



A Comparative Analysis of the Impact of Niger Delta Crisis on Edo and Delta States

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ABSTRACT

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria has faced crises for over 40 years, resulting in high crime rates and increased insecurity of people, property, and investments. This study examines the impact of the regional crisis on the socioeconomic development and well-being of the inhabitants of Delta and Edo States. Employing quantitative research methods, including primary data collection instruments such as surveys and structured interviews, the study refined and codified the data for regression analysis. The findings reveal the detrimental effects of the Niger Delta crisis on the socioeconomic well-being of residents in both states, particularly in hindering access to essential needs such as clean water, quality education, and a healthy environment. Regression coefficients and modified coefficients of determination showed that residents of Delta State are more significantly affected by the crisis than those in Edo State. The study suggests enforcing international best practices in corporate social responsibility for oil and gas companies in the region. It also emphasizes the need for basic infrastructural development and adequate compensation and environmental remediation to achieve lasting peace and stability in the region.

Keywords: Comparative Analysis, Conflict Management, Multinational Corporations, Niger Delta Crisis, Youth Restiveness

INTRODUCTION

Located in the south-south, south-east, and south-west of Nigeria, the Niger Delta area is a critical region for the country's economy due to its crude oil production. Since the discovery of oil in commercial quantities at Oloibiri in 1956, oil has been the backbone of Nigeria's economy, accounting for 80% of government budgetary income and 95% of foreign exchange earnings (Davis, 2019). Nigeria's oil output contributes 3% to global oil production and 8% of the daily production of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited. However, oil exploration has brought numerous risks, including air and water pollution, turning what was expected to improve the local communities into a curse. This situation has led to demands from the local population for control over the oil wealth and compensation for the damages caused, resulting in conflicts between the Federal Government and global oil firms operating in the area.

The conflict escalated from peaceful protests to armed confrontations following the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists (Davis, 2019). This led to a series of violent demonstrations, including the murder of foreign oil workers, bombings of oil facilities, and widespread destruction of property and lives (Davis, 2019). In response, the Nigerian government launched an amnesty program in 2009 under President Musa Yar'adua and his deputy, Goodluck Jonathan. This program offered unconditional pardon in exchange for militants laying down their arms, leading to the disarmament of 26,808 militants and their reintegration into society (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2016). However, the region saw a resurgence of militancy in 2016 with new groups demanding resource control and continuing violent actions, including bombings of oil installations.

The Niger Delta region, comprising nine states—Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers—is rich in oil deposits extracted by the Nigerian government and multinational oil companies (Ajodo-Adebanjoko and Ojua, 2020). The crisis in this region has manifested in various forms, such as kidnappings, cultism, armed robberies, homicides, community conflicts,

farmer-herder clashes, oil thefts, illegal mining, and occasional direct confrontations with authorities. These events have significantly impacted the socioeconomic development of the area, particularly in Delta and Edo States. According to Ejirefe (2021), the socioeconomic development indicators of Edo and Delta States have been severely affected by abductions and farmer-herder conflicts. These states, formerly known as Bendel State, have seen declining living standards due to ongoing conflicts, kidnappings, and related crimes. Socioeconomic indicators, including economic growth, healthcare access, education, life expectancy, and availability of basic necessities, have been negatively affected.

Conflicts in the Niger Delta date back to pre-colonial times, with protests against marginalization erupting in the early 1960s (Bekoe, 2015). Nonviolent protests against environmental degradation by oil companies in the Ogoni region in the early 1990s evolved into violent militancy by 2003. This militancy was characterized by bombings, armed attacks, and hostage-taking, introducing new dimensions of crime such as cultism, oil theft, illegal refining, and kidnappings (Ibeanu, 2021). The persistent instability has driven both Nigerians and foreigners to leave the area, causing several international companies to withdraw. Despite the significant impact of the Niger Delta crisis, there has been insufficient examination of its effects on the socioeconomic well-being of residents in specific states, particularly Delta and Edo. Researchers such as Afinotan and Ojokorotu (2018), Kasomo (2021), Afinotan & Ojokorotu (2018), and Akintunde and Martins (2020) have indicated the need for a more thorough analysis of these impacts. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate how the Niger Delta crisis has affected the socioeconomic well-being of residents in Edo and Delta States.

This research aims to determine how the Niger Delta crisis, proxied by the crime rate, has affected the socioeconomic development and well-being of the inhabitants of Edo State, to ascertain the impact of the crisis on the socioeconomic development and well-being of the inhabitants of Delta State, and to identify which of these states is more significantly affected by the crisis. The research seeks to answer the following questions: To what extent has the Niger Delta crisis, as indicated by the crime rate, impacted the socioeconomic development and well-being of the inhabitants of Edo State? How has the socioeconomic development and well-being of the inhabitants of Delta State been influenced by the Niger Delta crisis? Which state, Edo or Delta, has its inhabitants' socioeconomic development and well-being more significantly affected by the crisis? This comprehensive analysis aims to provide valuable insights into the comparative impact of the Niger Delta crisis on these twin states and to suggest effective measures for mitigating its adverse effects.

The research design for this study was a cross-sectional survey, enabling the collection of quantitative information from respondents in the two states, Delta and Edo. This approach facilitated gathering data to determine the link between different elements of a crisis and aspects of socioeconomic development, as measured by the standard of living of residents in the two states. Overall, the research design provided a practical strategy for collecting empirical data to achieve the study's objectives within a set timeframe. The study focused on the residents of Delta and Edo States, with an estimated population of 10.3 million people according to the National Population Commission (NPC, 2022).

To simplify and focus the study, leaders of thought within the field were targeted, and respondents were purposefully selected from each state to ensure a representative sample. A purposive sampling technique was adopted for administering the questionnaires. Four local government areas in each state were covered, with a total of 200 respondents sampled from each state—100 respondents per local government area—resulting in a total sample size of 400 respondents. Both primary and secondary data were used for this study. Secondary data sources included pertinent textbooks, news articles, online journals, periodicals, and the internet. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires, which served as the main tool for gathering data. The questionnaire featured closed-ended questions and was divided into two sections. Section one collected demographic information such as age, educational background, number of children, length of marriage, and employment status. Section two focused on the specific objectives of the study as outlined in the aims and objectives.

To represent the relationship between socioeconomic development/well-being and the crisis/crime rate in Edo and Delta States, two simple regression models were specified. For Edo State, the model is represented by the function $SEW_{ed} = f(CR)$. The mathematical equation for this model is $SEW_{ed} = b_0 + b_1CR$, and the econometric model is $SEW_{ed} = b_0 + b_1CR_t + U_t$. In this model, SEW_{ed} represents the socioeconomic well-being of Edo State inhabitants, CR denotes the crime rate, b_0 is the constant, b_1 is the coefficient relating to the independent variable, and U_t is the stochastic term. The

apriori expectations for this model are that both b_0 and b_1 are less than zero. For Delta State, the model is represented by the function $SEW_{dt} = f(CR)$. The mathematical equation for this model is $SEW_{dt} = b_0 + b_1CR$, and the econometric model is $SEW_{dt} = b_0 + b_1CR_t + U_t$. In this model, SEW_{dt} represents the socioeconomic well-being of Delta State inhabitants, CR denotes the crime rate, b_0 is the constant, b_1 is the coefficient relating to the independent variable, and U_t is the stochastic term. The apriori expectations for this model are that both b_0 and b_1 are less than zero.

Hypotheses:

1. H01: the Niger Delta crisis has no significant impact on the socio-economic development/well-being of the inhabitants of Edo State.
2. H02: the Niger Delta crisis has no significant impact on the socio-economic development/well-being of the inhabitants of Delta State.
3. H03: the effect generated by the Niger Delta crisis on the socio-economic development/well-being of Edo and Delta states is not different.

Literature Review

Conceptual Clarification

Some concepts are explained here for better understanding.

1. **Crisis:** This is disruptive and unexpected event that threatens to harm the organization or its [stakeholders](#) or disrupt the peace of an environment.
2. **Crisis Management:** Crisis management involves dealing with an unforeseen circumstance in a manner that minimizes damages and enables the affected organization or people to recover quickly
3. **Socio-Economic Development:** This is the progressive reinforcement of a socio-economic indicators' quantitative and qualitative dimensions towards a higher level of efficiency, well-being, justice, and democracy at all levels in a society.
4. **Comparative Analysis:** Entails the comparison of variables against a background of uniformity, either actual or analytical, for the purpose of discovering casual factors that account for variations.
5. **Education:** This is the acquisition of a skill or any form of learning.
6. **Health Services:** This implies the provision of basic health services infrastructure in a community.
7. **Life Expectancy:** This is the number of years an individual is expected to live on earth.
8. **Standard of Living:** The standard of living of a community indicates the well-being of the inhabitants of the community.
9. **Niger Delta:** This comprises of the six states of South- South Geo-Political Zone, as well as the states of Imo and Abia in the South-East and Ondo State in the South-West Geo-Political Zones of Nigeria.
10. Delta State is a [state](#) in the South-South geopolitical zone and the second largest oil producing state in [Nigeria](#), after Akwa Ibom State.
11. Edo State is a [state](#) in the [South-South geopolitical zone](#) of the Federal Republic of [Nigeria](#) and one of the oil producing states.

The Concept of Socio-Economic Development

The process of social and economic development in a society is quantified by a number of indicators, including life expectancy, standard of living, Gini index, and access to healthcare and education. The ideas, methodology, tools, and applications of socio-economic development offer a critical examination of the social and economic transformation process, taking into account cultural and environmental elements such as employment, income, skill development, and education (Asadullah and Savoia, 2018). When creating social policies and economic initiatives, socio-economic development takes public concerns into account (Naiz, 2021). According to Naiz (2021), the ultimate goal of socio-economic development is to achieve a consistent enhancement in the welfare of individuals, families, communities, and society as a whole. The gradual reinforcement of a socio-economic organization's quantitative and qualitative characteristics towards a greater degree of effectiveness, well-being, fairness, and democracy at all levels is another name for socio-economic development (Mazumder and Lu, 2019).

Socio-economic development is measured by various indicators, such as GDP, life expectancy, employment rates, and literacy rates, as stated by Sachs (2020). Social and economic variables, including

income, education, work, social support, and neighborhood safety, influence the options available in a society. These factors affect our capacity to pay for housing, healthcare, and stress management. The gradual reinforcement of a socio-economic organization's quantitative and qualitative characteristics in the direction of increased effectiveness, well-being, fairness, and democracy at all levels is known as socio-economic development. Dimensions such as social development, living standards, and multidimensional poverty have been included to encompass overall socio-economic development, along with measures related to sustainable livelihood, such as improvements in income, clothing, medication, education, cooking fuel, drinking water, and infrastructure development (Strielkowski, Veinbender, Tvaronavičienė, and Lace, 2020).

When creating social policies and economic projects, socio-economic development takes public concerns into account. The long-term goal of social development is to improve people's quality of life on an individual, group, family, community, and societal level. It is the steady rise in a nation's population's economic quality of life, usually attained by building up the nation's reserves of human and physical capital and advancing its technological capabilities (Mazumder and Lu, 2019). In developing nations, it is crucial for the socio-economic well-being of the destitute to increase sustainably (UNDP, 2020). Regarding the development of the impoverished segment of society, the top seven goals of any nation among the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are no poverty, hunger alleviation, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, decent working conditions, and economic growth (Sachs, 2020). Achieving these development goals, along with sustainable expansion in their means of subsistence, will raise socio-economic status, especially in developing nations (Asadullah and Savoia, 2018; Mazumder and Lu, 2019; Montgomery and Weiss, 2021).

The Concept of Crisis Management

Crisis management involves dealing with crises in a manner that minimizes damage and enables affected entities to recover quickly (Bundy, Pfarrer, Short, and Coombs, 2017). Crises often arise from greed, power struggles, and unequal wealth distribution (Akintunde and Martins, 2020). They can take various forms, and it is recommended that organizations prepare ahead of time with a crisis management plan regardless of the nature of the crisis. Crisis management is the process by which an entity or a state deals with a disruptive and unexpected event that threatens to harm it or its stakeholders (Coombs, 2020).

One of the greatest challenges in crisis management is maintaining balance and peacemaking among conflicting parties by a third party. The effectiveness of peacemaking often depends on how an institutional mediator, such as the government, can facilitate an unbiased balance in conflict situations (Venette, 2019; Gwebu, Wang, and Wang, 2021). According to Venette (2019) and Gwebu, Wang, and Wang (2021), three common elements of a crisis are a threat to the society or organization, the element of surprise, and a short decision time. Venette (2019) further argues that a crisis is a process of transformation where the old system can no longer be maintained, indicating a need for change.

Unlike risk management, which involves assessing potential threats and finding ways to avoid them, crisis management deals with threats before, during, and after they occur. It is a discipline within the broader context of management, requiring skills and techniques to identify, assess, understand, and cope with serious situations from the moment they first occur to the point where recovery procedures start (Gwebu, Wang, and Wang, 2021). Crisis management is a situation-based management system that includes clear roles, responsibilities, and processes (Austin and Jin, 2018). The response involves actions in crisis prevention, assessment, handling, and termination. The aim is to be well prepared for crises, ensure a rapid and adequate response, maintain clear lines of reporting and communication, involve all stakeholders, and agree on rules for crisis termination (Wooten and James, 2018).

The techniques of crisis management include understanding the influence of the crisis on the organization, preventing, alleviating, and overcoming various types of crises. According to Coombs (2017) and Madigan (2020), crisis management consists of responding to both the reality and perception of crises, establishing metrics to define crisis scenarios that trigger response mechanisms, and effective communication during the response phase. For example, the Niger Delta crisis illustrates a typical social sequence in peace and security provisions, where most conflicts are community-based and require local solutions (Akintunde and Martins, 2020). Despite their local nature, these conflicts can escalate to

regional and even global security threats (Madigan, 2020).

Conflict management, occasionally referred to as incident management, requires a mindset capable of anticipating the worst-case scenario while suggesting multiple solutions. Trial and error is a valid approach, as initial defense lines may not always work. Maintaining contingency plans and being always on alert is crucial. Organizations, states, and individuals should be prepared with a rapid response plan that involves analysis, drills, and exercises (Orbe & Harris, 2022).

Crisis management in the context of peacemaking involves reconciling disputes before they escalate into violence. Historical figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. emphasized non-violent means of dispute resolution (King, 2022). Contemporary peacemaking aims to prevent conflicts from starting and bring hostile parties to agreement through peaceful means, as outlined by former United Nations Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali (1992). Effective crisis resolution balances the differences, wills, and capabilities of the disputing parties, requiring a deep understanding of their perspectives (Arbath et al., 2020).

The credibility and reputation of organizations, states, and non-state actors heavily depend on their response during crises. Effective communication and timely management are crucial for success (Farazmand and Danaeefard, 2021). Open and consistent communication throughout the hierarchy contributes to successful crisis management. Although crisis management is related to risk management, it is not accurate to say that it represents a failure of risk management, as it is impossible to entirely mitigate the chances of catastrophes, including natural disasters (Wooten and James, 2018).

Recent Development Leading to the Niger Delta Crisis and Emergence of Armed Groups in the Region

Since the Nigerian state gained its independence in 1960, there has been ongoing violence throughout the nation, which has made living there uneasy. There have been battles in the Niger Delta for more than 40 years, and violence has been the region's worst enemy. The region has experienced numerous confrontations since pre-colonial times, initially stemming from protests against injustice and more recently from the desire to control resources. Up until 2009, when the Yar'adua/Jonathan regime proclaimed amnesty and an uneasy calm took hold, all attempts to end the violence in the region had failed (Mathiason, 2014).

The Niger Delta became more militarized in the late 1990s due to ethnic disturbances and conflicts, such as those involving the Ijaw, Urhobo, and Itsekiri, and a peak in the availability of small arms and other weaponry. Local and state government officials provided financial assistance to organizations they believed would help impose their political will. Conflagrations have mostly occurred in the states of Delta, Bayelsa, and Rivers.

Warri was the center of violence in the region until 2003. Conflict, however, shifted to Port Harcourt and the surrounding towns following the violent convergence of the two largest military groups in the area: the Niger Delta Vigilantes (NDV), led by Ateke Tom, and the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), led by Mujahid Dokubo-Asari (both of whom are primarily Ijaws). The two organizations, purportedly numbering in the hundreds, overwhelm a multitude of smaller militias. Many of these groups started out as local university fraternities, but the Nigerian government labels them as "cults" (Peel, 2019). With names like Vikings, Greenlanders, Icelanders, and Klan members, the groupings have mostly taken on Western cultural connotations. Disgruntled young men from Warri, Port Harcourt, Yenagoa, and their surrounding suburbs make up the majority of each group. The smaller organizations are independent but have allied themselves with either Tom's NDV or Asari's NDPVF, who supply them with training and military assistance, and they are essentially in charge from above.

Asari, a former president of the Ijaw Youth Council, "retreated into the bush" to organize the NDPVF in 2003, with the specific objective of seizing control of the area's petroleum resources. Oil "bunkering," a procedure that involves tapping an oil pipeline and extracting the oil onto a barge, is the main way the NDPVF tried to control such resources (Ikporukpo, 2007). The Nigerian government and oil companies point out that bunkering is prohibited; militants, however, defend the practice by claiming they are being underpaid and abused by the lucrative but environmentally damaging oil sector. Profitable sales of bunkered oil are possible, mostly to locations in West Africa but also internationally. In the Delta State, bunkering is a common activity, but in this instance, the militia groups are the main offenders (James, Andrew, and Lorne, 2015). The bitter political dispute between Asari and Peter Odili, the

governor of Rivers State and financial backer of the NDPVF, appears to have resulted in the fierce conflict between the NDV and NDPVF after the state and local elections held in April 2003. The Odili administration effectively launched a paramilitary campaign against the NDPVF when it stopped providing financial assistance to the latter and started endorsing Tom's NDV in response to Asari's public criticism of the election process as being illegitimate (Maier, 2017).

Health issues for locals are another consequence of the oil spills in the Niger Delta. Environmental changes have an immediate impact on human health in the area. To lessen the harm caused by crude oil in the Niger area, a large number of legal Acts and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were founded between the early 1980s and the early 2000s (Peel, 2019). Section IV of the Nigerian Oil Pipelines Act (1990) deals with the laws pertaining to compensation for any harm inflicted upon the Nigerian populace. Under this legislation, oil companies are legally required by the judiciary to reimburse the nation for damages inflicted upon its environment and infrastructure, provided that the affected areas are inhabited by natives (Obi, 2015). Establishing itself in the area in 2000, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) sought to promote environmental alleviation, avoid pollution, and identify and eliminate any obstacles to community development. One of the earliest NGOs focused on oil spills was Clean Nigeria Associates (N.C.A.), founded in 1981. Today, fifteen oil corporations make up the N.C.A., which works to clean up any contaminants that leak into the water bodies of the Niger Delta. In addition, multilateralism is essential to the process of rebuilding the area. To stop oil traffickers from coming into the region, going out of it, or doing any kind of commerce, the United States supplies the Nigerian Navy with outfitted patrol boats. Even while prior years have seen some action, the Niger Delta still suffers from physical and environmental harm, often with little to no justifiable intervention from the oil firms.

Beginning in early 2021, militant organizations from the Niger Delta, such as the "Niger Delta People's Salvation Force" under the leadership of Asari-Dokubo, joined the Biafran separatists in southeastern Nigeria, where they were up against robbers, armed Fulani herders, and Nigerian security forces. In March 2021, Asari-Dokubo established the "Biafra Customary Government" (BCG). The Niger Delta's Igbo population joined the Biafran resistance as well. Local bandit organizations took advantage of the disturbance to undertake attacks, while the Niger Delta Avengers persisted in their targeting and destruction of pipelines (Mateos, 2021). Fischer, Halibozek, and Green (2018), as well as Farazmand and Danaeefard (2021), classified eight different types of crises: natural disasters, technological crises, confrontational crises, malevolence, organizational misdeeds, workplace violence, rumors, and terrorist attacks. The Niger Delta region has experienced several of these crises, particularly confrontational crises, malevolence, and organizational misdeeds.

Creation of the Niger Delta Development Commission

President Olusegun Obasanjo created the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 2000 to replace the Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC), which had been set up by the Babangida government in 1992. Due to OMPADEC's inherent flaws, including widespread corruption and a failure to fulfill its purpose, the NDDC was established (Omotola, 2017). The NDDC's exclusive goal upon its founding was to develop southern Nigeria's petroleum-rich Niger-Delta area (Obi and Siri, 2019). Since its inception, the NDDC has prioritized human development, ecological and environmental rehabilitation, and the construction of social and physical infrastructure (Ajodo-Adebanjoko and Ojua, 2020). The people of the Niger Delta, a densely populated region home to several minority ethnic groups, established the NDDC partly in response to their demands. These ethnic groups—the Ijaw and the Ogoni, in particular—formed organizations in the 1990s to oppose the Nigerian government and international oil corporations like Shell. According to Ajodo-Adebanjoko and Ojua (2020), the Niger Delta's minority population has persisted in voicing their agitation and demands for increased autonomy and control over the region's petroleum riches.

Overview of Edo State

Edo State is located in the Federal Republic of Nigeria's South-South geopolitical zone. The state had 3,233,366 residents as of the 2006 national population census, making it Nigeria's 24th most populated state (Koutonin, 2016). The National Population Commission (NPC) projects that the state's population will be around 4,777,000 in 2022. According to Olubakola (2020), Edo State has the 22nd

greatest landmass in Nigeria. Benin City, the capital and largest city, is the hub of the rubber industry in Nigeria and the fourth largest city overall. Established in 1991 from the ruins of Bendel State, Edo State is bordered by Ondo State to the west, Kogi State to the north, Anambra State to the east, and Delta State to the south (Obinyan, 2018).

The majority population of Edo State includes the Edo (or Bini), Esan, Ora, Akoko-Edo, Owan, and Afemai people, among others (Olubukola, 2020). Speaking Edo, the most widely spoken Edoid language in Benin City, is common. Christianity is the most prevalent religion in Edo State, introduced by Portuguese missionaries in the fifteenth century. There are also adherents of traditional faiths and Islam (Koutonin, 2016). According to Olubakola (2020), Edo, an oil-producing state, has seen an increase in violent incidents and related fatalities over the past ten years, making it one of the most violent states in the Niger Delta per capita. Concerns in Edo include demonstrations, crimes such as human trafficking, kidnappings, and domestic abuse, as well as conflicts among gangs, cults, political parties, and local communities. While violence has been reported in other areas, most incidents occur in the Oredo Local Government Area, home to Benin City (Olubukola, 2020).

Overview of Delta State

Delta State is the second-largest oil-producing state in Nigeria and is located in the South-South geopolitical zone. It was formed on August 27, 1991, from the previous Bendel State, and named after the Niger Delta. Delta State is bordered by Edo State to the north, Anambra and Rivers States to the east, Bayelsa State to the south, and the Bight of Benin to the west (Emmanuel, 2021). Initially, Delta State had 12 local government units, which were expanded to 19, and currently, there are 25 local government units. The state's economic hub is the twin city of Warri and Uvwie, while Asaba, the state capital, is situated northeast of the state along the Niger River (Arokoyo, 2020).

With an estimated population of around 5.6 million as of 2022, Delta is the twelfth most populated and 23rd largest state in terms of area out of the 36 states in Nigeria (NPC, 2022). The state is geographically split between the lowland woods of Nigeria and the mangroves of Central Africa in the coastal southwest, with a small area of the Niger Delta swamp forests in the extreme south. The River Niger and its distributary, the Forçados River, run along the eastern and southern borders of Delta. Another significant geographical feature is the River Escravos, which flows through Warri. The state's natural areas are home to endangered species such as the dwarf crocodile, Grey parrot, African fish eagle, mona monkey, and African manatee (Emmanuel, 2021).

Delta State has been severely affected by the crises in Nigeria's Niger Delta. The state's crime rate is comparable to that of Rivers State, the highest in the region (Emmanuel, 2021). Crimes in Delta State include gang and cult conflicts, criminal abductions, oil theft, illicit oil refining, militancy, and domestic violence, mostly occurring in the southern region (Arokoyo, 2020).

Delta State's ethnic groups include the Urhobo people in the delta central senatorial district; the Igbo, which include the Ika and Aniocha-Oshimili-Ukwuani sub-tribes, and parts of Isoko in the delta north senatorial district; and the Isokos, Ijaws, Itsekiris, and some Urhobos in the delta south senatorial district. Other smaller tribes like the Olukumi and Igalas are located in the delta north and have been fully absorbed into the Anioma Igbo group (Ebewore, 2020). During the pre-colonial era, the present-day Delta State was split into monarchical kingdoms such as the Kingdom of Warri and Agbor Kingdom. The British included the region in the Niger Coast Protectorate in 1884, which later became part of the Southern Nigeria Protectorate. However, colonial authority was not firmly established until the 1910s due to the Ekumeku Movement's uprisings. Notably, from 1903 to 1930, the UK leased the enclave of Forcados to France, making Delta one of the few areas in modern-day Nigeria to have been under French rule (Arokoyo, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

This study is constructed on the frustration-aggression theory. The frustration-aggression-displacement hypothesis, also known as the frustration-aggression theory, serves as the foundation for this investigation. John Dollard, Neal Miller, Leonard Doob, Orval Mowrer, and Robert Sears first proposed the frustration-aggression hypothesis in 1939 (Dollard et al., 1939). Neal Miller and Leonard Berkowitz later expanded on the idea. The theory suggests that an individual's attempts to achieve a goal are obstructed or frustrated, leading to anger. The original hypothesis (Dollard et al., 1939) claimed that

anger invariably precedes aggressiveness and that anger always leads to aggression. However, Šarić Drnas (2022) later revised the theory, proposing that frustration may lead to aggression but is not the only possible outcome. Frustration itself is seen as a cause of all violent behavior, though it is neither sufficient nor necessary for aggressiveness.

The hypothesis also aims to explain the origin of violence by examining why individuals scapegoat (Kruglanski et al., 2023). Paulhus et al (2018) defined aggressiveness as an act intended to harm an organism (or its surrogate), and frustration as the state resulting from interference with a goal-response. According to the theory, when the source of anger is not addressed, hostility shifts to a defenseless victim. For instance, a man might take out his workplace frustration on his family if he cannot confront the situation at work due to fear of losing his job.

This idea parallels the events in Nigeria's Niger Delta, where ongoing crisis and violence have resulted from the locals' deprivation, leading to poverty, human suffering, and environmental degradation connected to oil exploration. Despite criticisms from some researchers who suggested moderating factors between frustration and violence, numerous empirical investigations have supported the theory (Berkowitz, 1981; Friedman and Schustack, 2014).

Berkowitz (1989) proposed a revision to the theory, considering negative effect and individual attributions as important factors in determining whether frustration leads to aggressive behavior. Breuer and Elson (2016) conducted a thorough review and found that although empirical research examining the relationship between frustration and aggressive behaviors is growing, the number of studies explicitly mentioning the frustration-aggression hypothesis is decreasing. They suggest that the hypothesis can serve as a useful theoretical basis for research on aggressiveness and could have new implications in fields like media psychology.

Berkowitz's (1969) revised theory states that violence must occur in response to an aggressiveness stimulus. According to Berkowitz, violent behavior stems from internal factors like anger and aggressive behaviors, as well as external triggers. These ideas contribute to understanding the triggers for aggressiveness but fall short in explaining how hostile behaviors become violent stimuli (Lawrence & Leather, 2021).

In response to this critique, Berkowitz (1989) proposed that the absence of a consensus definition for frustration is the primary cause of the debate around the frustration-aggression hypothesis. According to his definition, frustration is the result of anything stopping a drive or interfering with an internal response sequence. Therefore, all reasons for aggression fall within the frustration category.

Subsequent studies have focused on improving the theory rather than refuting its accuracy. Etim & Wilfred (2023) contended that the hypothesis should differentiate between arbitrary and non-arbitrary situations, as the former reduce the aggression of reaction. The study's findings indicated that the arbitrary nature of events plays a significant role in inciting violent behavior under frustrating circumstances, with arbitrary circumstances leading to higher levels of hostility.

Building on Kruglanski et al (2023) verified that an environment's arbitrariness influences an individual's degree of aggression. However, the research also confirmed his theory that the frustration-aggression hypothesis is incomplete without considering two additional variables: social norms and the interaction with the annoying agent. Despite more than 80 years of research, some sources contend that there is scant empirical evidence in favor of it (Friedman and Schustack, 2014). Additionally, research has revealed that dissatisfied, prejudiced people are more aggressive towards everyone, acting more aggressively against out-groups they harbor prejudices against. This may explain the high crime rate in Nigeria's Niger Delta, where no one has been spared from the consequences—not even the offenders.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted using suitably coded data obtained from the questionnaire. The data were analyzed using the ordinary least square (OLS) approach, which examined how the independent variable (CR) affected the dependent variable (SEW_{Edo} for Edo State and SEW_{Delta} for Delta State). Regression models were utilized to ascertain the precise impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable in the Niger Delta. Additionally, the explanatory power of the independent variables, the significance of the estimated regression model parameters, and the model as a whole were assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2), t-score, and f-score tests.

The examination of the variations between the two outcomes from model one (Edo State) and model two (Delta State) provided the answer to the third research question regarding which state's socioeconomic well-being is more significantly affected by the crime rate.

Socio-economic wellbeing Versus crime rate in Edo state

Analysis of Regression Statistics

By employing simple regression, we were able to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The regression statistics between the independent and dependent variables are summarized in the tables 1.

Table 1. Summary of Regression Statistics, Socio-economic wellbeing Versus crime rate in Edo state

Variable / Constant	Estimated coefficients	Standard errors	Sig t
Constant	14.916657	0.977582	0.0000
Crime rate (CR)	-0.784442	0.161854	-0.0304
Adjusted R ²	0.63152		
F-ratio	6.234		Sig f =0.0308

Source: Regression Analysis

Regression Analysis Interpretation

The mathematical equation is as follows:

$$SEWed = b_0 + b_1CR$$

The information supplied in Table 1 above can be fitted into the above mathematical equation. Thus: $SEWed = 14.916657 + (-0.784442)CR$

Where:

- Sig t = (0.000) for the constant, (-0.0304) for CR
- SE = (0.977582) for the constant, (0.161854) for CR

The independent variable (CR) accounts for approximately 63% of the variance in the dependent variable (SEWed), as indicated by the adjusted coefficient of determination (R²) of 0.63152. According to the study, there is a substantial and negative correlation between socioeconomic welfare (SEWed) and the crime rate (CR). CR has a t-significant value of -0.0304, indicating a significant relationship with socioeconomic welfare since the t-sign value is less than the 0.05 significance level.

The intercept in this investigation also appears to be significant with a t-significant value of 0.0000. The F ratio is statistically significant at 0.0308. This suggests that the total amount of data included in the regression analysis, as well as the regression analysis as a whole, are reliable, and as a result, the data and the aforementioned equation fit well.

First Hypothesis

Based on the aforementioned information, the null hypothesis (H₀), which claimed that the Niger Delta crisis does not significantly affect the socioeconomic welfare of the people living in Edo State, is rejected. The alternative hypothesis (H_a), which claims that the Niger Delta crisis significantly affects the socioeconomic welfare of the people living in Edo State, is accepted.

Socio-economic wellbeing versus crime rate in Delta State

Analysis of Regression Statistics

By employing simple regression, we were able to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The regression statistics between the independent and dependent variables are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of Regression Statistics on socio-economic wellbeing versus crime rate in Delta State

Variable / Constant	Estimated coefficients	Standard errors	Sig t
Constant	4.1731706	1.053159	0.0001
Crime rate (CR)	-2.124414	0.004437	-0.022
Adjusted R ²	0.79389		
F-ratio	7.00229		Sig f= 0.0322

Source: Regression Analysis

Regression Analysis Interpretation

The mathematical equation is as follows:

$$SEWdt=b_0+b_1CR$$

The information supplied in Table 2 above can be fitted into the above mathematical equation. Thus:

$$SEWdt=4.1731706+(-2.124414)CR$$

Where:

- Sig t = (0.0001) for the constant, (0.022) for CR
- SE = (1.053159) for the constant, (0.004437) for CR

The independent variable, crime rate (CR), accounts for approximately 79% of the variance in the dependent variable, socioeconomic well-being (SEWdt), as indicated by the adjusted coefficient of determination (R²) of 0.79389. Stochastic errors account for the remaining portion of the variation.

Because the significant t value of 0.022 is less than the 0.05 significance criterion, the study concluded that there is a negative and significant link between the crime rate and socioeconomic welfare. With a significant t value of 0.0001, which is also below the 0.05 significance level, the intercept in this investigation appears to be significant.

With a significant f value of 0.0322, which is below the 0.05 significance criterion, the F ratio is statistically significant. This suggests that the total amount of data included in the regression analysis, as well as the regression analysis as a whole, is trustworthy, and as a result, the data and the aforementioned equation fit well.

Hypothesis Two

In light of the aforementioned, the null hypothesis (H₀), which claimed otherwise, is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_a), which claims that the Niger Delta crisis significantly affects the socioeconomic development or well-being of the residents of Delta State, is accepted.

Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: The effect generated by the Niger Delta crisis/crime rate on the socioeconomic development, proxied by the well-being of Edo and Delta States, are not different.

There were differing effects according to the modified coefficient of determination, which reveals how much the crime rate affects the socioeconomic well-being of residents in each state. The adjusted coefficient of determination (R²) in Edo State is 0.63152, meaning that stochastic errors account for the remaining portion of the variance in the dependent variable (SEWed), with the independent variable (CR) explaining around 63% of the variation. This suggests that Edo State's crime rate has a detrimental effect on residents' socioeconomic well-being to the tune of 63%.

However, in Delta State, the dependent variable, socioeconomic well-being (SEWdt), explains 79% of the variation, with the independent variable, crime rate (CR), accounting for the remaining portion due to stochastic errors (adjusted coefficient of determination, R², is 0.79389). This suggests a 79% negative impact of the crime rate on the socioeconomic well-being of Deltans.

In summary: a. Crime rate has a higher determination of the behavior of the socioeconomic well-being of the inhabitants of Delta State than Edo State, that is 79% compared to 63%. b. Crime rate in both states has a negative and significant impact on the socioeconomic well-being of the inhabitants. c. The impact of the crime rate on socioeconomic well-being in Delta State is higher than that of Edo State as shown by the regression coefficients (Edo State has a regression coefficient of -0.784442, while Delta

State has a regression coefficient of -2.124414).

From the above analysis, the study concludes that the crime rate has a higher negative impact on the socioeconomic well-being of the inhabitants of Delta State than Edo State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from this study reveal that the crime rate significantly slows down the socioeconomic well-being of inhabitants in both Edo and Delta States. The regression analysis showed a strong negative correlation between crime rates and socioeconomic well-being, with the adjusted R^2 value indicating that crime rates account for 63% of the variance in socioeconomic well-being in Edo State and 79% in Delta State. This suggests that crime has a more severe impact on the socioeconomic conditions in Delta State compared to Edo State.

The study highlights several socioeconomic indicators adversely affected by high crime rates, including employment, income, education, and health. High crime rates create an environment of insecurity, discouraging investment and economic activities, leading to reduced job opportunities and economic stagnation. This is evident in both states, where lower employment rates and reduced income levels contribute to widespread poverty and economic disparity (Ukoha, 2019).

Education is also significantly impacted, with high crime rates leading to school disruptions and psychological trauma among students, resulting in decreased school attendance and higher dropout rates. This negatively affects human capital development, crucial for long-term economic growth (Aluko, 2016). Health outcomes are similarly affected, with frequent violent incidents leading to physical injuries and psychological stress, straining healthcare resources and increasing healthcare costs (Nandy, 2023). The significant negative correlation between crime and socioeconomic well-being in Delta State reflects how crime exacerbates health inequalities, with vulnerable populations suffering the most from inadequate healthcare access and services (Eze, 2020).

These findings align with previous studies by Ojeifo (2018) and Afinotan and Ojajorotu (2018), which documented the adverse impacts of the Niger Delta crisis on various Nigerian states. Both studies highlighted how persistent insecurity and high crime rates hinder economic development and exacerbate poverty, reinforcing the validity of the current findings and underscoring the need for targeted interventions to address crime and its socioeconomic repercussions.

The broader socioeconomic context of the Niger Delta crisis includes historical, political, and economic grievances. The region's vast oil wealth has paradoxically led to conflict and underdevelopment. Environmental degradation from oil exploration has devastated local ecosystems, affecting agriculture and fishing, the primary livelihoods for many residents (Nriagu et al., 2016). This environmental damage has compounded poverty and fueled resentment against both the government and oil companies, leading to a cycle of violence and crime.

Politically, the Niger Delta has suffered from ineffective governance and representation, with corruption and mismanagement of oil revenues depriving local communities of essential services and infrastructure (Watts, 2019). This political disenfranchisement has fueled militancy and criminal activities as marginalized groups seek to assert control over their resources and demand justice. Economically, the reliance on oil has stunted the development of other sectors, leading to an unbalanced economy vulnerable to fluctuations in oil prices. The focus on oil has also led to the neglect of critical infrastructure and social services, further entrenching poverty and inequality (Okonta, 2020).

The detailed regression analysis provided specific insights into the impact of crime rates on these regions. In Edo State, the regression coefficient indicates a significant negative relationship between crime rates and socioeconomic well-being, with significant t-values and F-ratios underscoring the robustness of this relationship. In Delta State, the impact of crime on socioeconomic well-being is even more pronounced, with stronger negative correlations indicating that crime has a more severe effect on socioeconomic outcomes compared to Edo State.

The findings have significant implications for policy and practice. Addressing high crime rates in Edo and Delta States requires a multifaceted approach that tackles the root causes of the Niger Delta crisis. Key policy recommendations include strengthening governance and accountability, investing in economic diversification, enhancing security and law enforcement, improving social services and infrastructure, addressing environmental degradation, and engaging and empowering local communities (Omotosho, 2021). These measures can help mitigate the impact of crime and foster sustainable

socioeconomic development in the Niger Delta.

While this study provides valuable insights, it also has limitations. The cross-sectional design captures a snapshot in time but does not account for changes over time. Longitudinal studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic relationship between crime rates and socioeconomic well-being (Ikelegbe, 2019). Additionally, while the study focused on crime rates, other factors such as political instability, environmental degradation, and social capital also play crucial roles in shaping socioeconomic outcomes. Future research could adopt a more holistic approach, incorporating these variables to provide a more nuanced analysis (Ibaba, 2020).

The study underscores the significant negative impact of crime rates on the socioeconomic well-being of residents in Edo and Delta States. High crime rates hinder economic activities, reduce educational attainment, strain healthcare systems, and degrade the overall quality of life. These findings are consistent with previous research on the Niger Delta crisis, highlighting the persistent challenges faced by the region. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive and coordinated efforts to tackle the root causes of the crisis, including economic, political, and environmental factors. By implementing targeted policies and interventions, policymakers can mitigate the impact of crime and promote sustainable socioeconomic development in the Niger Delta.

CONCLUSION

The study's results indicate that the socio-economic well-being of the inhabitants of Edo and Delta States is adversely affected by the high crime rate associated with the Niger Delta crisis. However, the impact is more pronounced in Delta State compared to Edo State. Achieving genuine peace in the Niger Delta requires the involvement of all stakeholders in the peace-building process. It is crucial to understand the institutional conditions in which development actions will take place. Efforts should focus on preventing conflict escalation while addressing the interests and aspirations of the people. Sustainable peace in the region should encompass addressing poverty, environmental degradation, political, economic, and social injustices, low literacy levels, and unemployment, which are central to human security in the Niger Delta.

The recommendations based on the study's findings are as follows: Oil and gas companies should adhere to global best practices and be compelled to follow corporate social responsibility principles, including strict enforcement of the gas flaring policy. The Nigerian government should diversify the economy to reduce reliance on oil, emphasizing agriculture, mining, and manufacturing. Adequate compensation should be provided for oil spills, and contamination should be cleaned up promptly. Immediate action is needed to combat criminal gangs, militias, and oil theft to restore control over the area, including disarming militant organizations and addressing other forms of social injustice. Lastly, constructive dialogue between the government, oil companies, and the public is essential to determine the next steps in achieving lasting peace and development in the region.

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