

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. Discussion of Findings

In addressing the first research question, which sought to identify the underlying factors contributing to ethno-religious conflicts in Ifelodun, Ilorin west, and Edu local governments in Kwara State, the qualitative data revealed several recurring themes. Participants consistently pointed to socio-economic disparities and unequal access to resources as key drivers of conflict. Many respondents shared personal experiences of how economic marginalization has created deep grievances among certain ethnic and religious groups, leading to heightened tensions and, eventually, violence.

The competition for scarce resources, such as land and economic opportunities, was also frequently mentioned as a source of friction between communities. Participants recounted instances where these struggles over resources exacerbated existing divisions, highlighting how negative stereotypes and inter-group prejudices further fuel mutual distrust and hostility. These findings resonate with (Chen & Wang, 2021) assertion that individual differences, religious intolerance, and communication failures often trigger ethno-religious conflicts. The lived experiences of the participants underscored the profound impact of these issues on their daily lives, painting a complex picture of the factors perpetuating conflict in Kwara State.

The second research question focused on the impact of these conflicts on the social and economic well-being of the affected communities. The qualitative responses provided insight into the devastating toll that ethno-religious conflicts have had on the

people of Kwara State.

Many participants spoke emotionally about the loss of lives and the injuries sustained during these conflicts, describing the immense suffering that has left communities bereft of valuable human capital. The disruption of education was another major theme that emerged from the interviews, with participants detailing how schools were often closed or destroyed during periods of conflict, depriving children of opportunities for learning and development. This disruption was seen as a significant blow to the prospects of the affected communities, with long-term consequences for both social cohesion and economic stability.

Also, participants expressed frustration over the impaired governance and development resulting from these conflicts, emphasizing how the persistence of violence has weakened institutions and diverted much-needed resources away from essential services, further entrenching poverty and instability. These personal accounts align with Canci & Odukoya's (2016) analysis that Nigeria's historical mismanagement of resources has fostered a climate of religious rhetoric and division, which further compounds the country's socio-political challenges. Considering the third research question, which explored strategies to prevent and resolve ethno-religious conflicts and promote peaceful coexistence, participants offered valuable insights into potential solutions. Many emphasized the importance of conflict sensitivity training for local authorities, security personnel, and community leaders. Participants suggested that empowering these key figures with skills in conflict analysis, early warning systems, and conflict-sensitive development approaches would be critical in reducing tensions and fostering a more proactive response to emerging conflicts.

Interfaith dialogue and mediation were also widely recommended by

participants, with many stressing the need for open communication between religious leaders and communities to promote understanding, tolerance, and reconciliation. Personal stories of successful interfaith initiatives provided concrete examples of how such dialogues have helped ease tensions in the past. Furthermore, the role of media was highlighted, with participants advocating for more responsible reporting and efforts to counter hate speech. They expressed hope that media engagement could be leveraged to spread messages of peace and tolerance, ultimately fostering a culture of coexistence. These recommendations align with Okechukwu et al. (2019), who emphasized the importance of educational programs and mediation in addressing ethno-religious conflicts.

Hence, the qualitative findings of this study describe how socio-economic, political, and cultural factors stimulate ethno-religious conflicts in Kwara State. Participants' personal narratives provided a nuanced understanding of the underlying causes and the profound impacts on their communities, while also highlighting potential pathways toward peace. The emphasis on training, dialogue, and media engagement suggests that multi-dimensional strategies are essential for fostering lasting peace and stability in the region.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

It is recommended that government strengthen conflict resolution institutions by providing adequate resources, training, and enforcement capacity to address recurring disputes. Likewise, community leaders should actively promote interfaith dialogue and grassroots peacebuilding initiatives, fostering tolerance and reconciliation among diverse groups. Such measures, when implemented together, will enhance trust and reduce the manipulation of ethnic and religious identities for political purposes.

### 5.3. Conclusion

Ethno-religious conflicts in Ifelodun, Ilorin west, and Edu local governments in Kwara State, Nigeria, are often influenced by a myriad of underlying factors. These may include historical grievances, competition over scarce resources such as land or economic opportunities, political manipulation, socio-economic inequalities, and identity-based tensions. Additionally, religious differences, cultural misunderstandings, and perceptions of marginalization can exacerbate existing tensions and contribute to the outbreak of conflicts. Understanding these multifaceted factors is crucial for developing effective strategies to address the root causes of ethno-religious conflicts and promote sustainable peace and reconciliation within the communities.

The ethno-religious conflicts in Ifelodun, Ilorin west, and Edu local governments have had profound implications for the social and economic well-being of the affected communities. These conflicts often result in loss of lives, displacement of populations, destruction of property, disruption of livelihoods, and erosion of social cohesion. The pervasive atmosphere of fear, distrust, and insecurity hampers community development initiatives, undermines investment opportunities, and constrains socio-economic progress. Furthermore, the protracted nature of these conflicts can perpetuate cycles of poverty, exacerbate inequalities, and impede efforts to build resilient and prosperous communities. Addressing the social and economic impacts of ethno-religious conflicts requires holistic interventions that prioritize peacebuilding, reconciliation, and socio-economic empowerment programs tailored to the needs and aspirations of the affected populations.

Therefore, recognizing the complex interplay of underlying factors shaping ethno-religious conflicts and understanding their profound socio-economic impacts is

essential for developing contextually relevant strategies to promote peace, reconciliation, and sustainable development in Ifelodun, Ilorin West, and Edu local governments of Kwara State, Nigeria. Efforts to address these challenges must be guided by a commitment to inclusivity, dialogue, and collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including community leaders, religious institutions, civil society organizations, and governmental agencies. By working together to address the root causes and consequences of ethno-religious conflicts, stakeholders can pave the way for a more peaceful, resilient, and prosperous future for all residents of the region.

