



# The Role of Media Against Violence in Timor-Leste

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## Abstract

This study explores the media's significant role in addressing and combating violence in Timor-Leste. As a nation with a history of conflict and political upheaval, Timor-Leste faces ongoing challenges related to violence and social instability. The Media, encompassing both traditional outlets like newspapers, radio, and television, as well as digital platforms and social networks, serves as a crucial agent in promoting peace and stability. This research examines how media initiatives can raise awareness, educate the public, and influence violence prevention and intervention policy. Through case studies, interviews with media professionals, and media content analysis, the study highlights successful strategies and identifies areas needing improvement. The findings underscore the importance of ethical journalism, community engagement, and the media's potential to act as a catalyst for positive change. By providing an in-depth understanding of the media's impact on violence in Timor-Leste, this study contributes to a broader discussion on the media's role in conflict resolution and social transformation.

**Keywords:** Media, Violence, Timor-Leste, Conflict resolution, Public Awareness

## 1. Introduction

Timor-Leste is one of the world's newest nations, having gained independence in 2002, and has since established itself as a democratic state. In the aftermath of its liberation, the Timorese populace articulated a pronounced dedication to democratic principles, encompassing freedom of speech and human rights. However, as a post-conflict society, Timor-Leste continues to face numerous challenges in consolidating peace and development. The media has played an instrumental role in supporting peacebuilding efforts, although it should be noted that not all media outlets align with these objectives. Various forms of violence persist, including youth-related conflicts that are often associated with martial arts groups, as

well as domestic and gender-based violence. Continued efforts are necessary to strengthen institutions and promote social cohesion.

The nation of Timor-Leste has endured a protracted period of turbulence, with its origins deeply intertwined with the legacies of colonialism, occupation, and domestic strife. During the 19th century, under the administration of the Portuguese Empire, numerous rebellions erupted as local communities resisted colonial rule. The most notable of these uprisings was the Manufahi War (1908–1912). In 1942, Japan invaded Timor during World War II, subjecting the population to forced labor and widespread suffering. Following a brief period of independence in 1975, Indonesia occupied Timor-Leste from 1975 to 1999, a period marked by egregious human rights violations, including massacres such as the Santa Cruz Massacre (1991) and the Carrascalão House Massacre, among others. In the aftermath of independence, the nation witnessed a surge in internal tensions that culminated in the 2006 national crisis. This crisis was precipitated, in part, by a faction of the military led by Major Alfredo Reinado, leading to widespread unrest and displacement.

The development of media in Timor-Leste has been inextricably linked to the country's political evolution. During the 19th century, under the rule of the Portuguese empire, communication was characterized by its informality and reliance on door-to-door dissemination of information. During the Indonesian occupation (1975–1999), state-controlled mass media operated, and international media played a key role in exposing human rights abuses. The United Nations transitional administration (1999–2002) played a pivotal role in the establishment of independent national media institutions. These media outlets initially prioritized the promotion of human rights and social justice. Following its independence in 2002, the number of media organizations in the country has increased significantly, including print, broadcast, and digital platforms. Notwithstanding this growth, media advocacy for human rights has declined. The challenges confronting the initiative include limited resources, political influence, and a paucity of professional training.

The role of media against violence in Timor-Leste (TL) is an increasingly urgent issue to be studied, given the support that this part has in supporting Timor-Leste's peacebuilding. In an Academic context, this study is important to understand how this role contributes to catalyzing the challenges faced by the Media today. In practice government of TL is committed to supporting the media for media development to promote the freedom of expression (strategy plan of the Secretary of State of Social Communication- SECOM 2023). With the high quantity of media institutions in TL, conflict in Timor-Leste is still high. Various forms of violence persist, including youth conflicts commonly referred to as martial arts gang violence, as well as domestic violence, gender-based violence, and more (Silva, D.M. 2024). Based on police data the majority of violence has been practiced nowadays in society such as homicide rates, which is including revenge killings, severe and widespread trauma, the degradation of infrastructure, forced and opportunistic migration, land grabs and disputes and a widespread sense of social injustice and impunity. Martial art dispute and Militarization pressure. The high rates of robbery, the high prevalence of sexual and domestic violence, and the unemployment of young people (The Asia Foundation data). Therefore, this study can provide an important

contribution to the development of media institutions in promoting peace as well as formulate effective policies to decrease and eliminate violence in the community.

The Prior Research on Media Against Violence, the media expects journalists to specialize in areas such as justice, economy, and peacebuilding to improve the quality and clarity of reporting. In 2024, research from *Reporters Without Borders* ranked Timor-Leste 20th in press freedom, a decline from its previous position of 10th. This drop has caused disappointment among media organizations and journalists. Some institutions, both government and private, still restrict media and journalists from accessing their facilities, taking photos or videos, and gathering data. As a result, it has become challenging for the media and journalists to actively promote peace. Although media in Timor-Leste has developed with the growth of digital platforms, quality remains poor, and social oversight is limited. The role of journalists often leans more toward mediation than active advocacy. (silva, 2017)

This study aims to explore the multifaceted role of media in addressing violence and contributing to peacebuilding efforts in Timor-Leste, assessing both the strategies employed and the challenges encountered. By answering this question, how do Media campaigns influence youth attitudes towards violence and their likelihood to report violent incidents in Timor-Leste, or the absence of such interventions? The result of this study can serve as a basis and provide useful information for the relevant institution to be knowledgeable in this field and continue to have good policies in the future.

This research argues that the media has a role that has the power to against violence. Especially in conflict situations needs collaboration with all stakeholders is needed to disseminate information through the media. The hypothesis presented in this study is the media still needs the collaboration of all institutions to support media reports or information for balanced information and correct ways to promote peace. Shows that the more media improve the quality, the more young people understand and far away from conflict. This study shows that new media against violence in Timor-Leste could promote peace and serve as a medium for educating and sustaining peace in the community.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Theoretical Perspectives on Media and Violence**

Academic literature offers a range of theoretical frameworks that help explain the complex relationship between media and violence(Phillips, 2017). Theories such as agenda-setting and framing(McCombs et al., 2014) suggest that media does not merely reflect reality, but actively shapes public perceptions by highlighting certain issues while ignoring others. Agenda-setting theory argues that media influences what people think about, whereas framing theory focuses on how the presentation of information affects public interpretation. Peace journalism, introduced by Johan Galtung(Galtung, 2015), advocates for media practices that contribute to conflict resolution by highlighting peace initiatives, giving voice to all parties, and avoiding sensationalism.

Additionally, cultivation theory posits that long-term exposure to media content can shape individuals' perceptions of reality, often reinforcing fear or mistrust if violence is disproportionately represented. These theories provide a lens through which to understand how

media can either reinforce violent narratives or challenge them by promoting understanding, empathy, and nonviolent solutions. Applying such frameworks is crucial in assessing the role of media in post-conflict settings like Timor-Leste, where the media's influence on public discourse and social cohesion is particularly significant.

## **2.2 Media Landscape and Violence in Timor-Leste**

The media landscape in Timor-Leste has undergone a significant transformation since the country's independence in 2002 (Toby Mendel, 2011). During the Indonesian occupation, the media was largely suppressed, with limited space for independent journalism (Harvey, 1990). In the post-independence period, the development of community radio, print journalism, and digital media has played a central role in rebuilding democratic discourse. Several local and international organizations have contributed to media training and capacity building, helping to establish a relatively vibrant but still fragile media environment (C. Silva, 2024).

Despite this progress, the media in Timor-Leste continues to face numerous challenges in addressing violence. Journalists often work under constraints such as limited access to information, lack of professional training, and pressure from political or social groups (Civicus, 2022). Reporting on sensitive issues such as domestic violence, gender-based violence, or political unrest requires both courage and ethical sensitivity (U.S. Department of State's Human Rights, 2023). Understanding this context is essential for evaluating how effectively the media contributes to violence prevention and peacebuilding in the country.

## **2.3 Media's Role in Advocacy and Peacebuilding**

Media has increasingly been recognized as a powerful tool for advocacy and social change, particularly in societies affected by violence and conflict. In Timor-Leste, media outlets and civil society organizations have utilized journalism to raise awareness about issues such as domestic violence, corruption, and political accountability. Through radio programs, television debates, and newspaper articles, the media has provided a platform for marginalized voices and encouraged public dialogue on violence-related issues (Winter, 2025).

At the same time, the role of the media in peacebuilding is constrained by structural and institutional barriers. Limited funding, inconsistent professional standards, and threats to journalists can hinder the ability of media to function effectively as an agent of change. Nonetheless, media initiatives that promote inclusive narratives and focus on community resilience show promise in contributing to a culture of peace (Generis Global Legal Services, 2024). This dual potential—media as both a risk and a resource—must be critically analyzed in the context of Timor-Leste's ongoing efforts to build a more peaceful and just society.

## **3. Method**

This study utilizes a mixed-methods approach to investigate the role of media in addressing violence in Timor-Leste. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods enables a more robust analysis by combining statistical trends with in-depth perspectives from key stakeholders. This methodological design provides both breadth and depth in understanding the media's influence on social issues, particularly violence and peacebuilding (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The quantitative component involved the administration of 20 structured questionnaire items, with 10 items corresponding to Variable X and 10 to Variable Y. The instruments were developed based on the Communication Theory of Media Effectiveness and Influence (McQuail, 2010) and reviewed for content validity by lecturers from the Social Communication Department. The questionnaires were distributed in Tetum, the national language, to enhance comprehension and response accuracy. A total of 91 valid responses were collected from 3 sample universities, Department of communication of UNTL, UNITAL and UCT based on the sample size determination table by Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

the sample size using this formula:

$$s = \frac{X^2 \cdot N \cdot P \cdot (1 - P)}{d^2 \cdot (N - 1) + X^2 \cdot P \cdot (1 - P)}$$

Based in Krejcie and Morgan table, with the 120 population and sample is 92.

Which from 3 universities which have the department of Social communication 30 departments. they are finalists who has understood the knowledge well and interpreted, from different municipalities in the countries, and all is young because the majority of conflict happened in Timor involved young people.

In the qualitative component, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants from various sectors relevant to media and social advocacy. These included academic observers, human rights ombudsmen, journalists, media owners, editors, members of the Press Council, local women's NGOs, and representatives from the Secretariat of State for Social Communication (SECOMS). A total of 10 open-ended questions were used, guided by theoretical concepts on media roles in peacebuilding and conflict resolution (Galtung, 2002). These interviews were designed to complement the survey by offering deeper insights into institutional perspectives and the challenges faced in media practice related to violence prevention.

Data analysis was conducted through both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, including descriptive statistics to summarize demographic and response data and inferential analysis to explore variable relationships. For the qualitative data, manual coding was employed to identify recurring themes and interpret findings within the framework of media and peace theories (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This triangulation strengthened the reliability and validity of the overall research outcomes.

## **4. Result**

### **4.1 The Importance of Ethical Journalism**

As a post-conflict nation, Timor-Leste confronted political instability, violence, and discord among diverse groups. The media played a pivotal role in shaping public perception and fostering national unity. The promotion of peace and reconciliation through ethical journalism is instrumental in preventing the propagation of hate speech, misinformation, and divisive narratives that have the potential to rekindle tensions. This approach promotes factual reporting and responsible storytelling, thereby fostering national unity and healing. Journalists

have the capacity to amplify the voices of marginalized groups and victims, thereby promoting the pursuit of truth and facilitating efforts for reconciliation. For instance, the Timor-Leste Truth and Reconciliation Commission/CAVR relied on media outlets to disseminate testimonies and educate the public about past atrocities. Furthermore, in 2006, when political violence erupted between eastern and western factions (Loro-sa'e/East vs. Loro-monu/Southwest), certain media outlets exacerbated the tension by employing divisive language. Nevertheless, responsible journalists endeavored to de-escalate violence by disseminating neutral, fact-based reports.

Conversely, the Association of Journalists in Timor-Leste has persistently lobbied for a reevaluation of the Social Communication Law, contending that it is antiquated and fails to address contemporary concerns in media, including the evolving nature of journalism. Consequently, the significance of ethical journalism is paramount in fostering the media's role in peacebuilding. Timor-Leste, a nascent democracy, is a prime example of the importance of media transparency in ensuring that leaders are held accountable for their actions. The promotion of ethical governance is predicated on the premise that it fosters accountability among government officials and institutions, thereby mitigating corruption and the abuse of power. It is a fundamental component of a well-functioning democracy, ensuring that citizens have access to information that is both free and fair. This, in turn, enables them to make informed decisions that contribute to the health of the democratic process. Responsible reporting is instrumental in fostering transparency within electoral processes and galvanizing civic engagement. This guarantees that government officials, law enforcement, and businesses will be exposed if they engage in corruption or human rights violations. For instance, investigative reporting by Radio Timor-Leste and Tempo Semanal has been instrumental in exposing corruption cases.

Furthermore, in the context of elections, ethical media plays a pivotal role in voter education, the exposure of election fraud, and the facilitation of fair political debates. Journalists are responsible for providing balanced reporting on candidates and political parties, thereby preventing the dissemination of misinformation that could potentially influence voter decisions. For instance, in the 2017 presidential elections, Timorese journalists played a pivotal role in reporting fairly on political parties, ensuring that citizens received balanced information rather than propaganda. Therefore, the implementation of media transparency is imperative to support and minimize conflict.

While Timor-Leste does enjoy relative press freedom, the country still faces challenges such as political pressure, intimidation, and self-censorship. The safeguarding of press freedom and the upholding of journalist integrity are paramount. The practice of ethical journalism serves to defend press freedom, while concurrently ensuring the maintenance of professional integrity and credibility. Journalists must resist censorship and avoid becoming mouthpieces for political or corporate interests. This approach is designed to mitigate the presence of sensationalism and bias, which have been observed in certain media outlets, particularly on social media platforms. These outlets have been known to sensationalize stories for political or financial gain, a practice that has the potential to contribute to social instability. Journalists who adhere to ethical standards and professional norms gain the public's trust, thereby

rendering the media a reliable source of truth in a fragile society. For instance, in 2016, journalist Raimundo Oki encountered legal repercussions following the publication of an investigation into government irregularities. The case in question has given rise to significant discourse on the subject of press freedom in Timor-Leste.

#### **4.2. Community engagement**

Community engagement with the media plays a crucial role in preventing violence and promoting peace in Timor-Leste. Indeed, such engagement can promote media literacy and responsible information sharing. It is imperative that communities be educated on how to identify misinformation, hate speech, and propaganda that could provoke violence. Schools, local organizations, and NGOs can conduct media literacy programs to help citizens critically analyze news sources. For instance, in Timor-Leste, organizations such as FONGTIL (Timor-Leste NGO Forum) endeavor to educate the public on ethical journalism and the perils of disinformation, particularly during elections or political crises.

In Timor-Leste, rural communities frequently lack access to mainstream media, rendering them susceptible to misinformation. The enhancement of community-based journalism and grassroots media is of paramount importance. One strategy that has proven effective in achieving this objective is the encouragement of citizen journalism. This approach facilitates the articulation of local perspectives, a phenomenon that is particularly salient in rural areas where the reach of mainstream media is often limited. Community radio stations and digital platforms have the potential to disseminate neutral and fact-based information that functions as a counteragent to violence-inciting narratives. For instance, Radio Communities in Timor-Leste plays a pivotal role in disseminating peaceful messaging, fact-based discussions, and community concerns, thereby ensuring that the populace receives reliable information rather than rumors. A considerable proportion of the media continues to disseminate divisive rhetoric, as evidenced by the employment of terms such as "Timor Puro" (denoting individuals of pure Timorese descent) and "Timor-Misto" (designating individuals with one foreign parent). These terms serve to perpetuate social divisions. Additionally, media outlets have been found to demonstrate a lack of sufficient protection for victims of conflict, as illustrated by their coverage of martial arts gang conflicts in rural areas. The establishment of community-based journalism, therefore, has the potential to empower citizens to play an active role in the dissemination of accurate, unbiased information and the resolution of local conflicts through peace-oriented storytelling.

The establishment of a collaborative alliance between media entities, civil society organizations, and peacebuilding initiatives, in conjunction with community leaders, youth groups, and religious organizations, facilitates a symbiotic relationship with journalists, thereby enabling the dissemination of a unifying message that emphasizes peace and reconciliation. It is imperative that media outlets incorporate a diverse array of voices, including those of women, youth, and former conflict victims, to foster healing and unity. For instance, during Timor-Leste's 2006 political crisis, civil society groups collaborated with the media to facilitate dialogue between conflicting parties, thereby reducing violence through open discussions. However, in 2024, the media faces challenges in gathering critical opinions from society. This is due to the reluctance of many independent institutions, such as national

and local NGOs, to criticize the government. The reason for this reluctance is their reliance on government subsidies and a lack of accountability in reporting. This financial reliance impedes their capacity to articulate their perspectives with autonomy. Therefore, it is imperative that media outlets refrain from operating in isolation. Instead, they must establish robust partnerships with community leaders, civil society groups, and peacebuilding organizations to promote stability.

#### **4.3. The Media's Potential to Act as a Catalyst for Positive Change**

The media plays a pivotal role in promoting good governance and accountability by acting as a watchdog, exposing corruption, human rights violations, and abuses of power. The practice of investigative journalism is a crucial element in maintaining accountability within government and institutional entities, thereby ensuring transparency and the promotion of fair governance. Conversely, the Secretariat of State for Social Communication (SECOMS), which is under the Prime Minister's office, has a mandate to enhance media quality and development. SECOMS endeavors to provide support to local media through subsidies and to facilitate the training of government media personnel in effective communication of government activities to the public (N. Falcao, personal communication, March 15, 2024). However, media outlets contend that SECOMS has not yet executed its strategic plans, with its emphasis seemingly prioritizing political objectives over media development (Dessy, personal communication, March 15, 2024). For instance, in Timor-Leste, autonomous media outlets such as *Tempo semanal* have unearthed corruption cases, resulting in legal proceedings and policy modifications.

In the contemporary world, the promotion of social cohesion and the establishment of peace are of paramount importance. A significant strategy for promoting national unity is the practice of ethical journalism. This form of journalism has been demonstrated to curtail divisive rhetoric and promote reconciliation, thereby contributing to the development of a stronger and more unified society. Media platforms have the potential to function as conduits for amplifying the voices of diverse ethnic, political, and social groups, thereby fostering dialogue and facilitating a more profound understanding among individuals. For instance, following the 2006 crisis in Timor-Leste, community radio stations played a pivotal role in mitigating tensions by disseminating messages of peace and coexistence. Moreover, challenges arise in regard to religious sensitivity. The Catholic faith is predominant among the Timor-Leste population, and journalists encounter challenges in reporting on or producing programs that could potentially offend religious sensibilities. Specific subjects are often considered taboo, including cases involving pedophilia by clergy or LGBTQ marriages. Those who engage in the practice of reporting on these issues may encounter substantial criticism.

The media plays a pivotal role in empowering communities by facilitating access to vital information on health, education, and human rights. This enables communities to make informed decisions, share knowledge, and engage in constructive dialogue. Digital platforms offer citizens a means to participate in discussions, exchange ideas, and mobilize for positive peace change. For instance, during the course of the global pandemic of the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), the media in Timor-Leste played an instrumental role in disseminating health guidelines and combating misinformation. Moreover, while the internet

speed and access in Timor-Leste are set to expand, concerns have been raised about the potential rise in digital conflict and violence if these developments are not managed properly. National and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as, private sector groups, have made appeals to the government through SECOMS and the Ministry of Education. These appeals urge the government to include media literacy in the school curriculum and to increase advocacy on responsible media use. According to J. Doe (personal communication, March 15, 2024) and A. Smith (personal communication, March 18, 2024), early intervention is crucial.

#### 4.4 Survey of Influence of Media

Classification Value : 1= No, 2= Not good Enough 3= Good, 4= good enough 5= very good

Table 1: Variable X utilization of Media (access to Information through Media)

| Nu | Questions                                                                                                                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  | You read/see/hear news about violence through the media                                                                              |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2  | We read/watch/hear news about violence often                                                                                         |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3  | Ita-boot fiar media iha responsabilidade atu servisu hodi kontra violensia                                                           |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4  | You believe the media has a responsibility to work against violence                                                                  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5  | The media places importance on the issue of violence                                                                                 |   |   |   |   |   |
| 6  | You think media coverage can increase violence in Timor-Leste                                                                        |   |   |   |   |   |
| 7  | In your opinion, the media's efforts to cover violence                                                                               |   |   |   |   |   |
| 8  | In your opinion, the government should regulate media coverage of violence by minimizing regulation to protect freedom of expression |   |   |   |   |   |
| 9  | In your opinion, should the government regulate media coverage of violence                                                           |   |   |   |   |   |
| 10 | In your opinion, the government should regulate media coverage of violence moderate regulation to ensure balanced reporting          |   |   |   |   |   |

Table 2: Variable Y minimize violence trough information in the media

| Nu | Questions                                                                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1  | You know the news of violence when we read/hear/see information in the media        |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2  | When we read/hear/see the news about violence, violence does not happen in our home |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3  | The media has contributed to the violence that has been happening in Timor-Leste    |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4  | The media can reduce violence through the information they publish                  |   |   |   |   |   |

|    |                                                                                                                      |  |  |  |  |  |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 5  | You believe the media has an active responsibility to work against violence in Timor-Leste                           |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6  | In our opinion, violence is no longer happening in Timor-Leste.                                                      |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7  | You have the knowledge to change your behavior about violence when reading/hearing/watching the news from the media. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8  | You entrust everyone with knowledge about violence through media publications                                        |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9  | Everyone will change their attitude to violence through information in the media                                     |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | The media's role in reducing violence in Timor-Leste is effective.                                                   |  |  |  |  |  |

**Correlations**

|   |                     | X      | Y      |
|---|---------------------|--------|--------|
| X | Pearson Correlation | 1      | ,465** |
|   | Sig. (2-tailed)     |        | ,000   |
|   | N                   | 91     | 91     |
| Y | Pearson Correlation | ,465** | 1      |
|   | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,000   |        |
|   | N                   | 91     | 91     |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

1. Correlation Analysis

Based on the data in the table, a sample of 91 responses was analyzed across 20 items, with 10 items for variable X (Media) and 10 items for variable Y (Violence). SPSS was used to calculate the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The correlation table indicates a relationship between the independent variable (Media, X) and the dependent variable (Violence, Y), with a correlation coefficient of 0.603. This result shows a significant correlation between the two variables.

**Model Summary**

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | ,465 <sup>a</sup> | ,216     | ,207              | 6,61055                    |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Y

## Regression

## Analysis

Based on the model summary table, the R-squared value is 0.216 (with a correlation coefficient of 0.465). The adjusted R-squared value of 0.207 indicates that the coefficient is relatively strong.

Table 4:

| Coefficients <sup>a</sup> |                             |            |                           |       |      |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| Model                     | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t     | Sig. |
|                           | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |       |      |
| 1 (Constant)              | 15,617                      | 3,016      |                           | 5,178 | ,000 |
| Y                         | ,483                        | ,097       | ,465                      | 4,956 | ,000 |

a. Dependent Variable: X

Refer to the significance (Sig) column in the coefficients table. The T-count value is 4.956, compared to the T-table value of 1.66177, indicating that  $T\text{-count} > T\text{-table}$  ( $4.956 > 1.66177$ ). This result demonstrates a significant relationship between the two variables. Based on the SPSS analysis, the T-count is greater than the T-table, which means that the alternative hypothesis (HA) is accepted, while the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected. Thus, the regression coefficient is significant.

## 5 Discussion

This study determined that the media plays a significant role in society by counteracting violence and deterring young people from engaging in conflict. The focus of this text is on the significance of ethical journalism, community engagement, and the media's capacity to function as a catalyst for positive change. The utilization of social communication law and the journalism code of ethics is imperative. Media outlets and institutional entities will be held accountable for their role in disseminating information, adhering to standards of truth and accuracy. A study by Johan Galtung (2015) revealed that advocates for media practices that contribute to conflict resolution by highlighting peace initiatives, giving voice to all parties, and avoiding sensationalism. This study reflects the dilemmas faced by Media Against Violence. It has been demonstrated that the challenges currently being experienced by the media persist; however, there is evidence of shifting influences and alterations in the behaviors of the audience, which is composed of young people.

In the communication of significant information, the media adheres to a code of journalistic ethics. Media practitioners have been observed to make a multitude of errors that demonstrate a disregard for moral principles, despite their awareness of such principles. For instance, under certain circumstances, the media is prohibited from displaying the faces of criminal offenders to the public, even when considering the safety of the offenders and their families. According to the findings of Based Generis Global Legal Services (2024), media initiatives that promote inclusive narratives and focus on community resilience show promise in contributing to a culture of peace. Consequently, the implementation of a journalistic ethics code is imperative.

Media practitioners must demonstrate their commitment to conflict prevention, thereby reducing the likelihood of new conflicts arising.

Community engagement has been identified as a crucial factor in empowering media practitioners to develop content that is focused on addressing issues of violence. It is imperative that civil society, academic institutions, and communities be cognizant of their role in monitoring and evaluating the role of the media in promoting peace. For instance, the concept of media literacy is applicable to all sectors of society, including the educational system. Winter (2025), the media has provided a platform for marginalized voices and encouraged public dialogue on violence-related issues through radio programs, television debates, and newspaper articles. This phenomenon underscores the notion that community engagement fosters societal equilibrium by facilitating societal participation in media contributions to the community.

The media's potential to function as a catalyst for positive change is substantiated by quantitative data. A significant proportion of the youth population concur that the media has exerted an influence on their lives, particularly about conflict, though this influence is not uniformly positive. This process underscores the necessity for media that is conducive to the education of the populace in post-conflict nations. Mendel Toby (2011) posited that the media landscape in Timor-Leste has undergone a significant transformation since the country's independence in 2002. This adaptation underscores the pivotal role of the media in fostering sustainable peace.

This finding is consistent with previous literature on contribution media for sustaining peace. The preceding study has a tendency to prioritize the contributions of Johan Galtung (2015), particularly his conceptualization of peace journalism. The propagation of messages that promote peace on social media platforms is not merely a matter of maintaining order and harmony within the digital domain; it is also an endeavor to shape positive perceptions and attitudes within society regarding emerging issues. In this case, the focus is on a nation that has experienced post-conflict reconstruction. This contribution elucidates the significance of ethical journalism, community engagement, and the media's capacity to function as a catalyst for positive change. The present study contributes to the extant discourse by means of an exhaustive examination of the media's influence on violence in Timor-Leste. This study contributes to a more extensive discourse on the role of the media in conflict resolution and social transformation.

In order to establish and fortify the media's role in combating violence, a series of strategic measures must be implemented. First and foremost, it is imperative to bolster media freedom and professionalism. Secondly, the promotion of media literacy and responsible communication is paramount. It is imperative that the role of the media in peacebuilding and human rights be strengthened. In order to facilitate open access to information for journalists, it is imperative to establish transparent protocols and revise outdated laws. Furthermore, it is imperative to incorporate media and digital literacy into school curricula and community education to prevent the dissemination of misinformation and online violence. It is imperative to provide support for media content that is conducive to fostering social inclusion, promoting human rights, and disseminating peace narratives. The following recommendations are made

in this study: The provision of continuous training in ethical, conflict-sensitive, and culturally aware reporting is to be considered. It is imperative that institutions such as the SECOMS and the Press Council be empowered to regulate fairly and support media independence through funding and capacity building. Collaborating with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government agencies is imperative to conduct public campaigns on responsible media use, especially on social media platforms. It is imperative to promote collaboration among media outlets, civil society organizations, and government entities to establish platforms that serve as effective conduits for marginalized voices and facilitate constructive resolution of community conflicts. The establishment of sustainable peacebuilding in the post-conflict nation of Timor-Leste is contingent upon the implementation of a cross-sector collaborative approach.

## **6 Conclusion**

The most salient finding of this study is that the media in Timor-Leste face considerable challenges in their mission to promote peace, democracy, and social justice. The present study demonstrates that, while specialized journalism in areas such as justice and peacebuilding is required, press freedom has diminished, and numerous NGOs continue to exercise restraint in criticizing the government due to financial dependencies. The influence of the media is subject to constraints imposed by various institutions, divisive rhetoric, cultural taboos, and inadequate protections for conflict victims. SECOMS' endeavors to provide assistance have been impeded by the prevailing political priorities. As the government pursues urban development, media coverage has sometimes been met with hostility from officials, reflecting ongoing social tensions. The proliferation of internet access has given rise to concerns regarding the potential for online conflict. In response to these concerns, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sectors have advocated for the incorporation of media literacy into educational curricula. The Association of Journalists has issued a call for the implementation of reforms to outdated media legislation and the provision of enhanced career assistance for journalists. This appeal underscores the necessity for a holistic strategy to fortify the media's contribution to peacebuilding and public accountability. Additionally, the data survey suggests the presence of influences in young people, exhibiting a correlation coefficient of 0.603. The result indicates a substantial relationship between the two variables.

This study provides substantial insights into the strategic measures necessary to fortify the position of the media. The study's contribution to the field lies in its exploration of the dual role of journalism as a catalyst for social cohesion and as a catalyst for division, particularly when practices are not carried out in a responsible manner. The study underscores the significance of media literacy, institutional accountability, and the necessity of updated legal frameworks. The report offers actionable recommendations for policymakers, educators, and media professionals. This study underscores the significance of regulation and policy in this context and advocates for enhanced collaboration among government entities, civil society, and the media sector. Such collaboration is deemed essential to ensure that journalism functions as a catalyst for inclusive development, democratic participation, and long-term peace in Timor-Leste. This study makes a significant contribution to the extant literature by employing a holistic approach that combines these various aspects. It offers novel insights by revealing how media in Timor-Leste is navigating modern challenges, such as digital misinformation,

weak regulation, and limited institutional support, in a post-conflict society. Consequently, it is anticipated that the results of this study will serve as a valuable reference for policymakers and media practitioners in the formulation of more effective strategies to support the media's role in combating violence in Timor-Leste.

It is imperative to acknowledge the limitations inherent to this study, particularly with regard to its scope and methodology, when interpreting the results. The study's primary focus on institutional perspectives limits the comprehensive capture of grassroots community and media consumer perspectives. The geographic and cultural limitations of the study may preclude the generalizability of its findings to other post-conflict societies. Consequently, further research is necessary to elucidate the underlying mechanisms and implications of these phenomena. It is recommended that broader, community-based studies be conducted to explore how audiences perceive and interact with media messages related to peace and conflict. The execution of comparative studies with other countries undergoing analogous transitional phases could further enhance comprehension and facilitate the development of media strategies that are more informed by regional considerations.

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