



Application of Peace Journalism in Resolving Farmers-Herders Conflicts in Yelwata Community of Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria: A Study of Joy FM

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ABSTRACT

Background: The farmer-herder conflict in Benue State, Nigeria, has led to significant loss of lives and property, with deep-seated implications for social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. Yelwata Community in Guma Local Government Area has been particularly affected, with recurring clashes between farmers and herders resulting in violence and displacement. Despite the crucial role of media in shaping public perception and understanding of conflict issues, there is a dearth of research on the application of peace journalism principles in resolving farmer-herder conflicts in this specific context.

Objectives: To examine the role of Joy Fm in shaping public perceptions of Farmer-Herder conflicts in Yelwata, Guma Local Government Area of Benue State; To assess the impact of Joy Fm's coverage on the attitudes and behaviors of listeners towards Farmer-Herder conflicts in the study area and to explore the potential of Joy Fm as a tool for conflict resolution and peace building in the context of Farmer-Herder conflicts in Benue State.

Method: This research employed a descriptive survey approach, using a structured questionnaire to solicit and analyze the opinions of respondents. The study adopted 6,781 as the population of residents residing in Yelwata. The study is guided by Conflict Resolution Theory and Media Dependency Theory.

Results: The study revealed : 48% of respondents (145) believe Joy FM raises awareness about conflicts and promotes understanding among listeners. Also 58% of respondents (175) think the station's coverage fosters empathy and promotes peaceful resolution and reconciliation. Furthermore, 38% of respondents (115) recommend creating programs that showcase stories of peaceful co-existence and dialogue.

Conclusion: This study underscores the pivotal role of Joy FM 96.5 in promoting peace and reconciliation in the farmer-herder conflicts in Yelwata, Benue State. By raising awareness, fostering empathy, and empowering listeners, the station's coverage has been instrumental in addressing the complex issues driving the conflict, including land ownership, grazing rights, and cultural differences. Ultimately, the research highlights the potential for radio broadcasting to



proactively contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts, making it a valuable tool for promoting peace in conflict-prone areas.

Unique Contribution: This study adds valuable insights to the field by exploring how Joy FM 96.5 promotes peace and reconciliation in the context of farmer-herder conflicts, demonstrating the power of radio broadcasting in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts.

Key Recommendation: Joy FM should prioritize balanced reporting on farmer-herder conflicts, focusing on peaceful resolutions and cooperation to foster empathy and understanding. Joy Fm should implement community initiatives like town hall meetings and public education campaigns to involve listeners in peacebuilding and address conflict root causes and finally, Joy Fm should create programs showcasing stories of peaceful farmer-herder coexistence, promoting positive role models and inspiring peaceful attitudes.

Keywords: Farmer-Herder, Conflict, Joy FM , Benue State, Peace building

INTRODUCTION

The farmer-herder conflict in Benue State, Nigeria, has led to significant loss of lives and property, with deep-seated implications for social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. Yelwata Community in Guma Local Government Area has been particularly affected, with recurring clashes between farmers and herders resulting in violence and displacement. Despite the crucial role of media in shaping public perception and understanding of conflict issues, there is a dearth of research on the application of peace journalism principles in resolving farmer-herder conflicts in this specific context.

The problem lies in the lack of effective media strategies to promote peace and resolve conflicts between farmers and herders in Yelwata Community. Traditional conflict reporting often focuses on sensationalizing violence, which can escalate tensions and perpetuate cycles of violence. This type of reporting can also create a culture of fear and mistrust, making it challenging to build bridges between conflicting groups. Furthermore, the media's tendency to focus on the symptoms rather than the underlying causes of the conflict can hinder efforts to find lasting solutions.

There is a need for a more nuanced and solution-oriented approach to conflict reporting that prioritizes peace and understanding. Peace journalism, as propounded by Galtung (2003), emphasizes a balanced and fair approach to conflict reporting, focusing on solutions rather than sensationalizing violence. By adopting peace journalism principles, Joy FM, a community radio station, can provide a platform for diverse voices and perspectives, promote understanding and empathy, and foster a culture of peace.

However, there is a knowledge gap in understanding how peace journalism principles can be applied in the specific context of Yelwata Community. While peace journalism has been applied in various conflict settings, there is limited research on its effectiveness in resolving farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria. Moreover, the unique cultural, social, and economic dynamics of Yelwata Community require a tailored approach to peace journalism that takes into account the specific needs and challenges of the community.



The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to the body of knowledge on peace journalism and conflict resolution in Nigeria. By exploring the application of peace journalism principles on Joy FM, this study can identify effective strategies for promoting peace and resolving conflicts in Yelwata Community. The findings of this study can also inform media practitioners, policymakers, and conflict resolution practitioners on how to harness the power of media to promote peace and understanding in conflict-affected communities.

In conclusion, the application of peace journalism principles on Joy FM has the potential to contribute significantly to resolving farmer-herder conflicts in Yelwata Community. Further research is needed to explore the impact of peace journalism on conflict resolution in this specific context and to identify effective strategies for promoting peace through media. By addressing the knowledge gap in this area, we can better understand how peace journalism can be used to promote peace and resolve conflicts in Yelwata Community and beyond.

Research Questions

1. What role does Joy Fm play in shaping public opinion about Farmer - Herder conflicts in Yelwata, Benue State?
2. How does listening to Joy Fm's coverage of Farmer - Herder conflicts affect people's attitudes and behaviors?
3. What strategies can Joy Fm employ to effectively promote peace and conflict resolution in Farmer - Herder conflicts in Benue State?

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review:

2.1.1 Joy FM Radio

Joy FM Radio has emerged as a prominent broadcasting entity in Nigeria, particularly in the Middle Belt region, where Farmer-Herder conflicts have been a recurring challenge. According to Akinfeleye (2003), radio remains a vital source of information and entertainment for many Nigerians, especially in rural areas where access to other forms of media is limited. Joy FM, with its strategic location and broadcast reach, has capitalized on this opportunity to engage with the local populace, providing news, entertainment, and discussion programs that shape public opinion and influence community discourse.

Studies have shown that radio stations like Joy FM play a crucial role in promoting social cohesion and conflict resolution in multicultural societies (Nkwain, 2020). By providing a platform for diverse voices and perspectives, Joy FM has the potential to foster greater understanding and empathy among different groups, thereby contributing to peacebuilding efforts. As noted by Olukotun (2002), radio's accessibility and affordability make it an ideal medium for reaching a wide audience, including those in rural areas who may not have access to other forms of media.



In the context of Farmer-Herder conflicts, Joy FM's role becomes even more significant. According to Tonah (2020), these conflicts are often fueled by misinformation, stereotypes, and a lack of understanding between the two groups. By providing accurate and balanced reporting, as well as facilitating dialogue and discussion, Joy FM can help to mitigate these conflicts and promote peaceful coexistence. With its community-focused approach, Joy FM can significantly impact listeners' lives, which underscores the need to investigate its influence on public perceptions of Farmer-Herder conflicts.

2.2.2. Causes of Farmers - Herders Conflict in Yelwata, Benue State

Conflicts between farmers and herders in Yelwata, Benue State, Nigeria, arise from multiple factors, including land and water resource competition (Ofuoku & Isife, 2009) and the Fulani herders' seasonal livestock movements, which often clash with farming activities (Tonah, 2006).

Furthermore, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the region has exacerbated the conflict, making it more violent and deadly (Alemika, 2013). The lack of effective conflict resolution mechanisms and the failure of government agencies to address the root causes of the conflict have also contributed to its persistence (Okpanachi, 2010). Climate change and environmental degradation have also been identified as contributing factors to the conflict, as they lead to scarcity of resources and increased competition for land and water (Obioha, 2010). The farmer-herder conflict in the region has been significantly intensified by several key factors. The widespread availability of small arms and light weapons has transformed what might otherwise be skirmishes into deadly confrontations, leading to a marked increase in violence and fatalities, as noted by Alemika (2013). Furthermore, Several factors have converged to escalate the farmer-herder conflict in the region. The proliferation of small arms has undoubtedly increased the lethality of clashes, as Alemika (2013) points out. Moreover, the lack of robust conflict resolution frameworks and the government's inability to tackle the root causes of the conflict have significantly contributed to its persistence, as highlighted by Okpanachi (2010). Climate change and environmental degradation have also emerged as critical contributors, leading to resource scarcity and intensifying competition for land and water, thereby fueling the conflict further, as Obioha (2010) observes. Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires a nuanced understanding of their interconnections and a multifaceted approach to conflict resolution.

The farmer-herder conflict in Yelwata is deeply intertwined with the historical and cultural dynamics between the Tiv and Fulani communities, with ethnic and religious factors often exacerbating tensions and hindering resolution efforts (Best, 2015).

Joy FM Application of Peace Journalism in Resolving Farmers - Herders Conflicts

The Joy FM application of peace journalism in resolving farmers-herders conflict represents a significant area of study in the field of conflict resolution and media studies. According to Galtung (2003) and later echoed by Lynch (2024), peace journalism emphasizes a balanced and fair approach to conflict reporting, focusing on solutions rather than sensationalizing violence. In the context of Joy FM, a community radio station, adopting peace journalism principles can contribute significantly to promoting peace and resolving conflicts between farmers and herders.



By providing a platform for diverse voices and perspectives, Joy FM can help shape public opinion and foster a culture of peace (Aja et al., 2022).

The farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria has been characterized by recurring violence and displacement, with deep-seated implications for social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. As noted by Okoli (2024), the media plays a crucial role in shaping public perception and understanding of conflict issues, and their framing and reportage can either escalate or de-escalate conflicts. In this context, Joy FM's application of peace journalism principles can help mitigate these conflicts by adopting a solution-oriented approach to reporting. By focusing on peace proposals and solutions rather than sensationalizing violence, Joy FM can promote understanding, empathy, and peaceful coexistence among conflicting groups (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005).

Peace journalism involves fairness, balance, and contextual reporting, avoiding language that demonizes one party or glorifies another. According to Hanitzsch (2024), peace journalism requires a nuanced understanding of the conflict context and a commitment to promoting peace. In the context of Joy FM, this means providing a platform for diverse voices and perspectives, including those of farmers, herders, and community leaders. By doing so, Joy FM can help promote understanding, empathy, and peaceful coexistence among conflicting groups.

The impact of peace journalism on conflict resolution has been documented in various studies. According to a study by Bratic (2024), peace journalism can contribute significantly to promoting peace and resolving conflicts by providing a platform for dialogue and promoting understanding among conflicting groups. In the context of Joy FM, the application of peace journalism principles can help resolve farmers-herders conflict by promoting dialogue, understanding, and peaceful coexistence among conflicting groups.

In conclusion, the Joy FM application of peace journalism in resolving farmers-herders conflict represents a significant area of study in the field of conflict resolution and media studies. By adopting peace journalism principles, Joy FM can contribute significantly to promoting peace and resolving conflicts between farmers and herders. Further research is needed to explore the impact of peace journalism on conflict resolution in this specific context and to identify effective strategies for promoting peace through media.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Magda et al. (2023) conducted a systematic scoping review to identify the causes of farmer-herder conflicts in Africa, shedding light on the complex factors driving these disputes.

The study utilizing a multi-faceted approach that incorporated qualitative, quantitative, remote sensing, and mapping methodologies, as well as secondary source analysis. The research spanned the entire African region, with a notable concentration on West Africa, particularly Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and Mali. This geographical focus may indicate that these areas experience a higher incidence of farmer-herder conflicts or that research efforts have predominantly centered on these regions, establishing a trend in scholarly inquiry.



The study's findings revealed that farmer-herder conflicts in Africa are driven by a complex interplay of factors. Specifically, the conflicts were attributed to pastoral mismanagement, insecurity, land issues, ethnic bias, environmental scarcity, and weak or non-inclusive governance. These factors often intersect and exacerbate one another, creating a multifaceted challenge that requires a nuanced and comprehensive approach to conflict resolution.

In light of these findings, the researchers recommended that policymakers and stakeholders prioritize pastoralism and land expropriation as key strategies for resolving conflicts in West Africa. By promoting more sustainable and equitable pastoral practices, and ensuring fair land distribution, it is possible to reduce tensions between farmers and herders, ultimately contributing to more peaceful and stable communities.

The study's recommendations underscore the need for a holistic approach to conflict resolution, one that addresses the root causes of farmer-herder conflicts and promotes inclusive governance, sustainable resource management, and social cohesion. By adopting such an approach, policymakers can help mitigate the impacts of these conflicts and foster more resilient and peaceful communities in West Africa.

Donatus Boniface Akosu and Evelyn Edward (2024) conducted a study on the herders-farmers conflict in Benue State, focusing on forced migration and displacement. The research aimed to understand the historical factors fueling the conflict, examine the effects of forced relocation and migration, and explore ways for different parties to contribute to long-term rehabilitation and conflict resolution efforts.

The study highlights that the conflict between farmers and herders is rooted in socioeconomic and environmental dynamics, making it a recurring issue in many regions worldwide. However, modern conflicts have become more violent and prolonged due to the proliferation of guns and the erosion of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

Using a historical qualitative approach, the researchers combined archival research, oral history interviews, and analysis of contemporary records to trace the conflict's roots. Based on their findings, they recommend several strategies to address the conflict: Encouraging open communication and fostering a sense of mutual understanding between farmers and herders, engaging community leaders: Involving local leaders in conflict resolution efforts to leverage their influence and build trust, organizing conflict resolution workshops, providing a platform for farmers and herders to learn effective conflict resolution skills and strategies, establishing grazing reserves*: Designating specific areas for grazing to reduce competition for land resources and developing livestock value chains: Creating economic opportunities and improving the livelihoods of herders and farmers through sustainable livestock management.

By implementing these strategies, the study suggests that it is possible to mitigate the effects of forced migration and displacement, promote peaceful coexistence, and foster long-term conflict resolution in Benue State and beyond.

A 2025 study by Andrew et al. examined the Fulani herdsman-farmers conflict in Nigeria's West Africa sub region, focusing on governance and policy responses. The research used an



exploratory approach to investigate federal and state government initiatives aimed at addressing the conflict. Findings revealed various policy initiatives, including grazing reserves and routes, as well as the National Commission for Nomadic Education. The study recommended that Nigerian governments adopt modern conflict management strategies, proactive approaches, and swift responses to early warnings and security challenges to effectively address the conflict and ensure peace and stability.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The research adopt Conflict Resolution Theory and Media Dependency Theory as its theoretical foundation.

Conflict Resolution Theory

- **Founders:** Johan Galtung (1975) and John Paul Lederach (1995) are prominent scholars in this field.
- **Theory Statement :** Conflict Resolution Theory focuses on understanding and addressing the root causes of conflicts, promoting peaceful resolution through dialogue, negotiation, and mediation. It emphasizes the importance of empathy, mutual understanding, and cooperation in resolving conflicts.
- **Link to the Work:** This theory is relevant to the study on Joy FM's role in promoting peace and reconciliation in farmer-herder conflicts in Yelwata, Benue State. The theory suggests that media can play a crucial role in conflict resolution by promoting dialogue, empathy, and understanding among conflicting parties.
- **Relationship with Theoretical Framework :** The Conflict Resolution Theory provides a framework for understanding the potential of media to contribute to peaceful conflict resolution. In the context of the study, Joy FM's coverage of the conflicts and its efforts to promote peace and reconciliation can be seen as an application of conflict resolution principles.

Media Dependency Theory

- **Founders:** Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur (1976)
- **Theory Statement:** Media Dependency Theory posits that individuals and groups rely on media to understand their social environment and make informed decisions. The theory suggests that media can have a significant impact on people's attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions, particularly in situations where individuals have limited personal experience or direct knowledge.
- **Link to the Work:** This theory is relevant to the study on Joy FM's role in promoting peace and reconciliation in farmer-herder conflicts in Yelwata, Benue State. The theory suggests that listeners in the conflict area may depend on Joy FM for information and understanding of the conflicts, which can influence their attitudes and behaviors towards peace and reconciliation.



- **Relationship with Theoretical Framework:** The Media Dependency Theory provides a framework for understanding the potential impact of Joy FM's coverage on listeners' perceptions and attitudes towards the conflicts. The theory suggests that Joy FM's role in promoting peace and reconciliation can be significant, particularly if listeners rely heavily on the station for information and understanding of the conflicts.

Relationship between the Two Theories

The Conflict Resolution Theory and Media Dependency Theory are interconnected in the context of the study. The Media Dependency Theory suggests that listeners may rely on Joy FM for information and understanding of the conflicts, which can influence their attitudes and behaviors towards peace and reconciliation. The Conflict Resolution Theory provides a framework for understanding how media can contribute to peaceful conflict resolution by promoting dialogue, empathy, and understanding among conflicting parties.

In the context of the study, Joy FM's coverage of the conflicts and its efforts to promote peace and reconciliation can be seen as an application of conflict resolution principles, which can be effective in promoting peaceful conflict resolution if listeners depend on the station for information and understanding of the conflicts. The relationship between the two theories highlights the potential of media to play a significant role in promoting peace and reconciliation in conflict areas.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design for this study is descriptive survey-based.

Area of Study

Yelwata, a community in Benue State's Guma Local Government Area, North Central Nigeria, serves as the study area. The area is predominantly inhabited by the Tiv people, known for their rich cultural heritage and agricultural traditions. Yelwata's economy is primarily based on farming, with crops like rice, yams, cassava, and maize being produced in large quantities. However, the community has faced security challenges, including attacks and displacement of residents, which have impacted the local economy and infrastructure. Despite these challenges, Yelwata has immense potential for agricultural development and infrastructure growth, which could improve the quality of life for its residents.

Population of the Study

The population of the study are persons living in Yelwata in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. According to 2006 National Population and Housing Censor, there were 2,672 persons living in the area. However, to determine the population of the area by 2025, the

population projection of 2.5% increase per year was employed but would stop in 2024 since we have not come to the end of 2025 thus:

$$\frac{25 \times 4685}{100} = 117$$

Number of years between 2006 to 2024 = 18 years

$$117 \times 18 = 2,106$$

$$4685 + 2,106 = 6,791$$

Therefore, the population of the study is 6791

3.4 Determination of Sample Size

The Taro Yamani (1964) formula for sample size determination shall be used for effective and accurate representation of the entire population. The formula is stated thus:

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

where,

n = sample size

N = total population

e = level of significance or degree of freedom 0.05

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

$$n = \frac{6,791}{1 + (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{6,791}{1 + 6791 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{6791}{1 + 16.9775}$$

$$n = \frac{6791}{17.9775}$$

n = 378 approximately

Therefore the sample is 378

Sampling Technique

This study utilize a Stratified Random Sampling technique to select 378 respondents from farming and herding communities in Yelwata, Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. The population is divided into two distinct strata: farmers and herders. Within each stratum, respondents will be chosen using simple random sampling, ensuring equal representation from both groups, with 189 respondents from each. This approach guarantees that the perspectives of both farmers and herders are adequately captured, providing a comprehensive understanding of the underlying causes of farmer-herder conflicts in Yelwata.



The sample size of 378 was determined using the Taro Yamane formula, which allows for a margin of error of 0.05. This calculation ensures that the sample is representative of the population, enabling the researcher to draw reliable conclusions about the conflicts between farmers and herders in the study area.

By employing Stratified Random Sampling, this study aims to gather nuanced insights into the complex dynamics driving farmer-herder conflicts in Yelwata, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of this pressing issue.

Methods of Data Collection

The study's data collection involved both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was gathered through surveys of farmers and herders in Yelwata, providing firsthand insights into the conflicts. Secondary data was drawn from existing literature, including academic journals, textbooks, and online resources, offering theoretical perspectives and contextual understanding of farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria. This mixed approach facilitated a thorough examination of the issue.

3.7 Instruments for Data Collection

This study employed a questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured into two sections: Section A, which gathered demographic information about the respondents, including age, occupation, and residence, and Section B, which focused on the research questions aimed at understanding the causes, effects, and potential solutions to the farmer-herder conflicts in Yelwata.

3.8 Methods of Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaire is analyzed and presented using frequencies, percentages, and charts, providing a clear and concise visual representation of the findings and highlighting key patterns and trends.

RESULT

SECTION A : Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Questionnaires	Frequency	Percentage
Returned	300	79%
Unreturned	78	21%



Total	378	100%
Gender		
Male	215	72%
Female	85	28%
Total	300	100%
Age		
18-25years	25	8%
26-30years	35	12%
31-45years	200	67%
46years and above	40	13%
Total	300	100%
Religion		
Christian	245	82%
Muslim	15	5%
Traditionalist	40	13%
Total	300	100%
Status of Respondents		
Single	77	25%
Married	200	67%
Divorce	23	8%
Total	300	100%

Source : Field Work, 2025

In the above table, out of 378 questionnaires distributed, 300 (79%) were successfully returned and deemed valid for analysis, while 78 (21%) were not returned or were invalid due to errors.

The survey results revealed a gender distribution of 215 males (72%) and 85 females (28%) among the 300 respondents.

The table reveal the following age distribution: 25 respondents (8%) were 18-25 years, 35 (12%) were 26-30 years, 200 (67%) were 31-45 years, and 40 (13%) were 46 years or older, with the 31-45 age group being the most represented.

The respondents' religious affiliations revealed a significant majority of Christians (82%, 245), with smaller proportions of traditionalists (13%, 40) and Muslims (5%, 15).

Finally, the table above shows that married individuals dominated the sample, accounting for 67% (200) of respondents, followed by single individuals at 25% (77), and divorced individuals at 8% (23).

SECTION B : Analysis of Research Question

QUESTION ONE:What role does Joy Fm play in shaping public opinion about Farmer- Herder conflicts in Yelwata, Benue State ?

Questionnaires	Respondent	Percentage
S/N		



1.	By broadcasting programs that feature discussion between farmers and herders that highlight the conflicts and their impact on the community, Joy Fm raises awareness about the issue and promotes understanding among listeners.	145	48%
2.	Joy Fm provide a platform for marginalized voices, including those of farmers and herders, to share their experiences and perspectives on the conflicts.	110	37%
3.	Joy Fm share stories of peaceful resolution and highlight the benefits of cooperation. The station also encourage listeners to adopt a more peaceful approach to conflict resolution.	45	15%
Total		300	100%

QUESTION TWO: How does listening to Joy Fm's coverage of Farmer -Herder conflict affect people's attitudes and behaviors ?

S/N	Questionnaires	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Listening to Joy Fm's coverage of farmer - herder conflicts can increase people's awareness of the issue and it's complexities, leading to greater empathy and	175	58%



understanding for those affected. This can result in a shift in attitudes, with listeners becoming more open to peaceful resolution and reconciliation.

2.	Conversely, if Joy Fm's coverage is perceived as biased or sensationalized, it could reinforce existing prejudices and polarize listeners. This might lead to increased tensions and conflict between farmers and herders, as listeners become more entrenched in their view.	50	17%
3.	Joy Fm's coverage can also empower listeners to make informed decisions and action. By providing accurate and balanced information, Joy Fm can facilitate a more informed and engaged citizenry.	75	25%
Total		300	100%

QUESTION THREE : What strategies can Joy Fm employ to effectively promote peace and conflict resolution in Farmer -Herder conflicts in Benue State ?

S/N	Questionnaires	Respondents	Percentage
1.	Joy Fm can create programs that showcase stories of peaceful co-existence , dialogue, and reconciliation between farmers and herders. By featuring diverse voices,	115	38%



	including community leaders, women, and youth, the radio station can promote understanding , empathy, and a sense of shared humanity.		
2.	Joy Fm can design and air public education campaigns that address the root causes of the conflicts, such as land ownership, grazing rights, and cultural differences. By providing accurate information and promoting critical thinking, the radio station can help listeners understand the complexities of the issue and the benefits of peaceful resolution.	100	33%
3.	Joy Fm can establish community engagement initiatives, such as town hall meeting, focus groups, and feedback mechanism to involve listeners in the peace building process. By creating a platform for farmers and herders to share their concerns, ideas, and experiences, the radio station can foster a sense of ownership and promote collaborative problem-solving.	85	28%
Total		300	100%

Source : Field Work, 2025

In the above table, indicate that 145 respondents, representing 48% of the total sample, perceive the station as raising awareness about the conflicts and their impact, thereby promoting understanding among listeners. Furthermore, 110 respondents, accounting for 37% of the sample, believe that Joy FM provides a platform for marginalized voices, including farmers and herders, to share their experiences and perspectives on the conflicts. Additionally, 45 respondents, constituting 15% of the sample, appreciate the station's efforts in sharing stories of peaceful resolution and highlighting the benefits of cooperation. These results suggest that Joy FM's initiatives are positively influencing the community's perceptions and attitudes towards conflict resolution, and underscore the importance of radio broadcasting in promoting peace and understanding in conflict-prone areas.

From the above table, a significant majority, 58% (175 respondents), believe that the coverage increases awareness of the issue and fosters empathy, leading to a shift towards peaceful resolution and reconciliation. In contrast, 17% (50 respondents) express concerns that biased or sensationalized coverage could exacerbate prejudices and polarize listeners, potentially increasing tensions. Additionally, 25% (75 respondents) believe that Joy FM's coverage empowers listeners to make informed decisions and take action by providing accurate and



balanced information. These findings highlight the critical role of media in shaping public perceptions and attitudes towards conflict.

From the above table, finally, the study reveal that 38% (115 respondents) suggest creating programs showcasing stories of peaceful co-existence and dialogue, while 33% (100 respondents) recommend public education campaigns addressing the root causes of conflicts. Additionally, 28% (85 respondents) propose community engagement initiatives, such as town hall meetings and feedback mechanisms, to involve listeners in the peace-building process. These findings highlight the potential for Joy FM to play a proactive role in promoting peace and reconciliation through diverse strategies.

CONCLUSION

The application of peace journalism in resolving farmer-herder conflicts in Yelwata community, Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria, as studied through Joy FM, highlights the potential of media in promoting peaceful coexistence. By focusing on dialogue, understanding, and peaceful resolution, peace journalism can play a vital role in de-escalating conflicts. Community engagement and participatory approaches are essential in addressing the root causes of the conflict, such as environmental degradation, lack of trust, and land access issues. Effective conflict resolution strategies should involve multi-stakeholder dialogue, community-based initiatives, sustainable livelihoods, and trust-building measures. By adopting these approaches, Joy FM and similar media outlets can contribute to promoting peace and understanding in the community.

RECOMMENDATION:

This paper strongly recommends that :

1. Joy FM should prioritize balanced reporting on farmer-herder conflicts, focusing on peaceful resolutions and cooperation to foster empathy and understanding.
2. Joy Fm should implement community initiatives like town hall meetings and public education campaigns to involve listeners in peacebuilding and address conflict root causes.
3. Joy Fm should create programs showcasing stories of peaceful farmer-herder coexistence, promoting positive role models and inspiring peaceful attitudes.

Ethical Clearance

Ethical consent was sought and obtained from the participants used in this study. They were made to understand that the exercise was purely for academic purposes, and their participation was voluntary.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Author's Contributions

Mr. Abutu Jeremiah O, conceived the study, including the design, Mrs. Eterigho Onyekachukwu Sonia collated the data, and handled the analysis and interpretation while Miss Origbo Amarachi Maria initial the manuscript. All authors have critically reviewed and approved the final draft, and are responsible for the content and similarity index of the manuscript.

Availability of data and materials

The datasets on which conclusions were made for the study are available on reasonable requests.

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