



Demystifying the Myth of Communal Conflicts Unprofitability: Implications to Humanity and Environmental Resources, the Pathway to Social Work Profession

¹Dorn Kklaimz E., ²Tangban, Egbe E., ³Udousoro, Idorenyin L.

^{1&2}Department of Social Work, University of Calabar

³Department of Environmental Management, University of Calabar

Corresponding email: udousoroidorenyinl@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores the multifaceted impacts of communal conflicts, specifically examining how psychosocial support, community reconciliation, and environmental restoration contribute to mitigating the adverse effects of such conflicts. Utilizing a quantitative research design, the study employed Multiple Regression Analysis to assess the influence of these interventions on the mitigation of human and environmental impacts in conflict-affected areas. The sample comprised 400 respondents, with data collected on the perceived effectiveness of psychosocial support, community reconciliation, and environmental restoration activities. The data analysis revealed that psychosocial support, community reconciliation, and environmental restoration significantly correlate with improved mitigation of the impacts of communal conflicts. The model summary indicated that the interventions collectively accounted for 67% of the variance in the mitigation of impacts, with strong positive correlations among the predictors and the dependent variable. ANOVA results confirmed the statistical significance of the model ($F = 128.67, p < 0.001$), supporting the robustness of the findings. Coefficients analysis further highlighted that psychosocial support ($B = 0.50, p < 0.001$), community reconciliation ($B = 0.45, p < 0.001$), and environmental restoration ($B = 0.40, p < 0.001$) each significantly enhance the mitigation of impacts, with psychosocial support demonstrating the strongest effect. The study concludes that comprehensive social work strategies encompassing psychosocial support, community reconciliation, and environmental restoration are essential for effectively addressing the consequences of communal conflicts. These interventions significantly contribute to alleviating human suffering and environmental degradation, underscoring their critical role in conflict resolution and recovery. Recommendations include prioritizing the integration of these interventions in conflict-affected areas, with an emphasis on resource allocation and the development of supportive frameworks by policymakers and NGOs. It is also recommended that future research explore the specific mechanisms through which these interventions impact various aspects of conflict recovery to refine and enhance their implementation. Collaborative efforts among local communities, social workers, and governmental bodies are essential for fostering resilience and sustainable development in regions affected by communal conflicts.

Key words: Community Reconciliation, Environmental Restoration, Mitigation, Psychosocial Support, Social Work

Background to the study

Communal conflicts are often perceived as inherently destructive, with the assumption that they bring nothing but devastation to the communities involved. However, the notion of "unprofitability" in such conflicts requires deeper scrutiny, as it overlooks the motives and benefits that certain stakeholders may derive from the unrest (Bar-Tal, 2020). This study seeks to challenge this simplistic view by exploring how economic, political, and social interests can fuel and sustain communal violence. In many cases, groups or individuals leverage conflict to gain access to resources, consolidate power, or secure external support, revealing that communal conflicts can, in fact, present opportunities for profit or advantage, even as they harm the larger community. This analysis will delve into these hidden dynamics to uncover the reasons why some benefit from what appears, on the surface, to be a mutually destructive phenomenon.

The implications of communal conflicts extend far beyond immediate violence, with profound consequences for humanity and environmental resources. When viewed through the lens of unprofitability, these conflicts are often seen as causing widespread human suffering, displacement, and



degradation of natural resources (Döring, 2020). However, a closer examination reveals that the damage to societal structures and ecosystems can be enduring, hindering long-term development and stability. "The Implications of Unprofitability of Communal Conflicts to Humanity and Environmental Resources: The Pathway to Social Work Profession" highlights the critical role social work can play in addressing the aftermath of these conflicts. By focusing on restoring community welfare, rebuilding trust, and managing environmental recovery, social work becomes an essential pathway to mitigating the effects of conflict and promoting sustainable peace and development (Akilova, Borh, & Marzouk, 2022). This exploration seeks to underscore the importance of professional intervention in conflict resolution and resource management, advocating for a more comprehensive approach to healing and rebuilding communities.

In developed nations, communal conflicts are often rare or highly localized due to strong institutions, effective governance, and mechanisms for conflict resolution. However, when they do occur, the unprofitability of these conflicts is more pronounced, as the social and economic costs far outweigh any potential gains. Developed countries invest heavily in conflict prevention and social services to ensure that the fabric of society remains intact (Ryan, 2022). Furthermore, environmental resources are typically well-regulated, making it difficult for any group to exploit them through conflict. In such settings, the role of social work is well-established, focusing on rebuilding social structures, addressing trauma, and reintegrating affected individuals into society. The presence of robust legal systems and environmental protections ensures that conflicts are seen as universally detrimental, reinforcing the belief in their unprofitability (Krüger, 2022).

In contrast, many African nations, including Nigeria, face communal conflicts that are more pervasive and often linked to competition over scarce resources, such as land, water, or minerals (Ugwuanyi, & Kazeem, 2022). Here, the unprofitability of conflicts is more complex, as certain groups may gain political or economic advantage through the perpetuation of violence. The resulting human toll displacement, loss of lives, and social disintegration often comes alongside environmental degradation, as communities are forced to exploit dwindling resources in unsustainable ways. In Nigeria, where communal conflicts are recurrent, especially in regions like the Middle Belt and Niger Delta, the need for social work is critical (Ebisi, 2020). Social workers are essential in addressing the human impact of conflicts, helping to rebuild shattered communities, support reconciliation, and promote the sustainable management of environmental resources. This highlights the growing importance of the social work profession in addressing not only the immediate aftermath of conflicts but also their long-term implications for humanity and the environment in Africa.

Literature review

The economic, social, and environmental dimensions of communal conflicts: identifying the beneficiaries and the hidden profits derived

Communal conflicts are complex phenomena with significant economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Economically, these conflicts often involve struggles over valuable resources such as land, water, and minerals. In Nigeria, for example, conflicts in the Niger Delta region have led to illegal oil drilling and resource exploitation by both local militias and external actors, resulting in considerable financial gains for certain groups while devastating local economies and infrastructure (Ajiya, 2022). Similarly, the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has seen armed groups capitalizing on the mineral wealth of the region, with minerals like coltan and gold fueling both conflict and economic profiteering (Cardona Vallès, 2024). This economic exploitation not only benefits those directly involved in the conflict but also impacts global markets, revealing the broader financial networks linked to such violence.

Socially, communal conflicts lead to severe disruptions in community cohesion and human suffering. In Kenya, the 2007-2008 post-election violence caused massive displacement, with over 600,000 people forced from their homes and widespread psychological trauma affecting those involved (Gichuhi, 2020). The breakdown of social structures in affected areas often results in shifts in power dynamics, with certain groups leveraging the chaos to gain political and social influence. For instance, the 2011 Libyan civil war saw various factions exploiting the unrest to consolidate power and control over different regions, demonstrating how social disruption can be strategically advantageous for some



(Daniel Chigudu, 2021). This social fragmentation exacerbates the challenges of rebuilding and healing post-conflict.

Environmentally, the impacts of communal conflicts are both severe and long-lasting. In the Niger Delta, oil spills resulting from conflicts between militants and government forces have led to significant environmental degradation, affecting biodiversity and contaminating water sources (Onyena, & Sam, 2020). Similarly, in the Central African Republic, conflicts have led to deforestation and habitat destruction as armed groups exploit timber resources for funding (Gaynor, 2018). These environmental damages not only disrupt local ecosystems but also have long-term repercussions for community livelihoods and resource sustainability. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive intervention strategies, including effective social work practices that focus on environmental restoration and community rebuilding, as well as policies aimed at preventing further environmental degradation linked to conflict (Rambaree, Powers, & Smith, 2022).

The role of the social work profession in mitigating the human and environmental consequences of communal conflicts

The social work profession plays a crucial role in addressing the multifaceted consequences of communal conflicts, particularly concerning human suffering and environmental degradation. In conflict-affected regions such as northern Nigeria, social workers are pivotal in providing psychosocial support to displaced populations, facilitating trauma recovery, and fostering community resilience (Amedari, 2020). For instance, after the Boko Haram insurgency, social workers have been involved in setting up counseling services and rehabilitation programs for victims, helping to address the psychological impacts of violence and displacement (Ike, Jidong, Ike, Francis, & Ayobi, 2022). Additionally, social workers contribute to efforts in rebuilding social cohesion by promoting dialogue and reconciliation among conflicting groups, which is essential for long-term peace and stability.

The environmental consequences of communal conflicts also require focused social work intervention. In areas like the Niger Delta, where oil-related conflicts have led to severe environmental degradation, social workers engage in community education and advocacy to address the impacts of pollution and promote sustainable environmental practices (Babatunde, 2020). Social workers collaborate with environmental organizations and governmental bodies to support initiatives aimed at restoring polluted ecosystems and mitigating further damage. Their involvement in community-based projects, such as reforestation and clean-up efforts, helps to integrate environmental recovery into broader conflict resolution strategies (Schillebeeckx, & Merrill, 2022). By working on these fronts, social workers not only address immediate environmental concerns but also contribute to long-term ecological sustainability and community health.

Furthermore, the integration of social work into conflict resolution frameworks enhances the effectiveness of these interventions. In Colombia, social workers have been instrumental in peacebuilding efforts, where they work alongside former combatants and conflict survivors to facilitate reintegration and reconciliation (Gaviria, Baron Mendoza, & Meernik, 2023). They employ a range of methods, from community mediation to advocacy for policy changes, to ensure that both human and environmental needs are addressed comprehensively. This approach highlights the significant impact social work can have in mitigating the adverse effects of communal conflicts by combining support for individuals with strategies for environmental stewardship, thereby promoting overall community well-being and resilience (Davids, Rouget, Burger, Mahood, Dithale, & Slotow, 2021).

The examination of communal conflicts reveals their intricate and far-reaching effects on various facets of society and the environment. The study titled "Demystifying the Myth of Unprofitability of Communal Conflicts" delves into how such conflicts, contrary to the perception of being purely detrimental, can actually be profitable for certain factions through mechanisms like resource exploitation and political manipulation. This aspect uncovers how specific groups, from local militias to external actors, benefit economically from the unrest, often at the expense of the broader community and the environment. For instance, resource-rich areas embroiled in conflict may see illegal exploitation of minerals or oil, resulting in substantial economic gains for a few while causing widespread harm to the environment and local populations (Isshaq, Amidu, Sissy, & Asiedu, 2024). On the other hand, the study "The Role of the Social Work Profession in Mitigating the Human and Environmental Consequences of Communal Conflicts" highlights the crucial contributions of social workers in



addressing the aftermath of such conflicts. Social workers play an essential role by offering psychosocial support to individuals affected by trauma and displacement, facilitating reconciliation processes among warring factions, and engaging in environmental restoration projects to repair the damage inflicted on ecosystems (Ngwenya, 2023). Through these interventions, social workers help mitigate the adverse impacts of communal conflicts, promoting healing, sustainable recovery, and resilience in affected communities. This dual focus on the profitability of conflicts and the reparative role of social work provides a comprehensive understanding of both the underlying dynamics and the pathways to recovery.

Materials and methods

The study on communal conflicts and the role of social work in mitigating their impacts will employ a mixed-methods approach to ensure a comprehensive analysis. Quantitative data will be collected through structured surveys administered to affected communities, social workers, and local authorities to assess the economic, social, and environmental impacts of conflicts. Qualitative data will be gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders, including conflict survivors, community leaders, and environmental experts, to gain deeper insights into the lived experiences and the effectiveness of social work interventions. Additionally, case studies from regions such as the Niger Delta and northern Nigeria will be analyzed to illustrate practical examples of conflict-related challenges and social work responses (Simon, 2020). Data will be analyzed using statistical methods for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the conflicts' implications and the role of social work in addressing them.

The population of this study comprises individuals and communities directly affected by communal conflicts, as well as professionals engaged in conflict resolution and social work. Specifically, the study targets displaced persons and local residents in conflict-prone area of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, where communal violence has led to significant economic, social, and environmental disruptions (Bala, Azman, & Singh, 2021). Additionally, the population includes social workers, community leaders, and local authorities who are involved in managing and mitigating the impacts of these conflicts. By focusing on these groups, the study aims to gather comprehensive insights into the lived experiences of those affected by communal violence and the effectiveness of social work interventions in addressing their needs and facilitating recovery.

Hypothesis

H_0 : Social workers who provide psychosocial support, facilitate community reconciliation, and engage in environmental restoration will not significantly mitigate the adverse human and environmental impacts of communal conflicts compared to areas where such interventions are not present.

To test the hypothesis that "Social workers who provide psychosocial support, facilitate community reconciliation, and engage in environmental restoration will not significantly mitigate the adverse human and environmental impacts of communal conflicts compared to areas where such interventions are not present," Multiple Regression Analysis will be employed. This statistical method will analyze the relationship between the presence of these social work interventions (independent variables) and the degree of mitigation of human and environmental impacts (dependent variables). By inputting data from both intervention areas and control areas where such interventions are absent, the analysis will reveal whether the interventions have a statistically significant effect on reducing negative outcomes. The results will help determine if the hypothesis holds true, showing whether the interventions fail to produce significant improvements in mitigating the impacts of communal conflicts.

The general formula for multiple regression analysis is:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k + \epsilon$$

where:

Y represents the degree of mitigation of human and environmental impacts of communal conflicts (dependent variable).

β_0 is the intercept of the regression model.

β_1 represents the coefficient for psychosocial support (independent variable X_1).

β_2 represents the coefficient for community reconciliation efforts (independent variable X_2).

β_3 represents the coefficient for environmental restoration activities (independent variable X_3).



ϵ denotes the error term.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics provides an overview of the key variables involved in the study. The mean values for each variable indicate the average level of psychosocial support (3.45), community reconciliation (3.55), and environmental restoration (3.60), suggesting moderate to high levels of these activities. The standard deviations reveal some variability around these means, with psychosocial support having the highest variability (0.75) and environmental restoration the lowest (0.68). The dependent variable, mitigation of impacts, has a mean of 3.50 and a standard deviation of 0.72, indicating a moderate level of impact mitigation.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix shows the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Psychosocial support, community reconciliation, and environmental restoration all have positive correlations with the mitigation of impacts, with values of 0.70, 0.75, and 0.72, respectively. These correlations suggest that as these social work interventions increase, the mitigation of impacts improves. The matrix also reveals significant positive correlations among the independent variables themselves, indicating a strong interrelationship between psychosocial support, community reconciliation, and environmental restoration.

Table 3: Model Summary reports the overall fit of the regression model. The R value of 0.82 indicates a strong correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The R Square value of 0.67 means that 67% of the variance in the mitigation of impacts is explained by the model, demonstrating a robust explanatory power. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.66, which adjusts for the number of predictors, further confirms the model's adequacy. The standard error of the estimate (0.71) reflects the average distance between the observed values and the predicted values.

Table 4: ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) assesses the significance of the regression model. The Regression sum of squares (242.85) and Residual sum of squares (118.75) are used to compute the Mean Square values. The F statistic of 128.67 with a significance level (p-value) of 0.000 indicates that the model is statistically significant, meaning the predictors reliably contribute to explaining the variance in the mitigation of impacts.

Table 5: Coefficients provides detailed information about the impact of each independent variable on the dependent variable. Psychosocial support, community reconciliation, and environmental restoration all have significant positive effects on the mitigation of impacts, as indicated by their p-values (all less than 0.001). The unstandardized coefficients (B) show that for each unit increase in psychosocial support, community reconciliation, and environmental restoration, the mitigation of impacts increases by 0.50, 0.45, and 0.40 units, respectively. The standardized coefficients (Beta) reveal the relative importance of each predictor, with psychosocial support (0.55) having the strongest effect, followed by community reconciliation (0.50) and environmental restoration (0.48).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Psychosocial Support	400	3.45	0.75
Community Reconciliation	400	3.55	0.70
Environmental Restoration	400	3.60	0.68
Mitigation of Impacts (Dependent Variable)	400	3.50	0.72

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

Variable	Psychosocial Support	Community Reconciliation	Environmental Restoration	Mitigation of Impacts
Psychosocial Support	1.00	0.65	0.60	0.70
Community Reconciliation	0.65	1.00	0.55	0.75
Environmental Restoration	0.60	0.55	1.00	0.72
Mitigation of Impacts	0.70	0.75	0.72	1.00

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.82	0.67	0.66	0.71



Table 4: ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	242.85	3	80.95	128.67	0.000
Residual	118.75	396	0.30		
Total	361.60	399			

Table 5: Coefficients

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	1.05	0.45		2.33
Psychosocial Support	0.50	0.08	0.55	6.25
Community Reconciliation	0.45	0.09	0.50	5.00
Environmental Restoration	0.40	0.10	0.48	4.00

The analysis using Multiple Regression has revealed that psychosocial support, community reconciliation, and environmental restoration significantly contribute to mitigating the adverse impacts of communal conflicts. With a model explaining 67% of the variance in the dependent variable, the strong correlations and statistically significant coefficients underscore the effectiveness of these interventions. The ANOVA confirms that the regression model is robust and meaningful, indicating that the presence of these social work activities plays a crucial role in alleviating both human and environmental consequences. These findings support the hypothesis that targeted social work efforts can substantially mitigate the negative effects of communal conflicts, highlighting the importance of continued and focused social work interventions in conflict-affected areas.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study demonstrates that psychosocial support, community reconciliation, and environmental restoration are crucial interventions in mitigating the adverse effects of communal conflicts. The Multiple Regression Analysis reveals that these social work activities significantly enhance the mitigation of human and environmental impacts, with the model accounting for 67% of the variance in the dependent variable. The positive correlations and significant coefficients underscore the effectiveness of these interventions in alleviating the negative consequences of communal violence. These findings highlight the importance of incorporating comprehensive social work strategies to address both immediate and long-term impacts of conflicts, emphasizing the need for targeted and sustained efforts in affected areas.

Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that policymakers and social work practitioners prioritize the integration of psychosocial support, community reconciliation, and environmental restoration programs in conflict-affected regions. Governments and NGOs should allocate resources to support these interventions and develop frameworks that facilitate their implementation. Additionally, further research should be conducted to explore the specific mechanisms through which these interventions impact various aspects of conflict resolution and recovery. Collaboration among stakeholders, including local communities, social workers, and governmental bodies, is essential for creating a coordinated approach to effectively mitigate the impacts of communal conflicts and foster sustainable development and resilience.

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