Counseling Approaches to Inter-Group Conflict: Case of Igbo and Yoruba Conflict in Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract
The study examined the conflict between the Igbos and Yorubas in Lagos city, Nigeria. The study employed descriptive survey and used primary source of data - an internet-based assessment system -an online questionnaire in collecting data for this study. The target population for the study is not context-specific as members of WhatsApp groups used are domiciled at different locations but are in the same WhatsApp platform. The target population of the study was 50 respondents who were the first to respond to the 20 -point questionnaire without regard to other socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The window was closed once 50 responses were captured in the platforms. The results of the study elicited from forty respondents were shown below. They were mainly males (72.5%) predominantly Igbos ( ) between the ages 38 to 67 years. Majority of these respondents 32 (80%) described the relationship between the Igbos and Yorubas as strained and 67.5% opined that there has been a long history of conflict between these two groups. Further responses from 36 (90%) of the respondents was that there were offenses directed against the Igbos which ranged from verbal abuse (80%, defrauding (35%) and killings (32.5%).. Among others, it was recommended that Counsellors should embark on programmes to build capacity in both groups to change their perceptions of each other, for better. None should brand the other as bad.
Keywords: counselors, Igbo people, Yoruba people, inter group conflict, Lagos

Introduction

It is natural for people in an environment to co-exist. No wonder Aristotle believed and argued that nature has made it imperative that man should live with his fellow man. Society is an expression of man's inherent sociability (Obiajulu, A.O. (2011). People around are big assets to one another as they rally round themselves in times of need. They are in exchange programme of production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. As interactions take place among these people all the time there is bound to be conflict. Marquis, B. L. & Huston, C.J. (2013) argue that "within a work environment there is often a variety of different values, beliefs, backgrounds and goals coming from each other and these clash." In the same vein the major challenge of intergroup relation is conflict, that is when members of two groups come into contact with one another in a series of activities that embody goals which each urgently desires, which can be attained by one group only at the expense of the other conflict ensues. Robbins, S.P. and Judge, T. A. (2014) define conflict "as a process that begins when one party perceives another party has or is about to negatively affect something that is cared about." Conflict implies disagreement, misunderstanding, strife, schism that degenerate to fiction. Conflict situation ensues when parties in the conflict develop apathy to each other's standpoint and react adversely to it.

These are evident in the long history of lack of harmony, quarrels, antagonism between the Yorubas and Igbos in Lagos which has resulted to series of conflicts that have been recorded between these two ethnic groups. The scenario calls for a research attention and is the motivation for this study.

The study therefore sought and identified the causes of the social distance, negative attitudes between members of these two ethnic groups, its nature, the effects, proffered solutions as prescribed by the respondents. The study made recommendations for solutions to the conflict. The assessment tool for the research methodology is a survey instrument of 20-point questionnaire used to elicit information from 50 respondents purposively chosen from four WhatsApp platforms the researcher belongs to. Their responses were analysed using simple statistics of simple percentages, bar and pie charts.

Statement of the Problem
Conflict is a natural phenomenon that transcends all cultures, nationalities and groups with its devastating outcomes. It has been a consistent, though not inevitable feature of human society. Conflict-free society is an ideal situation obtainable in the cosmos. **Globally, in recent times**, in 2014 alone, 180,000 people died in intergroup violence/conflict worldwide and 20,000 individuals in 69 countries were killed in terrorist attacks (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2015). In fact, intergroup conflict has even been named the "problem of the century" in social psychology (Fiske, 2002 in Bohm, R., Rusch, H. & Baron, J., (2020)

Igbo and Yoruba are among the dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria. These ethnic groups **have a long history of co-existence and interactions.** Nwabufo, F. (2019) argued that the Yoruba and the Igbo are indigenous to the geographical area called "Nigeria" and that they both are of a singular ancestry. The two groups had established trade links dating back to the pre-colonial times. **Some scholars** argue that there was a relative harmonious relationship among the people before colonialism in Nigeria, but this was altered by colonial policies. Specifically the genesis of the ethnic rivalry is traceable to the Western House of Assembly election of 1951 that saw Nnamdi Azikiwe and Awolowo as contestants in politics deemed to be the beginning of ethnic politics in Nigeria. There were allegations of Igbo domination by the Yorubas precipitated by Zik's political charisma, dogma, media propaganda etc (The Cable.ng). Thus the relationship among the people became more strained due to the activities of the political class that emerged before and after independence and the excruciating economic condition that preceded the bad governance in Nigeria.

In Nigeria today, ethnic rivalry among the Igbo and Yoruba are endemic. Despite the fact that many writers like Nwabufo, F. (2019) have adduced the fact of both evolutionary, cultural, linguistic and social similarities, without evidence of wars and hostilities between these ethnic groups some protagonists and indigenous tribal elements within these groups have denied any form of relationship and vet venom against each other. They trade hate speech in the social media and the baseless allegations and accusations fill the whole media space. There have been untold prejudice, segregation, mayhem, destruction of lives and property worth millions, etc. Even instances of intermarriage between both groups that came to limelight in politics and political contests in 2003 and 2023 which should have served as unifying factors heightened Yoruba-Igbo political hostilities and aggression (The Cable.ng). However, efforts have been made by some groups to broker peace among these ethnic groups before this time but that have yielded no reasonable, tangible results. This study sought to x-ray the dynamics of the conflict and proffer solutions to the conflict.

Objectives of the Study
The main purpose of the study was to examine conflict issues among the Igbos and Yorubas in Lagos metropolis. The specific research objectives include among others to;

1. Investigate the history of the conflict,
2. Find out the cause/s of the conflict,
3. Ascertain its nature,
4. Identify its consequences.
5. Identify the counseling approaches translated in actions and modalities to bring to an end the conflict or reduce it to the barest minimum, for peaceful coexistence of the two groups.
 These informed the following research questions for this study.

Research Questions
In studying intergroup conflicts Morton Deutsch (1973) identifies seven key questions to be addressed and these questions guided the study, notably:
1. What is the nature of the groups involved in the conflict i.e. - are they equal or unequal in relative power, population, resources etc
 2. What is the history of their relationship? Has the relationship of the two groups in conflict generally been friendly or unfriendly over the years?
3. What issues have led to the conflict in question -related to cultural differences, scarce resources?
4. What strategies or tactics are employed in the course of the conflict?
 5. How does the conflict affect the participants?

Study Hypotheses
1. There is a significant influence of conflict on the economic activities in Lagos
2. Intergroup conflict hinders intergroup relationship /engenders social barriers

Brief Background about Igbo Ethnic Group
The Igbos are found in the South and Eastern parts of Nigeria and they inhabit the Imo, Anambra, Enugu, Ebony states and fractions of them are found in parts of Cross Rivers, Rivers and Delta states of Nigeria. They are predominantly traders, widely travelled and are found in virtually everywhere in Nigeria. Her population is 15.2% of Nigeria's total population of 236,747,130 (Central Intelligence Agency (23 October 2023). Nigeria country profile. The world Factbook). Her rural dwellers are farmers, iron smelters, blacksmiths, etc.
Her major agricultural products are palm oil, yam, cassava, cocoyam, legumes, etc. Her mineral products include iron ore found in Awka, salt found in Ibanu, lead found in Abakaliki, crude oil in Imo state and these are major export items by the various groups who traded on them.
In the present dispensation, the Igbo political organisation is the town union which is the apex community organisation in which matters affecting the community are discussed and resolved. Their extensions are in various cities of Nigeria and even Overseas where the Igbos settled in search of greener pastures and they report back to the mother organisation back home.

Brief Background about Yoruba Ethnic Group
The Yoruba speaking people of Nigeria are concentrated in Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Kwara, Ekiti and Lagos State. Yoruba is a conglomeration of monarchical states or smaller units which later became known as Yoruba. These were the Egba, Ijebu, Ekiti, Ibadan, Ife, Ijesha, Oyo, etc. Apart from linguistic homogeneity the Yoruba share a common tradition and trace their descent from a common evolutionary pool and ancestor called Oduduwa who is believed to have established the Ife dynasty. Her population is 15.5% of Nigeria's total population of 236,747,130. (Central Intelligence Agency (23 October 2023). Nigeria country profile. The world Factbook).

Yoruba people stand out as a deeply religious group with great respect for superiors and elderly people. The Oni of Ife is regarded as the spiritual ruler of all Yorubas while the Alafin of Oyo was their political leader. There is a monarchical structure of government at the head of which is the traditional ruler, the Oba who is elected only after divine approval communicated by Oni of Ife.

The Yorubas are skilled and productive in farming, blacksmithing, weaving, leatherwork, glassmaking, ivory and wood carving. They are also learned and the most urbanized group in Nigeria with many urban cities e.g., Lagos, Ibadan.
These two ethnic groups are vast in rich cultural heritage which are expressed in their language, music, festivals and dishes which are distinctive and captivating.

Literature Review
Ethnic Group: It is a collection of people whose members identify with each other through a common heritage consisting of a common culture which may also include a shared language or dialect. These people are set apart from others and are bound together by common ties of race, language, nationality, or culture.

Intergroup relations: According to Kramer, R.M.; Schaffer, J. (2014). intergroup relations refer to interactions between individuals in different social groups, and to interactions taking place between groups themselves collectively.
According to French doctor and scientist Gustave Le Bon in his work "The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind, written in 1895 states that when individuals form a group, this group behaves differently than each individual would normally act. The individuals lose their sense of self and responsibility, they follow the beliefs and behaviors of the crowd, and these beliefs and behaviors of the crowd are shaped by the group's shared racial (collective) consciousness. Groups thus often exert powerful influences upon individual group members and other groups. It engenders distinctiveness and promotion of group interests. Identification with one's group enhances the process of designating someone as a member of one's own group (i.e., the in-group) or not (i.e., a member of an out-group) and that occurs almost automatically.
Harmonious intergroup relations eliminate prejudice, discrimination and social categorization. It enhances cooperative (rather than competitive) intergroup interaction, Negative sentiment for members of various out-groups ensues when there is an observed competition and rivalry to outstrip the other group over an observed goal desirable to both groups and which can only be achieved by one group at the expense of the other. The outcome becomes a conflictual relationship with conformity, cohesion, solidarity, cooperativeness within groups at their height while out-group differences, negative stereotypes, distrust are accentuated, all because intergroup conflict was most severe (Pettigrew, T.F. 1998). Intergroup Relations/Encyclopedia.com www.encyc lopedia.com

Intergroup Conflict:
According to Wilmot, W. & Hocker, J.L. (2011) conflict is defined as an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals. Robbins and Judge (2014) define conflict as a process that begins when one party perceives another party has or is about to negatively affect something that is cared about.
Intergroup conflict is the perceived incompatibility of goals or values between two or more individuals, which emerges because these individuals classify themselves as members of

different social groups. **Conflict is tantamount to fight, battle, war. It is** a clash between individuals arising out of disparity in their thought process, attitudes, understanding, interests, requirements and even sometimes perceptions (ibid).

Types / Levels of Intergroup Conflict
Several scholars have suggested distinguishing between different types of conflict. They can arise over (a). (scarce) economic resources (e.g., money, territory), (b) values (e.g., what is 'right' and 'wrong'), (c)power (e.g., influence on the other party' behaviors or outcomes), or a combination of these (Katz, 1965). Other types/levels of conflict include intrapersonal (within oneself), interpersonal (between two or more persons), intragroup (between members of a group), intergroup (between members of different groups) conflicts (Deutsch, M., Coleman, P.T.& Marcus, E.C. (2011).

Causes of Intergroup Conflict:
According to Holland, E. (2023) the factors that engender conflict comprise miscommunication, lack of resources, competitiveness, superiority belief, perceived bias, rejection of norms, individual differences, organizational climate etc. Also Sujan (2023) highlighted the following as the causes of conflict- misunderstanding, personal differences, information deficiency, goal differences, lack of role clarification, threat to status, lack of trust, scarce resources, poor communication, organizational changes.
Other causes of conflict as adduced by Piezunka, H., Lee W., Haynes, R. & Bothner, M.S. (2018) include negative attitudes in the form of perceptions or stereotypes about others, mere social categorization of people, behaviours of coercion and gestures of hostility and threat, prejudice, discrimination, competition etc.
Phases of Conflict.

Prachi Juneja (2021) opined that a conflict has five phases.
1. **Prelude to Conflict -** It involves all the factors which possibly arise a conflict among individuals. Lack of coordination, differences in interests, dissimilarity in cultural, religious, educational background, all are instrumental in arising a conflict.
2. **Triggering Event -** No conflict can arise on its own. There has to be an event which triggers the conflict. It can be ensue because of different cultural backgrounds, a very strong factor for possibility of a conflict.
3. **Initiation Phase -** Initiation phase is actually the phase when the conflict has already begun. Heated arguments, abuses, verbal disagreements are all warning alarms which indicate that the fight is already on.
4. **Differentiation Phase -** It is the phase when the individuals voice out their differences against each other. The reasons for the conflict are raised in the differentiation phase.
5. **Resolution Phase -** A conflict leads to nowhere. Individuals must try to compromise to some extent and resolve the conflict soon. The resolution phase explores the various options to resolve the conflict

Effects or Outcomes of Intergroup Conflict
Holland, E. (2023) acknowledging that intergroup conflict enhances in-group cohesion, cooperation and conformity (to ensure the conflict is settled in its favour and prevent being defeated) maintain that it has negative outcomes which include loss of focus on goals, isolation, mistrust, negativity, miscommunication. "Increased stress and anxiety among

individuals which decreases productivity and satisfaction, feeling of being defeated and demeaned, which lowers individual's moral and may increase turnover, and a climate of mistrust, which hinders the teamwork and cooperation necessary to get work done are other outcomes of intergroup conflict" (University of Minnesota, 2017).

Counselling

According to 20/20: A Vision for the Future of Counselling, a unified definition of professional counseling (as agreed upon by 31 counselling organizations) is "a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals."

The Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia define professional counseling as 'a safe and confidential collaboration between qualified counselors and clients to promote mental health and wellbeing, enhance self-understanding, and resolve identified concerns. Clients are active participants in the counseling process at every stage."

Counsellng is one of the talking therapies; a way of enabling choice or change or of reducing confusion (Claringbull, N.2010). Counsellors encourage expression of feelings, and as a result of their training will be able to accept and reflect on the clients' problems…. They help them to look at the options open to them and guide them in decision-making process.

Acceptance and trust for the client are essentials for a counselor and as the relationship develops, so does trust between him and clients, enabling the latter look at many aspects of their life, their relationships and themselves which they may not have considered or been able to face before (ibid). Thus the job assignment of a counselor is that of help, assistance for mental enhancement of clients.

Formats of Counseling Sessions

Bhattacharjee, M. (2021) outlines the following formats counseling can take place:

(1) In- person. This is a face to face counseling contact between a professional counselor and the counselee in the former' office

(2) Group Counseling. This is a counseling session organized for groups who share similar concerns. The members of the group interact with one another on common ground with the helping professional the counselor who serve as a catalyst and facilitator to enhance solution to the problem/s confronting them.

(3) Telephone Sessions. These are counseling sessions that take place through phone calls and communication. They are most convenient for busy clients and they can discuss their problems with the counselor from the comfort of their homes. From such a secure environment clients share their problems with the counselor who assists them by assessing the problems, helping them set goals and plans to overcome the problem.

(4) Online Counseling: The counseling relationship is formal as there is no physical contact with the counselor. The client has an option of emailing the counselor who renders the counseling services through the same medium. This helps to achieve anonymity of the counselee.

Strategies for Conflict Resolution

Havely, N. & Coleman, T.R. (2019) highlight potential solutions to intergroup conflict, many of which are based on the three "I"s of conflict: the interests, identities, and ideologies that often govern the dynamics of intergroup conflict (Bornstein, 2003) Examples of identity-based solutions include promoting a common in-group identity or a relational intergroup identity

through intergroup leadership. Examples of ideology-based solutions include interventions aimed at promoting colorblindness or multiculturalism. Other proposed solutions to intergroup conflict include interventions aimed at promoting intergroup contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), empathy for outgroup members

Other interventions prescribed by some theoretical perspectives and espoused by Boehm, R. & Rusch, H. (2020) include the following

1 Changing Incentives
According to realistic group conflict theory, groups' negative interdependence over scarce resources creates intergroup conflict. Conversely positive interdependence enhances cooperation .Indeed, it has been shown that 'doing things together' to achieve shared outcomes can increase intergroup cooperation and liking.

2 Changing Social Categorizations and Out-Group Perceptions.
Social identity theory posits that intergroup conflict may arise even in the absence of negative interdependences between groups as a result of social categorization processes. This means designating people as out-group. Interventions therefore is first, 'decategorization' which eliminates the perception that opposing groups form against homogeneous units. Second, 'recategorization' seeks to change the level of categorization from 'us' vs. 'them' into 'we' There is evidence that such a higher level of recategorization reduces intergroup bias over time.

3.Instituting Intergroup contact.
Intergroup contact is another approach that aims to reduce intergroup conflict while maintaining the individuals (different) social identities. This approach suggested that interpersonal contact between members from different groups can improve attitudes toward out-groups given that (i) individuals perceive themselves to have equal status, (ii) the contact situation encourages cooperation and promotes common goals, (iii) has normative and institutional support, and (iv) allows for the development of friendship through repeated and meaningful interaction; ideally, then, positive experiences made with individual out-group members generalize to a more positive attitude toward the out-group as a whole (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2008, 2006).

4. Changing Perceptions of Mutual/Opposing Interests
The theory of bounded generalized reciprocity assumes that individuals are prone to perceive aligned interests with in-group members and, in turn, to readily engage in costly in-group cooperation, while avoiding cooperation with or even actively harming out-group members. Counsellors should embark on programmes to build capacity in both groups to change their perceptions of each other, for better.
However, there are several interventions that aim to reduce intergroup bias by reshaping individuals' cognitive representations of how their personal interests relate to those of in-group and out-group members.

5.Some of such interventions are:
Baron (2012) argues that intergroup bias is reduced when individual group members calculate the self interest benefit of their contribution, along with its benefit for others in the group. Also seeing outsiders as individuals rather than as a group, and in-group members assessing group cultural norms and demanding justification for them. These will reduce intergroup bias (Baron et al., 2013). Lastly effective intergroup communication, as group norms are produced, reproduced, maintained, and changed through communication which reduces uncertainty and regulates perceptions (Hogg and Reid (2006).

Thomas Kilmann Conflict Model outlined by Catherine Cote in a 2023 Harvard Business Review article highlights five conflict resolution strategies, namely; avoiding, competing,

accommodating, compromising, and collaborating. He also advocated the following as skills for conflict resolution communication, don't place blame, remaining calm, collaboration.
University of Alabama Division of Student life Counseling Centre outlined the following as tips for Resolving Conflicts-
 (1) Establish ground rules before the discussion; (2) Identify the problem, be specific; (3) Ensure both parties are calm; (4) Utilize assertive communication skills; (5) Utilize active listening skills; (6) Avoid communication roadblocks e.g., criticizing, stonewalling, defensiveness, ridiculing, generalizing; (7) Be willing to compromise.

Theoretical Framework
Social Identity Theory
This study hinged on social identity theory. Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1986) proposed social identity theory. This theory is predicated on the assumption that an individual develops his/her self concept on the basis of his/her attachment to a significant group. In other words, a self-awareness of an individual is dependent on the individual's membership to a significant group. By the individual's membership to the significant group, the individual's self-concept is developed and actualized. This implies then that an individual is just but a reflection of his group membership.

From the social identity theory view point, the perceived individual's behaviour is patterned by the group's behaviour acting on the individual as a significant other More so, this patterned behaviour emanates as a result of the social bond between and among members of the group. This reinforcement consequentially creates a -we-feeling for the in-group and a -they-feeling'for the out-group members arising from self-categorization.
 This theory is relevant to this study because individual's identification with his in-group significantly shapes his self-image and the associated behaviour pattern which invariably determines his interaction/relationship with other members of the out-group. Both Igbo and Yoruba ethnic groups align with their own as one and each sees the other as an outsider.

Igbo and Yoruba Conflict: Past Efforts at Reconciliation
The following are the steps made in the past towards building a new constructive relationship between the Igbo and Yoruba people who have been divided by hostile narratives that have sown and nursed seeds of discord since before and after Nigerian Independence in which both groups played the leading roles but in which both have been marginalized.
Dim Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu's eulogy of Obafemi Awolowo at his death in 1987 as "the best president Nigeria never had." They were political opponents, but he overlooked his opposing grounds and extolled his sterling virtues. (Dr Akinwumi, A. Adesina, 2024).
1. President-General of the Igbo Community in Ogun State Chief John Oguebunwa courtesy visit to the Aare Onakakanfo of Yoruba land, Gani Adams in Lagos in the company of other Igbo Chieftains like Chiefs Young Nwachukwu, Donatson Ngele, Mrs.Emeje, Hon. Solomon, Chief Mike Okwandu, Comrade Maurice Ogu and Chief Christopher Eze to broker peace for the two ethnic groups (theeagleonline.com.ng).
2. Fatherland Group online zoom conference which is tagged "Yoruba and Igbo speaking with one voice from a shared experience: We tie to Biafra" led by Dele Ogun, a London based Corporate Lawyer and Historian to address Igbo Yoruba Rift on 15 January, 2021 being the anniversary of the day Nigeria witnessed her first military coup that led to the Nigerian –Biafran Civil War.

3. Support of the Labour Party Presidential flagbearer Peter Gregory Obi by the Yorubas "In the last count, prominent among whom are elder statesman, Pa Ayo Adebanjo, leader of Afenifere and Chief Olusegun Obasanjo revered international statesman and former president of Nigeria as observed by a Yoruba indigene Dr Tanko Yunusa, the spokesman of the Labour Party Presidential Campaign Organisation

4. A Yoruba indigene Dr Tanko Yunusa being the spokesman of the Labour Party Presidential Campaign Organisation is a step towards synergy of both ethnic groups.

5. Studies by Rasak, B. (2010). "Naming Ceremony: Comparative Analysis of the Igbo and Yoruba Culture in Nigeria, and Dasaolu, B. & Oyelakun, D. on "The concept of Evil in Yoruba and Igbo Thoughts: Some Comparisons highlight some points of culture agreement among both ethnic groups.

Methods and Procedure

The study examined the conflict between the Igbos and Yorubas in Lagos city. It was a descriptive survey and used primary source of data - an internet-based assessment system -an online questionnaire in collecting data for this study. The target population for the study is not context-specific as members of WhatsApp groups used are domiciled at different locations but are in the same WhatsApp platform. The target population of the study was 50 respondents who were the first to respond to the 20 -point questionnaire without regard to other socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The window was closed once 50 responses were captured in the platforms.

Research Results and Discussion of Findings

The results of the study elicited from forty respondents were shown below. They were mainly males (72.5%) predominantly Igbos (   ) between the ages 38 to 67 years. Majority of these respondents 32 (80%) described the relationship between the Igbos and Yorubas as strained and 67.5% opined that there has been a long history of conflict between these two groups. Further responses from 36 (90%) of the respondents was that there were offences directed against the Igbos which ranged from verbal abuse (80%, defrauding (35%) and killings (32.5%).
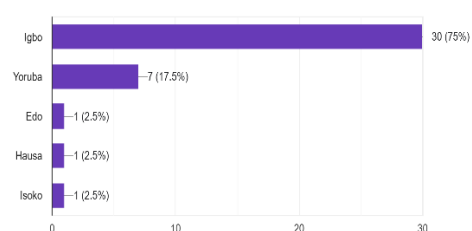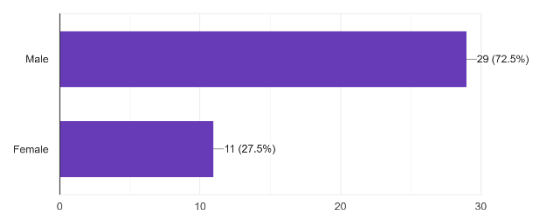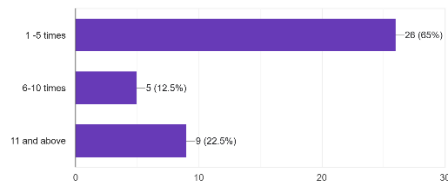

Qualitative data elicited on the offences against the Igbo include outrageous revenue collection and demands by Omonile and Yoruba local chiefs, molestations during 1993 presidential elections when Moshoo Kashimawo Olawale (MKO) Abiola's presidential election victory under the platform of the Social democratic Party (SDP) was annulled, 2023 election, most especially during the 2023 Governorship election. According to the respondents the Igbos were prevented from voting the candidate of their choice, revocation of their lands by opposing family member/s of the seller, sale and resale of a particular land to multiple buyers thereby causing rift between both buyers, demolition of Igbo houses and business premises since 2022 to date, even buildings that have Certificates of Occupancy (C of O), closure of Igbo shops.

Responses to the questions on any known clashes/fights between both groups. The responses were in the affirmative and they took place when the above incidents happened.

The researcher sought responses on the frequency of occurrence of the clashes. The findings were as follows; 1-5 times (65%) followed by 11 and above times 9(22.5%) and 6-10 times 5(12.5%). According to the respondents these clashes took place in many areas of Lagos like Ketu, Ladipo, Lagos Mainland, Isolo, Mile 2, Aja, Idumota, Oshodi, Trade Fair, Alaba market and many other markets in Lagos during the 2023 elections.
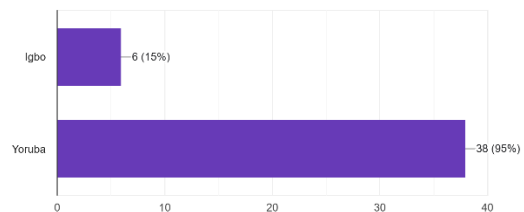

For the enquiry on whether lives were lost in the clashes 1-10 lives were lost as opined by 65.4% Respondents, 21 and above lives were lost according to 30.8% respondents. Respondents 36 (90%) gave responses that there was other loss of property namely, articles of trade which ranked highest as shown by 77.8% respondents, followed by houses (66.7%) and cars (63.9%). Most respondents (70% placed the value of the property lost to be above N10 million.
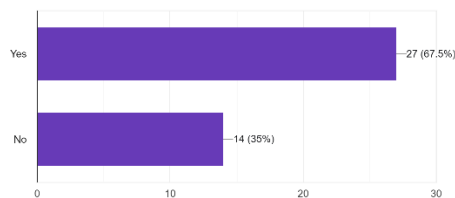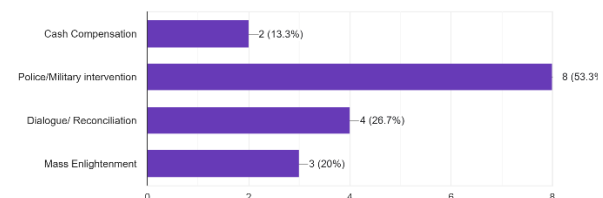
There were questions on government intervention and the nature of the intervention during the clashes. Results show minimal government intervention as it is only 14(35%) respondents that confirmed government intervention and mainly by police /military intervention (53.3%), dialogue/reconciliation (26.7%), mass enlightenment (20%) and cash compensation (13.35).

On the cause/s of the conflict there is a myriad of reasons given by the respondents. They include hatred and aggressive feelings against the Igbos, competition in business, envy/jealousy, stereotyping belief that Igbos are bad, stereotyping belief that Yorubas are bad, jealousy against the Igbos, jealousy against the Yorubas, Igbos are perceived by Yorubas to be pompous, noisy, domineering, lack respect and deceptive, the entrepreneurial drive and the republican nature of the Igbos, fear of dominance by the Igbos, domination and intimidation by the Yoruba. Other causes include religious and cultural differences, divergent political interests; that Igbos are supporting their opponent, and perceived trait to change in leadership, tribalism, hate speech, mutual distrust caused by politicians, antecedents of the Nigerian Civil war, outrageous revenue collection by the host community, destruction, demolition and revocation of Igbo property, marginalization by host community, lack of spirit of accommodation of other tribes, bad governance.

The main goal of this study was to proffer lasting solutions to the problem and so the researcher sought responses on what can be done to resolve the Igbo-Yoruba conflict in Lagos. The responses as adduced by the respondents are shown as follows: Enlightenment/education and reorientation of both ethnic groups, there should be mutual trust, love, spirit of oneself as Nigerians, unity of political interest, change of mindset by both groups, training and job creation for the unemployed youths in Lagos, promotion of inter-tribal marriages, government enactment of unifying laws, and application of rule of law by prescribing punishment to the sponsors and perpetrators of conflict in Lagos, restructuring of Nigeria and making provision for each region to produce a president every four years, Yoruba political elites to resolve inter-ethnic conflict and stop fueling it, Igbos should vacate Lagos and develop southeast region.

Lastly and interestingly 60%, 40% of the respondents opined that all -both Igbo and Yoruba, and the government respectively should implement all the above proffered solutions.

From the above findings one can conveniently argue that even though these are responses generated from a segment of one of the conflicting groups they provide insight to the understanding of the issue of conflict among Igbos and Yorubas in Lagos to some extent which will be complemented with a replication of the study among the Yorubas in Lagos.

Conclusion

Conflict is a natural phenomenon that is present in every human society. Some scholars argue in its favour that it solidifies group consciousness, commitment and competition with out-group members. It has untold consequences to the corporate existence of man in his natural and social milieu. The findings in this research show inter-group grievances, losses both in human and material resources, minimal government intervention especially in cash compensation to loss of property. These have devastating effect on the economic, social, psychological and political development of the parties in conflict in particular and Nigeria in general.

It is sad that the mere fact that an individual comes from a certain evolutionary pool and so can be identified with a group automatically places him at an enemy position with the members of the other group. That is typical of our country Nigeria and that is the bone of contention in Igbo -Yoruba conflict such that they are at daggers with each other. Each of them exhibits the _we 'feeling toward members of their own group at the expense and detriment of the other. This cliquing breeds bitterness, hatred and bickering among the members of the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. "The outcome of this ethnic group sentiment, affiliation and loyalty rather than national sentiment, affiliation and loyalty is contentions and conflicts. Let that stop and let all Nigerians live in peace no matter our differences, seeing that we are by nature favoured with good weather and environment devoid of natural disasters like earthquake, hurricane, volcanic eruption etc.

Recommendations

- Counselling is an engagement between two people that involves them in co-constructing solutions to concerns. It is a process whereby counselors avoid quick advice but facilitate healing through dialogue with clients, helping them analyse situations, take decisions that are favourable. In such inter-ethnic rift as this between Igbos and Yorubas counsellors should adopt these various interventions prescribed by some theoretical perspectives and espoused by Boehm, R. & Rusch, H. (2020) (expatiated in literature review) which include among others:

1. **Changing Incentives.** Let there be programmes of common interest for both groups instead of individual group goal pursuits which most often are conflicting. The government should pioneer this project.

2**. Changing Social Categorizations and Out-Group Perceptions.**
Counsellors should embark on programmes to build capacity in both groups to change their perceptions of each other, for better. None should brand the other as bad.

3. **Instituting Intergroup contact.**
Let both groups through their stakeholders continually interact and generate worthwhile benefits that get to their respective groups. That will lessen hostility and generate more positive intergroup attitudes. This can be sponsored by government and wealthy stakeholders.

- The government of Lagos state should invest in counseling education and deploy counselors to all localities in Lagos metropolis to embark on periodic mass enlightenment programmes to educate both groups on the need for peaceful co-habitation. Specifically those counselors should encourage the Igbos and Yorubas to develop active listening skills, empathic understanding of each other and communication with greater clarity and compassion.

- Counsellors should counsel against war of words, frequent outbreaks of yelling between the two ethnic groups, lack of respect for each other and hatred for unique ethnic values. Igbos should be encouraged to respect their host community no matter their level of involvement in the development of Lagos.

- The Federal Ministry of Education should revisit the curriculum on civic education on national values and incorporate well-articulated curriculum on conflict resolution and peaceful co-existence of different tribes in Nigeria. This should be taught in the classroom at both the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

- The government should construct jingles on how intergroup conflict and violence destroy lives, economy and wellbeing.

- The Federal Government of Nigeria should prosecute anyone instigating inter-ethnic crisis, for example the instigators of bigoted anti-Igbo tweet on the 27th July, 2024 released on X account of @Lagospedia wherein Lagosians and every Southwest stakeholder were asked to prepare for massive protest of "IgboMustGo on the 20th t0 30th of August, 2024. The relationship between every two individuals or groups is that of a symbiotic nature and should be seen and taken as so. Both groups need each other and none can effectively live without the other.

- Both State and Federal Governments of Nigeria should always discourage, dissuade and disappoint (3Ds) the sponsors and perpetrators of conflict in Lagos by "handsomely compensating the victims of looting and or destruction of property. If they know the victim will get more than what he lost it will serve as deterrent to them.

Limitation of the Study
This paper enriched with empirical study is not in itself a perfect indicator of the true state of affairs on the subject of study, the reason being that the respondents are predominantly people from one group whose responses to the interrogations may be tribalized. It is limited in its scope. That is a limitation. This is argued because the subject of study is a highly sensitive issue. The researcher summed up courage to delve into the project because of the burden to source solutions to the conflict between sister ethnic groups. However, the purpose of the study is not lost. And more results will undoubtedly be accessed when the study is replicated among the Yoruba group.

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