Perception of Ethnic Profiling in Crime-Related Nigerian Newspaper Reportage among Ilorin Residents

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Abstract

Stereotyping in conflict reporting often involves oversimplification of complex issues, highlighting differences and divisions among conflicting groups, and assigning blame unilaterally, among others. The problem of stereotyping in newspaper reporting of conflicts has been a growing concern. This study investigates the perception of ethnic profiling in crime-related newspaper reportage among Kwara State residents. This research is anchored on social identity theory. Survey research method was adopted and questionnaire was used to sample 200 respondents. The study revealed that several factors such as ethnicity, sensationalism, and bias from law enforcement agencies, stereotyping and lack of diversity in media ownership influence ethnic profiling in crime-related Nigerian newspaper reportage. The study also found that the major consequence of ethnic profiling in crime-related newspaper reportage in Nigeria among Ilorin residents is that it can lead to decreased distrust between ethnic groups and law enforcement agencies. Lastly, the study found that, the major strategy for combating ethnic profiling in crime-related newspaper reportage is to encourage greater collaboration and communication between different ethnic groups and law enforcement agencies. This study recommends that there should be more newspaper awareness campaigns on the negative implication of ethnic profiling in crime-related newspaper reportage.

Keywords: Perception, Ethnic Profiling, News framing, Newspaper Reportage, Stereotyping

Introduction

Crime-related newspaper reportage in Nigeria has a rich and complex history, shaped by interplay of various socio-political factors and the vibrant nature of the Nigerian media landscape. Nigeria, like many other nations in the African continent, has had a share of increased numbers of criminally minded individuals and unpatriotic citizens. These individuals fuel and sponsor ethnic bigotry, religious conflicts, political conflicts as well as Boko Haram insurgency and the farmer-herder clashes (Adebayo, 2021). As if these were not enough, incessant kidnapping in almost every state, including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja is the order of the day in Nigeria in recent time. Consequently, the role of the media in reporting criminal acts has been under scrutiny and of paramount importance.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian media landscape is dynamic and is largely divided into two broad categories: the print media and the electronic media. The print media in Nigeria, which includes newspapers, magazines, and other forms of printed news materials, have significant influence on the perception and understanding of these conflicts among the general public (Johnson & Oso, 2022). They play pivotal role in framing conflicts, shaping public opinions, and influencing policy directions.

One critical issue related to the reporting of conflicts in Nigeria by the print media is the prevalence of stereotyping and ethnic profiling. Stereotyping is a process through which generalized views, often biased or exaggerated, are attributed to a group of people (Dovidio, et. al., 2020), while ethnic profiling is the use of race, ethnicity, religion, or national origin rather than individual behaviour as the basis for making reportage decision about who may be involved in crime activity.

In the context of conflict reporting, this often involves painting groups or communities with a broad brush, emphasizing negative aspects, or misrepresenting the complexities involved in conflict situations. This issue is not unique to Nigeria; studies across the globe have highlighted how media outlets, including newspaper, often resort to ethnic profiling, especially when reporting conflicts (Ross, 2021). The role of newspaper in conflict reporting, and peace journalism, has been the subject of many studies (Ibrahim, 2018). Yet, there remains a research gap in understanding the perception of Ilorin residents on ethnic profiling in crime-related newspaper reportage.

Conflicts over resources, spurred by environmentalchallenges such as desertification, drought, and land degradation, have manifested into economic and social discord over the years in Nigeria. The most significant example is the long-standing conflict between herders and farmers, which has its roots in the 20th century. The crux of these conflicts often revolves around land use, as both farming and grazing activities rely heavily on the quantity and quality of land resources which are, according to recent research, increasingly limited (Oluwafemi & Ogundipe, 2022). These disagreements frequently escalate into violent confrontations with high casualty counts.

Various scholars have analyzed conflicts through differing lenses, with perspectives shaped by social, cultural, and political environments (Akpan & Ering, 2021). Definitions of conflict range from struggles for dominance or control to forms of social interaction in which the actors vie for scarce rewards (Ojebuyi, Etim & Okorie, 2022). Nigeria continues to experience intense conflicts

among numerous ethnic and religious communities across its states (Agbiboa, 2023). According to Omenugha and Oji (2022), sociological perspective suggests that these persistent conflicts between herders and farmers primarily stem from long-standing and unresolved differences, which are often exacerbated by media representation.

Meanwhile, the manner at which Nigerian newspapers report crime-related story is worrisome as sensationalized and sectionalized reporting becomes common with threatening reports capable of escalating tensions rather than promoting understanding and resolution (Agbo & Okoro, 2023). Therefore, as the media navigate the line between reporting facts and maintaining peace, the principles of objectivity and fairness must be upheld, while acknowledging that a peaceful environment is necessary for their continued operations (Ahmed & Okorie, 2023). While emphasising the importance of objective reporting, Oshiotse (2023) submits that, when it comes to reporting conflicts, the application of objectivity must be the case so as to avoid bias, rancour, and obvious purpose. Headlines must not be crafted to fuel conflicts especially in a country that is prone to cultural, religious and ethnic conflicts like Nigeria. So, reporters must be sensitive to all the issues capable of causing unrest in the country.

Although, some schools of thought argue that the notion of peace journalism undermines the profession's integrity, contending that journalists should not play the role of peacekeepers but should report events as they unfold (Lyon, 2022). This perspective views objectivity as a myth, given the influence of journalists' personal and institutional biases on the choice of stories, the language used, and the emphasis placed on certain angles (Ojebuyi, et al. 2022).

According to the principles of social responsibility theory, the media should operate with a sense of social responsibility while exercising their freedom (Omenugha & Oji, 2022). This study aims to examine the perception of ethnic profiling in crime-related Nigerian newspaper reportage among Ilorin residents.

While the importance of media in reporting crimes cannot be overstated, the challenge lies in the way these crimes are reported. Various studies have pointed out that media coverage, particularly in crime-prone or conflict-affected areas like Nigeria, has often been marred by issues such as biases, sensationalism, and stereotyping (Mogekwu, 2011; Ross, 2021).

Ethnic profiling in conflict reporting often involves oversimplification of complex issues, highlighting differences and divisions among conflicting groups, and assigning blame unilaterally, among other issues (Dovidio et al., 2020). This type of reporting would not only misrepresent the realities of conflicts but also contributes to fuelling tensions and perpetuating cycles of violence. It can lead to the reinforcement of prejudices, spread of misinformation, and distortion of public opinion, thereby hindering peace building and conflict resolution efforts.

While there is a body of literature on the role of the media in conflict reporting and peace journalism in Nigeria (Ibrahim, 2018; Mogekwu, 2011), there is limited research on readers' perception of ethnic profiling in crime-related newspaper reportage in Nigeria. In order to fill the existing gap, this study, therefore, investigates the perception of ethnic profiling in crime- related reportage among Ilorin residents.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the factors influencing ethnic profiling by Nigerian newspapers in crime-related reportage among Ilorin residents.
2. To assess the consequences of ethnic profiling by Nigerian newspapers in crime-related reportage among Ilorin residents.
3. To investigate strategies for combating ethnic profiling by Nigerian newspapers in crime-related reportage among Ilorin residents.

Research Questions

1. What are the factors influencing ethnic profiling by Nigerian newspapers in crime-related reportage among Ilorin residents?
2. What are the consequences of ethnic profiling by Nigerian newspapers in crime-related reportage among Ilorin residents?
3. What are the strategies for combating ethnic profiling by Nigerian newspapers in crime-related reportage among Ilorin residents?

Literature Review

Newspaper is a longstanding method of conveying information to a wide audience in a written format. The use of written manuscripts to disseminate information dates back to ancient times, and it has evolved over the centuries with advancements in printing technology (Kathuria & Subramanian, 2016), despite the growth of digital technology. Newspaper remains a vital component of modern media landscapes as it offers a tangible and durable format that can be conveniently shared and stored by readers, making it an effective tool for

conveying information over time. Additionally, newspaper has a unique ability to present information in a well-structured and easily navigable manner, as opposed to the more chaotic and unstructured nature of digital media (Mugambi & Chege, 2016).

Newspaper has been an integral part of Nigeria's media landscape since the colonial era. Newspapers like and *The Guardian* have a rich history of reporting on various topics, including crime (Ogunnubi & Oso, 2021). Even with the advent of digital media, newspaper continues to be a primary source of news for many Nigerians, especially in rural areas with limited access to the internet and technology. To confirm the potency of Newspaper, the study conducted by (Ogunnubi & Oso, 2021) reveals that print media remains a trusted source of information for a significant portion of the Nigerian population.

Newspapers provide a reliable and credible source of news to the public, which enables people to understand different perspectives of crimes and criminality in the society. In-depth and investigative reporting by journalists can help shed light on the root causes of crimes, the parties involved, and potential solutions. By presenting well-researched reports, newspapers can help the public to gain a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics of crimes in Nigeria.

Newspapers afford readers opportunity to read, and refer back to physical copies of newspaper edition as they desire. Nigeria has a long and illustrious history of newspaper, with the establishment of the first newspaper, *Iwe Irohin fun awon ara Egba ati Yoruba* meaning the newspaper for the reading pleasure of the Egbas and Yoruba in 1859 during British colonial rule (Amarikwa & Ayoade, 2015). By the early 20th century, several newspapers were in circulation, serving various regions and communities across the country.

Newspaper acts as a watchdog that holds stakeholders accountable for their actions during conflicts. Journalists, through their reporting, can expose human rights abuses, corruption, and misinformation, ensuring that perpetrators are held responsible for their actions (Amaso & Nwakor, 2014). Such reporting helps to promote accountability and transparency that is critical for building peace and reconciliation in conflict-affected communities.

The impact of exposure to crime in newspaper cannot be exaggerated. Accurate and unbiased reporting can promote public awareness, empathy, and solidarity with those affected by crime. It can foster a sense of national unity and encourage

citizens to support peace building efforts (Adebanwi & Obadare, 2011). Objective and in-depth reports can create awareness of the realities of conflicts, helping the public gain a better understanding of the situation.

On the other hand, biased or sensationalized reporting can exacerbate tensions, incite violence, and perpetuate ethnic profiling. When print media succumbs to sensationalism or propaganda, they may inadvertently fuel further conflict rather than promoting understanding and resolution. Moreover, irresponsible reporting may lead to the misinterpretation of facts and contribute to polarization, obscuring the truth about conflict issues (Amaso & Nwakor, 2014).

Stereotyping is the act of categorizing people, groups, or communities with a particular attributes, often negative, based on demography such as race, gender, class, religion, or age. The process of stereotyping is reinforced by a lack of diverse representation in media, leading to incomplete, inaccurate, and biased narratives. Stereotyping in journalism is a pervasive phenomenon that has been studied in different media forms, including news articles, photojournalism, and news reporting (Bertrand & Hughes, 2020).

Stereotypes may manifest in different ways in journalism. One such way is through language, with journalists using specific words or phrases that perpetuate biases or stereotypes of a particular ethnic group. For example, Bertrand and Hughes (2020) argue that some media outlets tend to refer to people of colour as minorities, perpetuating the notion of white as superior. Similarly, the language used in addressing immigrants may enforce the idea of a negative perception of the group, demonizing them as non-human or constructing stories around their foreignness. Another way stereotypes manifest is through oversimplification of complex issues, leading to superficial and unbalanced perspectives in the reportage. This approach may set up stereotypes that position certain ethnic groups as problematic or different, reinforcing biases that entrench unequal systems (Van Dijk, 2015).

Stereotyping affects different groups differently, exposing them to unfair treatment and disadvantage. For example, women may be stereotyped as weak, emotional, or overly concerned with aesthetics, which can curtail their opportunities in society. Similarly, an ethnic group may be stereotyped or profiled as aggressive or unintelligent, leading to marginalization and social exclusion. Journalists may unconsciously or consciously apply these stereotypes of profiling

in their reportage, leading to narratives that strengthen prejudices and biases already present in society.

In journalistic practice, stereotyping may arise from the reporter's personal attitudes, experiences, or interactions with sources. For example, journalists may have unconscious biases towards certain groups, leading to the perpetuation of stereotypes. Similarly, the pressures of the news cycle or media outfits may limit journalists' capacity to delve deeper into issues, leading to simplification of narratives and the reinforcement of stereotypes (Geraghty, 2016). The media organizations' structure and composition may also contribute to stereotyping in journalism. Stereotypes in journalism are damaging to society, leading to increased fear, division, and exclusion.

It is important to note that reporting crime by the print media is not devoid of some challenges and risks. These challenges hinder the print media's ability to provide objective and accurate information. The challenges and risks include:

1. Security Risks: Journalists often face significant security risks while reporting on conflicts in Nigeria, particularly in regions affected by insurgency and violence. Threats from armed groups and government forces can lead to self-censorship and restricted access to conflict zones, hindering journalists' ability to report comprehensively (Amaso & Nwakor, 2014). Journalists may be targeted, attacked, or killed while reporting in conflict zones. The risk of abduction or detention by armed groups also limits the freedom of journalists to report on conflict issues.
2. Lack of Resources: Many media organizations in Nigeria struggle with limited resources, leading to reduced coverage of conflict zones and reliance on secondary sources, which may lack accuracy or neutrality (Watkins, 2018). It is difficult to access remote conflict-prone regions or to afford the cost of reporting. As a result, conflict reporting is often confined to urban areas, and there is insufficient coverage of the rural areas where most conflict occurs. Furthermore, financial constraints may lead media outlets to prioritize sensationalized news over in-depth reporting that contributes to the amplification of conflict.
3. Political Interference: The Nigerian government's influence on the media through regulatory bodies can lead to censorship, which can pressure journalists to align their reporting with official narratives, potentially leading to biased coverage. The government may also use legal instruments to harass journalists or media outlets that are critical of its policies or actions

(Adebanwi & Obadare, 2011). The government may restrict access to conflict-prone areas to limit the flow of information.

4. Stereotyping and Biases: Print media can, sometimes, perpetuate stereotypes and biases in reporting conflict issues. These stereotypes may be based on ethnic, religious, or regional affiliations, and they can contribute to further marginalization of certain groups and communities (Watkins, 2018). Journalists' biases and preconceptions can lead to the framing of reports in ways that reinforce existing prejudices and stereotypes. This kind of reporting undermines the efforts to resolve conflicts by prolonging divisive rather than unifying narratives.
5. Lack of Training: Some journalists may lack adequate training in conflict reporting, leading to inaccuracies or misunderstandings in their coverage. Reporting conflict requires a specific set of skills, including the ability to extract information from diverse sources and the capacity to contextualize the information in a conflict-prone area (Watkins, 2018). Journalists may miss important details and nuances of conflict issues without the necessary training, which hinders their ability to report comprehensively and objectively.

Theoretical Underpinning

Social identity theory is considered appropriate to put this discourse in perspective. Social Identity Theory (SIT): proposed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979), has been one of the foundational theories in understanding the dynamics of intergroup relations and the formation of social identities. This theory offers valuable insights into how individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups, influencing their attitudes, behaviours, and self-concept. The theory's core concepts of in-group favouritism and out-group derogation have been widely studied and applied in various fields, including social psychology, sociology, and communication studies. The core proposition of SIT is the recognition that individuals do not only possess personal identities but also belong to social groups that significantly contribute to their self-concept (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Tajfel and Turner posit that social identity emerges from the process of categorizing oneself as a member of specific social groups, such as ethnicity, religion, nationality, or even sports teams. These group affiliations play a vital role in shaping a person's sense of self and self-esteem. According to the theory, individuals tend to view members of their own social group (in-group) more favourably and positively distinguish them from members of other groups (out-groups). This intergroup categorization leads to the development of distinct social identities that can impact attitudes and behaviours towards both in-group and out-group members. Nigerian newspapers and their journalists are enjoined to

always shun any form of bias in their reportage as this will make readers identify a particular ethnic group (to whom the newspapers are biased about) in negative light. Apart from the fact that ethic profiling by the newspapers is bad journalism, it is also capable of fuelling crisis in crisis prone countries like Nigeria. Journalists ought to be patriotic and play down on ethnicity in their reportage. Journalists should be more responsible and responsive enough to promote one Nigeria rather than promoting ethnicity. They should be open to the fact that any ethnic group and tribe could engage in crime and therefore, should not profile and label any ethnic group as criminal minded. Crime commitment is not determined by ethnicity but based on individuals to individuals. Moreover, by recognizing the impact of social identities on reporting, media practitioners can strive to adopt more responsible and inclusive practices to mitigate the perpetuation of stereotypes and biases.

Method of study

The research method adopted in this study is descriptive survey design. The population of this study were the residents of Ilorin West Local Government Area in Kwara State. According to Bako, et al. (2020), the projected population of Ilorin West Local Government is 515,674. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 200 respondents; the size of 200 was derived through the Taro Yamane`s (1967) statistical formula. Out of the 200 copies of questionnaire distributed to residents of Ilorin West Local government, 190 (representing 95%) were well filled, 4 (representing 2%) was not well filled, while 6 (representing 3%) was not returned. The 95% that was well filled were used for analysis.

Questionnaire was used as the instrument for collecting data for this study. The questionnairecomprised of two sections: Section A deals with information related to the objectives of the study, while Section B solicits information about the demography of the respondents. The instrument was content validated by three experts in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin and the experts' observations were incorporated into the final draft of the instrument. To ensure that the research instrument was valid, 20 copies were administered on 20 residents of Malete in Moro local government area of Kwara State. After two weeks, the instrument was re-tested on the same set of respondents. Thereafter, their responses were subjected to analysis using Cronbach Alpha. The reliability coefficient of 0.80 was observed. This shows that the instrument is reliable. The researchers, with the aid of two research assistants, personally distributed 200 copies of the questionnaire to the selected residents of Ilorin metropolis. The data were

analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and data presentation was done using simple percentages and frequency tables.

Results

RQ1: What are the factors influencing ethnic profiling by Nigerian newspapers in crime-related reportage among Ilorin residents?

Table 1: Factors influencing ethnic profiling by Nigerian newspapers in crime-related reportage among Ilorin residents

S/N	Statements	SA	A	SD	D	Total
1	Ethnicity plays a role in the way crimes are reported in Kwara State	32 (17%)	96 (51%)	16 (8%)	46 (24%)	190 (100%)
2	Sensationalism in media reportage is the main factor influencing ethnic profiling of crime suspects in Kwara State	36 (19%)	84 (44%)	28 (15%)	42 (22%)	190 (100%)
3	Bias from law enforcement agencies is a major factor influencing ethnic profiling of crime suspects in Kwara State	30 (16%)	90 (47%)	18 (10%)	52 (27%)	190 (100%)
4	Stereotyping of certain ethnic groups as being more prone to criminal activity contributes to ethnic profiling in media reportage in Kwara State	34 (18%)	98 (51%)	22 (11%)	36 (20%)	190 (100%)
5	Lack of diversity in media ownership and staffing contributes to ethnic profiling in criminal related reportage in Kwara State	26 (14%)	104 (55%)	20 (10%)	40 (21%)	190 (100%)

The results of the analyses in Table 1 showed that 32 (17%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 96 (51%) of the respondents agreed, 16 (8%) of the respondents strongly disagreed while 46 (24%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that ethnicity plays a role in the way crimes are reported in Kwara State. On the statement "Sensationalism in media reportage is the main factor influencing ethnic profiling of crime suspects in Kwara State", 36 (19%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 84 (44%) of the respondents agreed, 28 (15%) of the respondents strongly disagreed while 42 (22%) of the respondents disagreed. On the statement "*Biased from law enforcement agencies is a major factor influencing ethnic profiling of crime suspects in Kwara State*", 30 (16%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 90 (47%) of the respondents agreed, 18 (10%) of the respondents strongly disagreed while 52 (27%) of the respondents disagreed. On the statement "*Stereotyping of certain ethnic groups as being more prone to criminal activity contributes to ethnic profiling in media reportage in Kwara State*",34 (18%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 98 (51%) of the respondents agreed, 22 (11%) of the respondents strongly disagreed while 38 (20%) of the

respondents disagreed. On the statement "*Lack of diversity in media ownership and staffing contributes to ethnic profiling in criminal related reportage in Kwara State*", 26 (14%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 104 (55%) of the respondents agreed, 20 (10%) of the respondents strongly disagreed while 40 (21%) of the respondents disagreed.

Thus, from the results above, it could be deduced that there are several factors influencing ethnic profiling in crime-related reportage among Kwara State residents which include ethnicity, sensationalism, bias from law enforcement agencies, stereotyping and lack of diversity in media ownership. However, majority of the respondents agreed that stereotyping of certain ethnic groups as being more prone to criminal activity is the major factor that contributes to ethnic profiling in media reportage in Kwara State.

RQ2: What are the consequences of ethnic profiling by Nigerian newspapers in crime-related reportage among Ilorin residents?

Table 2: Consequences of ethnic profiling by Nigerian newspapers in crime-related reportage among Ilorin residents

S/N	Statements	SA	A	SD	D	Total
6	Ethnic profiling in media reportage can lead to increased tension and conflict between different ethnic groups in Kwara State	22 (12%)	102 (54%)	18 (9%)	48 (25%)	190 (100%)
7	Ethnic profiling can lead to innocent people being targeted by law enforcement agencies in Kwara State	28 (15%)	98 (51%)	24 (13%)	40 (21%)	190 (100%)
8	Ethnic profiling can lead to decreased distrust between ethnic groups and law enforcement agencies in Kwara State	28 (14%)	108 (57%)	26 (14%)	28 (15%)	190 (100%)
9	Ethnic profiling can lead to negative stereotypes and prejudice towards certain ethnic groups in Kwara State	30 (16%)	100 (52%)	24 (13%)	36 (19%)	190 (100%)
10	Ethnic profiling can lead to a decrease in overall public safety in Kwara State	32 (17%)	96 (50%)	24 (13%)	38 (20%)	190 (100%)

The results in Table 2 showed that, on the statement "*Ethnic profiling in media reportage can lead to increased tension and conflict between different ethnic*

groups in Kwara State", 22 (12%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 102 (54%) of the respondents agreed, 18 (9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed while 48 (25%) of the respondents disagreed. On the statement "*Ethnic profiling can lead to innocent people being targeted by law enforcement agencies in Kwara State*", 28 (15%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 98 (51%) of the respondents agreed, 24 (13%) of the respondents strongly disagreed while 40 (21%) of the respondents disagreed. On the statement "*Ethnic profiling can lead to decreased distrust between ethnic groups and law enforcement agencies in Kwara State*", 28 (14%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 108 (57%) of the respondents agreed, 26 (14%) of the respondents strongly disagreed while 28 (15%) of the respondents disagreed. On the statement "*Ethnic profiling can lead to negative stereotypes and prejudice towards certain ethnic groups in Kwara State*", 30 (16%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 100 (52%) of the respondents agreed, 24 (13%) of the respondents strongly disagreed while 36 (19%) of the respondents disagreed. On the statement "*Ethnic profiling can lead to a decrease in overall public safety in Kwara State*", 32 (17%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 96 (50%) of the respondents agreed, 24 (13%) of the respondents strongly disagreed while 38 (20%) of the respondents disagreed. Thus, from the results above, it could be deduced that the majority of the respondents agreed that the major consequence of ethnic profiling in crime-related reportage among Ilorin residents is that ethnic profiling can lead to decreased distrust between ethnic groups and law enforcement agencies in Kwara State.

RQ 3: What are the strategies for combating ethnic profiling in criminal related reportage among Kwara State residents?

Table 3: Strategies for combating ethnic profiling by Nigerian newspapers in crime-related reportage among Kwara State residents

S/N	Statements	SA	A	SD	D	Total
11	Increasing diversity in media ownership and staffing can combat ethnic profiling in crime-related reportage in Kwara State	16 (8%)	112 (59%)	28 (15%)	34 (18%)	190 (100%)
12	Providing more training for law enforcement agencies on understanding and combating ethnic profiling can be an effective strategy in Kwara State	30 (16%)	110 (58%)	18 (9%)	32 (17%)	190 (100%)
13	Encouraging responsible and unbiased reporting from media outlets in Kwara State can combat ethnic profiling in crimine-related reportage	36 (19%)	104 (55%)	22 (11%)	28 (15%)	190 (100%)
14	Ensuring that data on crimes and suspects	24	102	18	46	190

	are reported in a fair and unbiased manner can be an effective strategy to combat ethnic profiling in Kwara State	(13%)	(54%)	(9%)	(24%)	(100%)
15	Encouraging greater collaboration and communication between different ethnic groups and law enforcement agencies in Kwara State can be a strategy to combat ethnic profiling	34 (18%)	108 (57%)	26 (14%)	22 (11%)	190 (100%)

The results of the analyses in Table 3 revealed that, on the statement "*Increasing diversity in media ownership and staffing can combat ethnic profiling in criminal related reportage in Kwara State*", 16 (8%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 112 (59%) of the respondents agreed, 28 (15%) of the respondents strongly disagreed while 34 (18%) of the respondents disagreed. On the statement "*Providing more training for law enforcement agencies on understanding and combating ethnic profiling can be an effective strategy in Kwara State*",30 (16%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 110 (58%) of the respondents agreed, 18 (9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed while 32 (17%) of the respondents disagreed. On the statement "*Encouraging responsible and unbiased reporting from media outlets in Kwara State can combat ethnic profiling in criminal related reportage*",36 (19%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 104 (55%) of the respondents agreed, 22 (11%) of the respondents strongly disagreed while 28 (15%) of the respondents disagreed. On the statement "*Ensuring that data on crimes and suspects are reported in a fair and unbiased manner can be an effective strategy to combat ethnic profiling in Kwara State*", 24 (13%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 102 (54%) of the respondents agreed, 18 (9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed while 46 (24%) of the respondents disagreed. On the statement "*Encouraging greater collaboration and communication between different ethnic groups and law enforcement agencies in Kwara State can be a strategy to combat ethnic profiling*",34 (18%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 108 (57%) of the respondents agreed, 26 (14%) of the respondents strongly disagreed while 22 (11%) of the respondents disagreed. Thus, from the results above, it could be deduced that the majority of the respondents agreed that encouraging greater collaboration and communication between different ethnic groups and law enforcement agencies in Kwara State is the major strategy for combating ethnic profiling by Nigerian newspapers in crime-related reportage among Ilorin residents.

Discussion

The demographic characteristics of the respondents showed that116 (61%) of the respondents were male while 74 (39%) of the respondents were female. This

means that majority of the respondents are male. 51 (27%) of the respondents were below the age of 20 years, 87 (46%) of the respondents were within the age of 21 – 26 years while 52 (27%) of the respondents were within the age of 26-30 years. This means that respondents within the age of 21-26 have the highest number of respondents.128 (67%) of the respondents were single while 62 (33%) of the respondents were married. This shows that most of the respondents were not married. 153 (81%) of the respondents were Muslims, while 37 (19%) of the respondents were Christians. This means Muslim respondents are more in number than the Christian respondents.

RQ1: What are the factors influencing ethnic profiling by Nigerian newspapers in crime-related reportage among Ilorin residents?

The study revealed that several factors such as ethnicity, sensationalism, and bias from law enforcement agencies, stereotyping and lack of diversity in media ownership influence ethnic profiling in crime-related Nigerian newspaper reportage. This above finding is in tandem with the findings of Vogel & Dancygier (2019) who examined ethnic profiling in Germany: A Critical Review of Empirical Studies. According to Vogel & Dancygier (2019), ethnic profiling is a common practice in Germany's law enforcement, with minorities being the primary targets. It leads to feelings of injustice and mistrust, which negatively impact the relationship between racial minorities and the criminal justice system. It is observed in Nigeria that journalists in some cases also lend themselves to be used by the police to blacklist some ethnic groups. An instance of how they frame a particular ethnic group as criminally-minded, the police public relations officers, together with reporters, while interviewing suspects, in some cases, play up on ethnicity by asking for the suspects' tribe instead of concentrating on the substance of the crime. When the news is disseminated, readers will be discussing the news story from the point of ethnicity as presented to them by the news makers rather than the substance and gravity of the offence. This is perhaps, why it is difficult for successive government to tackle insecurity, kidnapping and some other crimes headlong. The focus of the news should shift to solution journalism rather than profiling a particular ethnic negatively. However, contrary to the finding of this study which adduced sensationalism, and bias from law enforcement agencies as part of the factors for ethnic profiling, Nwuneli and Olimma (2015) found that the selected newspapers in their study were not over sensational, were balanced and highly objective in their reportage.

RQ2: What are the consequences of ethnic profiling by Nigerian newspapers in crime-related reportage among Ilorin residents?

Furthermore, the study revealed that the major consequence of ethnic profiling by Nigerian newspapers in crime-related reportage is that it leads to decreased distrust between ethnic groups and law enforcement agencies; it leads to increase tension and conflict between ethnic groups and can also endanger public safety. Similarly, in the study conducted by Lasch (2014) on ethnic profiling and the NYPD's stop and Frisk Policy and Verdicchio (2014) on ethnic profiling in law enforcement: A qualitative study of minority youths experience in Sweden, respondents claimed that feelings of injustice, mistrust, and alienation, negatively impacted their relationships with the local community and law enforcement agents. The two separate studies emphasised that ethnic profiling leads to minority mistrust of law enforcement agencies. More so, Nigerian newspaper should realise that their integrity is at stake for playing down on any ethnic group. If the public notices high level of negative framing of certain ethnic or religious group by the newspapers, the public will count the newspaper as not credible source for information. In view of this, the law enforcement agency as well as journalists ought to be very careful in the manner at which they frame their news stories so as not to offend any ethnic group especially in Nigeria with multi ethnics. The principles of fairness and balance should be priority of both law enforcement agencies and journalists in their reportage. The management of media houses should understand that in the course of performing their tripartite functions of information, education, entertainment, there is need to be sure that they do not fuel hatred among different ethnic groups that make up Nigeria.

RQ 3: What are the strategies for combating ethnic profiling by Nigerian newspapers in crime-related reportage among Ilorin residents?

Further, the study revealed that strategies for combating ethnic profiling in crime-related reportage by Nigerian newspapers should be to encourage greater collaboration and communication between different ethnic groups and law enforcement agencies. Moreover, diversity in media ownership, encouragement of responsible and unbiased reporting from media outlets and unbiased reportage of crime-related story can combat ethnic profiling in crime-related reportage among Nigerian newspapers. This finding is in line with the major tenet of social responsibility theory that advocates that newspapers should be socially responsible and not be an agent of causing problems in the society. Newspapers should always be sensitive to reportage which will fuel ethnicity and other factors

that could make the public to resort to crisis as a result of unfair, unbalanced and biased reportage.

Recommendations

The regulatory bodies in print media such as the Nigeria Guild of Editors and the Nigerian Union of Journalists should organise enlightenment workshops for journalists on the negative impacts of ethnic profiling in criminal related reportage. To reduce the possibility of ethnic profiling in criminal related reportage, there should be efforts to promote diversity in media ownership and staffing. The Federal and State governments should encourage greater collaboration and communication among different ethnic groups and law enforcement agencies. This will help to build trust and reduce prejudices and stereotypes. To ensure that media organisations report crimes in a more objective and unbiased manner, the media should make efforts to empathize with victims and suspects of crimes. This will help to create a more balanced reportage that does not perpetuate stereotypes and prejudices. Government should implement regulations that prohibit the use of ethnic profiling in criminal related reportage. For journalism to exist as a critical instrument for promoting inclusivity, equity, and social justice in society as it ought to be, journalists and media organizations should deliberately prioritize diverse representation, analyze their reporting for undue ethnic profiling/stereotypes, and promote objective reporting (Bertrand & Hughes, 2020). Media outlets should offer training opportunities to their employees, promoting awareness about the harm of stereotypes and the importance of inclusive representation (Geraghty, 2016).

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