

Social Disagreement and Academic Progress in Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria

Omono, Cletus Ekok

*Department of Sociology,
University of Calabar*

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Abstract

The study investigated academic advancement and social discord in the Nigerian state of Cross River's Yala local government district. The survey method is the research design used in this investigation. Stratified sampling and purposive sampling are the sample methods employed in this investigation. The sample was chosen from Yala LGA areas that have recently been embroiled in land disputes. For the study, the following communities were chosen: Okwabang, Bebuo, Danare, Boje, Nsadop, and Iso-Bendeghe. A total of three hundred (300) respondents were chosen as the study's sample. 150 males and 150 females make up this sample. Respondents in the research area were given the questionnaire, which was used to collect data. Based on the variable being studied, the data from the questionnaire was converted into data codes for statistical analysis. Percentages and bar charts were used to interpret the data, which was displayed in tables. At the 0.05 level of significance, chi-square (χ^2) analysis was used to test and examine the hypotheses. The results demonstrate how communal disputes have hampered educational advancement and negatively impacted educational development by upsetting school operations, uprooting instructors and pupils, and causing infrastructure damage. The study suggests that in order to advance peace, bolster security, and fund educational infrastructure in the study area, a coordinated effort from the government, communities, and civil society organizations is essential.

Keywords: *Social Disagreement and Academic Progress*

Corresponding Author: *Omono, Cletus Ekok*

Background to the Study

In many parts of Nigeria, especially Yala Local Government Area (LGA) in Cross River State, communal disputes have been a persistent problem. Land, resource, ethnic, and political disputes are frequently the root causes of these conflicts. These conflicts have a significant impact on scholastic advancement even though they also tear apart communities' social cohesion. The roots of conflicts, their effects on education, and potential solutions for fostering peace and educational advancement in the region are all examined in this study, which delves into the complex relationship between community conflicts and educational development in Yala LGA. Over the years, major crises have arisen as a result of conflicts among communities over territorial claims, socioeconomic resource preservation, and the implementation of physical development or traditional practices (Ukpong & Okoroafor, 2021). Millions of people have been impacted by these conflicts, which have resulted in lost possibilities for social order, economic loss, and the destruction of housing and essential community infrastructure, particularly in the area of education (Ojo & Fatile, 2011). Short-term or long-term communal conflicts have a direct or indirect impact on locals and impose significant individual and social costs on the human environment.

Experiences in other African countries, however, show that the drawbacks of war greatly exceed any possible advantages (Nwankwo & Ukandu, 2020). The loss of farmland, the depletion of land-based mineral resources, the degradation of urban land during and after conflicts, the inability to preserve historically or culturally significant land, and the restricted access to urban land for socio-economic or physical development initiatives are just a few of the negative effects of communal conflicts (Egbe, 2019). Community conflicts have resulted in the displacement of numerous communities in Nigeria, especially in Cross River State. For example, the socioeconomic well-being of the residents of Yala Local Government Area has been severely impacted by violent community disputes. Conflicts in a number of Yala settlements, including Itega, Oba, Ipoulo, Wanikande, Yahe, and Ugaga, have occurred recently, causing extensive property and human damage. The basis for this study is the destruction of homes, schools, marketplaces, farms, and other infrastructure, which has left people terrified and stifled once-thriving economic activity.

Statement of the Problem

Conflict is a common feature of human society, and this is true everywhere, especially in Nigeria and Africa. All around the nation, reports of intercommunal strife are common. Bridges, roads, railways, schools, hospitals, airports, seaports, and companies are among the infrastructure essential to economic progress that is destroyed as a result of these conflicts. In addition, malnutrition and starvation brought on by the conflict, as well as direct violence, claim countless lives. In these wars, the elderly, women, and children—who are the most vulnerable—suffer the most. Violence survivors frequently suffer from long-lasting psychological and physical wounds. While some people are displaced and end up as refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs), children in particular may experience acute malnutrition, which can cause mental abnormalities. Socioeconomic activities are severely hampered in such circumstances.

According to research, communities impacted by intercommunal violence face significant obstacles to educational advancement (Onwumere & Egwu, 2015). Interpersonal relationships are further damaged by the fear of violence from neighboring communities, making life challenging for the locals. This is especially true for the communities in Yala Local Government Area, where it is difficult to achieve development due to persistent community strife. This study will provide insight into how community conflict affects educational advancement in Cross River State's Yala Local Government Area. The purpose of this study is to investigate how communal violence affects the advancement of education in the Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Disagreements or miscommunications between two or more communities are referred to as communal conflict. Groups within a society are involved in this type of social conflict (Orji, Ene & Nwoba, 2015). In contrast to inter-communal conflict, which occurs between many communities, intra-communal conflict occurs within a single group. Due of their frequent social connections, these groups may become more competitive, particularly when it comes to land (Orji, Ene & Nwoba, 2015). Although government forces are usually not involved, parties with armed militias are involved in communal land conflicts. However, when the government is thought to favor one group over another, these conflicts can turn into full-fledged wars, as has happened in Burundi, Rwanda, and Darfur (Kahl, 2006).

According to Onwudiwe (2004), the term "communal" describes phenomena that are connected to a particular group, community, or ethnicity. Contrarily, conflict stands for any miscommunication that has the potential to result in combat or perhaps war. According to Akwara and Enwuchola (2011), community conflict is defined as violent confrontations between groups of people over things like political disagreements, religious divisions, or land ownership that frequently end in fatalities and property damage. According to Azuonwu (2002), communal conflict is defined as one that arises between two or more communities. Violence that is committed along ethnic lines and targets victims according to their ethnic group is known as communal violence or inter-communal violence (Horowitz, 2000). Dzurgba (2006) states that disagreements over land, farms, and fishing grounds frequently serve as the focal point of communal strife.

All of these concepts emphasize how community conflict is sometimes confused with ethnic or community strife. These kinds of disputes, in which members of the community take part, are among the main issues facing modern human society. Generally, communal groupings have a shared culture and geographic location. Primary identities predominate in these groups, and national or cultural links are frequently used to determine membership (Orji, 2015). Being social and political creatures, humans reside in communities that are regulated by laws and traditions. People can participate in socio-economic and socio-political activities and reach their full potential in these communities (Philo, 2012). Social and economic elements interact to form the socio-economic context, which has a big impact on how communities and countries grow (Edwin, 2016). People are socio-political beings who participate in a variety of socio-economic and political activities at the local, state, and federal levels. They may be members of cultural groups, communities, or societies.

Communities have frequently clashed over boundaries, which serve to define them, particularly in rural areas. Boundaries should ideally be established for the convenience of people rather than to cause conflict. However, because border disputes are viewed as life-or-death situations, they often result in confrontations. In Nigeria, almost every village has gone through some kind of communal strife, frequently because of disagreements over land. Competition for access to land and other natural resources is typically the root cause of these disputes. If the parties were prepared to look for solutions, many of these disputes could be settled (Orji, Ene & Nwoba, 2015).

By destroying infrastructure, interfering with industrial processes, and taking resources away from useful purposes, communal disputes seriously impede socioeconomic growth (Adetula, 2010). Community and national educational progress have suffered greatly as a result of the regular recurrence of communal strife. In rural areas, where they frequently take on an ethnic dimension, communal conflicts are especially common. They have a substantial impact on the socioeconomic activities of the impacted communities and touch all facets of life. Conflicts between communities, for example, have a detrimental effect on agriculture, cause homes to burn, and force people to relocate.

In order to comprehend the dynamics of communal conflict, Ajaegbu (2014) highlighted the significance of location, interaction, and sustenance. People connect, work together, and reside in particular geographic locations, which can lead to disagreement or conflict. The connection between interaction and closeness is still vital, even with the advancements in communication technologies. Conflicts in any social structure, according to Mulin (2012), frequently result from disparities in viewpoints, a lack of resources, role conflicts, unfair treatment, and territorial rights breaches. When two different community groups disagree, usually over participation, social control, or the production and consumption of products, communal conflicts usually result (Warren, 2008). These conflicts are a result of social relations and frequently stem from disagreements about cultural values, beliefs, power, and economic matters (Robinson, 2008; Coleman, 2011).

Causes of Communal Conflict in Nigeria

According to Orji, Ene, and Nwoba (2015), communal disputes in Nigeria are caused by a number of factors that differ depending on the region. According to Yecho (2006), the underlying causes of these conflicts are dynamic and subject to alter at any given time depending on the socioeconomic and geographic conditions. Community conflicts are caused by a number of variables, including economic migration, population expansion, and anti-poor government policies (Onwudiwe, 2004). According to Orji et al. (2015), Horowitz highlighted how politics and the self-interest of politicians contribute to these conflicts.

Other factors, according to Albert (2001), include issues with indigenous peoples and settlers, religious disagreements, conflicts over resources and property ownership, and the objectives and aspirations of various groups. Vaevar (2002) identified poverty, hunger in rural areas, unemployment, and the growing demand for land for agriculture as causes of intercommunal strife. According to Angya and Doki (2006), community land crises are caused by a number of

variables, including leadership concerns, exploitation, deprivation, and the dominance of main ethnic groups over minority ones. According to Chikarire et al. (2016), communal conflicts are frequently caused by land disputes, traditional leadership struggles, land counterclaims, poverty, and unemployment.

Different facets of the problem have been highlighted by other academics. Lyam (2000) pointed out that environmental deterioration, including soil erosion, deforestation, bush burning, and flooding, might cause communal conflicts, while Hemebe (2000) attributed these conflicts to political battles. According to Yecho (2006), the main reasons of intercommunal disputes include low economic status, high rates of illiteracy, and a desire for or fear of dominance. Religious conflicts, rivalry for livelihood resources, and traditional chieftaincy issues were highlighted by Oboh and Hynde (2006) as additional variables.

Competition for limited resources, particularly land and water, is frequently at the core of intercommunal disputes, according to Kahl (2006). When communities vie for access, use, and management of resources for their diverse socioeconomic endeavors, these conflicts result. Depending on whether these disputes are between distinct types of resource users (such as farmers and pastoralists) or between comparable resource users (such as various farming groups), their nature and dynamics might differ greatly (Kughue, Daudu & Irornenege, 2017).

Boundary disputes, political conflicts, conflicts over land resources, conflicts of interest and values, and conflicts over limited resources are some of the distinct categories of community conflicts that Ikurekong et al. (2012) found in Nigeria. Political rivalry, unhealthy competition for prestige among community leaders, aggressive struggle for environmental resources, and divergent value systems can all contribute to these conflicts.

In Nigeria, there is hardly a year that passes without a major violent communal conflict, according to Banjo (2008) and IFPCR (2012). Conflict and conflict management became a major topic of discussion after the Ogoni uprising in 1993. According to Osaghae (2011), ethnic and identity crises are the main causes of these confrontations. Other scholars, however, like Ihonvbere and Shaw (2008) and Omoweh (2008, 2009, and 2011), contend that these disputes have more to do with the character of capitalist development and underdevelopment than they do with concerns of race and identity.

Community conflicts are not new, according to Ogar (2011), particularly in Nigeria's socioculturally complex culture, which is made up of many different ethnic nationalities and linguistic groupings. In Nigeria, communal conflicts are frequently caused by disagreements over land ownership, boundaries, and resources such as farmlands, waterways, and oil fields (Eleme-Okrika, 2012). Numerous instances of communal crises, frequently brought on by changes in farming methods, have occurred in Nigeria throughout history, both before and after colonization. According to Okoi (2008), conflicts arise as people look for new land to cultivate as a result of this change in agricultural practices, which leave farmlands fallow for a while to replenish nutrients. According to Hansford et al. (2007), community conflicts in

Nigeria can range from political confrontations and boundary disputes to disagreements over scarce resources, agriculture, and values. According to Emmanuel Eukpa (quoted in Okoi 2011), disputes within Nigeria's social structure are frequently caused by disparities in perception, role conflicts, unfair treatment, population growth, territorial violations, and economic concerns. Another reason was brought to light by Charles (2007): traditional chiefs may sell communal land to the state or outsiders, which can result in conflict and landlessness among their own people. According to a study by Orji (2014), the main causes of the Ezillo and Ezza-Ezillo conflict in Ebonyi State were competition for resources, land ownership, indigeneity, and cultural denigration. Oravee (2015) discovered that political power, avarice, and the competition for farmland were the primary causes of communal strife in Tiv land.

Impact of Communal Conflict on Educational Development

Because it disrupts the educational system and reduces educational possibilities in conflict-affected areas, communal strife has a severe influence on access to education. Conflicts within the community can cause teachers to leave or be displaced, which can result in a teacher shortage (Jones and Naylor, 2014). In conflict areas, funding for education frequently declines when funds are redirected to military spending (Lai & Thyne, 2007) or due to conflict-induced economic stagnation (Blattman & Miguel, 2010). According to Justino (2016), a number of processes that impede access to education are caused by communal tensions. Young people who may otherwise go to school could be enlisted or coerced into fighting, either willingly or under duress. Another important factor is fear and insecurity, as students abandon school because of real or perceived threats of sexual assault, forced recruitment, or violence (O'Malley, 2010). These dangers are especially worrisome when schools, educators, and pupils are singled out during hostilities.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2012), natural catastrophes, wars, and intercommunal conflicts all significantly disrupt society and make it more difficult for people to receive an education. The right to education is especially fragile during times of crisis, and this susceptibility persists into the recovery phases that follow a crisis. 28 million primary school-age children, or 42% of the world's total, were not attending school in conflict-affected nations in 2011. In addition, only 79% of young people in conflict-affected impoverished countries are literate, and children in conflict areas have a twice as high risk of dying before turning five compared to children in other poor nations.

According to research conducted in Tana Delta, Kenya, by Wahu (2013), ethnic conflicts caused parents and teachers to be displaced, which significantly hampered pupils' access to secondary school. According to the report, these disputes caused class mergers, higher absenteeism and tardiness, prompted children to drop out of school, and resulted in a teacher shortage. The immediate and long-term effects of armed conflicts on education and its stakeholders, such as students, instructors, and parents, were evaluated by Cervantes-Duarte and Fernandez-Cano (2016). According to their results, communal conflicts led to a number of serious disruptions, such as the dissolution of school social networks, the reduction or elimination of funding for education, and the destruction of educational facilities. These

disputes also resulted in the hiring of underqualified teachers and a general deterioration in the academic community's and families' protective roles.

Theoretical Framework

Karl Marx introduced conflict theory in 1968. By highlighting the part played by material interests and economic institutions, the theory provides a critical viewpoint on the dynamics and causes of conflict within civilizations. Marx's larger criticism of capitalism and how it affects social relations—especially those between classes—is the foundation of his theory. The central tenet of Marx's conflict theory is that the economic circumstances that govern society are what essentially cause disputes. According to Marx, the main source of conflict in any society is the tension between the various social classes, particularly the proletariat (the working class, which sells its labor to the bourgeoisie) and the bourgeoisie (the capitalist class, which owns the means of production). Class conflicts and inequality result from the bourgeoisie's desire to increase profits by taking advantage of the proletariat's work, which is a fundamental aspect of the capitalist system.

In "The Communist Manifesto," Marx and Friedrich Engels emphasized how class dominance, in which the bourgeoisie takes advantage of the proletariat, is a hallmark of capitalist systems. Despite the illusion of equality and freedom, this relationship is fundamentally antagonistic since the bourgeoisie gains from labor exploitation. This relationship's adversarial nature leads to ongoing struggle, which Marx thought would ultimately culminate in capitalism's downfall and the creation of a society without classes. A framework for comprehending the fundamental economic causes of social conflict is offered by Marx's Conflict Theory. It makes the case that class conflicts are what propel historical development and that social relationships are influenced by material circumstances. According to the idea, there are always going to be disputes over power, resources, and control under capitalism systems since the bourgeoisie, the ruling class, controls the proletariat, the working class.

Methodology

The survey method was used as the research design for this investigation. This design or strategy is chosen by the researcher because it makes conclusions possible. In order to determine the relative incidence, distributions, and interrelationships of sociological and psychological variables, the survey method is a form of methodology that is used to examine samples taken from the population. Furthermore, the survey approach gives researchers flexibility and versatility in their work, allowing them to integrate and understand their findings. To get a true picture of the current state of the specific phenomenon, it also allows researchers to highlight implications and interrelationships.

There are 199,159 people living in Yala, according to the 2006 National Population Census and National Population Commission (NPC), which were referenced by Ottong, Ering, and Akpan (2010). There are 98,279 men and 94,880 women in it, and they come from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, classes, and professions. Only persons twenty (20) years of age and above were selected to take part in this study because they are the most qualified to respond to the research questions.

Purposive sampling and stratified sampling were the methods of sampling employed in this investigation. Communities in Yala LGA were divided into two groups based on stratification: those that had not encountered any serious community confrontations and those that had. Communities in Yala LGA that have recently been embroiled in communal land disputes made up the sample. The communities Okwabang, Bebuo, Danare, Boje, Nsadop, and Iso-Bendeghe are among those chosen for the study. Three hundred (300) respondents make up the entire sample that was chosen for the study. There are 150 males and 150 females in this sample. Table 1 is shown below.

Table 1: Sample of Communities and Respondents Selected

S/N	Community	Sample	Males	Females
1.	Itega	50	25	25
2.	Oba	50	25	25
3.	Ipoulo	50	25	25
4.	Wanikande	50	25	25
5.	Yahe	50	25	25
6.	Ugaga	50	25	25
Total		300	150	150

Source: Field research, 2025

Respondents in the study area were given the questionnaire, which served as the data gathering tool. Prior to distributing the questionnaires, the respondents were contacted and given the opportunity to participate in the study. Additionally, the respondents received assurances that their answers would be kept completely private and utilized only for the study. Based on the variable being studied, the data from the questionnaire was converted into data codes for statistical analysis. Percentages and bar charts were used to interpret the data, which was displayed in tables. At the 0.05 level of significance, chi-square (χ^2) analysis was used to test and examine the hypotheses.

Results/Discussion

The study's guiding hypothesis was used to examine data collected from respondents in the study area.

1. Does Yala Local Government Area's educational growth get impacted by communal conflict?

Table 2: Summary of respondents to the above question

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	246	82.0%
No	54	18.0%
Total	300	100%

Source: Field Research, 2025

Out of the 300 respondents, 246 (82.0%) agreed that school activities and infrastructures were impacted during communal strife between their groups and others, while 54 (18.0%) agreed, according to the results in Table 2.

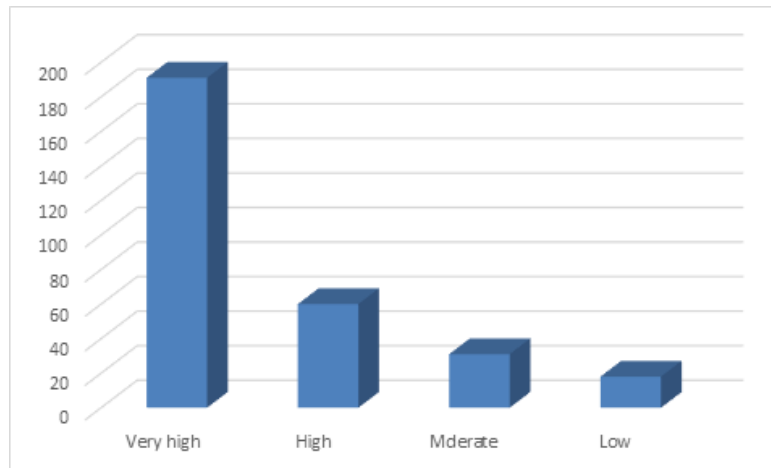


Figure 1: Bar chart showing the effects of communal conflict on educational development.

According to the figure, 45 (15.0%) respondents said that communal land conflict had a low impact on their communities' educational development, 58 (19.4%) said that it had a moderate impact, 61 (20.3%) said that it had a high impact, and 136 (45.3%) said that it had a very high impact. Hypotheses:

Ho: Yala Local Government Area's educational progress is not significantly impacted by communal conflict.

H1: Yala Local Government Area's educational development is significantly impacted by communal conflict,

Table 3: To test the hypotheses, responses to the question in table 2 above were analyzed using chi-square (X^2) test. The result is presented in table 3.

Cell	o	e	o-e	(o-e) ²	$\frac{(o-e)^2}{e}$
1	246	150	96	9216	61.44
2	54	150	-96	9216	61.44
				Calculated $X^2 = 122.88$	

*significant at 0.05; df= 1; critical $X^2 = 3.84$

The computed chi-square (X^2) value of 122.88 is greater than the crucial threshold of 3.84, according to the data analysis results in the above table. At the 0.05 level and with one degree of freedom, the hypothesis was examined for significance.

Decision: The result is significant since the computed chi-square (X^2) value (122.88) is greater than the crucial value (3.84). The alternative hypothesis, according to which communal strife significantly affects the advancement of education in Yala Local Government Area, was thus accepted after the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion

The findings showed that Yala Local Government Area's educational progress is significantly impacted by community conflict. Schools are closed during communal conflicts, particularly those that lead to fighting, carnage, and fatalities. As a result, teachers and students (children) do not attend classes. Because of this, Jones and Naylor (2014) proposed that communal tensions may cause teachers to leave or be displaced, resulting in a teacher shortage. The results support Justino's (2016) claim that young people who would otherwise go to school may turn into combatants by enlisting in the military or rebel organizations through pressure, conscription, or choice. The results also support those of Wahu (2013), who found that communal strife causes parents and teachers to be physically displaced, which in turn affects kids' access to secondary education and ultimately results in school dropouts.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Thus far, this study has demonstrated the significant influence that communal conflicts have on growth, especially in the field of education. The research shows that communal conflicts have caused considerable disruption at the national and local levels due to their recurrent character. The results from Yala LGA show how local educational advancement has been hampered by intercommunal disputes. Yala LGA's educational growth is negatively impacted by communal conflicts, which cause disruptions to school operations, force instructors and students to relocate, and destroy infrastructure. Communities, civil society organizations, and the government must work together to address these issues. Despite the difficulties caused by intercommunal conflicts, Yala LGA can ensure that future generations have the chance to acquire a high-quality education by fostering peace, bolstering security, and investing in educational facilities.

The prevention of such disputes is crucial for the advancement of meaningful educational growth. Community involvement, youth-focused awareness campaigns, and the promotion of a peaceful dispute resolution culture can all help achieve this.

Sustainable development necessitates addressing the underlying causes of community land conflicts, including resource competition, political conflicts, and economic inequities. Thus, it is essential to give conflict resolution and preventive techniques top priority in order to guarantee the socioeconomic advancement of impacted areas.

Additionally, it is advised that:

1. To increase public understanding of the risks associated with community land conflicts, the government should put in place educational enlightenment programs. The broader public should be the aim of these activities, which should emphasize the long-term detrimental effects on community growth and well-being.
2. Community leaders, such as chiefs and elders, should actively help their

communities—especially the younger generation—understand the value of refraining from acts that can spark conflict. Early conflict resolution should be their top priority, and disagreements should be settled amicably before they worsen.

3. Elders and chiefs should understand that the best way to settle land issues is through diplomacy. To resolve land disputes in a fair and just way, community leaders should use peaceful conversations or, if required, legal channels rather than violence or confrontation.

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