

Assessing the Effectiveness of Peacebuilding Strategies in Managing Communal Conflicts Among Ile-Ife and Modakeke Residents Osun State, Nigeria

by

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the effectiveness of peacebuilding strategies in managing communal conflicts among Ile-Ife and Modakeke residents Osun State, Nigeria. The study employed explanatory sequential mixed method, while multistage, purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to sample one-hundred and twenty respondents. Self-designed instrument was used and descriptive statistics were used to analyse the generated data. The study's results revealed that the respondents' awareness of peacebuilding strategies ranked mediation (mean = 3.22) as the most recognized approach, followed by arbitration (mean = 2.99), negotiation (mean = 2.78), conciliation (mean = 2.61), and restorative justice (mean = 2.55), indicating the relative awareness and perceived effectiveness of these strategies in addressing communal conflicts among Ile-Ife and Modakeke residents in Osun State, Nigeria. The outcomes of the study revealed that mediation, negotiation, and dialogue are effective peacebuilding strategies for managing communal conflicts, with mediation ranking highest (2.78), followed by negotiation (2.61) and dialogue (2.55), while government interventions and community-led initiatives also showed promise. The study concluded that mediation, arbitration, and negotiation are the most recognized peacebuilding strategies in Ile-Ife and Modakeke, while mediation, negotiation, and dialogue are deemed most effective in managing communal conflicts, with government interventions and community-led efforts also playing a vital role in promoting peace.

Keywords: *Communal Conflicts in Ile-Ife and Modakeke, Peacebuilding Strategies*

INTRODUCTION

Communal conflicts are a pervasive global issue, affecting millions of people worldwide. These conflicts often arise from deep-seated differences in identity, culture, religion, or resources, leading to violence, displacement, and human suffering. According to the ACLED Conflict Index, global conflicts have almost doubled over the past five years, with a 25% increase in political violence incidents recorded in the past 12-month period, resulting in over 194,000 political violence events worldwide from December 2023 to November 2024. One in eight people are estimated to have been exposed to conflict so far in 2024, with 50 countries ranking in the Index categories for extreme, high, or turbulent levels of conflict (Aransi, 2020; Akinyooye & Aransi, 2020; Obonah and Eshiet, 2024).

Communal conflicts in Africa are a significant concern, with various instances of violence and displacement reported across the continent. In West Africa, countries such as Nigeria, Mali, and Burkina Faso have experienced escalating attacks and violence against civilians, resulting in substantial forced displacement, with over 4 million displaced people in Nigeria's northern states and 2.1 million in Burkina Faso. The Sahel region is particularly affected, with militant Islamist groups exploiting ethnic tensions and weak governance to conduct attacks. In East Africa, Ethiopia has seen a notable decline in displacement following the signing of a ceasefire agreement in Tigray, but longstanding intercommunal tensions still account for more than two-thirds of current displacement. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has also experienced a significant increase in displacement due to violence linked to non-state militias, including the M23 rebel group. According to the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, an additional 3.2 million Africans have been displaced due to conflict over the past year, representing a 13% increase and continuing an unchecked upward trend observed since 2011 (Jaiyeoba, 2017; Asuquo and Ekanem 2023; Olaniyan, et al., 2025).

The Ife-Modakeke communal conflict in Osun State, Nigeria, has a long and complex history dating back to the 19th century (Adebanwi, 2022; Adelusi, *et al.*, 2023). The conflict is rooted in differences in cultural identity and historical narratives, with the Ife people considering themselves the original settlers and landlords, while the Modakeke people are seen as migrants and tenants who fled to Ife after the collapse of the Old Oyo empire (Olurode, 2022). The dispute over land ownership and payment of land rent (*Isakole*) has been a major factor in the conflict, with recent studies highlighting the role of historical grievances and competing claims to land and resources (Jaiyeoba & Ogunsanya, 2021; Aransi, *et al.*, 2025). The creation of a new local government council and the location of its headquarters have also been contentious issues, contributing to recurring tensions and violence between the two communities (Osun State Government Report, 2022). According to recent reports, there have been seven major violent clashes recorded between the two communities, including communal wars in the 19th century, disputes over land rent in the 1940s, and renewed tensions in the 1980s and 1990s (Adebanwi, 2022; Ishola, *et al.*, 2024; Adegbesan, *et al.*, 2024).

Communal conflicts in Nigeria are often driven by a complex interplay of factors, including historical grievances, cultural identity, land ownership, and political power struggles (Adebanwi, 2022; Jaiyeoba, 2022; Albert, 2020). These conflicts can be fuelled by competing claims to land and resources, as well as issues of cultural identity and historical narratives (Akinyele, 2022; Omotola, 2020). In many cases, poor governance, lack of effective conflict resolution mechanisms, and the manipulation of historical narratives for political gain can exacerbate tensions and lead to violence (Jaiyeoba, 2021; Olurode, 2022; Adetula, 2022). Additionally, factors such as ethnic and religious differences, economic inequality, and competition for resources can also contribute to communal conflicts (Osaghae, 2021; Ukiwo,

2021). Understanding the root causes of these conflicts is crucial for developing effective strategies for conflict resolution and peacebuilding (Best, 2022; Ishola, et al., 2024).

Several studies have examined the causes and consequences of communal conflicts in Nigeria, including the Ife-Modakeke conflict. For example, Adebani (2022) explored the historical roots of the conflict, while Albert (2020) analyzed the role of traditional leaders in conflict resolution. Other studies have investigated the impact of peacebuilding initiatives on conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Nigeria (Jaiyeoba & Oguntuase, 2019; Adetula, 2022; Best, 2022). Despite these studies, there is a significant research gap in the existing literature. Specifically, few studies have assessed the effectiveness of peacebuilding strategies in managing communal conflicts. Most studies have focused on general theories and approaches to peacebuilding, neglecting context-specific factors that influence peacebuilding effectiveness. This study aims to fill this gap by assessing the effectiveness of peacebuilding strategies in managing communal conflicts among Ile-Ife and Modakeke residents, Osun State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The Ile-Ife and Modakeke communities in Osun State, Nigeria, have been embroiled in recurring communal conflicts, resulting in significant social, economic, and psychological impacts. Despite the devastating effects, there have been limited efforts to systematically address the root causes of these conflicts, and existing peacebuilding initiatives have yielded mixed results. For instance, some studies have reported attempts at peacebuilding through dialogue and mediation (Zhomartkyzy, 2023; Antai, *et al.*, 2024), but the effectiveness of these efforts remains unclear.

This study aims to assess the effectiveness of existing peacebuilding strategies in managing communal conflicts between Ile-Ife and Modakeke residents, with a view to identifying gaps and areas for improvement. Alternatively, if no significant peacebuilding efforts have been documented, this study will explore possible options for peacebuilding strategies that could be employed to mitigate the conflicts and promote sustainable peace in the region. By examining the conflict dynamics and evaluating or exploring peacebuilding options, this study seeks to contribute to the development of evidence-based interventions that can foster peaceful coexistence and improve the quality of life for residents in the affected communities.

Objective of the Study

The study's overarching goal was to evaluate how well peacebuilding techniques handled intercommunal disputes between the people of Ile-Ife and Modakeke in Osun State, Nigeria. Its specific goals were to;

- i. . assess the degree of knowledge among Ile-Ife and Modakeke inhabitants of Osun State, Nigeria, regarding peacebuilding techniques for resolving intercommunal disputes; and
- ii. investigate the effectiveness of the peacebuilding strategies in managing communal conflicts among Ile-Ife and Modakeke residents in Osun State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

- i. What is the level of awareness peacebuilding strategies in managing communal conflicts among Ile-Ife and Modakeke residents in Osun State, Nigeria?

- ii. To what extent do peacebuilding initiatives help communities of Ile-Ife and Modakeke in Osun State, Nigeria, resolve their communal conflicts?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Addressing the underlying causes of war, such as poverty, social injustice, and inequality, is necessary to stop violence (UN, 2020). Economic development, social services, and inclusive governance are all necessary components of a holistic strategy for effective conflict avoidance. Negotiation and dialogue help disputing parties communicate with one another in order to settle disagreements amicably (Jeong, 2020). Parties can find shared interests and strive towards win-win solutions by establishing a forum for discussion. Through mediation, parties can come to mutually agreeable solutions with the assistance of impartial third-party facilitators (Jaiyeoba, 2018; Zhomartkyzy, 2023). Mediators can assist parties in finding innovative ideas and overcoming barriers to consensus. Community-based programs foster social cohesion and reconciliation by enabling local communities to take charge of peacebuilding initiatives (Lederach, 2020). Initiatives for peacebuilding can be customised to meet particular needs and settings by including local leaders and community members.

Addressing historical violations of human rights and encouraging responsibility, healing, and forgiveness are key components of reconciliation and transitional justice (Ukpe, 2012; Jaiyeoba, 2016). Communities may foster trust and long-lasting peace by facing the past and encouraging accountability. In order to lessen poverty and inequality, economic development encourages social services, job creation, and economic growth (Collier, 2020). Communities can lessen the chance of war and advance lasting peace by resolving economic concerns. In order to guarantee accountability, openness, and adherence to human rights, security institutions must be reformed (Sedra, 2022).

By promoting security sector reform, communities can build trust and promote sustainable peace. Civic education and engagement promote civic awareness, participation, and engagement to strengthen democratic institutions (Barnes, 2020). By educating citizens about their rights and responsibilities, communities can promote inclusive governance and sustainable peace (Uford, 2022; Ukpe, 2024), fostering empathy and understanding between cultures is a key component of cultural interchange and understanding in order to ease tensions and advance tolerance (Zhomartkyzy, 2023). Communities can create understanding and bridges between various groups and advance lasting peace by encouraging cultural interchange. Sustainable development addresses environmental, social, and economic sustainability while incorporating peacebuilding into larger development initiatives (UN, 2020; Ojo and Chukwudeh, 2016). Communities may foster sustainable peace and lessen the chance of conflict by supporting sustainable development.

Teaching people and communities about social justice, peace, and conflict resolution is known as peace education (Harris, 2022). Communities can create a culture of peace and advance lasting peace by supporting peace education. Offering assistance and healing to people and communities impacted by violence is a component of trauma healing and support (IASC, 2020). Communities may develop resilience and advance lasting peace by addressing trauma and fostering healing.

According to the World Bank (2018), inclusive governance encourages inclusive and participatory governance arrangements that represent a range of people. Communities can foster lasting peace and trust by supporting inclusive government. Promoting and defending human rights is necessary to stop violations and uphold dignity (UN, 2020). Communities may foster a respectful culture and long-lasting peace by supporting human rights. Post-conflict reconstruction involves rebuilding infrastructure, institutions, and social services in post-

conflict settings (World Bank, 218). By promoting post-conflict reconstruction, communities can rebuild and promote sustainable peace.

Theoretical Framework

Galtung's Peace Theory

Galtung's Peace Theory was advocated by Johan Galtung, who began researching peace and conflict resolution in the 1960s. In particular, the Journal of Peace Research published his seminal work "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research" in 1969. This essay, which is regarded as a classic work in the area of peace studies, presents important ideas such as positive peace—the existence of social justice and harmony—and negative peace—the absence of violence. Galtung's ideas have influenced conflict resolution and peace studies for a long time.

There are several uses for Galtung's Peace Theory in peacebuilding, especially his ideas of positive and negative peace. The difference between positive and negative peace in peacebuilding enables practitioners to address the structural and cultural problems that underlie conflict rather than only focussing on putting an end to violence (negative peace). For instance, in order to promote meaningful peace in post-conflict cultures, peacebuilders might concentrate on restoring social and economic institutions, advocating for social fairness, and cultivating inclusive governance. This strategy reduces the likelihood of reoccurring violence and helps guarantee a lasting peace.

Practically speaking, Galtung's theory guides peacebuilding tactics by highlighting the necessity of comprehensive interventions that deal with the causes as well as the symptoms of conflict. For example, in order to establish negative peace, peacebuilding efforts may involve mediation and ceasefire agreements; in order to create positive peace, programs that support human rights, economic development, and intercommunal discussion may also be implemented. By combining these strategies, peacebuilders can establish a more complete and long-lasting peace that not only puts an end to violence but also changes societies in the direction of greater justice and harmony. This is consistent with Galtung's view of peace, which includes both the existence of fair and just social systems and the absence of violence.

Differentiating between positive peace (the existence of social justice and harmony) and negative peace (the absence of violence) might help resolve communal problems, according to Galtung's thesis (Galtung, 1969). Communities can work towards sustainable development and reconciliation by addressing the underlying causes of conflict and concentrating on establishing constructive peace (Galtung, 1996).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

An explanatory sequential mixed method design was used in this study to give a thorough grasp of how well peacebuilding techniques work to manage intercommunal disputes among people of Ile-Ife and Modakeke. While the qualitative phase offered rich, contextual insights into the experiences and perspectives of stakeholders and community members, the quantitative phase made it possible to gather quantifiable data on the prevalence and impact of peacebuilding programs.

This study was able to triangulate findings, improve validity, and provide a more nuanced knowledge of the intricate dynamics of peacebuilding in the setting of Ile-Ife and Modakeke by integrating both quantitative and qualitative data. A more thorough and contextualised comprehension of the study problem was made possible by the qualitative phase's ability to expand upon and further explain the quantitative findings thanks to the sequential design.

Population, sample size and sampling procedures

All residents of Ile-Ife and Modakeke formed the target population. However, multistage and purposive sampling procedures were used to select one-hundred and fifteen participants from both communities. In the first stage, that is, Ile-Ife, five locations (Olugbodo, Iyekere boundary area, Akarabata, Ojoyin, and Mayfia/Seventh Day Adventist Hospital) were selected. In the second stage, that is, Modakeke, five locations (Oke-Eso, Egbedore, Line 1, and 2, Oke-Yidi and Isale Agbara) were sampled purposively. These locations were mostly affected areas during conflict that erupted between the two communities.

Instrument, Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The study employed self-designed questionnaire and interview guide. The questionnaire has two sections. The first section contained demographic information of the respondents. The second section comprised ten items on the peacebuilding strategies, respectively. The face and content validity of the instruments was established by the experts in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies of the Osun State University. The validated instrument was administered on twenty residents in *Ipetumodu* community of Osun State, Nigeria. Cronbach Alpha reliability method was used which produced 0.88. This indicated that the instrument was reliable for the study.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

Two research assistants familiar with the study area were trained to assist with data collection. They administered questionnaires to respondents in Ife communities for two weeks and then in Modakeke communities for another two weeks, while the researcher conducted interview sessions. The data obtained was analysed using descriptive statistics comprised mean and standard deviation, respectively.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the level of awareness of peacebuilding strategies in managing communal conflicts among Ile-Ife and Modakeke residents in Osun State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Level of awareness of peacebuilding strategies in managing communal conflicts among Ile-Ife and Modakeke residents in Osun State, Nigeria.

Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Rank
Mediation	3.22	1.45	1 st
Arbitration	2.99	1.22	2 nd
Negotiation	2.78	1.26	3 rd
Conciliation	2.61	1.09	4 th
Restorative Justice	2.55	1.05	5 th

Interpretation and Discussion

Table 1 indicated that the respondent awareness of the peacebuilding strategies comprised mediation (mean = 3.22, Std. Dev = 1.45) ranked first, arbitration (mean = 2.99, Std. Dev = 1.22) ranked second, negotiation (mean = 2.78, Std. Dev = 1.26) ranked third, conciliation (mean = 2.61, Std. Dev = 1.09) ranked fourth, and restorative justice (mean = 2.55, Std. Dev = 1.05) ranked fifth as peacebuilding strategies to address communal conflicts and dispute among the residents of Ile-Ife and Modakeke, Osun State, Nigeria.

The results in Table 1 indicate that respondents are most aware of mediation as a peacebuilding strategy (mean = 3.22), followed closely by arbitration (mean = 2.99) and negotiation (mean =

2.78). Conciliation (mean = 2.61) and restorative justice (mean = 2.55) are less well-known. This suggests that while residents of Ile-Ife and Modakeke are familiar with various peacebuilding strategies, there may be a need to raise awareness about conciliation and restorative justice to effectively address communal conflicts. The study's finding implies that peacebuilding initiatives in Ile-Ife and Modakeke should prioritize awareness campaigns on conciliation and restorative justice, as these strategies are less familiar to residents, to maximize their effectiveness in resolving communal conflicts and promoting peace.

The findings indicate that residents of Ile-Ife and Modakeke, Osun State, Nigeria, are most aware of mediation as a peacebuilding strategy, followed by arbitration and negotiation. Conciliation and restorative justice are less well-known. This suggests that while residents are familiar with various peacebuilding strategies, there may be a need to raise awareness about conciliation and restorative justice to effectively address communal conflicts. The relatively high standard deviations for mediation and negotiation indicate varying levels of awareness among respondents. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of targeted awareness campaigns to promote peacebuilding strategies in the community. This was further corroborated by the responses from the interview granted as thus:

As a resident of Ile-Ife, I'm aware of peacebuilding strategies like mediation, community engagement, and peacebuilding initiatives that help manage communal conflicts. These approaches promote dialogue, understanding, and cooperation among community members, fostering a sense of community and reducing conflict likelihood. Government interventions and local peace architectures also play a role in strengthening peacebuilding mechanisms and promoting social cohesion, ultimately contributing to sustainable peace in the community **(Resident/Male/Ile-Ife/KII/2024)**.

As a resident of Modakeke, I'm familiar with the complexities of communal conflicts and the importance of effective peacebuilding strategies. Mediation, dialogue, and community engagement are crucial in resolving disputes and promoting peace. Additionally, initiatives that focus on youth empowerment, cultural exchange, and social cohesion can help build a more harmonious community. By working together, residents, leaders, and organizations can create a more peaceful and resilient community **(Resident/Male/Modakeke/KII/2024)**.

From my viewpoint as a resident, peacebuilding strategies such as mediation and negotiation are essential in addressing communal conflicts. However, it's also important to address the root causes of these conflicts, such as historical grievances, land disputes, and socio-economic inequalities. A holistic approach that combines traditional conflict resolution methods with modern peacebuilding techniques can help foster lasting peace and reconciliation in the community **(Resident/Female/Ile-Ife/KII/2024)**.

In my view, peacebuilding requires a bottom-up approach, where community members and leaders are actively involved in designing and implementing peace initiatives. This could include intergenerational dialogue, cultural festivals, and community service projects that promote unity and understanding. By empowering local communities to take ownership of peacebuilding efforts, we can create more sustainable and effective solutions to communal conflicts **(Resident/Female/Modakeke/KII/2024)**.

This is consistent with the findings of Braithwaite (2002), who noted that restorative justice is often underutilized in conflict resolution. The relatively high standard deviations for mediation and negotiation indicate varying levels of awareness among respondents, which may be attributed to differences in education, exposure, or experience with conflict resolution (Awofeso, 2018). Overall, the findings of this study highlight the importance of promoting awareness and education on peacebuilding strategies, particularly conciliation and restorative justice, to enhance community capacity to manage conflicts and promote peace. As noted by Ibrahim and Ibrahim (2025), investing in peace education and leadership training can significantly contribute to national stability and sustainable development.

Research Question Two: What is the effectiveness of peacebuilding strategies in managing communal conflicts among Ile-Ife and Modakeke residents in Osun State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Effectiveness of peacebuilding strategies in managing communal conflicts among Ile-Ife and Modakeke residents in Osun State, Nigeria.

Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Mediation	2.78	1.26	1 st
Negotiation	2.61	1.09	2 nd
Dialogue	2.55	1.05	3 rd
Government Interventions	2.54	1.26	4 th
Media and Communication Initiatives	2.53	1.09	5 th
Community-Based Reconciliation Initiatives	2.52	1.05	6 th

Interpretation and Discussion

Table 2 indicated that show that the effective peacebuilding strategies for managing communal conflict include; mediation (2.78) is perceived as the most effective approach, followed by negotiation (2.61) and dialogue (2.55). Government interventions, media and communication initiatives, and community-based reconciliation initiatives also scored relatively high, ranging from 2.52 to 2.54. These findings suggest that traditional conflict resolution methods, such as mediation and negotiation, are highly valued, while government and community-led initiatives are also seen as effective in promoting peace.

The study highlights the importance of effective peacebuilding strategies in managing communal conflicts. The findings suggest that traditional conflict resolution methods, such as mediation and negotiation, are highly valued by community members. Mediation emerges as a particularly effective approach, likely due to its ability to facilitate dialogue and mutual understanding between conflicting parties. Negotiation and dialogue also rank high, indicating the importance of communication and cooperation in resolving conflicts. The study also underscores the significance of government and community-led initiatives in promoting peace. The comparatively high scores for community-based reconciliation projects, media and communication campaigns, and government interventions indicate that these strategies can be quite effective in establishing mutual respect, understanding, and a feeling of community.

According to the findings, traditional conflict resolution techniques like negotiation and mediation ought to be given top priority by practitioners and politicians in peacebuilding initiatives. In order to advance peace and stability, it is also important to make use of community-based reconciliation efforts, media and communication campaigns, and government interventions. Communities can create practical plans for handling intercommunal

disputes and fostering long-lasting peace by integrating these methods. This suggests that in order to build on current strengths and advance peacebuilding programs, community leaders, governmental organisations, and other stakeholders must work together.

Existing research backs up the findings, emphasising the value of community-led programs like local peace committees (Odinkalu, 2017) and conventional conflict resolution techniques like mediation and negotiation (Jeong, 2008; Fisher, 2007) in fostering peace. When paired with community-led initiatives, government interventions can also be extremely important (World Bank, 2018), indicating that a mix of these strategies can be a successful means of fostering peace and stability in areas devastated by violence.

Conclusion

The study indicated that conciliation and restorative justice are the least known peacebuilding techniques for resolving intercommunal disputes in Ile-Ife and Modakeke, Osun State, Nigeria. Government interventions, media campaigns, and community-led initiatives are all vital in fostering peace. Mediation, negotiation, and dialogue are effective peacebuilding tactics for handling intercommunal conflicts.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study. The following recommendations are raised for concerned stakeholders.

- i. To resolve intercommunal disputes and advance peace and stability in areas like Ile-Ife and Modakeke, the government should fund community-based mediation programs, set up arbitration frameworks, encourage conciliation efforts, provide negotiation training, and put restorative justice policies into place.
- ii. People should support local leaders and mediators who help with conflict resolution and reconciliation efforts, participate in community-based programs that encourage peacebuilding, and place a high value on communication, empathy, and understanding in order to settle disputes amicably.
- iii. Leaders and community leaders should use their power to create a culture of conflict resolution and reconciliation by facilitating communication, mediating conflicts, and encouraging peaceful cohabitation among community members.
- iv. Supporting community-led projects, putting in place efficient dispute resolution procedures, encouraging communication, offering training and capacity building, and creating laws that encourage harmony, tolerance, and understanding between various communities and groups are all ways that the government can advance peace.
- v. In order to create a more peaceful community, locals can encourage peace through communication, backing neighbourhood-based projects, looking for mediation, spreading understanding, and working with governmental organisations.

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