



RELEVANCE OF INFORMATION SHARING FOR CONFLICTS MANAGEMENT AMONG
TRADITIONAL RULERS IN BORNO, DIKWA AND BAMA EMIRATE COUNCILS, BORNO STATE,
NIGERIA.

By

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Abstract

This study investigated the relevance of information sharing in conflict management among traditional rulers in the Borno, Dikwa, and Bama Emirate Councils of Borno State, Nigeria. Conflict remains a pervasive issue in these communities, exacerbated by insurgency, ethnic tensions, land disputes, and social instability. Traditional rulers, as custodians of indigenous knowledge and community leaders, play a critical role in resolving such conflicts. However, the effectiveness of their efforts is often hindered by poor information-sharing mechanisms. The study adopts a quantitative research methodology with a descriptive survey design, targeting the population of 4724 members of traditional rulers in the Borno, Dikwa and Bama Emirate Councils of Borno State, Nigeria, and 354 was used as sample size based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling table. Data were collected through questionnaire and analyzed using mean score and standard deviation (SD). Findings revealed that information sharing significantly contributes to conflict resolution, peaceful coexistence, unity, and community development. The most highly shared type of information relates to fostering peaceful coexistence, followed by resolving conflicts and settling marriages. The study concludes that enhanced and structured information sharing among traditional rulers can substantially improve conflict management efforts. It recommends other means of sharing information such as; effective information sharing help resolves conflict, settle marriages, improves

economy, it brings about development etc.

Keywords: Information Sharing, Conflict Management, Traditional Rulers, Borno State, Emirate Councils

Introduction

Conflict is associated with hostility, inimical attitudes, antagonism, aggression, rivalry, and misunderstandings. Manje (2018) asserts that conflict depicts as an overt behavior arising out of a process in which one unit seeks the advancement of its own interest in its relationship with others. Conflict could then be linked to be a clash, battle, confrontation, a rivalry or struggle and controversy or quarrel arising from an issue. Conflict is any form of disagreement that results from differences in opinion, perception or aspiration. It is an expressed hustling between at least two anti-parties who conceive disagreeing goals, scare rewards and obstruction from the other party in achieving their goals. Conflict is inevitable in any society for the fact that people live together in the same environment with the expected differences in opinion, interest or competitiveness among parties and persons. There is bound to be dispute or conflict at one point or the other. There are different forms of conflicts among individuals and groups in Borno, Dikwa and Bama Emirate Councils. It could be a dispute between a husband and wife, a dispute on farmland, grazing, inheritance, religious among others. In these Emirate Councils, traditional rulers are supposed to play very important roles in settling disputes and conflicts between individuals, groups and communities arising from several factors such as poor communication, lack of compromise, prejudice, intolerance, self-interest etc.

Moreover, it is observed that most conflicts are caused by lapses in relevant information sharing among parties, cases of misinformation, wrong information, missing information, rumors, hearsay, difference in opinions etc. Information sharing is the process of giving out / providing / distributing crucial information to people, institutions and organizations with the purpose of informing the party and getting back a response. Information sharing according to Savolainen (2017), can be understood as a set of activities by

which information is provided to others, either proactively or upon request. Thus, the process of information sharing incorporates two major aspects. That is, giving information to others and receiving information that has been provided by the information giver. These lapses create social inequalities among people, organizations and nations. Conflicts cannot be managed when information preserved and managed employs falsehoods, half-truths and deception. It can also be argued that conflicts are contradictions arising from disparity in the interests, notions, ideologies, orientations and precipitous tendencies of the individuals and groups concerned. These differences are inherent at all levels of social and economic interaction of the human race. Conflict may therefore exist at the individual, group, institutional, regional, national and international levels. It is thus a pervasive phenomenon in human relationships and has been seen as the 'basic unit for understanding social existence.

In the same vein, conflict management refers to the process of identifying and addressing conflicts in a constructive and effective manner. It involves understanding the nature of the conflict, identifying the underlying issues and interests of the parties involved and developing strategies to resolve the conflict and prevent it from escalating further. Effective conflict management requires good communication skills, active listening, empathy and the ability to negotiate and find common ground. It can involve various strategies such as mediation, negotiation, peace-building, arbitration or collaboration. The goal of conflict management is to reach a mutually beneficial outcome that addresses the concerns of all parties involved and helps to maintain positive relationships.

By and large, traditional rulers are indigenous leaders or persons who by virtue of heredity or are people with proven tract of records nominated, appointed and installed in line with the provision of their native laws and customs. The essence is to manage, settle and resolve disputes / conflicts arising within, between or among the members of community by the instrumentality of laws and customs of the people in their particular community or society. For centuries before the advent of the colonialism,

governance in different parts of present-day Nigeria was synonymous with traditional institution and their rule. The traditional institution in Borno state is based on hierarchy and responsibilities. There is the *Shehu* (Emir), District Head (*Aja*), Village Head (*Lawan*) and Ward Head (*Bulama*). Traditional rulers are in charge of all local affairs of their communities. Their replica at the national level is: the President, State Governor, Local Government Chairman and Councilor respectively. All of them are collectively answerable to the *Shehu*. The District Head is answerable to the *Shehu*, the Village Head is answerable to the District Head and the Ward Head is answerable to the Village Head. Furthermore, there are also others with chieftaincy titles appointed by the *Shehu*. They consist of the *Waziri*, who serves as the Prime Minister; *Kaigama*, who serves as the Chief of Army staff; and *Zannahs* as Advisers etc.

Statement of the Problem

Conflicts remain a persistent challenge in many parts of North Eastern Nigeria, particularly in Borno State, where communities have been grappling with the consequences of insurgency, ethnic tensions, land disputes, and socio-political instability. Traditional rulers, especially within the Borno Emirate Council, Dikwa and Bama Emirate Councils, play a crucial role in conflict resolution and peace building due to their deep-rooted influence and cultural authority within their communities. However, the effectiveness of their interventions is often undermined by inadequate information sharing mechanisms, both within and across emirate councils, and between traditional institutions and government or security agencies.

Despite the strategic position of traditional rulers as custodians of local knowledge and mediators in community disputes, there is limited understanding of how structured and timely information sharing contributes to conflict prevention and management in these areas. In many cases, a lack of coordination and access to reliable information can escalate tensions, hinder early warning systems, and reduce the effectiveness of conflict resolution efforts. This gap poses a significant risk to sustainable peace and the protection of vulnerable populations. The absence of a formal framework

for information exchange among traditional institutions and other stakeholders raises questions about the existing practices, challenges, and potentials for strengthening communication networks. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the relevance and impact of information sharing in enhancing the capacity of traditional rulers to manage and resolve conflicts effectively in the Borno, Dikwa, and Bama Emirate Councils. It is against this backdrop that the researcher embarked upon the study on the “Relevance of Information Sharing for Conflict Management among Traditional Rulers in the Borno, Dikwa and Bama Emirate Councils of Borno State, Nigeria”.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is at investigating the information sharing for conflicts management among traditional rulers in the Borno, Dikwa and Bana Emirate Councils of Borno State, Nigeria”. And the specific objective is to find out the extent at which information shared among the traditional rulers are relevant for conflicts management in the Emirate Councils.

Research Question

The following research question was answered:

1. To what extent the information shared among the traditional rulers are relevant for conflicts management in the Borno, Dikwa and Bana Emirate Councils of Borno State, Nigeria?

Literature Review

Information has a big role to play in conflict management. Reliable information is essential to incorporate peace in conflict resolution. It has been observed that poor information always results in misunderstandings and

conflicts. Information has to be clear and precise to mitigate conflicts. Information sharing describes the exchange of data, facts, opinion, understanding, knowledge etc between various organizations, people and technologies. Information shared becomes a central process through which team members collectively utilise the available informational resources Jessica and Leslie (2009) in (Suleiman et al 2017). According to Suleiman et al (2017), information shared for the purpose of conflicts management is an indispensable and essential ingredient in today's social, economic, industrial, educational, political, religious, cultural and technological development. It is very apparent today that without information no meaningful developmental activity or operation will be achieved.

Similarly, Jose, Nieves, Immaculada and Petra (2019) asserted that when relevant information is shared, people are able to express their views, articulate common grounds, and agreed on necessary adjustments that could foster understanding and harmonious peaceful coexistence. Conflict management therefore, provides an opportunity to interact with parties concerned bearing in mind that the intensity, effects and range of such conflict could be resolved or reduced. Again, Jose, Nieves, Immaculada and Petra (2019) revealed that engaging in dialogue with parties involved in conflict is aimed at sourcing and gathering information for what happen, how it happens, when it happens, where it happens, who are involved and what measures to be taken to end the conflict. Traditional authorities rely on information shared to manage conflicts using different techniques such as brainstorming, negotiation, compromising, collaboration and dialogue in gathering, educating and communicating information for parties in conflict to reduce tension and create peace.

In the context of information shared for conflict management, more attention should be paid to understanding information shared within public that is relevant and can help to increase their conflict management practices (Degn et al. 2018). However, conflict management practices carried out by traditional authorities largely depends on effective collaboration among traditional authorities (Lauring and Selmer 2011), and this, in turn, depends on

their exchange of relevant information (Tan 2016). Moreover, it is important to focus on the relevancy of information shared, whether the information shared is truly relevant for managing the conflict. According to Travaile and Hendriks (2010), the success processes related to the conflict management occur at the level of traditional leaders rather than at the level of group members involve in conflicts. Nevertheless, in collaboration processes among the traditional rulers, the main determinants for not achieving success when information is shared could be rooted in the lack of relevant information and other issues related to human resource management (Jimenez- Jimenez and Sanz- Valle, 2013). In this regard, it should be taken into account that traditional leaders have autonomy when managing their subjects in conflict, which is a fundamental element in assuming responsibilities related to the management of peace.

Traditional authorities usually share information with their colleagues, seeking answers to some challenging issues in interactive face-to-face communication (Tan 2016). However, traditional leaders must know and trust each other in order to exchange information (Nistor et al. 2015). For this reason, it is critical to understand the underlying effects of the collaboration between a leader and his subjects, as well as the influence of these effects on the members' willingness to share information with others (Liu et al., 2011). Travaile and Hendriks (2010) draw attention of the traditional authorities to manage members in conflict through information sharing to mitigate creative chaos. However, they also need to have certain interpersonal relationships with their colleagues (Fullwood et al. 2013), so that they can improve communication and cooperation (Liu et al. 2011). Thus, traditional rulers should sometimes prioritize a decrease in the community's internal tensions (Degn et al. 2018). Information shared can be fostered if traditional rulers show certain behaviors related to conflict management activities (Lee et al. 2010), convincing their societal members that the exchange of ideas and open debate are beneficial for everyone, even in terms of dialogue and consultations (Tian et al. 2009). Traditional rulers can also help by reducing hoarding behavior, which generates high levels of conflict, and trying to inspire members to share information (Bai et al. 2016). Taking these

considerations into account, the objective of this is to analyze the influence of information shared to traditional rulers both directly and indirectly through his / her influence on conflict. To this end, an empirical research study was carried out by surveying 211 native leaders who belonged to the same local group in a Spanish society. The results provided evidence that leaders' behaviours (task- or relationship-oriented) have a direct, positive, and significant effect on information shared, as well as an indirect effect by reducing the negative effect of high levels of task and relationship conflict. This study contributes to the literature by studying not only the factors that can influence information sharing among traditional rulers, but also the way these factors interact.

Traditional rulers must help members of the society to minimize the likelihood of reaching dysfunctional conflicts, seeking a good and relevant information that can stimulate creative chaos (Travaille and Hendriks 2010). In this regard, Ayoko and Callan (2010) pointed out that "the behaviours of the leader can assist in setting boundaries around inappropriate emotional play in the team which may reduce the frequency of conflict while preventing conflict escalation". This aim can be achieved through different leadership styles or behaviours. Traditional rulers with conflict management-oriented behaviour often serve as examples for community members, reducing the negative consequences of conflict by focusing on goal achievement and establishing well-defined patterns of communication in the society (Bai et al. 2016). Moreover, members of the society who perceive a greater task-oriented leadership style in conflict management experience positive emotions toward their colleagues more frequently, thus reducing communal conflict (Bono et al. 2007). By contrast, a leader's relationship-oriented behaviour will help to maintain or control an appropriate level of conflict in the society by establishing good interpersonal relationships among his subjects in order to prevent both communal and interpersonal conflicts.

Methodology

Quantitative research methodology was used in the study. Quantitative research, according to Plano-Clark and Creswell (2015) is a type of research

in which the researcher studies a problem that calls for an explanation about variables; decides what to study; asks specific narrow questions; collects quantifiable data from participants; analyses these numbers using statistics and graphs; and conducts the inquiry in an unbiased, objective manner. This is what this study is up to. It is also said that quantitative research method is the systematic empirical investigation of social observable phenomena via statistical, mathematical or computational technique. It is a method of gathering data from a representative portion of the population being studied. This method is chosen for this study because it offers great advantages in data collection. And It is cost effective since it allows the use of questionnaire found to be cheap to produce and easy to administer. Further, it is convenient in the study because the population is scattered over many Local Government Areas.

Descriptive survey design was used in the study. Descriptive survey design according to Orji (2016) is a design often used when a researcher intends to elicit responses from a relatively large number of respondents by administering pertinent instruments for collecting primary data on a portion of the population known as sample. The researcher is considering the design because data can be collected in large amounts of information from a large pool of participants and studied in an inexpensive way and manner. The population of this study comprised of the three *Shehus* of Borno, Dikwa and Nama 44 District Heads, 337 Village Heads and 4339 Ward Heads making the total of 4724 traditional rulers of the three emirates in the central senatorial zone of Bornro state was studied. A sample of 354 was drawn from the population as recommended by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) that in a population of 4724, a sample of 354 is recommended

Results and Discussion

The respondents were asked to indicate their views on the options provided in relation to the extent at which traditional rulers share information among them for conflict management. The responses of the traditional rulers were analysed and presented as follows:

C	Options	The extent at which information shared among the Traditional Rulers are relevant for conflict management															Total Mean	Total SD
		Highly Shared			Shared			Rarely Shared			Not Shared			Total				
		Borno	Dikwa	Bama	Borno	Dikwa	Bama	Borno	Dikwa	Bama	Borno	Dikwa	Bama	Borno	Dikwa	Bama		
1	It helps resolve conflicts	129	43	42	15	18	10	74	12	17	3	0	0	223	73	72	4.27	0.08
2	It brings about peaceful coexistence	126	52	33	6	27	11	74	8	19	3	0	3	211	87	71	4.20	0.23
3	Settle marriages	133	42	30	26	19	19	53	13	15	3	3	2	215	78	73	4.15	0.43
4	It brings about unity in the community	132	59	20	14	19	20	68	20	14	3	11	7	220	122	68	3.87	0.21
5	Brings about development	132	45	15	37	26	21	45	23	12	3	9	8	217	104	64	3.93	0.14
6	Improves economy	129	34	21	30	30	18	55	18	7	0	6	8	214	90	64	3.94	0.09
7	It helps foster good	124	44	17	6	28	12	57	27	9	3	4	3	190	107	50	3.93	0.25

	relationships																	
8	It brings about political stability	127	43	18	6	28	12	57	27	9	3	4	3	193	106	51	3.94	0.25

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 presents the extent at which the information shared is relevant for conflict management among the traditional rulers in the Emirate Councils of Central Senatorial Zone Borno State Nigeria. From the table it can be seen that the statement “it brings about peaceful existence” is the item which has the highest mean score of 4.51 followed by “it helps resolve conflicts” with mean score of 4.42 and “it settle marriages” with mean score of 4,34. However, the least recorded information shared is “it brings about development” with mean score of 3.42.and the benchmark is 3.0, while all mean scores recorded are higher than the benchmark. This means that the traditional rulers are much more concerned about sharing more information that will help resolve or manage conflict in their domain. The finding of this study is in agreement with that of Jose, Nieves, Immaculada and Petra (2019) who reported that when relevant information is shared, people are able to express their views, articulate common grounds, and agreed on necessary adjustments that could foster understanding and harmonious peaceful coexistence. The implication of this study is that information brings about peaceful co-existence is the most used among the traditional rulers for conflict management.

Finding of the Study:

Based on the data presented and analysed above, the following finding was arrived at:

- 1- Majority of the respondents agreed that information sharing brings about peaceful co-existence is the mostly shared information among the traditional rulers for conflicts management in the Borno, Dikwa and Bama Emirate Councils.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has illuminated the critical role that information sharing plays in conflict management among traditional rulers in the Borno, Dikwa, and Bama Emirate Councils of Borno State, Nigeria. Traditional rulers, deeply rooted in their communities, possess invaluable indigenous knowledge and cultural authority that position them as pivotal actors in

conflict resolution. However, their effectiveness is often hampered by inadequate information-sharing mechanisms, limited constitutional recognition, and insufficient integration with formal governance structures.

The findings underscore that enhancing information-sharing frameworks among traditional institutions and between these institutions and formal state actors can significantly improve conflict prevention and resolution efforts. Such enhancements would facilitate timely interventions, foster mutual understanding, and promote collaborative strategies that are culturally sensitive and community-driven. Therefore, it is imperative for policymakers to recognize and institutionalize the roles of traditional rulers in the national conflict management architecture. This includes providing them with the necessary resources, training, and legal backing to perform their roles effectively. By doing so, Nigeria can harness the full potential of its traditional institutions to foster sustainable peace and development, particularly in regions like Borno State that are grappling with complex conflict dynamics.

Recommendation

The traditional rulers should also consider other means of sharing information such as; effective information sharing help resolves conflict, settle marriages, improves economy, it brings about development etc for proper information sharing in the Emirate Councils studied.

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