



Research Article

Between conflict resolution and conflict termination: A revisit of the Ife - Modakeke Crises

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Abstract

Previous studies have shown the circumstances that led to the birth of Modakeke; the status of Modakeke and that of its people has always been a source of dispute and conflict due to issues relating to landlord/tenant relationship or indigene/non-indigene issues. The conflict has grown and matured to the extent it is no longer a physical battle alone. Its psychological dimension has reached the extent that the parties are in cold war, and become major elements in impoverishment, undermining human security and sustainable urban development in the region. Bridging the gap between conflict resolution and its termination, a survey technique method through administration of structured questionnaire to three hundred and seventy two (372) eye-witness as well as household members in the locality was adopted. The statistical analysis result shows that as long as the children of women from Ife/Modakeke that are inter-married see themselves as kinsmen unlike strangers and enemies; then, conflict will reduce drastically and peace shall begin to reign in the two communities. This paper concludes that for sustainable peace to be attained there is the need to pursue policies that encourages strong ethnic attachment in the communities. Finally, contact within an educational setting would also reduce intolerant attitude and lead to better intergroup relations between the communities.

Keywords: Conflicts, Crisis, Ethnicity, Ife, Modakeke, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Nigeria has witnessed the outbreak of several violent communal or ethnic conflicts, while some old ones had gained additional potency (Imobighe, 2003). One of the oldest intra-ethnic conflicts in Nigeria, however, is Ife-Modakeke crisis (Aguda, 2001). It has been going on for more than a century (Abert, 1999; Agbe, 2001). The conflict has become its own *raison d'être*, as it had since detached from its original cause (Augsburger, 1992; Omotayo, 2005). Ife and Modakeke are neighbouring communities in Osun State, Nigeria, which have engaged in protracted communal violence and intra-ethnic conflict since 1835. Asiyanbola (2007) asserted that so far, there had been seven major wars between the Ifes and Modakekes, that is, 1835-1849, 1882-1909, 1946- 1949, 1981, 1983, 1997-1998, and 2000.

Since 1847, various attempts have been made to resolve the crisis between the two communities by individual traditional rulers, Obas, state and federal governments as well as socio-political and cultural organisations. Among the Obas is *Ooni* Abeweila who attempted to give Modakeke a separate land to live. *Ooni* Adelekan Olubuse attempted to resolve the crisis by implementing an 1886 treaty which recommended the expulsion of Modakeke from Ile-Ife. Since becoming the *Ooni*, Oba Okunade Sijuade has also spent much of his energy and time in resolving the crisis. But the people of Modakeke have accused him of favouring the Ifes.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

This paper covers an overview of the historical background of Ife-Modakeke communities up till the recent times. It is an overview because the crises have lingered on for over a century. The research questions that the paper attempts to addresses are:

Is there relationship between ethnic attachment and interpersonal relationships among the people of the two communities / how is the inter-personal relationship in the two communities?

As well as - How is ethnic consciousness intensified / how is identity constructed?

Thus, the paper, a revisit of Ife-Modakeke crises tries to weigh a balance between conflict resolution and its termination. To remain focus, the paper aims at the following:

- to highlight the intensity of the crises (intensification of ethnic consciousness in the area)
- to highlight strategies (mainly through ethnic relations in the area) to curb the violence; and
- Why these strategies have not produced lasting solution?

Population

A population is the total group to be represented in a sample with which a researcher expects to be able to generalize the findings of the research. The target population to be studied in this research consists of the indigene of both Ife and Modakeke who witnessed the crisis at one time or the other. The sample size for the study consists of three hundred and seventy two (372) men and women who were selected from the four hundred (400) questionnaires that were primarily distributed among them. These men and women were selected because the whole population cannot be studied and the few selected represent the whole adequately.

METHOD

The nature of research method is field study via sampling survey and this involves the use of questionnaires as a supplement to secondary data. The questionnaire is structured in a way to obtain the required information for the research. The paper engages in the use of both explanatory and conclusive research design types. Explanatory research design is concerned with the acquisition of fundamental information that would uncover the nature and problem under investigation while the conclusive research design type about field survey of the knowledge of individual ideas through the use of both oral interviews and administration of questionnaires. Quantitative data generated through field work was analysed and processed through electronics means. The electronics application used was Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 17.0). The information collected was carefully analysed using simple percentage; descriptive; and regression. Information was presented in tabulated form for easy understanding.

Instrument

The tools used to collect data for the purpose of testing hypothesis and answering research question is a structured and non-disguised questionnaire as well as observation. The researcher is interested in primary data, because the project uses a descriptive design and sample size are not too large, secondary data with related materials that had been in existence before is also used. The questionnaire for the study was meant for the indigene of Ife and Modakeke who mostly witness the crisis at one time or the other. The questionnaire is divided into three sections addressing the respondent on the research, purpose and instructions on how to fill the questionnaires. The first section of the questionnaire is the general profile of the respondent which includes age, sex, educational attainment, and occupation. The second section of the questionnaire includes questions on the intensification of ethnic consciousness in the area. The third section of the questionnaire includes questions on ethnics' relations in the area.

The questionnaires are distributed by hand since this is the fastest means apart from distribution through post or mail. Appeals are made to the respondents for their cooperation to create time to fill the questionnaire despite their busy schedule. The questionnaires were administered and collected from the 8th of March 2014 all through the 22nd of March 2014 which is a space of two weeks.

CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL CLARIFICATION

Conflicts and crises are found at every stage of life. Individuals, groups, associations, clubs, societies, local, national

and even world community continue to experience conflicts and crises in one way or the other. Conflicts and crises are features of life and they have been since the beginning of creation—conflicts between darkness and light, even between, and among the first set of human beings created on earth. This paper is imperative as it considers an integrated education as a peace initiative based on contact theory according to which Ife and Modakeke communities should be brought together in the same school setting in order to overcome their attitudinal differences.

Theoretical Framework

Conflicts and crises are permanent features of life which we have come to live and cope with and resolve from time to time. Their existence cannot be terminated in life unless we want to terminate life itself. However, a poorly handled conflict or crisis could become violent or destructive which could hinder national peace and security. Thus, effective strategies that can help to nip conflict in the bud and to prevent it from escalating if it erupts, as well as to sustain peace to avert future occurrence of crises and their attendant large scale effects should be developed and sustained by any nation that seeks peace, growth and development.

Concepts of Conflicts and Crises

These two words do not imply peace rather they are anti-peace. As a matter of fact they stand for or symbolize problem in human society. The World Book Encyclopaedia (2004) sees crisis as “a turning point in the course of anything, uncertain time or state of affairs, moment of great danger or difficulty”. Conflict, on the other hand, is seen as “to be in opposition to another or each other; disagree. Crises are sudden eruptions of unexpected events caused by previous conflicts.

Kesterner and Ray (2002) see conflict as a social factual situation in which at least two parties (individuals, groups, states) are involved and strive for goals which can only be reached by one party, and or want to employ incompatible means to achieve a certain goal. Harks (2000) throws more lights into these words as he gives synonyms of crisis as “catastrophe, calamity, emergency, disaster” and that of conflict as “quarrel, squabble, disagreement, difference of opinion, desertion, discord, friction”. Thus, a conflict refers to a disagreement or differences in opinion as to how certain objectives could be achieved.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity refers to a group of people with a common socio/cultural identity such as language, common worldview, religion and common cultural traits (Boaten, 2000). Thus ethnic groups are social formations distinguished by the communal character (such as language and culture) of their boundaries (Nnoli, 1980). In other words, ethnic groups represent categories of people characterized by cultural symbols including language, value systems and normative behaviour, and whose members are anchored in a particular territory (Otite, 1990). Actually, the word ethnic is derived from the Greek word *ethnos* which means a group of people who share a common and distinctive culture. In its classical meaning, ethnic relates to a member of a particular *ethnos* (Imobighe, 2003).

Hence ethnicity according to Imobighe should be seen as the feeling of belonging to a distinctive cultural or linguistic group, or a manifestation of ethnic consciousness in relation to other groups. Conflicts arise from the pursuit of divergent interests, goals and aspirations by individuals and or groups in defined social and physical environments (Otite, 1999). As observed in the literature, ethnic conflict derives their rationale and configuration from perceived socio/cultural differences.

Ife and Modakeke

The Ife and Modakeke are Yoruba towns of Osun State in South-western Nigeria. Going by mythical stories, Ile-Ife is the cradle home of Yoruba land. And since the history of Ile-Ife is shrouded in mystery such that even the Yoruba legend—Oduduwa met Ife Aborigenes when he arrived at the ancient city, no one can say about the origin and the year Ile-Ife was created (Agbe, 2001). The South –West Zone is made up of six States, namely, Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo States. The Zone is traditionally inhabited by one of Nigeria’s three largest ethnic groups, the Yoruba. Historical accounts have it that Ifes and Modakekes are sons and daughters of the same parents (Toriola, 2001).

Around this same 1835 when the Ife hostility commenced against the Oyo refugees in their midst, rumours were circulating that the Fulani jihadists were preparing to invade some parts of Yorubaland from their Ilorin base. The surrounding Ife territories of Ikire, Iwata, Gbongan, Ipetumodu and Origbo became evacuated and the refugees came to settle in Ile-Ife. But the attitude of the Ifes to strangers had changed. Ooni Abeweila, who ascended the throne in 1839,

had to send some of the refugees back to Ipetumodu, Gbongan and Ikire in 1847 following the defeat of the Fulani invaders at Osogbo in 1840. By the same year, the Ooni created a separate settlement for those Oyo refugees who had no home to return to. The settlement was named Modakeke after the cry of a nest of storks on a large tree near the site. The leader of the Oyo refugees was given the title Ogunsua (Johnson, 1973; Akinjogbin, 1992).

Till date, there had been seven major wars – 1835-1849, 1882-1909, 1946-1949, 1981, 1983, 1997-1998 and 2000. The conflict is depicted as a conflict between the Ife “landlords” and the Modakeke “strangers/tenants”. The recent crisis has caused over 2000 deaths and several more injuries. Several hundreds of people were shot, slaughtered or lynched; several houses and properties were destroyed. It was during the 19th century that the socio-political as well as economic deterioration of Ife came to its nadir. Akinjogbin (1992) identified three factors responsible for such. These are internal weaknesses, collapse of Yoruba institutions and the collapse of the Oyo Empire. These factors led to different wars between Ifes and other Yoruba kingdoms. Also, these series of wars in Yorubaland led to disintegration, formation and relocation of towns in Yorubaland. This was aptly noted by Albert (1999: 143) “the nineteenth century was a watershed in the history of Yorubaland.

DATA PRESENTATION

Table 1 shows that the Cronbach's alpha is 0.701 which indicates a high level of internal consistency for our scale with this specific sample. Therefore the research instrument is reliable with a coefficient of 0.701 which indicates 70.1% reliability (Ojo, 2003; Oyeku and Ayodele, 2010).

The **table 2 – ‘Bio-Data of Respondents’** shows that about 203(54.6%) of our population sample were male while the remaining 169(45.4%) were female. Age distribution shows that 165(44.4%) were within the age bracket 35 – 45 years; about 94(25.3%) were within the age bracket 46 years and above; about 74(19.9%) were within the age bracket 26 – 35 years; while the remaining 39(10.5%) which constitutes the lower parts of our population sample were within the age bracket 16 – 25 years. Marital status shows that 298(80.1%) respondents were married while the remaining 74(19.04%) were divorced. Educationally, 186(50.0%) of our population sample own tertiary education certificate; 148(39.8%) own secondary education certificate while the remaining 38(10.2%) own primary education certificate. Occupationally, 130(34.9%) were civil servants; 112(30.0%) were self-employed (entrepreneur); 56(15.1%) were employed by private organization; 38(10.2%) were students while the remaining 36(9.7%) were unemployed.

The **table 3 – ‘intensification of ethnic consciousness in the area’** shows that 372 (100%) representing the entire population sample witnessed at least one of any of the Ife/Modakeke violent crisis. About 305(55.1%) witnessed one to three; about 67(44.9%) witnessed four to 8 violent crisis. A total of 222(60.8%) individuals witnessed the violent crisis as resident living within the community; 92(24.7%) as resident living within the neighbouring rural area to the community within the state; about 36(9.7%) as resident in neighbouring community within the state; while the remaining 18(4.8%) witnessed it as resident living outside the state. Our population sample shows that about 150(40.3%) first heard the story of Ife/Modakeke crisis during childhood age period; about 93(25.0%) heard it during adolescent age period; 92(24.7%) during youthful age period; while the remaining 37(9.9%) heard it during adulthood age period. Meanwhile 336(90.3%) were individuals whom their parents told the story of Ife/Modakeke conflict while 36(9.7%) were those whom their parents never shared the story with. Those whom their father share the story with were 204(54.8%); 132(35.5%) were individuals whom it was their mother while the remaining 36(9.7%) were never shared the story with by their parents. Lastly, 318(85.5%) has told/related same story to their children while the remaining 54(14.5%) has never tell/relate same story to their children.

The **table 4 – ‘ethnic relations in the area’** shows 295(79.3%) do believe people in Ife/Modakeke marry each other in the community while 77(20.7%) do not believe they marry each other in the community. About 166(44.6%) do see women from Ife/Modakeke that are married as kinsmen; 130(34.9%) were just indifferent ; 39(10.5%) see women from Ife/Modakeke that are married as stranger; while 37(9.9%) a lower part of our population sample see women that are married as enemy. It also shows that about 207(55.6%) respondents cannot encourage their children to marry from Ife/Modakeke community while 165(44.4%) says they can encourage their children to marry. About 189(50.0%) says they cannot encourage their relations to marry from Ife/Modakeke community while 183(49.2%) says they can encourage their relations to marry from Ife/Modakeke community. About 242(65.1%) says they cannot marry each other while 130(43.9%) says they can marry. Finally, 169(45.4%) respondents see children of the women that are married from these communities as Kinsmen; 169(45.4%) were indifferent; 73(19.6%) see them as enemy; while 19(5.1%) the lower part see them as stranger.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics Test

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.701	.066	17

Source: Fieldwork (March 2014)

Table 2. Bio-Data of Respondents

Frequency Distribution for Gender			Frequency Distribution for Marital Status		
Variables	No.	%	Variables	No.	%
Male	203	54.6	Married	289	80.1
Female	169	45.4	Divorced	74	19.9
Frequency Distribution for Age			Frequency Distribution for Occupation		
16-25	39	10.5	Government	130	34.9
26-35	74	19.9	Unemployed	36	9.7
36-45	165	44.4	Student	38	10.2
46-Above	94	25.3	Private	56	15.1
Frequency Distribution for Academic Qualification			Self-employed	112	30.1
Primary Education	38	10.2	Total	372	100.0
Secondary Education	148	39.8			
Tertiary Education	186	50.0			
Total	372	100.0	Source: Fieldwork (March 2014)		

Table 3. Intensification of Ethnic Consciousness in the Area

Variables	No.	%
Did you witness any of the Ife/Modakeke violent conflict?		
Yes	372	100
If yes, how many?		
1-3	305	55.1
4-8	67	44.9
Where were you, your spouse and your family during the recent violent crisis?		
Within the community of resident	226	60.8
Neighbouring rural area to the community within the state	92	24.7
Neighbouring community within the state	36	9.7%
Resident living outside the state	18	4.8%
When did you first hear the story of Ife/Modakeke crisis?		
During childhood age period	150	40.0
During adolescent age period	93	25.0
During youthful age period	92	24.7
During adulthood age period	37	9.9
Did your parents ever tell you the story of Ife/Modakeke conflict?		
Yes	336	90.3
No	36	9.7
If yes, which of them told you?		
Father	204	54.8
Mother	132	35.9
Have you also told/related the story to your children?		
Yes	318	85.5
No	54	14.5

Table 4. Ethnic Relations in the Area

Variables	No.	%
Do people in this community marry from Ife/Modakeke community?		
Yes	295	79.3
No	77	20.7
How do you see women from Ife/Modakeke that is married to the people of this community?		
Kinsmen	166	44.6
Stranger	39	10.5
Enemy	37	9.9
Indifferent	130	34.9
Can you encourage your children to marry from Ife/Modakeke community?		
Yes	165	44.4
No	207	55.6
Can you encourage your relations to marry from Ife/Modakeke community?		
Yes	183	49.2
No	189	50.8
Can you as a person marry Ife/Modakeke person?		
Yes	130	34.9
No	242	65.1
How do you see the children of the women from Ife/Modakeke that are married to the people of this community		
Kinsmen	111	29.8
Stranger	19	5.1
Enemy	73	19.6
Indifferent	169	45.4
Total	372	100.0

Source: Fieldwork (March 2014)

Table 5. Model Summary Table

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.399 ^a	.159	.157	.45971

a. Predictors: (Constant), How do you see the children of the women from Ife/Modakeke that are married to the people of this community?

Table 6. ANOVA Table

ANOVA^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.781	1	14.781	69.941	.000 ^a
	Residual	78.195	370	.211		
	Total	92.976	371			

a. Predictors: (Constant), How do you see the children of the women from Ife/Modakeke that are married to the people of this community?

b. Dependent Variable: Can you encourage your relations to marry from Ife/Modakeke community?

Research Hypothesis

This paper is undertaken with a view to confirming or refuting the following hypothesis:

H₀ ethnic attachment those not have any significant effect on inter-personal relationships among the people of the two communities

H₁ ethnic attachment those have a significant effect on inter-personal relationships among the people of the two communities

Linear Regression Analysis

This section, show only three main tables (see table 5 – 7) required to understand our test results from the linear regression procedure, assuming that no assumptions have been violated. The first table of interest (Table 5) is the Model Summary table. This table provides the R and R² value. The R value is 0.399 which represents the simple correlation. It indicates a low degree of correlation. The R² value indicates how much of the dependent variable, *“Interpersonal Relationship”* (can you encourage your relations to marry from lfe/Modakeke community), can be explained by the independent variable, *“Ethnic Attachment”* (how do you see the children of the women from lfe/Modakeke that are married to the people of this community). In this case, 15.9% can be explained, which is low. Better still, this means that our model explains 15.9% of the variance *“Ethnic Attachment to Interpersonal Relationship”* (i.e. ‘how do you see the children of the women from lfe/Modakeke that are married to the people of this community’ to ‘can you encourage your relations to marry from lfe/Modakeke community’).

Table 6 is the ANOVA table. This table indicates that the regression model predicts the outcome variable significantly well. How do we know this? Look at the "Regression" row and go to the Sig. column. This indicates the statistical significance of the regression model that was applied. Here, p < 0.001, which is less than 0.01, and indicates that, overall, the model applied can statistically significantly predict the outcome variable. Besides, the result from table 6 indicates 66.941fcal at the associated significant level 0.001 which is far less than the conventional level of 0.005. Therefore, the null hypothesis represented with H₀ is rejected, that is, ‘ethnic attachment those not have any significant effect on inter-personal relationships among the people of the two communities’. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis represented with H₁ is accepted i.e. ‘ethnic attachment those have a significant effect on inter-personal relationships among the people of the two communities’.

Table 7 - Correlation Coefficients, provides us with information on each predictor variable. This gives us the information we need to predict *“Interpersonal Relationship”* from *“Ethnic Attachment”*. We can see that both the constant and predictor contribute significantly to the model (by looking at the Sig. column). By looking at the B column under the Unstandardized Coefficients column, we can present the regression equation as: Ethnic Attachment = 1.07 + 1.55 (x), where x is Interpersonal Relationship. The implication of this result is that as long as they continue to see the children of women from lfe/Modakeke that are inter-married as kinsmen unlike strangers and enemies; then, they can encourage their relations to marry form lfe/Modakeke. The study concludes that for sustainable peace to be attained there is the need to pursue policies that encourages strong ethnic attachment and firm interpersonal relations in the two communities. Finally, contact within an educational setting would also reduce intolerant attitude and lead to better intergroup relations between the communities.

Table 7. Correlation Coefficient Table

		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.074	.057		18.808	.000
	How do you see the children of the women from lfe/Modakeke that are married to the people of this community?	.155	.018	.399	8.363	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Can you encourage your relations to marry from lfe/Modakeke community ?

CONCLUSION

The paper was able to establish through its regression analysis that the null hypothesis represented with H₀ is rejected, that is, ‘ethnic attachment those not have any significant effect on inter-personal relationships among the people of the two communities’. Therefore, the alternate hypothesis represented with H₁ is accepted i.e. ‘ethnic attachment those have a significant effect on inter-personal relationships among the people of the two communities’. The implication of this result is that as long as they continue to see the children of women from lfe/Modakeke that are inter-married as

kinsmen unlike strangers and enemies; then, conflict will reduce drastically and peace shall beginning to reign in the two communities. An integrated school would serve as a long-term approach targeted at children/ youths in resolving the conflict. It is based on the idea that children/ youths are the future leaders of the communities. This result also suggests that policies that encourage social integration could enhance the attainment of sustainable peace among the people of the two communities.

Towards this end, there is the need for the promotion of the following policies in the study area:

- i. promotion of psycho-social work which aims at both psycho-social healing and psychological transformation towards peaceful co-existence in the two communities;
- ii. promotion of peace education in school and the society that target both female and male of all age groups;
- iii. promotion of non-violence means in the settling of land dispute issues;
- iv. promotion of reconciliation of the Ifes and the Modakekes and trust building in the two communities; and,
- v. Encouragement of inter-marriage and cultural re-integration of the two communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research project therefore argued for integrated education as an alternative instrument for the conflict resolution. This tool is premised on contact theory. It also argued that integrated school should be incorporated into the Universal Basic Education programme in the area. This would be effective in bringing peace, social and attitudinal changes only if positive relationships and inclusive cultures are developed within the school.

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