



ANALYSIS OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN YORRO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF TARABA STATE: THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY- BASED ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract

The study examined the role of community-based organizations in managing conflicts in Yorro local government area of Taraba State. The study intended to underscore the types and areas of focus of community-based organization, as well as ascertain the strategies and mechanisms used by community-based organizations in conflict management in the study area. Two specific objectives with corresponding research questions guided the study. The study adopted descriptive research design and

proportionate sampling technique was used to select

Keywords: Community-based organization, conflict, conflict management, Yorro LGA, Taraba State.

41 participants from 136 target population for the study. A researcher-designed questionnaire, which yielded 0.86 reliability coefficient using Cronbach's Alpha analysis and Split-Half method was used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency, percentage, mean

INTRODUCTION

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) have become a significant factor in managing conflicts at national, regional and international levels, within community contexts, around the world. Conflicts have been existing as long as the creation of human societies. In other words, conflict arises whenever incompatible actions take place. That is, when values, viewpoints, and opinions of two or more people clash, conflict will emerge. This explains why many people perceive conflict as entirely negative event with no positive aspects. Some characterize it as dysfunctional or destructive, while others see it as a catalyst for change, innovation and productivity. This dual perspective arises from the notion that wherever individuals coexist in a community, conflict is likely to occur.

It is not surprising that Devi (2012) defined

and standard deviations for answering the research questions. The findings revealed that CBOs used peace committees, community meetings, peace caravans and membership in peace groups to facilitate peace while the preferred method for solving conflict was arbitration by community elders. Also, the findings indicated that the areas of focus of CBOs include community physical infrastructure development, healthcare access, education

and literacy enhancement, among others. The study further indicated the strategies and mechanisms employed by CBOs in managing conflicts in the study area as use of council of elders, intercultural marriages, and resource management agreements among others. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that, as far as Yorro local government area of Taraba State is concerned, there are numerous CBOs with focus on

different aspects of lives of the community people. Also, several strategies and mechanism are employed by CBOs in addressing conflicts in the study area. In line with the findings, it was recommended that CBOs should be used to mitigate community-related conflicts in Taraba State; and that CBOs strategies and mechanisms used should be refined and incorporated into formal system for effective conflict management in Taraba State.

Conflict as a social circumstance where two individuals compete for a particular set of resources simultaneously. This can occur at any level- social, religious, regional, national or international. Throughout history, societies, social groups and individuals have disputed and competed against one another over scarce commodities and resources such as land, money, political power, and ideology. Groups have even engaged in conflict and aggressively sought to defeat or suppression opponents to gain control over their resources and commodities. However, human societies, social groups and individuals have also developed strategies for managing, averting, or resolving conflicts. Thus, conflict management refers to the array of strategies and mechanisms used to facilitate a peaceful resolution to conflicts and retribution. It may be understood as a scenario in which the conflicting parties reach an agreement that solve their incompatibilities, disputes, problems and cease all violent actions against each other. For Austin (2016), it encompasses non-violent measures with the aim to ensure effective solution whereby strategies such as negotiation, mediation, mediation-arbitration, diplomacy and creative peace building are employed for conflict control and management.

The existing body of literature confirms that the nature and causes of conflicts and the strategies or mechanisms for managing them are deeply rooted in the culture and history of every society or community. The strategies and mechanisms for managing conflicts are in many important ways unique to each community. For instance, Baxi and Gallanter cited in James (2010) reported that in India, Panchayat conflict management strategy is used; while China uses Mediation Committees and Afghanistan employs Jirga management mechanism. These comparative social facts may lend credence to support the philosophical position of cultural relativists that the nature of all social phenomena, including conflicts and their management are relative and culturally specific (see Harris, 2018). According to Mwaniki (2017), there is increasing realization that effective conflict management provides opportunity to prevent violence and destruction from occurring, it is dependent on among other things recognition for local strategies and mechanisms developed by community-based organizations towards managing conflicts.

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are typically construed as non-profit and grassroots entities that operate at the local level, mainly to tackle particular community issues, encourage social change, and stimulate community development (Wright & Reames, 2020). That is, it is an organization based on community unity, a social structure that strives to achieve shared objectives through collective efforts. This explains why CBOs is constituted by community members, who have something in common in terms of settlement/quarter, or share some other common characteristics or interests. That is, CBOs often emerge from within the community, driven by residents, activists, or stakeholders who are dedicated to improving the quality of life, advocating for social justice, advancing the interests of their community members, and controlling of possible fracas within and between members of communities. In this sense, the strategies and mechanisms employed by CBOs in recent times towards conflict control and management has tamed the waves of conflicts at the community level to some extent (Francis, 2019). Olawale (2016) observed that in managing conflicts, community as once developed codes of conduct, norms and customs to regulate human behaviour and prevent eruption of conflicts and clashes. In communities like Yorro in Taraba State of Nigeria for instance, formal set of rules, legislations, police system, and judiciary are prominent strategies employed to prevent and resolve conflicts.

In other words, most of the conflicts in Yorro local government area of Taraba State are being handled by using formal conflict management strategies. In fact, the researcher's visit to the study area revealed that community people still have disagreement over land issue, farmer-herder crises, fracas as a result of border and boundary as well as mutual blame among the ethnic nationalities in the area. The afore-mentioned points have caused series of conflicts among the settlers of Yorro with resultant effects of killing, maiming, destruction of properties and displacing multitude in the said environs.

For instance, the Gongong Maliki community in Yorro local government area has been fraught with tension and mutual blame between the Mumuye and Fulani ethnic nationalities. The Fulani, as migrant pastoralists, have historically laid claims to autonomy over land holdings, which has sparked conflict with the Mumuye and other established ethnic groups in the region. The Fulani feel they are falsely accused of kidnapping and cattle rustling, and they also complain about being denied access to traditional cattle routes. This has led to a crisis where community members, particularly the Mumuye and other ethnic groups have fled Gongong Maliki, displacing many individuals.

The Fulani with their nomadic lifestyle and dependence on cattle herding, often come into conflict with settled agricultural communities, such as the Mumuye over land use and resources (Smith, 2017). In the case of Gongong Maliki, the Fulani felt their autonomy and traditional rights were being infringed upon, leading to accusations and suspicions (Elder at Gongong Maliki, 2024). As Smith (2019) notes, land disputes are a common source of interethnic conflict, especially in areas with diverse ethnic groups and competing land use. The Fulani claims of cattle rustling and kidnapping further escalated tensions, as these are serious crimes that often carry significant social repercussions.

The Mumuye on the other hand, felt threatened by the Fulani presence and perceived their actions as menacing to the community (Elder at Gongong Maliki, 2024). As a result, kidnapping became rampant, fueling mutual mistrust and exacerbating the conflict. This dynamic is not uncommon in areas with a history of ethnic tensions, as kidnapping can be used as a tool to assert power, seek ransom, or retaliate (Williams & Jones, 2020). The Mumuye's decision to flee Gongong Maliki highlights the severity of the situation and the breakdown of social cohesion in the community. However, little is being said about the strategies employed by community-based organizations- CBOs in addressing conflicts in Yorro LGA, Taraba State. As a further study in this direction, the current study examined the types, arears of focus and conflicts management strategies used by CBOs in the study area.

Statement of the Problem

The presence of numerous Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in Yorro Local Government Area underscores the recognition of the importance of local conflict management and resolution. However, the effectiveness of these CBOs in mitigating and resolving conflicts remains a subject of inquiry and ongoing research. Understanding the specific roles, and approaches used by CBOs in addressing community conflicts is crucial for assessing their impact and improving their effectiveness.

There is no doubt that CBOs often serve as mediators and facilitators of dialogue between conflicting parties. That is, CBOs usually work to de-escalate tensions, identify underlying issues, and promote peaceful solutions among community members. By being embedded in the local community, CBOs have a unique understanding of the cultural, social, and historical dynamics that influence conflicts. This knowledge enables them to tailor their approaches to the specific needs and contexts of the area. However, the success of CBOs in conflict management depends on the types of CBOs and available strategies at their disposal. Thus, the current study explored the types, areas of focus and strategies employed towards managing conflicts in Yorro local government area, Taraba State.

Objectives of the Study

The study explored community-based organizations and conflict management in Yorro local government area of Taraba State. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Determine the types and areas of focus of community-based organizations (CBOs) operating in Yorro local government area.
- ii. Ascertain the conflict management strategies often employed by CBOs in addressing various conflicts in the study area.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. What are the types and areas of focus of community-based organizations (CBOs) operating in Yorro local government area of Taraba State?
- ii. What are the conflict management strategies often employed by CBOs in addressing various conflicts in the study area?

Literature Review

The concept of community-based organization speaks to different local organizations that exist in various communities. It is mostly established by the members of the community; and its control and operations are targeted at enlivening the community. In other words, community-based organization is a local-based organization in terms of structure and design, which help people to attain common goal through joint efforts. Unlike many national or state organizations, which are controlled by authorities and strictly follow statutes and regulations, CBO is managed by society members, who have something in common or share some other common characteristics or interests. Perhaps Xu (2018) was right to have described community-based organizations as local organizations, initiated and governed by the community residents; and are organized around a common interest or purpose, and concerned with addressing issues of importance to their community.

It is important to reiterate that CBOs are not meant for profit making purposes. This is supported by Charles that community-based organization is an organization that is rooted in a particular locality, works primarily within that location, and is engaged in a wide range of activities to promote and/or enhance the well-being of the community (Charles, 2019). That is, the centrality of CBOs is to improve living conditions in the zone of influence (for the target group). According to Johnson (2019), the operational scope of CBOs includes but not limited to the following:

- i. Community Physical Infrastructure Development- Initiatives focused on improving access to basic infrastructure such as clean water, sanitation facilities, electricity, and transportation networks within communities.
- ii. Healthcare Access- Establishing clinics, mobile medical units, and health education programmes to improve access to healthcare services in underserved areas, including vaccinations, maternal and child health, and disease prevention.
- iii. Education and Literacy Enhancement- Implementing programmes to increase access to quality education, including building schools, providing educational materials, training teachers, and promoting adult literacy.
- iv. Agricultural Development- Supporting small-scale farmers with training, resources, and technologies to increase agricultural productivity, improve food security, and enhance livelihoods in rural communities.
- v. Microfinance and Entrepreneurship Support- Facilitating access to financial services, including microloans and business training, to empower individuals to start small businesses and generate sustainable income.
- vi. Disaster Preparedness and Response- Establishing early warning systems, emergency shelters, and community-based disaster management committees to mitigate the impact of natural disasters and ensure swift response and recovery.
- vii. Women's Empowerment- Promoting gender equality and women's rights through programmes focused on education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and leadership development,

- viii. Youth Development- Offering recreational activities, vocational training, mentorship programmes, and entrepreneurship opportunities to engage and empower young people, reducing their vulnerability to exploitation and extremism.
- ix. Various services- Day-care centers, alcohol and drug abuse treatment centers, employment agencies etc.
- x. Legal service consultations.
- xi. Environment protection- air pollution, conservation of biodiversity/rare species, conservation of the ecosystems.
- xii. Community work- promoting culture, celebrating historic dates etc.
- xiii. Improving living conditions– providing accommodation, establishing neighbourhood cooperatives, preventing harmful effects, etc.
- xiv. Political actions- constituency registration, supporting or resisting changes in taxation system etc.
- xv. Cultural unions- unions of artists, museum associations, gardeners' unions; ethnic unions etc.

Types of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

There are different types of community-based organizations, Owolabi (2018) highlighted the following types of community-based organizations:

- i. *Users Associations (UAs)*: These are CBOs established to operate and maintain a facility constructed with public and/or private funds, with resources mobilized from the members of the association.
- ii. *Micro-Finance Institutions (MFIs)*: These are community-level organizations specialized in savings and lending.
- iii. *Village Development Committees (VDCs)*: These are organizations of collective governance of a village with responsibility for development. Collective governance of a community implies a set of accepted endogenous rules, i.e. the institutions of the community, and an organization responsible for the application of the rules and for organizing collective action of interest to all the members of the community.
- iv. *Common Interest Groups (CIGs)*: These are organizations of some members of the community that come together to achieve a common purpose.
- v. *Networks of CBOs*: These may join together VDCs or CIGs. The latter are more common. Federations of CIGs of various types are often classified as "Professional Associations".

However, it has been observed that different communities or organizations use different strategies for managing conflicts. This is supported by Jeong (2018) that in coping with conflict, people employ particular styles, strategies and tactics for effective control of conflict situation. For this author, strategy serves an overall plan for responding to a given situation and that adoption of particular strategies is influenced by different styles and attitudes towards conflict. Jeong (2018) identified four conflict management strategies as follows:

- a. Avoidance strategy is oriented towards inaction or an ignorance of uncomfortable issues by being non-committal. Conflict avoidance stems from reduced goal utility and a low likelihood of meeting expectations as well as the high costs involved. In an overwhelming power imbalance, a weaker party tends to be hesitant to initiate confrontation. People can be passive or unassertive when they lack the power necessary to face their adversary. In a dominant relationship, discussion about issues is suppressed so long as the weaker party remains subordinate.
- b. Contending strategy focuses on scoring a victory and defeating the other party by attempting to prove how wrong they are. In this strategy, contest is inevitable when one party tries to settle differences on its own terms without considering the other's interests. Contending parties insist on an opponent's concession and stick to positional commitments that indicate a refusal to move from a particular stance. In power imbalanced relationships, the stronger side more easily employs a contentious strategy, however a head-on collision is expected. This is most likely to happen under perceived conditions of equal power relations.
- c. Yielding strategy- In yielding, one party offers unilateral concessions by taking the others' perspectives or interests more seriously than one's own. Little wonder, Jeong applauded yielding as the fastest strategy to settle differences and notes that an intrinsic interest in the happiness and success of others makes concessions easier. In this sense, yielding is likely to be seen as an investment for inducing or convincing the other side to collaborate; whereas parties may resist yielding in case they anticipate that even partial concessions may send signals of weakness. To this end, the success of yielding depends on the accurate assessment of an adversary's motives and attitudes.
- d. Accommodation strategy involves parties to a conflict searching and locating options that gratify mutual goals. Through accommodation, neither party totally wins or loses as a result of trade-off concessions in favour of what each side considers most important. In reality, however, because all parties are unable to get exactly everything they want, some parties may feel that they got less than they deserved. For Jeong (2018), under such circumstances, common ground can be discovered by means of a search for an alternative that suits both sides. In this way, mutual satisfaction comes from joint gains and trust relations.

However, historically, conflict management strategies have revolved from a basic face-negotiation theory by Ting-Toomey (1988) and competing theory among team members to manage intergroup conflict by Cohen and Ledford (1994) to the commonly used Thomas and Kilmann 5-model strategies (1974). That is, Thomas and Kilmann designed 5-model strategies for responding to conflict situations and which were found most applicable and relevant by CBOs in managing conflict situations (Mujtaba & McCartney, 2018). The strategies are discussed below:

1. **Competing:** This refers to a situation where an individual pursues his or her own concerns at the other person's expense. This strategy could be described as forcing and using a formal authority or power one possesses to satisfy his/her wishes and desires.

The strategy assumes that one party should act in a very assertive way without any cooperation which might be necessary for emergency or time sensitive situations. Though Jones and George (2014) sensed occurrence of ethical dilemma in this type of conflict management strategy as one of the parties could find it difficult to act in a way that helps the others as it went against his or her principles and interests. This was related to Kelly's idea of dominating (Kelly, 2014). The dominating style of conflict management was a style that forces behaviour to win one's position at any cost. According to Rahims (2019), dominating may mean standing up for one's rights and or defending a position that the party believes to be correct.

2. **Accommodation:** This is another strategy which is all about neglecting of an individual's concerns in favour of some other persons. For Rahims (2019), this type of conflict management strategy appeared when parties cooperated very well and one of the members was an expert in the given situation, thus is able to provide a better solution even if it works against somebody else's goals and desired outcomes.
3. **Avoidance:** In this strategy, it is a scenario when a person neither pursues his/her own concerns nor those of the other individuals. Hence, avoiding the conflict environment is very cardinal. It is the indifference of one party to the other's wills. The individual does not confront the other and try for a solution, because it is hopeless. As observed by Karip (2019), in cases where the parties value each other's interests and needs, the strategies of avoiding a conflict or ignoring the conflict are used. This type of situation takes place when one of the parties did not want to participate in the conflict and paid no attention to it. It might happen when one of the parties had no interest in the conflict, does not wish to win the argument or is emotionally unwilling to create any tension, and hoping that the situation would pass by.
4. **Collaborating:** This is strategy actually implies dialogue or working together to find a solution that satisfied all parties involved. That is, it is a cooperation with the other parties to express and hear concerns in the effort to find a mutually satisfactory outcome. Kilman (2017) referred to this strategy as a "win-win" scenario which is possible when one takes into consideration the wishes of all parties, broadens the frames of usual solutions and analyzes all of the ideas to create absolutely new and fresh outcome.
5. **Compromising:** In this strategy, conflict resolution is attained with partial satisfaction of both parties. The condition where either of the parties forgo their desires in order to satisfy the others. In this wise, persons seek a third way. Karip (2019) affirmed that as long as both sides accept mutual compromise as a strategy, parties forgo certain issues in order to settle and achieve a solution. These conflict management tactics could also be classified into three general groups: integration or working with people, distributive or working against people, and avoidance or working away from other people. The ultimate goals of any conflict managing strategies were to create a positive and conflict free atmosphere at the community level, find a better solution to a problem and provide long life for the community and its members.

At this juncture, it is important to underscore the fact that several strategies are employed to manage conflict situations by different people and communities. According to Adan and Suleiman (2016), some of the conflict management strategies used by different communities and community-based organizations in Nigeria include:

1. The formal justice system: Adjudication and arbitration are currently the most predominant strategies of conflict management recognized under law in Nigeria. In this strategy, the courts of law are the arbiters of disputes either between the citizen and the state and or between citizens themselves. Courts are very central to dispute resolution in the modern Nigeria. Courts by their very nature are highly formal and conflict resolution through the judicial system is made difficult by a population poorly informed of its legal rights and responsibilities, high costs and complex procedures, inadequate staffing of the judiciary, and sometimes strong links between the executive and judiciary. For Adan and Suleiman (2016), due to the disadvantages associated with courts such as expenses, delays and technicalities that there is a discernible shift to alternative strategies of dispute resolution that include arbitration, negotiation and mediation.
2. Legislative framework: Conflict management at the national level comprises of laws that establish formal adjudicatory processes that seek to administer justice in all civil and criminal matters, empower security forces and other administrative agencies to respond to crisis caused by conflicts. The relevant laws are contained in the Constitution through the Bill of rights and provisions relating to the administration of justice. Related provisions that impact on conflict situations and their impact are to be found in the Panel Code, Civil and Criminal Procedure Codes, the Evidence Act, the Commission of Inquiry Act, and the Magistrate Court Act. Sectoral laws such as the Water Act, Environmental Management and Coordination Act, and laws relating to land, the Chiefs Act, the Preservation of Public Security Act among others contain provisions that address conflict to the extent that conflict affects those sectors.
3. Traditional justice mechanisms: In Nigeria, reliance on informal conflict management mechanisms still exists due in part, to lack of faith in the judiciary and the sheer expense of court procedures. One of the inclusions of traditional mechanisms in modern conflict management is the system of elders under the Land Disputes Tribunals Act, 1990. Under this Act, there is a requirement that all disputes relating to land be referred to appointed elders at the local level, whose decisions, on matters of fact is final. Though this system has its own imperfections, stemming from weaknesses in the statute in question, it has served to ease the pressure on courts of law and to provide disputants with a cheap point of redress. Nigerian communities have varied traditional strategies for conflict management which have complemented the government efforts in dealing with protracted violence in some parts of the country. In some situations, institutional structures built on these processes for example, the mediation panel has been used in many communal disputes in Taraba State. Adan and Suleiman (2016) observed that the

strategies vary from one conflict environment to the other; and some examples include the following:

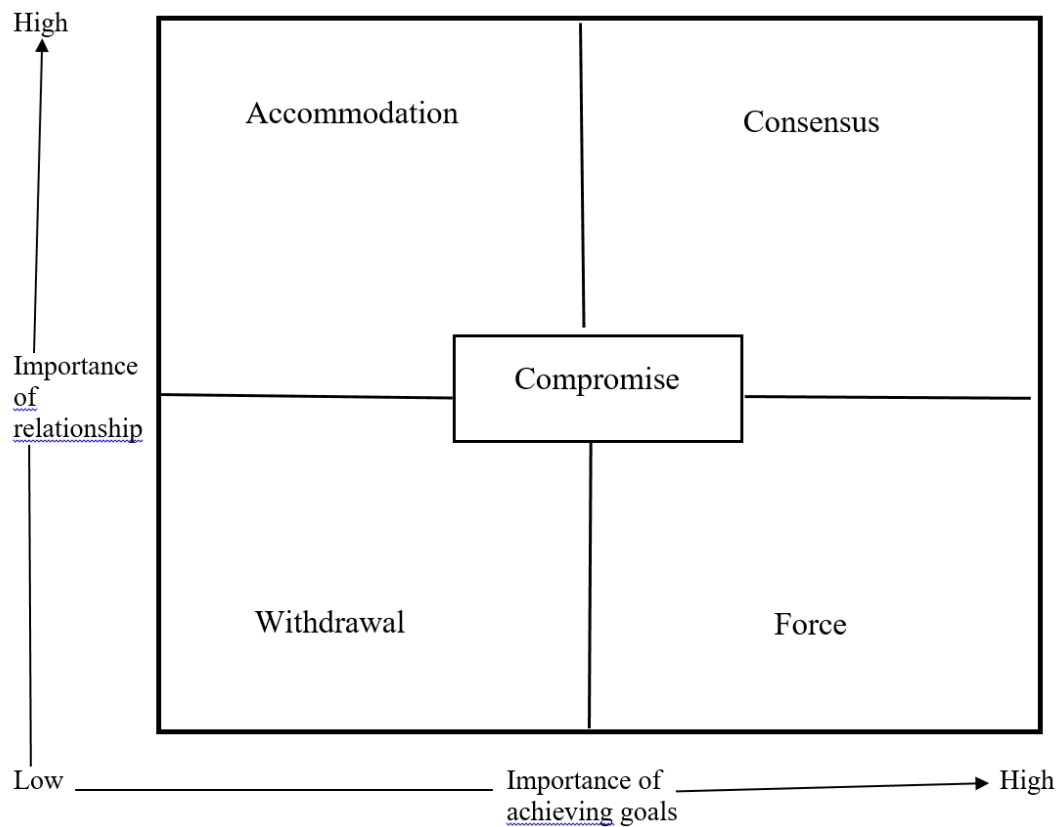
- a. Council of Elders: The primary indigenous conflict resolution institution among majority of communities is the council of elders. The institution of elders is still very much in use even today but somewhat weakened as the elders are unable to enforce the punishment meted out. Ruto, Mohamud and Masinde (2014) in their study of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms amongst pastoralist revealed that most traditional societies/communities had a council of elders, which was the premier institution charged with the responsibility of managing and resolving conflicts. Council of elders was greatly respected, as elders are seen as trustworthy and knowledgeable people in the community affairs thus enabling them to make informed and rational decisions. Their ages gave them accumulated experience and practical wisdom useful for making decisions which were not only for the parties to the conflict but also for the betterment of the whole community. The council of elders used to sit and adjudicate disputes. The primary consideration was the need to maintain family harmony, peaceful coexistent within the members of the community, and reconciliation of disputants in the community.
- b. Inter-ethnic marriages: Use of interethnic, cultural and political marriages is another common mechanism employed in traditional African societies to resolve conflicts and to foster peace. The creation of bonds between two communities through marriage helped to eliminate fighting between members of these communities, for it was an abomination to fight with one's in-laws. One of the ways by which the conflict between two principal clans was diffused was between inter-clan marriages. Some pastoralists in Taraba State continue to use the mechanisms as marriages between Fulani and Mumuye; Fulani and Kona, as well as Tiv and Jukum are on the increase.
- c. Resource management agreements: It is not surprising that pastoralists and other communities with scarce natural resources frequently discussed and reached an agreement on how to best utilize such resources. In fact, movements of cattle prior to harvesting farm produce are usually based on agreements, as herders are not expected to graze in one's farm that has not been harvested. Thus before the movements begin, there is negotiation concerning such movements and a general agreement is reached on access to water and pasture. These negotiations are intense during periods of drought. The visiting herders use pasture and water and move back to their original homes when the situation improves.
- d. Ethnic groups alliances: Different ethnic groups sometimes agreed to enter into alliances to protect each other from aggression by other groups. For this purpose, such ethnic groups would view themselves as members of one group and jointly repulse attacks from any group(s) that were not part of the alliance. This mechanism was, by design deterrent since the result of such alliances was to send a clear message to potential aggressors that the tribe they intended to

attack did not exist in isolation but had allies who could come to its aid in time of need. Another effect was to reduce the possibility of conflict within the members of the tribe in question. In this sense, conflicts were managed through a progressive process influenced by the social context of the society. Emphasis throughout the process is placed on understanding the motives of the parties.

- e. African customary law: The study by Awaye (2015) on the role of traditional societies in conflict management revealed the importance of traditions, customs and norms in managing conflicts at the community level cannot be underestimated. In other words, African societies had customs and beliefs that must be adhered to by all members. In this sense, the African customary law required people to carry out certain tasks while restraining them from undertaking others. Thus, disregard of some of these beliefs and norms were believed to attract the wrath of the gods in addition to ridicule and reprimand from members of the society. This helped to ensure that people shunned conflict-causing conduct. This explains why customary law has been applied in both formal courts and traditional justice processes and in relation to interpersonal and community-based conflicts.
- f. Government led initiative: The local administration through the offices of Chiefs, District Officers and Commissioners frequently intervene in disputes as third party neutrals. They have played a pivotal role in addressing disputes that involve land, family matters and in some cases communities. Their advantage lies in the fact that they are situated at community level unlike formal justice institutions and in some instances is the only available state assistance available at the community level. The local administration has also set up security committees at both district and provincial levels. These committees bring together government agents such as police and intelligence to address security issues in the area including conflict and crime. The roles of local administration is pivotal at community level as they provide state security, administer humanitarian aid and relief, and facilitate the operation of government programmes. Despite their contribution to conflict management, the local administration faces challenges to its successful delivery of services. In conflicts where the government is a key actor either as an instigator of violence or as a partisan bystander, local communities view the local administration with fear, suspicion and hostility. Besides, the government policy requires administrators to be transferred frequently, thereby leading to inconsistency in application of strategies that address conflict.

For the purpose of this study, the five (5) conflict management strategies suggested by Warner (2014) are adopted being the most frequently use by CBOs in the study area (see fig 1 below).

Figure 1: Five Conflict Management Strategies



Source: Warner (2014)

From Figure 1 above, the five (5) conflict management strategies such as force, withdrawal, accommodation, compromise and consensus are comprehensively discussed in this order:

Force: Conflict can be managed through force, where one party has the means and inclination to win regardless of whether the other party losses, and whether or not the process of winning causes damage to personal relationships. Not all parties will be able to use force – its use will largely depend upon the power that one party holds relative to another. Some of the more obvious uses of force in Yorro community include physical violence, threat of physical violence, exertion of economic dominance (including buying-out opponents), corruption of officials and blackmail. In some cases, recourse to the legal system is also a form of force, in that one party can use their superior resources to ‘buy’ better advice or raise the stakes (for example, by taking a lost case to an appeal court). Some less obvious but often no less powerful forms of ‘force’ include adversarial (i.e. uncompromising) negotiation tactics, political expediency, manipulation of the electoral system, use of the media to rally public support, public protest, witch hunts, slander and the threat of withdrawal.

Withdrawal: Withdrawal is an approach to conflict management suited to those parties whose desire to avoid confrontation outweighs the goals they are trying to achieve. The power (either positive or negative) of withdrawal should not be underestimated, not least since it can be used as a threat to force reluctant and sometimes more powerful parties to

negotiate in a more consensual fashion. Types of withdrawal include withdrawal of funding; avoidance of volatile locations within a wider project area by CBOs; certain stakeholders opting out of a project or a negotiation process; deployment of delaying tactics; postponing project decisions; temporary boycotts; and strikes (i.e. withdrawal of labour).

Accommodation: There are occasions when one party in a conflict situation values a strong and continuing relationship with one or more of the other parties above the attainment of its own specific goals. In these cases, a party may result to accommodate the other parties' goals, conceding to all or most of their demands. Although such outcomes may look as though they have been the result of force, the difference is that rather than losing outright, the accommodating party perceives itself to have gained by way of securing good relations, accompanied perhaps by an element of good will and the option to achieve some greater goal at a future date. Common examples are where an CBO gives in to demands for additional services in order to keep a project from collapsing.

Compromise: Compromise is often confused with consensus. To compromise in a negotiation may sound positive, but it means that at least one of the parties perceives that it has had to forgo something. In managing conflict, compromise – and in particular the notion of trade-offs – is now prevalent, based on the need to make rational decisions favourable to all aggrieved parties. For example, CBO Analysis – an analytical tool often used to help design procedures for conflict management– requires planners to analyze the distributional impacts of an individual between the various stakeholder groups. The process identifies where the objectives of the different stakeholders are contradictory and where they share elements. From this, an optimal trade-off is constructed comprising the minimum 'win-loss' outcome.

Consensus: Although processes of consensus-building sometimes contain elements of compromise within the final agreement, there are some key differences between the two approaches. Consensus-building explicitly sets out to avoid trade-offs altogether, seeking instead to achieve a 'win-win' outcome. In contrast, a compromise approach seeks to minimize what are considered to be inevitable trade-offs. The fundamental principles of consensus-building are to steer conflicting parties away from:

- negotiating over their immediate demands and hostile positions, towards addressing those underlying needs which are the true motivating factors behind each side's perception of the conflict;
- thinking about only one solution, towards considering the widest possible and most creative range of options for meeting the parties' underlying needs;
- personalized and often exaggerated demands, towards clarity and precision in describing parties' 'underlying needs and the range of proposed options.

Design

The study adopted descriptive survey design as it describes a target population of study by evaluating or collecting data from its sample.

Population

The target population for this study stood at 136 comprising 110 council of elders, 11 traditional councils and 15 CBOs in Yorro LGA, Taraba State.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study stood at 41. Proportionate sampling technique was used to select 30% of the respondents from total population.

Instrument

A researcher-developed questionnaire tagged “Strategies and Mechanisms of CBOs as related to Conflict Management (SMCCM)” was used for data collection. SMCCM contained 20 items designed on 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed, and Strongly Disagreed.

Validity and Reliability

The instrument underwent content and face validity by contacting 3 experts who reviewed the draft copy in terms of appropriateness of language usage, relevance of the subject matter, coverage of content areas, and clarity purposes. In order to obtain reliability coefficient, the instrument was pilot-tested and the data through test and retest was analyzed using Cronbach's alpha and Split-Half method, which yielded .86 coefficient value.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviations were used to analyze research questions with mean acceptance value of 2.50 and above.

Results

Research Question One: What are the types of community-based organizations (CBOs) operating in Yorro local government area of Taraba State?

Table 1: Mean ratings of respondents with regard to the types of CBOs in the study area

S/N	Items on types of CBOs	Valid N= 41	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Users' associations are organized to operate and maintain facility constructed with public funds.	41	2.77	1.025	Accept
2.	Micro-finance institutions specialized in savings and lending.	41	3.05	2.500	Accept
3.	Village development committees targeted at governance of a village for development.	41	3.12	0.833	Accept
4.	Common interest groups are meant to achieve a common purpose.	41	2.93	0.854	Accept
5.	Networks of community-based organizations of various types.	41	2.89	1.164	Accept

Source: Field study (2025).

Table 1 showed the respondents' views on the different kinds of CBOs in Taraba State's Yorro local government area. Based on the table, the mean scores of the respondents- 2.77, 3.05, 3.12, 2.93, and 2.89 with their corresponding standard deviation for items 1 to 5 respectively seem to be within the criterion mean of 2.50 and above for acceptance level. The results from the table indicated that all respondents affirmed that items 1-5 revealed the kinds of CBOs operating in the study area include networks of community-based organizations of various types with mean scores of 2.77, 3.05, 3.12, 2.93, and 2.89 respectively; user's associations who are organized to operate and maintain facilities built with public funds; microfinance institutions that specialize in savings and lending; and village development committees that aim to govern a village for development.

Research Question Two: What are the areas of focus of community-based organizations (CBOs) operating in Yorro local government area of Taraba State?

Table 2: Mean ratings of respondents with regard to the areas of focus of CBOs in the study area

S/N	Items on Areas of Focus of CBOs	Valid N= 41	Mean	SD	Remark
6.	Basic physiological needs such as food, security initiatives, housing and shelter programmes, and clothing distribution.	41	3.34	0.783	Accept
7.	Human relations in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment, and community conflict management.	41	2.92	0.853	Accept
8.	Decision-making and public structures including participatory governance initiatives, and strengthening local institutions.	41	3.21	0.772	Accept
9.	Recreational activities covering community sports and cultural programmes as well as youths' engagement activities.	41	2.94	0.848	Accept
10.	Healthcare and wellness including primary healthcare services, disease prevention and control as well as mental health support.	41	2.63	1.088	Accept

Source: Field study (2025).

Table 2 above shows the opinions of respondents with regard to areas of focus. The mean scores of the respondents- 3.34, 2.92, 3.21, 2.94 and 2.63 along with their corresponding standard deviation for items 6-10 respectively appear to fall within the acceptance level criterion mean of 2.50 and higher, according to the table.

The results from the table indicated that respondents affirmed that 5 items represent the areas of focus of CBOs in Yorro local government area of Taraba State. The results revealed basic physiological needs such as food, security initiatives, housing and shelter programmes, and clothing distribution; decision-making and public structures including participatory governance initiatives, and strengthening local institutions, recreational activities covering community sports and cultural programmes, youths engagement

activities as well as healthcare and wellness including primary healthcare services, disease prevention and control as well as mental health support with the mean scores of 3.34, 2.92, 3.21, 2.94 and 2.63 respectively are the areas of focus of CBOs in the study area.

Research Question Two: What are the conflict management strategies and mechanisms often employed by CBOs in addressing various conflicts in the study area?

Table 3: Mean ratings of respondents with regard to conflict management strategies and mechanisms employed by CBOs in addressing conflict in the study area

S/N	Items on Strategies and Mechanisms Employed by CBOs	Valid N= 41	Mean	SD	Remark
11.	Council of elders are used to adjudicate disputes among community members.	41	2.81	0.925	Accept
12.	Interethnic, cultural and political marriages are used to resolve conflicts and foster peace.	41	3.37	1.867	Accept
13.	Resource management agreements are discussed and reached within the concerned parties.	41	3.17	0.785	Accept
14.	Ethnic group alliances are formed for protection from aggression by other groups.	41	3.18	0.894	Accept
15.	The use of African customary law, traditions and norms for restriction in participating in anti-social activities.	41	2.82	1.975	Accept
16.	Use of force to dominate other conflicting parties.	41	2.84	1.141	Accept
17.	Withdrawal to avoid confrontation especially when goal is not overdesirous.	41	2.58	0.999	Accept
18.	Accommodation of other parties' goals by conceding to one's demand.	41	2.58	0.999	Accept
19.	Compromise by forgoing some of the demands earlier made.	41	2.60	0.949	Accept
20.	Consensus-building in actualizing a win-win situation for parties involved.	41	2.59	0.990	Accept
	Grand Mean		2.86	1.250	

Source: Field study (2025).

Table 3 above shows the opinions of respondents with regard to the strategies and mechanisms often employed by CBOs in addressing conflict in Yorro local government area of Taraba State. Based on the table, the mean scores of the respondents- 2.81, 3.37, 3.17, 3.18, 2.82, 2.84, 2.64, 2.58, 2.60 and 2.59 with their corresponding standard deviation for items 11 to 20 respectively seem to be within the criterion mean of 2.50 and above for acceptance level.

The results from the table indicated that all respondents affirmed that items 11-20 are the strategies and mechanisms of conflict management employed by CBOs in the study area. The results revealed that council of elders are used to adjudicate disputes among community members, interethnic, cultural and political marriages are used to resolve

conflicts and foster peace, resource management agreements are discussed and reached within the concerned parties, ethnic group alliances are formed for protection from aggression by other groups, the use of African customary law, traditions and norms for restriction in participating in anti-social activities, use of force to dominate other conflicting parties, withdrawal to avoid confrontation especially when goal is not overdesirable, accommodation of other parties' goals by conceding to one's demands, compromise by forgoing some of the demands earlier made, as well as consensus-building in actualizing a win-win situation for parties involved with mean scores of 2.81, 3.37, 3.17, 3.18, 2.82, 2.84, 2.64, 2.58, 2.60 and 2.59 respectively are strategies and mechanisms employed by CBOs to manage conflict situations in the study area. The grand mean of 2.86 implies that the strategies and mechanisms of conflict management employed by CBOs are effective in the study area.

Discussion of Findings

The CBOs facilitated conflict management and resolution in the study area by using a consensus-building, encouraging accommodation of other parties' goals, suggesting formation of ethnic group alliances, employing African customary law for upholding acceptable social activities, admonishing withdrawal from confrontation at all cost, appealing against the use of force, encouraging the use of agreement in resource management, inspiring interethnic marriages to foster peace, engaging council of elders before eruption of crises as well as encouraging compliance to agreement made with others.

The findings of the study agreed with Chepkoiyo (2015) who reported that CBOs used peace committees, community meetings or barazas, peace caravans and membership in peace groups to facilitate peace while the preferred method for solving conflict was arbitration by community elders. It was further revealed that communities in the study area supported strategies used for conflict resolution and peace building and that majority of the people in the area felt that peace and security in the region had improved with the use of community-led strategies. The findings of the current study further agreed with Wasau (2012) who reported that NGOs usually provide for conflict affected persons to facilitate conflict resolution; and that NGOs provide fora meetings during which residents were given awareness concerning peace and conflict resolution.

The findings of the study concurred with Johnson (2019) that the areas of focus of CBOs include community physical infrastructure development, healthcare access, education and literacy enhancement, agricultural development, microfinance and entrepreneurship support, disaster preparedness and response, women's empowerment, youth development, various services, legal service consultations, environment protection, community work, improved living conditions, political actions, and cultural unions. Similarly, the study agreed with Lawal and Yahaya (2018) who reported the scope of CBOs as basic physiological needs, human relations, decision-making and public structures, education, recreation, beliefs and material values, healthcare and wellness, economic empowerment as well as technology and innovation. In addition, the findings of the current study agreed with Augusty and Dizon (2020) who revealed that the CBOs

bridge the social equity gap between marginalized and vulnerable communities through programme initiatives and education targeted at training of skills, child rights protection, and with other major concerns enveloped as social justice and fairness operationalized through access to livelihood, access to education, participation in the political and cultural life, access to self-determination, and peace building.

The strategies and mechanisms employed by CBOs in managing conflicts in the study area include the use of council of elders, intercultural marriages, resource management agreements, ethnic group alliances, African customary law, use of force, withdrawal, accommodation, compromise as well as consensus-building within the conflicting parties in the area.

The outcome of this study concurred with Mali and Rinkat (2021) whose findings revealed that NGOs used numerous strategies towards peace building in conflict affected areas. Also, the results of the study agreed with Wharobs (2018) that collaborative efforts, negotiating workers' payments and accommodating are some of the conflict management strategies used in curtailing escalation of conflicts. The findings of the current study supported Apipaalakul, Jaimooka and Ngang (2017) that application of strategies of community-based organizations are essential in effective conflict management. Similarly, the outcome of this study further revealed with Iman (2017) that community-based organization fosters peace by preventing violence and wars; and NGOs, CSOs, CBOs, local women and youth groups are instrumental in promoting peace building. The study also agreed with Chepkoiywo (2015) whose study revealed that CBOs usually use peace committees, community meetings or barazas, peace caravans, membership in peace groups as well as arbitration by community elders to resolve conflicts.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that, as far as Yorro local government area of Taraba State is concerned, there are numerous CBOs with focus on different aspects of lives of the community people. Also, several strategies and mechanism are employed by CBOs in addressing conflicts in the study area. Specifically, the study has documented that many kinds of community-based organization operate in the study area which include users' association, micro-finance institutions, village development committees, common interest groups as well as networks of community-based organizations. The findings also established that the areas of focus of community-based organization that operate in the study area include basic physiological needs, decision-making and public structures, recreational activities, youths' engagement as well as healthcare and wellness of community members.

Findings further revealed several strategies and mechanisms used by community-based organizations that operate in the study area to include use of council of elders, intercultural marriages, resource management agreements, ethnic group alliances, African customary law, use of force, withdrawal, accommodation, compromise as well as consensus-building within the conflicting parties in the area.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Community-based organizations should be used to strengthen various categories and areas of focus for effective conflict management in Taraba State. This is because a bottom-up approach to conflict management and peace building particularly among local communities where the state deliberately makes use of existing community systems, structures and approaches to reduce conflict and engender peace. Such approach should focus on bringing on board the large number of community-based organizations who have been involved in peace initiatives and also seek to strengthen strategies for conflict control and management as well as create linkages with formal law enforcement agencies and justice institutions to ensure inclusion of community-based organizations.
2. Again, it is important to emphasize that there is the need for promotion and refinement of community-based organizations strategies and mechanisms used for conflict management. That is, the various efforts by community-based organizations trying to build a culture of peace and community reconciliation and peaceful existence among conflicting members should be harnessed and utilized in a formal system manner. Peace meetings with council of elders, peace enlightenment programmes with CBOs experts, peace talks during public events such as public meetings and traditional ceremonial rites should be made community knowledge-contents for all members. To the extent that fighting each other will become a taboo in the community.

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