

COLLABORATING CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RURAL/URBAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA

ABSTRACT

Conflicts have emerged as key issues challenging local, regional, national and global security. Environmental crises and problems throughout the world are widespread and increasing rapidly. In relation to these concerns, the main objective of the study was to examine the collaborating conflict management and rural/urban sustainable development in south-south Nigeria. Other specific objectives set for the study were to examine the impact of accommodation on economic growth and to determine the influence of communication on quality of life. The population comprised of staff of ministry of Housing and Urban Development in Edo state. A sample size of eighty five (85) participants were selected using stratified sampling method taking from the total staff of ministry of Housing and Urban Development in Edo state Nigeria. The statistical technique used was linear regression analysis. The results showed that a statistically strong and positive relationship exists between accommodation and economic growth ($R^2 = 0.944$ $p < 0.05$), and that communication have significant influence on quality of life ($R^2 = 0.769$ $p < 0.05$). This result is statistically significant as the p -value of the results (0.000) is less than 0.05 level of significance set for the study. The study concluded that accommodation has a strong and significant impact on economic growth of south-south Nigeria and that if there is effective communication it will help enhance the people's quality of life. The study recommends that organizations/government should provide conducive environment through good accommodation in order to foster the economic growth and they should continue to communicate effectively through clear policies, apparent procedures and rules communication to improve quality of life of the people.

Keywords: *Conflict Management, Accommodation, Communication, Sustainable development, Economic Growth and Quality of Life*

Introduction

Nigerian civilization, by its very nature, is made up of various micro societies or multi ethnic communities, each with its own geographical distribution, natural resources, and human surroundings and customs. It is obvious that Nigerian society's cohabitation is a historical aspect resulting from a succession of fights for survival and coexistence within and between different ethnic groups, which has allowed the country to continue to flourish. Conflict management is one successful way of resolving social disagreements and developing understanding and respect for all people, regardless of social class, ethnic groupings, or privileges (Garba, 2019).

The technique of limiting the negative parts of conflict while promoting the beneficial features of conflict is known as conflict management. The goal of conflict management is to

improve learning and group outcomes, such as organizational effectiveness or performance. Conflict that is well managed can enhance group outcomes and population diversity issues (Alpert, Tjosvaldo, & Law, 2017). Nigeria's population is diverse, with over 200 ethnic groups speaking about 500 indigenous languages and following one of two major religions: Islam or Christianity (World Bank, 2016). The Abba riots of 1929, the independence struggle of the 1950s, the election riots of the 1960s, the Kafanchan riots of the 1970s, the Matasine massacres of the 1980s, the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC) militancy and the Odi invasion of the 1990s, the Niger Delta militancy of the 2000s, and the current Boko Haram attacks of the 2010s, Nigeria has seen its fair share of conflicts. Until now, Nigeria, particularly the rural/urban areas of south-south Nigeria, has needed to identify and implement effective conflict management techniques (Abimbola, Okon & Charles, 2015).

As a result, conflict management is the process of reducing conflict's negative features while raising its beneficial ones (Rahim, 2018). It is a premise that while all conflicts cannot be resolved, learning how to manage them can reduce the likelihood of non-productive escalation. Conflict management, according to Dalung (2019), comprises the long-term management of intractable conflicts. He went on to say that it is the various methods in which people deal with grievances, standing up for what they believe is right and against what they believe is wrong. Thus, conflict management entails learning conflict resolution skills, self-awareness of conflict modes, conflict communication skills, and building a structure for resolving conflict in the workplace. It is a process that encompasses all stated tactics, interventions, and institutional structures for preventing conflict from escalating and advancing society's sustainable development goals (Dalung, 2019).

Sustainable development is defined as development that meets current needs without jeopardizing future generations' ability to meet their own. In 1992, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, sustainable development became a hot topic (the Earth Summit). With important milestones like the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and the 2005 World Summit, sustainable development has progressed. The importance of sustainable development in terms of economic progress, social fairness, and environmental conservation cannot be overstated. Conflict management techniques can aid sustainable development by minimizing the risk of poorly informed development proposals and conflict-related disruptions to ongoing initiatives. Before a proposal is approved and a project begins, effective communication and diversity management can guide the achievement of resource development assessments and agreements, ensuring that monitoring, evaluation, review, and enforcement are part of the agreement and ongoing management and oversight of a project (Dalung, 2019).

It is important to emphasize that organizations or governmental institutions that fail to manage conflict have a negative impact on people's economic growth and quality of life, which has a negative impact on the nation's long-term development. Conflicts can take many forms, ranging from major conflicts and even genocide to localized disagreements. While conflict is based on the behaviors (not always violent) of people, it appears to be linked to incompatibility. Whatever shape conflict takes, it is likely to have a number of consequences (albeit at different geographical scales), including physical injury to persons and the natural

resource base, as well as a negative influence on productivity and overall economic development (Bob & Salome, 2019).

However, making reference to Garba (2019), Samuel (2019), Pochon, Stephen, Olive and Richard (2018), Kariuki (2018), Micheal (2016), Simo, Hannu, Miko and Alfred (2016) and Oluwadare (2015), the effect of conflict management on sustainable development has been inconclusive which makes this study to intend to contribute to the existing literature by investigating collaborating conflict management and rural/urban sustainable development in south-south Nigeria. In doing this, the study follows the works of Kurt (2018), Michal, Viviana and Wright (2017) to estimate the dynamic impact of conflict management on sustainable development of selected rural/urban areas in Nigeria from 2006 to 2020. All these studies are not done in the present locale and the tool of analysis used are different which creates a gap to be covered in this study by looking into conflict management and sustainable development in Nigeria. The overall objective of this study is to examine the effect of conflict management on sustainable development. Other specific objectives are to;

1. examine the impact of accommodation on economic growth
2. determine the influence of communication on quality of life

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conflict Management

The term "conflict" refers to a disagreement. Conflicts vary in shape and breadth, making them an unwelcome issue in a setting where peace is supposed to reign. Disputes can arise between individuals, states, clans, and organizations or groups over specific concerns. It stems from divergent perspectives, beliefs, and values on specific topics of interest. These problems could be cultural, societal, political, or economic in nature. It can, however, be done on an individual or national level. Individuals and groups seek distinct aims and preserve diverse aspirations in a specific social setting, according to Ogionwo (2016). In this case, where two distinct persons have the same aim in mind, the ultimate result may lead to miscommunication, conflict of interests, and a struggle for first place (Ogionwo, 2016).

Depending on its history or use by various scholars, the concept of conflict can be viewed in a variety of ways. Quarrel, inconsistency, dispute, violence, hostility, and even battle over particular things, such as power, resources, between two individuals or organizations, are all examples of conflict. Where there is no peace, however, there is strife. This condition arises from a fight and competition for finite resources, as well as disparities among groups in a society with multiple ethnic groups. Conflict, according to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2016), is a direct confrontation between two people; it can sometimes spread to include larger groups, organizations, local governments, states, and even international communities, at which point it is said to have taken on a broader scope (Siri, 2017).

Conflict management, according to the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2016), is an attempt to avoid a disagreement or misunderstanding from spiraling out of control and bursting into violence or a crisis. It can also be used to de-escalate a violent act or

a crisis that has already devolved into violence by removing, neutralizing, or restricting the means of dealing with the violent. This can be accomplished by denying the group access to physical combat or by resolving the parties' differences. Both parties can be summoned to order. This is accomplished by holding meetings with both parties at different locations, times, and days to address matters related to peace. The effective handling and long-term management of disagreements is referred to as conflict management. It also includes a variety of approaches to dealing with complaints, as well as standing up for what is regarded right and against what is deemed wrong and unjust (Siri, 2017).

Because it is nearly difficult to find two parties with completely coinciding interests, conflict is a pervasive feature of human civilizations. In all fields of study, including economics, psychology, sociology, international politics, and business management, a general strategy and theory for bargaining and resolving conflict situations is useful (Siri, 2017).

Effective Communication

Effective communication, according to Laurie (2020), occurs when ideas and concepts are received and acted upon. It also implies that you can listen to, comprehend, and act on what others say. Clear policies, visible procedures, and rules communication are all part of excellent communication (Laurie, 2020).

Accommodation

Accommodation, according to Thesaurus (2020), is the process of mutual adaption between individuals or groups, usually accomplished by the elimination or reduction of animosity, such as through compromise or arbitration. It's anything that satisfies a need, want, favor, or convenience. Accommodation facilitates employees' return to work and enhances productivity, which has a significant impact on economic growth (Jeffery, 2018).

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is defined as development that meets current needs without jeopardizing future generations' ability to meet their own. In 1992, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, sustainable development became a hot topic (the Earth Summit). With important milestones like the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and the 2005 World Summit, sustainable development has progressed. The importance of sustainable development in terms of economic progress, social fairness, and environmental conservation cannot be overstated. Conflict resolution techniques can aid sustainable development by minimizing the risk of poorly informed development proposals and conflict-related disruptions to ongoing initiatives (Dalung, 2019).

Economic Growth

When comparing one period of time to the next, economic growth is defined as an increase in the production of economic commodities and services. It can be expressed in nominal or real (inflation-adjusted) terms. Although alternative measures are occasionally employed, aggregate economic growth is traditionally assessed in terms of gross national product (GNP) (Charles, 2021).

Quality of Life

The World Health Organization defines quality of life (QOL) as an individual's view of their place in life in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live (WHO, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

An harmonious, peaceful, calm, and cooperative group or social organism is prone to becoming static, indifferent, and nonresponsive to requirements for change and innovation, according to the interactionist view theory. The interactionist's fundamental contribution is to encourage leaders to maintain a constant degree of friction – just enough to make the group, leaders, or government self-critical and creative (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

Methodology

The study utilizes a survey research design which involves the collection of information from selected respondents. The population comprise of staff of ministry of Housing and Urban Development in Edo state. A sample size of eighty five (85) participants was selected using stratified sampling method taking from the total staff of ministry of Housing and Urban Development in Edo state Nigeria.

To gather information, a structured questionnaire was designed and administered on the selected participants of the study. The participants were served the questionnaire and the researcher went to retrieve them after one (1) week in order to give the participants ample time to fill out the questionnaire. The validity of the instrument was achieved using content validity trough expert review while the reliability test was carried out using Cronbach alpha test to ascertain the internal consistency of the research instrument. Descriptive statistics was utilized to present the results while the hypotheses were tested using linear regression analysis. The statistical tool for achieving the analysis was SPSS version 23.

Model Specification

The model for the research is specified as:

$$y = f(x)$$

Where:

y = Dependent variables i.e. rural/urban sustainable development

x = Independent variables i.e. conflict management

$$EG = \beta_0 + \beta_1 ACC + \mu \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

$$QL = \beta_0 + \beta_2 COM + \mu \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

Where:

QL = Quality of life

EG= Economic growth

ACC = Accommodation

COM = Communication

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.742	12

Source: Field survey, 2021

Table 2: Demographic Information of respondents

Variable	Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	15	17.6
	Female	70	82.4
Age	25-34	17	20.0
	35-44	50	58.8
	45-54	16	18.8
	55 years and above	2	2.4
Experience	10 and below	10	11.8
	11-25	16	18.8
	26-35	14	16.5
	35 years and above	45	52.9
Cadre	Junior	43	50.6
	Senior	42	49.4

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One:

H₀₁ - Accommodation does not have any significant impact on economic growth.

H₁: There is a significant impact of accommodation on economic growth.

Table 3: Model Summary for Hypothesis One

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.972	.944	.942	.214	3.029

Source: Field survey, 2020

- a. Predictors: (Constant), accommodation
b. Dependent Variable: economic growth

Table 3 shows the summary of the size of the effect of the independent variable (accommodation) on the dependent variable (economic growth). The result revealed an R-square value $R^2 = .942$, which implies that about 94% total variance in economic growth is accounted for by the independent variable (accommodation). The remaining 6% is accounted for by other variables not captured in model.

Table 4: ANOVA for Hypothesis One

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	62.583	3	20.861	453.887	.000
Residual	3.723	81	.046		
Total	66.306	84			

Source: Field survey, 2021

- a. Dependent Variable: Accommodation
b. Predictors: (Constant), economic growth

Table 4 shows that there is a positive significant relationship between accommodation and economic growth at 5% significant level. This is evidence by the result if $(^3/_{81}) = 453.887$, $P < 0.05$. This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted at 95% confident interval. Thus, the study concludes that accommodation has a significant and positive effect on economic growth in ministry of Housing and Urban Development in Edo State.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant influence of communication on quality of life

H₁: There is a significant influence of communication on quality of life

Table 5: Model Summary for Hypothesis Two

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.877	.769	.761	.383

Source: Field Survey, 2021

- a. Predictors: (Constant), communication
- b. Dependent variable: quality of life

Table 5 revealed the model result of the variables employed for this study. From the table, the value of R^2 is .769 which is an indication that about 76.9% variation in quality of life.

is explained by communication. The R^2 value which is .769 also shows the strength of the model, the closer to one, the better the result. The adjusted R^2 shows that after adjusting for the degree of freedom, the model could explain about 76% of the systematic variation in quality of life.

Table 6: ANOVA for Hypothesis Two

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	39.675	3	13.225	90.007	.000
Residual	11.902	81	.147		
Total	51.576	84			

Source: Field survey, 2020

- a. Dependent Variable: quality of life
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Communication

Table 6 shows that there is a positive significant relationship between communication and quality of life at 5% significant level. This is evidence by the result if $(^3/_{81}) = 90.007$, $P < 0.05$. This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted at 9.5% confident interval. Thus, the study concludes that communication has a significant and positive impact on quality of life in ministry of housing and rural development in Edo state.

Conclusion

Conflicts develop for a variety of reasons/combinations of reasons, hence there is no single successful management technique. The capacity to recognize and resolve the root cause(s) of any conflict is critical to an effective conflict management plan for long-term peace. As a result, this study investigated two objectives, with each outcome revealing that accommodation has a strong and significant impact on economic growth in south-south Nigeria, and that effective communication can assist improve people's quality of life.

Recommendation

The following recommendations were made in light of the significant role that conflict management plays in increasing society's long-term sustainability:

- i. In order to support economic progress, organizations/governments should provide a suitable climate through good accommodations.
- ii. To improve people's quality of life, organizations/governments should continue to communicate effectively through clear policies, transparent procedures, and rules communication.

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