



Conflict Management and Farmers' Production Level in Oke-Ogun Area of Oyo State

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Authors AAA, KKB and AMO designed the study, wrote the protocol, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors AAA, KKB and AMO performed the statistical analysis, and managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Aim: Conflict management is a factor that determines whether farmers production level increases or not since conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in the society. Oke-Ogun areas have been witnessing several violent conflicts of which farm settlements, properties and lives were destroyed. Quest for empirical data concerning effect of conflict management by farmers in the area necessitate this research.

Study Design: Structured interview guide was used to elicit information from 120 respondents each from core conflict (CCA) and outside conflict areas (OCA).

Place and Duration of Study: The study area Oke-Ogun area of Oyo State was chosen given its prevalent conflict occurrences. Study duration 2 years.

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Methodology: Using simple random sampling techniques respondents were sampled from four blocks as stratified by the Oyo State ADP. Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentage and t-test analyses.

Results: The result showed that 72.65% of the farmers in (CCA) and OCA (69.22%) were in the age category of 18-45 years. Farming was the main livelihood of respondents in CCA (83.76%) and OCA (77.88%). Prominent reason adduced for conflict by farmers is competition for natural resources (86.42%). Farmers in CCA recorded lower mean production level for maize 62.25 tones, yam 1152 tones and cassava 1232 tones as oppose to higher mean production level recorded for maize 310.5 tones, yam 3505 tones and cassava 11,185.6 tones OCA. Result of the t-test showed a significant difference in crops production level between CCA and OCA at $p < 0.05$.

Conclusion: The study therefore concluded that conflict management employed by farmers had negative influence on farmers production level. It is recommended that farmers should avail themselves of training opportunities on conflict management and resolution in order to ensure peaceful co-existence among themselves which is a factor for increase in production.

Keywords: Management; farmers; crops; violent conflict; production.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Oke-Ogun area is the food basket of Oyo State [1]. In these areas efforts are mostly concentrated on arable crop production with few livestock farms, fisheries and tree crops plantations. However, labour scarcity and poor feeder roads are the major constraints to movement of farm produce from rural to urban centers. In recent times communal conflicts have been on the increase. The historical analysis of conflict in this area revealed major causes as competition for land and natural resources, territorial disputes and traditional chieftaincy tussles. Others includes doctrinal differences, lack of communal respect for host community, and agitation for positions of authority and power, which had culminated into inter- personal and intra/inter group conflict in the communities [2].

The crisis in Irawo communities in Atisbo Local Government areas (Ago-Are, Tede, Irawo, Sabe, Bassi and Offiki) was one of the several violent conflicts in this part of Nigeria. It was an age-long conflict, which started sometimes in 1952 when the Oba Ajoriwin "Aderinola" died [3]. The Edu and Ogbo ruling families fought for the throne until they eventually split the town into two communities. The Edu migrated to Irawo-Owode three kilometers to Irawo-Ile. This position was maintained till the mid-1960s prior to a resolution that led to the formation of common front- Irawo Parapo Community. Apart from struggling for the throne, people still traced the origin of the conflict to the scramble for control of the precious stone deposit in some communities. However, government intervention could not bring lasting solution to the crisis as one party was subjugated for the other in the era of the Alliance for

Democracy (AD) political party in year 2001. Thereafter, the community was pulled apart as the seat of government turned against the other party and no sooner had the Oba Ajoriwin, who was on exile in the last four years, returned to the palace than some people invaded Irawo-Owode and unleashed mayhem, burnt houses and shot into the air sporadically [4].

Another example of community conflict was that of the Bororos from the Niger Republic who usually migrate into the country through Benin Republic, which shares boundary with Nigeria along the Oyo Northern part of the State (Saki, Kisi, Igboho, Igbeti). During the dry season they move from one region to the other in search of forage for their livestock. At this time of the year fadama farmers at the peak of their production, block cattle routes and waterways, hence the grazing animals encroach on the cultivated farmlands damaging crops. These had often resulted into farmer/pastoralist conflicts, which claim lives and properties. Similar conflicts have also been recorded among the Tiv and Fulani/Jugun in Benue State [5]. Part of the factors responsible for the underdevelopment of Nigeria is the incessant ethno-religious conflicts, territorial encroachment by the neighboring communities (Igbojaye/Ofiki and Saki/Ogboro) among others, and perpetual division arising from tribal, geographical or religious differences [6]. The incessant conflicts might have had adverse effects on agricultural production in terms of internal population displacement, unwarranted deaths, maiming and destruction of infrastructure. In conflict areas, the fear of attack by extension personnel might have had adverse effects on the level of their visitation and training of farm families. This hostility and unstable

environment might have also militated against mobilization of investors such as government, individuals or agencies which will in no doubt adversely affect the nations' economy tremendously. The unavailability of empirical concerning impact of the conflict necessitate conduct of research on the impact of communal conflict on agricultural production in Oke-Ogun area of Oyo State, Nigeria with the aims of achieving the following objectives: determine the personal characteristics of farmers which generated violent conflict in the study area, identify causes of conflict in the area, examine the causes and nature of conflicts in the study area and ascertain the impact of conflict management style employed by farmers on crop production level.

2. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

There is no significant difference in crops production level in conflict and outside-conflict zones of the study area.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Description of the Study Area

Oyo State is divided into four main administration agricultural zones that is, Oyo, Ogbomoso, Saki and Ibadan/ Ibarapa zones, with 7- 9 LGAs per zone. Saki zone was selected purposively due to the high concentration of conflict in the area. Oke-ogun area of Oyo State shares boundaries with Ogun State, Kwara State, Republic of Benin and Ibarapa. It is located on the northwestern part of the State. It stretches from about latitudes S60°w with rainfall range between 1000-1500mm [1]. As at December 2006 it accounts for about 35% (174,152) of the population of the State. It encompasses 10 local government areas out of the thirty-three in the State. The local governments are: Saki-West, Saki- East, Atisbo Ago-Are, Tede, Irawo, Sabe, Bassi and Offiki, Kajola, Orelupe, Olorunsogo, Itesiwaju, Iwajowa, Irepo and Iseyin as shown in Fig. 1. It was primarily an agrarian community with about 480 communities. The area served as the food basket of the State and about 80km from Ibadan, the capital of the State.

3.2 Data and Data Sources

A combination of purposive and simple random sampling techniques was used to select respondents (head of households) at 5-10km radius from the LG headquarters to ensure a

representative sample frame. Four blocks were randomly selected from the purposive sampled zone while 3-communities were randomly selected from each of the 4 cells sampled from each of the selected blocks with 5 respondents (household heads; 2.5%) per community (i.e. 15 respondents per cell), male and female inclusive, using the list of farmers in Oyo State (available at OYSADEP). Primary data were collected with the use of structured interview guide through the help of extension agents in OYSADEP.

3.3 Method of Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using frequency count, percentages and t-test. The results of the data analysis were segregated into core and outside conflict areas in which the respondents from both areas were 117 and 104 respectively. The total sample size was 240 farmers.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Personal Characteristics

The personal characteristics of the respondents were presented in Table 1. The mean age of the farmers was 33 years. However, majority (47.86% and 47.11%) in core and outside conflict areas respectively of the respondents were between 31-50 years of age. The mean age of 33 years implied that majority of the farmers was young and were still in their active and productive years. The finding was in agreement with [7] that fewer older farmers took farming as vocation due to lack of strength to cope with farm drudgery. This was an adventurous age when young people explored new horizons for greener pastures of which attempt to block this ambition might have resulted into personal and inter group conflict in the society [8].

Table 1 further indicated that majority (94.02% and 99.04%) of farmers were male in core and outside conflict areas respectively. [9] reported that, the main activity of Nigeria women was food processing and agricultural products distribution. However, this does not mean that women were not engaged in farming activities such as cultivation, planting, weeding and harvesting. Since the majority of respondents were male, incessant conflict in core conflict area could be attributed to attempt by the respondent to generate means of livelihood from competing interest and resources.

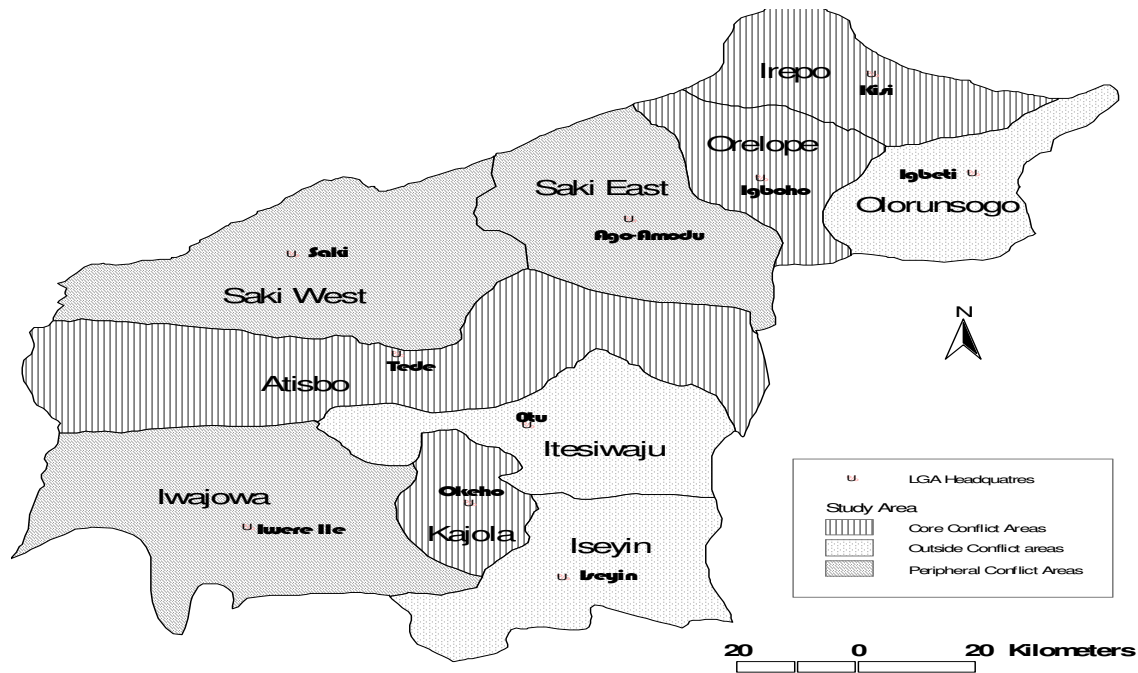


Fig. 1. Map of Oke-Ogun showing core, peripheral and outside conflict areas

Table 1 also indicated that majority (82.91% and 76.92%) of the farmers in core and outside conflict areas respectively were married. The distribution of number of wives showed that 57.26% and 50.00% had one wife and 42.74% and 50.00% had more than one wife in core and outside conflict areas respectively. This implied that, the fewer the number of wives and children the greater the chance of taken risk of life in conflict involvement.

However, 46.15% and 38.46% were Christian while, 46.15% and 50.00% were Moslem in core and outside conflict areas respectively. Findings showed that Christianity and Islam were the major religions of the respondents. This was contrary to [10], who stated that traditional religion was observed mainly in the rural areas and those rural inhabitants of the various states in Nigeria still place premium on the continued work of traditional religion. It could be deduced that attempt to defend ones faith against other contravening doctrinal right culminated into conflict.

Household size refers to the number of people that eat from the same pot daily and live under a common roof. Table 1 showed that 50.4% and 47.1% in core and outside conflict areas of the farmers belong to moderate household size of 6 – 10 while, 10.3% and 7.7% were in large

household size (i.e. greater than 10) and 39.3% and 45.2% were in small household size of 1 – 5. The mean household size was 8 persons. The size of a household was also a determinant of productivity. The implication house hold size could be viewed from two perspectives one, a large household may likely have more diversified income sources if it has some or all of its members working and contributing to household welfare. Secondly, a large household may have more household expenses and needs thereby becoming a liability to the production force. This corroborated [9] findings, which stated that large household farm families might either be a liability or other wise to the enterprise depending on how productive they were.

4.2 Causes of Conflict in the Study Area

Table 2 indicated that competition for natural resource (86.4%), communication problem (84.6%), and conflict of interest (79.2%) were the prominent causes of conflict in the areas. These findings rated competition for natural resources as the most prominent cause of conflict. This was in agreement with [12], which stressed that contact between people of different ethnic groups does not necessarily resulted into conflict else; it was the competition between them for economic gain that triggered conflict. For instance, it was competition for economic gain over the precious

stone deposit in some part of Irawo community that led to conflict in the land [3], while conflict of interest between the 'Alamodu' of Ago-Amodu and Balufon of Sepeteri in Saki-East Local government area pull the two communities apart. Dispute over land culminated into conflict between Igbojaye and Ofiki community in the year 2000, while territorial dispute led Saki and Ogboro community to court verdict when government intervention for compromise failed in the year 2006. Desire for autonomy was the genesis of crisis in Irawo community in the year 1952 [3], while Modakeke suffered under Ife community for same reason in the year 2000 [8]. Also, traditional chieftaincy tussle (i.e hierarchical placement) brought segregation among Igboho community of ancestral relationship with the Oyo-Messi as far back as 1945 (field survey), while same reason culminated into conflict in Ilero community at Itesiwaju LGA in 2000 during the Alliance for Democracy (AD) a political party in Oyo State. In the course of this crisis people were killed, property destroyed and shortage of farm labour were elicited due to movement of people away from the communities that was on the increase; consequently, starvation, malnutrition, epidemic and underdevelopment in the community.

4.3 Nature of Conflict in the Study Area

Table 3 indicated that poverty (47.86%) and ideological differences (29.06%) were the most prominent elements and characteristics that determined group cohesion and mobilization of members to conflicts in core conflict areas, rather than religion or ethnicity. The findings still supported [11] that it was competition for economic gain among groups that led to crisis and not cultural differences or their coming into contact with one another. However, poverty has to do with the living standard of community members, while opinion diversity among stakeholders in the community was perceived as ideological differences by the respondents in the study areas. The ethnic (4.27%) and religious (10.26%) conflict rarely occurred, but they had pulled apart many communities in those days. For instance, the war between the Oyo Messi and the Egbas in the nineteenth-century, while of recent Saki community was pulled apart through doctrinal differences though not without political undertone [12]. In view of these many Christian homes and churches were destroyed. However identity (8.55%), which was a supersitory innate attribute commonly found among the pressure

groups often promoted inter-personal and inter-group conflict among community members. Hence, it could be inferred that inter-personal and inter-group conflict as a result of envy was more prominent in core conflict areas such as Irawo and Ofiki communities in Atisbo LGA and Kisi at Irepo LGA where there were competition for scarce natural resources like precious stone (tourmaline, diamond and others) and forage for nomadic livestock respectively; which had culminated into dispute over land ownership and farmer/pastoralist conflict in Irawo-ile and Kisi communities respectively. Since there were always motives behind peoples' need; an attempt to block this motive might have led to conflict.

4.4 Impact of Communal Conflict Management Style Employed by Farmers on Crop Production

Table 4 showed impact of communal conflict on agricultural production most especially on arable crops, tree crops and root and tuber crop production in core and outside conflict areas over a period of two years. Crop production was lower in cashew with average yield of 0.78MT/hectare in core conflict area compared with 1.9MT/ha of farmland, while 0.84MT/ha of citrus in core conflict area was lower compared to 1.6MT/ha in outside conflict area. However, arable crops (maize, sorghum, rice, millet, cowpea and soybean) from the table revealed that average yield of 0.82MT/ha of maize was lower in core conflict area compare to 1.76MT/ha in outside conflict area, while soybean had a relatively low yield of 0.78MT/ha in core conflict area compared to an average of 1.55MT/ha in outside conflict area, and 2.89MT/ha of cassava in core conflict area was equally lower compared to 6.3MT/ha in outside conflict area. This implied that conflict had negative impact on crop production in core conflict areas as attention were diverted to fighting rather than concentrating on farming while, the few timid older ones ran out of the community for their dear lives and abandoned their farm uncared for. The finding agreed with [13] in the case of Ife/Modakeke's crisis where youth of active labour force diverted attention to war. The low crop production performance in core conflict area could be adduced to proportion of work-time lost to conflict and farmers' inadequate access to needed agricultural information that could have increase agricultural production output [14].

Table 1. Personal characteristics of farmers in conflict and non-conflict areas (n = 221)

Parameters	Conflict area (n=117)				Outside conflict area (n=104)			
	Freq	%	Mean	Std.	Freq	%	Mean	Std
Age								
11 – 30	29	24.79			23	22.11		
31 – 50	56	47.86			49	47.11		
51 – 70	22	18.80			24	23.08		
71 – 90	10	8.55	33.32		08	7.69	33.47	
Above 90	-	-			-	-		
Marital status								
Single	20	17.09			24	23.08		
Married	97	82.91			80	76.92		
Sex:								
Male	110	94.02			103	99.04		
Female	7	5.98	88.75		1	0.96	99.01	
Religion								
Christianity	54	46.15			40	38.46		
Islam	54	46.15			52	50.00		
Traditional	9	7.69			12	11.54		
Number of wives								
Monogamy	67	57.26			52	50.00		
Polygamy	50	42.74	58.50		52	50.00	52.00	
Household size								
1 – 5	46	39.32			47	45.19		
6 – 10	59	50.43			49	47.11		
11 – 15	9	7.69			6	5.77		
21 – 25	3	2.56	7.54		2	1.92	7.42	4.01

Sources: Field Survey (2005-2006)

Table 2. Causes of conflict (n = 221)

Statement	Agree		Disagree			
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Mean	Standard deviation
Competition for natural Resources	191	86.42	30	13.57	3.91	1.07
Communication problem	187	84.62	34	15.38	4.32	0.81
Cultural differences	45	20.36	176	79.64	1.81	1.20
Territorial dispute	145	65.61	76	34.39	3.65	1.53
Dispute over land Ownership	171	77.38	50	22.62	2.85	1.20
Traditional chieftaincy Tuuzzle	116	52.49	105	47.51	3.23	1.69
Doctrinal differences	148	66.97	73	33.03	3.63	1.53
Conflicting objectives	143	64.71	78	35.29	4.42	0.79
Personality clash	175	79.19	46	20.81	4.59	0.87
Autonomy desire	122	55.20	99	44.80	4.05	1.02

Multiple Responses Sources: Field Survey (2005-2006)

Table 3. Degree of conflict nature in core conflict area

Elements of conflict	Core conflict area (n=117)	
	Frequency	%
Ethnicity	05	4.27
Religion	12	10.26
Poverty	56	47.86
Ideology	34	29.06
Identity	10	8.55
Total	117	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2005-2006)

Table 4. Impact of communal conflict management style employed by farmers on crop production

Variable	Core conflict area (n=117)					Outside conflict area (n=104)				
	Farm size (Ha)	Cumulative yield year 2005	Cumulative yield year 2006	Cumulative average yield	Average yield/Ha	Farm size (Ha)	Cumulative yield year 2005	Cumulative yield year 2006	Cumulative average yield	Average yield/Ha
Cashew	150	164MT	70MT	117MT	0.78MT	144	168MT	374MT	271MT	1.90MT
Citrus	165	212MT	65MT	138.5MT	0.84MT	163	226MT	356MT	261MT	1.60MT
Maize	174	264MT	22.50MT	143.25MT	0.82MT	176	275MT	346MT	310.5MT	1.76MT
Sorghum	85	65.00MT	27MT	46MT	0.54MT	82	59MT	113.5MT	86.25MT	1.05MT
Rice	7	12.8MT	10.6MT	11.7MT	1.67MT	8	14.3MT	20.4MT	17.3MT	2.16MT
Millet	4	1.50MT	0.9MT	0.79MT	0.2MT	4.2	1.82MT	1.85MT	1.84MT	0.04MT
Cowpea	63	50.4MT	10.1MT	30.25MT	0.48MT	66	57MT	67.4MT	62.2MT	0.94MT
Soybean	45	63.8MT	6.8MT	35.3MT	0.78MT	42	63MT	67.5MT	65.25MT	1.55MT
Yam	142	1650MT	32.6MT	841.3MT	5.92MT	146	1598MT	1654MT	1626MT	11.14MT
Cassava	346	1901MT	102MT	1001.5MT	2.89MT	345	1942MT	2406MT	2174MT	6.30MT

Sources: Field Survey (2005-2006)

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the results of the study the following major conclusions were drawn. Majority of the sampled farmers were still in their active years (<50years) in the study area. That is they were in their active stages of life where participation in social group activities were concentrated on economic activities. Majority of the farmers were literate and traveled outside their village. This implied that farmers' were indoctrinated through cultural synchronization/assimilation. Findings further revealed that a greater proportion of the population in core CCA engaged themselves in farming; hence, food insecurity must have been due to farmers' active involvement in conflict as a result of their work-time lost to conflict. Majority of the respondents indicated that competition for scarce natural resources was the most prominent causes of conflict in the study area. A greater proportion of the population indicated that poverty and ideological differences were the most prominent elements and characteristics that determined group cohesion and mobilization of members to conflicts in CCA rather than religion or ethnicity. It could be inferred that competition for economic gain among people for sustainability happened to be the motive behind conflict and not ethnic or doctrinal differences. The severity of conflict having harness low income in CCA through a proportionate decrease in farmers' productivity; it could be inferred that farmers' in CCA must have been living below poverty line consequently; suffered from starvation, malnutrition, disease epidemic and untimely death that were clear signs of poverty and population decrease. The conflict might have crippled the economic and social activities especially in conflict-ridden areas.

Therefore, it could be concluded the conflict handling styles adopted by farmers and stakeholders in the community might have depict the negative impact of conflict on agricultural production (decrease in production). Farmers suggested recommended solutions are that an appropriate land tenure policy should be formulated by the government to ensure right access to agricultural land, while a substantial amount of money should be set aside for restructuring and rehabilitation of demolished houses and farms respectively. In addition, others recommended a uniform distribution of infrastructure placement and reformation of traditional chieftaincy hierarchical placement.

Other suggested an appropriate orientation of the farmers in exploiting other new horizon and appropriate reconciliation mechanism through reputable non-partisan and non-political NGOs as mediator.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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