

### **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).

Conflict management is a technique for limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict. Conflict resolution aims to promote learning and group outcomes such as organizational effectiveness and performance. Well-managed conflict can improve group outcomes and population diversity issues (Alpert, Tjosvaldo, &

Law, 2017). Nigeria's population is diverse, with more than 200 ethnic groups speaking over 500 indigenous languages and adhering to one of two major religions: Islam or Christianity (World Bank, 2016). The 1929 Abba riots, 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. Nigeria, particularly the rural/urban districts of south-south Nigeria, has had to find and execute effective conflict management approaches up to now (Abimbola, Okon & Charles, 2015).

As a result, conflict management is the act of lowering the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects (Rahim, 2018). While all disagreements cannot be resolved, learning how to manage them helps lessen the likelihood of unproductive escalation. According to Dalung (2019), conflict management entails the long-term management of intractable conflicts. He said, "It's the many ways in which individuals cope with grievances, standing up for what they believe is good and against what they believe is wrong." Learning conflict resolution skills, self-awareness of conflict modes, conflict communication skills, and creating a structure for resolving conflict in the workplace are all part of conflict management. It is a method that includes all declared methods, interventions, and institutional structures for preventing conflict from escalating and achieving society's long-term development goals (Dalung, 2019).

Development that fulfills present needs without risking future generations' ability to meet their own is referred to as sustainable development. Sustainable development became a hot topic in 1992 during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (the Earth Summit). Sustainable development has progressed thanks to major milestones such as the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and the 2005 World Summit. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of sustainable development in terms of economic advancement, social equity, and environmental preservation. Conflict resolution approaches can help to promote long-term development by reducing the danger of ill-informed development plans and conflict-related interruptions to ongoing projects. Effective communication and diversity management can guide the achievement of resource development assessments and agreements before a proposal is approved and a project begins, 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. Conflict, in whatever form it takes, is likely to have a number of effects (albeit at different geographical scales), including physical injury to people and natural resources, as well as a detrimental impact 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. Investigate the effects of accommodation on economic growth.
2. ascertain the impact of communication on one's 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).

### **2.1.2 Effective Communication**

According to Laurie (2020), effective communication occurs when ideas and concepts are accepted and acted upon. It also suggests that you are capable of listening to, comprehending, and acting on what others have to say. Clear policies, visible procedures, and rules communication are all part of excellent communication (Laurie, 2020).

### **2.1.3 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).

### **2.1.4 Sustainable Development**

Development that fulfills present needs without risking future generations' ability to meet their own is defined as sustainable development. Sustainable development became a popular topic in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Earth Summit). Sustainable development has evolved thanks to significant milestones like the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and the 2005 World Summit. The importance of development that is long-term 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).

### **2.1.5 Economic Growth**

Economic growth is defined as a rise in the production of economic commodities and services over time. It can be represented either nominally or in real (inflation-adjusted) terms. Although alternative measurements are occasionally used, gross national product (GNP) is the usual metric for measuring aggregate economic growth (Charles, 2021).

### **2.1.6 Quality of Life**

Quality of life (QOL) is defined by the World Health Organization as an individual's perception of their place in life in relation to their objectives, expectations, standards, and concerns within the context of their culture and value systems. (WHO, 2020).

## **Theoretical Framework**

According to the interactionist view theory, a harmonious, tranquil, quiet, and cooperative group or social organism is prone to becoming static, apathetic, and nonresponsive to demands for change and innovation. The essential contribution of an interactionist is to encourage leaders to maintain a consistent level of friction — just enough to keep the group, leaders, or government self-critical and creative (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

## **Methodology**

The study employs a survey research design, which entails gathering data from a sample of respondents. Staff from Edo state's Ministry of Housing and Urban Development make up the population. A total of 85 participants were chosen using a stratified sampling approach from the ministry of Housing and Urban Development's entire employees in Edo state, Nigeria.

A structured questionnaire was prepared and administered to the study's selected participants in order to obtain information. The questionnaire was served to the participants, and the researcher returned to collect them after one week to give them enough time to complete the questionnaire. The instrument's validity was established by expert evaluation, and the reliability test was conducted using the Cronbach alpha test to determine the research

instrument's internal consistency. The data were presented using descriptive statistics, and the hypotheses were tested using linear regression analysis. SPSS version 23 was used as the statistical tool for the analysis.

### 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

**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:

$H_{01}$  - Accommodation does not have any significant impact on economic growth.

$H_1$ : There is a significant impact of accommodation on economic growth.

**Table 3: Model Summary**

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**

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

Table 3 summarizes the magnitude of the independent variable's (accommodation) effect on the dependent variable (economic growth). The R-square value was  $R^2 = .942$ , indicating that the independent variable accounts for around 94 percent of the entire variance in economic development (accommodation). Other variables not included in the model account for the remaining 6%.

**Table 4: ANOVA**

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

**Source: Field survey, 2021**

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

Table 4 reveals that there is a 5% significant positive association between accommodation and economic growth. This is supported by the fact that  $(3/81) = 453.887$ ,  $P < 0.05$ . At a 95% confidence interval, this means the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. In the ministry of Housing and Urban Development in Edo State, the study suggests that accommodation has a large and favorable effect on economic growth.

### Hypothesis Two

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant influence of communication on quality of life

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant influence of communication on quality of life

**Table 5: Model Summary**

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. The  $R^2$  value of .769 also demonstrates the model's strength; the closer to one, the better. After accounting for the degree of freedom, the modified  $R^2$  suggests that the model can explain around 76% of the systematic variance in quality of life.

**Table 6:****ANOVA**

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 reveals that, at a 5% significance level, there is a positive significant association between communication and quality of life. This is demonstrated by the fact that  $(3/81) = 90.007$ ,  $P < 0.05$ . At a 95% confidence interval, this means that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. As a result of the study, the ministry of housing and rural development in Edo state finds that communication has a large and positive impact on quality of life.

### **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.

Furthermore, it is probable and plausible that sustainable growth will only be viable and likely when there is less misunderstanding. Good inter-group and intra-group connections, as well as a well-designed program for improved living, should be incorporated into a country's educational system.



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