties in conflict	39 AMON FOR SERVICE	13.6	
Opinion leaders	28	9.9	
Residents	39	13.6	
Others	19	6.6	
Total	286	100	

Source: Field data (2022)

Table 3 revealed that the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper sourced most of the stories from security agencies with 99 representing 34.6% while government officials and leaders and spokespersons of institutions recorded 62 representing 21.7%. The two sources constitute an elite source registering 56.3% of the data. The result therefore shows that the newspaper utilized or gave attention to the security

agencies, government officials, and heads and spokespersons of institutions more than other sources in reporting the 179 conflict situations. Thus, the newspaper attributed 161 out of 286 sources cited to the elite sources (police; government officials; leaders and spokespersons of institution). It suggests the reliance of the newspaper on elite sources in the coverage of conflict situations. This corroborates earlier studies (Baah-Achamfour, 2020; Ofori-Birikorang, 2009) who mentioned that the media in Ghana rely heavily on official sources in the gathering and presentation of news articles. According to Hussain and Ahmad (2021), journalists have the tendency of giving prominence to the views of elite sources despite their thinking of including the voices of those who are not part of the conflict or the public.

In relation to parties involved in conflict situations, the study established that the newspaper used 39 of such sources representing 13.6%; opinion leaders including chiefs, 28 sources representing 9.9%; residents in areas of conflict situations were also cited in the coverage of conflict by the newspaper with 39 sources representing 13.6% while sources from other categories were 19 representing 6.6%. The data from the study suggests that the *Ghanaian Times* disregarded the voices of the vulnerable including women and children and other members of communities experiencing conflict. It rather gave attention to people who indirectly may not be aware of the nuances leading to the conflict. Ofori-Birikorang (2009) however says that dependence on other independent news sources gives an indication of the newspapers giving voice to individuals or institutions outside that of the official sources thereby creating a varied fields for public discourse.

The dependence on other sources apart from elite sources according to Lynch and Galtung (2010) gives voice to the voiceless as peace journalism is people

oriented rather than elite oriented. Thus, peace journalism advocate for journalists to go beyond official sources in the coverage of conflict situations by seeking alternative sources in their news presentations. The findings also corroborate the position of Ofori-Birikorang (2009) that African media tend to rely heavily on government and official sources for the publication of their news. The reliance on such sources according to him focuses on the assumption that government and official sources have high degree of credibility. According to Hussain and Ahmad (2021), journalists are said to have the possibility of looking at different options in terms of gathering and presentation of conflict related issues with the potential of bringing feuding factions nearer; and to view conflict with the angle of winning as the only choice.

4.2 RQ2: What are the frames the *Ghanaian Times* used to report conflict on its frontpage?

Premised on the theory of framing analysis, the researcher conducted a manual coding of data to establish patterns of reportage in the newspaper. The question is to establish the frames the print media in Ghana used in the presentation of conflict related issues. Through a carefully organized coding process, patterns of reportage of issues of conflict are categorized into frames or themes. The dominant frame/theme are presented in this section.

4.2.1 Frames used to report issues of conflict related issues

Four dominant frames occurred from the content analysis of news articles that highlight issues of conflict on the front-page of *Ghanaian Times* newspaper within the study period. The themes identified from the data are in sync with the frames suggested by Entman (1991). These are consequence,

responsibility, solution and conflict. Findings on the frames used to present issues about conflict in the *Ghanaian Times* are presented in the order of dominance in table 4 below:

Table 4: Frames of Conflict Related Issues in Ghana

Frames	Number	Percentage (%)
Consequence	67	37.4
Responsibility	50	28
Solution	41	22.9
Conflict	21	11.7
Total	179	100

Source: Field data (2022)

4.2.2 Consequence Frame

The dominant frame according to Table 4 is the consequence frame. It includes reports of death, attack and destruction of property. The consequence frame for this study is the *Ghanaian Times* focus on the effects of conflict such as death, injuries and destruction of property. Where there is death, injuries and destruction of property, the researcher coded this as consequence frame. The newspaper used the consequence frame in the coverage of conflict situations across Ghana. This frame is the most consistent during the coding process and easy to identify. In terms of consequence frame, manifestation of conflict in terms of death, destruction of property and weapons used were coded under it. Thus, the attributes were readily manifest. The use of words such as attacks, killed, communal clashes, shooting, weapons used, houses burnt, and injuries were visible in the front-page coverage of conflict by the *Ghanaian Times*. Examples of some of the excerpts are as follows:

...Renewed chieftaincy violence has erupted at Bunkprugu, in the Northern Region, claiming three lives. (January 29, 2016, *Ghanaian Times*, pp. 1, 16,17).

...A chieftaincy clash in the Tutumba community in the Bole District of the Northern region, on Wednesday night, has claimed nine lives. Information gathered by the *Ghanaian Times* from the area indicate that several others have sustained various injuries from gunshot wounds and were being treated at the Bole hospital where the deceased have been deposited, (July 23, 2016, *Ghanaian Times*, pp. 1, 19).

The above excerpts suggest the newspaper's focus on the physical aspect of conflict or the manifest conditions in the coverage of conflict situations. Thus, this aspect of publication is in agreement with the tenets of war journalism which focus on the physical manifestation of conflict/violence (Galtung, 2002; Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005).

Another aspect of consequence frame used by the newspaper involve the destruction of property in the coverage of conflict related issues. This relates to the burning down of structures/houses, vandalization of vehicles and destruction of food crops as a result of the conflict or the precursor to the conflict situation. The following excerpts are illustrated below:

Several houses were also said to have been set ablaze in the renewed clashes between the Jamong and Jafok families. (January 29, 2016, *Ghanaian Times*, pp. 1, 16,17).

There was pandemonium at Katapor, near Amasaman in the Ga West Municipal Assembly when angry youth attacked a herbalist and police patrol team, last Sunday evening. The youth vandalised a police patrol vehicle, and pelted the personnel with stones when they arrived at Katapor to rescue the herbalist, Togbui Agama, who had been attacked by the youth (*Ghanaian Time*, April 17, 2018, pp. 1, 3).

The frame was also used in the coverage the vulnerable including women and children who were affected by conflict in terms of their socio-economic wellbeing. It

relates to residents fleeing their communities to safety as a result of the conflict. This is captured in the following excerpt:

More than 100 residents of Chereponi and its surrounding communities in the Northern Regio, have fled to some farming communities in Togo following the communal clashes that ensued between Konkombas and Chokosis over a parcel of land. The residents mainly women and children are reportedly stranded at the border as they do not know whom and where to go. (2019, January, 7) *Ghanaian Times*, pp. 1,3.

Severe food crisis is looming in the Central Tongu District, and other parts of the Volta Region as returnee Fulani herdsmen have let their cattle loose on farms in the various communities to devour the crops.

(2016, March, 8) Ghanaian Times, pp. 1,32.

According to the framing theory, the media highlights part of issues and then place them within a certain context to encourage or discourage certain interpretation. The consequence frame according to the data gathered for the study was used to look at the conflict outcome or precursor to the conflict. In the view of Lynch (2014), coverage and representation of conflict are an integral part of peace and conflict studies as they can influence in various ways how conflicts are perceived. Melon (2002) also argues that the media in the situation of conflicts, may either play an active role in increasing violence in the conflict or stay independent of the conflict thereby making contributions to the determination of the conflict. Thus, the consequence frame mainly consists of conflict stories the newspaper used war journalism approach to cover. It centred on the manifestations of conflict such as death, destruction of property and weapons used in the conflict. Even though journalists have the ability to delve deep into the conflict and cover all grounds as argued by scholars in the field of peace journalism, the study established that this aspect is hardly followed by the reporters and editors of the Ghanaian Times.

4.2.3 Responsibility Frame

The second most dominant frame used by the newspaper in the coverage of conflict was the responsibility frame. Entman (1991) avers that the responsibility frame is used when the media frame issues around acknowledgement of responsibility for a cause or solution. The frame looks at issues of conflict and how the parties in the conflict and other stakeholders are to resolve the conflict. The responsibility frame adopted by the newspaper created an opportunity for common grounds in addressing the conflict. Thus, it negates the influence of "we" versus "them" but makes room for the parties in conflict to find a middle ground in dialoguing to end the dispute.

For example, during the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) conflict that witnessed the dismissal of Prof Mawutor Avoke and five other Principal Officers of the institution, the Minister of State for Tertiary Education urged all parties to support the on-going reconciliation efforts by the Governing Council in the April 29, 2019 edition of the *Ghanaian Times* as follows:

The Minister of State in charge of Tertiary Education, Prof Kwesi Yankah, has urged all parties to lend support to the ongoing reconciliation process by the Governing Council. He expressed regret that the admonition of the President for reconciliation and building of bridges was not heeded as there was more muscle flexing by various campus factions than peace making...He called on the UEW alumni to play a constructive role of assisting peace making and reconciliation efforts, saying, "Let the alumni avoid the temptation of instigating an inner rebellion or stoking flames". (Ghanaian Times, 2019, April 29, pp. 1, 16).

An analysis of the excerpt points to the fact that the resolution of the UEW conflict lies within the purview leadership of the institution and factions involved in the dispute.

Also, the responsibility frame was also used by the newspaper to focus on a call for the leadership of both the Andani and Abudu royal gates to stop beating the war drums and embrace peace as captured by the newspaper is an indication of the responsibility frame. The call captured by the newspaper is as follows:

The Muslim community in the Northern region has appealed to the leadership of the Andani and Abudu royal gates of the Dagbon chieftaincy, to stop beating the war drums, and return to the negotiating table. "We are appealing to the leaders of the two royal families, the Abudu and Andani gates to re-commit themselves to peace processes with the view of finding lasting solution to their dispute," the Muslim community advised. (*Ghanaian Times*, 2016, March, 30, pp. 1,4).

Thus, the above excerpts make room for parties in conflict situation by offering them an opportunity for them to reflect on their differences and also come to a common ground to embrace the olive branch. It is pertinent to state here that the decision to escalate or de-escalate conflict is entirely in the hands of the parties in conflict. The media only acts as a vehicle in appealing to the conscience of the parties. The responsibility frame leans towards peace journalism approach as it place the conflict in a way that the parties involved in conflict and other stakeholders can work together in ending the violence.

4.2.4 Solution Frame

The solution frame is used by the newspaper to create a certain aspect regarding the handling of the conflict by the security agencies. Such stories also emphasize the arrest of instigators of conflict and what is being done by the security agencies to ensure peace in conflict communities. The newspaper also adopts the solution frame when it focuses on the easing of tension in such communities based on the perspective of the reporter. The following excerpt is illustrated below:

Peace has returned to Naaduni in the Chereponi District of the Northern Region, as a combined police and military team has taken control of the community. The Northern regional Police public Relations Officer (PRO) deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Mohammed Yussif Tanko in an interview with the *Ghanaian Times*, said the security personnel dispatched to the area, had managed to control the situation. (*Ghanaian Times*, 2018, June 5, pp. 1, 15))

In similar vein, the frame was also used when individuals or members of a community make an appeal to the feuding factions to embrace the olive branch and give peace a chance in ending hostilities. It also relates to the issuing of an apology on behalf of a group for an act of violence to pave way for coexistence among people. The following are excerpts of the solution frame adopted by the newspaper in reporting conflict related issues:

The National Council of Fulani Chief in Ghana called on President Nana Akufo-Addo yesterday and apologized for the many atrocities of some Fulani herdsmen across the country. According to the chiefs, the blatant criminal activities by some herdsmen in communities, especially Agogo in the Ashanti Region is giving them sleepless night (March 15, 2018, pp1, 17).

The above excerpt, contradicts the position of Tsikata (2020) that, the media portrays the Fulani herdsmen as violent. It demonstrates the newspaper's position in using peace journalism approach also in covering farmer-herders' conflict. Thus, the solution frame also puts attention on peace initiatives aimed at promoting unity in a conflict community. It includes modalities put in place by institutions and organisations on how such institutions are contributing towards the de-escalation of conflict in communities. It avoids name calling or labelling while working to bring warring factions to the negotiating table.

According to Adeyanju (2018), the media is capable of deactivating tensions or near confrontation before it reaches a point where it can degenerate into violent conflict and also have a role to keep a critical observation on government, opposition and society. This implies that by focusing on issues that will help de-escalate

tensions, the *Ghanaian Times* through the solution frame has been contributing towards the promotion of peace journalism in conflict situations.

4.2.5 Conflict frame

The least of the frame used by the *Ghanaian Times* in covering the various conflict situation in Ghana is the conflict frame. The frame is used by the newspaper as regards to contention over the right of ownership/position or resource. It focusses on who actually have right of ownership is based on the information available to the journalist. The conflict frame relates to struggle over resources, leadership position and the right to be given the needed recognition. It results in disagreement and gives direction as to what the situation is about as seen in the excerpts below:

The police yesterday maintained a strong presence at the University of Education Winneba (UEW) to avert any attempt by the former Vice Chancellor, Prof Mawuto Avoke, from taking over the running of the institution. Some staff have labelled the decision to take over as coup d'tat, indicating that they would resist any attempt by him and others from causing unrest on campus (2019, July 26, Ghanaian Times, pp. 1, 15).

Two factions laying claim to the Ga stool, yesterday clashed amidst gunshots and destruction of property at the Ga Mantse palace in Accra. The two factions reportedly clashed over the installation of Nii Adama Latse, who was cleared by an Accra High Court, last week to assume the presidency of the Ga Traditional Council (*Ghanaian Times*, January 25, 2017, pp. 1, 3).

Thus, the excerpts above demonstrate entrenched position by parties involved in conflict situation. The emphasis on such stories is to bring out contention over claims by individuals and group of people thereby enhancing the hostilities already at play.

4.3 RQ3 What is the tone of coverage of conflict stories and frames used on the front page of the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper?

Another aspect of the analysis to determine the quality of conflict related issues on the front-page of the *Ghanaian Times* is the tone. It examined whether the newspaper painted a gloomy or healthy picture about conflict incidents in the country or a middle ground. Pavelka (2013) argues that media tone focusses on the style the media presents the subject to the public. Thus, journalists use tones by portraying a matter in terms of positive, negative or neutral. In this study, the stories that sought to escalate the conflict were coded as negative, the ones that were progressive or promote peace were coded as positive while the ones that were neither progressive or undesirable were coded as neutral. Findings on the tone is presented in table 5 below:

Table 5: Tone of Coverage in the newspapers

Tones	Frequency	Percentage	
Positive	48 CICATION FOR SERVICES	26.8	
Negative	61	34.1	
Neutral	70	39.1	
Total	179	100	

Source: Field data (2022)

Results in Table 5 indicate that the *Ghanaian Times* dominantly used neutral tone in the coverage of conflict situation in Ghana. Out of 179 stories analysed, 70 had neutral tones, 61 were negative tones, and 48 in positive tones.

4.3.1 Negative tone

Analysis of the table showed that negative tones were employed in the coverage of conflict situations as the stories centred on the destruction of property,

causing injury and death. The newspaper from the data gathered used negative tones to report 61 (34.1%) conflict related news articles. It involves blaming, providing skewed reportage and portraying that the differences among the parties will continue to linger on without any solution. Coverage of conflict situations showed entrenched position by parties involved in conflict in the coverage of conflict by the newspaper. This is illustrated in the following excerpt by the *Ghanaian Times*:

...They claimed they have people who saw the police manhandled the deceased and that the report was an attempt by the police to shield the offenders from blame and any legal charges... Commenting on the issue, the Ashanti Regional Police Commander, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCOP) Kofi Boakye said the police would not countenance anybody who tries to take advantage of the situation to cause mayhem in the area (*Ghanaian Times*, June 1, 2016, pp. 1, 16,17).

The above excerpt demonstrates the entrenched position of residents and the police following an autopsy that exonerated five police personnel from the murder of a 22-year-old man at Kumasi.

Additionally, the data also showed the destructive nature of conflict in terms of property/infrastructure which might affect the socio-economic life of the people affected by the conflict. The following are also excerpts of negative tone the newspaper used in the coverage of conflicts in terms of the destruction of property:

Tumu Senior Technical High School has been closed down indefinitely by the Sisala East Municipal Security Council (MUSEC) after students attacked school and vandalized property running into thousands of Ghana cedis. About 19 students have been arrested and are in police custody. The students staged a riot on Thursday to register their displeasure about the confiscation of mobile phones belonging to some of the students. (2019, May 29, *Ghanaian Times*, pp. 1,3).

Another aspect of negative tone the newspaper is in the area blaming a section as instigators of conflict related issues thereby creating a situation for reprisal

attacks. An example of the use of blaming of farmer-herder conflict by the newspaper is captured in the excerpt below:

Severe food crisis is looming in the Central Tongu District, and parts of the Volta Region as returnee Fulani herdsmen have let their cattle loose on farms in the various communities to devour the crops.... In other Mafi communities, some of the herds were straying into homes while others had taken over construction sites and turn the uncompleted buildings into their kraals.... (*Ghanaian Times*, March, 8, 2016, pp. 1, 32)

4.3.2 Positive tone

Results in Table 5 show that out of a total number of 179 stories analysed, 48 (26.8%) were in the positive tone. Analysis of data established that the *Ghanaian Times* used positive tones in the coverage of conflict situations in relation to resolution of conflict and promoting an atmosphere for a win-win situation. The stories were coded with positive tones because they suggested the calming down of tensions, resolution of conflict and cooperation for the settlement of conflict situations. For instance, the following extract demonstrates the commitment towards resolving dispute through an appropriate means:

Calm has returned to Yendi and the funeral of the late overlord of Dagbon, Yaa Naa Yakubu Andani started yesterday with the shaving of hairs of his children, grandchildren and widows who have returned to the town (2019, January 14, *Ghanaian Times*, pp. 1, 17)

Calm has returned to Kpandai Seniour High school (SHS) in the Kpandai district of the Northern Region, after a violent disturbance on campus Wednesday night (2020, July, 18, *Ghanaian Times*, pp. 1,3)

The above extracts demonstrate how the newspaper dealt with the publication of activities leading to the burial of the late overlord of Dagbon, Yaa Naa Yakubu Andani and a disturbance at Kpandai Senior High School. It demonstrates the contribution of the *Ghanaian Times* towards promoting peaceful coexistence prior. It suggests the contribution of the *Ghanaian Times* towards easing the tension in the

society. The newspaper also used a positive tone in the coverage of protest by agents at the Tema port on the implementation of ICUMS initiative. The story is captured as follows:

The protests at the port prompted a hurriedly arranged closed door meeting between the Minister of trade and industry, Alan Kyeremanteg and his Deputy, Carlos Ahenkorah with officials of the Customs division of GRA... The Commissioner of Customs, Colonel (rtd.) Kwadwo Damoah, later told the protestors to calm down and present their grievances to designated customs officers at the long room for assistance (*Ghanaian Times*, June, 2020, pp. 1, 20).

The excerpt above demonstrates the efforts of the newspaper to highlight the diverse commitment on the part of individuals and institutions towards peacebuilding efforts in the country. The presentation on certain salient issues as part of reporting is to present positive idea that will influence the next line of action to be taken by factions in conflict to settle their differences amicably.

4.3.3 Neutral tone

The findings in Table 5 revealed that 70 stories (39.1%) had neutral tones. Analysis of the data showed that the newspaper dominantly used neutral tones in the coverage of conflict situations across Ghana. The study established that the newspaper provided facts of the conflict without taking sides and also did not use words that will give an indication of their role in either calming or escalating the conflict. The newspaper used words such as "cause of violence was unknown" "ongoing investigations into the conflict" and "parties involved in the conflict declined to comment". Another indicator was the deployment of security personnel without stating the action the security personnel were taking to stop the conflict. These indicators did not give a precise direction as to whether such acts would lead to deescalation or escalation of conflict situations. Thus, investigations into a conflict alone, does not indicate that, the conflict has been resolved or there is an escalation

of the conflict. The following illustrate the newspaper's use of neutral tone in reportage of conflict situation:

Soldiers have been deployed at Zebila in the Bawku West District of the Upper East Region to maintain law and order following some irate youths believed to be New patriotic Part (NPP) who went on rampage destroying party and government property.

(*Ghanaian Times*, 2017, April, 27, pp.1,12)

DSP Tenge said investigation into the case were ongoing and efforts were being made to identify and arrest the perpetrators... (*Ghanaian Times*, 2020, August 31, pp. 1, 3)

The police have apprehended four persons in connection with renewed communal clashes between the Konkombas and Chokosis, at Chereponi in the North East Region (*Ghanaian Times*, 2017, March 18, pp. 1, 3)

A tone in framing according to Evers (2016), is designated as valence and may be negative, positive or neutral. It therefore gives an indication from the analysis of the data that the framing of conflict stories affects the tones used by the newspaper in the coverage of conflict situations. Consequently, the approaches and the frames used in reporting the various conflict situations across Ghana suggests a connection with the tone of coverage (Hart, 2011) as de Vreese & Boomgaarden (2003) argue that the application of tone to the perception of framing has shown that frames are suggestive of negative versus positive contradiction or both. It is instructive to say that, the claim by Baumgartner and Jones (1991) that media coverage of an issue has valence and attention dimensions as attention is closely related to the salience of frames used by media and valence demonstrates specificity to the tonality of the frames used by the media.

The tone agrees with de Vreese and Boomgaarden (2003) that certain frames are by themselves inherently filled with valence, as journalists give emphasis to the tonality of frames by portraying an issue in terms of bad (negative), good (positive)

or neutral. A careful analysis of the data gathered exhibited that issues presented with war journalism and peace journalism approaches and framed with responsibility, conflict and solution were predominantly neutral. This is because the newspaper only presented the issues without taking sides on the part of those involved in the conflict.

Analysis of the data also established that a number of issues framed with responsibility, conflict and solution were neither framed positive or negative. This account for why the tone of coverage of the newspaper were predominantly neutral. It is based on the fact that 70 conflict stories representing 39.1 % of the stories analysed did not give a clear position as to the direction of the tone of coverage. It therefore did not portray the conflict related issues reported by the newspaper as neither negative or positive.

4.4 RQ4: What are the challenges of reporters and editors of the *Ghanaian*Times newspaper on the coverage of conflict stories in the newspaper?

The fourth research question for the study was to establish why the newspaper report conflict situations the way they did from the perspectives of journalists and editors. Interviews were conducted with four journalists including the editor of the newspaper. The journalists are those who report for the newspaper selected for the study and the editor was selected based on his role as the chair at the editorial conference and superintending over the selection and placement of stories in the newspaper. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data gathered from the interview. This was a careful process where the researcher immersed himself in reading the transcripts of the interview and making interpretations from the responses the journalists and the editor gave.

The researcher sought clarification from the journalists and the editor when the need arose to avoid wrong interpretations that may eventually affect the findings.

The themes /reasons that emerged from the analysis of the data are:

- i. News sources
- ii. Media ideology
- iii. Personal values of journalists
- iv. Resources
- v. Safety and security

4.4.1 News sources

Analysis of the interview data revealed that journalists largely rely on elite sources comprising government officials, heads and spokespersons of institutions and the police in the coverage of conflict situations. The data established that journalists found it convenient in reporting from the view-point of elite sources during conflict situations. Thus, they found the information from the elite sources credible due to the assumption that the officials are in a position to give out relevant information regarding conflict related issues. According to Hussain and Ahmad (2021), journalists give prominence to the views of elite sources despite their thinking of including the voices of those who are not part of the conflict or the public. Information gathered from elite sources according to the respondents are about the physical manifestations in the conflict area and what is being done to address the conflict. In the words of a respondent;

...We normally get the information regarding conflict from the police, sometimes we talk to opinion leaders and chiefs as well. (Participant Three)

According to the journalists, their attempt to report what the elite sources (police and government officials, heads and spokespersons of institutions) say about

conflict, the particular frame comes in handy and suitable to be used. The following are the argument put forward by the respondents:

...Often times, we are restricted from accessing information directly on the ground. You are prevented from doing so because you might not understand the nuances of the problem and go beyond reporting what is necessary and what information to give out (Participant One).

The respondents explained further that journalists tend to use official sources to avoid bias representation of facts in the coverage of conflict related issues due to the possibility of propaganda or misrepresentation of facts by parties involved in conflict situations or residents of a community. This corroborates the position espoused by Ofori-Birikorang (2009) that African media tend to rely heavily on government and official sources for their news production on the premise that government and official sources have a high degree of reliability. Reliance on official sources according to the respondents also serves as a "strainer" in relation to the information gathered by journalists and this agrees with Herman and Chomsky (1998) that official sources serve as 'filters. According to the respondents the stake people have in a conflict will compel them to deliberately give out information that may escalate the conflict. The following are the views of the respondents:

...The communities also have credibility challenges unless a journalist is smart. The unit committee chairman in a community and the assemblyman sometimes are not for the establishment but they are for a different party. They are embedded community people and they want to exaggerate the situation because of the way eye witness paint a picture of a situation. (Participant Three)

...I think that there is an opportunity for reporters to even go there but it means they are going to report independently from the official position and sometimes it is unhelpful. If the security agencies or the officials are coordinating the peace efforts in an area and you go and report independently, what you might be doing is to disrupt the plan of the officials and security agencies to the extent that it can even escalate the problem and would not bring peace (Participant One).

The respondents further acknowledged the importance of multiple sources in enriching their news articles and ensuring that all sides to the stories are covered. Serwornoo (2021) argues that news coverage of events by the mass media also centre on the gathering of data from sources by reporters who then present it without taking sides during their reportage of the issues. According to the respondents:

...Journalists should turn their attention on those in conflict affected communities to tell their story. The issue is who will give the figures in terms of statistics. The police may also not be able to give a journalist the full details of the story so there is a dilemma. Getting the right sources of information, of course unbiased sources, one may not be able to get it. (Participant Four)

...Personally, I have not been attacked but a number of our colleagues have been attacked in some of the conflict areas. The recent one we can talk about is about two or three years where our colleagues were in Yendi to cover the performance of the two Ya-Naas' funeral and it was unfortunate that they were caught in a cross fire. Some of them were even chased up to the police station. It was the police and other security personnel that saved them. Some of them were even put in the ambulance. (Participant Three)

The views expressed by the respondents corroborate the position of Serwornoo (2021) that sources demonstrate an important role in news construction due to the fact that ideology of news scarcely allows journalists to change significantly what their sources say, especially when the source is another journalist. Thus, information journalists gather from the conflict field will inform the framing of conflict situations.

4.4.2 Resource challenges

The resource and logistics challenges associated with the media restraint journalists from moving to the field to carry out extensive reporting on conflict situations and to incorporate into the story the views from different sources.

Inadequate resources therefore prevent journalists from traveling to long distances sometimes to unmotorable places to report on a conflict related issue. The provision of logistical support in terms of transportation by Ministers of State and other officials to areas experiencing conflict according to the respondents also affect the way the media report on conflict related issues. Thus, their coverage of such conflict situations is sometimes aided by speeches and briefings from the security agencies and representatives of parties involved in the conflict. The respondents stated the following:

...Going to such places is very difficult. Sometimes we have the challenge of means of transport depending on where the conflict is happening; so, in that case what happen is that, I rely on sources (my sources there) to get the information. When the newsroom ask that I go to the grounds for specific aspect to a story, I move to the area to get the information (Participant Two).

... We have the challenge of resources/ logistics, mobility due to the accessibility of areas affected by conflict. We are also hindered in situations where people are not ready to give any information (Participant Three).

Also, another point of resource challenge compels journalists to conduct telephone interviews with heads of institutions or their spokespersons in clarifying issues relating to conflict in their establishments or in a community. Sometimes journalists rely on briefs/statements from these officials for the presentation of their news articles. Themes contained in the briefs/statements from such sources are largely based on the cause of the conflict and what is being done to promote peacebuilding efforts.

4.4.3 Personal values of journalists

At times journalists frame conflict stories by using peace journalism or war/violence journalism approaches based on their personal values/experience within

the media landscape. The insight and years of experience shape the kind of news articles written by journalists in the coverage of conflict situations and the frames they use in such news articles (Hussain & Ahmad, 2021). The number of years spent in covering conflict and witnessing the havoc caused by such conflicts according to the respondents affect the coverage of conflict related issues in terms of gathering and presentation of information by journalists. In the explanation of one of the respondents, his experience in an area plagued by various types of conflicts drives his desire to write stories that would promote peace and stability in the country and not report in such a way to escalate tension in the society. This is captured in the extract below:

...The number of years I have spent in the profession and covering conflict have actually shaped my reportage. If you look carefully at the beginning of my reports up to date, you can see that there has been some improvement because as days go by, we learn from our mistakes. Things that we used to report at the beginning of our journalism career, we are no more doing same when it comes to conflict. At the beginning we wanted to be the first to report but as days go by, we avoid apportioning blame and mentioning names among others (Participant Four).

The above excerpt advanced by one of the participants is in disagreement with the position that the media mastermind the escalation of conflict through sensationalism, over simplification and under representation of certain issues (Wolfsfeld, 2004; Lynch& McGoldrick, 2005; Mensah et al., 2017; Zebulon, 2017).

Besides the contribution towards reducing tensions in the society, journalists also frame their stories for the annual Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) Awards for their contribution towards peace and security in the country. The anticipation of such recognition is the reason journalists focus reporting conflict related issues in a way that will lead to the de-escalation of conflict situations. Some journalists report

in a certain light due to their experience and feeling towards conflict and the premium they place on it.

...I always want to be neutral and be accurate as possible. I don't want to aggravate the situation thereby I try to avoid using words that will compound the problem. I choose to stay in the middle; but of course, I always want to report factual and nothing but factual. Experience that I have gathered for so many years is that I always want my report to be a reference point and in so doing, you need to stick to the facts and don't put yourself into the situation; it can be your own ethnic group or chieftaincy gate, try to be neutral because people will use my stories some years to come and I don't want them to use the story and mention my name in a negative way (Participant Four).

4.4.4 Media Ideology

The ideology of the media allows the reporters and editors to frame conflict stories in a certain way. McCombs (1976) posits that professional, cultural and organisational influences are factors that enhances news judgement and selection. According to Kim and Chung (2017), the front-page of every publication within the print media gives an overview of the newspaper, and most importantly an extension of the essential values of the newspaper's staff.

In explaining the placement of stories on the front-page of the newspaper. One of the respondents stated the following:

First of all, we are a state-owned newspaper and we are guided by our ethics (the GJA Ethics) in the coverage of conflict. We are supposed to be gatekeepers and also to ensure peace and national cohesion... Well, to be quite honest, everything we do at conference is to ensure that we deliberate the stories to place on the front page (Participant One)

The above extract demonstrates the gatekeeping function of editors in the placement of stories on the front-page of the newspaper. According to Kim and Chung (2017), the front page of a newspaper generally forms part of the core values of the journalists working with a newspaper. Thus, the procedure used in selecting

what constitutes news- especially the front-page of the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper is an important issue that the editors consider as part of their gatekeeping mandate. It corroborates the gatekeeping role of editors (White, 1950). According to Galtung & Ruge (1965) certain decisions in the newsroom are taken based on the interest of the organisation vis-a-vis the influence of individual journalists as gatekeepers

Journalists and editors also rely on their professional values in line with the routines of the organisation in reporting and publication of conflict related. As mentioned by Gans (2004), Schudson (2012) and Tuchman (1973), news is a product by news organisations and it follows rigorous routines for efficiency, suppression of personal values by journalists while embracing professional values in line with organisational routines on how to portray the world to the public and the impact of external forces. The views of the respondents are stated in the following excerpts:

... If there is conflict and we cover such, we make sure that the coverage is not to inflame or escalate the conflict. Our focus is to bring out information and accurate information but at the same time not to inflame passions (Participant One).

...I will say the newspaper attaches much importance to issues of peace building because the paper ensures that what story we sent for instance in conflict situations, we get the reaction from both sides and not to file one sided story. We make sure that we are reporting from both sides. (Participant Two).

...Ideology of the newspaper is that we don't have a strait jacket ideology, we are like fire fighters whatever happens we report on it. I don't remember the last time our newsroom brought us together to see how best we can report on conflict. (Participant Four).

In terms of story writing and selection by the media, various indicators are used in the publication of the stories on the front page of the *Ghanaian Times*. This suggests that the selection of news articles on conflict is done by reporters and editors of the newspaper with specific direction of the editorial team. According to

Lynch (2008), it is the reporters and editors that make choices regarding the gathering and framing of news articles published in newspapers and other media outlets. Thus, the coverage of conflict situation by the media is a collaborative effort among the editorial team involving reporters and the editors. On influence from both internal and external sources, the respondents said:

...The newspaper is not being influenced by external sources Let me tell you what, where I sit as the Editor, I do not get anybody influencing me externally. The Constitution of this country protects every editor from external (both from individuals or from government) intervention. So it cannot be that we are influenced by external factors to produce our newspapers (Participant One).

We attached a lot of importance in peace-building efforts because we try to bring to the public attention the need to maintain peace and security in the country. We try to be proactive in publishing stories that would prevent or ensure that there is peace. So, in all forms, we create the platform or give opportunity to people or people in peace industry to air their views or to publish their views in the newspaper (Participant Three).

...Our newspaper is a national paper, a state-owned newspaper and what we seek to achieve is to promote unity, promote coexistence and try to woo investors into the country so we are always looking for things that will promote unity. (Participant Four).

The above excerpts corroborate the position of Adisa et al. (2016) that ownership of a newspaper is important in determining the role that newspapers play on issues such as ethnic and social conflict. It also agrees with the position of Kim & Chung (2017) that certain factors within the organisation may stimulate the content of news that is published by the newspaper.

Additionally, business operations also influence the way journalists and editors in Ghana focus on conflict manifestations such as death toll, injuries and destruction of property. The journalists and editors unconsciously pay attention to

this aspect of conflict reporting as a marketing tool for the media outlets to 'break even' in a competitive media environment. The respondents explained in the following excerpts:

We sometimes focus on the manifestation of the conflict and look at what will sell and that is why we focus on that aspect. The extent of the conflict to magnify the magnitude. You picture the magnitude of the conflict. We most of the time quantify the conflict before we will later come and talk about the other aspect. We look at what will sell first. Because whatever we are doing, we are looking at the business aspect (Participant Three).

...There is a lot and in these days that we have a very competitive environment, you always want to publish stories that would earn you some revenue. And therefore, if there are stories particularly bothering on conflict or peace that may not bring you revenue, you are tempted to place it elsewhere in the newspaper and rather promote stories that would attract readership and generate income for you (Participant One).

The excerpts affirm the position of Harcup & O'Neil (2016) that news values appear as saleable aspects which satisfies an extensive target audience and superiority aspects that focus on essential features of a news article's standing. As argued by Strömbäck & Hopmann (2012), popular newspapers are strongly market driven and aim to reach out to a large audience as possible and might focus on profitable news standards.

4.4.5 Safety and security of journalists

Journalists covering conflict related issues also have in mind their personal safety and security in gathering and presentation of information. Some have developed a code of 'living to tell the story and not be the story'. According to Nyarko & Akpojivi (2017), media practitioners in Ghana are susceptible to different forms of violence because of the nature of the profession which include covering conflict situations. Thus, the coverage of conflict related issues further exposes journalists to violent attacks as they move to the field to gather information for

presentation. The respondents explained that a number of journalists in the country fear attacks during the gathering of information on conflict related issues for publication. The views expressed by the respondents are captured in the excerpts below:

Our safety and security are a challenge We don't have enough security. Our media houses do not provide insurance package to cover our lives, so we will not risk going to conflict areas to stay there three or four days to do in-depth stories on conflict (Participant Four).

Safety and security issues are key and as always, we have informed ourselves that you live to tell a story and you don't just move to the ground and risk your life like that (Particpant Three).

The attacks on journalists in the coverage of conflict according to the respondents is one of the motivating factors for journalists to refrain from going to the area of conflict to carry out in-depth coverage of conflict related issues for their media outlets. This is captured in the following extract:

... Personally, I have not been attacked but a number of our colleagues have been attacked in some of the conflict areas. The recent one we can talk about is about two or three years ago where our colleagues were in Yendi to cover the performance of the two Ya-Naas' funerals and it was unfortunate that they were caught in a cross fire. Some of them were even chased up to the police station. It was the police and other security personnel that saved them. Some of them were even put in the ambulance (Participant Four).

The respondents also indicated that there have been attacks against journalists by factions involved in conflict, security agencies and other section of the society based on the coverage of conflict related issues by the media. They explained the attackers always express disquiet about reportage by the media. Journalists in avoiding such attacks according to the respondents engaged in self-censorship. One of the respondents stated that:

You don't put yourself in a position that will compromise your own security. So, we always rely on the security and our own conscience. Things that you will report and you will be safe. You look at our paper, mostly we are not apportioning blame. We always try to be in the middle. It is a bit tough. (Participant Four).

Alhassan et al. (2018) confirm the views expressed by the respondents that media practitioners in Tamale are compelled to engage self-censorship to reduce or avoid the potential attacks by civil society as elements within the civil society forcibly limit broadcast media freedom as broadcasters. According to Reporters Without Boarders (2022), journalists in Ghana increasingly resort to self-censorship to protect their jobs and security as the government shows itself intolerant of criticism. One of the participants said:

4.5 Summary

Based on framing and gatekeeping theories, the story analysed conflict news articles found on the front-page of the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper. The study is to establish the framing of peace in terms of analysing conflict stories, the nature of conflict and use of sources in the presentation of conflict. The second is to establish the frames used to report conflict issues in the newspaper while the third is to look at the tone in the coverage of conflict. The fourth research question sought to analyse the perspectives journalists and editors in reporting conflict. The finding revealed that the *Ghanaian Times* published 179 conflict related stories on its frontpage from January 2016 to December 2020.

The study established that out of 179 stories the newspaper used 109 war journalism frames representing 61% as against 70 peace journalism frames representing 39 %. Additionally, the study found that 70 out of 179 stories representing 39.1% were presented by the newspaper using neutral tone, 61

representing 34.1 were negative tone while 48 representing 26.8% had positive tone. Thus, besides using 109 war journalism frames representing 61%, the tone of the reportage is largely neutral. This therefore suggests that the newspaper's contribution towards the escalation of conflict is minimal.

Adopting frame analysis as an analytical approach, four frames occurred from the data as frames used to report issues of conflict. They are consequence frame, responsibility frame, solution frame and conflict frame. Excerpts from the data are used to demonstrate the incidence of these frames used to report conflict situations. Dominant of the frames used is the consequence frame followed by responsibility frame.

The study also sought to find out the perspectives of reporters and editors on the reason for framing the stories the way they did in the newspaper. Five reasons were identified from the thematic transcript of the interviews conducted with journalists and editors of the *Ghanaian Times*. These are news sources, resources, personal values of journalists, ideology of the newspaper and safety. The findings of the study are qualitatively analysed with thick, rich descriptions and illustrations. The researcher made sure to observe ethical standards by protecting the identity of respondents. The next chapter presents conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter captures the summary of findings of the study, limitations of the study, and conclusions arrived from the study. It also focuses on recommendations that may guide coverage of conflict by the media and future studies into the promotion of peace journalism.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study sought to find answers to four research questions, premised on two media theories-framing and gatekeeping using qualitative approach of enquiry and the case study as a design. As repetitive as it may look, it is imperative to reiterate the questions that steered the study:

- 1. How does the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper cover conflict stories on the front page of the newspaper?
- 2. What are the frames the *Ghanaian Times* use to report conflict on its frontpage?
- 3. What is the tone of coverage of conflict stories on the front page of the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper?
- 4. What are the challenges faced by reporters and editors of the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper on the coverage of conflict stories on the front page?

The study sought to understand how Ghanaian media covered conflict situations with reference to the front-page conflict related news articles. It examined war journalism and peace journalism approaches, subject of conflict related issues, news sources, the dominant frames, tones used and the perspectives of reporters and editors of the newspaper. An elaborate review of relevant literature was undertaken

to serve as the bedrock of the findings of this study. News values, media content and organisational influence, concept of front page, importance of front page, concept of conflict, conflict in Africa, conflict in Ghana, role of media in conflict, safety and security of journalists, peace journalism, structural conflict, framing and gatekeeping theories, sources, and media tones were reviewed in conducting the study. Structural conflict theory, Framing theory (Entman, 1993) and gatekeeping theory were used as the theoretical framework underpinning to analyse the findings of the study. The structural conflict theory was used to understand the various occurrence of conflict, the framing theory helped the researcher to understand the data analysed while the gatekeeping theory gave direction to how the reporters and editors framed the stories the way they did.

Qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis are data analytical tools employed in analysing the data gathered. In relation to the coverage of conflict news articles on the front-page of the *Ghanaian Times*, the study analysed 179 stories published between January 2016 to December, 2020. It established that the newspaper used more war journalism frame than peace journalism frame. Thus, peace journalism approach in reporting conflict related issues was minimal in Ghana as the newspaper relied on the conventional conflict reporting by dwelling on the manifestations of conflict. The study established that the *Ghanaian Times* placed less emphasis on peace journalism in the coverage of conflict situations as it framed 70 out of 179 conflict related issues representing 39% on peace journalism model. In line with conventional conflict reporting, the newspaper reported 109 conflict stories representing 61% using war journalism frame.

The categories of conflict involving chieftaincy suggests the continuous contestations regarding legitimacy of traditional leadership and control of resources.

This agrees with Kendie et al. (2014) that chieftaincy dispute in Ghana is linked to legitimacy and control of resources. Additionally, 30 out of the total number of 179 stories representing 16.6% were on political conflict. The study found that the political violence stories the newspaper captured on its front page were confrontations between members of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New patriotic Party (NPP) or sometimes between members of the same political party-NDC and NPP. The years 2016 and 2020 (two election years) according to the data, recorded 14 and 7 political violence on the frontpage of the newspaper respectively. Tsikata and Seini (2004) maintain that political violence between factions of different political parties precedes Ghana's independence. It is worth noting that the *Ghanaian Times* during the period of study did not capture any conflict related story relating to other political party in the Ghanaian political landscape on its frontpage apart from that of the NPP and NDC

Again, the study established that the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper gathered information on conflict related issues from security agencies (34.6%) and government officials and leaders and spokespersons of institutions (21.7%). The two official sources (elite source) used in the gathering of information represent 56.3%. The result suggests the newspaper's resolve in utilising or giving attention to the security agencies, government officials and heads and spokespersons of institutions more than other sources in reporting 179 conflict situations. Thus, the newspaper used 161 out of 286 sources constituting elite sources (police; government officials; leaders and spokespersons of institution) in presentation of 179 conflict related stories. It suggests that the newspaper relies heavily on elite sources in the coverage of conflict situations.

The newspaper's reliance on official sources in the coverage of conflict corroborates earlier studies (Baah-Achamfour, 2020; Ofori-Birikorang, 2009). In relation to parties involved in conflict situations, the newspaper used 39 of such sources representing 13.6%; opinion leaders including chiefs, 28 sources representing 9.9%; residents in areas of conflict situations were also cited in the coverage of conflict by the newspaper with 39 sources representing 13.6% while sources from other categories were 19 representing 6.6%.

The study further established the occurrence of four dominant frames from the content analysis of conflict related issues on the front page of the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper. It is indicative to state that these frames are not mutually exclusive of each other, and that the four frames are interrelated and intertwined. The frames are consequence, solution, responsibility and legitimacy.

Additionally, the study revealed that the newspaper dominantly used neutral tone in the coverage of conflict across Ghana. Out of 179 stories analysed, 70 had neutral tones, 61 were negative tones, and 48 in positive tones. The analysis of the data showed that negative tones were employed in the coverage of the conflict situations as the stories centred on actions the destruction of property, causing injury and death.

In analysing perspectives of reporters and editors on the way they covered the conflicts across Ghana, four journalists including the editor of the newspaper were interviewed. Thematic analysis of the data after the interview established five themes in reporting issues of conflict. These reasons are news sources, media ideology, personal values of journalists, resources and safety and security. The reasons according to the journalists and the editor influence the way reporters cover conflict situations.

5.2 Limitations of the study

The study sought to examine how the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper cover conflict stories published on the front page of the newspaper. It also sought to look at the frames and tone the newspaper employed in the coverage of conflict. Additionally, it looked at the challenges of reporters and editors on the coverage of conflict. Notwithstanding, the findings should be seen in the light of limitations. Besides time constraint, the number of newspapers proved difficult to access. Not all editions of the newspapers were found at the Sam Jonah Library at the University of Cape Coast. The researcher traced the other newspapers not found at the UCC library at the New Times Corporation's Library. The routine work of journalists including the editor also delayed/affected arrangements for the face-to-face and telephone interview, the process which data was gathered from the reporters and the editor. Despite these limitations, the findings of the study have critical implications for future studies on media regarding the adoption of peace journalism in conflict reporting, media theories and practice.

5.3 Conclusions

The findings of the study suggests that the media pay less attention to peace journalism in reporting conflict related issues and that the status quo of the print media using war journalism in the coverage of conflict remains the same in line with established literature. The print media in Ghana pay little focus in highlighting the indicators of peace journalism per the number of conflict related stories found on the front-page of the *Ghanaian Times* for the year 2016 to 2020. This conclusion is further strengthened by the way the newspaper used war journalism in the coverage of conflict situations. Only 70 out of 179 of conflict related stories placed on the front-page of the newspaper were associated with peace journalism.

The study indicates that the media in Ghana give little focus to peace journalism frame from conflict related issues. Thus, the focus on death, injuries, destruction and blame game continue to dominate the Ghanaian media landscape. Additionally, newspapers in Ghana tend to rely on elite sources (security agencies, government officials and heads and spokespersons of institutions) as avenue in gathering information for publication of conflict stories as 161 out of 286 sources representing 56.3% were from the elite sources. The study therefore concludes that the Ghanaian print media utilised or gave attention to the security agencies and official sources more than other sources when reporting conflict related issues.

Furthermore, the study revealed that the frames used by the newspaper to report issues of conflict are consequence, solution, responsibility and conflict. It should be indicated that these frames are not mutually exclusive of one another. In a news article for instance, more than one of these frames are identified.

Again, the study revealed that the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper dominantly used neutral tones in the coverage of conflict across Ghana. Out of 179 stories analysed, 70 had neutral tones, 61 were negative tones, and 48 in positive tones. Journalists and editors gave various reasons for the way the report issues of conflict and these comprise news sources, media ideology, personal values of journalists, resources and safety and security.

5.4 Recommendations

With the findings adduced from the study, it is pertinent to state that the media in Ghana ought to pay attention to peace journalism as a critical tool in the coverage of conflict situations especially, in a nation that is surrounded by countries experiencing violent conflict and terrorist attacks which has resulted in the truncation of development trajectory of these states. Conflict can therefore be a hinderance to

Ghana's efforts in meeting the tenets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) if stakeholders including the media carry out acts that will lead to the escalation of conflict. As the media continue to play a critical role in the coverage of issues of conflict/violence, it should not lose sight of the fact that their publication can lead to the exacerbation of the situation. The media can therefore consciously promote discussion on resolution of conflict. Regardless of the challenges, journalists must give attention to other voices by covering diverse background in their reportage of conflict related issues- the effect of conflict on education, health, and socioeconomic situations of people in areas affected by conflict.

The study sought to examine how Ghanaian media cover conflict related issues on the frontpage. It examined war journalism and peace journalism frames, subject of conflict, sources, the dominant frames, tones and perspectives of reporters and editors of the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper. Future research can look at expanding the study to cover two state-owned media as well as other media outlets. Further studies on the adoption of peace journalism approach by the traditional media in reporting political violence, farmer-herders conflict, chieftaincy dispute, communal clashes and other categories of conflict can be explored by taking into consideration a multiple case study to draw out similarities and differences. Additional studies can also be done on how the online media contribute to peace journalism when reporting conflict related issues.

Reporters and editors, the study recommends should explore how to use more peace journalism indicators when reporting conflict related issues. Thus, frames that will bring out the need for people to use dialogue/negotiation in resolving conflict rather than resorting to violence should be promoted by journalists. This commendation is critical since Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) postulate that reporters

and editors develop conscious efforts towards selecting and reporting on issues with the mindset of creating opportunities for society to contemplate and appreciate nonviolent responses to conflict.

Further research is needed into journalistic and editorial practices that hinder the use of peace journalism in covering conflict related issues in Ghana. An ethnographic or phenomenological study is recommended regarding the lived experiences of journalists who have or continue to report on conflict or people affected by conflict in Ghana, especially experiences of people living in Yendi, Bimbilla and Bawku where the data show the prevalence of conflict relating to chieftaincy and communal clashes. The Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA) and Private Independent Newspapers Association (PRIMPAG) should encourage their members to refrain from using inflammatory language in their reportage of conflict to avoid escalating the conflict situation.

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APPENDIX A

CODING PROTOCOL

Instructions

Part I

This appendix gives accounts for words and symbols used for the diverse items on the coding sheet (Appendix II). There are five parts to the code sheet- the first four items (followed by dotted lines), and the table. Kindly read each item section carefully. Beside each item at the top of the page is a dotted line- this is the space within which you indicate an answer. Your answer should take the form of appropriate number/digit.

- 1. Date of article: This place, you indicate the date the newspaper article was published and it should be selected as Day followed by Month and followed by Year, as in this sample---01/01/17.
- 2. Newspaper: This place, you put the relevant number of the newspaper that is being coded. Since you are dealing with only one newspaper, that is the Ghanaian Times,
- 3. War and Peace journalism approaches: You indicate "1" for war or violence journalism and "2" for peace journalism.

Part II

4. Direction of the Article: This relates to the tone/quality of coverage and is defined in terms positive, negative or neutral. In the case of positive news stories-e.g., those that reported harmony, within communities or groups, development, easing of tensions- indicate "1". In terms of negative new stories- e.g. those that

highlight disagreement, antagonism misunderstanding and death as well as destruction of property- indicate "2". All news stories that did not fall into any of the two categories mentioned above, indicate "3".

- 5. Thematic categories (Nature of stories): In relation to the nature of conflict stories, the study looked at economic conflict, land dispute, chieftaincy dispute, strikes/demonstrations, mob attack, communal clashes, political conflict, religious conflict. Other categories are expected to emerge from the data.
- 6. Sources: This refers to the people that the journalist get the information from in order to write the story. These include official sources (government, police/security) parties to the conflict, opinion leaders, residents and others.



APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Editor

- 1. What is your position on the issue that the media promote conflict than peace-building?
- 2. How do you think your publication of conflict affect the development of the affected communities?
- 3. What level of importance do you think your newspaper attaches to peace-building efforts in conflict areas?
- 4. How often is the promotion of peace discussed at Editorial conference?
- 5. Could you recount concerns and issues you expect as the major challenge in using peace journalism approaches in placing conflict stories on the front page?
- 6. Do you think the use of conflict frames in the newspaper are yours or influence from external sources?
- 7. Do you think the size of your paper influence the type of space you give to framing of stories using peace-oriented approaches?
- 8. Do you see any link between conflict stories and profitability?
- 9. What is the way forward?

Journalists

10. What is your viewpoint on the perception that the media promote conflict than peace-building?

- 11. How do you think your reportage of conflict affect the development of the affected communities?
- 12. What level of importance do you think your newspaper attaches to peace-building efforts in conflict areas?
- 13. What are some of the conflicts that you have reported on over the year(s)?
- 14. What is the biggest challenge of using peace-oriented approaches in your coverage of conflict situation?
- 15. What is the reason behind the focus on death toll, injuries and destruction of property in your coverage of conflict?
- 16. What is your view on covering conflict situations some years ago and now?
- 17. Do you use any document guiding journalists on covering conflict situation in Ghana?
- 18. Have you undergone any training on conflict reporting?
- 19. How do you cover conflict situation?
- 20. What is the way forward?