Perceived Institutional Authority and Audience Acceptance of Radio Stations' Conflict Resolution Programmes among Radio Listeners in Ibadan

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Abstract

The growing adoption of radio as a tool for resolving interpersonal and community conflicts in Nigeria has led to questions about the legitimacy of the radio institutions and acceptance of the mediation outcomes. This study investigated perceived institutional authority and audience acceptance of radio stations' conflict resolution programmes among listeners in Ibadan, Nigeria. The objectives were to evaluate listeners' exposure to conflict resolution programmes, explore audience perception of institutional authority, determine their acceptance, and analyse the relationship between perceived institutional authority and audience acceptance. A mixed-method design was used, and 367 valid survey responses were gathered using multi-stage sampling, along with 12 participants who were purposively selected for in-depth interviews. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, simple linear regression and thematic analysis. The regression analysis used perceived institutional authority as the predictor variable and audience acceptance as the outcome variable. The study found that the respondents were moderately exposed to radio conflict resolution programmes. Lack of perceived institutional authority was low, and respondents considered radio stations as legitimate and credible mediators. Findings showed that perceived institutional authority was strongly positively and significantly related with audience acceptance ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.05$) and accounted for 50% of the variance in audience acceptance. The study recommended that radio stations should enhance listener engagement through active follow-up mechanisms for mediated cases.

Keywords: Institutional authority, audience acceptance, radio conflict resolution, media credibility, conflict mediation

Introduction

Conflict resolution process in Nigeria has always been rooted in recognised social and institutional power, including formal legal systems, traditional authorities, religious figures and community elders. These institutions are recognized either by law or by custom. The Yoruba sociocultural context of southwestern Nigeria, for instance, is characterized by dispute resolu-

tion that is rooted in the power of the palace of the *Obas*, the chiefs, and community leaders and emphasizes reconciliation and restorative justice over adversarial adjudication. However, contemporary studies suggest that formal justice systems are increasingly overburdened, costly, and slow, limiting access for ordinary citizens and encouraging recourse to informal and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms (Iseh, 2020). This institutional void has opened up opportunities for non-traditional players, such as the broadcast media, to play a more important role in conflict resolution.

In this changing communication landscape, radio stations in Nigeria have launched mediation programmes as an alternative to formal courts and tribunals, and as a forum for individuals and groups to submit their disputes and obtain mediation responses on air. Radio mediation is a practice that has been institutionalised for decades (Abakli-Zakli, 2025). Programmes like *Brekete Family* on Human Rights Radio 101.1 FM have been embraced nationally as dispute mediation forums in Nigeria (Campbell, 2018). In Ibadan, there are similar programmes such as *Kokoro Alate* on Agidigbo 88.7 FM and *Let's Talk About It* on Fresh FM 105.9, which are seen as mediators of interpersonal, familial and community conflicts. Despite their popularity, these programmes are not conducted under the auspices of the formal judicial system, raising important questions about the legitimacy and authority that supports audience acceptance.

Radio stations are not constitutionally established dispute arbiters, yet they are increasingly playing quasi-judicial functions, which is not the case with formal legal or traditional institutions. This leads to important issues of why people file claims on these radio stations, agree to mediated verdicts, and believe in their legitimacy. The empirical evidence indicates that participation is not forced, but is influenced by perceptions of institutional authority and trust. Abdullahi and Olanase (2024), in their study on *Kokoro Alate*, averred that although the programme had an impact on conflict management awareness, participation was limited by the

lack of confidence in the institutional legitimacy and the binding force of its outcomes. This means that in radio mediated conflict resolution, the content is not the only thing that matters, but the credibility of the institution is also important.

This argument fits into the larger communication scholarship that situates institutional credibility as a key part of the effects of the media. Trust in media institutions is a strong driver of engagement and acceptance of information, especially when institutions are subject to contestation (Newman et al., 2024). Likewise, Slavík et al. (2025) showed that the audiences use institutional trust as a cognitive shorthand to assess the credibility of the message, taking into account the institutional credibility of the producing organisation. Beyond exposure effects, Zhang et al. (2025) also showed that perceived institutional authority plays an important role in predicting behavioural compliance with mediated messages.

Existing studies carried out in Nigeria attest to the influence of institutional perception on radio audience response, but are mostly on radio station credibility in general rather than specifically on the context of conflict resolution. Ojebuyi and Ogunkunle (2019) found that private radio stations are perceived to be more credible and socially responsible than public radio stations. Their analysis, however, does not apply to specialised conflict resolution programming, where the stakes of trust and legitimacy are much higher. The difference is critical because the credibility of the general media exists in a fairly low-stakes arena in which audiences judge stations on entertainment, news accuracy or programming quality. Conflict resolution programming, on the other hand, is situated in a high stakes social arena, where the results have a direct impact on the processes, relationships and livelihoods of the parties in conflict. Here, audience are not just passive consumers of content; they judge the institutional authority of the mediating radio station as a valid mediator of conflicts. This trust is different,

however, from the trust that audiences demonstrate in mediated outcomes in contexts other than conflict, such as in general broadcasting or health communication (Folger et al., 2021).

Studies on radio conflict resolution programmes are still very limited and often emphasize the effectiveness of the programme over institutional authority. In the study of community radio and peacebuilding in Ife–Modakeke, Emovwodo et al. (2024) concluded that radio programming is a factor that helps mitigate conflict. The study argued that the success of these efforts is more a matter of audience engagement with the content than of institutional legitimacy; however, the study did not explain why audiences trust and act on radio-mediated conflict resolutions. Nkwam-Uwaoma et al. (2021) also revealed that attitudinal change through radio programming alone is moderate, implying that attitudinal change cannot occur without other factors such as trust and institutional perception. In the context of Africa as a whole, Danso et al. (2024) also found that the effectiveness of broadcast media in resolving conflicts is greatly influenced by institutional credibility, ownership and editorial independence. While such contributions have been made, there remains a critical gap. Few studies have systematically examined the relationship between perceived institutional authority and the acceptance of radio conflict resolution outcomes, especially in urban settings like Ibadan. This study fills the gap by exploring the link between perceived institutional authority and audience acceptance of radio stations' conflict resolution programmes among radio listeners in Ibadan, Nigeria.

The study is based on the Institutional Theory and Source Credibility Theory. Institutional Theory can be used to understand how institutions become recognised as legitimate actors in society and thus how decisions made by these institutions are accepted by the public (Scott, 2014). In this view, radio stations can be perceived as new quasi-institutional actors whose authority to mediate conflict is socially negotiated and not legally defined. In addition, the Source Credibility theory suggests that acceptance of any message is influenced by the send-

er's perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and reliability (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). In the context of this study, audience's acceptance of mediated conflict outcomes is linked to the perceived institutional legitimacy of the radio station, as well as the credibility of the radio station's presenters for the mediation process. These theories can be combined to explain the audience's acceptance of radio mediated conflict resolution in terms of perceived institutional authority and source credibility. The study aimed to achieve four objectives which were to explore the extent of the audience exposure to conflict resolution programmes, determine the audience's perceived institutional authority of radio stations broadcasting conflict resolution programmes, determine the extent of audience acceptance of the outcomes of the conflict resolution programmes, and examine the relationship between perceived institutional authority of radio stations broadcasting conflict resolution programmes and the extent of audience acceptance of the outcomes of the conflict resolution programmes.

Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-method design which combined survey and in-depth interviews. The survey measured the relationships between the various variables, while the in-depth interview explored audience interpretation and experience. The study was carried out in Ibadan; adult radio listeners (18 years and above) were the target groups. The population was treated as large and near-infinite, as the exact number of active radio listeners was unknown despite Ibadan's estimated population of 3.6 million (Businessday, 2024).

A sample of 400 respondents were selected using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) guidelines for large populations. Although Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table recommends a minimum sample size of 384 for large populations, this study adopted 400 respondents to account for potential attrition, incomplete responses, and non-returns. This slight upward adjustment is a common methodological practice in survey research, as it ensures that the final usable sample

meets or exceeds the recommended threshold, thereby strengthening the reliability and validity of the findings (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Inclusion criteria required respondents to be adult residents, regular radio listeners (at least three times weekly), and aware of at least one conflict resolution programme on Ibadan radio stations. The study adopted a multi-stage sampling design in order to have sufficient coverage of the eleven Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Ibadan: Ibadan North, Ibadan North-East, Ibadan North-West, Ibadan South-East, Ibadan South-West, Akinyele, Egbeda, Ido, Lagelu, Ona-Ara and Oluyole. The list of LGAs was made at the first stage. In the second phase, proportionate allocation was used in accordance with the population of each LGA of adults according to the reports of the National Population Commission and the Oyo State Bureau of Statistics (2023). Larger LGAs like Ibadan North, which has an estimated adult population of 350,000, and Egbeda, which has an estimated adult population of 320,000, were allocated a higher number of copies of questionnaire, whereas smaller LGAs like Ona-Ara, with an estimated adult population of less than 200,000 and Ido, with an estimated adult population of less than 200,000, were allocated fewer copies of questionnaire.

As a result, 70 copies of questionnaire were administered in Ibadan North while 15 copies were administered in Ona-Ara, thus constituting four hundred respondents. In the third stage, systematic random sampling was done to select a ward in each LGA, and within the ward, respondents were selected through systematic random sampling. To ensure field transparency and replicability, the study identified specific communities within each LGA where questionnaires were distributed. These included Bodija and Agbowo in Ibadan North, Mokola and Yemetu in Ibadan North- West, Beere and Oje in Ibadan North-East, Orita-Aperin and Mapo in Ibadan South- East, Ring Road and Challenge in Ibadan South-West, Moniya in Akinyele, Alakia and Adegbayi in Egbeda, Apata in Ido, Ejioku in Lagelu, Olorunsogo in Ona-Ara, and Idi-Ayunre in Oluyole. Every fourth household member was approached in every community

at central gathering points such as markets, motor parks, and community centres until the needed quota was achieved by the LGA. This was done to assure geographical equity, reduce biasness and create a sample that represented the heterogeneous Ibadan population adequately.

For the qualitative strand, 12 in-depth interview participants were purposively selected based on regular listenership and engagement with conflict resolution programmes, which include *Kokoro Alate* on Agidigbo 88.7 FM, *Let's Talk About It* on Fresh FM 105.9, and selected programmes on BCOS Oluyole FM, FRCN Premier FM, and Splash FM 105.5.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and an interview guide. The questionnaire, designed on a five-point Likert scale, was validated by five experts in mass communication and conflict studies, with a pilot test among 40 respondents yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82. The interview guide comprised 14 questions, with sessions lasting 45–75 minutes, audio-recorded with participants' consent in English or Yoruba. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, including Pearson's correlation and multiple regression. Qualitative data were analysed thematically. Ethical standards were maintained throughout, with informed consent obtained, participation voluntary, confidentiality ensured through anonymised identifiers, and participants free to withdraw at any stage. The study strictly adhered to the ethical principles governing social science research, including respect for participants' autonomy, confidentiality, and protection from harm.

Results

Quantitative Data Analysis, Interpretation and Presentations

A total of 400 copies of questionnaires were distributed among the respondents out of which 367 copies were retrieved and found usable (91.75% return rate). 33 copies (8.25%) were

found to not returned or improperly filled. The analysis is therefore based on the 367 copies of questionnaire that were properly filled.

Table 1: Exposure to Radio Conflict Resolution Programmes

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
I regularly listen to radio programmes that resolve conflicts between people.	68	102	74	78	45	3.18	1.31	Accepted
I am aware of conflict resolution programmes on radio stations in Ibadan.	85	120	68	56	38	3.43	1.24	Accepted
I listen to such programmes at least once a week.	60	95	80	82	50	3.02	1.33	Accepted
I have heard programmes where disputes were resolved on air.	78	110	72	65	42	3.33	1.27	Accepted
I often follow up conflict cases discussed on radio stations.	55	88	85	82	57	2.95	1.34	Rejected
Mean of means			***3.18***					

Source: Field Work (2026)

Data in table 1 indicates an overall moderate level of exposure with the majority of items having mean scores above the decision benchmark of 3.00 and thus were accepted. It was found that respondents were aware of difference conflict resolution programmes and they reported listening and hearing occasional conflict resolution programmes on radio stations. One of the items "I often follow up conflict cases discussed on radio stations" however, was rejected with a mean score below 3.00, meaning that while respondents listen to these programmes, they do not follow up on the cases of conflict. This means that the exposure is more passive than active, suggesting that listeners are not actively engaged in the content or monitoring for effects.

Table 2: Perceived Institutional Authority on Radio Stations Conflict Resolution Programmes

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
Radio stations are credible institutions for resolving conflicts.	92	140	60	45	30	3.60	1.19	Accepted
I believe radio stations have the authority to mediate disputes effectively.	80	135	70	52	30	3.49	1.21	Accepted
Decisions made on radio conflict resolution programmes are trustworthy.	78	128	75	55	31	3.42	1.23	Accepted
I see radio stations as legitimate platforms for settling disputes.	95	132	68	45	27	3.60	1.18	Accepted
I believe people should obey resolutions reached on radio programmes	88	130	72	50	27	3.52	1.20	Accepted
Mean of means			***3.53***					

Source: Field Work (2026)

Table 2 shows show that the perceived authority is high because all the items have mean values greater than the benchmark of 3.00 and were therefore accepted. Overall, respondents were generally in agreement that radio stations can be trusted, credible, and legitimate institutions that can effectively mediate conflicts. The uniformity of high mean scores in all items provides a strong degree of confidence in the authority of the radio stations, indicating a high degree of institutional legitimacy and moral weight of the radio stations' conflict resolution processes. This means that radio stations are not just perceived as entertainment and information providers but as "socially recognised mediators in conflict situations.

Table 3: Audience Acceptance of Radio Conflict Resolution

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
I accept the outcomes of conflicts resolved on radio programmes.	72	120	78	62	35	3.36	1.22	Accepted
I am willing to allow my dispute to be resolved on radio if necessary.	60	110	85	70	42	3.10	1.28	Accepted
I trust the fairness of conflict resolution processes on radio.	75	125	72	55	40	3.37	1.23	Accepted
I would recommend radio conflict resolution programmes to others.	90	128	70	45	34	3.53	1.19	Accepted
I believe radio-mediated conflict resolu-	88	130	68	50	31	3.54	1.18	Accepted

tion can solve real-life disputes

Mean of means	***3.38***

Source: Field Work (2026)

Table 3 shows indicate that the level of acceptance was moderate to high since all items had a mean score above the benchmark of 3.00 and were thus accepted. The respondents were open to the results of radio mediated conflict resolution and felt that radio mediated conflict resolution programmes were fair and useful. The relatively low mean score for the willingness to personally use radio mediation to resolve disputes, however, indicates some degree of caution or reservation in using radio mediation to resolve personal disputes. Results overall suggest that although the audience tends to accept the results of radio conflict resolution, the acceptance is greater in theory than in practice.

Table 4: Relationship Between Authority and Acceptance

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
When I trust a radio station, I am more likely to accept its conflict resolution outcomes.	110	140	55	40	22	3.66	1.12	Accepted
My perception of a radio station's credibility influences my acceptance of its decisions.	105	135	60	45	22	3.60	1.15	Accepted
I accept radio-mediated resolutions because I believe in the station's authority.	100	140	62	43	22	3.59	1.14	Accepted
The more authoritative I perceive a radio station, the more I trust its conflict resolution programme.	115	132	58	40	22	3.67	1.11	Accepted
I am more willing to comply with resolutions from stations I consider credible.	118	130	57	40	22	3.69	1.10	Accepted
Mean of means						***3.64***		

Table 4 shows a high correlation between all items and the mean score for each item was above 3.00, indicating acceptance. Consistent across the board, participants indicated that

trust, credibility and perceived authority of radio stations were important factors in determining their acceptance of the outcomes of conflict resolution. The highest mean scores were obtained for the items associated with compliance and trust, which shows that institutional authority is critical in influencing audience behaviour. This indicates that the more legitimate and trustworthy a radio station is perceived to be, the more listeners will believe and follow its decisions made on conflict resolution.

Qualitative Data Analysis and Interpretations

Theme 1: Level of Radio Listeners' Exposure to Conflict Resolution Programmes

The in-depth interviews showed that there was varying degree of respondents' exposure to conflict resolution programmes aired by radio stations in Ibadan. Most of the participants said they were aware of the programmes, mainly because they listen to the stations like Agidigbo FM, Fresh FM, BCOS Oluyole FM, Premier FM and Splash FM regularly. The study revealed that programme popularity, the communication style and routine of the presenters and listeners had a significant impact on awareness and exposure. An artisan and a regular listener of Agidigbo FM explained that because of the many issues raised, they had a similarity to the many issues that were experienced in the market places and neighbourhoods, he became interested in such programmes. One of the respondents averred that: "Sometimes the conflict they talk about is similar to what goes on around us, so I sit in and listen to them resolve the conflict."

The various forms of conflict that were discussed on radio were generally identified as marital disagreements, land disputes, debt-related conflicts, family misunderstandings, and tenancy issues and disagreements among business associates. However, some of the respondents opined that political and communal conflicts were less common than interpersonal conflicts.

The interviews also revealed that exposure was not equal. People over the age of 50 showed a good level of awareness of conflict resolution programmes and presenters, but younger participants and those who relied more on social media showed occasional awareness. However, respondents who listened to radio irregularly admitted that they were aware of radio mediation of conflict, indicating that radio programmes have created a lot of visibility for listeners in Ibadan.

Theme 2: Perception of Institutional Authority of Radio Stations Airing Conflict Resolution Programmes

The interviews revealed mixed but predominantly positive attitudes towards institutional authority of radio stations in conflict resolution. A significant number of the respondents perceived radio stations as reliable intermediaries that could help to build dialogue and promote peaceful resolution of conflicts, but not necessarily as formal institutions with judicial powers. Several participants equated credibility with station reputation, professionalism of the mediators and how neutral they were towards the parties. Broadcasters' experience and radio conversations that are open to the public were often mentioned as contributing to a high level of confidence in the mediation process. A female trader who frequently tuned into Fresh FM said: “Some stations are more trusted because they give both sides the chance to speak and the presenters are fair.

However, the participants differentiated moral influence from legal authority. Some of the respondents averred that radio stations don't have the power to enforce decision but can only persuade. Some respondents noted that traditional rulers, courts and security agencies continue to have greater institutional legitimacy in formal dispute resolution because they have institutional legal and cultural support.

A civil servant who joined a discussion on Agidigbo FM on conflict related issues said that radio stations could help to defuse tensions and promote reconciliation, but they could not force compliance when people were not ready. Other respondents also emphasized that trust in a station was rooted in their perception of political independence and lack of sensational reporting. Scepticism was directed at the stations that appeared biased or had commercial interests.

Theme 3: Extent of Audience Acceptance of Radio Conflict Resolution Programmes

The in-depth interviews showed that the respondents had a high acceptance of radio conflict resolution programmes. Majority of the respondents showed positive attitudes toward the decisions of mediated disputes, especially when there seemed to be a balance in the discussions and parties were willing to participate in the process and agree to the solutions. The respondents felt that radio mediation was effective in preventing escalation because it facilitated dialogue, apology, and compromise. A recurring opinion was that radio provides an accessible and less intimidating alternative to litigation, especially for minor interpersonal conflicts. However, acceptance was conditional rather than absolute. Some respondents maintained that they would only accept outcomes if they considered the process transparent and fair. A market woman who occasionally listened to BCOS Oluyole FM remarked that, "If they hear both sides well and nobody is favoured, people can accept it.

The opinions of the participants were split when asked if they would personally refer their conflicts to radio mediation. Some were willing, particularly in the cases of misunderstandings with family or debtors and neighbours, due to speed and lower costs. Others were opposed to the concept, saying that private issues could get unnecessarily into public view or cause social embarrassment. The interviews therefore showed that acceptance of radio con-

flict resolution programmes is present, but is affected by the nature of the conflict, perceived fairness and privacy and dignity concerns.

Theme 4: Relationship Between Perceived Institutional Authority and Audience Acceptance

The interviews showed that listeners' perception of institutional authority is related to their acceptance of the outcomes of conflict resolution broadcast on radio stations. Trust and credibility were always cited as a major factor influencing acceptance. Several respondents commented on how important it was that the outcome of the mediation was accepted, but not as much as the reputation of the station and the individual(s) involved. Stations perceived as professional, balanced and community-oriented were more likely to gain public confidence and acceptance. A university student, who listened to Splash FM regularly, said, “If people think the station is honest, then there are higher chances that the respondents will adhere to whatever is agreed upon there.” Several participants agreed that this is the case, and that credibility leads to confidence in the process and results.

Respondents also tended to think that low-credibility stations would have a hard time mediating. Participants say listeners won't trust decisions made on stations that they believe are biased, manipulated or have poor ethics. Some of the participants suggested that more stringent moderation, participation of legal or traditional experts and better procedures should help to increase trust in radio-based mediation. Overall, the interviews showed that there is a close relationship between audience acceptance and perceived institutional authority. The central connection between listeners' perception of radio stations and their endorsement of the outcomes of conflict resolution on radio was found to be trust.

Test of Hypotheses

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and multiple regression analysis were used to test the hypotheses. The tests were conducted at the 0.05 level of significance, and p-values < 0.05 were considered significant indicating rejection of the null hypothesis while p-values > 0.05 were considered not significant indicating the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis One: There is a significant relationship between perceived institutional authority and audience acceptance of radio stations' conflict resolution programmes among radio listeners in Ibadan.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation between Institutional Authority and Audience Acceptance

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev	r	p-value	Decision
Institutional Authority	367	3.53	0.78	0.71	0.000	Significant
Audience Acceptance	367	3.38	0.81			

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation shows that there is a strong positive correlation between perceived institutional authority and audience acceptance of radio conflict resolution programmes ($r = 0.71$, $p = 0.000$). The p-value is less than 0.05 (significance level), so the relationship is statistically significant. This means that the more people feel that radio stations are credible and authoritative, the more they will accept the outcomes of conflict resolution. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis Two: Perceived institutional authority significantly predicts audience acceptance of radio stations' conflict resolution programmes among radio listeners in Ibadan.

Table 6: Regression Analysis of Institutional Authority and Audience Acceptance

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
0.71	0.50	0.50	0.58

ANOVA Table

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Regression	148.18	1	148.10	223.94	0.000
Residual	148.12	365	0.41		
Total	296.20	366			

Coefficients Table

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p-value
(Constant)	1.12	0.18	—	6.22	0.000
Institutional Authority	0.61	0.04	0.71	14.96	0.000

The regression analysis revealed that perceived institutional authority is a significant predictor The regression analysis revealed that perceived institutional authority is a significant predictor of audience acceptance of radio conflict resolution programmes ($F = 223.94$, $p = 0.000$). The model explains approximately 50% of the variance in audience acceptance ($R^2 = 0.50$), which represents a moderate to high level of explanatory power. The regression coefficient indicates that institutional authority is positively and significantly related to audience acceptance ($\beta = 0.71$, $p = 0.000$), implying that as the perceived level of institutional authority increases, so does audience acceptance. Thus, the alternative hypothesis is accepted."

Discussion of Findings

The first objective examined radio listeners' level of exposure to conflict resolution programmes. The quantitative strand showed that the respondents' level of exposure was generally moderate, with respondents being aware of programmes like *Kokoro Alate* on Agidigbo FM and *Let's Talk About It* on Fresh FM, but limited active engagement in the follow-up of conflict cases. This indicates that exposure is mainly passive and intermittent. This is in line with the observation of Nkwam-Uwaoma et al. (2021) that exposure to radio programming leads to moderate attitudinal engagement but to a lesser extent, behavioural engagement. It also resonates with Emovwodo et al. (2024) who said that radio does play a role in awareness but does not ensure regular participation in conflict processes. This finding is consistent with

Institutional Theory because radio stations have become visible as informal institutions of mediation, but the level of engagement is not sustained, meaning that there is less institutional consolidation than with formal conflict-resolution institutions.

The second objective determined the audience's perceived institutional authority of radio stations broadcasting conflict resolution programmes. The findings showed that the level of perceived authority was high, and that radio stations were perceived as credible, legitimate and socially trusted mediators, despite not having a formal legal mandate. This was supported by qualitative findings, which indicated that perceived neutrality, presenter professionalism, and openness of dialogue are sources for building trust. This result is similar to the findings of Abdullahi and Olanase (2024) who found that credibility has a strong influence on audience participation in *Kokoro Alate* and also in line with the findings of Ojebuyi and Ogunkunle (2019) who found that institutional perception affects audience trust in media organisations. It also aligns with Slavík et al. (2025), who noted that institutional trust acts as a mental shortcut to assess the reliability of a message. From a theoretical perspective, this result is consistent with both Institutional Theory and Source Credibility Theory, because radio stations are seen as quasi-institutional actors whose legitimacy is socially constructed, and the evaluations of authority and credibility and trustworthiness have a significant impact on the audience.

The third objective determined the extent of audience acceptance of the outcomes of the conflict resolution programmes. Findings indicated that there was a moderate to high level of acceptance, and that mediated outcomes were seen as acceptable, especially when fairness and balanced representation were present. However, personal willingness to submit disputes to radio mediation was more hesitant, suggesting conditional acceptance. This result is consistent with Talabi et al. (2022), who discovered that perceived credibility affects the ac-

ceptance of mediated messages and also supports Danso et al. (2024), who indicated that broadcast-mediated conflict resolution is effective when institutional credibility is high. This study, however, challenges Emovwodo et al. (2024) who proposed greater personal use of radio in local peacebuilding settings, as personal use was found to be limited in this study. This study agrees with Source Credibility Theory because it is clear that acceptance is related to perceived fairness and trust.

Lastly, the study examined the relationship between perceived institutional authority and audience acceptance of the outcomes of the conflict resolution programmes. Findings from the quantitative data showed that there was a high positive and significant relationship, and regression analysis showed that institutional authority has an impact on the audience acceptance. This was further corroborated by qualitative results which indicated that trust in radio stations and presenters directly influences acceptance of mediated outcomes. The result confirms the result of Zhang et al. (2025) who found that perceived institutional authority is a key determinant of behavioural compliance, and it is consistent with the results of Newman et al. (2024) who found that institutional trust is key to audience engagement. In addition, it also reinforces Abdullahi and Olanase (2024) who reported that trust is a key determinant of compliance with radio-mediated resolutions.

Conclusion

This study investigated perceived institutional authority and audience acceptance of radio stations' conflict resolution programmes among listeners in Ibadan, Nigeria. The study found that listeners of radio in Ibadan have a moderate exposure to programmes of conflict resolution, and that the awareness is mostly attained through the habit of listening to popular stations. It is noteworthy that audience engagement with such programmes is passive, with many listeners not taking up the issue of conflict cases beyond the initial exposure. The study

also confirmed that in the eyes of the audience, radio stations are social legitimate and trusted mediators, although they do not have formal legal authority. It was found that trust, editorial neutrality and presenter professionalism were the key factors in this perceived institutional authority. The study revealed a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between perceived institutional authority and audience acceptance ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.05$), and the variance in audience acceptance was 50% ($R^2 = 0.50$) explained by perceived institutional authority. The results indicate that institutional trust is an important determinant of the acceptance of radio mediated resolutions by the audience and compliance with them, and that strengthening the perceived legitimacy of radio stations will likely increase the effectiveness of conflict resolution programming.

Recommendations

i. Radio stations should create a structured follow-up process to maintain listeners' participation after the initial broadcast so as to move listeners from passive listening to active participation.

ii. Radio presenters involved in mediation programmes should be professionally trained in mediation ethics, active listening and impartiality, so that they can increase their credibility and ensure that disputes are handled in a consistently neutral, transparent and professional way.

iii. Radio stations should establish and broadcast clear ethical guidelines and confidentiality procedures for their conflict resolution programmes.

iv. In order to systematically develop and maintain public trust in radio mediation, radio-based conflict resolution programmes should have established standards and reinforced collaboration between broadcasting regulatory bodies and station management.

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