

Ethno-Religious Conflict and Its Impact on Intergroup Relations in Yobe South, Yobe State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The outbreak of conflict in social settings is an intrinsic part of human history, and ethno-religious conflict has been a persistent social phenomenon. In Nigeria, with its multireligious groups and conspicuous rivalry have consequences on intergroup relations, and religious rivalry underpinned the structural configuration in the society. The objective of this paper is to assess the impact of ethno-religious conflict on intergroup relations in Yobe South, Yobe State, Nigeria. The paper adopts Realistic Group Conflict Theory of Intergroup Conflict. The paper utilizes primary data consisting collection of data using questionnaire. The population of the study comprises all adults both men and women in Yobe South, of Yobe State, Nigeria. Specifically, this study will cover all the four local government areas in Yobe South. Namely, Fika, Fune, Nangere and Potiskum. The study employs a survey research design using primary data. The sample size for this study is (518) which is determined by adopting Yamane formula for calculating sample size for finite population. The major findings of this paper based on the objective of the study revealed that ethno-religious conflict affect intergroup relations in Yobe South. The conclusion from the results of this study showed that people with cross- group friends living in communities where this form of conflict were experienced tend to develop negative intergroup relations. The paper recommends that structural reform that engenders an inclusive political system, equitable distribution of resources, greater roles for religious and traditional leaders, religious tolerance, and bridging of the gap between the rich and the poor will undoubtedly decrease if not completely eradicate the constant outbreak of ethno-religious conflicts in Yobe South, Yobe State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Intergroup Relations, Ethno-Religious conflicts, peacebuilding, Yobe State, Northern Nigeria.

Introduction

Intergroup relation in Nigeria has become synonymous with hostility perception and assumed debilitating proportions. Notable threats to intergroup relations include ethnic politics, struggle for power and resources. Living together in a nation that is made up of different ethnic and religion groups demand a lot of efforts in the area of peace education, confidence building and peacemaking to create the much-desired atmosphere of peace and stability.

Nigeria is made up of over 250 ethnic nationalities, among them the dominant three Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. Nigeria has about 190 million people boast of about an equal number of the world two dominant and seemingly perpetually feuding religious- Christianity and Islam. A significant number of traditional worshipers also account for the country numerical strength. Social relation among the disparate Nigerian social groups have however been characterized by intense rivalry and competition for scarce resources and vantage placement on the socio-political ladder (Halliru, 2012).

Ethnic identity issues and hostility perception have scarred Nigeria for decades since her independence in 1960. This ugly development has not only hampered national integration but also negatively influenced the quality of leadership. There are notable clichés in the political landscape, including 'majority rule, rotational presidency, tenure elongation, single tenure, third-term agenda, zoning of leadership, party agreement for power rotation, and minority rights. There is no doubt that Nigeria, as currently constituted, is characterized by contestations and struggle for power at the Federal level, which remains at the center of most internecine (social) conflicts across the country (Soyemi, 2016).

In Nigeria ethnic identities or differences are mobilized in the events of competition, conflict, and cooperation. The same situation applies in the case of religious mobilization. Often, scarcity of resources and the closing in of competitive social, economic and political spaces, group marginality and grievances based on ethnic and religious identities, greed and competition for resources, as well as inherent primordial sentiments or hatred, mutually and exclusively reinforces negative mobilization of ethnic and religious identities in Nigeria (Shuaib, 2020).

In the 1980s, particularly in northern Nigeria, ethnic and religious violence have become unprecedented. This period witnessed ethnic and religious crises, particularly the Maitatsine crisis in Kaduna, Kano, Plateau, and the defunct Gongola States (now, Taraba State and Adamawa State). The return to civil rule on 29 May 1999 brought new dynamics in the manifestations of ethnic and religious violence. Since 2002, northern Nigeria has been experiencing ethnic and religious violence, mainly between Hausa-Fulani Muslims and the Christian population in northern Nigeria. Because ethnicity and religion have politicized, every conflict in northern Nigeria finds interpretation in that context. The consequences of modelling every conflict to take ethnic and religious dimensions have been deleterious for intergroup relations in Nigeria (Gaunt, 2021).

Despite the assurance and measures taken for the safety of lives and property by the state government, the safety scenario in the state has persevered to deteriorate with massive affection too the economic and political development in the state. Therefore, the paper examines the effect of ethno-religious conflict on intergroup relations in Yobe South, Yobe State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

It has been the concern of both the national and local peace committee in Nigeria to ensure peaceful co-existence among the diverse ethno-religious groups so as to maintain unity of

the country. Yet, Northern Nigeria, specifically, the Northeast and Yobe State in particular has witnessed high propensity of ethno-religious conflicts from 1999 to date. The widespread of these menaces has become a serious challenge that could disrupt or threatening the intergroup relations in Nigeria, particularly Yobe South.

Yobe State located in Northeastern Nigeria, has been grappling with significant number of conflicts, ranging from ethno-religious tensions to insurgency-related violence. These conflicts have had far-reaching consequences, affecting not only the immediate communities involved but also the broader intergroup relations within the State. The impact of intergroup relations in Yobe South, Yobe State presents a complex and critical research area that requires deeper exploration.

The primary problem to address is to understand how various conflicts in the State have shaped intergroup relations among different ethnic, religious and social groups. The State's diverse population, comprising different tribes and religion, has experienced increasing instances of tension, mistrust, and prejudice due to prolonged exposure to conflicts. The dynamics of intergroup relations might have undergone significant changes, with potential implications for social cohesion, peacebuilding efforts and overall stability in the region.

It is in the light of the above problem and the desire to fill the identified gap, that this study seeks to assess the impact of conflicts on intergroup relations in Yobe South, Yobe State, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

This study's key objective is to assess the impact of ethno-religious conflict on intergroup relations in Yobe South, Yobe State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

According to Paul (2019) the word conflict is derived from two Latin words *con* meaning "coming together", and *fligere* meaning "to strike". Therefore, conflict means a state of opposition or hostilities, a fight or struggle. It is a clash of opposing principles, the opposition of incompatible wishes or needs (Paul, 2019). Conflict is the balancing of vectors of powers of capabilities to provide effects (Ushe, 2015). Halliru (2012) sees conflict as a state of antagonism, that is, the result of disagreements that arise between two or more people or group of people that have either produced or threaten to produce loss of life, freedom, land, property or livelihood, or cause mental or physical abuse.

Imobighe (2012) defines conflict as a condition of disharmony in an interactional process. He further states that conflict is the direct result of a clash of interest by the parties involved and it arises usually as a result of the pursuit of incompatible ends or the use of incompatible means to pursue desired goals. Salem (2013) defined conflict as the existence of divergent interests within a group or the result of each group or class trying to pursue her interest and, in the process, come against one another with conflict emerging. He further states that

conflict is a state of tension which exists when one party perceives that its goals, needs, desires or expectations are being blocked by another party.

Bar-Tal (2013) affirmed that a conflict is a situation in which two or more parties perceive their goals, intentions and actions as being mutually incompatible and act in accordance with this perception. As can be noticed, conflict has one of its main roots in the parties' thinking and perceptions. They hold onto beliefs and perceptions and act according to them, resulting to alienation and broken relations.

Ethno-Religious Conflict in Nigeria

(Chabal, 2012). Ethnicity and religion are the most ferocious variables of intergroup relations in Nigeria. Nigeria is a country with more than 250 ethnic groups, speaking over 500 languages with the Igbo spoken dominantly in the southeast, Yoruba in southwest and Hausa and Fulani languages dominating the northern Nigeria, respectively. Christianity and Islam are two major religions evenly divided between the north-south territories of Nigeria (Eniola, 2016).

Nigeria is deeply divided along the fault lines of ethnicity and religion. In the political arena, ethnic and religious groups are mobilized by political elites as powerful instruments to achieve certain goals, which could be for their interests, cronies, ethnic and/or religious groups (Hakeem, 2015). Young (2016) puts it aptly that in Nigeria ethnic identities or differences are mobilized in the events of competition, conflict, and cooperation. The same situation applies in the case of religious mobilization. Often, scarcity of resources and the closing in of competitive social, economic and political spaces, group marginality and grievances based on ethnic and religious identities, greed and competition for resources, as well as inherent primordial sentiments or hatred, mutually and exclusively reinforces negative mobilization of ethnic and religious identities in Nigeria. Fundamentally, ethnic and religious mobilizations were early in the politics of Nigeria. What today constitutes Nigeria previously consisted of diverse ethnic groups and settlements organized in the forms of caliphates, kingdoms, chiefdoms, nations, and communities with varying political and religious arrangements (Kaufmann, 2015).

The scramble and partition of Africa amongst colonial powers altered the existing ethnic and religious organizations and led to the introduction of new social, economic and political structures to serve some specific colonial interests (Lars-Erik, Wimmer & Brian, 2010). Toward the end of colonial rule in Nigeria, while struggling for independence, the various ethnic and regional political classes mobilized separately to agitate for independence. Political consciousness amongst these people was based on ethnic and religious identities. The pattern of political organizations and speeches from leaders of major political parties in the Nigeria's First Republic were indications of the crystallization of Nigeria along dangerous ethnic and religious fault lines. Although religion was not as important as ethnicity to the political classes of southern Nigeria, it was a major determinant of intergroup relations in Northern Nigeria (David & Daniel, 2011).

Intergroup Relations

Intergroup relations refer to both individual interactions involving members from different groups and the collective behavior of groups in interaction with other groups, at either the intra or inter organizational level. The classic definition of intergroup relations was originally provided by Sharif (2016) who suggested whenever individuals belonging to one group interact, collectively or individually, with another group or its members in terms of their group identification, we have an instance of intergroup behavior. Intergroup relations, therefore, implies the existence of mutually exclusive groups that are in constant interaction with one another. These mutually exclusive groups due to the mode of their social bond usually exhibited attitude of togetherness towards members of their mutual group the same attitude to the other members of the out group.

group contact and interactions between groups. This ordinarily implies that it is the logical consequences of contact between people, in which case, it deals with human beings and is therefore a social phenomenon.

Empirical Review

Generally, the nature of ethno-religious conflict and its implication for intergroup relation has been explored by scholars of diverse backgrounds. In specific terms, the topic of ethno-religious crises, causative factors, and consequences has also featured prominently in the lenses of scholars. With this in mind, this section will examine empirical analysis of ethno-religious conflicts with relation to intergroup relation in Nigeria.

Hassan et al. (2013) on ethnic crisis, and good governance in Nigeria: implications for sustainable national development. The study relied on concepts and previous researches. The study found out among others that; ethnicity has remained the single most threatening trigger of crises in Nigeria and it is strongly supported by object poverty which leaves a larger part of its citizenry grossly frustrated and easily swayed by opportunities to vent this frustration. Similarly, its implication for good governance and sustainable national development is huge in that, employment and appointments into public service hardly respect the merit rule because ethnic considerations are put ahead of merit and national interest. The implication is worsening underdevelopment and general failure of governance at all levels.

Adam (2013) examined the intergroup relations among ethnically diverse university students. The study was conducted in Bahir Dar University, one of the public Universities in Ethiopia a country of "indigenous ethnic diversity". The participant were students, teachers and support staff selected using purposive and snowball sampling. Necessary data were collected through interview focus group discussion. The study revealed different factors that facilitate and impede intergroup relations among students. The study also showed that students generally have positive attitude toward outgroups and developing positive intergroup relations. The finding has very strong implications in managing intergroup relations not only in universities but also in the society. The university management, however, was found unable to provide much support to such positive attitudes and

promoting diversity mainly because of lack of institutional priority as well as managers confidence and diversity management skills.

For De Juan and Henze (2021) investigated the plausibility of a prominent channel according to which scarcity of natural resources can foster violent conflict through deteriorating intergroup relations. In addition to assessing the direct effects of adverse environmental conditions on intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic trust we suggest a conditional argument on the role of horizontal inequality of hazard exposure. Environmental hazards are unequal if they systematically affect ethnic groups differently. While inequality may reinforce intra- ethnic ties and outgroup suspicion, equal hazard exposure may create a sense of unity among diverse victims in their collective struggle to cope with harsh environmental conditions.

Different systems of sociocultural and religious practices. As a result, relationships between people of different religions and ethnicity tend to be shaped by contextual discrimination, a lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion, and fear, as the history of intergroup relations among Nigeria's ethnic and religious groups has illustrated.

This explains why, since 1980, 'ethno- religious' crises have remained a prominent feature in Nigeria's national life. It's thus clear that conflict perpetuates a state of rivalry and competition between groups whose interests intersect. Scholars have linked the outbreak of ethno-religious crises to several factors. For instance, Halliru (2012) carried out a study on ethno-religious conflicts: a study of North-Eastern Nigeria (2000-2007). The study investigates the history of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria and argues that the foundation of ethno-religious and political conflicts was laid by the issues of colonialism, and which has been supported by the Nigerian Military dictatorship, followed by the contradictions compounded in the Nigerian federalism.

The study also outlined the general background of the ethno-religious and political conflicts in Nigeria with peculiar reference to North-East region. The study reveals that ethno-religious intolerance, poverty occasioned by unemployment, corruption, illiteracy and ignorance, economic hardship and poor leadership are the most significant hindrances to the peace process, unity and political stability in the area. The study concludes that good governance, accountability, alleviation of poverty and unemployment, education reform and restructuring of federalism are most important issues to be addressed in order to control the impact of ethno-religious and political conflicts'

Regrettably, each outbreak of ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria, particularly in Yobe South, Yobe State usually comes at a huge cost. The regular occurrence of conflicts linked to ethnic and religious backgrounds has given rise to the destruction of lives and properties, breakdown of law and order and displacement of citizens in the area.

Theoretical Framework

The Realistic Group theory proposes that conflicts between groups is not something irrational but on actual need for resources, it is conflict theory because it rejects the idea that group could share and cooperate. The theory explains how intergroup hostility can

arise as a result of conflicting goals and competition over limited resources, also offers an explanation for the feelings of prejudice and discrimination toward the out group that accompany the intergroup hostility. Group may be in competition for a real or perceived scarcity of resources such as money, political power, military protection, or social status. The theory further explains that the struggle over limited resources, power, and influence, and the quest to sustain dominance over the disadvantaged and powerless in society is at the root of conflict within human societies. In other words, it examines how groups within a society compete for scarce resources.

Therefore, most conflicts in Nigeria have been traced to the roots of structural issues that have manifested through struggles for resources, power, resistance to religious domination, or protection of religious belief. This is because these factors confer advantages in Nigeria's socio-economic and political spheres characterized by competition and class struggle. Struggles over these issues, especially in Nigeria made up of over 250 ethnic groups, have often manifested in conflicts of ethnic and religious nature. So, the emergence of such groups as Boko Haram, Niger Delta Militants (MEND), Independent People of Biafra (IPOB), and bandits are ripple effects of the competition over power, resources, influence and to assert religious influence. Salawu, (2010) noted that the accusations and allegations of neglect, oppression, dominance, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization, nepotism, and bigotry that result from structural framing that induces exploited groups against each other are key sources of what we currently see as ethno-religious conflicts and intergroup relations in Nigeria.

This perspective is a veritable tool for analysis in the study and understanding of the nature/patterns of intergroup relations in a multi-cultural society like Nigeria and so is appealing to this study. It is appealing in the sense that it enables us to dissect the nature of the intergroup relations in the country. It equally enables us to understand the form and shape assumed by intergroup relations in Nigeria. Are the relationship cordial/harmonious or antagonistic/conflict laden? What is/are the fundamental cause(s) of this nature of relationships and the way(s) forward? This study will attempt a discuss on these contending issues raised. It is obvious therefore that to understand the nature of intergroup relations in Nigeria, one must understand the nature of material resources production, distribution and appropriation in the country. It is by so doing that we will be able to understand why ethnic and/or religion sentiment and rise of ethno-religion militias in the country, why religious bickering in the country, why the cry for resource control and the practice of true federalism etc. in the country.

Without an understanding of the materials resources base of the country, a true understanding of the nature of the intergroup relations in the country may be problematic and distorted. While not discountenancing the role of group social identification and the posturing of a positive individual/group image in the configuration of intergroup relations in the country, it will be pertinent to consider the forms and nature of the relationship arising from the material production, distribution and appropriation/expropriation by individuals/group in the relationship. This directs us to asking: what is the economic base of

the country? Who are the economic actors in the country? What is their interest(s)? How does this interest inform their individual/group relationship and how does this in turn shape the form and nature of the groups 'relationship? A consideration of these fundamental questions enables us to understand the root cause(s) and the forms of intergroup relations in Nigeria assume (Iwendi, 2016).

According to Baumeister and Vohs (2007) this theory sprang up in the 1960's. Its emergence marked a new line of thought in the field of intergroup relations. The emergence of this theory saw a dramatic shift or refocus of scholarly attention and analysis of intergroup relations from the previously dominant personal characteristics of the individual(s) to the structure of the situation. Here, emphasis shifted from analyzing intergroup relations from the point of view of the individual personal characteristics to the structure of the situation. In other words, rather than try to understand the relationship between and among various multi-cultural groups from the stand point of the differences in the personal characteristics and attributes of the various participants in the various groups, focus rather should be in understanding the form and nature of the structure and the situation informing the relationship.

This study therefore adopts realistic group conflict theory for the fact that the theory captured the variables (conflicts and intergroup relations) used in this study. Theory also holds that the struggle for scarce material resources in the society is the fundamental root cause of conflict in the society and therefore become injurious to intergroup relations within the context of a multi-cultural society like Nigeria, and, Yobe South. Yobe State.

Methodology

This study employs a survey research design. The reason for employing this research design is based on the facts that the research objective required the use of primary data. In other words, the design is preferable because it focus on vital facts, demographic information, and opinion of correspondents who respond to the research instrument. A survey research design has the advantage of being an effective means of collecting data from large number of sources or population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Besides, it enables the researcher to obtain opinions of the target population in order to find the perception of such population (Cooper & Schindler, 2008).

The research design which is survey in nature is a good fit for a study of this nature as it attempted to provide further insight into the research problem. Questionnaire is used because the study the use of primary data and because of its ability to obtain data from large number of people within a short period. Also, both descriptive statistics and regression analysis used in this study are non-experimental approach to research.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected for this study is analyzed using descriptive statistical tool of frequency, simple percentages, correlation statistics and regression analysis to test the hypothesis. The analysis is done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The population of this study is comprised of all adults both men women in Yobe South of Yobe State, Nigeria specifically; this study will cover all the four Local Government Areas in Yobe South. The four Local Government Areas in Yobe South are: Fika, Fune, Nangere and Potiskum Local Government Areas. The justification for choosing the adults is because they are the category of people who can respond to the questionnaire and give the require information. Therefore, the population of this study is based on the recently used registered voters from the independent electoral commission (INEC). Which is 1,104,113 (One Million, One Hundred and Four Thousand One Hundred and Thirteen)

Therefore, in order to determine the sample size for this study, Yamane (1967) formula for calculating sample size for finite population is adopted. One of the assumptions of this formula is that, the population from which the sample will be derived from must be a finite one and not infinite. It also assumes that the acceptable error margin for any sample must be greater than zero and never equal to or less than zero (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Yamane (1967) sample sizes determination formula is given as $n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$ where: 'n' is the sample size, 'N' is the finite population size, 1 is constant and 'e' is the level of precision.

Sampling Technique

The Sampling Technique in selecting the respondents is convenience sampling techniques. The justification for using convenient sampling techniques is based on the facts that not every youth to be contacted at a time he is willing or chanced to respond to the questionnaire at that moment.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by Local Government Areas in Yobe South Senatorial District.

Local government area		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Fika	271	52.3
	Fune	54	10.4
	Potiskum	132	25.5
	Nangere	61	11.8
	Total	518	100.0

Table 1 displays the local government area from which the respondents were drawn. Local governments with higher frequencies of the types of conflict of interest are chosen for the study. It can be observed that two hundred and seventy-one were from Fika, fifty – four were from Fune, one hundred and thirty-two from Potiskum and sixty – one was from Nangere local government areas. This gives a total of five hundred and eighteen respondents.

Demographic Information of Respondents

The study constitutes five (5) demographic variables of the respondents. These include gender, age, marital status, educational qualification and job occupation. The descriptive distributions – involving frequencies and percentages – of responses of the respondents based on these variables are given in the table below.

Table 2: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	397	76.6
	Female	121	23.4
Age	18 – 22	37	7.1
	23 – 27	68	13.1
	28 – 32	168	32.4
	33 – 37	133	25.7
	38 – 42	65	12.5
	43 – 47	32	6.5
	48 – 52	13	2.5
	53 – and above	2	0.4
Marital Status	Single	64	12.4
	Married	327	63.1
	Divorced	109	21.0
	Widow/Widower	18	3.5
Education Qualification	Primary School Certificate	200	38.6
	SSCE	298	57.6
	ND/NCE	13	2.5
	Bachelor’s degree/HND	7	1.4
Occupation	Farming	237	45.8
	Civil Servant	216	41.7
	Business	53	10.2
	Housewife	11	2.1

Source: Field Work, 2025.

The table 2 shows socio- demographic data of the respondents. the personal information of the respondents. From the results male respondents constitutes (76.6%), while that of the female respondents are (23.4%). This indicates that males are the majority respondents in the study.

For the variable age,(7.1%) of the respondents falls in the age group 18 – 22 years, (13.1%) in the age group of 23-27 years, (32.4%) were between the ages 28 – 32 years, (25.7%) falls in the age group of 33 – 42 years, (6.2%) were between the ages 43 – 47, (2.5%) were between 48 – 52 years and (0.4) were between the ages 53 and above. The age bracket 28-32 respondents participated more in the survey. Also, the majority of the participants (more than 90%) fall between 18 to 42 years.

Furthermore, the table shows that 64(12.4%) of the respondent surveyed were single, 327 (63.1%) replied to be married, 109 (21.0%) were discovered as divorced and 18 (3.5%) were widow/widower. This implies that more than half of the respondents were married. Similarly, personal data of the respondents for educational qualification of respondents also shows that 200 (38.6%) did not go beyond the primary school, 298 (38.6%) of the respondents were SSCE holders, 13 (2.5%) of the respondents possessed Diploma/NCE, 7 (1.4%) of the respondents had the Degree / Higher National Diploma and none was post graduate degree holders. Therefore, it could be deduced that majority of the respondents that participated in this research did not further their studies beyond secondary school. This is because of farming and domestic animal rearing.

On occupation, (48.8%) of them responded that they were farmers, (41.7%) surveyed to be civil servant, (10.2%) were into business, and (2.1%) affirmed that they were only housewives.

Data Analysis and Results

The data are analyzed as follows:

Table 3: Impact of Ethnic Conflict on Intergroup Relations.

S/N	Effect	Response (%)		
		Minimum Extent frequency percentage	Some Extent frequency percentage	Large Extent frequency percentage
1	It creates disunity	34 / 6.6	115 / 22.2	337 / 65.1
2	It causes distrust	36 / 6.9	356 / 68.7	119 / 23.0
3	It reduces ethnic solidarity	14 / 2.7	226 / 43.6	271 / 52.3
4	It brings division among members	35 / 6.8	356 / 68.7	121 / 23.4
5	It causes population displacement	31 / 6.0	140 / 27.0	332 / 64.1

Source: Field Work 2025.

The table 3 above presents the extent to which ethnic conflict affect the people in the study area. A large proportion (65.1%) of respondents agree that ethnic conflict creates disunity, to a large extent 68.7% agree, while to some extent that ethnic conflict causes distrust, 52.3% agreed that ethnic conflict reduces ethnic solidarity to a large extent, while 64.1% believed that it causes population displacement to a large extent. From the analysis above, the majority of the respondents affirmed that ethnic conflict brings divide among members of the community in Yobe South of Yobe State.

Table 4: Impact of Religious Conflict on Intergroup Relations

S/N	Effect	Response (%)					
		SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean
1	It creates tension and insecurity	6.6	6.7	16.0	18.7	50.6	2.76
2	It induces in carrying out daily activities	6.4	17.0	5.7	39.9	28.8	3.41
3	It leads to destructions of property	5.4	7.7	23.0	21.2	39.2	3.72
4	It reduces peaceful relationship and coexistence	0.2	19.1	9.3	38.7	28.6	3.44
5	It reduces economic activities	10.4	12.4	19.0	33.9	22.8	3.32

Source: Field Work 2025.

The results contained in table 4 above show how religious conflict affect the people in the study area. Each statement in the table was rated with a mean score. Clearly, religious conflict leads to destruction, reduces peaceful relationship and coexistence, and also reduces economic activities as indicated by their respective mean scores. The results indicate 50.6% of respondents strongly agreed it creates tension and insecurity among the people in the area. 39.9% of the respondents agreed it induces fear in carrying out usual daily activities by the people in the area. Also, 39.2% of respondents strongly agreed it leads to the destruction of property in the area, while 38.7% of the respondents agreed and 28.6% strongly agreed it reduces the peaceful relationship and coexistence of the people in the area. Also, 33.9% agreed and 28.8% strongly agreed that it reduces the level of economic activities and farming in the area.

From the analysis above, the majority of the respondents agreed that Religious Conflict reduces the peaceful relationship and coexistence of the people in Yobe South of Yobe State. While 50.6% strongly agreed that it creates tension and insecurity in the study area, thereby affecting intergroup relations.

Impact of Conflict on Intergroup Relations

Table 5: Ethnic conflict and intergroup relations

S/N	Extent to which ethnic conflict affect the people in the community	Response (Frequency / Percent)		
		Minimum Extent	Some Extent	Large Extent
1	Causes distrust amongst people in our Area?	0 / 0	18 / 36	32 / 64
2	Engender competition over scarce resources.	0 / 0	14 / 28	36 / 72
3	Injustice in terms of resources distribution	0 / 0	27 / 54	23 / 46
4	Access to education is denied.	0 / 0	34 / 68	16 / 32
5	Causes disunity amongst our people.	0 / 0	31 / 62	19 / 38
6	Destruction of business thereby affecting economic relations.	0 / 0	18 / 36	32 / 64
7	Affects facilities such as health care services.	0 / 0	27 / 54	23 / 46
8	Victims end up losing their lives or contracting diseases.	0 / 0	20 / 44	30 / 60

The table 5 show how the impact of ethnic conflict on intergroup relations is examined. From the result, it can be observed that interviewees said that ethnic conflict to large extent causes distrust amongst people in our area and engenders competition over scarce resources. to some extent. The entire interviewees held the belief that ethnic conflict has effect on the items that measure intergroup relation in Yobe South of Yobe State.

Table 6: Religious conflict and intergroup relations

S/N	Ways in which religious conflict affect intergroup relation in your area	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Constant conflict between different political groups in our community.	0	0	0	38	62
2	Causes injustice with regards to power rotation.	0	0	0	42	58
3	Denies communities political participation as a result of election rigging	0	0	0	56	44
4	Creates enmity among people in our community.	0	0	2	56	42
5	Brings division between the members of a community and communities.	0	0	2	56	42
6	Breaks alliances with other groups in our community.	0	2	4	58	36
7	Population displacement and movement of persons to IDP camps.	0	0	0	64	36

Table 6 show the impact of religious conflict on intergroup relations. Participant interviewed believed that religious conflict has an overwhelming effect on Inter group relations. It brings division between members of a community and communities. It also, breaks alliances with other groups and creates enemyntiy among people in the community.

Discussion of Findings

The general findings of the study based on its objective revealed that ethnic conflict have significant relationship on intergroup relations and religious conflict have overwhelming relationship on intergroup relations in Yobe South of Yobe State, Nigeria.

The assessment of the effect of ethnic conflict on intergroup relations in Yobe South of Yobe State show that ethnic conflict has positive and significant relationship on intergroup relations in the area.

This position agreed with the study conducted by Hassan et al. (2013) on ethnic crisis, and good governance in Nigeria: implications for sustainable national development. The study relied on concepts and previous researches. The study found out among others that; ethnicity has remained the single most threatening trigger of crises in Nigeria and it is strongly supported by object poverty which leaves a larger part of its citizenry grossly frustrated and easily swayed by opportunities to vent this frustration. Similarly, its implication for good governance and sustainable national development is huge in that, employment and appointments into public service hardly respect the merit rule because

ethnic considerations are put ahead of merit and national interest. The implication is worsening underdevelopment and general failure of governance at all levels.

Adam (2013) examined the intergroup relations among ethnically diverse university students. The study was conducted in Bahir Dar University, one of the public Universities in Ethiopia a country of "indigenous ethnic diversity". The participants were students, teachers and support staff selected using purposive and snowball sampling. Necessary data were collected through interview focus group discussion. The study revealed different factors that facilitate and impede intergroup relations among students. The study also showed that students generally have positive attitude toward outgroups and developing positive intergroup relations. The finding has very strong implications in managing intergroup relations not only in universities but also in the society. The university management, however, was found unable to provide much support to such positive attitudes and promoting diversity mainly because of lack of institutional priority as well as managers confidence and diversity management skills.

On the assessment of the Impact of the religious conflict on intergroup relations in Yobe South, of Yobe State. Findings revealed that result from the analysis fail to provide enough evidence that there is relationship between religious conflict and intergroup relations in the area. This finding agreed with the finding of Benneth et al. (2022) who examined the relationship between religious diversity, religious and national identity, neighborhood trust and found that there were no associations between religious diversity, national identification, and neighborhood trust. For the other religious groups, no significant associations were found between our variables of interest. The study only relied on concepts and empirical reviews.

Also, according to Babangida (2020:p11), cited in Idahosa & Akov, (2013), the regular occurrence linked to ethnic and religious backgrounds has given rise to waste of enormous human and material resources in ethnically and religiously inspired violent encounter, clashes and even battles, threats to security of life and properties the heightening of the fragility of the economy and political process. Condemning the incessant outbreak of ethno-religious conflicts in Plateau State in the early 2000s, Obasanjo lists the consequences to include: the destruction of lives and properties, break down of law and order, displacement of citizens, and loss of foreign investments.

Conclusion

The wave of ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria since independence has been estimated loss of over three million lives and unquantifiable damages. In spite of the ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria and their long history, the present and past government have failed to tackle this problem through articulate policy actions. The conflict management has been poor as government continues to rely on coercive method and always resorts to the use of whitepaper emanating from them which are not implemented. Nigeria emerge as a free and democratic society; a society where the worth and dignity of the individual is accorded

to all irrespective of religious and ethnic inclination. All hands must be on deck to root out the menace of ethno-religious bigotry from the social system.

The resurgence of ethnic conflicts gave birth to ethnic militias in Nigeria with different security implications considering the military attributes of the groups and individuals involved. Other causes of conflicts include corruption, domination, and marginalization, the breakdown of traditional institutions, victimization and use of military troops by Nigerian government in managing conflict. This is a failure on the part of Nigerian government, but the eradication of the ugly trend is an impossible task. Unfortunately, over 50 percent of Nigerian youths particularly in the Northern part of the country are unemployed and are easily attracted to the extremist groups such as Boko Haram. Otherwise, managing the Nigerian experience of ethno-religious crisis will remain a daunting task

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusions drawn by the study, the following recommendations are offered:

- a. Structural reform that engenders an inclusive political system, equitable distribution of resources, greater roles for religious and traditional leaders, religious tolerance, and bridging of the gap between the rich and the poor will undoubtedly decrease if not completely eradicate the constant outbreak of ethno-religious conflicts in Yobe South. Yobe State. Nigeria.
- b. Federal Government should come up with robust conflicts management process that seek to provide good conflicts resolution mechanism rather than rely on coercive method and always resorts to the use of whitepaper emanating from them which are not genuinely implemented.
- c. The government at the Federal level should provide educational reform across all states, especially in the North, in that regard emphasis on peace and unity should be a part of the focus of educational curriculum from tender age.
- d. The government at the Federal and indeed the State levels should strive hard to provide good governance to the people by providing social security and other necessary incentives to encourage self-development
- e. Federal and State governments should respect merit rule in employment and appointments into public service rather than ethnic, religious or social status considerations at the detriment of merit and national interest.
- f. Deliberate efforts should be made by State government to include more individuals in Yobe State as well as recognize and harness their potentials as peace agents in their communities.

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