Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria: A Dangerous Threat to Human Existence and Business Activities

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Abstract
The thesis of this study is to examine the implications of ethnic and religious conflict on human existence and business activities to residents of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design. Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted in selecting four hundred (400) participants from five districts in Jos metropolis. Questionnaire was the major instrument for primary data collection. The reliability estimate of the instrument was established through the Cronbach method. The obtained data were statistically analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Each hypothesis was tested at 0.05 per cent level of significance. The results obtained from the analysis of data shows that ethnic and religious crisis is a deadly threat to human existence and it significantly affects business activities in Jos metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria. The study concluded that ethnic and religious crisis portends great danger to human existence and a threat to business activities in the country. It was recommended among others that National Orientation Agency (NOA) should be strengthened and empowered to mobilize and create consistent national awareness on the ills of crisis, be it religious, ethnic, or communal crisis. Nigerians should be made to understand that at the end of every crisis, it is the people and the nation that suffers the damages. Finally, government must move from policy of conflict resolution to conflict prevention.
Keywords: Insecurity, human existence, business activities, ethnic, religious and conflict

1.   Introduction

Insecurity in the form of ethnic, communal, and religious crisis is one of the biggest, most complex, and perhaps the most complicated problem facing Nigeria and most countries in the world, whether developed or developing countries. The upsurge in these forms of insecurity has left many countries in pains, suffering, and dismay, as it results in wanton destruction of lives and properties. This ugly security situation apparently demonstrated in wilful killings, religious violence, communal conflicts, aggression, and cruelty have rendered many Nigerians deeply embittered about the safety profile of the country (Ukwayi & Okpa, 2017). Imhonopi and Urim (2012), posit that the growing number of violent crimes, ethnic and religious killings, kidnapping, communal clashes, politically motivated violence, militancy, suicide bombing and banditry have increasingly become common phenomenon in the Nigerian society. Over the years, the deteriorating nature of ethnic, communal, religious, and political crisis in the country have had a damaging effect on the security situation in Nigeria, forcing the elites, the political class, as well as the poor to agonise over human, material, and immaterial losses across the country (Ewetan & Urhie, 2014, Ukwayi & Okpa, 2017). Albinus (2012) observed that the heightened insecurity issue in the last few years, as manifested in the high rate of ethnic, communal, religious, and political crisis, has left unpalatable consequences for Nigerians and her socio-economic growth. The obvious and indisputable truth as well as bitter reality according to Ukwayi and Okpa (2017) is that even the blind can testify to the insecurity challenges bedevilling the Nigerian society.

According to Egwu (2001), the primordial inclination of most religious and ethnic groups toward conflict and the persistent upsurge of violent ethno- religious militias and warlords, who pledges allegiance to the values and beliefs of certain dominant religious and ethnic groups, have aggravated the scale of the insecurity, and widened its scope in different dimensions. The prevailing security situation, characterised by ritual killings, cultism, insurgency, militancy, suicide bombings, religious killings, assassinations, drug trafficking, vandalism of oil installation, ethnic crisis, destruction of lives and properties, armed robbery and a host of other crimes, has destroy the very foundation of national peace and integration. It has also created a situation of constant panic, fear, apprehension, and anxiety in the minds of Nigerians. The incessant violent attacks and unabated religious upheavals have resulted to wanton damage of critical infrastructures without which development is not guaranteed. Although the magnitude and severity of ethnic and religious crisis may differ from place to place, it poses serious challenges to human existence and business activities of individuals, households, and communities in Nigeria. Empirical research has found negative associations between ethnic and religious crisis and a range of outcomes including economic, education, health, social, and psychological (Egwu, 2001; Adebayo, 2006; Imhonopi & Urim, 2012).

Plateau State according to Gwaza, Dakum and Bogoro (2015), has suffered the siege of insecurity for more than ninety (90) years, this has manifested in incessant and recurring ethno-religious cum communal crisis across the state. The conflict has always assumed ethnic, communal, and religious dimensions, with minimal political undertone. In Jos, Plateau State, the state of insecurity has become worrisome and disturbing considering the

high rate of killing resulting from the ethnic and communal conflict and other social vices that has befallen the area in recent time. The situation deteriorated to the point that there was no year, that Jos does not witness a heavy bloodbath occasioned by ethnic, communal or religious conflict. According to Krause (2010) no fewer than four thousand (4,000) and possibly as many as seven thousand (7,000) persons have been killed since late 2001, when the first major violence in more than three decades broke out in Jos. Plateau State has lost thousands of her citizens to this crisis. In addition, important infrastructural facilities have been destroyed and the development prospect of the state as well as the well-being of her population exposed to risks of different nature (Krause, 2010). Jos, the state capital and a major city with a population of more than one million people is at the centre of the crisis and has been the site of most of the worst conflicts. Mass killing and the destruction of lives and properties have taken place in 2001, 2004, 2008, and 2010. The crisis has also affected parts of the high plateau and other rural parts of Jos Local Government Area (Blench, 2004). Against this backdrop, the study is designed to examine the effect of ethnic and religious conflict on human existence and business activities in Jos metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria. Two research questions were raised to guide the study: they are:

(i)   To what extent does ethnic crisis affect human existence and business activities in Jos metropolis?
(ii)   What are the effects of religious crisis on human existence and business activities in Jos metropolis?

1.2   Objectives of the study
The major objective of this study is to determine the effects of ethnic and religious conflict on human existence and business activities in Jos metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study is aimed at examining:
(i)   the extent to which ethnic crisis affect human existence and business activities in Jos metropolis
(ii)   the effects of religious crisis on human existence and business activities in Jos metropolis

1.3   Statement of hypotheses
Based on the raised research questions and objectives, the following null hypotheses were raised and tested in the study:
(i)   ethnic crisis could likely affect human existence and business activities in Jos metropolis
(ii)   religious crisis could likely affect human existence and business activities in Jos metropolis

1.4   Significance of the study
The study is expected to be of benefit to government and its agencies at the national, state, and local levels in the area of curbing the many security challenges in the country. This is because emphasis will be placed on issues of insecurity as they relate to the lingering Jos crisis. Empirically, the findings of this study would enhance knowledge about the root causes of insecurity and violent crimes in Nigeria, particularly in Jos metropolis. The outcome of this study will assist administrators at all levels to identify factors that hinder peace and promote insecurity in Nigeria. The strength of this study lies in the variables that can help to understand and find lasting solutions to the problems of insecurity in Jos metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria. Thus, the study is expected to provide recommendations that will assist the government and other agencies in finding lasting solutions to Jos crisis. In addition, researchers and students of development as well as the public will find the result of this study useful in their endeavours.

2.   Literature review
2.1   The effect of ethnic crisis on human existence and business activities
According to UNEP (2006), ethnic conflict has the ability to bear a multiplicity of long and short-term effects on socio-economic development, in addition to human and environmental well-being of a nation. The impacts of internal feuds between ethnic groups are manifest at diverse spatial levels, in the immediate community of conflict and neighbouring communities. In general, ethnic conflict destabilizes or devastates environmental social, physical, and human capital, in addition to diminishing accessible openings for business activities. It is evident that ethnic crisis between neighbouring communities continues to impact negatively on human well-being, especially, where it has manifestly destabilized people's quality of life and their accessible legitimate choices. Consequently, this can result to loss of livelihoods, lives, opportunities and human dignity, as well as basic human rights. In a study conducted by UNESCO (2010) statistics institutes in 25 countries, revealed that conflicts of all nature affect greatly the educational system of the conflict area. The study demonstrated the multifaceted effect of ethnic conflict on education, from access to school, progress through the educational system, destruction of facilities, teacher's absenteeism, and children insecurity. Sany (2010), asserts that in such conflict areas, education is relegated to the bottom in terms of priorities to the extent that stakeholders are more concerned with finding a lasting solution to the conflicts. In such situations, education, which is seen as the bedrock of every societal development, is affected significantly, which in turn, impacts on the human existence and business activities within the area of conflict. In relation, to conflict and its impact on property, people become displaced within their own community. The destruction property can take several forms, ranging from

basic infrastructures, houses, and agricultural products, to farmlands, national resources, and environment, among many others.

According to UNEP (2006), ethnic conflicts have a propensity of multifaceted impact on people's properties both in the short and long-term. Such destruction is seen manifestly in the quality of life as well as affecting the basic human rights of the people in regions where conflicts have destroyed the social fabric of their existence. The impact of conflicts on the socio-economic development can be seen in the area of inter-marriages. Sociologists place a premium on the link between inter-marriage and ethnic identity. Therefore, in an area of ethnic conflict where clashing parties are seen as enemies, inter-marriages are prohibited. Cultural identity and chauvinism play a critical role in inter-ethnic conflicts; therefore, one group does not want to identify with other groups, which negatively affect social life. Furtado and Trejo (2012) posit that since much importance is attached to ethnicity and identity, inter-marriages become a social boundary, which can completely erase their identity. Therefore, in an ethnically conflicted area, inter-marriages are strongly prohibited because they weaken the entrenched positions of conflicting parties; thereby, lessening their identity. According to Onoma (2009), ethnic conflicts contribute significantly to the collapse of social cohesion, as well as the impediment of local governance structures. Subsequently, this might lead to the inaccessibility of the standard safety nets. In this regard, the escalating economic and social vulnerability attributable to ethnic conflict, might, in the context of land and environmental degradation, generate new tensions, as well as conflict over vital resources; for example, water or food. Poverty incidence is also likely to increase in the course of the loss of livelihoods, in addition to an escalating inability of the populace to cope with changes. According to Keefer and Knack (2002), this loss of resilience relates directly to a reduced accessibility to public services. This can lead to an escalating incidence of sickness, a reduction in formal job openings, and the devastation of subsistence livelihoods. Moreover, several entitlements may disintegrate, which involve consumption as well as nutrition. This is in addition to the deterioration of social cohesion and worsening insecurity. Agbewode (2013) asserts that the dislodgment of persons is a key social and economic cost of ethnic conflict, both in the short-term and the post-conflict phases.

2.2   Effects of religious conflict on human existence and business activities

Religion is ranked next to ethnicity in Nigeria, and is usually classified into three – Christian, Muslim and Traditional. The least politically active in this classification is the traditional religion(s); numbering several hundreds of ethnic groups and subgroups, villages, clans and kin groups; and, involving the worship of different gods and goddesses. In effect, Christian and Muslim identities have been the mainstay of religious differentiation and conflict in Nigeria (Lewis & Bratton, 2000). It is difficult to define with precision and objectivity because it is emotion-laden (Egwu, 2011). Ogban-iyam (2005) maintained that religion is one of the phenomena that is often misunderstood in the analysis of interpersonal activities, especially violent conflicts in Nigeria. In many instances, religious riots provide grounds for economic, political, opportunity for looting, intimidation, and controlling the affairs of co-religionists and non-co-religionists and even that of the hated co-religionists. Threats are purportedly issued to one religious sect when adherents of another religious sect occupy the advantageous position within the social production process. When this happens, conflicts and violence engenders. Religious conflict does have many implications on the affected people. Ali (2008) for example, established that, 'throughout the crisis years in Takum/Ussa, there was a decline in the level of agricultural investment/yield, decline in income levels of the people of the area, and increased level of social and residential segregation and damages to lives and property worth millions". The resultant effects of these are high levels of poverty and unemployment. Religious conflicts create internally displaced persons, as thousands of people suddenly become refugees in their country or elsewhere beyond their shores.

Family disconnect and dislocation is another obvious consequence of religious crisis. Husband and wife usually lose contact resulting from an unplanned and sudden departure from their previous abode. It also affects the education of children in the families involved. Properties are lost and people displaced. It is clear fact that if a refugee can carry some personal effects during forced movement, none can carry fixed assets such as buildings, economic and non-economic crops. One disturbing effect of religious conflict is that high number of people are usually disfigured, killed, and displaced. Different sources are coming out with estimates of religious conflict in Nigeria. In economic terms, religious conflict damages resources and infrastructural facilities, which cost huge amount of money to acquire. More seriously, the time of crisis, be it ethnic or religious is a time when direct foreign investment is discouraged. No foreign investor will like to invest funds in a country or an area that is divided by communal and ethno religious conflicts (Ayinla, 2003). There are fears at two levels. Firstly, the basic aim of foreign investment is to make profit, which is not possible in an environment of crisis. Secondly, the resources invested already will definitely go down the drain. Foreigners will not want to live in a country where there is no guarantee of lives and property (Onwumah, 2014). This affects the quality of life of the people and their development.

3.   Methods

Survey research design was adopted in this study. The survey method was used because it allows for objectivity and true sampling of opinion among respondents. The study was conducted in Jos metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria. Jos, the Plateau State capital is located in the north central geographical zone of Nigeria. Jos metropolis is located at $9^0$51'N and $8^0$52'E coordinates respectively. The city has a population of about 821,618 (NPC, 2006). Jos metropolis is located on the Jos plateau at an elevation of about 1238 meters above sea level. For administrative purpose, the city (Jos metropolis) is divided into three local government areas, namely – Jos South, Jos North, and Jos East. The population of the study involves the three local government areas that make up Jos metropolis. According to the 2006 population census, the population of Jos stands at 821,618 (NPC, 2006). The spread of the population across Jos metropolis reveals that Jos North is the most populated area with a population of four hundred and twenty-nine thousand, three hundred (429,300). It is followed by Jos South local government with a population of three hundred and six thousand, seven hundred and sixteen (306,716), while, Jos East has a population of eighty-five thousand, six hundred and two (85,602). According to the National Population Census of 2006 (NPC, 2006), this gives the total population at 821,618.

The sample size was calculated using the formula developed and popularized by Taro Yamane (1964). The formula is given as

n = $\dfrac{N}{1 + N *(e)^2}$

Where

n   =   sample size
N   =   Total Population
e   =   Level of Significance $(0.05)^2$

Using BODMAS, we calculate our Value as Follows:

n   = $\dfrac{821618}{1 + 821618 (0.05)^2}$

n   = $\dfrac{821618}{821619 \times 0.0025}$

N   =   2054.04

Therefore sample size = 400

The study adopted mixed sampling technique in selecting the study sample size. The researcher purposively selected five districts from the districts that make up the local government areas. The selection of these five districts were on merit as the district were among the areas where the crisis was concentrated. These include Jos North – Gwong District, Jos East – Federe and Fursum Districts, and Jos South – Du and Kuru Districts. From these five districts, three streets were purposively selected from each. Thus, fifteen (15) streets namely: Jos North – Gwong District – Kabang, Rusau, Bobale; Jos East – Federe District – Gandibappa, Jaranda, Febas; Jos East – Fursum District – Foro, Jawara, Mai Ido Taro; Jos South – Du District – Wawan, Zek, Itimtim; Jos South – Kuru District – Daken, Dankanang, Dazek. From ten of the fifteen streets, twenty-seven (27) respondents were selected, while twenty-six (26) were selected from the remaining five streets, using the simple random sampling technique. Therefore, the total population used to generate data for this study were 400 respondents. An open-ended questionnaire was adopted. The questionnaire consists of three sections. Section A consists of items that elicit information on the demographic data of the respondents used for this study. Section B of the questionnaire consists of information on the independent variables and was sub-divided into three (3) sub-groups containing each variable that was operationalized from the independent variable, while section C deals with questions on the dependent variable. Data gathered from the field were appropriately coded and analysed using necessary statistical tools applied. Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient was used to measure the relationships between variables under discussion. The testing were analysed hypothesis by hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

4.   Results
4.1   Data presentation

Table 1 revealed respondents demographic information. The distribution of respondents shows that out of 400 participants in the study, 77.8 per cent (N = 311) are male while 22.3 per cent (N = 89) were female. The variance in the sample distribution is not within the control of the researcher since the sampled metropolis has the presence of this gender. The spread of respondents in terms of age shows that majority 44.8 per cent (N= 179) are between the age of 18 and 25 years, 22.3 per cent (N = 89) are between the ages of 26 – 35 years, 22.0 per cent (N = 88) are between the ages of 36 – 45 years while only 11.0 per cent (N = 44) are aged 46 and above. all the age group are represented since the study did not exclude any known group in the area under the scope of the study. Respondents responses to marital status reveals that majority 62.5 per cent (N = 250) are currently married, 33.5 per cent (N = 134) are single while only 4.0 per cent (N = 16) were divorced or separated. This

spread is not decided by the researcher rather, it is the fact. Out of the 400 respondents: 33.8 percent (N = 135) each have FSLC and SSCE/NECO as the highest educational qualification to their credit; 22.0 percent (N = 88) have NCE/OND as the highest educational qualification while 11.0 percent (N = 44) has B.Sc as the highest educational qualification. The spread of respondents in respect to occupation shows that 33.5 per cent (N = 134) were traders; 22.3 percent (N = 89) were famers while 11.0 percent were either civil servants, into business and others not engaged in occupation that was not captured in the questionnaire. Responses to religion as ticked by respondents reveal that 86.7 per cent (N = 347) are Christians and Muslim, While the least represented group are the traditional worshippers having a representation of 13.3 per cent (N = 53).

TABLE 1
Demographic information of respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Gender	Male	311	77.8
	Female	89	22.2
	Total	400	100
Age	Below 25 years	179	44.7
	26 – 30 years	89	22.3
	31-35 years	88	22.0
	36 – 40 years	44	11.0
	Total	400	100
Marital status	Single	134	33.5
	Married	250	62.5
	Divorced/separated	16	4.0
	Total	400	100
Educational qualification	FSLC	135	33.7
	SSCE/GCE	133	33.3
	OND/NCE	88	22.0
	B.Sc	44	11.0
	Total	400	100
Occupation	Students	45	11.2
	Civil servants	44	11.0
	Trader	134	33.5
	Farmer	89	22.3
	Fishing	44	11.0
	Others	44	11.0
	Total	400	100
Religious affiliation	Christianity	199	49.7
	Islam	148	37
	ATR	53	13.3
	Total	400	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

4.2   Test of hypotheses
Hypothesis one
Ethnic crisis could likely affect human existence and business activities in Jos environs, Plateau State, Nigeria. The independent variable is 'ethnic crisis', while the dependent variable is 'human existence and business activities'. Both the dependent and independent scores were obtained from the structured questionnaire developed and administered by the researcher. Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic was used to analyse the data at .05 level of significance, the result is presented in Table 2. The result in Table 2 revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.712* is greater than the critical r-value of 0.098 at 0.05 level of significance with 398 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis, which stated that, 'Ethnic crisis could likely affect human existence and business activities in Jos metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria' is rejected, while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This implied that, ethnic crisis has a statistical significant effect on human existence and business activities among residents of Jos metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria.

TABLE 2

Pearson Product Moment Correlation of ethnic crisis and human existence and business activities

Variables	N	M	SD	r-value	Sig.
Ethnic crisis	400	12.79	2.48		
				0.712*	.000**
Human existence and business activities	400	15.44	2.74		

**significant at 0.05 level, df = 398, critical r value = 0.098*

Hypothesis two

Religious crisis could likely affect human existence and business activities in Jos metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria. The independent variable is religious conflict while the dependent variable is human existence and business activities. Both the dependent and independent scores were obtained from the structured questionnaire developed and administered by the researcher. Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics was used to analyse the data at .05 level of significance, the result is presented in Table 3. The result in Table 3 revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.213* is greater than the critical r-value of 0.098 at 0.05 level of significance with 398 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis, which stated that, religious crisis could likely affect human existence and business activities in Jos metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria is rejected while the alternate hypothesis accepted. This implied that, religious conflict significantly affects human existence and business activities of resident of Jos metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria.

TABLE 3

Pearson Product Moment Correlation of religious conflict and human existence and business activities

Variables	N	M	SD	r.value	Sig.
Religious conflict	400	12.00	1.70		
				0.213*	.000**
Human existence and business activities	400	15.44	2.74		

**significant at 0.05 level, df = 398, critical r value = 0.098*

4.3   Summary of research findings
(i)   Ethnic crisis significantly affects human existence and business activities in Jos metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria.
(ii)   Religious crisis significantly affects human existence and business activities in Jos metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria.

5.   Conclusion
This study examined the effect of ethnic and religious conflicts on human existence and business activities among residents of Jos metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria. In conclusion, ethnic and religious conflicts portend great danger to human existence and business activities to residents of Jos metropolis and Nigeria in general. Ethnic and religious conflicts expose human beings and the environment to different degree of danger, which hampers development. We can only progress and have meaningful development under the atmosphere of tranquillity, peace, and harmony. A corollary to the above is that it portrays Nigeria in a very bad light internationally. It depicts our leaders, at all levels and in different facets of life as weak, naïve, selfish and self-centred. In an environment of strong, dedicated, and selfless leadership, the diversity and complexity of the Nigerian society would be duly harnessed and channelled into holistic national development.

6.   Recommendations
From the findings of this study and the conclusion drawn from the findings, the following recommendations have been put forward:
(i)   National Orientation Agency (NOA), should be strengthened and empowered to mobilize and create consistent national awareness on the ills of crisis, be it religious, ethnic, or communal crisis. The people should be made to understand that at the end of every crisis, it is the people and the nation that loses. In addition, it is desirable to have an orientation programme on the damaging effects of violent uprisings. Such an orientation programme should aim at informing the people that no ethnic, religion, or community is superior to the other.
(ii)   Government should address the problem of youth unemployment, through empowerment programmes and creation of job. In addition, government should create an enabling environment that would encourage private investors to invest in the country.

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