Dialogic Communication Patterns of Community Development Associations and Sustainable Socio-Political Development in Gokana Local Government Area

Alawa Louis & Okon Godwin B. (Ph.D)
Department of mass Communication
Faculty of Social Sciences
Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the Dialogic Communication Patterns of Community Development Associations and Sustainable Socio-Political Development in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study delineated three objectives which helped to identify the dialogic communication patterns in use by the Community Development Committees in Gokana LGA; ascertain whether the existing patterns of communication lend themselves to socio-political development in Gokana LGA and find out how the Community Development Committees (CDCs) in Gokana LGA use the existing communication patterns for socio-political development among other things. The descriptive survey design was adopted within a sample population of 380. The questionnaire was the basic instrument for data collection. The study found that the dialogic communication pattern utilized by the Community Development Committees in Gokana Local Government Area was hinged on interactivity; the dialogic communication pattern adopted by the committees lend themselves to socio-political development by creating avenue for robust engagement of the people and similarly the committees used the existing dialogic communication patterns to drive socio-political development by involving the people in the decision making process. It was, therefore, recommended that the Community Development Committees in Gokana Local Government Area should sustain the interactive model of communication and improve upon its areas of application within the council area; and that the Government of Rivers State should partner Community Development Committees in the State to fight crime and other forms of criminalities through robust engagement of the people and as a matter of priority engage the Community Development Committees in generating data for sustainable socio-political development programmes.

Keywords: Dialogic communication, Patterns, Peace building, Development,

INTRODUCTION

Society is the perpetual habitation of humans organized by them to cater for their needs and aspirations. These aspirations are largely dependent on how humans view and indeed interact with their immediate environment. The creation, understanding and implementation of human ideals within any given society and indeed environment, as to what should be and what is not to be, the processes and procedures of living, warrant the setting up of different organizations to coordinate human activities to solve peculiar needs discernable within the context of each society and indeed its applicability to other societies.

Similarly, organizations are created by people to handle specific tasks that aid them in their day-to-day activities and living. These organisations work with structures that control different levels of service rendered within a system. The structure of any organization helps to perpetuate its identity, gives it a distinct orientation and ensures that the various ideals of organizations are protected and carried out in expressible forms. By implication,

organizations came into existence when a group of people who decided to respond to certain characteristics and needs of the environment by creating a system of patterned activities to accomplish a specified task, thereby exerting pressures for the patterning of activities which will complete the task.

According to Abbey (2018), the world has a population of 6.5 billion. It is, however, projected that by 2050, the world population will be about 8-10 billion. This poses a lot of challenges in diverse dimensions to the world such that the larger the number of people in the world, the more the possibility of the occurrence of crisis following the perceived inability to meet the needs of the growing population. As Richard and Smalley (2003) as cited in Abbey (2018) put it, there are top ten challenges for the next 10 years which shall include inadequate energy, shortage of portable drinking water, food shortages, worsening poverty, terrorism, war, outbreak of diseases, lack of access to quality education, survival of democracy and population explosion. This seemingly prophetic declaration has become an undeniable reality and will possibly continue to be for decades to come.

All of the 10 challenges outlined above represent the nexus of the various challenges rocking the universe today. Governments all over the world are still battling to have a firm grip and understanding of the dimensions in which the issues affect them within their various territorial jurisdictions but worse still, some are simply not aware of these crisis dimensions and are, therefore, very clueless as to how it affects their people and cannot do anything meaningful to check the trend.

An organization is characterized as collectivity that has been set up for the quest for generally explicit goals on pretty much ceaseless premise. Associations have pretty much fixed limits, a regulating request, authority rank, a communication framework and a motivating force framework which empowers different kinds of members to cooperate chasing shared objectives (Scott, 1995). It is additionally a deliberately organized social substance, with a moderately recognizable limit, which capacities on a generally consistent premise to accomplish a shared objective or a bunch of objectives (Hall, 1987). In essence, an organization is an assemblage of people with cooperative efforts to achieve both individual and societal ideals crafted within the organizational goals. All organizations are purposeful and powered with objectives of making profit or maximizing profit discernable from their ability to address the issues of the general public. Organizations then again, might be formal or casual. Formal to the extent of having visible and relatively permanent structure and informal when a group of people set out to render services in an ad-hoc basis in order to meet certain challenges that spring out of the blues and requiring urgent attention. The group of persons that render this cadre of service are simply created to respond to the exigencies of time and relax thereafter. Their operations are not elaborate as that of formal organisations and their structure is very flexible.

A formal organization is a properly organized arrangement of interrelated exercises, cycles and innovations inside which human endeavors are composed to accomplish specific goals (Williams and Huller, 1986). An informal organization develops simultaneously when people interact closely for a period of time. It exists in cliques, gangs and cooperative work groups. Its activities are usually spontaneous, unplanned and unpredictable activities within the formal organization. It has its own bearers who are more or less definable members and powerful means of controlling members' behaviour. Its process of communication is also informal, yet powerful means of co-ordination of their members. Its leaders are not appointed or elected as in the formal organization. An informal leader emerges as the need arises.

In formal organizations however, activities are rationally structured with defined roles and specific action points to every member of the organisation. A lot of emphasis is usually placed on processes and procedures for carrying out their actions and plans. Lines of authority, policy and procedures are properly delineated to fulfill organizational goals. The

structure, activities, processes and technology of operation are interdependent. Any change in one area of the organizational structure, potentially affects all other areas.

Communication is pivotal to the operations and coordination of organisations' tasks within the society. No man is anything in the society except what has been or can be expressed through the art of communication. Every society has various means of communicating and understanding the issues that define living. In the African society, there is the age-grade, kindred gathering, community gathering, women meetings among other institutions that perpetuate and correlate the society (Okedi, 2020).

The African anthropocentric philosophy demands that a traditional African Society stay closely knit with such factors as kinship, ancestors, tribe, ethnic grouping and other forms of social affiliations holding sway as to how the society relates. These form a complex lifestyle of the ideal African society expressible in what is referred to as culture. Culture is one of the determinants of the African identity because every African society is rooted in culture. The language, ethnic group, tribe and other factors that can be used to identify the African man are all enmeshed in culture and this culture is expressible within the fringes of what some may want to refer to as cultism. For an African and indeed Nigerian, the ethnic and other forms of identities, can be linked to a culture and because of the perceived exclusivity of this culture to its adherents, the expression of its tenets becomes a challenge in the face of varying and opposing world views.

Ashimolowo (2007) cited in Okedi (2020) notes that the advent of colonialism marked the beginning of Africa's disintegration in all spheres of life, especially the culture. By 1935, colonialism had been fastened on Africa like a steel crate and shackles upon a lifetime prisoner. This system of government which combined the absolute powers of the colonialists with their arbitrary way of changing the rule for the governance of the regions in which they were, was to forever shape the lives of most Black people in the various nations of Africa.

Achebe (1959) avers that colonialism had one goal, which was the assuagement of the crude clans of the lower Niger. He explained that the colonialists in their quest for control of the resources in their various colonies, decimated the culture of Africans in order to achieve their goal. This prompted Okon (2003) to assert that the African communication system is a victim of neo-colonialism and world media imperialism. In order to safeguard the African identity, members of a particular society then formed themselves into groups and associations for the preservation and protection of the ideals they cherish. This prompted the development of the Community Development Associations (CDAs) to safeguard the rights and aspirations of the people. According to Afisa (2016), in the past, traditional societies in Nigeria operated with cultism. In some parts of the pre-colonial Nigeria, traditional Native Court accessed cults in judicial matters and sometimes, these cults served as Court of Appeal which bestowed justice according to their moral codes. The cults of those days were tools of traditional administration and protectors of the ethics of various societies.

Statement of the Problem

Gokana Local Government Area has been engulfed by several degrees of crisis in recent times. These crises have affected the socio-political landscape of Gokana in no small measure. The unresolved land disputes of the post-civil war era and the current activities of bad boys (cultists) have been responsible for the extant impasse in the area. Several communities have had to run away from their homestead because of communal clashes leading to the engagement of cultists and other forms of ethnic militia to fight, kill and destroy several lives and property.

For instance, Barako and Nwebiara have become ghost towns because of protracted land disputes that have led to both communities being engaged in full blown war such that the destruction of life and property in the communities has become unquantifiable. Bomu and

Lewe have also become a shadow of themselves due to protracted unresolved boundary dispute and the on-going lucrative illegal oil refining (kpo fire) activities by cult boys from both communities. When the two communities could no longer handle the cult boys, it resulted in the recent full blown war between them.

In the light of the foregoing, this work seeks to know how the CDCs use dialogic communication patterns to avert or curb crisis and secure sustainable socio-political development in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Objectives of the Study

Broadly speaking, this work seeks to determine the place of dialogic patterns of communication in sustaining socio-political development in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the work are to:

1. Identify the dialogic communication patterns in use by Community Development Committees in Gokana LGA.
2. Find out whether the existing patterns of communication lend themselves to socio-political development in Gokana LGA.
3. Find out how the Community Development Committees (CDCs) in Gokana LGA use the existing communication patterns for socio-political development.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study.

1. What are the dialogic communication patterns in use by Community Development Committees in Gokana LGA?
2. How do the existing patterns of communication used by the Community Development Committees (CDCs) lend themselves to socio-political development in Gokana LGA?
3. How do the Community Development Committees (CDCs) in Gokana LGA use these communication patterns for socio-political development?

Theoretical Framework

The Development Media Theory and the Dialogic Communication theory helped to sharpen this study.

The Development Media Theory

This theory was propounded by Denis McQuail in 1987, and it posits that the media should pursue development goals in any society as its basic principles (cited by Anaeto, Onabanjo and Osifeso, 2008, p.63). According to Nwabueze (2014, p.53), the media should acknowledge to complete positive advancement assignments in accordance with public set up approach; opportunity of the media ought to make available economic needs and improvement needs of the general public; the media should give need in their substance to public culture and language; the media ought to underline news and data that interface with other non-industrial nations which are close topographically, socially or politically and so forth.

The theory was intended to distinguish the way that social orders going through a progress from underdevelopment and imperialism to freedom and better public conditions frequently do not have the foundation, the cash, the customs, the expert abilities and even the audience expected to support media establishments tantamount to those of the main world or second world (Nsereka and Amannah, 2014).

The media in this light should not leave to adulate singing or government's propaganda publicity bull horn yet improvement accomplices. They are relied upon to uncover maladministration since this will help shape better the predetermination of ravaged Africa

and Nigeria specifically. According to Uwakwe (2003), the accomplice in advancement announcement will presently mean not supporting untrustworthy government for the sake of solidarity and soundness and so forth trademarks, yet assisting with obliterating such untrustworthiness. Such activity will even put a country on a superior wheel of progress.

Gokana is one of the Local Government Areas that make up the Ogoni speaking ethnic group in Rivers State and it has its fair share of the environmental pollution traceable to the activities of international oil giants which device several means to divide the people instead of catering for their welfare. In fact, the Ogoni clean- up has continued to linger because of the frustrating antics of the international oil majors.

This theory therefore becomes very relevant in view of the crisis foisted on the Gokana Local Government area arising from the activities of international oil giants especially Royal Dutch Shell and other internal wrangling incidental there from. No community can be said to be totally crisis free but a twist arises when the community is battling both internal and external forces. And in order to succeed, community development associations come to the fore to seek and chart the part to peaceful co-existence and communal integration.

Dialogic Communication Theory
The dialogic communication theory was propounded by Kent and Taylor, in l998. The theory was proposed as a way of explaining the utilization of computerized communication in the fields of advertising and public relations to reach the target audience directly beyond the middlemen. The basic premise of dialogic communication–Internet and Web based–is the digital interaction between publics and organizations. Kent and Taylor posit that organizations could integrate a type of interpersonal discourse into online communication to satisfy what they portrayed as the 'dialogic guarantee' of new media. They characterized this methodology as "any arranged trade of thoughts and suppositions", (p.67). All the more as of late in 2014, the duo composed that researchers should regard exchange as "… a direction that qualities sharing and common understanding between interact ants", (p.97).

According to Wilcox (2019), "the dialogic communication theory from a historical perspective, is an outgrowth of Grunig's idea of the two-way symmetric model of public relations. His concept was that the purpose of symmetric communication, as opposed to the persuasive-oriented model of two- way asymmetric communication, was to gain mutual understanding with balanced effects between an organization and its publics. The concept, likewise communicated as relationship building and commitment have strategies and activities that are commonly useful to the organization and its various stakeholders", (p.4).

In essence, the dialogic communication theory puts the communicators – the organization/association and the host community- on a single pedestrian where both sides reach a common agreement on what has been done, what should be done and what needs to be done. This way, both sides in a communication quadrant sign up willingly to specific responsibility of bringing the set objectives to pass.

This theory is important in this study as it gives scholarly explanation of the conceptualization of conflicts and peace building efforts of the Government and multinational oil companies in Nigeria through dialogue after military confrontation was jettisoned. One area that is crisis ridden is the Niger Delta and this is due to the perceived environmental degradation the people suffer as a result of oil spill. The scourging heat of negligence by both the government and the multinational oil corporations, have ignited a violent response from indigenes of oil producing states, indulging them to engage in militancy, civil disobedience and kidnapping as a way of revolting against those they feel are responsible for hindering their satisfaction. Compensations have been made but the indigenes feel it is lesser than what they deserve.

The latest effort of the government at building peace within the area was to grant amnesty to the militants who in turn surrendered their arms in exchange for peace in and negotiations in the area. The outcome was the stoppage of armed conflict and the signing of Global Memorandum of understanding between the companies and their host communities. Another move was to kick-start the bioremediation of the oil spill impacted sites popularly referred to as the 'Ogoni Clean-up'. The Ogoni was chosen given the protracted battle between them and the Federal Government on one side and the Multinational Oil Corporations on the other side. The battle has claimed several lives and the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People, MOSOP has continued to push for a better deal in sustaining the tempo of the fight.

This brings the tenets of dialogic communication to the fore. The bioremediation project was a product of the United Nations' Environmental Programme (UNEP) report on the actual pollution level of the peoples' environment and this report was not done independently but in collaboration with the people. The wide acceptance of the UNEP report by the Ogonis and indeed Nigerian government is also one of the benefits accruable to the application of dialogic communication as a means of achieving peace on both sides.

Dialogic Communication

Dialogue is a communication model that prizes feedback and interaction rather than assumptions and preconceptions. It acknowledges that in a communication process, there must be a sender and receiver that co-create meaning within a given frame of reference. Dialogic communication refers to a form of communication that is transactional rather than monologous. This means that feedback is at the heart of dialogue. LittleJohn (2008), state that dialogue is used to build relationships. It therefore suffices that dialogic communication is a form of communication intended to build and sustain human relationships. Adhianty (2017) creates four dimensions of dialogue within the human society using Baxters theory of relationship. They are as follows:

(a) Relationships generated through dialogue: In the primary perspective on this hypothesis by Baxter, it is in the exchange that you characterize your relationship with others. Your thoughts regarding yourself, others and relationships framed in the discussions. In any event, when you retell old accounts of the relationship, or shared encounters which bring harmony. Baxter alludes to this as chronotopic likeness, simultaneously you will perceive the distinction among you and the other individual in the relationship. At Baxter Dialogic hypothesis it is referenced that relationship are created through a discourse among clamors. In this hypothesis it is referenced that the cycle of exchange is that various voices are incorporated in a conversation. According to Baxter, the dialogue is a conversation that defines and redefines the relationship when the relationship appears in the actual situation. Relationships generated through dialogical communication processes are dynamic and can adjust the similarities and differences. Actually, the relationship unites us through equality, while a relationship also creates, maintains and regulates areas of difference.

(b) Dialogue generates an occasion to accomplish solidarity in variety: Through dialogue we oversee the elements of impact between the centripetal power and outward power that isolates and draws us inside and out, the force that makes a comprehension of disarray and power that gives a feeling of harmony. These restricting powers are rationalistic as in they include a strain between at least two components of a framework resistance and the relationship gives a setting where we coordinate resistance.

(c) Dialogue is the aesthetic: Aesthetics involves a comprehension of the equilibrium, arrangement, shape and solidarity. Dialogue gives a relationship personality, uniqueness and solidarity. The personality of a relationship turns out to be such impression of the

style made in dialogue. Communication in a relationship can shape a feeling of solidarity through a dialogue.

(d) Dialogue is a discourse: Baxter noted that the relationship was never as a progression of explanations of a solitary individual yet a cycle that runs to and fro over the long haul. Consequently the real lead or practice is significant where the entertainers are included all through the relationship course. In principle the possibility of a relationship is significant on the grounds that the relationship isn't something you think psychologically in your mind, but is the result of the discourse.

Dialogic communication is relational—it includes not simply a comprehension of the past and the present, yet additionally has an attention on a proceeded and shared future for all members (Kent &Taylor, 2002). As an initial move toward articulating a public relations hypothesis of dialogue, Kent and Taylor (1998,2002) created five overall precepts that envelop the verifiable and express presumptions that underlie the idea of dialogue: mutuality, or the acknowledgment of organization public relationships; propinquity, or the transience and suddenness of cooperation's with publics; compassion, or the strength and affirmation of public objectives and interests; hazard, or the readiness to collaborate with people and publics on their own terms; and responsibility, or the degree to which an association gives itself over to discourse, translation, and understanding in its interactions with publics (Kent &Taylor, 2002).

Levels of Dialogic Community Development
Botrell and Godwin (2011) aver that within dialogical community development framework concept, the social practice can be at four levels (Ingamellsetal.2010; Westoby & Dowling 2009, p.64).These levels are stated below:

i. Bonding
The first level of dialogical community development, which happens right off the bat in any community advancement measure, is holding. This holding cycle can be perceived as the manufacturing of intentional formative connections between a 'community/youth laborer' and another person inside a school setting for instance, a youngster or an educator. Getting back to the circumstance from the presentation for instance, envision a community specialist consenting to meet with the youngster. The people group specialist sets aside the effort to hear their story, construct trust, and consent to accomplish something together. They learn through tuning in and addressing (a type of discourse), that the young person, showing clear 'social issues' is consistently encountering harassing and bigotry, and that they are depleted on the grounds that consistently after school they need to decipher and decipher for the displaced person guardians. It is this cycle of tuning in, hearing the narrative of the young person, understanding their perspective and then forging an agreement to do something together that is understood as the first level of social practice.

ii. Banding
The second level of dialogical community development is where individuals with a comparative or same concern meet up and structure a 'we' that needs to accomplish something. A specialist utilizing community improvement approach works with a young person, with whom they have fashioned a deliberate formative relationship at the primary level, to then discover other people who have had comparable encounters, or who share a longing to take care of others' interests. Note the accentuation on 'with'- the laborer goes with the youngster to discover other people who share a similar concern; they don't 'administration' the youngster by doing it for them. This degree of training unites every one of these individuals into what is then seen thoughtfully as a participatory action group.

The key concepts that have been appropriated from his immense work incorporate those of basic addressing and extraordinary reasoning. Inside the system, it is the point at which a gathering of individuals at first meets up and afterward takes part in such Freirean discourse that the chance of shaping a participatory activity bunch with a deliberately thoroughly examined turns into a genuine likelihood. This sort of discourse necessitates that the underlying gathering of individuals, who have met up around a shared concern, figure out their experience through addressing and changing their reasoning, guaranteeing that what has been capable as felt private torment is presently perceived regarding social powers that can be tended to publically. From that dialogical cycle of enactment and sorting out the world, at that point build up an aggregate activity or activity that addresses their issues.

iii. Building

The third level of dialogical community development is building, which reflects either the further organizing of a participatory activity bunch into an economical authoritative structure (that meets consistently, that basal personality, a name, etc, and perhaps an authoritative document), or some other type of primary work, for example, the structure of hierarchical organization that may advance the worry of the gathering. Such organization work may likewise have occurred directly toward the start of a network improvement measure, empowering any of this work to happen by any means for instance, an organization between a young situated non-benefit organization and a school is started to do some community work together.

iv. Bridging

The fourth level of dialogical community development practice is perceived as connecting work, in which organized gatherings or associations, who may have comparative worries, past one territory or, for the motivations behind this part, past one school site-assemble linkages together. These linkages are regularly formalized into some sort of organization, alliance, league or co-usable empowering individuals to handle these 'trans-neighborhood' issues. The reasoning is that numerous worries can't be (re) addressed at one site or one region.

At the third and fourth level, discourse educated by both Buber and Freire, prompts primary connections grounded in organizations that both consolidate certified association (I-thou), awareness (aware of social powers molding the work and partnership), and likewise address the systemic issues required of partnership.

Dialogue and Peace Building

Dialogue is one way to bring about peace in the society because the members of the society agree on the terms for peace before peace can be prevalent. Peace is one of the greatest needs of man and indeed, of the world today. Without peace, the life of society will be stalled on all fronts. There will be neither development nor growth because man will be battling to save his life and neglect every other responsibility he owes himself and the society. There is a schizophrenic rise in the rate of crime and insecurity in the world in recent times. This has made the value of man's life on earth to be reduced to something that should be estimated in time based on certain social, economic, and political cum religious indices, with each index varying from one society to another; instead of life running its eternal span terminus. Peace is very sacrosanct because it is one of the basic conditions for humanity. Barring any other societal dynamics, peace is one of the determinants of man's stay on earth. Without peace, man cannot move forward or make any meaningful development in any area of life.

In Africa, the term peace is very relative because of the realities on the ground. No African country can stand tall today to say that all is well with the land or its people in all

ramifications (Okedi, 2020). Governments and other relevant agencies have continued to battle that monster of insecurity and other social challenges that plagues the continent. The continent unfortunately, is seen as a theatre of civil wars, lawlessness and dictatorships. To date, the continent is still struggling with sit-tight clueless and visionless ideologies who see the seat of government as their patrimony. There are the oppressed people who have been too weakened to stake a claim to their fundamental human rights but respond obsequiously to the whims and caprices of the territorial hegemons. There are also the ideological rationalists who are constantly at daggers drawn with the complacent ideologues while the bourgeois utopians and tragic visioners watch on. It is a complex war of wits, in a continent divided against itself in every dimension of the word (Amadi, 2003).

According to Uzuegbunam (2013), the efforts of peace-building may be imported from outside the framework accordingly disregarding the structures and societies of the gatherings concerned. The way to deal with the endeavors of harmony building could be base-top as well as top-base. Whichever base the endeavors are coordinated to, the final products should be in regard, advancement and utilization of nearby human and socio-social assets. Harmony building has accepted a particularly noticeable situation in the brains of the global network individuals and all harmony sweethearts on the planet. There is subsequently the call for everybody to contribute in making harmony a reality in the general public and the world on the loose. Harmony building has become so significant that the United Nations (UN) Security Council proclaimed harmony working as its number to point understanding under the arrangement of chapter VI of the UN charter.

Peace building is a cardinal function of the community development associations because of the rising crisis level of the various communities of the world. In Gokana for instance, there are myriad of troubles that can only be settled by the community development associations due to the peculiarity of their content. Land disputes have never been successfully settled by the courts but the community development associations do settle such disputes because of the hindsight of history on the side of the settlers. The benefit of culture is another instance that necessitates the relevance of community development associations in building peace within their locality. One thing is certain, the community development associations work with the mind that they are working for their fatherland and indeed themselves and therefore apply a lot of caution in decision making.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive survey method in the quest for answers to the research questions. This design is considered appropriate for the study because it allows for unbiased and objective responses from the respondents. The peculiarities of this study necessitated the descriptive survey. The population of the study includes the people resident in the Gokana Local Government Area. The 2006 census put the population of Gokana Local Government Area at 228,825. However, the researcher did a projection using an annual growth rate of 3.2 per cent stipulated by the United Nations Development Population (UNDP, 2014). In the light of this projection, the population of Rivers State had increased by 102,514 as at 2020, covering the period of fourteen (14) years, 2006 to 2020. Adding this to the population, it amounted to 228,825 + 102,514 = 331339. The population of this study therefore was 331339. The sample size for this study was 380. This was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for sample size determination.

RESULTS
Research Question 1:
What are the dialogic communication patterns in use by members of the Community Development Committees in Gokana LGA?

Table 4.3: The Dialogic Communication Patterns used by Community Development Committees in Gokana Local Government Area includes;

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Fx	WMS	Decision
A	Mediation/Persuasion	185	80	60	40	1,185	3.2	Agreed
B	Advocacy/Interactions	205	90	60	10	1,280	3.5	Agreed
C	Arbitration/Sanctions	40	50	210	65	795	2.2	Disagreed
D	Consultations/Negotiations	145	125	40	55	1,080	2.95	Agreed
E	Meetings/Dialogues	255	95	10	5	1,330	3.6	Agreed
F	Social gatherings/Celebrations	20	30	250	65	735	2.0	Disagreed

Source: Survey Data, 2020.

The Table 4.3above shows that community development committees in Gokana Local Government Area do not prefer to use social gatherings/celebrations and arbitrations/sanctions as part of their dialogic communication pattern while carrying out their duties. But other means of interactions are employed in the process such as meetings/dialogues, Mediation/Persuasion, consultations/negotiations and so on. This implies that the community development committees rarely aim at exercising authority over the people but rather seek their cooperation and understanding in carrying out their duties.

Research Question 2:
How do the existing patterns of communication used by the Community Development Committees (CDCs) lend themselves to socio-political development in Gokana Local Government Area?

Table 4.4: How Dialogic Communication Patterns were used by Members of the Community Development Committees to enhance Socio-Political Development in Gokana Local Government Area

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Fx	WMS	Decision
A	To foster peace and unity among the people	80	185	40	60	1,015	2.7	Agreed
B	To engender cooperation and harmonious coexistence among them	90	205	60	10	1,105	3.0	Agreed
C	To promote strife and bitterness among the people	10	50	210	95	705	1.9	Disagreed
D	To enthrone fairness and participation among the people	145	125	40	55	1,090	2.9	Agreed
E	To promote the rule of law among the people	100	250	10	5	1,175	3.2	Agreed
F	To promote sectional interest among the people	20	20	240	85	705	1.9	Disagreed

Source: Survey Data, 2020

The Table 4.4above shows the manner in which the dialogic communication patterns adopted by members of the community development committees helped in the socio-political development of Gokana Local Government Area. From the table, it could be seen that the dialogic communication patterns were not employed for the promotion of sectional interest or the promotion of strife and bitterness. But the dialogic communication patterns were used to foster peace and unity among the people of Gokana Local Government Area, engender cooperation and harmonious coexistence among them, enthrone fairness and participation among the people and promote the rule of law among the people. In essence, they engender brotherliness and good neighbourliness among the people. This implies that such dialogic communication pattern is both cultural and indigenous to the people and the people participate freely in the communication processes.

Research Question 3:

How do the Community Development Committees (CDCs) in Gokana Local Government Area use these communication patterns for socio-political development?

Table 4.5: How Members of the Community Development Committees in Gokana Local Government Area utilize the Dialogic Communication Patterns for Socio-Political Development

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Fx	WMS	Decision
A	For the settlement of boundary disputes among the people	90	205	60	10	1,105	3.0	Agreed
B	Serving as the highest decision-making body for the community	10	50	210	95	705	1.9	Disagreed
C	Build peace among members of the community	145	125	40	55	1,090	2.9	Agreed
D	Serving as a political platform for choosing political candidates to represent the people	20	20	240	85	705	1.9	Disagreed

Source: Survey Data, 2020

The Table 4.5 above shows that members of the Community Development Committees do not use their communicative patterns for political gains rather, to represent the interest of the people of Gokana Local Government Area at the local levels by ensuring that the communities are very peaceful. For example, the respondents agreed that the members of the community development committees utilize the dialogic communication patterns for the settlement of boundary disputes among the people of Gokana Local Government Area and to build peace among members of the different communities in Gokana Local Government Area.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: What are the dialogic communication patterns in use by Community Development Committees in Gokana LGA?

The study found that the predominant mode or pattern of communication deployed by community development committees in Gokana Local Government Area was interactivity with the natives. The Table 4.3 above shows that community development committees in Gokana Local Government Area do not prefer to use social gatherings/celebrations and arbitrations/sanctions as part of their dialogic communication pattern while carrying out their duties. But other means of interactions are employed in the process such as meetings/dialogues, Mediation/Persuasion, and consultations/negotiations. This implies that the community development committees rarely aim at exercising authority over the people but rather seeks their cooperation and understanding in carrying out their duties. And in times of crisis, the focus is usually on reaching an amicable resolution to the issues being raised instead of aggravating them. This finding affirms LittleJohn (2008) who state that dialogue is used to build relationships. It therefore suffices that dialogic communication is a form of communication intended to build and sustain human relationships.

Kent and Taylor (1998) suggested that in dialogic communication, dialogue is "not a process or a progression of steps" but rather "a result of continuous communication and relationships between an organization and the host community or stakeholders" (p.24). This brings the

publics of an organization like the community development associations to the status of communication equivalent with the organization where bureaucratic bottle necks will no longer suffice for sincere responses to real questions as opposed to the traditional secondary role of publics in public relations. In real situations, it is important to "have a dialogic system rather than monologic policies" where relationships are more important than feedback (Kent and Taylor, 2002, p.23).

For example, the Bonalo Gokana which is one of the community development associations in the Gokana Local Government Area, interacting with the people is usually done on an equal basis without discrimination because the members of the association are also members of the communities. In the words of Hon D. K. Badom, the current president of Bonalo Gokana, "The dialogic communication pattern adopted or in use by Bonalo Gokana is interactive. The feuding or contending parties are brought together on a round table and **persuaded** to state their grievances. The aim is to find a common ground or agreeable position that will be beneficial to all".

Research Question 2: How do the existing patterns of communication used by the Community Development Committees (CDCs) lend themselves to socio-political development in Gokana LGA?

The study found that the existing dialogic communication pattern used by the community development committees lend themselves to socio-political development of Gokana through being an instrument for peace-building. The table shows the manner in which the dialogic communication patterns adopted by the members of the community development committees in Gokana Local Government Area lend themselves to socio-political development. The dialogic communication patterns are averse to the promotion of sectional interest or the promotion of strife and bitterness. In essence, they engender brotherliness and good neighbourliness among the people. This implies that such dialogic communication patterns are both cultural and indigenous to the people and the people participate freely in the communication processes.

This finding re-echoes Ukuma (2011) that the creative management of differences is at the core of making a harmony culture; as such, it's anything but a culture without struggle. Each human is not the same as the other, clash is a fundamental piece of any social request. Every one of us see, hear, and experience the world in a remarkable way, and we spend our lives spanning the contrasts between our discernments (and the necessities and wishes they create) and the impression of others. Despite the fact that it is sensible to inquire as to why we don't battle continually, given our disparities, a large part of the time we accomplish this work calmly. The clarification lies in the two contradicting needs for holding and independence. Each person needs to bond with others. We should be important for a community; we need others to think about us; we need to think about others. Children who don't encounter this caring experience difficulty managing others for the duration of their lives. At the same time, we need autonomy, our own space - room enough to express our individuality, (Ukuma, 2011).

Clements (1997) avers that crisis results from man's inherent feeling of dissatisfaction, deprivation and disagreement with the things happening around his immediate environment. Disagreement often results from clash of interests, views, intents and purposes among people in the society. This eventually snowballs into full crisis if not properly handled in a way that the parties involved will come to a point of compromise. This requires collective effort to achieve. It is in a bid to achieve collective and sustainable result that warrants men to come together to articulate goals, create structures and form organisations that will coordinate the efforts at generating a sustainable peace in the society.

Research Question 3: How do the Community Development Committees (CDCs) in Gokana Local Government Area use these communication patterns for socio-political development?

The data in this regard showed that the focus of the community development committees in Gokana Local Government Area is to build and sustain peace among the people living in the communities and her neighbours. The Table 4.5 above shows that the CDCs do not use their communication patterns for political gains but to represent the interest of the people at the local levels by ensuring that the communities are very peaceful. Bonalo Gokana as a leading example does not seek to divide but unite the people and engender development of the Local Government Area in all ramifications. According to Hon D. K. Badom, "Bonalo Gokana uses these communication patterns to engender socio-political development in Gokana local government area because of the active involvement of the people. The people are not alienated in the dialogic process. And because they are effectively engaged in the communication process, they willingly accept the outcome of the dialogue, and this brings about sustainable socio - political development in Gokana".

This finding has voice in the words of Amadi (2003) that the intricacies occasioning the existence of man on earth require steady refinement. He further avers that man can only co-create a peaceful environment for habitation through inter-activity. This can only be achieved when the rules occasioning the creation of meaning in the communication process allows for equality in the involvement and participation in the communication process. That is, when no one will be oppressed based on race, class or status before being found eligible to participate in societal communication process.

Schaefer (2005) acknowledges that there is day-to-day deterioration of human environment that presents a devastating threat to humanity. The quality of improved living conditions of people therefore depends on the nature of the climate and human exercises as to how they interact within the same environment. With suspicion and assumptions, no society can be free of rancor and rancor clogs the wheel of development in all spheres of live except in the negative divide.

Summary of findings

The study found as follows:
1. The dialogic communication pattern used by Community Development Committees in Gokana Local Government Area is hinged on interactivity.
2. The dialogic communication pattern used by Community Development Committees in Gokana Local Government Area lend themselves to socio-political development by creating avenue for robust engagement of the people.
3. Community Development Committees in Gokana Local Government Area use the existing dialogic communication patterns to drive socio-political development by involving the people in the decision making process.

Recommendations

In the light of the above, the following recommendations were put forward:
1. The Community Development Committees in Gokana Local Government Area should sustain the interactive model of communication and improve upon its areas of application within the Council Area.
2. The Government of Rivers State should partner with the various Community Development Committees in Gokana Local Government Area to fight crime and criminality in the area through robust engagement of the people.
3. The Gokana Local Government Area Council should as a matter of priority engage the members of the Community Development Committees in generating data for sustainable socio-political development programmes in the area.

REFERENCES

Adhianty, N. (n.d.). Community Communication Forum (FKM) & WhatsApp (WA) Group: Dialogic Communication between Company-Community in Achieving Community Developmentin Indonesiaia

Adhianty, N., Ravik, K., Widodo, M.,& Sri Kusumo, H. (2017).Dialogic Communication Patterns between Company-Community in Achieving Community Empowerment in Indonesia: A Case Study of Waste Problem.

Amadi, F. A. (2006). *Critical Issues in Nigerian Mass Media*. Port Harcourt: Charlesworth.

Anaeto, S., Onabanjo, O.,& Osifeso, B. (2008).*Models and theories of communication*. Ibadan: African Renaissance Books Incorporated.

Clements, K. P. (1997). Peace Building and Conflict Transformation, "*Peace and Conflict Studies*: 4 (1).Article2.Availableat:https://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs/vol4/iss1/2

Kent, M.,& Taylor, M. (l998).Building dialogic relationships through the world-wideweb. *Public Relations Review,* 24, 273-288.

Nsereka, B.G., & Amannah, P.I. (2014).An evaluating study of the freedom of Information Act and media practice in Nigeria. *Review of Communication and Media Studies*. 1(1), 94-102.

Nwabueze, C. (2014). *Introduction to mass communication*. Owerri: Topshelves Publishing Ltd.

Okedi, J. (2020). Cult vernacular discourses and security challenges in Rivers State. Dissertation submitted to the Department of Mass Communication, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Okon, G. B. (2001). *Basic dimensions in mass communication*. Lagos HDX Communications Limited.

Ukuma, T. S. (2011). Deepening the culture of peace in Nigeria as an imperative for sustainable development: A theatre proposal. A thesis presented to the Theatre Arts Department, Benue State University, Makurdi.

Uzuegbunam, A. O. (2013). Non-Governmental Organisations, conflicts and peacebuilding in Nigeria. *Open Journal of Philosophy;* 3(1), 207-212. Published Online February 2013 in *Scientific Research Corporation* (http://www.scirp.org/journal/ojpp).

Wilcox, D. L. (2019).Dialogic Communication Theory in the Age of Corporate Activism: A Postmodern Perspective. *Communication and Median Asia Pacific (CMAP)* 2 (1), *1-10.*