

Recent Trends in the Tribal Conflicts and Socio-Economic Development in Western Uganda

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Abstract

Original Research Article

This scientific investigation study assessed the correlation between recent trends in the tribal conflicts and socio-economic development in Western Uganda particularly in the Rwenzori Region. The systematic study employed a cross sectional survey research design with mixed paradigms (qualitative and quantitative approaches). A sample of 384 participants out of 1.057.000 parent population was selected using a table developed by Morgan & Krejcie (1970). Data was garnered utilizing researcher generated questionnaires and interview schedules and scrutinized applying Descriptive measurements and Pearson Linear Correlation Coefficient (PLCC) for quantitative statistics and content analysis was used for synthesizing qualitative information. The investigation study results came up with a significant correlation between recent trends in the tribal conflicts and socio-economic development in Western Uganda particularly in the Rwenzori Region. It was therefore concluded that the recent trends in the tribal conflicts do affect the socio-economic development in Western Uganda. Conflicts create a deplorable environment that cannot allow development to blossom. The scientific exploration study recommended that the political leadership of the Rwenzori region in Western Uganda should sit together on a round table, assess the causes of conflicts and resolve them amicably for the benefit of humanity. Generally, there is need to be cooperative with all the stakeholders in the said region so that development can be engendered.

Keywords: Recent trends in tribal conflicts, Cooperation, Development, Uganda.

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, since World War II, there has been several conflicts across the globe including; 22 interstate conflicts with over 25 battle-related deaths per year; and a big number of people have lost lives throughout this conflict period. The total number of deaths from these conflicts is estimated to be between 3 to 8 million (Gleditsch *et al.*, 2019; Bethany & Gleditsch, 2020).

In England, the notion of socio-economic development, at a global glance has existed for a span of time. Midgley (2017) explains the history of the concept of socio-economic development relating it to the social aspects with economic scenarios. He connects this history to the works of the Charity Organization Societies in England in the 1800s which resulted in poor clients getting some work to do, whereas others would be helped to start small businesses. Green (2022) observed that historically, most developing countries

have had challenged socio-economic developments due to persistent conflicts. In addition, the great revolutions of the twentieth century resulted from the economic difference and from the proletariat realizing that a small group of the elite had got almost all the rewards while the proletariat struggled and suffered most. Traditionally, crisis and conflicts as per works of Karl Marx have focused on class conflicts as being responsible for hindering socio-economic development. Relatedly, Piketty (2022) noted that there was a rise of economic inequality in the second half of the 20th century.

Mindra, Moya, Zuze, & Kadongo (2017) opined that Sub-Saharan Africa has had a long history of conflicts during the past several decades with some going as back as precolonial times although their intensity, nature, and geographical distribution have varied over time, showing the peak in the 1990's with about 35 percent of the total number of countries in the region having conflict during the 1990–99 period

(Karmakar, 2017). Following the declining global trend, the average number of countries affected by conflict in the region dropped from 15 to 9 during 2004–12 but that trend was reversed in recent years, with the number of countries in conflict reaching a peak of 17 in 2016 with conflict-related deaths totalling to at least 825,000 (over two-thirds of global conflict deaths) with high death tolls in conflicts in Rwanda, the Ethiopian-Eritrean war; and protracted violence in Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, and Sierra Leone and Uganda (Fang *et al.*, 2020).. As several of these conflicts ended in the early 2000s, the number of conflict-related deaths in the region fell sharply, reaching its lowest level of about 2,200 deaths in 2010. Resurgence in violence in recent years, however, implies an increase in conflict-related deaths, which have averaged about 14,000 a year since 2014, a significant number, though well below the average of 82,000 seen during the 1990's (Syahuka, 2018).

In the Rwenzori sub-region of Uganda, incidents of tribal violence began with the period 1919-1925 against the colonial government and they have continued to recent times. Habitats for both Bamba and Bakonzo have been, for example burnt during the clashes, lives lost, and a lot of property destroyed (Syahuka, 2016). Incidents of violence continued despite the efforts of peace building that included the various government commissions of inquiry and the involvement of the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda and inter-tribal talks between cultural leaders, with tribal clashes continuing to occur with bloodshed, animosity and incidences of internal displacements and serious impact on the socioeconomic development in the region (Kambanje, 2017).

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Data Capturing

The information used for the organized research study was collected while utilizing both primary and secondary bases of data. Primary data was garnered while using questionnaires and interview schedules to important persons in connection to the systematic research study. Supplementary information was gathered with the use of documentary records. The rational empirical study utilized a survey descriptive investigation design including qualitative and quantitative paradigms.

Amin (2005) mentioned that descriptive investigation design is usually used to echo an event and its data characteristics. The academic got a total of 384 respondents (sample size) while using a table developed by Morgan & Krejcie (1970) to belong to the inquiry study.

Sampling Methods

The scholar employed simple random sampling and purposive sampling strategies in the

inquiry organized study. The target population involved the categories like citizens, political leaders, civil servants, cultural leaders and departmental managers.

Questionnaire and Interviews

The educational researcher used an adapted questionnaire to gather information from the arena because it covers a diverse geographical universe in data coverage; it gathers much evidence within a short epoch, and offers strong guarantee in association to confidentiality.

The intellectual used a qualitative discussion schedule because it was vital to grasp the participants' subjective opinion of their experiences; unfolding the explanation of their domain, revealing their real rehearses prior to organized explanations (Karoro, 2017).

Validity and Reliability of Scientific Research Instruments

Validity of the researcher organized questionnaire was determined by utilizing content validity Index. After testing of the validity of the investigation study tools, the researcher got content validity index (CVI) of 0.78 which was by and large above 0.75 indicating that the research tool was real to elicit information essential for the plausible orderly study (Amin, 2005). However, the validity of the interview strategy was arrived at by talking to critical participants to prove the answered cross-examinations (Gibbs, 2007).

Reliability of the educational adapted questionnaire was considered using Cronbach's alpha coefficient formula looking at the examination study variables that got an alpha coefficient of value more than 0.70. Since the reliability digit obtained by the academic talked of 0.79 alpha value, it meant that the research facts gathering method was reliable to elicit data reliable for the study. Nonetheless, the reliability of the interview guides was reached at by relying on peer review mechanisms or tactics (Gibbs, 2007).

Data Analysis

Research statistical tools which were engaged to scrutinize data for this methodical inquiry study included; descriptive statistics like tables, frequencies, percentages, and inferential analyses like Pearson Linear Correlation Coefficient (PLCC) for examining quantitative data. In addition to that, Qualitative data were assessed by scientifically amalgamating information into reasonable themes or sub topics for instantaneous Interpretation along a narrative storyline (Gibbs, 2007).

RESULTS

Recent Trends in Tribal Conflict and Socio-Economic Development

This section was studied using 10 items. The results on the same were as presented in Table 1 below;

Table 1: Descriptive statistics on tribal conflicts

	F/%	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
Managers do allow conflicts to escalate in Rwenzori region	F	25	11	-	106	88	1.69
	%	10.8	4.6	-	46.2	38.5	
I am aware that conflicts are part and parcel of our lives	F	113	78	7	14	18	3.87
	%	49.2	33.8	3.1	6.2	7.7	
In my region, there is a conflict management department or a disciplinary committee that handles conflicts.	F	35	11	7	102	74	2.23
	%	23.3	10	3.1	44.6	37.5	
Managers use proper channels of communication that avoid conflicts	F	109	67	11	18	25	3.45
	%	47.7	29.2	4.6	7.7	10.8	
Reconciliation is a priority in the reconciliation procedures Rwenzori region	F	21	18	-	127	63	2.15
	%	9.2	7.7	-	55.4	27.7	
Managers of Rwenzori region have been properly trained on how to handle conflicts.	F	116	63	7	11	25	3.59
	%	50.8	27.7	3.1	7.7	10.8	
Managers of Rwenzori region do compromise in the process of reconciling the population	F	18	14	7	127	53	1.68
	%	7.7	6.2	3.1	55.4	23.1	
The conflicting parties in the Rwenzori region do show clear signs of collaboration in the process of reconciliation.	F	120	56	7	21	25	3.83
	%	52.3	24.6	3.1	9.2	10.8	

Source: Primary data

The results in Table 1 above, with respect to whether managers do allow conflicts to escalate in Rwenzori region, the majority percentage (84.7%) of disagreed with the statement while 15.3% agreed and with the low mean equal to 1.69 close to code 2 which on the scale used corresponded with disagreement, the results suggested Managers do not allow conflicts to escalate in Rwenzori region. The findings also revealed that citizens are aware that conflicts are part and parcel of our lives because the majority percentage (83%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, 13.9% of them disagreed and only 3.1% of them were neutral. The results were confirmed by the high mean equal to 3.87 and this suggested that majority of employees are aware that conflicts are part and parcel of our lives. Also, with the majority percentage (82.1%) of the respondents disagreeing and the low mean equal to 1.83, the findings suggested that in Rwenzori region, there is a conflict management department or a disciplinary committee that handles conflicts. The findings further indicated that managers use proper channels of communication that avoid conflicts because the majority percentage (76.9%) agreed with the statement and this was supported by the high mean equal to 3.45. this suggested that there is usage of proper channels of communication by leaders of Rwenzori region in order to avoid conflicts. Furthermore, with respect to whether reconciliation is a priority in the conflict management procedures of organizations in Rwenzori region, the majority percentage (83.1%) of the respondents disagreed that there is reconciliation while 16.9% agreed with the statement and with the low mean equal to 2.15 suggested that there is no reconciliation in managing conflicts in the Rwenzori region.

The results in Table 1 above, with respect to Managers of organizations in Rwenzori region have been properly trained on how to handle conflicts,

showed that cumulatively, the majority percentage (78.5%) of them agreed with the statement while 18.4% disagreed, 3.1% were neutral and with the high mean equal to 3.59 close to code 4 which on the scale used corresponded with agreement, the results suggested Managers of organizations in Rwenzori region have been properly trained on how to handle conflicts. The findings also revealed that managers of organizations in Rwenzori region do not compromise in the process of reconciling the population because the majority percentage (78.5%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 18.4% of them disagreed and only 3.1% of them were neutral. The results were confirmed by the high mean equal to 1.69 and this suggested that managers of the organizations in Rwenzori region do not compromise in the process of reconciling the employees. Also, with the majority percentage (3.83%) of the respondents agreeing and the high mean equal to 3.83, the findings suggested that the conflicting parties in the Rwenzori region do show clear signs of collaboration in the process of reconciliation.

In the interviews with Rwenzori organizations' managers to whether organizations have conflict management systems in place to handle conflicts. One organizational leader 5 stated:

"Whenever there are some intergroup cultural competitions several conflicts normally arise out of such interactions. The majority of people do not know where to run to, for a solution of the conflict situation created. However, for those people who present their cases to managers in Rwenzori region take a long time or process to arrive at a fair hearing probably due to corruption" (Organizational leader 5).

This suggested that conflicts are part and parcel of our lives. People who live together are bound to conflict with one another because they are normal human beings. And conflicts are useful, if at all, there

are functional in organizations. It further meant that the people of Rwenzori region need to be sensitized on how to handle or deal with conflicts; and political leaders at the Centre need to fight corruption that is involved in conflict management processes in Rwenzori region.

The Relationship between Recent Trends in Tribal Conflict and Socio-Economic Development in the Rwenzori region in Western Uganda

Table 2: Relationship between Recent trends in tribal conflict and socio-economic development

Correlations			
		Recent trends in tribal conflict	socio-economic development
Recent trends in tribal conflict	Pearson Correlation	1	.593**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	139	130
socio-economic development	Pearson Correlation	.593**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	139	139

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data

The study found out that Recent trends in tribal conflict significantly ($p=0.000<0.05$) influenced the socio-economic development in the Rwenzori region in Western Uganda. Also, there was a moderate positive relationship ($r=0.593$) between Recent trends in tribal conflict and socio-economic development in Rwenzori region in Western Uganda. In this context, recent trends in tribal conflicts in Rwenzori region have become eye openers in Rwenzori region in a sense that political leaders at the Centre have intensified the sensitization campaign on how to handle conflicts in Rwenzori region. Thus, such a scenario has been found to be contributing to a healthy situation of socio-economic development in the said region. This implied that the set null hypothesis was rejected saying that Recent trends in tribal conflicts have a strong bearing on socio-economic development in Uganda.

The above finding was supported by the chairman Local Council Five (LCV) at district level who was interviewed at Kasese district headquarters and generally mentioned that:

“Central government’s commitment on the welfare of its citizenry has always helped officials get information about the recent trends in tribal conflicts in Rwenzori region, through both the print and electronic media or through reports from the Resident district commissioners (RDCs). Such information is usually used to handle conflict situations better.”

This suggested that having the knowledge of recent trends in tribal conflicts in Rwenzori region has always aided the Ugandan government to enact proactive policies for the benefit of the population in the said region.

DISCUSSION

The findings showed that the relationship between recent trends in tribal conflicts and socio-economic development was statistically significant.

This implied that the recent trends in tribal conflicts really affect socio-economic development in the Rwenzori region.

This finding was in accordance with the study conducted by Anna & Kristof (2021) on Violence in Uganda, who found out that awareness of the existence of conflict issues in society, always leads to sensitization for better conflict management in any organization. However, these findings are in disagreement to a popular investigation study conducted by Jonathan (2020) on Poverty and conflict who found out that poverty of households does not allow proper rationalization of conflict issues in communities.

CONCLUSION

The recent trends in tribal conflicts generally affect the socio-economic development in the Rwenzori region in Western Uganda. Conflicts create a deplorable environment that cannot allow development to blossom especially if most of them are dysfunctional conflicts.

Implications for the Study

The scientific exploration study recommended that the political leadership of the Rwenzori region in Western Uganda should sit together on a round table, assess the causes of conflicts and resolve them amicably for the benefit of humanity. Generally, there is need to be cooperative with all the stakeholders in the said region so that development can be stimulated. The Ugandan central government should sensitize the political leadership on the best methods to deal with conflicts rationally and reduce corruption among government officials.

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