



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***CAUSES OF AND PEOPLE'S RESPONSES TO PETRO-CONFLICT IN
THE
NIGER DELTA REGION OF NIGERIA***

ONWUBIKO ONYEMAECHI FREDERICK Jnr.

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**CAUSES OF AND PEOPLE'S RESPONSES TO PETRO-CONFLICT IN THE
NIGER DELTA REGION OF NIGERIA**

By

ONWUBIKO ONYEMAECHI FREDERICK Jnr.

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
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Philosophy**

April 2016

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

CAUSES OF AND PEOPLE'S RESPONSES TO PETRO-CONFLICT IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION OF NIGERIA

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April 2016

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Petro-conflict in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria has caused significant disruption of oil business and loss of lives over five decades. The crises escalated from the struggle between the indigenous and the Nigerian government to control oil exploration. In order to understand the causes and responses of the indigenous Niger Delta people to the Petro-conflict, qualitative research methods based on the narrative method of inquiry were used to collect data from the three actors namely; the indigenous people, the oil and gas companies (OGCs) and Nigerian government representatives. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the causes of petro-conflict and responses in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. The study is guided by the following research objectives;

1. To investigate the main causes of Petro-conflict in the Niger Delta region.
2. To explore provocative confrontations leading to the use of firearms by the militia group to protect the interest of the indigenous Niger Delta.
3. To examine the effect of oil exploring activities by the oil companies in the Niger Delta region.
4. To identify the strategies used by Nigerian government to restore peace in the Niger Delta region.
5. To investigate the perception of the indigenous Niger Delta people towards establishing a lasting peace in the region.

The criteria for data collection were that the informants must have had a minimum of 25 years experience of the Petro-conflict in the area. This strategy was used to ensure that the informants supply sufficient data to describe various crises over a reasonable period. This is necessary to gain more insight on the qualitative data obtained through an in-depth interview conducted at the convenience of 12 informants comprising of 4 each from the three actors. Content analysis was used to extract relevant data corresponding to the experiences of the informants. Crisis Decision Theory postulated by Sweeny's and Coping Theory by Lazarus and Folkman's were

used to explain the causes and responses of the indigenous Niger Delta people to the Petro-conflict. Nigeria government decision and concern was mainly for the interest of protecting the oil resources and neglected the welfare of the indigenous people. This further stir-up among the indigenous because, oil activities has damaged their agricultural lands and rivers, which is their primary sources of livelihood. Research findings shows that the Petro-conflict was intensified by the unfair decision by government. The militant group comprising of indigenous youth often aggressively confronts military forces, further disrupts, and destroys oil and gas pipeline and oil activities. For oil activities to continue, Nigerian government mobilizes the military forces to guard oil exploration activities in the region. The expectation of the indigenous such as providing job opportunities and alternative sources of livelihood has not been satisfied and the Petro-conflict has affected the entire region. The Petro-conflict remains a threat in the Niger Delta area as long as the interest of the government is devoted to the resources rather than the people. Although organizing an interview for data collection was very difficult in the Niger Delta area, the research method was appropriate to explore the causes of the Petro-conflict and the responses of the indigenous people.

Abstrak tesis yang di kemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

PUNCA KONFLIK MINYAK DAN TINDAKBALAS PENDUDUK DI WILAYAH DELTA NIGER DI NIGERIA

Oleh

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Konflik minyak di kawasan Delta Niger telah menyebabkan gangguan yang ketara kepada perniagaan minyak dan mengakibatkan banyak kematian sejak lima dekad yang lalu. Krisis bermula daripada perebutan kuasa untuk mengawal penerokaan minyak antara penduduk tempatan dan kerajaan Nigeria. Bagi memahami punca konflik dan tindakbalas dalam kalangan penduduk tempatan Delta Niger terhadap konflik minyak, kaedah kualitatif berdasarkan kaedah naratif telah digunakan untuk mengutip data daripada tiga golongan iaitu; penduduk tempatan, pegawai syarikat minyak dan gas, dan wakil kerajaan Nigeria. Tujuan kajian kualitatif ini ialah untuk memahami punca konflik minyak dan tindakbalas dalam kalangan penduduk tempatan Delta Niger. Kajian ini adalah berdasarkan kepada objektif kajian berikut:

1. Menyiasat punca utama konflik-petro di Wilayah Delta Niger,
2. Meneroka perbalahan provokatif yang membawa kepada penggunaan senjata oleh kumpulan militan bagi melindungi kepentingan penduduk asal Wilayah Delta Niger,
3. Meneliti kesan akibat aktiviti penerokaan minyak oleh syarikat minyak kepada Wilayah Delta Niger,
4. Mengenalpasti strategi yang digunakan oleh kerajaan Nigeria untuk mengembalikan keamanan di Wilayah Delta Niger,
5. Menyiasat persepsi penduduk asal Wilayah Delta Niger ke arah mewujudkan keamanan berkekalan.

Kriteria informan yang digunakan untuk pengumpulan data ialah mereka yang mempunyai sekurang-kurangnya 25 tahun pengalaman dalam konflik minyak di kawasan berkenaan. Strategi ini digunakan untuk memastikan informan memberi maklumat adalah tepat dan benar untuk dapat menerangkan pelbagai situasi yang berlaku pada tempoh yang munasabah. Ini amatlah perlu untuk mendapatkan pandangan yang lebih tepat terhadap data kualitatif yang diperolehi melalui temubual secara terperinci yang dijalankan mengikut kesesuaian masa kesemua 12 informan

iaitu yang terdiri daripada empat orang bagi setiap golongan berkenaan. Analisis kandungan telah digunakan untuk mendapatkan data yang relevan hasil dari pengalaman informan. Teori Keputusan Krisis Sweeny dan Teori Kendalian Lazarus telah digunakan untuk menerangkan punca konflik dan tindakbalas dalam kalangan penduduk tempatan Delta Niger terhadap konflik minyak. Kerajaan Nigeria hanya membuat keputusan dan amat prihatin kepada usaha melindungi sumber minyak dan telah mengabaikan kebajikan penduduk tempatan. Keadaan ini telah membangkitkan kemarahan penduduk tempatan dimana aktiviti pengeluaran minyak telah mengakibatkan pencemaran tanah pertanian dan sungai yang merupakan sumber utama kehidupan mereka. Hasil kajian mendapati konflik minyak telah bertambah hebat oleh kerana ketidak adilan dalam membuat keputusan oleh pihak kerajaan. Kumpulan militan yang terdiri daripada belia penduduk tempatan telah bertindak balas secara agresif terhadap pihak tentera dan seterusnya mengganggu dan memusnahkan saluran paip dan aktiviti pengeluaran minyak dan gas. Bagi memastikan pengeluaran minyak berterusan, pihak Kerajaan Nigeria telah menggerakkan angkatan tentera untuk mengawal aktiviti pencarian minyak di wilayah berkenaan. Harapan penduduk tempatan untuk mendapatkan peluang pekerjaan dan sumber kehidupan alternatif tidak tercapai dan konflik minyak telah memberi kesan kepada keseluruhan kawasan. Konflik minyak akan kekal menjadi ancaman di Delta Niger selagi pihak Kerajaan Nigeria hanya memberi kepentingan terhadap sumber minyak berbanding dengan pembangunan penduduk. Walaupun pengurusan pengumpulan data melalui temubual di kawasan Delta Niger adalah amat sukar, kaedah kajian yang digunakan ini adalah sesuai untuk memahami punca konflik dan tindakbalas dalam kalangan penduduk tempatan.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 8 April 2016 to conduct the final examination of Onwubiko Onyemaechi Frederick, Jnr on his thesis entitled "Causes of and People's Responses to Petro-Conflict in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MNCs	Multinational Companies
OGCs	Oil and Gas Companies
R1	Informants (Indigenous)
R2	Informants (OGC)
R2	Informants (Government Representatives)



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The Niger Delta area of Nigeria has been noted for consistent conflicts region over the last five decades (Abraham, 2011) which later intensified in the 1990s and has continued (Ghazvinian, 2007; Kashubsky, 2008; OmejeWatts, 2006). The conflict has interrupted discussions on the oil wealth distribution as violent attacks on oil installations and hostage threats by local fighters persisted (Eberlein, 2006; Kashubsky, 2008; Long, 2007; Omeje, 2006; O'Rourke, 2007). The reoccurring conflicts have caused a substantial disruption of life and the business and have got extensive publicity that affect operations of several oil and gas companies and the lifestyles of the indigenous with political, legal, and fiscal implications (Warner and Palfreyman, 2003). Ojakorotu (2011) described the slip in the Niger Delta in Nigeria as a 'situation that is synonymous instability and baffling security'.

The indigenous people intensified their efforts to destabilize the oil exploration of the companies in their land with the intention to take over control of the oil resources and to control excessive pollution within their living environment. To the government, the indigenous are constantly struggling to subdue the government security and accused the government of purposefully ignoring and taking over their land without considering their input to the national growth and the nation's economic well-being. The consequences, as exposed by events ongoing in the Niger Delta, have been kidnappings of nationals and expatriates for ransom, destruction of petroleum and gasoline installations, environmental pollution and degradation, and loss of receipts due to inability to work in some fields, among others (Ngomba-Roth, 2007; Obi, 2010; Abidde, 2011; Oriola, 2011).

Presently, the uprising in the Niger Delta has become an international concern affecting oil and gas workers and their wellbeing, the oil exploration activities as well as families and relatives of those involved in various activities and their facilities. A study by Abidde (2011), reported that oil and gas companies (OGCs) in the area spend huge sums of money to protect their workers and facilities, and are subject to kidnapping and destruction by the indigenous. As government intensifies their effort in struggling to fully control oil activities in the areas, their focus remains on the economic value of oil and gas rather than to restore peace and order for the interest of the inhabitants. In an attempt to control frequent uprising in the Niger Delta region, the government and OGC spend huge sums of money in paying for security and buying security infrastructure, lives are lost, increased environmental hazards such as pollution and smog continues and oil workers are kidnapped (Abidde, 2011). There is a high risk of destroying the facilities used by the OGC workers as government forces are fiercely confronted by the militants who use sophisticated fire arms and weapons to disengage workers from oil exploration activities. The militants

are difficult to handle because they are familiar with the environmental terrain and this makes it very difficult for any non-indigenous to navigate the area (Abidde, 2011). The increasing negative impact of the deep-rooted uprising in the Niger Delta area can no longer be overlooked owing to the increasing cost incurred in maintaining and replacing vandalized equipments as well as loss of lives.

Past experiences gained from previous literature studies have shown that further ignoring issues in the Niger Delta heightened the risk of business activities and the lives of those living in the area being in great danger. Regester and Larkin emphasized that, "An issue ignored is a crisis ensured" (Regester and Larkin, 2008). Studies by Mitroff and Anagnos (2005); Warner and Palfreyman (2003) asserted that tribal conflicts require immediate attention and could potentially lead to escalation with devastating consequences. Therefore, resolving the Petro-conflict in the Niger Delta region is a complex issue requiring mutual agreement and understanding among the parties involved. To ensure a lasting peace, it has become essential to focus on the emerging issues, especially those that can significantly influence the actors (the government, OGC and the indigenous) as well as the entire nation and global businesses. A study has shown that the consequences arising from a widespread uprising could become sources of international concern if it were unsuccessfully managed. The case of Niger Delta represents a typical form of conflict that started in the remote communities and spreads to the town as it intensifies. The experiences in the Niger Delta crises have shown that the nation has been destabilized since the crises intensified in the 1990's and has claimed not only properties and facilities used for oil exploration, but also lives of the indigenous, the lives of OGC workers and expatriates as well as Nigerian security personnel, especially the military (the army, navy and the police) who were sent for peacekeeping in the areas.

The crises have further led to the closure of businesses and limited the opportunities to trade with other neighboring states including affecting international relations. Prompt attention is needed to put a stop to the increasing tension and to establish a lasting solution to improve the lives of the inhabitants as well as business. Although several efforts made to manage the crises have yielded little success and the region is still considered unsafe, the present research tends to understand the causes of the escalation of the crisis in an attempt to proffer practicable and lasting solution to the Petro-conflict that has ruined useful resources and claimed lives and properties.

A study by Watts (2010) have shown that the Niger Delta peoples' intention is to fully exercise total control over the oil and gas in the region and be provided with sustainable income sources. Consistent access to considerable parts of the oil and gas resources could be helpful to take care of most of their domestic needs. This step can help in reducing the poverty that has affected most families. This could equally support national development and peaceful relationship among the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region. It has been very difficult to implement a peaceful negotiation in the region because the Nigerian government does not show any interest to let go their hold on the natural resources in the area.

This the Nigeria governments do to deprive the indigenous the right to control resources in the region and to justify their claims (Ikelegbe, 2006). Implementing the strategies and policies that threatens the rights and claims of the Niger Delta people has further threaten the indigenous and further deteriorated opportunities for peaceful negotiation. The OGC's has often been accused of not fulfilling their corporate responsibilities to the indigenous. Accusations and neglect of the Niger Delta abound yet there has not been any reasonable peace setup to foster peace and resolve the dispute. Niger Delta indigenous has experienced difficulty in meeting their daily needs as government and OGC's failed to show any sign of concern to resolve their problem but refused a peaceful movement to prevent further escalation (Kemshall & Pritchard, 2007; Mitroff & Anagnos, 2005; Regester & Larkin, 2008; Warner & Palfreyman, 2003). Such attitude has raised anger and intensified the uprising and is consistent with previous literature studies that were reviewed in this study.

A clear understanding of the Petro-conflict is needed to provide a lasting peace and ensure a timely response to control issues that are like to be resolved earlier before they are out of control especially in cases crises continued without reasonable intervention from the governing authority. Therefore, to put a stop to further deterioration in the Niger Delta region, it is important to establish a lasting peaceful solution. In an attempt to achieve this, the present study is structured to address questions that focus on understanding how the disputes deteriorated and has become a global concern. In addressing the research questions, appropriate recommendations were suggested to maintain peace and order as well as preventing further escalating of crises in the region.

Oil exploitation began in 1956 in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria at a production level of 5100 barrels per day (p/d) and was exported to the Europeans. The production level rose to 20000 barrels p/d before independence in 1960. In 1961, the production increased to 46000 p/d and this led to the development of the trans Niger oil pipeline in 1965. The exploitation of the offshore oil fields later increased oil production to 275 000 p/d to 420 000 prior to the commencement of the civil war in Nigerian in 1967 that lasted until 1970 (Ojakora, 2011). "The civil war time slightly affected oil production, which significantly increased to 2.06 million p/d in 1973. As of 1972, oil constituted 83% of Nigerian exports and constituted 17% of government revenue in 1971, 71% in 1973 and 86% in 1975. In early 1990s, oil revenue provided over 90% of the foreign exchange receipts in Nigeria and constituted about 70% budgetary revenues and 25% GDP" (Edokpayi & Metaferia, 2005).

In 1998, the federal government income from sales of equity in crude oil' was US\$7. 706 billion and from royalty and Petroleum Profits Tax, US\$4. 288 billion, which add up to 88% of the government's foreign exchange earnings in 1997. Until present, oil has been the major source of revenue that sustains the Nigerian economy. In a Report and Statement of Account for the year 2000, the Central Bank of Nigeria stated that "oil accounted for N1.59 trillion or 83.5% of the total gross revenue" for the year (Okoro, 2004; CBN, 2009).

The federal government has a total control over oil resources produced only from the Niger Delta region. The federal government of Nigeria gave out oil, mining right to the oil and gas companies and receives rents from them. Nigerian law of property section 16 of the Interpretation Act 1964 explicitly removed mineral oils in explaining what comprises the land. Oil was owned by the state and was part of the land because it supports oil; it was initially controlled by the families and communities till 1978 when the Land Use Act was promulgated as a Decree by a military government with the right of access to the land for its operations (Winter, 2007). Most scholarly works on oil exploitation activities in the Niger Delta have concentrated on their increasing impact on the living environment and the risk of oil, mining and the under-development of the Niger Delta region despite the huge revenue oil exploitation have yielded to the Nigerian state. The present study focuses on the causes of the Niger Delta Petro-conflict, strategies to control the conflict, and to obtain in-depth information on the effect of the conflict on the inhabitants, living environment and recommend ways to resolve the deep-rooted conflict.

1.2 Background of the study

Nigeria is the most populous countries in West Africa and the most populated country in Africa (Ojakorotu, 2011; Uyigue & Agho, 2007). The Niger Delta comprises of approximately 26,000 Km² in the southerly region of the state with approximately 10,000 Km² of wetlands in the rain forest of Nigeria (Uyigue & Agho, 2007). Ojakorotu described the region as one of the richest locations globally based on the availability of mineral resources, different species of plants, animals and human thrive. This region supplies 90 % of Nigeria's 2.3 million of barrels of oil produced p/d constituting 80% of the nation's revenue (Ojakorotu, 2011). The Niger Delta region constitutes several states which are Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers state. 95 % of Nigeria foreign exchange earning comes from oil and gas production and has been increased since the discovery of oil in 1956 (5100 barrels p/d) to the present day(over 2 million barrels p/d). All the oil and gas production recorded till date were mined from the Niger Delta (Ojakorotu, 2011).

In contrary, the initial constitution of Nigeria stipulated that 50% of the total revenue from the oil producing states is to be invested back to the states to support the development of the oil producing region. In a study Ngomba-Roth (2007), noted that the allocation of oil revenue was reduced from 20% in 1975 to 1.5%. As the indigenous people began to pressure the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and the Multinational Companies (MNCs) to respond to their corporate responsibility towards the people and the development of the region, government and the oil companies could not show any concern even to increase the allocation to 50 % of the total oil revenue that was initially agreed upon. The negligence of the Nigerian government and the oil companies to the request of the indigenous heightened looming of crises in the region. The allocation which was supposed to be 50 % dropped to 1.5 and later increased to 3% in 1992 and further to 17% in 2005(Ngomba-Roth, 2007). The changes were attributed to the high level of corruption between the Nigerian government and the Niger Delta leaders on reducing

the allocated revenue irrespective of several complaints that the allocation was sufficient to sustain the people. Most community members receive little earning in the form of compensation through rent for acquiring the oil lands which unfortunately are directed by the government.

Major sources of livelihood available for the people of the Niger Delta were identified by Opukri and Ibaba and include subsistence level of farming because of limited space after the oil land were taken away from the indigenous, fishing in the unpolluted streams and rivers, hunting and small scale trading especially on agricultural produce basically foodstuffs (Opukri & Ibaba, 2008). Excessive pollution from the oil and gas companies that degraded the living environment further reduced the available means of livelihood and exposes them to different types of diseases. The high level of land and water pollution drastically affected farming activities as well as fishing because oil spilled lands are no more useful for agriculture while rivers and streams polluted by oil lead to the death of the fishes that serves as a source of food to the indigenous. In addition, consistent gas flaring over the years reduced visibility and has affected hunting in the limited available land. Collectively, the insufficient farmland, fishing pond and hunting space can no longer sustain the growing population without government incentives (Opukri & Ibaba, 2008).

The needs to improve the living standard of the Niger Delta people “prompt for a clear understanding of the cause of the prolonged Petro-conflict that have affected the lives and properties as well as national peace”. Consequently, the indigenous solely depended on goods produced from other areas which are usually sold at exorbitant rates. Due to lack of good roads and transportation means, domestic items are usually sold in the towns which often make it difficult for the poor community to support their families with the limited sources of income. Also, the oil and gas workers are mostly foreigners and can afford to buy things at any rate. This makes it more difficult for the indigenous to live in the same environment with them. At this, the root cause of the Petro-conflict can be traced from insufficient means of sustenance arising from the limited sources since the commencement of oil exploitation in the region. The metallic roofing sheets, especially for those living close to the oil companies, especially the refinery is frequently changed because of acid rain resulting from excessive pollution that corrodes the roofing sheets. Frequent rainfall in the region, especially during the training session necessitate for a regular changing of the roofing sheet yearly (O’Neill, 2007).

However, the indigenous Niger Delta struggles to meet their family need and losses resulting from pollution and higher cost of living. The challenges in this area made life very miserable and there has been no lasting solution to ease the tension among the people. Lack of good roads, good drinking water, decent homes, and high cost of electricity, lack of schools and educational facilities and health services further makes the environment unfit for living (Mahler, 2010; Ngomba-Roth, 2007; Watts, 2010). These problems added to the frustration that has heightened the Petro-conflict as the government and OGC were unable to fully support the living expenses of the people. Although the discovery of oil and gas in the area has added to national

development, the Niger Delta people are yet to receive adequate attention needed to improve the living standard of the inhabitants especially the indigenous.

As Nigerian government and the oil companies benefit from the oil activities, anger grows among the people of the Niger Delta who believed that they have been forcefully marginalized by using their natural resources to develop other areas of the country that has no oil especially the northern part (Watts, 2010). The struggles for resource control continues in the area until appropriate measures that can substantially alleviate the burden of the people are established.

Poverty has been considered a norm in the Niger Delta region owing to the unavailability of basic necessities of life. Lishman (2007) exerted that poverty depicts the lack of adequate income to cater for livelihoods resulting in hunger and malnutrition; illness and health problems. Lack of access to quality education and learning infrastructures and services increases poverty level and unsafe environment leading to social crises as witnessed in the Niger Delta region over the past five decades. The consistent Petro-conflict has been synonymous with social discrimination, kidnapping, vandalizing of pipeline infrastructures, killing and destruction of properties. The situation intensified because of lack of proper decision-making that positively impact the social and cultural life of the indigenous people. Conflict may be caused by different situation among different people.

However, conflict do not necessarily add to national development, but often times, leads to poverty and suffering and loss of sources of livelihoods as applied to the people of the Niger Delta. As it approaches economic recession, sudden poverty leading to austerity especially to the people who are not within the family support or social institutions. Ojakorotu (2011) in a study, pointed to that World Bank's explanation on the meaning of poverty was supported Lishman's (2007) definition. The expatriates working for the OGC from various countries of the world live comfortably and this aggravates the Niger Delta people because they believe that the opportunity should have been given to them. However, the politicians have worsened matters by their opulent attitude and high corruption practices by setting their personal gain and promotion ahead of the welfare of the indigenous people. This also is a setback to a peacemaking process considering the high level of hardship that is predominant in the region for decades.

In the same hand, the attitude of the military and democratic government has not convinced the people that they care about their welfare. This is because there has not been any change in responding to the needs of people towards developing the area, especially in providing health and educational facilities (Obi, 2009). The military leaders failed to show sympathy to the Niger Delta indigenous but instead, blamed them for nurturing the formation of armed militant group to challenge government authority (Asuni, 2009; Mahler, 2010; Obi, 2009). Edokpayi and Metaferia (2005) concluded that the MNCs oil exploration activities in the lands of the Niger Delta were a major cause of the high level of poverty in the areas. The study added that frequent air and land pollution has tremendously affected the limited sources of drinking water, the quality of air, health of the animals which directly affect human safety and the environment in the region. The continuous decline in the quality of life

has been attributed as a major cause of anger and revenge illustrated in the form of confrontational social movement and the use of firearm to attack oil and gas workers as well as government security that were assigned to monitor the area. The regime has been blamed for neglecting to properly regulate the MNCs, for conspiring with them against the masses, and for laws and policies that engendered ethnic clashes that complicated the crises. Social groups emerged to protest the oppression as the MNCs and the regime, through their policies and actions, failed to protect the multitude and the crisis has persisted till the present day.

The present day crisis in the Niger Delta is no longer confined to the region, but has become an international business that involves oil and gas activities, actors as well as folks whose relatives work in the location all over the globe. Oil and gas industries are spending to protect their workers and installations that have become subject to kidnapping and vandalism (Abidde, 2009) while the regime is scrambling to hold its major earnings and to restore peace in order to hold the involvement of investors (Abidde, 2009). Although efforts are continually being made to nurture peace in the region, lives are still being lost, environmental pollution continues, workers are being kidnapped, facilities are being demolished and the government military units are not properly fitted to stop militants in possession of more sophisticated firearms as they work in the familiar environment whose topography is difficult for non-indigenous to navigate.

Experiences from previous literature studies showed that ignoring issues is not an ideal control scheme. Register and Larkin (2008) in their study asserted that issue ignored is a crisis ensured. Previous studies warned that ignoring crises is an indirect way to nurture anger and often lead to frequent escalation that could potentially result in devastating consequences to the national peace and economic growth (Warner & Palfreyman, 2003; Mitroff & Anagnos, 2005). Although it has not been possible to respond to every issue that arose from the Niger Delta region, but it is essential to identify the causes and the effect of the crisis so as to focus on the emerging issues that have the capability to significantly transform the living environment, the oil activities, organizations, the society, the nation and global businesses at large.

The tension brought forth by the heightened crises in the Niger Delta was not expected by the regime, the communities or the oil and gas industries (Edokpayi & Metaferia, 2005; Asuni, 2009; Watts, 2010; Ojakoronu, 2011). This study recognized that a “clear understanding of the crises requires a thorough evaluation in order to control similar situation in the future. This becomes important as different regime has been affected by how the issues arising in the areas have been handled by various government authorities that were sent for peacemaking operation in the past”. This is based on the fact that leadership capabilities influence the quality of decisions that are used to directly or indirectly shape crises conditions of the affected areas. This study, therefore, provided an enhanced platform to the decisions and information management processes among the OGC in the Niger Delta region as well as the government to maintain a peaceful relationship to address the critical situations in the Niger Delta which has been affected by inappropriate management

strategies. The study covered the crucial decisions and management strategies that escalated the Niger Delta crises based on which practicable management strategies were recommended.

1.3 Origin of the Niger Delta conflict

The Niger Delta has become an agitated, restive and conflict ridden region in Nigeria. What began as communal agitation for increased benefits from the several multinational oil companies operating in the region in the 1980s has blossomed to tribal conflict having the state government as epitomized by the Ijaw and Ogoni crises. The crises were hijacked by the militant groups, which since 1997 have taken over control of a considerable number of oil installations and operations (Ikediobi & Marvin, 2010). That the frontiers of confrontation have been extended in the Niger Delta can be seen first by the generalization of violent seizures of oil installations in Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta states, and second by the engagement of other ethnic groups, such as Ikwerre, Ijaw, Ogoni, Isoko and Urhobo, in the violence. The latter has had a significantly negative impact on economic growth and development in the region in particular and in Nigeria in general. In fact, the state of security in the region has deteriorated so much that in 1999 the Federal Government threatened to declare a state of emergency to allow for the employment of more radical and ad hoc methods for securing the peace and saving the country's embryonic democracy (Adigun & Lawal, 1999).

The level of frustration in the Delta Region is so high that even hitherto law-abiding citizens become seduced by militant groups that violently seek ways to change social, economic, and political conditions in the region. Although many citizens are aware that some of these groups are opportunistic and are pursuing purely private ends, there is still very little local opposition, especially since the activities of these militant groups are directed at the oil companies and the Federal Government, two entities now generally considered to be responsible for the dismal conditions in the Niger Delta. During the last two years conflicts have increased in both frequency and intensity and extend to neighboring communities. In addition, each subsequent incident has become more violent and the destruction of property and lives more widespread. There have been brazen seizures of oil installations and equipment, kidnapping of staff of oil companies, and bold and direct challenges to institutionalized authority, including a showdown with security officers. The end result has been the militarization of the area. As Suleiman (1999) notes, the entire region is engulfed in a large-scale insurrection (Adeniyi, 2003).

The militarization of the region is evidenced by the fact that oil installations and exploration activities have been guarded by the soldiers and Para-military police. Since October 1999, the increased threat to oil installations in the region has forced the Nigerian Navy to provide escorts to merchant ships and oil tankers, as well as provide patrols for oil installations (Ikediobi & Marvin, 2010). The Nigerian government, has since 1994, sent soldiers to secure the peace in several protesting communities. Since 1998, such military incursions into villages in the Delta Region

have become increasingly violent, involving many civilian casualties. Unfortunately, military involvement, rather than stabilize the region and secure the peace, has actually exacerbated the problem as more citizens have joined the violent mobilization to improve participation levels of ethnic minorities and prevent their further “marginalization”. One of the most important consequences of the violent approach adopted by the Federal Government to secure the peace in the Delta has been the rise of militarized Youth Associations, most of which are staffed by restless school leavers determined to rid the region of exploitative and repressive foreigners, notably the multinational oil companies and a Federal Government that is apparently insensitive to the plight of the masses.

1.4 The three actors/players in the Niger Delta conflict

To better understand the causes of the Petro-conflict in the Niger Delta region, it was deemed important to recognize the three important players that are involved in the conflict. The main actors include the communities also referred to as the indigenous people of the oil-rich Niger Delta communities (the communities comprise of minority ethnic groups and are non-participants in governance and resource allocation in Nigeria); The multinational oil companies, which since the colonial period, have been exploiting environmental resources in the region; and the Federal Government of Nigeria (Ikelegbe, 2005).

The frustration of the oil communities arose from lack of attention by the Federal Government of Nigeria in providing the needs of the indigenous people in the region, instead the government has cooperated well with the multinational companies to exploit the enormous resources of the region, with benefits accruing to shareholders of the oil companies and other parts of Nigeria. In addition to the fact that the oil communities have not received much of the benefits from exploitation, the Niger Delta people have been left to suffer from the pollution and environmental degradation caused by over five decades of oil extraction.

Disagreement between the actors lead to the formation of the Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) that caused the loss of over 26,460,000 gallons of crude petroleum daily in 1999 (Watts, 2006). Since then there has been increasing tension by the indigenous perceived to be a consistent in the change of power (Ikelegbe, 2005).

Conflicts in the Niger Delta have caused social and environmental regress resulting from the exploitation of oil resources by multinational companies (Ghazvinian, 2007; Kashubsky, 2008). The exploration of oil and gas has seriously the environmental progress and has led to more crises in the region large enough to affect the health of the communities (Omotola, 2007; O'Rourke, 2007).

1.5 Problem Statement

The exploration of petroleum resources in the Niger Delta region has affected the living condition of the indigenous people. The response of the indigenous to unfairness intensified crisis and has caused frequent clashes between the militant group formed to protect the indigenous peoples' interest with the Nigeria forces in the area. The confrontation to oil resources has lead to insecurity to lives and infrastructures in the region. The indigenous in attempt to stop oil exploration in the area has suffered shortage of sources of income. This is because, constant oil spillages has rendered the available agricultural land unfit for farming while fish ponds has been damaged by the oil spillage. The indigenous tend to respond aggressively to oil exploration activities as a way to control the possibility of oil spillage and as an alternative source of income. This aggressive confrontation by the indigenous has led to the formation of armed militant group.

Food insecurity, floods, droughts and epidemics combined to create complex devastating long-term poverty. This complicates the prospects for peace and stability (Abraham, 2011; Obi, 2009). The widespread deterioration of health and recurring famine, which have displaced large numbers of refugees from the marginalized populations resorted to the formation of armed militia groups to advocate for the communities' rights and to fight over control of oil and to engage in violent acts against oil companies in the form of kidnapping of the oil and gas workers.

Lives and properties have been lost to an alarming proportion in the region and there has been an unfair trial notably the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa a playwright and environmental activist and eight other community leaders from Ogoni land in Niger Delta which has rekindled the violent crisis that remained in the minds of the indigenous people since 1995 (Obi, 2009). The attempts of the movement for the survival of the Niger Delta indigenous to gain full access to oil wealth have been frustrated by the Nigerian government.

The involvement of Nigeria military and the OGCs in the Petro-conflict frustrated peacemaking process, inspired violence and delayed peaceful resolution in the region (Edokpayi and Metaferia, 2005). Wife & Agho (2007) offered an insight on the conflict and asserted that peaceful protests metamorphosed to widespread violence and has increased criminal activities. In the case of Niger Delta, the OGCs and the government applies a forceful measure that resorted to a more intense violence that spreads the uprisings to the remote villages. Oil production reduces as oil workers in the area were kidnapped and the facilities were demolished. Vandalism of pipelines rose from seven in 1993 to over 600 in 2000 (Uyigue & Agho, 2007). Increasing tension from rampant kidnapping and oil bunkering among other criminal acts became common and the militants insisted that the OGC must pay huge amount of money before their workers are released. This reduced the activities of the oil workers in the area, although this threat was not agreed upon by all the communities in the Niger Delta region.

Ngomba-Roth (2007) asserted that anytime the basic necessity of the people is not provided, there is a high tendency that conflicts will abound. This seems to apply to the Niger Delta case that was in the early days of social movement looked down by the government and eventually turned into an international concern and has been breeding social crises and angers between the indigenous, the government and the OGC. During the early days, no one anticipated that the conflict could go this far to affect international community and has lasted so long because of the inappropriate measure used in peacemaking. The earlier strategies used by the government and the OGCs tends to provide a temporary solution that later led to further escalation. The same measure could not hold up the situation as awareness was created among the indigenous on the opportunities to make more money, improve their social conditions and environmental degradation caused by oil and gas activities. This information speedily spread to all indigenous of the Niger Delta and they insisted to be granted the privilege to control their resources. The MNCs has a disproportionate advantage over the poor communities and this provided political covering to corrupt government representatives seeking a political position (Ngomba-Roth, 2007).

Edokpayi and Metaferia (2005) reported that the emergence of the MNCs contributed to the high level of poverty and intensified conflict in the areas rather than promoting development and oneness. In the same hand, Ngomba-Roth, Watts (2010) affirmed that the policies of the federal government failed to address the need of the people of Niger Delta undermining the immense contribution of oil and gas to the economy of the country. In supporting the MNCs by colluding with prominent people of various communities to subdue the pressure from the people, they created more strife that resulted in fighting between the communities seeking for sovereignty over others. Power struggle continued among the communities as the actively competed among each other for a political recognition to control minorities in the area. The struggle for leadership only kept them occupied until when the issue regarding resource control loomed larger and worsens by the absence of a responsible and transparency initiative by the government and the MNCs to ease the tension among the people (Edokpayi & Metaferia, 2005; Ngomba-Roth, 2007; Watts, 2010).

The proliferation of firearms according to Obi (2009) and Ojakorotu (2011) started during the ethnic crises. Each group was fitted out by wealthy “patrons” from several ethnicities, not merely for defense but for successful attack of others. Affluent politicians who became ethnic leader provided their clan members with funds and purchased firearms as the communities continually fought for sovereignty. The uprising later extended to the oil and gas production areas and responded by providing military force to promptly protect the OGC locations where their sole means of economy activities lies much on oil exploration. Studies by Edokpayi and Metaferia (2005), Ojakorotu (2011), and Watt (2010) reported that soldiers were allegedly mobilized to openly confront the communities where there were crises. Such temporary peacemaking strategy that forcefully eases tension to allow for normal activities to continue accumulate anger and revenge, especially among those that are involved in the crises and who sees themselves as being treated unfairly.

The frequent crises arising from the desire to totally control and to subdue the Niger Delta communities has led to the possession of firearms. This has encouraged them to resist military force during the conflict and to fight back in the struggle to take over possession or control of the oil wealth. The impacts of the violence are a reminder that the Niger Delta issue challenges both the people living in the region and every Nigerian and influence the producing scale of oil and gas products nationally and internationally.

The government and the MNCs have gained experience in the Niger Delta conflict and have known that using force to resolve conflicts create more social problems and complicate issues leading to greater violence. The wave of conflicts that started in the form of demonstration has reached global attention for decades now affecting conglomerates, indigenous, national peace and expatriates working in the OGCs. Painful consequences and constant clashes are proof that the region deserves urgent attention for a lasting peace.

Though peaceful measures has been taken in the past and ongoing at present by the government to address the recurring petro-conflict crisis that have consumed lives and billion worth of properties in the Niger Delta region, consistent pollution by the OGCs has affected the establishment of a lasting peace in the area. The delayed efforts in using the proper strategy to check criminal activities and to ensure safety in the areas necessitate for a study to investigate the causes and the associated impeding danger to the deep rooted crisis. The problems that were addressed in the present study focuses on the causes of the petro-conflict and the responses of the indigenous people. This was investigated using data from the OGCs, the indigenous Niger Delta communities and the Nigeria government. A study by hanging (2008) recommended that the problems leading to uprising should be investigated based on the experiences of various individuals or group that were exposed to the crises. Based on this, the present study considering the length of time covering the Niger Delta Petro conflict tend to understand the cause of the Niger Delta prolonged crises and the effect remediation strategies used to control the situation.

Research gaps from previous studies on the “escalation in the Niger Delta area focuses on the consistent crises without explaining little on how government decision has affected the indigenous living conditions. This study has explained the causes of the Petro-conflict using a direct data from an in-depth interview that focuses on informant with a minimum of twenty five experiences of the petro-conflict crises situation”. Hanggi (2008) asserted that the gap between human responses to crises can best be explored by obtaining real life experience data that explains the true life interactions. This was necessary in order to reflect the real causes of the petro-conflict and proper solution to various responses that aggravated the anger of the indigenous people.

This study provided insight and reveals how the petro-conflict crisis escalated from social groups to communities and has become a national and international issue at the

top of the nation's agenda. To clearly understand this, the study is confined to answering the research questions provided in the subsequent section.

1.6 Research Questions

This study aims to understand the cause of the Petro-conflict in the Niger Delta and the measures being taken to control rising tension in the area. In order to achieve this, the study is guided by the following research questions:

The research questions of the research are as follows:

1. How did the indigenous Niger Delta people respond to the Petro-conflict?
2. How have the actions of Nigeria forces in the Niger Delta region led to provocative confrontation by the indigenous militia group?
3. How have oil exploration activities in the Niger Delta region affect the living condition of the indigenous people?
4. What are the measures taken by the Nigerian government to restore peace in the Niger Delta area?
5. How has the indigenous people of Niger Delta coped with their perception of how the OGCs and the Federal Government of Nigeria's treatment them in establishing a lasting peace in the region?

1.7 Research Objectives

The following are the objectives of the study:

1. To investigate the main causes of Petro-conflict in the Niger Delta region.
2. To explore provocative confrontations leading to the use of firearms by the militia group to protect the interest of the indigenous Niger Delta.
3. To examine the effect of oil exploring activities by the oil companies in the Niger Delta region.
4. To identify the strategies used by Nigerian government to restore peace in the Niger Delta region.
5. To investigate the perception of the indigenous Niger Delta people towards establishing a lasting peace in the region.

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it investigated the causes of Petro-conflict and the responses of the people to the conflict in the Niger delta region of Nigeria. The strength of the study focuses on exploring how a multi-national company (MNCs) in oil business and Nigeria government has responded to conflict in the Niger delta region. This is necessary because, policies implemented in the Niger Delta communities failed to address the need of the indigenous people. As a way of

revenge, indigenous Niger Delta have consistently shown dissatisfaction to the government by distrusting oil and gas company's (OGCs) activities in the area. Workers in the oil companies have been kidnapped with their children and family members over the period while others has been harassed and threatened. A clear knowledge of the oil activities have been explored in this study to proper solution in the region.

A clear apprehension of the Petro-conflict based on the experiences of the citizens of the Niger Delta, the causal agents and how the crises escalated provides insight to recommend appropriate peace management measures that will mitigate the adverse impacts of further crisis in the country. The strength of the study, therefore, lies in understanding the causes and how the Petro conflict escalated, and to gain a deeper insight on different peacemaking approaches that were not appropriate leading to further deterioration of the situation. Suitable peacemaking strategies were recommended to ease the tension across the region. The recommendation aims at providing lasting solutions to the deep-rooted crises. The findings and the recommendations from this study are not only expected to produce a long-lasting peace and opportunities that will enable the development of the region and the organizations that depends on the resources in the area for their daily production and businesses. This study will prepare the government and the OGCs to identify and properly handle the uprisings and their occurrence in the future. The present study is important if provided lasting peace, security and stability in the area are of high priority. Restoring the region will open doors for more businesses and will in turn lead to the development of the region and the nation at large.

Findings from this study can guide policy makers (the Federal Government of Nigeria), the local councils, the multinational companies operating in the region and the indigenous people of the Niger Delta region in order to provide a conducive co-existence within the living environment. Examples of areas of improvement as an implication of these findings are;

- Provision of adequate social amenities to the host communities.
- Proper monitoring and accountability of funds provided for the development of the region.
- The Multinational companies being more responsive to their corporate social responsibilities to their host communities including taking steps to clean up spillages and leakages and compensate victims adequately for damages as a result of such spills and leakages.
- Amnesty and training for militia groups that gave up their activities to embrace peace building.

The study identifies the causes and the effect of the prolonged Petro-conflict in the Niger Delta, the trend of escalation, and the peacemaking measures that have been used along with their impact. To contribute positively towards resolving the crises, appropriate recommendation were provided to prevent further disruption arising from social crises leading heavy losses to the OGC, the government as well as the indigenous people. The impact of the prolonged crises has affected and continued to affect the oil and gas production level requiring huge expenditure on security with

the risk of opening worker and assets up to jeopardy. The anger of the restive indigenous youth seeking the opportunity to revenge has increased over the years. They have been denied access to a peaceful negotiation needed to improve the quality of life in the area. This study aims to capture lessons based on the experiences from various crises and measures that have been used to curb further disruption of business and lawlessness to restore peace.

1.9 Causes of the Crisis and Peace Making Strategies

OGC oil activities as well as the military and democratic administrations of the Nigerian government did not amount to any significant change in improving the living standard of the Niger Delta people who are crying for attention. The military government failed to show any sign of sympathy to the suffering of the people but insisted in blaming them for forming militant group that opposes the government (Obi, 2009; Asuni, 2009; Mahler, 2010).

Edokpayi and Metaferia (2005) found that the oil activities of the OGCs heightened the level of poverty in the areas and intensifies environmental pollution which is a major cause of the suffering. Pollution affected water quality, air quality, soil viability as well as animal and human health which collectively led to a drastic decline in the quality of life. The military government contributed to lawlessness over the oil and gas activities and for colluding against the indigenous by enacting policies that resorted to clashes among the ethnic; this complicates the situation. Social movement was organized to demonstrate the heightened suppression as the government actions were not nurtured to protect the citizenry.

The engagement of the “military by the government and the oil and gas industries to stop peaceful protests was claimed to have exacerbated violence in the areas” (Edokpayi & Metaferia, 2005). Uyigue and Agho (2007) found that local conflicts and peaceful protests which was initiated as a step to peace-making transformed into violence and organized crimes because the oil and gas industries and the government used violence to quash uprisings. Oil production cut down as workers were kidnapped and facilities were demolished. Vandalism of pipelines rose from seven in 1993 to over 600 in 2000 (Uyigue & Agho, 2007) as well as kidnapping and other criminal activities became yielded higher earnings for rebelling youths which have prevailed over the point. Government tries to checkmate criminal activities and to ensure safety in the areas increased the degree of fierceness. Security was breached as the youths emerged as militants with more sophisticated firearms and crumpled their perceived oppressors until no solutions were in view. The Nigerian government later adjusted policies and fix up a panel for the maturation of the Niger Delta however; corruption frustrated the restore peace in the area. Multinational industries have expressed involvement in addressing the worries over the crises so as to carry on operations. The MNCs later provided scholarship scheme and awarded contracts to the community members, but the opportunities were seized by the leaders (Okoro, 2004).

A series of attempts using dialogue for peace-making produced no results to the uprising in the Niger Delta region (Uyigue & Agho, 2007). The militants enjoyed possessing of firearms and were familiar with the topography and tides of the neighborhood and this made it real hard for a non-indigenous to navigate the area. Most companies, families and workers were forced to relocate as a result of insecurity in the areas, despite the multinational companies spending millions of dollars to strengthen security for their workers and properties as well as to ensure a continual operation.

The militants later diverted their attention to political leaders and wealthy Nigerians (Obi, 2009; Obi, 2010) and more militant groups are emerging as kidnapping increased and spread through to the poor. People are snatched from their families and in the streets, children from schools or while in transit, and the elderly from the countryside. Over forty percent of internal oil production dropped as oil and gas industries cut down operations and took away their workers from the areas and this led the government to publicly seek peaceful negotiations and solutions (Watts, 2010).

Ojakorotu (2011) revealed that the government offered amnesty to militants in 2009 and that reduced the activities of the militants and involvement in different phases of preparation. Nevertheless, the position has not changed as kidnappings persisted and facilities are continually being put down. These peacemaking strategies were not suitable for the Niger Delta people as the region has long been suppressed by the influences from government and MNCs. The continuing impact of the failed peace-making strategies necessitated for a realistic and prompt sustaining solution to the area. It is for this purpose that this study was started to identify the causes of the crisis, how the indigeneous people cope with it and to propose suitable approaches to effectively hold up peace and protect properties in the regions.

1.10 Conceptual Framework

The research was guided by coping theory postulated by Lazarus and Folkman (Hanggi, 2008) and the crisis decision theory by Sweeny (2008). These theories were used to identify causes of the escalation and to understand measured that resulted to intensify uprising that lost control in the hands of indigenous militant group that demanded for compensation from the government. Most previous literature work used to reveal that decision making and policies used by the government to guide the OGCs on the management of natural resources, oil and gas operations, and community relations and development in the region are the sources and the causes and the escalation of the crises (Asuni, 2009; Edokpayi & Metaferia, 2005; Mahler, 2010; Ngomba-Roth, 2007; Ojakorotu, 2011; Uyigue & Agho, 2007; Watt, 2010). These decisions are blamed for the lack of basic amenities and pollution of the environment that destroyed farmlands and fish ponds, denying the indigenous people their major means of livelihood.

The crisis decision theory explores the decision that escalated the crisis and the factors that influenced the decisions. The theory revealed the trends in their decision making processes and was used to examine how the Niger Delta people responded to the conditions that they had to live with such as the pollution of their farms and ponds, which led to loss of income as well as the lack of health facilities and water supply scheme to the people and the areas. The theory was used to determine if the decisions that the government and the OGCs made influenced the decisions and responses of the indigenous and to identify the impacts of the decisions of each player as well as the consequences. The coping theory was applied to explain how various policies imposed on the indigenous people were considered in crisis spots. It was helpful in determining how the people of Niger Delta handled the situations as well as the result of oil and gas operations.

1.11 Conceptualization of Important Terms

Communities refer to the ethnic groups in the Niger Delta region.

Coping strategies refers to the way individual deals with internal and external challenges they saw as a consequence of specific weather or their interest in the crisis (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000).

Crises refer to the situation that produce negatively influences and destabilizes economic activities and poses' potential risk to life (Unal-Karagüven, 2009). It is used alternately with conflict in the present study.

Crises Management refers to the measures utilized to detect crises at the earliest stage at a specific time in an attempt to effectively handle the uprising for peaceful results (Martinet & Kreysa, 2007).

Federal Government of Nigeria refers to the central regulating agency in the state. It is often alternatively used in this study with 'the government or regime'.

Multinational Companies (MNCs) as used in this study entails international corporations usually in the oil sector that work in the Niger Delta as well as in other parts of the world and may extend to be part of other institutions.

Oil and Gas Companies (OGCs) refer to an organization that concentrates on oil, gas prospecting as well as production in the Niger Delta region. Their operations may extend to broader scope, however; the term is alternatively used with MNCs in the present study.

Patrons as used in this study refer to the affluent members of distinct cultural or political groups who support the actions of the group through funding.

Violence refers to illegal or unlawful use of violence with the potential of harmful results on individual or group of people (Kemshall & Pritchard, 1999, p. 10).

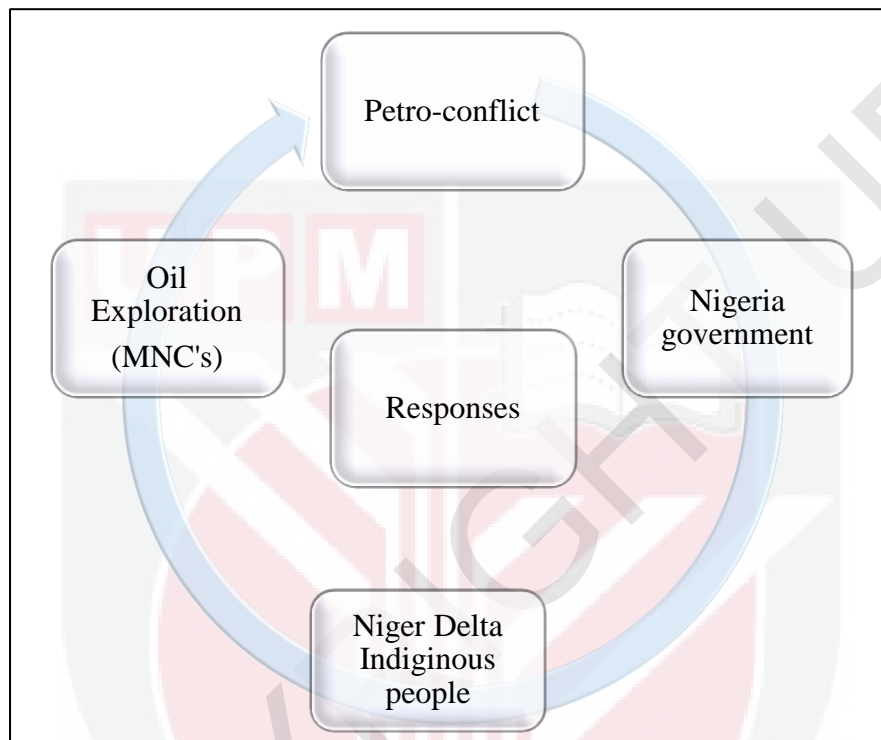


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework of the research

The research framework of this study is as shown in Figure 1.1. The causes of the Petro-conflict was as a result of Nigeria government policy which supported oil exploration by the multinational oil companies which was not considered appropriate by the indigenous Niger delta people. The Nigeria government, MNCs and the indigenous people were considered as the key actors to the petro-conflict. The cause of the petro-conflict was explored in this study through qualitative data collected from the three actors. Direct data was considered appropriate because it conveys the real life experience of the informants which was used to generalize based on the research questions.

1.12 Assumptions

In developing this survey, the following assumptions were taken made:

- 1) The informants are eager to share their personal experiences concerning the Niger Delta crises and to provide helpful hints.
- 2) Different individual experienced the same things, but have different perceptions to expressing their understanding of the challenges of the Petro conflict.
- 3) The shared experiences of the informants represent a true description of the realities of the entire crisis.
- 4) The research strategy utilized a clear and deeper discernment of how the Niger Delta crises escalated beyond the control of decision makers.
- 5) The survey identifies the conclusions of the government and the OGCs that prompted the responses by which coping adjustments were formed by the Niger Delta people.

1.13 Limitations of the Study

The study is confined to the causes petro-conflict and responses in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria based on the view of the indigenous people, OGCs workers, and government informants with at least 25 years experience in the crises region. There is a possibility of the informants withholding to sharing their genuine feelings or providing material data they think may be used against them. To address the limitations, data provided through an in-depth interview was used to align informant's views and to draw a generalized conclusion on the key witness's data from Niger Delta communities, the OGCs worker and Nigerian government security agency. Access to the militant group for oral interviews in their hide outs in the creeks was not that easy hence it took more time than necessary to be able to conduct the interviews.

A leader of one militant group was simply willing to be questioned on the conditions that his personal information remained hidden and no recordings or pictures submitted. Attempts were made to communicate the purpose and benefits of the work to the selected participants bearing in mind that they may alter their ideas. The number of representatives was increased to provide sufficient data needed to understand the causes and the remediation effects on various strategies applied to curtail the prolong Petro-conflict. The inability of the researcher to have the whole interview with this leader recorded or photographed is just among the barriers encountered during the data collection because if the notes the researcher made during the interview were to be lost along the line, the validity of the whole process would have been questionable.

Another limitation was the availability of the limited literature on recent studies on human coping during crisis. In order to address this limitation, recent texts on Niger Delta crises, were applied to improve differing information available in various journals. This was done to provide authentic data that explain the real situation and to ensure that the credibility of the information utilized in this research were used along with published dissertations on the events of the crisis.

1.14 Structure and Description of Chapters

Chapter 1 provided the background information about the subject, the design of the survey, the research questions that were addressed to fulfill the prescribed objectives of the research, the causes and the consequence of public peace-making strategies used in the region, the conceptualized research terms and the conceptual framework. Chapter 2 provided a detailed literature review of Niger Delta crisis, the causes, and management strategies that produce acceptable results, information on crisis management to understand the root cause of the Niger Delta crises by tracing historical records and reports as well as published articles that are essential for a clear understanding of how the crises escalated and spread across many regions. The qualitative research method that was used to answer the research question was discussed in Chapter 3. Empirical data obtained from the informants during the in-depth interviews were presented in Chapter 4. Analysis of the data collected and the results were included and discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 concludes provides the research findings and recommended helpful management strategies to restore peace in the area.

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