Post Conflict Psycho-Social Dilemmas: Experiences of Internally Displaced Persons from Ezza/Ezillo Communal Crisis

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Abstract

This study aimed at exploring the psychological and social impacts of the Ezza-Ezillo communal crisis on lives of the victims who experienced the crisis. To achieve the objectives of the study, a qualitative research method was adopted. Participants comprised of persons who were internally displaced by the Ezza-Ezillo communal crisis. The sample comprised of 144 respondents aged between 10-80 years. The data was generated through in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). Qualitative analysis revealed that the crisis created a sense of loss and emptiness in the lives of the crisis victims. Result also revealed that all the categories of the victims (children, youths and older people) were affected in different ways. It was further observed that the victims resorted to seeking solace in the religious worships, skills acquisition, petti trading, farming etc as part of their coping strategies. It was generally observed that the killings and displacements of family member shattered the hopes and aspirations of the victims of Ezza/Ezillo people, leaving them in a condition of psychological despair and social impotency. As findings further revealed, the crisis affected the victims' ability to concentrate, find solutions to daily problems, and interact with others. We recommend that support of different kinds was very necessary and should be provided by individuals, organizations and government to help ameliorate the untold sufferings of the victims of Ezza-Ezillo communal crisis.
Keyword: Ezza/Ezzilo, Communal Crisis, Psychological, Social

Introduction

Conflict generally is a reality of social relations. As a matter of fact, man in a socio-physical environment lives in continuous process of dependence and interdependence which often produces contradictions and conflicts.

Communal conflicts constitute one of the major recurring problems bedeviling the sociopolitical landscape of Africa. To be sure, communal conflicts are not new, particularly in

socio cultural complex societies defined by a high number of ethnic nationalities and language groups such as Nigeria. Pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria experienced inter-kingdom dynastic feuds, and inter-community conflicts (Ogban-Iyam, 2005). Communal conflict is demarcated in this study as a condition of discordance that arises from a generally allocated, used property or assets by a group(s) in a society. Communal conflicts pose a serious risk to human security, societal development and kill thousands of people each year (Sundberg, Eck, and Kreutz, 2012)

It is no doubt that there has been a history of intra-ethnic crisis experienced across Ebonyi State, Nigeria, Africa and other continents of the World. Such conflicts might be said to have become parts of human existence and many countries of the world have continually engaged in peace negotiations with the affected communities and ethnic groups. Because there exist clashes of interest among different ethnic groups and communities, conflicts, crisis and war news have flooded our communication channels.

Previous researches on communal conflicts in Nigeria have tended to focus on indigene/settler problem, religious differences, ownership of land and its resources (Albert, 2001), while Yecho (2006) observed poor economic conditions, high level of illiteracy, the quest for, and fear of domination by other groups, land disputes, market ownership, chieftaincy tussle and party politics to the central causes of communal conflicts.

Ezza/Ezillo community in Ebonyi State has experienced a major communal crisis and conflict which has claimed many lives and affected economic activities in the area. There is need to explore the psychological and social impact of this crisis on the wellbeing of the affected community members currently referred to as internally displaced person.

The Ezza-Ezillo People

Ezza and Ezillo are two communities in Ebonyi State, Southeastern Nigeria. They are both located in the Ishielu Local Government Area of the state. The state is ethnically heterogeneous, being one of the states in the Igbo heartland. Ezillo is one of the seven sub-ethnic communities in Ishielu Local Government of Ebonyi State. Ishielu L.G.A has a population of 151, 048 (NPC 2006) with one of the largest concentrations of sub-ethnic and dialectic groups in Ebonyi State. These sub-ethnic and dialectic groups are Agba, Ohofia-Agba (Ntezi dialect) Ntezi, Okpoto (Korri dialect), Ezillo (Ezillo dialect) Nkalagu, Nkalaha, Iyionu (Nkalaha), Azuinyaba (Ezza

dialect). Within some of these sub-ethnic communities are Ezza-settler-communiteseg. Ezza-Ezillo, Ezza-Nkalagu, EzzaOgboji-in Azuinyaba

Ezillo and EzzaEzillo have population of 37022 (NPC 2006), Ezillo community is made up of seven villages namely (in order of seniority) Amofia, Amaleze, Umuakpaa, Umuezeoke, Amuhu and Amorie; The Ezza-Ezillo community in made up of two villages namely Umuezeoka and Umuezeokoha. Ezillo community is located at the North Southern fringe of Ishielu LGA and shares borders with Ngbo, Iyionu and Nkalagu communities in the North, Ntezi and Okpoto in the East and Inyaba in the south. Because of the strategic location of Ezillo across the Enugu-Abakaliki Expressway, it hosts both people and infrastructural facilities such as the Ezillo Farm Settlement, and the Ezillo Regional Water Scheme etc. There are several schools of thought on the origin of the Ezillo people. However, popular documented literature traced the origin of Ezillo to MgbomEze in IshiekeIzzi in the present Ebonyi, LGA and Ikwo LGA. According to this thought, the Ezillos and their Ezzangbo/Ngbo brothers regard MgbomEze as the ancestral father of Amaleze village in Ezillo. This ancestral brotherhood accounts for the sacred relationship between EzilloandNgbo on one hand and Izzi people on the other hand. Hence the abhorrence of bloodshed between these groups (Enuke 2010).

The inter-communal interaction between the people of Ezillo and Ezza dates back to the late 1920s. The Ezillo Community, now the headquarters of Ishielu Local Government Area, had a communal conflict with Ngbo, its neighbouring community in the present-day Ohaukwu Local Government Area of the state. Because of their apparent ethnic homogeneity and myth of common descent which invariably forbade the Ezillo Community from shedding the blood of Ngbo people, Ezillo decided to lay a complaint before Ezza, generally regarded as the oldest of all Abakaliki clans. Accordingly, the Ezza came to make peace between the Ezillo and Ngbo Communities by occupying the buffer territory, which Ezillo insists is in the present-day Eguechara. On the contrary, the Ezza version of the story indicates that they were invited to fight and drive the Ngbobackwards and live in the land which is now the claimed present-daydisputed areas of Ishimkpume, Amalinze, Umuezikoha, amongst other hamlets in dispute. The two communities had lived together peacefully and had even been inter-marrying after the defeat of Ngbo. Ezza people are generally nomadic, most populous, and most evenly spread across the three geo-political zones of the state. Wherever the Ezza occupied, they would build new settlements and name such a place after themselves, hence there are places like Ezza-Ezillo, Ezza-Effium, Ezza-Akpoga, etc (Agbo, 2010:1; http://www.newswatchngr.com

13/02/2012). The Ezillo Community further holds that only twenty two Ezza men were invited to come and settle in Ezillo originally. With passage of time, however, they (the Ezzas) started inviting their kit and kin from Onueke, in the present-dayEzza South Local Government Area and began to occupy the extra portions of land that made both the Ezillo and Ezza live without a clearly defined boundary. Consequently, problems ensued and Ezillo sought for Ezza relocation to Eguechara, the place the former maintained was the original place it agreed to give to the latter. The matter was taken to an Abakaliki colonial customary court in 1955 and the court ruled in favour of Ezillo, thereby mandating the Ezza to move to Eguechara. The Ezza appealed the matter before an Abakaliki colonial district officer called Mr. Gunning who affirmed the judgment of the customary court. However, the Ezza remained in the land till 9th May, 2008, when the dispute that led to the February 19, 2010 and December 31, 2011 recrudescence of bloodbath in the area started. Although land has been identified as the primal casus belli in the origination and escalation of the protracted conflict, the Ezzas' quest for different identity is also implicated in its recrudescence. They had built churches and separate traditional leadership institutions for themselves as a means of checkmating the dominance of the Ezillo people who regarded them as settlers. For many years the Ezillo Community had complained that scholarships meant for their indigenes were taken by the Ezza people because of their positions in government both at the state and federal levels. That is why Otite (1999) argues that identity mobilization acquires significance because of the struggle for access to a variety of limited resources which could include power, chieftaincy, market or land. More often than not the negative mobilization of such identities as ethnicity, religion, language, clan or race in the pursuit of access to the limited resources further fuels conflict and violence. The Ezillo people began to see the position of the Ezzas as a threat and consequently mobilized themselves to checkmate their hegemonic disposition. The latest war started after a misunderstanding on where to erect a commercial pay phone booth broke out between an indigene of Ezillo and an Ezza man. The disagreement led to the pulling down of the booth and consequent burning of motorcycles that belonged to both parties. The problem escalated and culminated into a full-blown war with the attendant loss of innocent lives and destruction of valuable property. Although, it was settled, it resurfaced with a much greater force in January 2010, leaving hundreds of residents, unsuspecting travelers and police officers dead. The recent crisis between Ezilloand Ezza communities dubbed 'The Ezillo Mass Murder' cropped up on December 31, 2011.

Researches on communal crisis most of the time focus on economic loss and death while efforts are not made to understand the trauma experienced by victims and survivors of communal crisis. Albert (2001) asserted that, several houses, vehicles and persons were burnt in both Ife and Modakeke. Similarly, in study of communal conflict in Oju Local Government Area of Benue State, lives were lost, trees and arable crops, livestock, houses, schools, markets and hospitals were destroyed..

Therefore, research that investigates the psychosocial impact of communal conflicts on victims in Nigeria remains scanty and underexplored. Defined as the relationship between a person's fears and how he or she relates to others in a social setting, psychosocial interventions may help people and communities to alleviate the psychological wounds and repair social structures after a communal conflict. To address this knowledge gap, this study explores the psychosocial impact of communal conflicts in Ebonyi State, the case of Ezza/Ezillo. We contend that an understanding of the psychosocial impact of communal conflicts on victims is crucial for enhancing scholarly research in addition to improved clued-up schemes and/or interventions.

The general objective of this research was to explore the psychological and social consequences of being an internally displaced person by the Ezza/Ezillo crisis. This is explored through three sub-objectives.

Study Objectives

1. To determine how the lives of the internally displaced persons of the Ezza/Ezillo crisis have been shaped by the crisis.
2. To find out the category (children, adolescents, adult males, adult females) of persons mostly affected psychologically and socially.
3. To determine coping mechanisms and strategies that is useful in repairing the psychological and social damages caused by the crisis.

Method

Design

A qualitative survey approach was adopted in this study. The method was chosen to conduct this study for the following reasons. First, questions about why something works the way it does indicate the need for a clarification or theory as the answer. However, questions about

how one thing affects another call for some kind or type of measurement as the answer. Customarily, to answer "why" questions, one needs to use a qualitative research method; whereas, to answer "how much" questions, the use of a quantitative research method is needed. The research questions posed in the study are "why" questions; for this reason, the use of qualitative research methods. Again, qualitative approach was adopted as it gave the participants the latitude to express their feelings vis-à-vis their personal experiences during the Ezza/Ezillo crises.

Participants

Participants in the study comprise of internally displaced persons (Men, women and youths) between the ages of 10 years to 800 years and a total of 144 respondents were interviewed for the study, there were 67 respondents from each of the two study communities for FGD, while 10 participants (5 per community) were used for in-depth interviews . Participants were selected through Purposive sampling which enabled the research team to focus specifically on the internally displaced persons that were of interest and could likely answer the research questions. The respondents were also picked if they gave their consent to be interviewed or participate in the FGD. Also, participation in the IDIs and FGDs were voluntary and mutually exclusive. Participants were not compelled, hoodwinked or deceived to volunteer their comments. Similarly, those selected for FGD did not participate in the IDI and vice versa. Children below the age of 18 years who participated in the study did so with the consent of their parent(s).

Instrument

Data collection instruments in this study comprised of In-depth interviews (IDIs), focus group discussions (FGDs)designed to elicit information on the psychosocial impact of communal conflicts on victims; the profile of internally displaced persons andthe psychological and social consequences of being an internally displaced person as a result of theEzza/Ezillo crisis, as well as participants' personal accounts of the communal crisis.

Procedure

A total of 12 focus group discussions (six in each study area) were conducted with study participants.All 12 focus groups had an average number of eleven participants. The discussions lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. The focus group discussions brought out the collective

experience and opinion of the respondents on their experiences during the crises and after. As with the in-depth interviews, all focus group discussions were audio-recorded with the participants' consent and in their local dialect. An in-depth interview guide was used to collect data from selected 5 respondents each from the two sites like women leaders, youth leaders, church leaders and the traditional rulers, priests and pastors these people did not take part in the FGD. With the permission of the participants, all interviews were audio-recorded and notes taken by a note taker. Trained fieldworkers were used to conduct the interviews. The principal investigator (PI) and co-investigators (CIs) supervised the fieldworkers and ensured that they adhere to the protocols and to the principles and practice of research ethics.

Ethical approval

The Research Ethics Committee of Ebonyi State University reviewed and granted ethical permission to the research proposal and protocols. Overall, the study adhered strictly to the critical ethical principles of informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary participation.

Data analysis

All in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder (DVR) and were transcribed verbatim and translated into English language.

The key themes that were analyzed using data from the in-depth interviews with internally displaced persons were, the psychological and social consequences of being an internally displaced person as a result of theEzza/Ezillo crisis, the category (children, adolescents, adult males, adult females) of persons mostly affected psychologically and socially and Support from the current host community and coping mechanism. The primary focus of the analysis was to understand cross-cutting beliefs, perceptions and experiences. Data was analyzed thematically following the study objectives. We created an initial codebook based upon the stated research questions and objectives. The PI and CIs participated in the process of ensuring inter-coder reliability by coding the same 20% of transcripts, meeting to confer about and resolve discrepancies in coding and code reports were reviewed, and the team discussed and agreed on major themes across code reports.

Results

Results of the study were presented along socio-demographic and thematic lines. The socio-demographic variables include sex, age, marital status, educational attainment, occupation and religious affiliation. Thematic issues presented include impacts of the crises and internal displacement on the affected persons, the category of people mostly affected and the coping strategy of those affected by the Ezza/Ezillo crises. The table below shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Profile ofRespondents

Variables	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Sex		
Male	5638.9%	
Female	88	61.1%
Total	144	100%
Age Range (in Years)		
17 and Below22	15.3%	
18-3542	29.2%	
36-5348	33.3%	
54 and Above32	22.2%	
Total	144	100%
MaritalStatus		
Never Married	20	13.9%
Married	64	44.4%
Widowed/separated/divorced	60	41.7%
Total	144	100%
Educational Attainment		
Educated	98	68.1%
No Formal Education	46	31.9%
Total	144	100%

Occupation		
Civil/Public Service	15	10.4%
Trading	56	38.9%
Farming	42	29.2%
Artisan	10	6.9%
Unemployed	21	14.6%
Total	144	100%
Religious Affiliation		
Christianity	120	83.3%
African Traditional Religion	24	16.7%
Total	144	100%

The table above provides a summary of the socio-demographic variables of the respondents from the study communities. Obviously, more females participated in the study than males, more than half of the study participants (61.1%) were females while 38.9% were males. The reason could be that more males than females participated in the war and suffered more casualties or injuries than their female counterparts, thereby depleting the number of males were available and disposed for the study.

The study cut across four categories of people viz: children (aged 17 years and below), young adults (aged 18-35 years), middle aged people (aged 36-53 years) and older adults (aged 54 years and above). The categorization is arbitrary and purely for the purpose of this study. From the socio-demographic distribution table above, it can be seen that middle aged adults constituted the largest group (33.3%). This was followed by the young adults, those aged 18-35 years (29.2%); and then by the older adults (22.2%). Children constituted the fewest of the study participants (15.3%).

The table also highlighted the marital status of the participants. It can be seen that those who were not married constituted the fewest of the study participants, accounting for only 13.9%. This could be partly as a result of the intrinsic importance attached to marriage in the locality or partly as a result of inclusion of children in the study who were not yet of marriage age. As indicated earlier children who participated in the study did so with the consent of their parent(s).

Surprisingly, the proportion of those widowed, separated or divorced was almost equal the number of those still married to their mates, 41.7% and 44.4% respectively. The rise in the number of married people who were no longer living with their mates may suggest that the crises led to the death of many married people or that the challenges orchestrated by the crises drove some married mates into separation or divorce. It is still heartwarming to observe that the greater percentage of the participants were able to maintain their marriages despite all odds.

Similarly, as indicated in the table, more than half of the study participants (68.1%) attained at least basic education or above, this underscores the importance attached to education by people in the communities before the outbreak of the crises. Those who never had any form of formal education accounted for 31.9%. Although lower than the number of those attempted formal education, the number of those with no formal education is still quite high.

The table further shows the various economic activities the participants engaged in. 10.4% were civil/public servants. Traders were 38.9%, farmers were 29.2%, artisans were 6.9% while those unemployed were 14.6%. This underscores the enterprising sagacity of the study participants. Despite the loss they experienced more than one third are able to start up petti trading as a survival strategy, close to one third engage in farming in their various host communities.

On religious affiliation, almost all participants (83.3%) are of Christian faith in its varied denominations. Only 16.7% professed African Traditional Religion (ATR). This suggests a sharp decline in the number of those who still adhere to the ATR within the study area.

Thematic Analysis

Findings from the study were analyzed thematically. These themes were derived from the study objectives. This is to ensure a comprehensive aggregation of points raised by the participants during the IDIs and the FGDs.

(a) Effect of the Crises and Internal Displacement on the Ezza/Ezillo people

The Ezza and Ezillo people had hitherto lived a communal, peacefully and happily. There was a relatively mutual understanding among them prior to time the crises erupted. They worshiped together in the same places of worship, go to the same market and their children attended same schools. A traditional ruler of Ezillo extraction reported during a personal IDI: *"prior to the crisis we have been living together in peace that you can't even differentiate between Ezilo and Ezza man; in fact me, the traditional ruler of Ezilo married from Ezza."* Similarly, a 76-year

old man of Ezza extraction pointed out in an FGD: *we have been living together with Ezillo, inter marrying and sharing things in common".*This underscores the level of harmony and mutual understanding that existed among the Ezza and Ezillo people prior to the outbreak of the crises. However, the crises bred distrust and social dislocation among the people. A 40-year old female participant in an FGD retorted: *"we no longer inter-marry again, our people live in fear constantly".* The displacement equally affected people's livelihood severely. A 65 years old man noted during an FGD how he enjoyed his large family size before the crisis but now laments that the war has brought untold hardship, he said: "*You see, before the crisis, I had 8 children and feeding them was never a problem to me because I farm over 8 hectares of land every year. But the situation is now different. Since we got displaced by the war, we now live in a rented apartment of 2 rooms. I hardly can afford 2 parcels of land to farm. Feeding my family has put much financial and emotional stress on me".* A 40 years old father of four said in an FGD session*"nothing is left, we are finished, live has become miserable as we have lost everything".*The impact of the crises was also felt students. Many schools were destroyed and the remaining ones have become excessively overcrowded. A 15-year old student lamented during an FGD: "*Our schools are over populated because some of the school has been destroyed by the crisis and we are left with the few ones many a time we study under the tree".* Apart from physical and material impact, the IDPs reported psychological and social imbalance too. A middle aged woman noted in an FGD: *"we live in fear constantly....fear that they may come and attack us again".* Others experience social imbalance too as they experience stigmatization and segregation from their host community. A 42-year old woman reported during FGD session: *when it comes to sharing items from government to this community, they always say Ndi-gbaru-osoogu tee esokwiya (the refuges among us are not included). So even if you attend the meeting where the items are shared, you won't be part of it because they called us ndigbaruoso (refugees).* This means that the refugees (IDPs) suffered segregation and discrimination when it comes to the sharing of palliative and relief materials provided to cushion the effect of the crises. Others too suffer negative attribution. A 38-year old woman reported during an FGD session: "*if anything goes wrong, for instance, if any item is missing, they would say that it is Ndi-gbaru-osoogu (the refugees of war) that did it, it is humiliating".*

(b) Coping Strategy Strategies of the Ezza/Ezillo Internally Displaced persons (IDPs)
The Ezza/Ezillo crises wreaked havoc on the lives and livelihood of the people of the community. Many families lost their homes and economic resources. A number of the displaced persons adopted some survival strategies to enable them cope with post crises trauma.

Among such are relocation to safer areas, engaging in petti trading, learning skills, farming among others. People evacuated the affected areas and moved to safer areas to spare their lives. A respondent in an IDI observed: "*some of the people moved to Nkalagu, Ntezi, Mgbo and Oshegbe*". They took the initiative to move, carrying their loads on their head and their little ones strapped at their back. This was necessary as there was no official or government arrangement to evacuate people from the affected area. Again there was no officially designated IDP centres in Ebonyi state so, people move to extended family members and kinsmen living in a safer area. A respondent remarked: *"whoever has two rooms in their homes were encouraged to make one available to the refugees"*. Thus, family and communal social support was a veritable coping strategy or mechanism for adjustment among the IDPs.

Skills acquisition was another coping strategy. Refugees had to start life afresh, to enable them provide for themselves and their families they resorted to various skills acquisition. One respondent said: *"I joined those construction, this enable me to learn mason work through it I am able to care for my family"*. Another respondent, a female observer: "*I was a trader… I lost everything during the crisis, so I started learning tailoring to enable me provide for my family*". Thus, the crisis opened up other avenues of survival for many of the refugees. Many had to acquire skills to enable them adapt to their new life challenges. A 16-year old male respondent in an FGD related: "*times are hard really; my parents are struggling to provide for us. We are eight in number. I am the second child of my parents. I dropped out from school as a result of the war and my parents do not have money to send me to school, so I decided to learn how to fix bicycle. I will still go back to school when our conditions improve"*. So, the boy took up bicycle repair apprenticeship as a way of empowering himself with skill.

Religiosity was another coping strategy observed among the IDPs. Many of them devoted more time for religious activities. Through social interaction that such places provide, they were able to cope better with the post-crisis trauma. A 68-year old elderly man remarked during an FGD session: "*since then [since he left his place of usual residence] I never missed the morning mass, it helps me to be optimistic*". This view was shared by many other respondents. Again religious organizations provided succor to their members affected by the crises to help them cope and adjust successfully. One respondent remarked: *"the church provided us with thinsg we needed, they gave us food clothing and paid our medical bills"*.

Understandably, the Ezza/Ezillo IDPs adopted various self-help strategies to enable them cope with the post crises trauma. This self-help was facilitated by the social support system of the extended family members and religious organizations.

The Category of People Mostly Affected by Ezza/Ezillo Crises

There was divergence of views on the most affected group of people in the Ezza/Ezillo crises. While some consider the most affected group to be children and mothers, others say it is the elderly ones and some other believes it was the youths.

The crisis affected children in a number of ways. Apart from the trauma of leaving their homes and people they are used to, many children were affected educationally and even psychologically. A respondent from Ezza clan said: *"our children are no longer in school, their schools have been vandalized"*. So the crisis affected children negatively as some were forced out from school. Others are malnourished as their parents are no longer able to provide basic meals for them, this has resulted in malnutrition, morbidity and mortality among the children. Others were victims of molestation and abuse, such bizarre experience no doubt left lasting scare in the heart and mind of such children. A 55-year old woman observed during an FGD session: "*the crisis has also brought more immorality into our community because many of our young girls were forced into having illicit sex with men, it was terrible"*.

Mother were also negatively affected, especially the nursing mothers. These ones cared not only for their own safety but also that of their babies. One of such women observed: *"we ran bare foot with our babies strapped at our backs"*. This illustrates the plight of such women as the run for their life.

The youths were also negatively affected. They were the ones whose vitality and energy were exerted during the crises. A youth from Ezillo remarked: "*we used to be in the bush all through the night… it was not an easy experience"*. Others' experience was more than being in the bush at night, they sustained various degrees of injuries and even death. One respondent, who is an elderly man observed: "*our youths were injured…many of them were killed"*. So the youths faced physical harm orchestrated by the conflict others met their waterloo. On the other hand, the crisis prompted violent behavior among many youths. A respondent to an IDI observed: *the behavioral pattern of many of our youths have changed because they have been exposed to a lot of terrible things during the crisis, so they have become more violent and less patient"*. This underscores the fact that communal crises are capable of inciting people to violent behavior.

Many other youths suffered loss of jobs as their source of livelihood has been destroyed. One of such youths lamented: *"I am a university graduate but I don't have job any longer"*. This illustrates that the impact of the Ezza/Ezillo crises on the youths is diverse and multi-faceted.

The elderly appear to be the most affected group. Most of them were trapped in the crises as they had no strength to move out as others did. Most of them are physically frail and fragile that they cannot do most of the things the younger ones did. An elderly man who was one of the respondents recounted: "*when I started hearing sound of gunshot I wasn't myself, since others have left, I had to crawl to a nearby plantain tree were I hid myself despite that it is a place that people defecate*". Evidently, the crisis had enormous impacts on all categories of people affected; young, old males and females.

Discussion of findings

The long term goal of the project aimed at understanding the psychological and social consequences of being an internally displaced person as a result of the Ezza/Ezillo crisis. This main goal was achieved through other sub-objectives. Our major findings in this study as our qualitative analysis has shown suggests that there were salient negative psychological and social implications of the communal war in the lives of the internally displaced persons by the Ezza/Ezillo communal crisis.

How the Ezza/Ezillo communal crisis shaped the lives of the internally displaced persons from the crisis

Participants account of their experience of the communal crisis document a wide range of events they encountered which negatively impacted on their lives in significant manners. Negotiating life in their current environment has been difficult as our findings reveal. Just as the result of the study has shown, the people of Ezza and Ezillo were very socially potent people who were united in different cultural ties which they enjoyed before the communal crisis started. This can be seen in a comment by one of the leaders of the community who participated in this study when he said: "*So we have been living together inter marry and share things in common….*" Apparently their lives changed totally after they experienced the war because their psychological wellbeing was shattered and their social existence has become bleak. Another participant told of how negatively their lives have been shaped by the crisis when she said: "…*infact that crisis has rendered us hopeless …. [Crying]*. This suggests that there is a feeling

of hopelessness and helplessness which Kolk (2000) has already identified as an evidence of psychological trauma.

Further findings on how the lives of the internally displaced persons of Ezza /Ezillo communal crisis can be in the comments of other participants and one of such respondents revealed that the communal war shattered their sense of absoluteness when he said that *"...the crisis has caused us heart attack and there are hypertension to any little thing that happen around us"* Conditions as these is evidence of panic and traumatization which implies that the lives of these internally displaced individuals from the Ezza/Ezillo communal crisis has been shaped rather negatively owing to the pains they have experienced from the crisis.

Grief and mourning which has characterized the lives of the participants in this study has long been seen a major source of psychological depression which can be evoked by many causes (Nancy, Loey, Maartan and Son, 2003). Result of the study as illuminated above using some vignettes from the participants' responses shows that they made sense of their lives rather in a self-defeating manner owing to how the communal crisis they experienced affected their livelihoods. While this research focused on examining the psychological and the social consequences of the Ezza/Ezillo crisis on the lives of individuals who were internally displaced by this conflict, the outcome has however indicated that there exist litanies of psychosocial problems as experienced by the participants. The extent of psychological damage caused the participants experienced, can be seen in one of the comments from one participants when she said: "…*then till now we have been passing through hell"*. The above statement explains the horrendous terrible conditions that the participants in this study were exposed to by the crisis they experienced which shaped their lives in negative ways.

Result of the study further revealed that other participants had a feeling of self-devaluation as a result of the enormity of pain they felt during the communal war. One of the respondents said: *"Nothing good has this condition brought to us, we are dying of hunger just take a look at me, I am young but am looking like old woman now because of the condition we are facing here"*. This is evidence of a life shaped rather in overwhelmingly self-defeating manner as seen in the kind of comment she used to make sense of her current living.

The category (children, adolescents, adult males, adult females) of persons mostly affected psychologically and socially.

Result of this study has earlier shown that there are elements of negative psychosocial effects observed in the lives of the people who encountered the Ezza/Ezillo communal crisis. Meanwhile, just as qualitative analysis has shown from the emerging themes in the participants responses, there are categories of persons who were mostly affected. Although this is not to say that all categories of persons who experienced the crisis were less affected but as findings reveal old people and children were mostly affected. This is revealed in a comment by one of the participants who said *"…: I can say that the most affected groups are the aged and children, the youth is also affected but not to compare to women and children*" The reasons for their responses was that it was difficult for these categories of persons to run away or stand to fight the enemies. So the option left for them at that period was to freeze. This is akin to the fight, flight or freeze responses that occur when people are traumatized. The fight, flight or freeze response of the body during trauma explains the processes by which the amygdale part of the hippocampus in the brain controls fear and reactions to danger and threats to the body.

As Rees and Smith (2007) noted, the mechanism is an involuntary response of the body to fearful situations which can also be seen as part of the body's unified defence system (Levine, 1997). What happens at this period is that a person who cannot fight or flight which is running away will freeze and that is trauma. When emotional valour is totally defeated the outcome is a feeling of helplessness which explains that all the available copying mechanisms has been exhausted. The results of the data analysis in this study reveal that the old people and the children could not withstand the war. This is because they are a vulnerable group who depended on the youths and young people to escape being killed.

During the fight/flight response process as researchers has noted, the individual experiences automatic arousal (Wilson, Hansen and Li, 2011) of the sympathetic system, which is controlled by the autonomic nervous system. Just as Solomon and Heide (2005) note, this autonomic activation sends signals to the adrenal medulla to increase the output of hormones called epinephrine and norepinephrine, which are discharged in the fight or flight responses. When this process is thwarted the individual freezes, leading to trauma (Levine, 1997). It is thus undercharged energy that causes feelings of helplessness when coping mechanisms have been exhausted, and this may further lead to suppressing emotions. Rees and Smith (2007) also note that the fight or flight mechanism is shared by animals and human beings as a natural

physiological response to life-threatening events and experiences. Therefore, suffice to say that the children and old people who were seen as the mostly affected persons in the communal crisis of Ezza and Ezillocould not find a relational home to hold their weaknesses.

Coping mechanism and survival strategies

In terms of copying after the crisis, participants had limited options as the result of data analysis in this study has shown. This was primarily personal and inter-personal in nature. The personal level highlighted the negative changes that the crisis has caused in their psychosocial existence while the inter-personal, evidences the breakdown in interpersonal relationships which has occurred because of loss of their social bonds and social connections. Emerging themes from the result of the interview in this study shows that the host communities only provided support that was not enough to help the participants in this study cope with their ordeal and losses. This was seen from some of the vignettes from interviews as one of the participants said "….*we have been abandoned without any help and they keep seeing us as their slaves just because we came to live with them because of the war*". Many others also used such feeling of disappointment to tell how they have been poorly supported by the community that hosted them after the experienced the communal war. One of such comments was one who said *"…..the people we live in their place don't care about us. We are just their laborers because they will hire us for farm work and pay us small money and we least expected this from them*". Comments as those show a connection between separation, attachment and psychological trauma which affected their psychosocial wellbeing.

Separation from source of livelihood, familiar environment, social bonds and survival symbols can cause catastrophic psychological breakdown wherein comments such as the ones used by the respondents to make sense of their experience of the crisis reveal a huge sense of loss. In effect, attachment closely predicts mental health, such that separation from bonds can have implications for psychological discomfort and problems (Bowlby, 1993). What this implies is that the internally displaced persons studied in this research are faced with huge survival and coping problems which has continually disconnected their coherent integral functioning.

Conclusions

The study explored the psychological and social consequences of being an internally displaced person as a result of the Ezza/Ezillo crisis, how the Ezza/Ezillo communal crisis shaped the lives of the internally displaced persons from the crisis, the category (children, adolescents, adult males, adult females) of persons mostly affected psychologically and socially, and

Support from the current host community and coping mechanism. Negotiating life in their current environment has been difficult as our findings reveal. Just as the result of the study has shown, the people of Ezza and Ezillo were very socially potent people who were united in different cultural ties which they enjoyed before the communal crisis started. Apparently their lives changed totally after they experienced the war because their psychological wellbeing was shattered and their social existence has become bleak. Every category (children, youths, young and old) were affected negatively in varying degrees. We conclude that coping strategies as those adopted by the participants in this study was important as it helped them to navigate their horror and suffering in meaning ways.

Recommendations

We recommend that government, private individuals and communities should join hands to provide uninterrupted access to basic education, health services, employment and other physical development facilities for quality living among the internally displaced persons of Ezza/Ezillo communal crisis. This can be done through the rebuilding of those facilities destroyed during the crisis years and also, the development of new ones. This will give people a sense of belonging and an empowerment which will avert reoccurrence of violent conflicts. Skills acquisition centers should be established to train youths in the area that have not been privileged to be educated to harness their strengths and channel their energies into usable profitable ventures.

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