Amnesty and Beyond: Local Ownership and Peacebuilding in The Niger Delta Region, Nigeria (2009-2019)

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Abstract
The study examined the local ownership and peacebuilding in the Niger Delta region using the amnesty programme as a case. Pursuing lasting peace in fragile contexts necessitates a paradigm shift, prioritizing local ownership as the linchpin of sustainable peacebuilding. Conventional top-down approaches have often yielded ephemeral results, as externally driven initiatives frequently neglect the intricate complexities of local dynamics. In contrast, empowering local stakeholders to assume ownership of peacebuilding processes fosters contextualized solutions, amplifies indigenous knowledge, and cultivates resilience. This study contends that local ownership is not merely a rhetorical flourish, but a pragmatic imperative for constructing durable peace by examining the intersection of local agency, contextual knowledge, and peacebuilding outcomes of the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta region. Also, the study underscores the significance of devolving ownership to local actors, ensuring that peacebuilding endeavours are culturally attuned, politically astute, and sustainably effective. The study adopted Conflict Transformation Theory as its theoretical construct. The study relied on primary and secondary methods for its data-gathering techniques. The primary source relied on survey research design and interview techniques. The secondary data relied on journals, newspapers, and books. The study revealed a correlation between local ownership and peacebuilding in post-conflict reconstruction. The study recommends amongst others that policymakers and practitioners continue to foster inter-community dialogue and cooperation, which includes establishing community-led dialogue and encouraging collaborative economic development projects, among others.

Key words: amnesty programme, conflict, local ownership, local participation, Niger Delta region, peacebuilding

1. Introduction

The societal fabric is characterized by incessant friction and struggle among competing individuals, groups, and divergent interests (Hobbes, 1651). This inherent tension does not necessarily imply violence, but rather manifests through various forms of expression, such as labor union demands, political party disputes, and the struggle for supremacy among religious, political, and social entities (Marx and Engels, 1848). From a philosophical perspective, it is imperative to acknowledge the complexity and multifaceted nature of human and societal problems (Plato, 380

BCE). Philosophy provides a rational framework for understanding and addressing these issues, enabling individuals to devise informed and logical solutions (Aristotle, 350 BCE).

Nigeria's complex socio-political landscape, characterized by diverse ethnic groups, has been plagued by internal security challenges for decades (Hudsted, 2022). The country's population is fragmented along religious, linguistic, and tribal lines, creating a volatile environment conducive to conflicts. Historically, Nigeria has faced numerous national security threats, including ethnic and religious clashes, armed robbery, terrorism, kidnapping, and violent extremism (Wodu, 2021). Notably, research suggests that environmental degradation, land policies, and political manipulation play a significant role in exacerbating these conflicts, rather than solely ethnic or religious differences (Ogele, 2021; Duerksen, 2021; Okpara et al., 2015).

The southern region of Nigeria faces a complex web of challenges, including secessionist agitations, armed militancy, kidnapping, oil theft, and illegal refining, which have far-reaching consequences for economic development, social cohesion, and public confidence in the country's security. These conflicts have given rise to various ethnic groups, such as the Niger Delta Militants, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), and the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), among others. Specific political and economic variables such as marginalization, resource control, deprivation, poverty, ungoverned spaces, under-policing, the proliferation of arms, porous borders and lack of political will are responsible for this nefarious phenomenon in the Niger-Delta region. This worrisome situation violates the fundamental responsibility of government; the protection of Nigerian lives and properties, as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended); Section 14 (2) (b), provides that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government" (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 as amended; Chapter 2, p., 28).

Given the above, former President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's made proclamation of amnesty on militants involved in the Niger Delta agitation. Subsequent, amnesty programme was initiated aimed at addressing the longstanding issues of violence and militancy in the region. Launched in 2009, the programme was designed to provide a window of opportunity for militants to surrender their arms and reintegrate into society. The programme was structured into three phases: disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration. The first phase involved the surrender of arms and ammunition by militants, while the second phase focused on the demobilization of militant groups. The final phase aimed at reintegrating former militants into society through vocational training, education, and job placement.

Nevertheless, the engagement of Niger Delta local actors in peacebuilding initiatives in the region was crucial, especially in the conflict resolution of this nature (Hancock, 2017). This is predicated on the fact that the conflict was environment degradation that adversely impacted the locals and the reason for arms struggle in the region. Lemay-Hébert and Kappler (2016) argued that inclusivity and leveraging of local actors and stakeholder-driven approaches can foster sustainable peace from within. Given the above, the paper examined the relationship between the local ownership and peacebuilding in post-conflict Niger Delta communities. Also, it examined the relevance of the locals in peacebuilding in the post conflict-reconstruction in the Niger Delta region.

2.0 Conceptual Review

2.1 Amnesty: Amnesty, a Latin word meaning "forgetfulness" or "pardon," is a complex and multifaceted concept that has been employed in various contexts to promote reconciliation, peacebuilding, and transitional justice (Shelton, 2005). There are different types of amnesty, including blanket amnesty, conditional amnesty, and reparative amnesty (Mallinder, 2008). Blanket amnesty involves a general pardon for all individuals involved in a conflict, without any conditions or exceptions. Conditional amnesty, on the other hand, requires individuals to meet certain conditions, such as confessing their crimes or cooperating with authorities, in order to receive a pardon. Reparative amnesty involves providing reparations or compensation to victims of human rights abuses in exchange for a pardon.

Amnesty can be a useful tool for promoting reconciliation and peacebuilding in post-conflict societies. However, its effectiveness depends on various factors, including the type of amnesty employed, the level of participation and buy-in from stakeholders, and the extent to which the underlying causes of the conflict are addressed. The Nigerian government's amnesty program for militants in the Niger Delta region is a notable example of conditional amnesty (Ukiwo, 2011). Launched in 2009, the program aimed to reduce violence and promote peace in the region by offering amnesty to militants who agreed to surrender their arms and cooperate with the government. The programme also provided training and employment opportunities for former militants, as well as infrastructure development projects for the region. The Nigerian amnesty program has been credited with reducing violence in the Niger Delta region and promoting peacebuilding (Ibaba, 2015). However, critics have argued that the programme did not address the underlying causes of the conflict, such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation (Okonta, 2012). Furthermore, the program has been criticized for failing to provide adequate reparations to victims of human rights abuses.

2.2 Local Ownership: The concept of "local" is often defined by the proximity of individuals to the crisis or conflict, as well as their susceptibility to the consequences of decisions and actions taken (Saleem, as cited in Principles for Peace, 2021). However, this proximity is not solely determined by spatial boundaries, but also by the social, economic, political, and cultural ties that connect people to a particular place and community. The notion of "local ownership" has been a cornerstone of development aid since the 1990s. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) emphasized the importance of local ownership in 1996, advocating for an inclusive approach that respects local stakeholders' ownership of the development process (OECD-DAC, 1996).

The "local ownership" gained prominence in peace operations in 2001, when UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan emphasized that lasting peace and development can only be achieved through the efforts of the local population themselves (United Nations, 2001). Annan's statement underscored the importance of facilitating local-led processes to dismantle structures of violence and foster conditions conducive to durable peace and sustainable development. This perspective was reinforced by the Joint Utstein Study, a seminal document at the time, which advocated for

partner countries to take the lead in peacebuilding efforts, particularly in post-conflict contexts (GTZ, 2003). By prioritizing local ownership, peacebuilding initiatives can better address the specific needs and concerns of local populations, ultimately contributing to more sustainable and effective peacebuilding outcomes.

Local ownership has become a ubiquitous principle in post-conflict reform, frequently cited as a benchmark for success in international interventions. However, globally assisted police reforms often adopt a top-down approach, which can lead to host country leaders prioritizing upward accountability over downward accountability to local communities (McCann, 2015). This can result in the exclusion of locally identified problems and solutions, ultimately undermining local ownership of reform. The notion of local ownership is often oversimplified, with its meaning assumed to be universally understood. In reality, it is a complex and ambiguous concept that requires a nuanced approach. Rather than merely securing local buy-in, local ownership should entail the active participation of diverse governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in strategic decision-making and daily activities (Bekou and Hills, 2014). This collaborative approach enables local actors to assume responsibility for the reform process from its inception. To achieve genuine local ownership, it is essential to adopt a more flexible and adaptive approach, moving away from rigid blueprint models and embracing piecemeal, bottom-up strategies (McCann, 2015). By doing so, international interventions can foster a more inclusive and sustainable reform process.

The local ownership emphasizes the importance of granting decision-making authority to individuals and communities directly impacted by a particular issue. This decentralized approach enables stakeholders to take ownership of decisions affecting their lives, fostering empowerment, participation, and accountability (McCann, 2015). Local ownership also facilitates a deeper understanding of community-specific needs and dynamics, allowing for more effective and targeted solutions. In the context of development projects, local ownership is widely recognized as a critical factor in ensuring the sustainability and success of initiatives (Baser & Morgan, 2008). By empowering local communities to drive their own development, projects can be tailored to the specific context, increasing the likelihood of long-term impact and positive change.

2.3 Peacebuilding: The concept of "peacebuilding" has its roots in the field of peace studies, dating back over three decades. Johan Galtung's seminal work, "Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding" (1969), introduced the term and laid the foundation for modern peacebuilding theory. Galtung argued that peace requires a structural framework that addresses the underlying causes of conflict and provides alternatives to violence (Galtung, 1969). He emphasized the need to create mechanisms that promote sustainable peace by leveraging local capacities for conflict management and resolution. Galtung's pioneering work has had a lasting impact on the development of peacebuilding theory and practice. His ideas on addressing the root causes of conflict and fostering indigenous peacebuilding capacities remain central to contemporary peacebuilding efforts (Lederach, 1997; Anderson and Olson, 2003).

John Paul Lederach, a prominent scholar in peace studies, has advocated for a broader understanding of peacebuilding. According to Lederach, peacebuilding encompasses a comprehensive range of processes, approaches, and stages necessary to transform conflict into sustainable, peaceful relationships (Lederach, 1997). This concept extends beyond post-conflict reconstruction, incorporating a wide array of activities that precede and follow formal peace agreements. Lederach's framework views peace as a dynamic social construct, rather than a static condition or stage in time. Conflict transformation, in this context, is a holistic and multi-faceted approach to managing violent conflict across all its phases (Lederach, 1997). This process involves an ongoing transformation from negative to positive relationships, behaviors, attitudes, and structures. A comprehensive approach to peacebuilding must acknowledge the complex, multi-dimensional nature of human experience and rely on broad social participation (Bloomfield, 2006). The ultimate goal is to foster new patterns, processes, and structures through the cultivation of relationships (Lederach, 2003).

Peacebuilding is a multifaceted process aimed at resolving conflicts and preventing future disputes by fostering open communication between conflicting parties and establishing a sustainable peaceful environment (Lederach, 1997). Peacemaking, which involves resolving conflicts and promoting peace, can occur at any stage of a conflict, regardless of its level of escalation (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). The primary objectives of peacebuilding initiatives include preventing disputes from escalating, identifying potential concerns before they become conflicts, and developing long-term plans to maintain a peaceful environment (Moore, 2013). To achieve these goals, peace strategists collaborate with local organizations and governments to analyze the root causes of conflict, assess the impact of war on affected areas, and anticipate potential opposition to peace initiatives. Effective peacebuilding also requires promoting justice, equality, and respect for human rights as a foundation for sustainable peace (United Nations, 2015). This proactive and ongoing process aims to build resilience against conflicts and create a foundation for lasting peace in communities and societies.

3.0 Theoretical underpinning

The study adopted Conflict Transformation Theory as its theoretical construct. The theory was developed by John Paul Lederach in 1996. This theoretical approach seeks to address the root causes of conflict by transforming the underlying conditions and relationships that contribute to conflict, rather than merely managing its symptoms (Lederach, 1997). Conflict Transformation Theory posits that conflicts often stem from deeper structural, cultural, and psychological issues that must be addressed to achieve sustainable peace (Lederach, 1995). This perspective critiques traditional conflict resolution approaches, which tend to focus on resolving immediate issues in dispute, neglecting the underlying causes of conflict and thereby failing to foster lasting peace (Lederach, 1995).

Conflict transformation theory has been widely applied in diverse contexts globally, ranging from international conflicts to community-level disputes. Practitioners, policymakers, and scholars have utilized this framework to develop innovative and sustainable approaches to conflict resolution (Lederach, 2003). Conflict transformation is a multifaceted process that extends beyond dispute resolution by addressing underlying issues and transforming relationships. This approach focuses

on altering the structural and dynamic aspects of a conflict to foster understanding, collaboration, and mutual respect, rather than merely seeking a compromise or resolution (Lederach, 1997). By transforming the underlying conditions and relationships that give rise to conflict, conflict transformation theory offers a powerful framework for conflict resolution. While acknowledging its limitations, this approach has the potential to create lasting peace and promote social change in conflict-affected areas (Lederach, 2003).

Linking this theory to the study is predicated on the premise of transforming the underlying relationships and structures that perpetuate conflict in the Niger Delta region, ultimately leading to the amnesty programme. Rather than merely addressing the symptoms, this approach acknowledges that conflicts are deeply entrenched in social, economic, and political inequalities. Research on local ownership and peacebuilding in the Niger Delta region underscores the significance of community-led initiatives in promoting sustainable peace. Empirical evidence suggests that local peace committees, traditional authorities, and community-based organizations have played pivotal roles in mediating conflicts, facilitating dialogue, and rebuilding social cohesion.

4.0 Methodology

This study adopted the triangulation of data sources which allows researchers to focus on the use of primary and secondary data to examine or investigate a particular phenomenon. The data collected for this study was through 267 questionnaires and textual documents. The questionnaires were structured and administered to respondents on the following arrangements such as the nexus between local ownership and peace building in post conflict societies; factors responsible for, impact and challenges of the Amnesty Programme in the Niger Delta region; and the use of published and unpublished books, journals, newspapers, internet sources, among others were materials used in content analysis.

5.0 Data Presentation

The study targeted a sample of 267 indigenes of the three focal states and the sample size was drawn using the Taro Yemen's sampling techniques. A response rate of 82.0 percent was recorded, this implies that 219 questionnaires administered were retrieved. This response rate was found to be appropriate, compared to previous studies done in the same area nationally and internationally. The study adopted the use of drop and pick method, personal visits, and follow-up telephone calls and e–mail communication to the respondents, explaining the purpose of the study and its usefulness to the management improved the response rate. However, 17.9 percent of the questionnaires were not retrieved, this represents 48 questionnaires, and 7 questionnaires were invalid due to error, which represent 2.6 percent. The table has the details of the response rate.

Table 5.1 Questionnaire Administered and Retrieved

S/N	Response rate	Frequency	Percentage
1	Questionnaire administered	267	-
2	Number retrieved and used	212	79.4
3	Number not retrieved	48	17.9
4.	Number Invalid	7	2.6

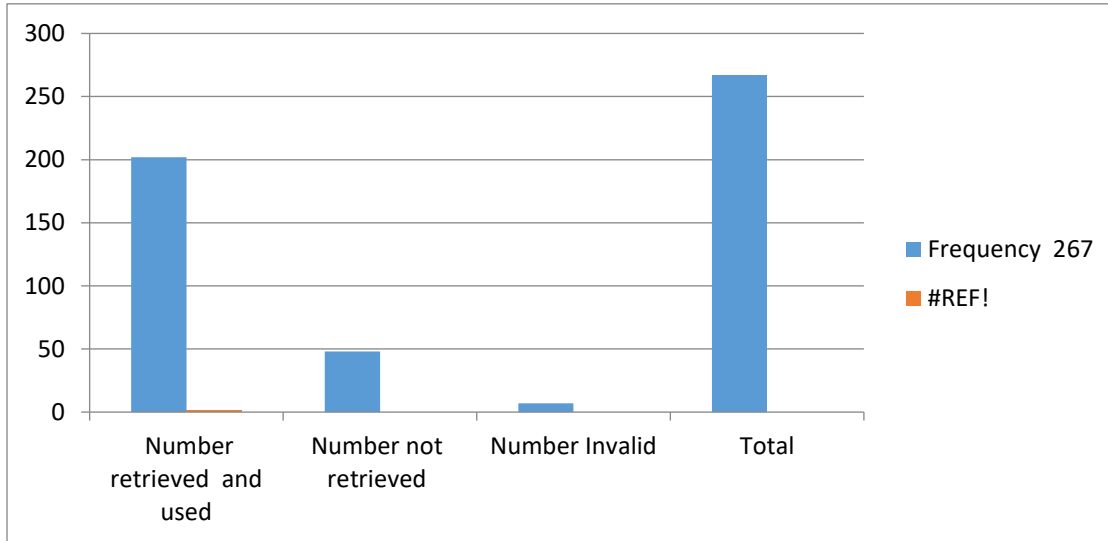| 5 | Total | 267 | 100 |

Source: Authors Research Desk, 2025.

Figure: **Bar Chart Showing Questionnaires Administered and Retrieved**

The table 5.1 and figure 5.1 reveals that at a total summary rate of 267 questionnaire distribution (based on the calculated sample size of the study) and a 212 response rate (based on compliance and availability of respondents); a survey success rate of 75.6 percent was recorded and consequently forms the representative model of the study, also a total of 48 questionnaires were not retrieved due to one reason or the other ranging from time factor and unwillingness of the respondents which represent a response rate of 17.9 percent, while a total of 7 questionnaires were invalid showing a response rate of 2.6 percent.

Table 5.2: Distribution of the Study Sample Size/ Questionnaire Response Rate

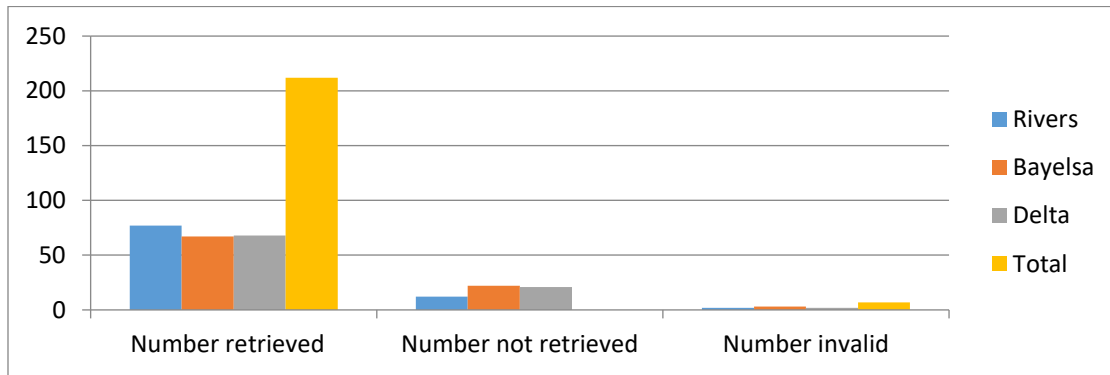| S/N	State	Questionnaire administered	Number retrieved	Number not retrieved	Number invalid
1	Rivers	89	77	12	2
2	Bayelsa	89	67	22	3
3	Delta	89	68	21	2
	Total	**267**	**212**		**7**

Figure 5.2: **Bar Chart Showing Questionnaire respondents from the states**

Table 5.2 and figure 5.2 illustrate response rate on distribution of respondents' sample size from the states out of 89 respondents to Rivers State, 77 was retrieved, 89 administered to Bayelsa, 67 was retrieved while 89 administered to Delta state, 68 was retrieved.

Table 5.3: Gender Status of Respondents

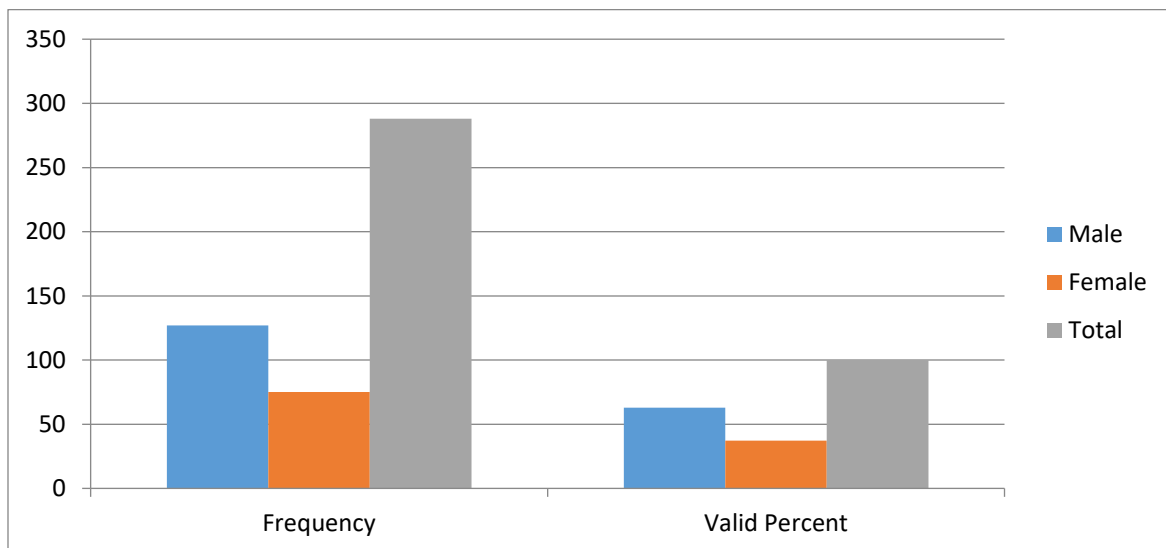|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	127	59.9	59.9	59.9
	Female	85	40.1	40.1	100.0
	Total	**212**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Source: Authors Research Desk, 2025.

Figure 5.3: Bar Chart Showing Respondents Gender

As shown in table 5.2 and figure 5.2, large proportions of 62.9 of the participants are male while 37.1 are female.

Table 5.4: Respondent Highest Academic Qualification

S/N	Qualification	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	SSCE/ Equivalent	21	9.9	9.9	9.9
2	National Diploma	33	15.7	15.7	25.6
3	B.Sc./BA/HND	120	56.6	56.6	82.2
4	Masters Degree and above	38	17.9	17.9	100
5	Total	212	100.0	100.0	

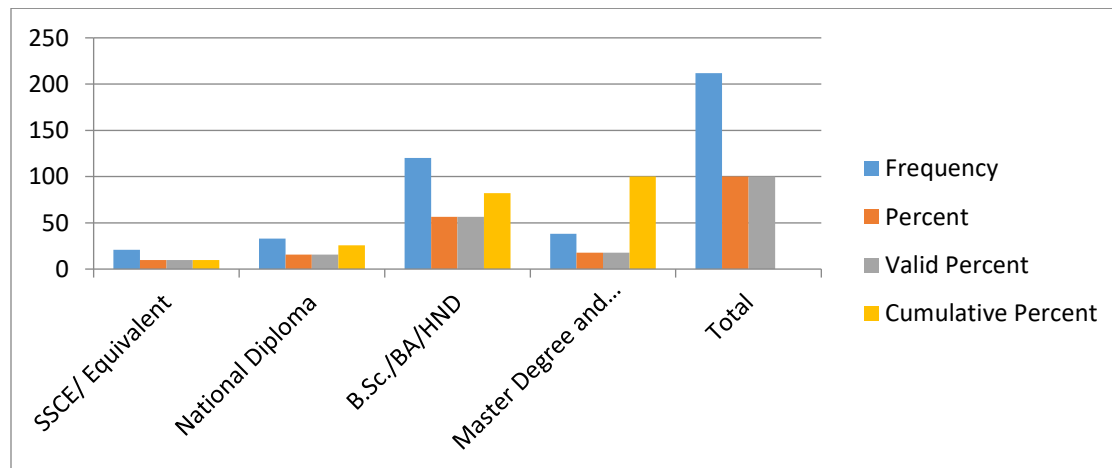**Source: Authors Research Desk, 2025.**

Figure 5.4: Bar Chart Showing Respondents Academic Qualifications

The analysis of the educational qualification of the entire participants in table 4.4 reveals that 21 by 9.9 percent of the respondents are SSCE holders, 33 respondents by 15.7 percent are national diploma holders, 120 respondents by 56.6 percent are B.Sc/BA/HND holders while 38 respondents by 17.9 percent hold master's degree and above. From the above, the majority of the respondents are B.Sc/BA/HND holders.

6.0 Analysis

6.1 Correlation between local ownership and peacebuilding in post-conflict reconstruction.

S/n	Local Ownership and Peace Building	SA	A	UN	D	SD
1	The importance of local ownership in securing sustainable peace	95 44.8%	100 47.2%	3 1.4%	10 4.7%	7 3.3%
2	The shortcomings have been linked to power imbalances	109 51.4%	101 47.6%	1 0.47%	1 0.47%	1 0.47%
3	Interpretations of local ownership continue to be channeled towards peacebuilding	88 41.5%	113 53.3%	1 0.4%	5 2.4%	5 2.4%
4	Local ownership is characterized by peace building challenges	87 41.0%	110 51.9%	0 0%	7 3.3%	6 2.8%
5	Conflict settings are highly complex and fragmented using local ownership	95 44.8%	79 37.3%	6 2.8%	16 7.5%	16 7.5%

Table, 6.1 above reveals the correlation between local ownership and peace building in post-conflict reconstruction. The responses in the table proved that local ownership and peace building have no impact in post-conflict reconstruction 44.8% and 47.2% strongly agree and agree that local ownership correlates with peace building in post-conflict reconstruction; this result to 51.4% that the short shortcomings have been linked to power imbalances. It reveals that local ownership affects peace building as the cumulative respondents' view on strongly agree and agree sum up to 99% of the total respondents. The relationship between interpretations of local ownership continues to be channeled towards peacebuilding reveal a cumulative of 92.9% which is greater than strongly disagree and disagree. The item on conflict settings are highly complex and fragmented using local ownership from the respondents' view proved 82.1%. From the above, the research concludes that there is a correlation between local ownership and peace building in post-conflict reconstruction.

Table 6.2: The relevance of locals in peacebuilding in the post-conflict reconstruction of the Niger Delta region.

S/n	Relevance of Locals in Peace Building	SA	A	UN	D	SD
1	Local understanding is an inherent part of the challenge in peacebuilding	108 50.9%	91 42.9%	1 0.4%	6 2.8%	6 2.8%
2	Local dynamics are non-responsive to issues that caused the conflict	98 46.2	107 50.3	0 0	4 1.9	3 1.4

3	Local ownership of activities have larger implications for peace building	113 53.3%	67 31.6%	2 0.94%	20 9.4%	10 4.7%
4	The credibility of peace building is questioned by local participants	88 41.5%	99 46.7%	5 2.4%	15 7.1%	5 2.4%
5	Undermining the support of local knowledge is important in peace building	87 41.0%	67 31.6%	8 3.77%	30 14.2%	20 9.4%

Table 6.2 examined above reveals the relevance of locals in peace building in the post-conflict reconstruction of the Niger Delta region. Item one proved a cumulative percentage of 93.8%. Item two which examines local dynamics are non-responsive to issues that caused the conflict proved a cumulative percentage of 96.5% between strongly agree and agree, item three has greater percentage of strongly agree and agree 84.9% while item four and five posited higher of 88.2% and 72.6%. From the above, the research concludes that there is correlation between local ownership and peace building in post-conflict reconstruction. From the above, it inductively concludes that local owners have significant influence in peace building in the Niger Delta region.

7.0 Discussion of Findings

7.1 Correlation between Local Ownership and Peace Building in Post-Conflict Reconstruction of the Niger Delta

From research question one, the study found that local ownership and peace building in post-conflict reconstruction 44.8% and 47.2% strongly agree and agree that local ownership correlates peace building in post-conflict reconstruction; this result to 51.4% that the shortcomings have been linked to power imbalances. It reveals that local ownership affects peace building as the cumulative respondents' view on strongly agree and agree sum up to 99% of the total respondents. The relationship between interpretations of local ownership continues to be channeled towards peace building reveal a cumulative of 92.9% which is greater than strongly disagree and disagree. The item on conflict settings are highly complex and fragmented using local ownership from the respondents' view proved 82.1%. The null hypothesis was rejected at 5% confidence level and the alternate accepted that there is significant relationship between local ownership and peace building in the post-conflict reconstruction. The correlation coefficient of 91.6% shows positive and strong relationship between the variables. The positive correlations between the variables confirm the expectations of the study and in line, anchors on peace building theory and conflict management theory as its theoretical framework.

Empirically, the findings are supported by the findings of Nwagbara and Nwagbara (2024) that there is an affirmative association between strategic partnership and sustainable future in the region; Obasesam (2023) that post-conflict peacebuilding produced change at the cultural, intrapersonal, structural, and interpersonal levels, which formed the basis for the development of the CISI model of Conflict Transformation; the observation of Altiok and Lee (2023) that

interconnectedness between economic well-being and peace, and also they actively work towards building resilient, self-sufficient, and economically vibrant communities and the findings of Kilmurray (2023) that Local ownership enables communities to take charge of their own security and well-being, allowing them to implement preventive techniques to avoid escalation.

7.2 Locals and Peace Building and the Post-Conflict Reconstruction of the Niger Delta Region

The study found a cumulative percentage of 93.8%. Item two which examine local dynamics and is non-responsive to issues that caused the conflict proved a cumulative percentage of 96.5% between strongly agree and agree, item three have greater percentage of strongly agree and agree 84.9% while item four and five posited higher of 88.2% and 72.6%. From the above, the research concludes that there is correlation between local ownership and peace building in post-conflict reconstruction. The null hypothesis is rejected at 5% confidence level and the alternate accepted that there is significant relationship between locals and peace building in post-conflict reconstruction. The correlation coefficient of 75.2% shows positive and strong relationship between the variables. This finding is expected based on various peace organizations and initiatives in the region.

The empirical findings is in line with the findings of Loha (2023) that socio-economic factors impact on achieving lasting peace, Joseph (2023) that promotes local ownership, emphasizing the role of community engagement, dialogue, and capacity building and found significance in local ownership and community-based approaches in the context of peace building which demonstrates the potential of community-led approaches in achieving lasting peace and stability, Okogbule and Brown (2023) that organizations can play a crucial role in the peace-building process, the findings of Moneme (2023) a layout on which peace practitioners, policy makers and donor agencies can embed their framework for local peace operations in post-conflict societies and the findings of Suleiman, Ahmed and Mohammed (2023) that the roles played by women towards enhancing conflict resolution in Kaduna state include: facilitation of negotiation between conflicting parties, conflict sensitivity awareness campaigns and peace advocacies, mediation in intra and inter communal and ethno-religious crises.

8.0 Conclusion

This study has examined the role of local ownership in peacebuilding in post-conflict societies, with a specific focus on the Amnesty Programme in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria from 2009 to 2019. The findings of this research underscore the significance of local ownership in promoting sustainable peace and stability in post-conflict societies. The study reveals that the Amnesty Programme, which was initiated by the Nigerian government, had limited success in addressing the root causes of conflict in the Niger Delta region. However, the programme's impact was enhanced when local communities were empowered to take ownership of the peacebuilding process. The research highlights the importance of community-led initiatives, traditional authorities, and local peace committees in mediating conflicts, promoting dialogue, and rebuilding social cohesion. The study's findings also emphasize the need for a more nuanced understanding

of local ownership in peacebuilding. The research demonstrates that local ownership is not a monolithic concept, but rather a complex and multifaceted process that requires the active participation of local stakeholders. The study's conclusions have implications for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars working in the field of peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

9.0 Recommendations

1. Future research should explore the role of local ownership in peacebuilding in other post-conflict societies.

2. Policymakers and practitioners should prioritize community-led initiatives and local ownership in peacebuilding efforts.

3. The Nigerian government should build on the successes of the Amnesty Programme by empowering local communities to take ownership of the peacebuilding process.

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