



The Role of Women in Conflict Management: A study of Ivo Local Government Area in Ebonyi State.

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Abstract

The marginalization of women in conflict management remains a critical challenge, particularly in Ivo Local Government Area, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Despite women's potential contributions to peace-building, cultural barriers and entrenched gender stereotypes limit their active participation in conflict resolution processes. This study, grounded in feminist theory, investigates how these socio-cultural dynamics, alongside the impact of women's education, shape their role in conflict management. Based on survey data from 400 respondents, the findings reveal that traditional gender roles and the lack of representation significantly hinder women's engagement in decision-making forums. However, education emerges as a powerful enabler, equipping women with the skills and confidence needed to contribute effectively to conflict resolution. Respondents overwhelmingly recognize education as a crucial factor in empowering women and fostering gender-inclusive peace-building strategies. The study also highlights the pervasive influence of societal stereotypes, which continue to undermine women's leadership in conflict management. These findings underscore the need for structural changes to promote gender equality, including policies that ensure balanced representation in decision-making bodies, investments in women's education, and concerted efforts to challenge harmful stereotypes through community awareness programs. By addressing these barriers, stakeholders can create a more equitable and effective framework for conflict management, ultimately enhancing sustainable peace and development in the region.

Keywords: Conflict, Conflict management, Ivo, Ebonyi State

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Introduction

In the discourse on conflict management, one striking oversight continues to persist: the marginalization of women's contributions, especially in regions rich in cultural heritage but fraught with socio-political tensions. Ivo Local Government Area in Ebonyi State, Nigeria, presents a vivid case in point. Historically rooted in the former Afikpo Local Government Area, Ivo was formally established in 1996, yet its significance dates back to 1991, when Afikpo was divided into Afikpo North and Afikpo South (Okafor, Enwo-Irem, & Agha, 2023). While renowned for its agricultural wealth and vibrant cultural festivals such as the Iwa Ji (New Yam) and Iyi Udele (Kolanut) celebrations (Okeke et al., 2023), the region faces enduring conflicts related to communal disputes, political tensions, and competition over resources.

Despite women's deep involvement in community affairs across Nigeria, their roles in conflict resolution have remained undervalued, marginalized by patriarchal structures and longstanding cultural norms (Mustapha & Christian, 2023). In Ivo, as in many parts of the country, traditional approaches to conflict management frequently exclude women from formal negotiations, leaving their potential contributions untapped. Although national efforts toward gender equality have progressed, socio-cultural barriers and entrenched stereotypes continue to impede women's participation in conflict management processes (Nwangwu & Ezeibe, 2019; Ajayi, 2020). These obstacles have led to a systemic exclusion of women from crucial decision-making roles in peace negotiations, perpetuating the dominance of male-centered power dynamics (Allen & Nyiayaana, 2023).

This study, therefore, addresses a critical problematique: the socio-cultural and institutional factors that obstruct women's full engagement in conflict management within Ivo Local Government Area. Central to this inquiry are two research questions: What are the socio-cultural and institutional barriers limiting women's participation in conflict management? How does women's education influence their involvement in these processes? The study adopts feminist theoretical perspectives, positing that education can act as a transformative tool, dismantling gender stereotypes and enhancing women's ability to participate in peacebuilding.



The objectives are twofold: first, to analyze the socio-cultural dynamics that restrict women's roles in conflict resolution, and second, to explore the influence of education in empowering women for effective participation in peace processes. By addressing these issues, this research seeks to inform policymakers and community leaders on the necessity of integrating women into peacebuilding efforts and to contribute to the broader academic literature on gender and conflict management in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Women and Conflict Management

Conflict management is an essential facet of human interaction, encompassing strategies and processes aimed at addressing, mitigating, and resolving disagreements. (Onalu, Ramsey-Soroghaye, & Nwafor, 2023). Viewing this concept from a unique perspective involves departing from conventional approaches and embracing a holistic understanding that goes beyond mere resolution to foster long-term harmony and growth.

One distinctive viewpoint on conflict management involves reframing conflicts as opportunities for organizational and personal development. (Onalu, Ramsey-Soroghaye, & Nwafor, 2023). Instead of viewing conflicts as obstacles, this perspective sees them as occasions to identify areas for improvement, innovation, and increased collaboration. By reframing conflict in this way, organizations can transform adversarial situations into catalysts for positive change, leading to enhanced productivity and creativity.

Additionally, a unique perspective on conflict management involves the recognition of emotions as integral components of conflicts. (Rahim, 2023). Traditional models often focus on the rational aspects of disputes, neglecting the emotional dimensions. Embracing a holistic approach acknowledges that emotions play a significant role in shaping perceptions, motivations, and responses during conflicts. Effective conflict management, therefore, involves not only addressing the tangible issues at hand but also understanding and managing the emotions involved to promote empathetic and sustainable resolutions.



Nwachukwu (2023), in a study titled 'Parental Attitude and Female Genital Mutilation In Rivers State: Implications For Counselling', explores the link between parental attitudes and female genital mutilation (FGM) in Rivers State, emphasizing implications for counseling. The study's strength lies in its empirical approach, utilizing a survey design with a substantial sample of 400 women from diverse local government areas in Rivers State. In terms of strengths, the study demonstrates empirical rigor by employing a survey design with a sizable and representative sample. The self-designed Parental Attitude and Female Genital Mutilation Questionnaire (PAFGMQ) adds relevance, with approval from specialists contributing to the research's credibility. The reliability analysis, utilizing Cronbach's alpha (0.81), ensures a robust internal consistency, enhancing the credibility of the measurements. The study also provides practical recommendations, such as urging the enforcement of existing laws on FGM by the Rivers State Government. However, certain weaknesses exist. The study's focus on parental attitudes and FGM in Rivers State may limit the broader applicability of its findings. The use of a self-designed questionnaire, while reliable, may have inherent limitations, potentially introducing biases or lacking nuance. Additionally, the study identifies a correlation between FGM and psychological problems but may not establish causation due to the complex interplay of variables.

Momoh (2023) in a study titled, 'Exploring the centrality of women in indigenous peacemaking among the Mende of Sierra Leone', delves into the pivotal role women play in traditional peacemaking and conflict management within the Mende community of Sierra Leone. The study asserts that Mende women, with a rich historical record, enduring courage, and demonstrated pedigree, consistently act as intermediaries to resolve hostilities and restore normalcy in conflicted communities. It further explores their essential function in de-escalating volatile situations and proactively preventing conflicts. The paper acknowledges the presence of male chauvinism and cultural traditions that disempower women in certain traditional societies. Despite these challenges, the study uncovers evidence illustrating that women hold central positions influencing decisions critical to shaping community culture and fostering peace. Through roles such as Mammy Queens, Soweis, Chiefs, and heads of women groups, women



contribute significantly to social restructuring, political transformation, and the peacemaking process in local communities.

While recognizing the historical disempowerment of women in some traditional settings, the paper concludes that women, leveraging their roles as mothers, educators, counselors, mentors, and leaders, possess a historical legacy of reconciling conflicting parties. Their influence contributes to fostering harmony in communities burdened by conflicts. Strengths of the paper include its in-depth exploration of the historical and contemporary roles of Mende women in conflict resolution, providing valuable insights into the cultural dynamics at play. The emphasis on women's agency in decision-making positions is a notable aspect that adds depth to the analysis. However, a potential weakness lies in the generalization of findings. The paper could benefit from a nuanced examination of variations within the Mende community and consideration of external factors impacting women's roles in conflict management.

Cultural Norms and Attitudes towards Gender Roles

Adedeji (2023), in a paper titled “An Appraisal of Violence against Women in the 21st Century Nigeria: Gender Perspective”, addressed the concerning escalation of violence against women in Nigeria, despite the country's commitment to international human rights declarations, particularly the 1993 United Nations General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. This issue has attracted international attention and raised apprehensions among human rights groups. The paper focuses on the gender-specific aspects of violence against women in 21st-century Nigeria, employing a content analysis methodology that relies on secondary sources for data. Strengths of the paper lie in its explicit identification of key challenges contributing to the persistence of violence against women in Nigeria. By highlighting factors such as the lack of political will, inadequate resources, the absence of systematic efforts to address the issue, slow progress in criminal justice reformation, and insufficient evaluation mechanisms, the paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted challenges at play.

However, a potential weakness stems from the reliance on content analysis and secondary sources, limiting the depth of primary data collection. This may affect the paper's ability to capture the nuanced and dynamic nature of violence against women in diverse cultural contexts



within Nigeria, including areas like Ivo Local Government Area. The paper concludes by offering valuable recommendations, emphasizing the need for political will, adequate funding, systematic efforts, expedited criminal justice reforms, and the establishment of more research centers for evaluation purposes. The call for collective efforts in eradicating violence against women in Nigeria adds a commendable dimension to the conclusions.

Ndu, Nwafor, & Adama (2023) in a study titled, 'Women and the maintenance of peace in Nigeria's rural communities: A study of Oshi Ekwa Leka of the Eziobodo people', critically addressed the important but often overlooked role that women play in maintaining and nurturing peace, particularly in rural communities in Nigeria. The study's strength lies in its focus on a specific women's group, the Oshi ekwa leka, providing a localized perspective that adds depth to the broader discourse on women's involvement in peace initiatives. The theoretical framework of womanism is a noteworthy strength as it aligns with the study's emphasis on women's experiences, perspectives, and unique contributions. Womanism, which recognizes the intersectionality of gender, race, and class, enriches the analysis by acknowledging the specific context and challenges faced by women in the Eziobodo Alachara Mgbowo community. The adoption of the survey method, particularly through key informant interviews or in-depth interviews (IDI), adds qualitative richness to the study. By engaging directly with the women leader and chairman of the community, the research captures nuanced insights into the activities of the Oshi ekwa leka in maintaining peace. This approach enhances the authenticity and depth of the findings.

However, a potential weakness lies in the limited generalizability of the findings, given the focus on a specific women's group in a particular local government area. While the localized approach is valuable for in-depth understanding, it may be challenging to extrapolate these findings to other regions with different cultural contexts or women's groups. The paper successfully addresses the gap in women's representation in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. It advocates for women's inclusion in peace talks, recognizing that their participation correlates with the successful implementation of peace agreements. This advocacy aligns with broader discussions on the importance of gender-inclusive approaches to conflict resolution.



Linking this analysis to women's education in Ivo Local Government Area, the study indirectly highlights the potential impact of education on women's active participation in peace-building initiatives. Women who are educated may be better equipped to articulate their perspectives, advocate for their inclusion in peace processes, and contribute meaningfully to community development. Therefore, supporting women's education in Ivo Local Government Area may serve as a catalyst for enhanced engagement in conflict resolution and peace-building efforts within the region.

Samson and Origbo' (2023), in a study titled, 'Women's Contributions In The Peace Building And Conflict Resolution Processes: The Nigerian Perspective' meticulously explored the multifaceted contributions of Nigerian women at various levels—individual, group, and organized, including formidable registered groups—toward peace-building and conflict resolution in the country. The examination encompasses traditional methods of women's involvement in the peace process, as well as their evolution into contemporary avenues such as mass social mobilization, peaceful protests, women's peace advocacy organizations, and registered Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with specific mandates to contribute to building a violence-free society.

One notable strength of the paper lies in its comprehensive overview of the diverse ways in which Nigerian women engage in peace-building. By considering traditional and contemporary methods, the authors acknowledge the dynamic nature of women's roles in conflict resolution, providing a nuanced perspective on the evolution of their contributions over time. The paper also touches on the scholarly argument that women, by nature, are inclined towards peace and have demonstrated effective conflict resolution strategies, surpassing men in certain aspects. This acknowledgment adds depth to the discussion and aligns with broader debates on gender roles in peace and conflict studies.

However, a potential weakness is the limited exploration of specific case studies or empirical evidence to support the assertions made. While the paper provides a conceptual framework and general overview, a more in-depth analysis of specific instances or localized impacts within regions like Ivo Local Government Area could enhance the paper's empirical foundation. The



paper rightly highlights the significance of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) as a catalyst for advancing women's participation in the peace process. This connection to international frameworks strengthens the paper's argument and emphasizes the global recognition of women's roles in peace-building.

Linking this analysis to women's education in Ivo Local Government Area, the work indirectly underscores the importance of education in empowering women to contribute meaningfully to peace-building efforts. While not explicitly discussing education, the paper implies that women's involvement in various forms of peace activities is influenced by their evolving roles, which education can significantly contribute to. The insights provided align with the broader discourse on the positive correlation between women's education and their engagement in conflict resolution and peace-building initiatives.

The Landscape of Women Participation in Politics and Conflict Management in Nigeria

Ajeli (2023), in a study titled, 'A Historical Assessment of the Place of Umuada Igbo in Peace and Conflict Resolution in Ogwuaniocha', presents a compelling examination of the Umuada Igbo in Igboland, underscoring their significance as one of Nigeria's well-organized, peaceful, and endowed women groups. The strength of the paper lies in its meticulous portrayal of the multifaceted contributions made by Umuada Igbo in various roles, such as farmers, civil workers, and managers of human welfare. Their impact is portrayed as pivotal to addressing challenges arising from conflicts linked to factors like poverty, misrule, and masculine domination. One notable strength is the historical analysis method employed, providing a contextual understanding of the Umuada's role in conflict resolution in Ogwuaniocha. This method adds depth to the exploration, offering insights into the evolution of their contributions over time. The historical lens enables readers to appreciate the continuity and resilience of Umuada Igbo in the face of societal challenges.

The paper effectively challenges the prevalent misconception that women are irrelevant in peace and conflict resolution initiatives in Nigeria. By emphasizing the traditional and modern contributions of Umuada Igbo, the work contributes to debunking stereotypes and promoting the



recognition of women's agency in fostering peace. This aligns with broader discussions on the importance of acknowledging women's roles in conflict resolution. However, a potential weakness is the lack of specific empirical data or case studies to substantiate the claims made. While the paper convincingly argues for the importance of women's involvement in peacebuilding, incorporating concrete examples or empirical evidence from Ivo Local Government Area could strengthen the empirical foundation of the work. The recommendation to provide equal opportunities for women in both appointive and elective positions is noteworthy. It directly links to the broader theme of women's education, suggesting that empowering women through education can contribute to their increased participation in decision-making roles, thereby enhancing conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts.

Iyke-Ibe & Ogele (2023), in an 'International Federation of Women Lawyers and Domestic Conflict Management in Rivers State, Nigeria', present a comprehensive exploration of the role played by the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) in managing domestic conflict in Rivers State, Nigeria, from 2010 to 2022. The study's strength lies in its focus on domestic violence against women, a pervasive issue with multifaceted dimensions. The adoption of feminist theory adds depth to the analysis, offering a lens through which power structures, patriarchy, and gender dynamics are critically examined. The paper effectively employs a triangulation method, utilizing both primary data gathered through structured questionnaires and secondary data analyzed through content analysis. This methodological approach enhances the reliability and validity of the study, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the complex phenomenon of domestic violence. One of the notable strengths is the acknowledgment of the various forms of domestic violence, including verbal, physical, religious, economic, and emotional abuse, among others. By recognizing the diversity of abuses, the study contributes to a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by women in the region, fostering a more inclusive approach to conflict resolution.

Oluwagbemiga, Johnson, & Olaniyi (2023), in a study titled, 'Education and intimate partner violence among married women in Nigeria: a multilevel analysis of individual and community-level factors', made a significant contribution to the understanding of intimate partner violence (IPV) and its relationship with women's education in Nigeria. The research's strength lies in its



use of a robust data set from the 2018 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, employing three levels of statistical analysis to investigate the nuanced relationship between women's education and IPV. One notable strength is the study's clear identification of individual and community-level factors influencing the degree of IPV. By exploring various aspects of IPV (physical, sexual, and emotional violence), the research offers a comprehensive analysis, recognizing that different forms of violence may have distinct determinants. This approach enriches the depth of understanding regarding the complex dynamics surrounding IPV. The finding that women with higher levels of education experienced lower levels of IPV aligns with existing literature and reinforces the potential of education as a protective factor against intimate partner violence. This empirical evidence strengthens the argument for investing in women's education as a strategy for mitigating IPV, particularly in regions such as Ivo Local Government Area. The study appropriately acknowledges the limitations associated with relying on cross-sectional survey data, emphasizing the need for further research to explore the causal relationships and potential mediating factors between women's education and IPV. This acknowledgment of limitations reflects the research's transparency and contributes to the scholarly discourse on IPV.

Ogundiwin & Adeyanju (2023), presented a qualitative exploration of the increasing involvement of women in various roles within terrorist activities in Nigeria, challenging the prevailing focus on male militants in counter-terrorism strategies. The strength of the study lies in its pioneering effort to shed light on the multifaceted contributions of women to terrorism and advocate for a gender-inclusive approach in counter-terrorism initiatives.

One notable strength of the work is its emphasis on the qualitative nature of the study, employing documentary review, observations, and interrogations. This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the roles women play in terrorism, moving beyond conventional perceptions that primarily associate terrorism with male actors. The use of qualitative methods is appropriate for exploring the complexities of women's involvement in terrorism, providing insights into their various roles, such as combatants, suicide bombers, and logistical support. The study's contribution to the field of terrorism studies is evident in its call for a gender-neutral conceptualization of terrorism. This perspective challenges existing stereotypes and biases that may hinder effective counter-terrorism efforts. By recognizing and addressing the active



participation of women in terrorism, the study advocates for more comprehensive counter-terrorism plans that encompass the grievances identified to cause terrorism, thereby addressing the root causes.

Heilman, Caleo, & Manzi (2024), in a study titled. 'Women at work: pathways from gender stereotypes to gender bias and discrimination', critically examines the persistence of gender-based discrimination and its impact on women's career advancement, shedding light on the role of gender stereotypes in fostering bias. The study's strength lies in its comprehensive review of existing literature, particularly in delineating the content of gender stereotypes and elucidating their impact on both descriptive and prescriptive aspects. One notable strength is the delineation of two pathways through which gender stereotypes contribute to disparate work outcomes for men and women. The characterization of women as communal is identified as conflicting with the perceived requirements of many male gender-typed roles, leading to perceptions of female incompetence in those domains. Additionally, the study highlights how norms regarding acceptable female behavior at work may penalize women for displaying counter-stereotypical attributes. This dual-pathway analysis enriches the understanding of the nuanced ways in which gender stereotypes perpetuate discrimination.

Mensah (2023) in a study titled, 'Husband is a priority: Gender roles, patriarchy and the naming of female children in Nigeria', delved into the intricate onomastic practices within certain traditional societies in Nigeria, revealing how gender stereotypes and patriarchy are embedded in the naming of female children. The study employs an ethnographic qualitative approach to explore the politics of this naming regime, focusing on the Bette (South-east) and Owe (North-central) cultural traditions. The strength of the work lies in its in-depth examination of how personal names serve as instruments in perpetuating gender inequality and oppressive gender regimes, as well as in portraying the implications of such practices on the girl-child.

One notable strength of the study is its ethnographic methodology, allowing for a nuanced exploration of the naming practices within specific cultural contexts. The focus on linguistic evidence adds depth to the analysis, providing insights into how language reflects and perpetuates gender norms. The utilization of West and Zimmermann's concept of "doing gender"



adds theoretical rigor, framing the discussion within a well-established framework in gender studies. The work sheds light on the centrality of naming in the social construction of gender, illustrating how names become symbolic tools that either conform to or resist patriarchal ideologies. This aspect contributes to a richer understanding of how cultural practices influence and perpetuate gender stereotypes, particularly against the girl-child.

Fitong Ketchiwou & Dzansi (2023), in a study titled. 'Examining the Impact of Gender Discriminatory Practices on Women's Development and Progression at Work', delved into the persistent challenge of gender discriminatory practices within organizations, specifically examining the link between such practices, women's skill development, and career progression. The study adopts a quantitative approach, utilizing a questionnaire survey administered online to 412 women through a convenient non-probability sampling method. Statistical analyses, including descriptive tendencies, test normality, validity, reliability, and regression analysis, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and AMOS 27, enhance the research's robustness. The study addresses a pertinent issue of gender discrimination in the workplace, providing timely insights into the challenges women face in skill development and career progression despite global calls for gender equity. Also, the use of a quantitative approach, including statistical analyses, adds rigor to the research. The large sample size (412 women) enhances the generalizability of the findings. Clear Focus: The study maintains a clear focus on the link between gender discriminatory practices, skill development, and career progression. This targeted approach contributes to a nuanced understanding of the issues at hand. Utilization of Statistical Tools: The use of SPSS and AMOS 27 demonstrates a commitment to robust data analysis, enhancing the reliability of the study's findings.

However, the study primarily relies on quantitative data, potentially limiting its ability to capture the nuanced and context-specific aspects of gender discrimination. A complementary qualitative component could have provided a richer understanding of women's experiences. Sampling Method: The use of a convenient non-probability sampling method may introduce selection bias, as participants who self-select may not represent the broader population accurately. This could impact the external validity of the findings. Rejecting a Claim without Elaboration: The study rejects the claim that workplace gender discriminatory practices impact women's career



progression, but the rationale behind this rejection is not explicitly discussed. Providing more insight into this aspect could enhance the study's depth.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the framework of the Feminist theory, which originated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries during the suffragette movements and waves of feminist activism. Contemporary feminist philosophy is notably shaped by the influential psychoanalytic insights of Judith Butler, Rosi Braidotti, Donna Haraway, Bracha Ettinger, and Avital Ronell (Allen, 2023). It evolved as a response to the pervasive gender inequalities and disparities in social, political, and economic spheres. Feminist theorists, including Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone de Beauvoir, and Betty Friedan, laid the intellectual groundwork by challenging the status quo and advocating for women's rights. Feminism offers a versatile perspective that opens up new avenues for both scholarly inquiry and activism in support of families and intimate relationships. (Allen, 2023).

Feminist theory operates on several core assumptions that underpin its analysis of gender relations and women's experiences: Feminist theory posits that gender is socially constructed, challenging the idea that inherent biological differences dictate social roles. (Olaitan, 2023), It contends that societal norms, traditions, and power structures shape perceptions of femininity and masculinity. Central to feminist theory is the recognition of patriarchy as a system of social organization that privileges men and subordinates women. It critically examines power structures that perpetuate gender-based hierarchies, both overt and subtle. Likewise, feminist theorists acknowledge the intersectionality of identities, emphasizing that women's experiences are shaped by various factors such as race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. This nuanced perspective rejects a one-size-fits-all approach. Feminist theory is inherently egalitarian, advocating for the dismantling of oppressive structures to achieve gender equality. It seeks to challenge and transform societal norms that perpetuate discrimination against women. In Olaitan's work (2023), the assertion is made that women transcend the role of mere victims and should actively contribute to the processes of peace-building.



The research topic, "The Role of Women in Conflict Management: A Study of Ivo Local Government Areas in Ebonyi State," aligns seamlessly with feminist theory, providing a lens through which to understand and interpret the dynamics of women's roles in conflict resolution. Feminist theory allows for an in-depth exploration of how cultural norms and expectations influence women's active participation in conflict management. It unveils the gendered nature of cultural practices and traditions that may limit women's agency in resolving conflicts. Through a feminist lens, the research can delve into the transformative potential of women's education. Feminist theory contends that education empowers women, providing them with the skills and knowledge to challenge traditional gender roles and actively engage in peace-building initiatives. Feminist theory helps unveil the detrimental impact of stereotypes on women's involvement in conflict management. It provides a theoretical framework to understand how deeply ingrained gender stereotypes hinder women's contributions and perpetuate gender-based discrimination.

Methodology

The study employed a quantitative research design, utilizing structured questionnaires as the primary data collection instrument. This method was selected for its capacity to systematically quantify responses, allowing for robust analysis that directly addresses the research questions. The structured questionnaire was composed of closed-ended and Likert-scale items, carefully designed to elicit detailed information on women's involvement in conflict management, socio-cultural influences, and prevailing perceptions of gender roles. It included sections that captured demographic data, attitudes toward women's participation in conflict resolution, perceptions of gender stereotypes, and experiences with conflict management initiatives.

To ensure a representative sample, the study employed a stratified random sampling technique. The population of Ivo Local Government Area was stratified according to key demographic variables, such as age, gender, educational attainment, and occupation, ensuring that diverse segments of the community were appropriately represented. Within each stratum, participants were randomly selected to ensure equal probability of inclusion across the population. The sample size was determined using statistical methods, specifically the Taro Yamane formula, to ensure sufficient power for generalization and representativeness of the findings. This



methodological rigor allowed for the consistent and comparable collection of data across a broad spectrum of respondents, strengthening the validity of the study's conclusions.

To calculate the sample size using the Taro Yamani formula, you can use the following equation:

Where:

n = Sample size

N = Population size

e = Margin of error (expressed as a decimal)

Given:

$N=180,000$ (Population size)

e (Margin of error) is typically chosen based on the desired confidence level and precision. For this example, let's assume $e=0.05$ (5%).

Now, we can plug these values into the formula:

$$n = \frac{180,000^2}{1 + 180,000(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1 + 180,000(0.05)^2}{180,000}$$

$$n = \frac{180,000^2}{1 + 180,000(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{1 + 180,000(0.0025)}{180,000}$$

$$n = \frac{180,000^2}{1 + 450}$$

$$n = \frac{180,000^2}{451}$$

$$n = 399.11$$

Rounding up to the nearest whole number, the recommended sample size using the Taro Yamani formula is approximately 400. Therefore, a sample size of 400 would be suitable for this study.

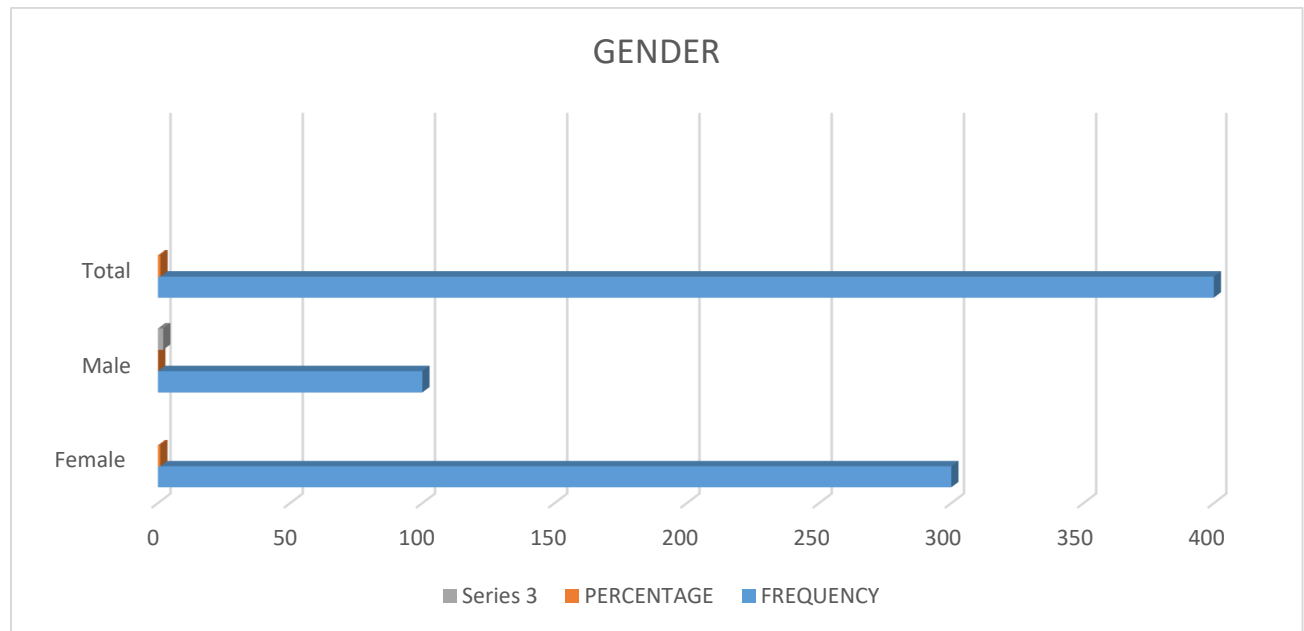
The study adopted descriptive statistics in the analysis of the questionnaire.



ANALYSIS

Demographic distribution of Gender, Age, Education and Occupation of the Respondents

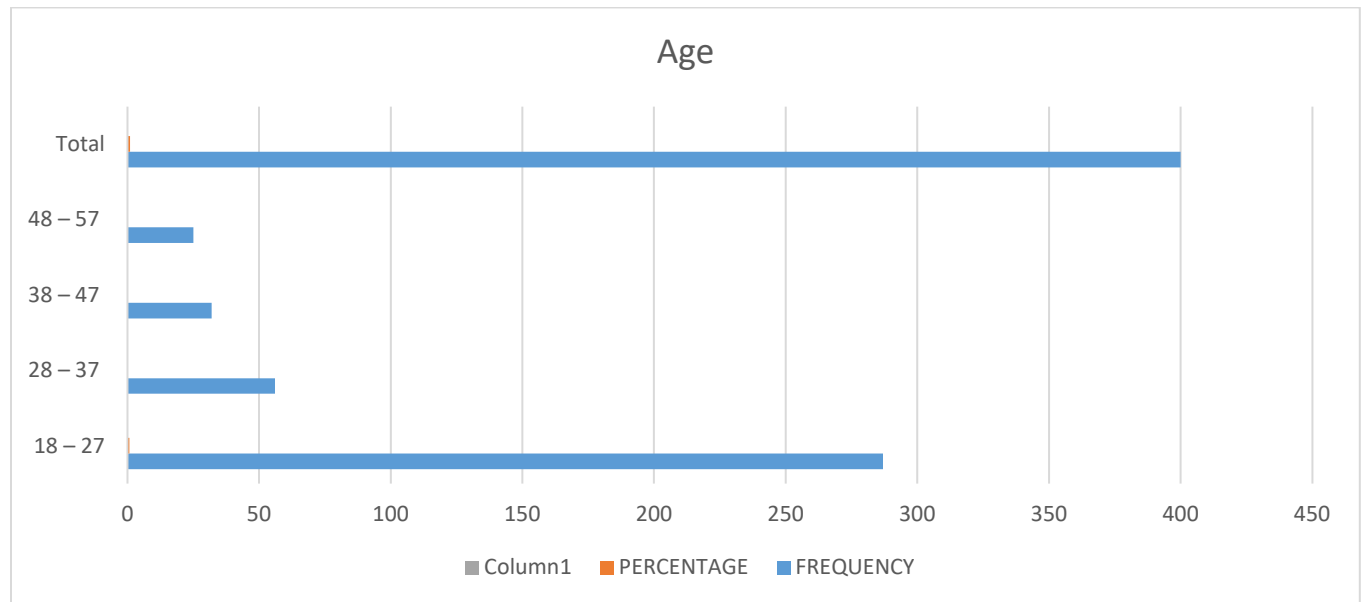
TABLE 1: GENDER



Source: Author’s fieldwork, 2024

From table 1, the demographic distribution of gender in the study sample reveals a substantial gender disparity, with females comprising the majority (90%) of respondents compared to males (10%). This gender asymmetry aligns with the focus of our study on women's roles in conflict management within Ivo Local Government Area. The overrepresentation of females in the sample suggests a heightened interest and participation of women in conflict-related issues within the community. It underscores the significance of examining gender dynamics and women's experiences in conflict resolution processes, considering their substantial presence and potential contributions to fostering peace and stability. Additionally, this demographic distribution underscores the importance of adopting gender-sensitive approaches to conflict management initiatives, acknowledging and leveraging the unique perspectives and capacities of women in addressing conflict-related challenges within the community.

TABLE 2:



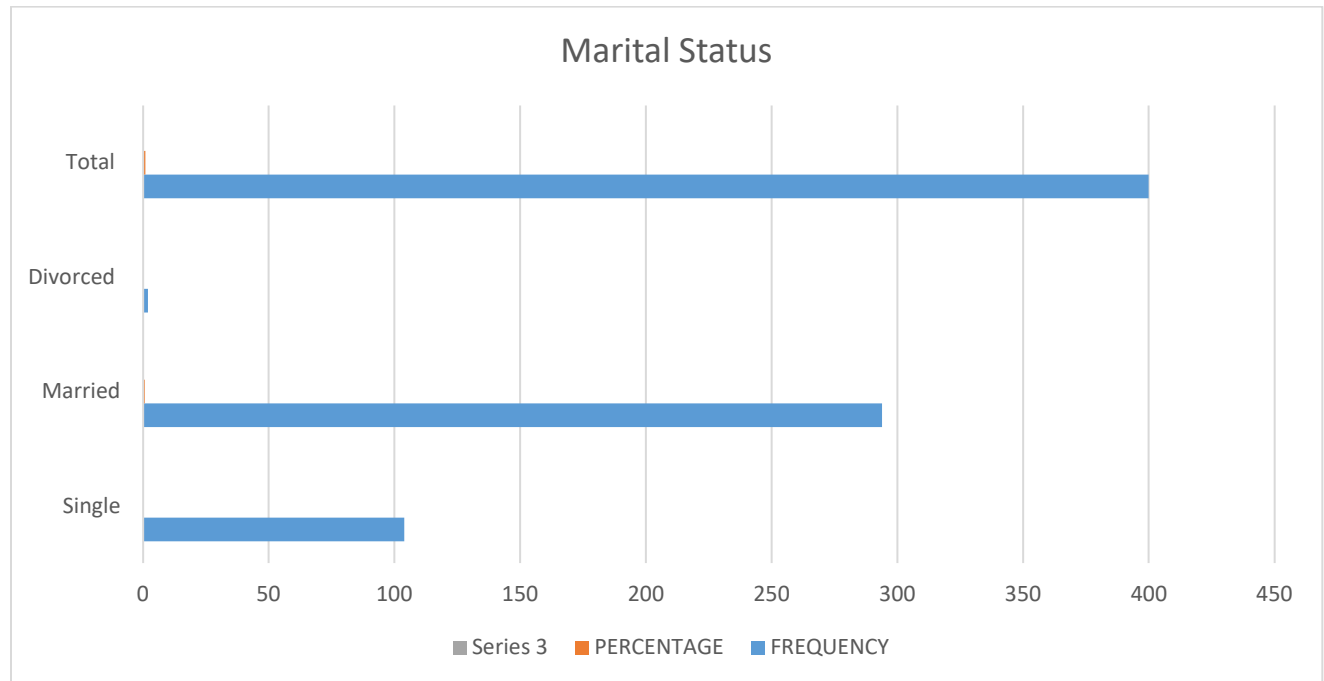
Source: Author's fieldwork, 2024

The demographic distribution of age in the table 2 above, reveals a predominant representation of younger adults, with the age group 18-27 comprising the majority (71.75%) of respondents. This age distribution is significant in the context of our study on women's roles in conflict management within Ivo Local Government Area, as it indicates a strong presence of young adults who are potentially actively engaged in community affairs and conflict-related activities.

The substantial representation of younger adults suggests a demographic cohort that may hold unique perspectives, experiences, and aspirations regarding conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. Their inclusion in the study provides valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of conflict management within the community, particularly from the perspective of younger generations who may bring innovative approaches and fresh perspectives to addressing conflict-related challenges. Furthermore, while the older age groups (28-37, 38-47, 48-57) represent smaller proportions of the sample, their inclusion is still noteworthy as it offers a diverse range of experiences and perspectives across different age cohorts. Understanding the viewpoints of individuals from varied age groups can enrich the analysis of gender dynamics and conflict management strategies, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in promoting peace and stability within the community.



TABLE 3: MARITAL STATUS

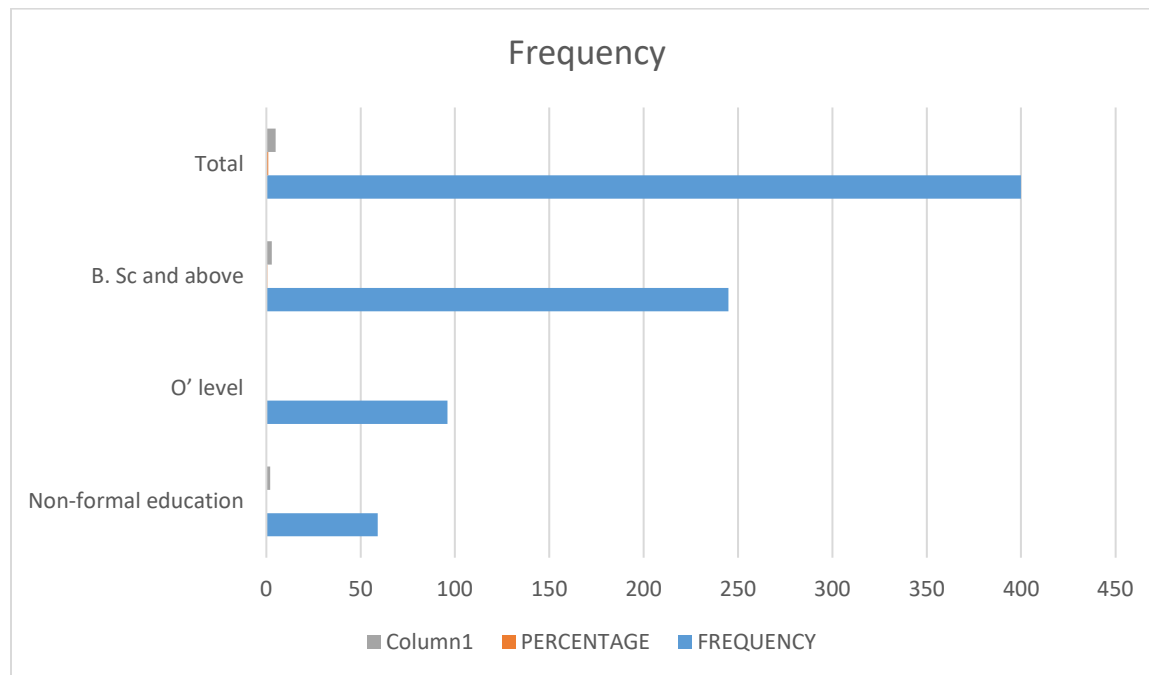


Source: Author’s fieldwork, 2024

From table 3, the demographic distribution of marital status in the study sample indicates a predominant representation of married individuals (73.5%), followed by singles (26%) and a negligible proportion of divorced individuals (0.5%). This distribution suggests that the majority of respondents may have familial responsibilities and social networks that influence their perspectives and roles in conflict management within Ivo Local Government Area. Understanding the marital status of participants provides insights into potential differences in priorities, commitments, and support networks that may shape their involvement in conflict resolution processes.



TABLE 4: EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

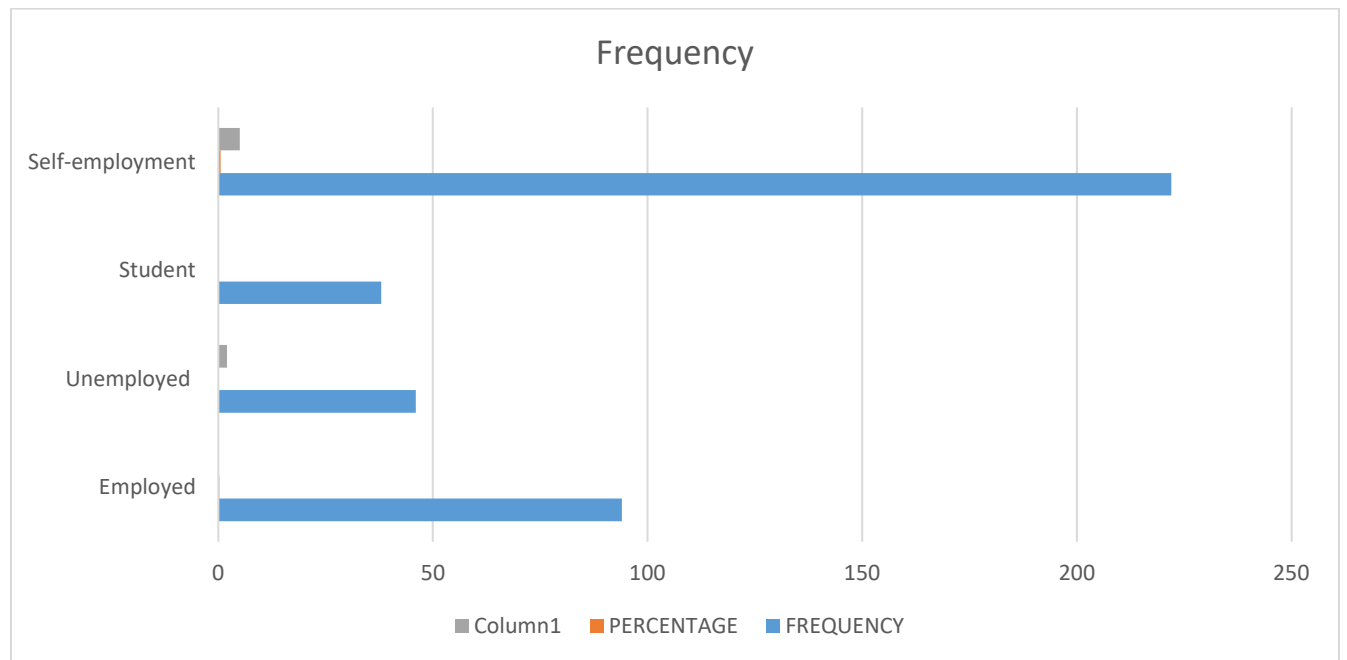


Source: Author’s fieldwork, 2024

In table 4 above, the demographic distribution of educational qualification in the study sample reveals a significant majority (61.25%) of respondents with Bachelor's degrees and higher education qualifications, followed by individuals with O' level qualifications (24%) and a smaller proportion with non-formal education (14.75%). This distribution indicates a predominance of individuals with higher levels of formal education, suggesting a potentially well-educated and informed participant pool. The high representation of individuals with Bachelor's degrees and above may imply a greater capacity for critical thinking, problem-solving, and participation in conflict management initiatives within the community. Understanding the educational background of participants is crucial for contextualizing their perspectives and contributions to conflict resolution efforts, highlighting the importance of leveraging their expertise and skills in promoting effective and sustainable peacebuilding strategies within Ivo Local Government Area.



TABLE 5: OCCUPATION



Source: Author’s fieldwork, 2024

The demographic distribution of occupation in table 5 reveals that the majority of respondents are engaged in self-employment (55.5%), followed by those who are employed (23.5%), unemployed (11.5%), and students (9.5%). This distribution suggests a diverse range of occupational backgrounds among participants, reflecting varying levels of economic independence, professional expertise, and engagement in productive activities within the community. The high representation of self-employed individuals indicates a significant proportion of entrepreneurs and small business owners who may possess valuable insights and resources relevant to conflict management and peacebuilding initiatives. Understanding the occupational diversity of participants is crucial for recognizing the different perspectives, experiences, and contributions they bring to the study, highlighting the need for inclusive approaches to conflict resolution that leverage the strengths and resources of individuals across various occupational sectors within Ivo Local Government Area.



SECTION 2

Testing of Hypothesis 1. Specific cultural factor limits women conflict management processes within Ivo Local Government Area.

Response 1: To what extent do you believe cultural factors influence women's active participation in conflict management processes in Ivo Local Government Area?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	24	6%
Slightly	50	12.5%
Moderately	116	29%
Very much	210	52.5%
Total	400	100%

Source: Author's fieldwork, 2024

Analysis:

The analysis indicates that a majority of respondents (52.5%) believe that cultural factors very much influence women's active participation in conflict management processes in Ivo Local Government Area. This suggests a widespread acknowledgment of the significant impact of cultural norms, traditions, and practices on women's roles in conflict resolution within the community. Conversely, a smaller proportion of respondents (6%) indicated that cultural factors do not influence women's participation at all. Overall, the high percentage of respondents indicating a strong influence of cultural factors underscores the importance of considering cultural dynamics in efforts to promote gender-inclusive approaches to conflict management in the region.

Response 2: Have you observed instances where cultural norms or practices limit women's involvement in conflict resolution activities?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	240	60%
No	100	25%
Not sure	60	15%
Total	400	100%



Source: Author's fieldwork, 2024

Analysis:

The analysis reveals that the majority of respondents (60%) have observed instances where cultural norms or practices limit women's involvement in conflict resolution activities. This finding suggests a prevalent recognition of cultural barriers that hinder women's active participation in conflict management processes within Ivo Local Government Area. Conversely, a smaller proportion of respondents (25%) reported not observing such instances, indicating a minority perspective. Additionally, 15% of respondents were not sure, highlighting a level of uncertainty or ambiguity regarding the influence of cultural norms on women's involvement in conflict resolution. Overall, the findings underscore the complex interplay of cultural dynamics and gender roles in shaping women's roles in conflict management within the community.

SECTION 3: Testing of Hypothesis 2:

Hypo2: Women's education in Ivo Local Government Area positively influences their engagement in conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives within the region.

Response 3: What level of impact do you think women's education has on their engagement in conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives in Ivo Local Government Area?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Low impact	80	20%
Moderate impact	160	40%
High impact	160	40%
Total	400	100%

Source: Author's fieldwork, 2024

Analysis:

The analysis indicates that respondents' perceptions regarding the impact of women's education on their engagement in conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives in Ivo Local Government Area are evenly divided. An equal proportion of respondents (40%) believe that women's education has a high impact and a moderate impact, respectively, on their engagement in conflict resolution activities. This suggests a recognition of the significant role that education plays in



empowering women and enhancing their capacity to contribute effectively to peacebuilding efforts. Additionally, a smaller proportion of respondents (20%) perceive women's education to have a low impact on their engagement in conflict resolution, indicating a minority perspective. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of education in promoting gender-inclusive approaches to conflict management and peacebuilding in the region.

Response 4: Do you believe that educated women are more likely to contribute to conflict resolution efforts compared to those with lower levels of education?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	160	40%
Agree	120	30%
Neutral	60	15%
Disagree	40	10%
Strongly disagree	20	5%
Total	400	100%

Source: O Author's fieldwork, 2024

Analysis:

The analysis reveals that a majority of respondents (40%) strongly agree that educated women are more likely to contribute to conflict resolution efforts compared to those with lower levels of education. This finding suggests a widespread acknowledgment of the positive correlation between women's education and their capacity to participate effectively in conflict resolution activities within Ivo Local Government Area. Additionally, a substantial proportion of respondents (30%) agree with this statement, further underscoring the perceived importance of education in empowering women to play active roles in peacebuilding initiatives. Conversely, smaller proportions of respondents expressed neutral (15%), disagree (10%), and strongly disagree (5%) responses, indicating varying degrees of uncertainty or dissent regarding the impact of education on women's participation in conflict resolution efforts. Overall, the findings highlight the significance of education as a catalyst for promoting gender-inclusive approaches to conflict management and peacebuilding in the region.

**SECTION 4:** Testing of hypothesis 3:**Hypo 3: Stereotypes against women hinder conflict management practices within Ivo Local Government Area.**

Response 5: In your opinion, to what extent does societal stereotype against women hinder effective conflict management in Ivo Local Government Area?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	20	5%
Slightly	40	10%
Moderately	80	20%
Very much	160	40%
Extremely	100	25%
Total	400	100%

Source: Author's fieldwork, 2024

Analysis:

The analysis indicates that the majority of respondents (40%) believe that societal stereotypes against women very much hinder effective conflict management in Ivo Local Government Area. This finding underscores the significant impact of societal attitudes and perceptions on women's ability to engage in conflict resolution processes within the community. Additionally, a substantial proportion of respondents (25%) perceive societal stereotypes to have an extreme impact on effective conflict management, further emphasizing the pervasive nature of gender biases and discrimination. Conversely, smaller proportions of respondents expressed slightly (10%) and not at all (5%) responses, indicating varying degrees of disagreement or skepticism regarding the influence of societal stereotypes on women's participation in conflict resolution efforts. Overall, the findings underscore the critical importance of challenging and addressing societal stereotypes to promote gender-inclusive approaches to conflict management and peacebuilding in the region.



Response 6: Have you personally witnessed situations where stereotypes about women negatively affected their involvement in conflict resolution activities?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	240	60%
No	120	30%
Not sure	40	10%
Total	400	100%

Source: Author's fieldwork, 2024

Analysis:

The analysis above, indicates that the majority of respondents (60%) personally witnessed situations where stereotypes about women negatively affected their involvement in conflict resolution activities. This finding underscores the prevalence of gender biases and stereotypes in influencing women's participation in conflict management processes within Ivo Local Government Area. Additionally, a significant proportion of respondents (30%) reported not witnessing such situations, indicating a minority perspective. Furthermore, 10% of respondents were unsure, highlighting a level of uncertainty or ambiguity regarding their observations of the impact of stereotypes on women's involvement in conflict resolution activities. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of addressing and challenging stereotypes to promote gender equity and inclusivity in conflict management initiatives within the community.

Responses 7: What challenges, if any, do you think women face in actively participating in conflict management processes in Ivo Local Government Area?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of representation	160	40%
Gender stereotypes	120	30%
Cultural barriers	80	20%
Lack of educational opportunities	20	5%
Other (please specify)	20	5%
Total	400	100%

Source: Author's fieldwork, 2024



Analysis:

The analysis indicates that the majority of respondents (40%) perceive lack of representation as the primary challenge faced by women in actively participating in conflict management processes in Ivo Local Government Area. This finding suggests a widespread acknowledgment of the importance of ensuring gender-balanced representation in decision-making and leadership roles within conflict resolution initiatives. Additionally, a significant proportion of respondents (30%) identified gender stereotypes as a major obstacle to women's participation in conflict management, highlighting the pervasive influence of societal attitudes and perceptions. Furthermore, 20% of respondents cited cultural barriers as a challenge, underscoring the significance of cultural norms and traditions in shaping women's roles and opportunities. A smaller proportion of respondents (5%) mentioned lack of educational opportunities as a hindrance, indicating a minority perspective. Additionally, 5% of respondents provided other unspecified challenges, suggesting a diversity of viewpoints and experiences. Overall, the findings underscore the multifaceted nature of challenges faced by women in actively participating in conflict management processes, highlighting the need for comprehensive strategies to address systemic barriers and promote gender-inclusive approaches within the community.

Response 8: **Do you believe that addressing these challenges will improve women's contributions to conflict resolution efforts?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	320	80%
No	40	10%
Not sure	40	10%
Total	400	100%

Source: Author's fieldwork, 2024



Analysis:

The analysis indicates that the majority of respondents (80%) believe that addressing the challenges faced by women will improve their contributions to conflict resolution efforts. This finding underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing systemic barriers and biases that hinder women's participation in conflict management processes within Ivo Local Government Area. Additionally, 10% of respondents expressed uncertainty (not sure) about the impact of addressing these challenges, suggesting a level of hesitation or ambiguity regarding the potential outcomes. Furthermore, a smaller proportion of respondents (10%) indicated that addressing these challenges would not improve women's contributions to conflict resolution efforts, reflecting a minority perspective. Overall, the findings highlight the perceived significance of addressing gender-based obstacles to promote more inclusive and effective conflict resolution initiatives within the community.

Conclusion

Cultural barriers, including entrenched gender stereotypes and lack of representation, emerged as significant challenges hindering women's active participation in conflict resolution activities. Equally, lack of representation was identified as a primary cultural factor, with respondents highlighting the underrepresentation of women in decision-making bodies and leadership roles as a key barrier to their engagement in conflict management processes. Respondents overwhelmingly recognized the positive impact of women's education on their ability to contribute effectively to conflict resolution efforts. Education was identified as a critical factor in empowering women, enhancing their communication and negotiation skills, and increasing their awareness of rights and responsibilities. Addressing challenges related to women's education was perceived as essential for improving their contributions to conflict resolution efforts and promoting gender-inclusive approaches within the community. Societal stereotypes against women were identified as significant barriers to their active participation in conflict management processes. Gender biases and discriminatory attitudes perpetuated harmful narratives that marginalized women's voices and limited their influence in decision-making and leadership roles. Challenging stereotypes against women was recognized as crucial for improving their



contributions to conflict resolution efforts and fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment for peacebuilding initiatives.

In conclusion, this study highlights the complex interplay of cultural factors, women's education, and stereotypes in shaping women's roles and opportunities in conflict management within Ivo Local Government Area. Specific cultural barriers, including lack of representation and gender stereotypes, hinder women's active participation in conflict resolution activities, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to address systemic inequalities. However, women's education emerges as a powerful catalyst for empowering women and enhancing their capacity to contribute effectively to peacebuilding efforts. By challenging stereotypes, promoting gender-inclusive approaches, and investing in women's education, stakeholders can create a more conducive environment for women's meaningful participation in conflict resolution and ultimately contribute to sustainable peace and development within the community.

Recommendations

The study suggested the following recommendations;

1. **Promote Gender-Inclusive Policies and Representation:** Local authorities and community leaders in Ivo local government should prioritize efforts to promote gender-balanced representation in decision-making bodies and leadership positions within conflict resolution initiatives. This includes implementing policies and programs aimed at increasing women's participation and ensuring their voices are heard in peacebuilding processes.
2. **Invest in Women's Education and Skills Development:** Stakeholders of Ivo local government should prioritize investments in education infrastructure and initiatives aimed at improving women's access to quality education and skills development opportunities. By empowering women through education, they can acquire the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to actively contribute to conflict resolution efforts and drive positive change within their communities.



3. Challenge and Address Gender Stereotypes: Community-wide awareness campaigns and educational programs should be implemented to challenge and dismantle harmful gender stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination and limit women's opportunities. By promoting positive representations of women and challenging societal norms, stakeholders can create a more inclusive and equitable environment that fosters women's meaningful participation in conflict management processes.

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