

EFFECT OF REGIONAL CONFLICTS ON NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND UNITY OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study conducted to examine the effect of regional conflicts on consciousness and unity of Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of the resident of the five states of south easth geopolitical zone in Nigeria. The study adopted survey design, while random sampling technique was used in selecting three hundred and eighty three (383) respondents. The structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson analysis. The data was then organized, tabulated and analysed in frequency tables; and percentages with the help of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software. It was concluded that the effect of regional conflicts on Nigeria's national consciousness is an ongoing narrative that demands continuous attention and proactive measures. By fostering a climate of understanding, tolerance, and equitable development, Nigeria can transcend regional differences and strengthen its national unity, paving the way for a more prosperous and harmonious future. While it was also recommended that, a concerted effort should be made to address economic disparities between regions. Implementing policies that promote equitable distribution of resources and opportunities will alleviate tensions arising from perceived marginalization, thereby fostering a more unified nation. Also, that , the government must invest in effective communication strategies to counter divisive narratives propagated by regional conflicts. Utilizing mass media and social platforms to promote stories of national cooperation and success will help reshape public perceptions.

KEYWORDS: Effect, Regional Conflicts, National Consciousness, Unity and Nigeria

Introduction

Nigeria, a nation known for its rich cultural diversity and complex history, has faced numerous challenges in its quest for national unity. One significant factor influencing this unity is the existence of regional conflicts. To understand the current impact of regional conflicts on Nigeria's national consciousness, one must delve into the historical context of the nation. Nigeria gained independence from British rule in 1960, and since then, it has grappled with internal struggles stemming from ethnic, religious, and regional differences. These differences have often led to conflicts, hindering the development of a cohesive national identity.

Regional conflicts have exacerbated ethnic polarization in Nigeria. The country is home to over 250 ethnic groups, each with its own cultural heritage and traditions. Regional conflicts tend to deepen these ethnic fault lines, fostering a sense of "us versus them" among different groups. This hampers the development of a unified national consciousness as individuals identify more

strongly with their ethnic or regional affiliations than with the nation as a whole (Smith, 2008). According to Suberu, (2001) regional conflicts often translate into political fragmentation, with different regions vying for autonomy or dominance. The struggle for political power at the regional level can overshadow national interests, leading to a weakened sense of national consciousness. Political leaders may prioritize their regional constituencies over national unity, further perpetuating divisions. Regional conflicts contribute to economic disparities across Nigeria. On the opinion of Aigbokhan, (2000); when certain regions are plagued by conflict, economic development is stunted, hindering the overall progress of the nation. Economic imbalances can breed resentment and contribute to a lack of national unity, as citizens from marginalized regions may feel neglected by the central government. Regional conflicts can erode social cohesion by fostering distrust and animosity among different communities. The breakdown of social bonds impedes the development of a shared national identity, as citizens become more preoccupied with protecting their regional interests. This erosion of social cohesion poses a significant challenge to achieving national unity (Mustapha, 2011).

The effect of these conflicts on national consciousness is a subject of great importance, as it sheds light on the challenges and opportunities that arise from Nigeria's rich tapestry of ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. The independence from British colonial rule in 1960 brought together a multitude of ethnic groups with distinct languages, traditions, and cultural practices. The amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914 laid the foundation for a nation that would grapple with regional tensions for decades to come. The Biafran War (1967-1970) stands out as a significant moment in Nigeria's history, as the Igbo-dominated Eastern region sought secession, leading to a devastating conflict. While the war ended, the scars it left behind continued to influence regional dynamics (Smith, 2008).

The persistent regional conflicts in Nigeria have had profound implications for the development of national consciousness. One major consequence has been the emergence of ethnocentrism, where individuals identify more strongly with their ethnic or regional affiliations than with the nation as a whole. This fragmentation poses a significant challenge to the creation of a unified Nigerian identity, hindering efforts to build a cohesive society. The Niger Delta crisis, fueled by socio-economic disparities and environmental degradation, is another example of a regional conflict that has strained national unity. The struggle for control over oil resources has led to tensions between the government and local communities, exacerbating feelings of marginalization and discontent. As these regional conflicts persist, they contribute to a sense of alienation among different ethnic groups, impeding the formation of a shared national identity (Smith, 2008; Suberu, 2001; Isiugo-Abanihe, 2010).

As observed by Smith, (2011) and Obi, (2009) National consciousness, defined as the shared sense of belonging and identity among a nation's citizens, plays a crucial role in fostering unity and promoting national development. In the Nigerian context, the challenge lies in reconciling the diverse cultural and ethnic identities within the broader framework of a unified nation. Efforts to cultivate a strong national consciousness must address the root causes of regional conflicts and promote inclusivity. Government policies, educational initiatives, and cultural programs can all contribute to the development of a shared national identity. Investing in inclusive educational curricula that celebrate Nigeria's cultural diversity while emphasizing common values can bridge the gap between regional differences and cultivate a sense of national pride. Additionally, fostering a sense of civic responsibility and participation can help citizens identify with the larger national project, promoting unity and solidarity (Falola, 2018 & Mustapha, 2011).

A country with ethnic and cultural diversity like Nigeria has faced persistent challenges stemming from regional conflicts that threaten its national consciousness and unity. The recurring clashes between various ethnic groups and regions have raised concerns about the overall cohesion and solidarity of the nation. The prolonged history of inter-ethnic tensions and regional disparities has not only strained the social fabric but also has potential repercussions on the economic and political stability of the country. Understanding how these conflicts influence the collective identity and sense of unity among Nigerians is crucial for developing effective strategies to promote national integration and resilience in the face of adversity.

This research draws upon a range of academic literature, including works by Smith (1991) on national identity and Anderson (2013) on imagined communities, to explore theoretical frameworks for understanding the dynamics of national consciousness. Additionally, insights from studies on conflict resolution, such as Galtung's (1990) structural violence theory, will be employed to analyze the impact of regional conflicts on the unity of a nation. By shedding light on the nuanced interplay between regional conflicts and national consciousness, this study aims to provide valuable insights for community leaders seeking sustainable solutions to foster a stronger and more unified Nigeria. It is in this light that this study investigates the effect of regional conflicts on national consciousness and unity of Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The major purpose of this study is to examine the effect of regional conflicts on national consciousness and unity of Nigeria. Other general objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the impact of regional conflicts on national unity of Nigeria.
2. To examine the impact of regional conflicts on national consciousness of Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study sought to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. Is there significant impact of regional conflicts on national unity of Nigeria?
2. Is there significant impact of regional conflicts on national consciousness of Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were raised for this research:

1. There is no significant impact of regional conflicts on national unity of Nigeria.
2. There is no significant impact of regional conflicts on national consciousness of Nigeria.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Regional Conflicts

Regional conflicts have been a persistent feature of the global geopolitical landscape, influencing the course of history and shaping the destiny of nations. These conflicts, often characterized by political, economic, and territorial disputes, can have far-reaching

consequences, affecting not only the involved regions but also the broader international community (Smith 2011). Understanding the underlying factors contributing to regional conflicts is crucial for devising effective strategies to prevent and resolve them. Many regional conflicts have deep-rooted historical origins, with disputes over borders, resources, or sovereignty dating back centuries. Historical grievances can create a fertile ground for contemporary tensions and conflicts. Smith (2016) sees the importance of historical narratives in perpetuating regional animosities and shaping the perceptions of involved parties.

Ethnic and religious diversity within regions can be both a source of strength and a catalyst for conflict. Clashes between different ethnic or religious groups often stem from competing identities, unequal distribution of resources, or discriminatory policies. Huntington's (2013) seminal work on the clash of civilizations underscores how cultural and religious differences can fuel regional conflicts. Regions marked by political instability, weak governance, or authoritarian rule are susceptible to conflicts. The absence of inclusive political processes and institutions can lead to power struggles, rebellion, and violence. A study by Fearon and Laitin (2003) emphasizes the role of political institutions in mitigating or exacerbating regional conflicts.

Collier and Hoeffler's (2004) opined that economic disparities, whether within a country or across borders, can contribute to regional conflicts. Unequal access to resources, economic marginalization, and disparities in development can breed resentment and spark confrontations. The research went on to state that economic causes of civil wars shed light on the relationship between economic factors and regional conflicts. According to Anderson (2019) and Byman (2005) highlight consequences of regional conflicts to include;

- (i) **Humanitarian Crises:** Regional conflicts often result in humanitarian crises, with civilian populations bearing the brunt of violence, displacement, and economic collapse. It is also observed that the impact of conflict on civilian populations underscores the urgent need for international efforts to address humanitarian challenges arising from regional conflicts.
- (ii) **Global Security Threats:** Regional conflicts can have far-reaching implications for global security. They may serve as breeding grounds for terrorism, arms proliferation, and the spread of extremist ideologies. The interconnectedness of regional conflicts and global security, calling for a comprehensive approach to addressing the root causes of such conflicts.
- (iii) **Economic Consequences:** Regional conflicts disrupt economic activities, impeding trade, investment, and development. The economic consequences extend beyond the conflict zone, affecting neighboring regions and even the global economy. Through a detailed analysis of regional conflicts, Collier and Hoeffler (2002) provide insights into the economic repercussions of violence and instability.

Many scholars have made suggestion for potential solutions to regional conflicts (Bickerton, 2009; Luck, 2008; Bellamy and Williams (2010)

- (i) **Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution:** Diplomacy remains a cornerstone for resolving regional conflicts. Dialogue, negotiations, and conflict resolution mechanisms can help address underlying issues and build consensus among

involved parties. The Oslo Accords, facilitating negotiations between Israel and Palestine, serve as a prominent example of diplomatic efforts to resolve a long-standing regional.

- (ii) **International Mediation and Peacekeeping:** International organizations and peacekeeping missions play a crucial role in mitigating regional conflicts. The United Nations and regional organizations often deploy peacekeeping forces to monitor ceasefires, protect civilians, and facilitate the implementation of peace agreements. The case of UN peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina illustrates the potential of international mediation in post-conflict reconstruction.
- (iii) **Conflict Prevention Strategies:** Proactive measures to prevent conflicts from escalating are essential. Early warning systems, diplomatic interventions, and addressing root causes such as economic disparities and political instability can contribute to preventing the outbreak of regional conflicts. Bellamy and Williams (2010) explore the effectiveness of conflict prevention strategies in averting violence and promoting stability.

The concept of regional conflicts is a complex phenomenon with deep-seated causes and wide-ranging consequences. Historical grievances, ethnic and religious differences, political instability, and economic disparities all contribute to the complexity of regional conflicts. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing effective strategies to prevent and resolve such conflicts. The consequences of regional conflicts, from humanitarian crises to global security threats and economic repercussions, underscore the urgency of finding sustainable solutions. Diplomacy, international mediation, peacekeeping, and conflict prevention strategies all play integral roles in addressing regional conflicts.

Concept of National Consciousness

National consciousness is a complex concept that lies at the heart of understanding the identity, unity, and shared values within a nation. This article aims to delve into the intricate layers of national consciousness, exploring its historical roots, psychological underpinnings, and contemporary significance. The concept of national consciousness has deep historical roots, often intertwined with the emergence of nation-states and the evolution of political and cultural identities. Anderson, (2013) in his seminal work "Imagined Communities," posits that nations are socially constructed entities, and national consciousness is the result of shared imaginings and a sense of belonging among diverse individuals within a defined geographical space. Anderson argues that print capitalism, through the dissemination of newspapers and literature, played a significant role in creating a shared narrative that facilitated the development of national consciousness.

Ernest Renan, a 19th-century French philosopher, offered another perspective in his essay "What is a Nation?" Renan, (2011) argued that the essence of a nation lies not in common ethnicity or language but in a shared will to live together, a collective consent to remember and forget together. According to Renan, the continuous act of reaffirming this collective will forms the basis of national consciousness. The psychological dimension of national consciousness involves examining how individuals form a connection with their nation on an emotional and cognitive level. Social psychologists emphasize the role of social identity theory in understanding this phenomenon. Tajfel and Turner's theory in Hobsbawm, & Ranger, (2013)

posits that individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups, and a sense of belonging and self-esteem is derived from positive comparisons between the in-group (national identity) and out-group (other nations). Moreover, the concept of collective memory, as proposed by Maurice Halbwachs, contributes to the psychological understanding of national consciousness. Collective memory refers to the shared representations of the past that bind individuals together. In the context of national consciousness, the collective memory of historical events, traditions, and shared experiences serves as a unifying force that strengthens the sense of belonging to a nation (Assmann, 2012).

In the contemporary globalized world, the concept of national consciousness continues to play a crucial role in shaping political, social, and cultural landscapes. As nations navigate the challenges of an interconnected world, the question of how to balance a strong national identity with global cooperation becomes increasingly pertinent. Benedikt Korf and Timothy Raeymaekers, cited in Assmann, (2012) explore how national consciousness can be manipulated by political elites to serve their interests. They argue that the construction of a common enemy, whether internal or external, is a strategy employed by leaders to foster a sense of unity and purpose among citizens. This highlights the dynamic and often instrumental nature of national consciousness in contemporary geopolitics. Furthermore, studies such as Appadurai, A. (2016) "The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism" shed light on the impact of colonialism on national consciousness. Appadurai discusses the psychological implications of colonial rule, emphasizing how the colonized often internalize the values and norms of the colonizer, leading to a complex relationship with their own national unity.

The concept of national consciousness is a dynamic phenomenon with deep historical roots, intricate psychological underpinnings, and contemporary significance. Scholars like Anderson and Renan have provided valuable insights into the construction of national identity and the role of shared imaginings in fostering a sense of belonging. Social identity theory and collective memory contribute to our understanding of the psychological aspects of national consciousness, highlighting the role of emotions and cognition in forming a connection with one's nation. Contemporary research, such as that by Hobsbawm, & Ranger, explores how national consciousness can be manipulated for political purposes, emphasizing its instrumental nature in shaping geopolitical dynamics. Additionally, studies on the impact of colonialism, like Appadurai's work, underscore the complexities of national identity in the face of external influences. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the concept of national consciousness remains a critical lens through which we can analyze the evolving nature of identity, unity, and shared values within nations. Recognizing the multidimensional nature of national consciousness is essential for fostering a nuanced understanding of the forces that shape the collective identity of diverse societies (Gellner, 2013; Bourdieu, 2016; Assmann, 2012; Smith, 1995).

Regional Conflicts and National Unity of Nigeria

Nigeria as a diverse nation with over 250 ethnic groups, has faced numerous challenges to its national unity since gaining independence in 1960. Regional conflicts have played a significant role in shaping the country's socio-political system. Nigeria's colonial legacy left a fragmented nation with distinct regional identities. And also the Biafran War (1967-1970) marked a critical period when the southeastern region sought secession, leading to a devastating conflict. While the war ended, its repercussions continue to influence the country's unity. The impact of

regional conflicts on national unity cannot be overstressed. The scars of the Biafran War heightened ethnic consciousness and deepened mistrust among Nigeria's major ethnic groups. A study by Adewumi and Aluko (2015) published in the Journal of African History highlights the persistence of ethnic divides as a consequence of historical conflicts. In the same vein, Ojo (2018) underscores the link between regional conflicts and political instability. Regional conflicts have often translated into political instability. The struggle for power and resources among regions has fueled corruption and governance challenges. Other scholars like Ibrahim et al. (2017) and Akinola and Oyebade (2019) emphasize the economic consequences of regional conflicts, hindering national progress and unity and social implications of regional conflicts, revealing challenges in fostering a shared national identity. The impact of regional conflicts on the economy is evident in the disparities in development across regions as well as contributed to the social fragmentation, affecting societal cohesion.

Despite these challenges, Nigeria has made concerted efforts to promote national unity. Constitutional reforms, the establishment of federal character principles, and the creation of national symbols aim to foster a sense of belonging among diverse ethnic groups. The impact of regional conflicts on the national unity of Nigeria is a complex and ongoing challenge. Addressing historical grievances, promoting equitable development, and fostering inclusive governance are crucial steps toward building a more united and resilient nation. Scholars continue to explore these dynamics, providing valuable insights for policymakers and researchers alike. As Nigeria navigates its path forward, understanding the historical and contemporary impact of regional conflicts is essential for fostering a stronger, more unified nation.

Regional Conflicts and National Consciousness of Nigeria

Regional conflicts, often rooted in ethnic, religious, or resource-based tensions, have left lasting imprints on the collective psyche of the Nigerian people. To comprehend the current state of national consciousness in Nigeria, it is imperative to examine the historical roots of regional conflicts. The Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), also known as the Biafran War, stands out as a notable event in the annals of Nigeria. The conflict, primarily between the Igbo-majority secessionist state of Biafra and the Nigerian government, resulted in immense human suffering and deep-seated regional animosities.

The impacts of the Civil War continue to affect Nigeria's national consciousness, fostering a sense of regionalism. The notion of "us versus them" persists, hindering efforts to forge a cohesive national identity. Studies like Adepegba et al. (2018) emphasize how historical conflicts have contributed to the fragmentation of national consciousness, with regional loyalties often taking precedence over a unified Nigerian identity. Similarly, Okeke (2019) argue that economic disparities deepen the divide between regions, undermining the collective pursuit of national prosperity. Regional conflicts also exert a profound economic toll, impeding national development. The Niger Delta crisis, characterized by struggles over oil resources, has disrupted economic activities and fueled a sense of marginalization among the region's inhabitants.

According to Akinola (2020) the impact of regional conflicts is palpable in the ethno-religious landscape of Nigeria. Frequent clashes between ethnic and religious groups exacerbate divisions, fostering mistrust and hindering efforts to foster a shared national identity. The study further highlights how these conflicts contribute to the emergence of exclusive identities,

hindering the formation of a unified national consciousness. The effectiveness of good governance has a crucial role to play in mitigating the impact of regional conflicts on national consciousness. Ibrahim (2021) underscore the importance of inclusive policies that address regional grievances, promote social cohesion, and create a sense of belonging among diverse populations.

However, the impact of regional conflicts on the national consciousness of Nigeria is profound and multifaceted. Historical legacies, economic disparities, ethnic and religious tensions, and governance dynamics all contribute to the collective mindset of the nation. To build a stronger and more unified Nigeria, there is a pressing need for comprehensive efforts to address historical grievances, promote economic equity, and foster inclusive governance. Only through such measures can Nigeria hope to transcend the divisive legacy of regional conflicts and forge a truly cohesive national unity of Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed ex-post facto design as a method of collecting information by administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. This type of research design is useful when collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, and habits Orodho, (2009). This approach was considered most appropriate because it helped the researcher to describe, examine, record, analyze and interpret the variables that were found in the study.

Population of the study

The population of this study consisted of the resident of the five states in the south east geopolitical zone in Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The Sample sizes of 383 respondents were in the study area. The sample size was statistically determined using the sample fraction of Krejcie, and Morgan, (1970). A sample is any group on which information is obtained (Frankel et al., 2000).

Instrumentation/Research Instrument

The research instrument used for the study was self-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to obtain data on the independent and dependent variables presented in both sections A and B of the questionnaire. While section A measured the demographic data of the respondents such as name, gender, age, educational qualification and marital status, section B measured the independent variables. Likert (1932) scale was used in the study.

Procedures for Data Collection

The procedure for data collection in this study was through use of questionnaires with relatively higher degree of subjectivity thus, to minimize its effects; the researcher triangulated the answers with other sources, and also posed clear questions using simple language in the whole process.

Method of Data Analysis:

The data was then organized, tabulated and analysed in frequency tables; percentages and independent t-test analysis with the help of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software. Thus, the data obtained were analyzed using Pearson moment correlation analysis was used to analysed the hypotheses.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSES

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by sex

Sex	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
MALE	194	50.65
FEMALE	183	47.78
Total	383	100

Source, field Survey 2023

Table 1 shows that one hundred ninety four (194) respondents representing 50.65% of the sample population were male while one hundred and eighty three (183) respondents representing 47.78% of the population were female.

Table 2: Age Distribution

Age	No. of respondents	% of Percentage
20 – 25	106	27.67
26 – 30	77	20.10
31 – 35	56	14.62
36 – 40	88	22.97
41 – Above	56	14.62
Total	383	100

Source, field Survey 2023

Table 2 shows that hundred and six (106) respondents representing 27.67% of the sample were between the age bracket of 20 – 25 years, seventy seven (77) respondents each representing 20.10% were between the age bracket of 26 – 30 years, fifty six of the respondents representing 14.62% were 17% were 31 – 35 years respectively, also eighty eight (88) respondents representing 22.97% of the sample were between the age limit of 36 – 40 years and fifty six (56) respondents representing 14.62% were within the age limit of 41 and above years.

Table 3: Marital Status Distribution

Status	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Single	158	41.25
Married	134	34.98
Divorced	55	14.36
Widow/Widowers	36	9.39
Total	383	100

Source, field Survey 2023

Table 3 above shows that one hundred and fifty eight (158) respondents representing 41.25% of the sample were single, one hundred thirty four (134) respondents representing 34.98% of the sample were married, only fifty five (55) respondents representing 14.36% of the sample were divorced as well as only thirty six (36) respondents representing 9.39%

Table 4: Educational Qualification Distribution

Qualification respondents	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
WAEC/NECO	162	42.29
OND	101	26.37
HND/BSC	53	13.83
MSC	21	5.48
PHD	46	12.01
Total	383	100

Source, field Survey 2023

Table 4 shows that one hundred and sixty two (162) respondents representing 42.29% of the sample were WAEC/NECO holders, one hundred and one (101) respondents representing 26.37% were OND/NCE certificate holders; fifty three (53) respondents representing 13.83% were holders of HND/BSC certificates holders, while twenty one (21) respondents representing 5.48% were MSC certificate holders and only forty six (46) respondents representing 12.01% of the population were PHD holders.

RESEACRH QUESTIONS

Research Question One

Is there significant impact of regional conflicts on national unity of Nigeria?

Table 5: percentage analysis of the impact of regional conflicts on national unity of Nigeria

Extent	Frequency	Percentage
Very high extent	122	31.85
High extent	77	20.10
Low extent	96	25.06
Very low extent	88	22.97
Total	383	100

Source, field Survey 2023

The above table 5 present the percentage analysis of the impact of regional conflicts on national unity of Nigeria, the table show that there is very high impact of regional conflicts on national unity of Nigeria. Therefore, the result causes the research question to be significant.

Research Question Two

Is there significant impact of regional conflicts on national consciousness of Nigeria?

Table 6: Percentage analysis of the impact of regional conflicts on national consciousness of Nigeria

Extent	Frequency	Percentage
Very high extent	137	35.77
High extent	89	23.23
Low extent	78	20.36
Very low extent	79	20.62
Total	383	100

Source, field Survey 2023

The above table 6 presents the percentage analysis of the impact of regional conflicts on national consciousness of Nigeria, the table shows that there is high impact of regional conflicts on national consciousness of Nigeria. Therefore, the result causes the research question to be significant.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

Hypothesis One

There is no significant impact of regional conflicts on national unity of Nigeria.

In-order to test the hypothesis independent t-test analysis was used in comparing the mean score of the two groups.

T A B L E 7

Independent t-test analysis of the impact of regional conflicts on national unity of Nigeria

Variable	N	X	SD	t
High	234	12.01	1.30	21.45*
Low	149	15.15	0.71	

Significant at 0.05 level; df= 381; N= 383; critical t-value = 1.96

The above table 7 presents the obtained t-value as (21.45). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 level with 381 degree of freedom. The obtained t-value (21.45) was greater than the critical t-value (1.96). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is significant impact of regional conflicts on national unity of Nigeria.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant impact of regional conflicts on national consciousness of Nigeria.

In-order to test the hypothesis independent t-test analysis was used in comparing the mean score of the two groups.

TABLE 8

Independent t-test analysis of the impact of regional conflicts on national consciousness of Nigeria

Variable	N	X	SD	t
High	201	12.07	1.34	18.31*
Low	191	15.00	1.09	

Significant at 0.05 level; df= 381; N= 383; critical t-value = 1.96

The above table 8 presents the obtained t-value as (18.31). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 level with 381 degree of freedom. The obtained t-value (18.31) was greater than the critical t-value (1.96). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is significant impact of regional conflicts on national consciousness of Nigeria.

Discussion of the Findings

The result of the data analysis in table 7 is significant due to the fact that the obtained t-value (21.45) was greater than the critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 level with 381 degree of freedom. This result implies that there is significant impact of regional conflicts on national unity of Nigeria. The finding is linked with study conducted by Ojo (2018) who underscores the link between regional conflicts and political instability. Regional conflicts have often translated into

political instability. The struggle for power and resources among regions has fueled corruption and governance challenges. The significance of the result caused the null hypothesis to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

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Conclusion

In conclusion, the impact of regional conflicts on the national consciousness and unity of Nigeria is an important issue. The historical context of ethnic and regional tensions has undeniably shaped the nation's identity and collective consciousness. While instances of conflict have at times exacerbated divisions, they have also prompted crucial dialogues and efforts towards reconciliation. Nigeria's diverse ethnic and cultural landscape remains both a source of strength and a challenge, requiring a delicate balance to foster a sense of shared national unity.

The realization that the nation's progress hinges on unity and cooperation has driven efforts to bridge divides and promote inclusivity. It is imperative for the government and civil society to address the root causes of regional conflicts, addressing issues of inequality, resource distribution, and historical grievances.

Ultimately, the effect of regional conflicts on Nigeria's national consciousness is an ongoing narrative that demands continuous attention and proactive measures. By fostering a climate of understanding, tolerance, and equitable development, Nigeria can transcend regional differences and strengthen its national unity, paving the way for a more prosperous and harmonious future.

Recommendations

1. The impact of regional conflicts on the national consciousness and unity of Nigeria is a critical concern that demands immediate attention. To strengthen national cohesion, it is imperative that the government, civil society, and the media actively work towards fostering a sense of shared identity and purpose among Nigerians.
2. There is a need for comprehensive educational reforms that promote a unified national narrative while respecting and celebrating the diversity of Nigeria's regions. Introducing a standardized curriculum that incorporates the rich history, cultures, and traditions of all ethnic groups will contribute to a more inclusive sense of national pride.
3. Also, a concerted effort should be made to address economic disparities between regions. Implementing policies that promote equitable distribution of resources and opportunities will alleviate tensions arising from perceived marginalization, thereby fostering a more unified nation.

4. Moreover, the government must invest in effective communication strategies to counter divisive narratives propagated by regional conflicts. Utilizing mass media and social platforms to promote stories of national cooperation and success will help reshape public perceptions.
5. While, diplomatic initiatives should be pursued to resolve regional conflicts peacefully, emphasizing the shared interests and common goals that bind Nigerians together. By prioritizing national unity, Nigeria can navigate the challenges posed by regional conflicts and emerge stronger as a united and resilient nation.

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