



Al-Hikmah Journal of Politics and Public Administration

ISSN (Print): 3121-8814

Volume 1, Number 1, June 2026



KINGSHIP DISPUTES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN IKARE AKOKO, ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

FISAYO SAMUEL, FALUSI¹

¹Department of Peace & Security Studies, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State.

E-mail: falusi.fisayo@bouesti.edu.ng

Abstract

This study examines kingship disputes and their implications for sustainable peace in Ikare Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. Anchored on Social Identity Theory, it explains how lineage loyalties, group affiliations, and competing legitimacy claims intensify succession conflicts. A survey research design was employed, with data collected from 130 respondents comprising traditional authorities, royal family members, community leaders, and residents using stratified random sampling and structured questionnaires. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) and inferential techniques. Findings indicate that kingship disputes are largely driven by ambiguous succession rules, rivalry among royal lineages, intra-family power struggles, political interference, and weak legal frameworks, with a majority of respondents identifying unclear succession procedures as the dominant factor. The disputes have significantly undermined social cohesion, manifesting in mistrust, inter-group tensions, insecurity, and slowed economic development. Results further show that while traditional conflict resolution mechanisms are widely perceived as ineffective, formal legal systems and government interventions are considered more reliable, though only moderately effective, revealing a gap between perceived fairness and actual outcomes. The study concludes that persistent kingship disputes pose a serious threat to sustainable peace and community development. It recommends the codification of succession rules, reduction of political interference, strengthening of traditional institutions, and the adoption of hybrid conflict resolution approaches that integrate customary and formal systems. Promoting inclusive dialogue, youth engagement, and trust-building initiatives is essential for achieving lasting peace in Ikare Akoko.

Keywords: Kingship disputes, Sustainable peace, Social cohesion, Traditional institutions, Political interference, Succession crisis

Introduction

Traditional institutions have historically played a central role in governance, conflict resolution, and social organization across African societies. In many communities, leadership structures evolved around founding lineages whose authority was rooted in customs, ancestry, and communal legitimacy (Addo Dankwa, 2004). Among the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria, the

kingship institution remains one of the most enduring symbols of political authority, cultural identity, and communal unity.

Historically, Yoruba monarchs (oba) exercised political, judicial, and spiritual authority, serving as custodians of tradition and intermediaries between the people, their ancestors, and the supreme deity, Olódùmarè (Onipede, 2022). Chiefs (ìjoyè), who occupied subordinate positions within the traditional hierarchy, derived their authority from the king and were accountable to the throne. Pre-colonial Yoruba political systems were therefore characterized by organized governance structures, checks and balances, and mechanisms for maintaining social stability.

However, colonial administration and post-independence political transformations significantly altered the traditional institution of kingship in Nigeria. The introduction of indirect rule weakened the political autonomy of traditional rulers and subordinated many customary institutions to state authority (Afe & Adubuola, 2009). In contemporary Nigeria, the regulation of chieftaincy through statutory laws and state recognition processes has further complicated succession systems and questions of legitimacy. Consequently, disputes over kingship have become increasingly common in many Yoruba communities.

Kingship disputes in Nigeria are often linked to ambiguous succession rules, rivalry among ruling houses, political interference, and conflicts between customary practices and formal legal frameworks (Ahorsu, 2014). These disputes frequently result in prolonged litigation, factional divisions, violence, and weakened traditional authority. Beyond the institution itself, they negatively affect social cohesion, economic development, and community security.

Ikare Akoko in Ondo State represents a notable example of these challenges. The community has experienced recurrent kingship disputes characterized by competing claims to legitimacy, prolonged court cases, and tensions among royal lineages. Given the important role of traditional institutions in local governance and peacebuilding, these disputes have generated significant concern regarding their implications for sustainable peace and community stability.

Although several studies have examined chieftaincy disputes in Nigeria, limited scholarly attention has been paid to their specific implications for sustainable peace in Ikare Akoko. Existing literature has focused largely on the causes and legal dimensions of succession conflicts, with less emphasis on their effects on social trust, cohesion, and local security. This study therefore investigates the causes of kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko, examines their

implications for sustainable peace, and evaluates the effectiveness of traditional and modern conflict resolution mechanisms in addressing the conflicts.

Statement of the Problem

The kingship institution has historically served as a vital mechanism for governance, cultural preservation, and conflict resolution in many Yoruba communities. In Ikare Akoko, traditional leadership remains highly influential in maintaining social order and communal identity. However, persistent kingship disputes in the community have increasingly undermined these functions, creating tensions that threaten sustainable peace and development.

In recent years, Ikare Akoko has witnessed recurring succession conflicts arising from competing claims among royal lineages, disagreements over customary succession procedures, political interference, and prolonged judicial interventions. These disputes have contributed to factional divisions, mistrust among community members, insecurity, and disruptions to social and economic activities. The persistence of these conflicts has also weakened the legitimacy and effectiveness of traditional institutions in promoting unity and resolving communal tensions.

Despite government interventions and the use of both traditional and formal legal mechanisms, kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko continue to reoccur, suggesting limitations in existing conflict resolution approaches. This situation raises important concerns regarding the capacity of traditional governance systems to sustain peace in the community.

Although previous studies have examined chieftaincy disputes in Nigeria, much of the existing literature focuses on their historical causes, legal dimensions, or political implications. Limited attention has been given to how these disputes specifically affect sustainable peace, social cohesion, trust, and community security in Ikare Akoko. Furthermore, there is insufficient empirical research assessing the effectiveness of both customary and modern conflict resolution mechanisms within the community.

This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by examining the causes of kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko and analyzing their implications for sustainable peace and community development. The study also evaluates existing conflict resolution mechanisms and proposes strategies for promoting lasting peace and stability in the community.

The primary aim of this study is to examine kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko and analyze their implications for sustainable peace. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. Identify and analyze the root causes of kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko,

- ii. Explore the impact of kingship disputes on community cohesion, trust, and security;
- iii. Evaluate the effectiveness of existing conflict resolution mechanisms in addressing kingship disputes.

Conceptual Discourse

Kingship Disputes and Traditional Governance in Nigeria

Kingship disputes in Nigeria represent a major challenge to the interaction between traditional governance systems and modern state structures. These disputes, often rooted in succession disagreements and competing claims to legitimacy, have significant implications for social cohesion, political stability, and sustainable peace. Traditional institutions historically served as mechanisms for governance, conflict resolution, and cultural preservation within Nigerian societies. Among the Yoruba, including communities in Akokoland, the Oba occupied a central position in political administration and social organization, supported by councils of chiefs and elders responsible for maintaining justice and communal order (Ajayi, 2004).

Colonial administration significantly transformed these traditional structures. Through the policy of indirect rule, British colonial authorities incorporated traditional rulers into the colonial system, often altering existing hierarchies and weakening indigenous checks and balances (Ekeh, 1975). Ogunode (2021) argues that colonial restructuring in Akokoland created divisions among traditional institutions and intensified rivalries between communities, particularly Ikare-Akoko and Oka-Akoko. This historical restructuring contributed to persistent tensions surrounding kingship and legitimacy in the region.

In post-colonial Nigeria, traditional institutions have continued to remain relevant, particularly in rural communities where they function as custodians of culture and mediators in communal conflicts (Oladipo, 2022). However, the coexistence of customary succession practices and modern legal frameworks has created ambiguities in the selection and recognition of traditional rulers. Scholars such as Smith (2001) and Oladipo (2022) contend that political interference has further complicated these processes, as politicians frequently support preferred candidates for strategic advantage. This politicization transforms kingship contests from cultural processes into struggles for political influence and control.

Several studies identify ambiguity in succession rules as a major factor responsible for kingship disputes in Nigeria. In many communities, succession practices are based largely on oral traditions, which often permit multiple interpretations by competing royal lineages. Joseph

(2021) notes that colonial endorsement of particular ruling houses in some communities generated long-term disputes over legitimacy and entitlement to traditional stools. Similarly, Ekeh (1975) emphasizes that economic interests associated with kingship positions, including access to communal land, political influence, and government recognition, intensify competition among claimants.

The persistence of kingship disputes has serious implications for peace and development. Okoro and Bariledum (2019) argue that sustainable peace involves not only the absence of violence but also the existence of social trust, justice, and inclusive participation within communities. In many Nigerian communities, however, succession disputes have generated factional violence, mistrust, and insecurity, thereby undermining local development efforts. This situation is particularly evident in communities where youth are mobilized in support of rival claimants.

Kingship Disputes in Akokoland and Ikare Akoko

Akokoland provides an important context for understanding the dynamics of kingship disputes in Yorubaland. Historically, traditional institutions in the region played central roles in governance, cultural continuity, and social cohesion. Obas were regarded not only as political leaders but also as custodians of spiritual and cultural traditions (Ogunode, 2021). The selection of kings traditionally involved kingmakers, lineage considerations, and spiritual consultations intended to ensure legitimacy and communal acceptance.

Despite these traditional mechanisms, Akokoland has experienced recurring disputes linked to succession and political rivalry. Ogunode (2021) demonstrates that colonial administrative policies and the creation of separate traditional structures contributed significantly to rivalries among Akoko communities. Famoye (2021) further observes that historical security challenges and political transformations altered patterns of governance and intensified communal tensions in the region.

Ikare Akoko represents one of the most prominent cases of kingship disputes in Ondo State. The long-standing rivalry between the Olukare and Owa-Ale institutions has generated persistent tension within the community. These disputes have frequently resulted in prolonged litigation, factional divisions, and violent clashes involving youth groups and supporters of rival claimants. Unlike many studies that focus primarily on the legal or historical dimensions of chieftaincy disputes, the Ikare Akoko case demonstrates how succession conflicts directly affect social cohesion, community security, and sustainable peace.

Political interference has also remained a major factor in the persistence of disputes in Ikare Akoko. State involvement in the recognition of traditional rulers often influences local perceptions of legitimacy, especially where government decisions appear to favor particular factions. The interaction between customary succession practices and statutory legal systems has therefore complicated dispute resolution processes within the community.

Existing empirical studies have extensively examined the historical and political dimensions of chieftaincy disputes in Nigeria. Ogunode (2021) focused on kingship and power politics in Akokoland, emphasizing the influence of colonialism and political restructuring on traditional authority. Famoye (2021) examined security challenges in Akokoland and their socio-political implications, highlighting how historical transformations contributed to contemporary instability. Other studies, such as those by Smith (2001) and Oladipo (2022), emphasize the role of political interference and legal ambiguity in sustaining kingship disputes across Nigeria. However, much of the literature concentrates on the causes and historical evolution of these disputes, with limited attention given to their implications for sustainable peace at the community level.

Furthermore, few empirical studies specifically examine Ikare Akoko despite its long history of succession conflicts and communal tensions. Existing studies rarely explore how kingship disputes affect trust, social cohesion, youth participation, and local peacebuilding efforts within the community. This study therefore fills an important gap by investigating the causes of kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko and assessing their implications for sustainable peace and community stability.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Social Identity Theory, developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979). The theory provides a useful framework for understanding how group identities shape individual behavior and intergroup relations, particularly in conflict situations.

Social Identity Theory posits that individuals derive a sense of identity and self-worth from their membership in social groups. Through processes of social categorization, individuals classify themselves and others into distinct groups based on shared characteristics such as lineage, clan affiliation, or political alignment. In the context of kingship disputes, these categorizations often give rise to in-groups and out-groups, fostering competition and division.

Applied to Ikare Akoko, the theory helps explain how allegiance to particular royal lineages or factions can intensify conflict. Individuals are more likely to support members of their own

group while exhibiting bias or hostility toward rival groups. This dynamic contributes to the persistence of disputes, as competing factions struggle for legitimacy, recognition, and control of traditional authority.

Furthermore, the theory highlights how competition for status, resources, and power reinforces intergroup tensions. Kingship disputes, therefore, are not merely institutional conflicts but also identity-based struggles that can erode trust and weaken social cohesion. Importantly, Social Identity Theory also suggests that constructive intergroup engagement through dialogue, cooperation, and shared goals can reduce prejudice and promote peaceful coexistence.

Scholars have acknowledged both the strengths and limitations of the theory. Brown (2000) and Turner et al. (1987) emphasize its effectiveness in explaining intergroup conflict and group dynamics. However, critics such as Hogg and Abrams (1988) argue that it may oversimplify complex social realities, while Reicher et al. (1997) highlight the importance of considering broader contextual and power relations.

Despite these critiques, Social Identity Theory remains a valuable analytical tool for understanding the dynamics of kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko. It provides insights into how identity, group affiliation, and competition interact to shape conflict, and it offers a foundation for developing strategies aimed at fostering dialogue, reducing tensions, and promoting sustainable peace.

Your supervisor is satisfied with your theoretical choice and explanation. The only major improvement needed is to make the theory more *research-oriented* by linking it clearly to measurable variables in your study. In other words, your framework should not only explain the conflict conceptually, but also show how the theory connects to what you actually measured in the field (lineage loyalty, mistrust, social cohesion, conflict persistence, etc.).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Social Identity Theory (SIT), developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979). The theory provides a useful framework for understanding how group identity influences individual behavior, social interaction, and intergroup conflict. Social Identity Theory explains that individuals derive a sense of belonging, self-worth, and social meaning from their membership in particular groups. These groups may be based on ethnicity, lineage, religion, political affiliation, or other forms of collective identity.

According to the theory, individuals engage in social categorization by classifying themselves and others into distinct social groups. This process often produces in-groups and out-groups, where members of one group tend to favor their own group while exhibiting distrust, hostility, or discrimination toward rival groups. Tajfel and Turner (1979) argue that competition for status, recognition, and power reinforces these divisions and may result in persistent intergroup conflict. The theory is particularly relevant to kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko, where allegiance to specific royal lineages and factions strongly shapes perceptions of legitimacy and authority. Members of competing ruling houses often identify primarily with their lineage interests, thereby intensifying rivalry and reducing the possibility of compromise. This identity-based competition contributes to prolonged disputes, mistrust among community members, factional divisions, and weakened social cohesion.

Social Identity Theory also helps explain how kingship disputes affect sustainable peace within the community. In this study, lineage affiliation, group loyalty, and perceptions of legitimacy constitute the major independent variables influencing conflict dynamics. These variables manifest in forms such as support for rival claimants, intergroup tensions, political alignment, and resistance to opposing factions. The dependent variables include social cohesion, trust, communal stability, and sustainable peace. The theory therefore provides a basis for understanding how strong group identification can negatively affect peaceful coexistence and community development.

Furthermore, the theory suggests that constructive intergroup engagement can reduce hostility and promote cooperation. Mechanisms such as inclusive dialogue, mediation, collective decision-making, and shared community goals can help minimize group bias and foster peaceful coexistence among rival factions. This perspective is important in evaluating conflict resolution strategies within Ikare Akoko.

Several scholars have acknowledged the strengths and limitations of Social Identity Theory. Brown (2000) and Turner et al. (1987) emphasize its usefulness in explaining group behavior, intergroup rivalry, and conflict dynamics. However, critics such as Hogg and Abrams (1988) argue that the theory may oversimplify complex social realities by placing excessive emphasis on group identity alone. Reicher et al. (1997) further contend that broader political, historical, and economic contexts must also be considered in analyzing conflict situations.

Despite these criticisms, Social Identity Theory remains highly relevant to this study because it provides a strong analytical foundation for understanding how lineage identity, group loyalty, and competition for legitimacy contribute to kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko. The theory also offers important insights into how dialogue, cooperation, and inclusive governance can promote sustainable peace and strengthen social cohesion within the community.

Methodology

This study adopted the survey research design, which is appropriate for collecting data on opinions, attitudes, and perceptions regarding kingship disputes and their implications for sustainable peace in Ikare Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. The survey design enabled the researcher to gather information from a relatively large population and analyze patterns relating to conflict, social cohesion, and conflict resolution mechanisms within the community.

The population of the study comprised individuals and groups directly or indirectly involved in or affected by kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko. These included traditional authorities such as the Olukare, chiefs, and kingmakers; members of royal families and contenders to the throne; community leaders and elders involved in dispute resolution; government officials responsible for chieftaincy affairs; civil society actors engaged in peacebuilding; and ordinary residents of the community. The population of Ikare Akoko is estimated at approximately 150,000 people (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

A sample size of 130 respondents was selected for the study. Given the heterogeneous nature of the population, a stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure adequate representation of relevant groups within the community. Respondents were categorized into sub-groups, including royal family members, traditional leaders, and ordinary community members. This sampling technique enhanced representativeness and minimized sampling bias, thereby improving the reliability of the findings.

Data were collected primarily through a self-structured questionnaire designed in line with the research objectives and research questions. The instrument consisted of five sections. Section A focused on respondents' demographic information, while Sections B to E addressed the causes of kingship disputes, their implications for sustainable peace, perceptions of conflict resolution mechanisms, and strategies for promoting peace in Ikare Akoko. The questionnaire items were structured using a Likert-scale format ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree to measure respondents' perceptions and attitudes effectively.

To ensure validity, the questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation by experts in Political Science and Peace and Conflict Studies, who reviewed the instrument for clarity, relevance, and adequacy in addressing the study objectives. Corrections and suggestions provided by the validators were incorporated before the final administration of the instrument.

A pilot study was conducted using a small sample outside the study area to test the reliability of the instrument. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.81, indicating that the instrument was reliable and suitable for the study.

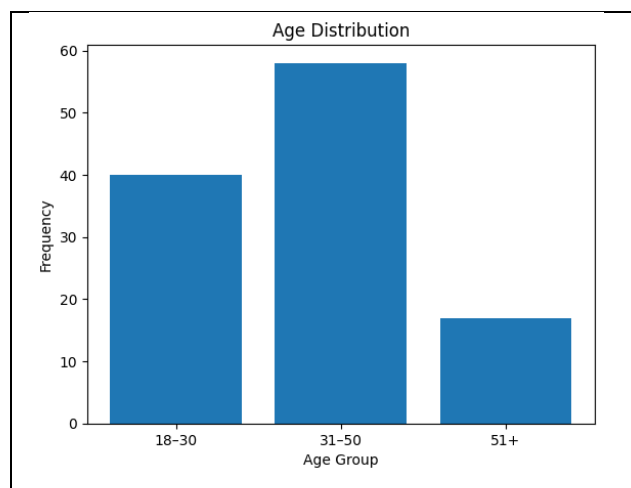
The questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher to ensure a high response rate and proper clarification of items where necessary. Responses obtained were carefully retrieved, coded, and organized according to the research objectives.

Data collected from the field were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools, including frequency counts, percentages, and simple statistical interpretations. Qualitative responses obtained from open-ended questions were analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved organizing responses into themes, identifying recurring patterns, and interpreting participants' views in relation to the objectives of the study. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches enhanced the comprehensiveness and validity of the findings.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the research, and their participation was entirely voluntary. Informed consent was obtained before questionnaire administration, while confidentiality and anonymity of responses were assured. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty.

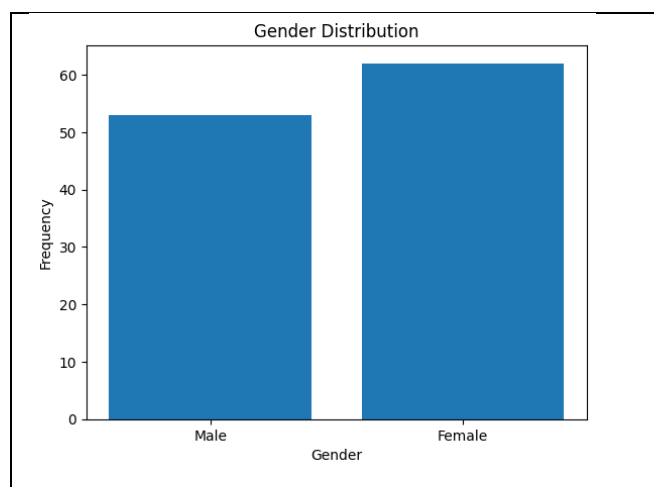
Results

A total number of 130 copies of questionnaire were distributed to respondents and 115 copies were returned representing 88.46%. 15 copies were not return representing 11.54%. Table 4.1 below show the performance of the research instrument.



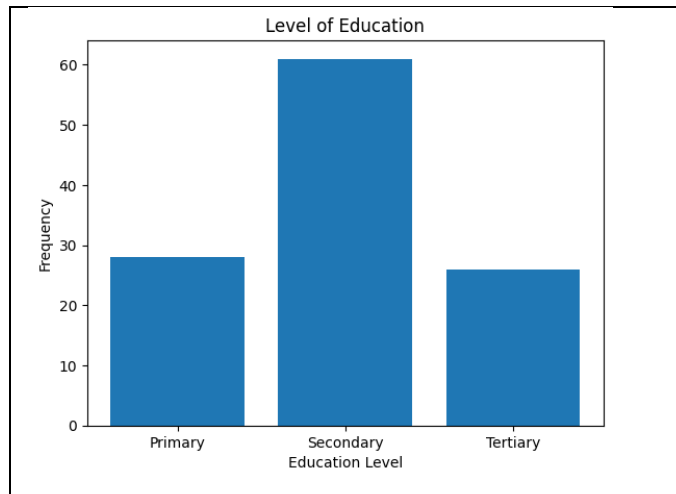
Source: Field Survey, 2026

The age distributions of the respondents on Table 4.2 revealed that 40 (34.78%) of the respondents were between the ages of 18 – 30 years, 58 (50.43%) between ages of 31 – 50 years while 17 (14.79%) were 50 years and above. This indicated that majority of the respondents are between the ages of 31 – 50 years and all the respondents are 18 years and above.



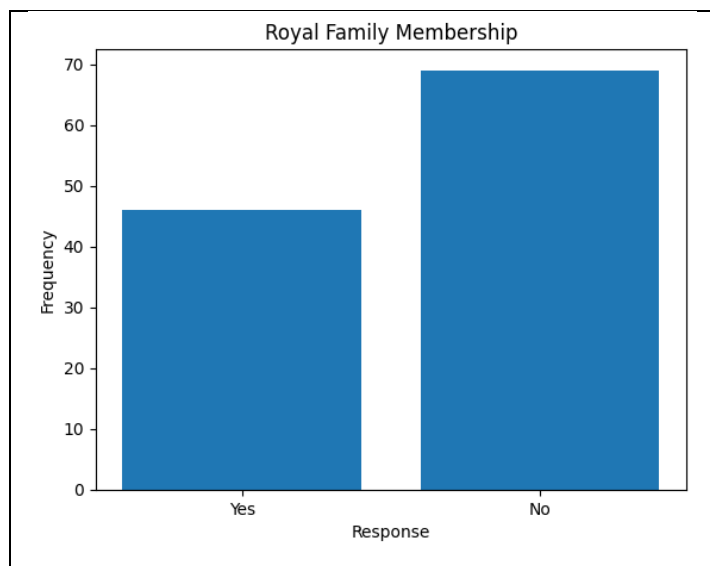
Source: Field Survey, 2026

Figure 2 also shows the distribution of respondents by gender which revealed that 53 (46.09%) of the respondents were male while 62 (53.91%) were female. This shows that majority of the respondents were female.



Source: Field Survey, 2026

The figure 3 further illustrates the information regarding the distribution of the respondents by their level of education. The result revealed that 28 respondents representing 24.35% had primary education and 61 (53.04%) had education up till secondary school while 26 (22.61%) had tertiary education. This means that majority of the respondent had education up till at least secondary school.



Source: Field Survey, 2026

The Figure 4 further indicated the information regarding whether the respondents were members of Ikare Akoko Royal Family. The result revealed that 46 respondents representing 40.00% were members of Ikare Akoko Royal Family, while 69 (60.00%) were not a member. This indicated that an appreciable number of the respondents were a member of Ikare Akoko royal Family while majority were not.

Frequency and Percentage Analysis of the Kingship Dispute and its Implication on Sustainable Peace in Ikare Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria

Research Question 1: What are the historical, socio-cultural, political, and legal factors that contribute to the emergence of kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko?

Table 4.3: Factors that Contribute to the Emergence of Kingship Disputes in Ikare Akoko

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agreed F (%)	Agreed F (%)	Disagreed F (%)	Strongly Disagreed F (%)
1	Ambiguous succession rules contribute to kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko.	38 (33.04%)	32 (27.83%)	27 (23.48%)	18 (15.65%)
2	Rival claims to the throne based on lineage or other factors are a major cause of disputes.	42 (36.52%)	31 (26.96%)	17 (14.78%)	25 (21.74%)
3	External interference from outside powers or individuals fuels kingship disputes.	26 (22.61%)	49 (42.61%)	12 (10.43%)	28 (24.35%)
4	Power struggles within the ruling families contribute to disputes over succession.	44 (38.26%)	37 (32.17%)	29 (25.23%)	5 (4.34%)
5	The influence of political parties and politicians exacerbates kingship disputes.	37 (32.17%)	39 (33.92%)	19 (16.52%)	20 (17.39%)
6	The lack of clear legal frameworks for resolving succession disputes is a	34 (29.57%)	43 (37.39%)	29 (25.22%)	9 (7.82%)

	contributing factor.				
--	----------------------	--	--	--	--

Source: Field survey, 2026

Table 4.3 presents respondents' views on the factors contributing to kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko, focusing on historical, socio-cultural, political, and legal dimensions.

The findings show that a majority of respondents agreed that ambiguous succession rules are a key cause of disputes, with 38 (33.04%) strongly agreeing and 32 (27.83%) agreeing, compared to 27 (23.48%) who disagreed and 18 (15.65%) who strongly disagreed. Similarly, most respondents affirmed that rival claims to the throne based on lineage or other factors significantly contribute to disputes, as 42 (36.52%) strongly agreed and 31 (26.96%) agreed, while 17 (14.78%) disagreed and 28 (24.35%) strongly disagreed.

On external interference, 26 (22.61%) strongly agreed and 49 (42.61%) agreed that outside influence fuels kingship disputes, whereas 12 (10.43%) disagreed and 28 (24.35%) strongly disagreed. In relation to power struggles within ruling families, 44 (38.26%) strongly agreed and 37 (32.17%) agreed, compared to 29 (25.23%) who disagreed and 5 (4.34%) who strongly disagreed, indicating strong consensus on its impact.

Regarding political interference, 37 (32.17%) strongly agreed and 39 (33.92%) agreed that the influence of political parties and politicians exacerbates disputes, while 19 (16.52%) disagreed and 20 (17.39%) strongly disagreed. Lastly, the lack of clear legal frameworks was also identified as a major factor, with 34 (29.57%) strongly agreeing and 43 (37.39%) agreeing, against 29 (25.22%) who disagreed and 9 (7.82%) who strongly disagreed.

Thus, the findings indicate that kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko are largely driven by internal factors such as ambiguous succession rules, lineage-based rivalries, and intra-family power struggles. However, external factors including political interference and weak legal frameworks also play a significant role in intensifying these disputes

Research Question 2: How do kingship disputes affect social relationships, inter-group dynamics, and trust within the community of Ikare Akoko?

Table 4.4: Effects of Kingship Disputes on Social Relationships and Trust within the Community of Ikare Akoko

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
-----	-----------	-----------------	--------	-----------	--------------------

		F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
1	Kingship disputes lead to strained relationships and mistrust within the community.	41 (35.65%)	39 (33.91%)	24 (20.87%)	11 (9.57%)
2	These disputes create divisions and conflicts between different lineages or clans in Ikare Akoko.	52 (45.21%)	46 (40.00%)	12 (10.42%)	5 (4.37%)
3	Kingship disputes negatively impact the overall sense of security in the community.	33 (28.70%)	47 (40.87%)	21 (18.26%)	14 (12.17%)
4	The economic development of Ikare Akoko is hindered by kingship disputes.	44 (38.26%)	28 (24.35%)	25 (21.74%)	18 (15.56%)
5	These disputes have long-term consequences on the social fabric and development of the community.	31 (26.96%)	47 (40.87%)	11 (9.57%)	26 (22.60%)

Source: Field survey, 2026

Table 4.4 presents respondents' views on the effects of kingship disputes on social relationships and trust within Ikare Akoko.

The results indicate that a majority of respondents agreed that kingship disputes lead to strained relationships and mistrust, with 41 (35.65%) strongly agreeing and 39 (33.91%) agreeing, while 24 (20.87%) disagreed and 11 (9.57%) strongly disagreed. Similarly, most respondents affirmed that these disputes create divisions and conflicts among lineages or clans, as 52 (45.21%) strongly agreed and 46 (40.87%) agreed, compared to 12 (10.42%) who disagreed and 5 (4.37%) who strongly disagreed.

Regarding community security, 33 (28.70%) strongly agreed and 47 (40.87%) agreed that kingship disputes negatively affect the overall sense of security, while 21 (18.26%) disagreed

and 14 (12.17%) strongly disagreed. In terms of economic development, 44 (38.26%) strongly agreed and 28 (24.35%) agreed that disputes hinder development, whereas 25 (21.74%) disagreed and 18 (15.56%) strongly disagreed.

Furthermore, the findings show that respondents largely agreed that kingship disputes have long-term consequences on the social fabric and development of the community, with 31 (26.96%) strongly agreeing and 47 (40.87%) agreeing, compared to 11 (9.57%) who disagreed and 26 (22.60%) who strongly disagreed.

Therefore, the findings demonstrate that kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko have significant negative impacts, including strained relationships, mistrust, inter-lineage conflicts, reduced community security, hindered economic development, and long-term damage to the social structure and progress of the community.

Research Question 3: What are the traditional and modern mechanisms currently employed to resolve kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko?

Table 4.5: Traditional and Modern Mechanisms Currently Employed to Resolve Kingship Disputes in Ikare Akoko

S/N	Statement	Strongly Agreed F (%)	Agreed F (%)	Disagreed F (%)	Strongly Disagreed F (%)
1	Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, such as mediation by elders, are effective in resolving kingship disputes.	15 (13.04%)	26 (22.61%)	48 (41.74%)	26 (22.61%)
2	The legal system and court processes are effective in resolving these disputes.	52 (45.23%)	37 (32.17%)	13 (11.30%)	13 (11.30%)
3	Government interventions, such as the establishment of commissions of inquiry, are helpful in resolving disputes.	47 (40.87%)	41 (35.65%)	16 (13.91%)	11 (9.57%)

4	There is a need for more collaborative approaches involving traditional and modern institutions to address these conflicts.	44 (38.26%)	33 (28.70%)	26 (22.61%)	12 (10.43%)
5	The current conflict resolution mechanisms are perceived as fair and unbiased by the community.	49 (42.61%)	18 (15.65%)	29 (25.22%)	19 (16.52%)

Source: Field survey, 2026

Table 4.5 presents respondents' views on the traditional and modern mechanisms used to resolve kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko.

The findings show that a majority of respondents disagreed that traditional conflict resolution mechanisms are effective, as only 15 (13.04%) strongly agreed and 26 (22.61%) agreed, while 48 (41.74%) disagreed and 26 (22.61%) strongly disagreed. In contrast, most respondents agreed that legal systems and court processes are effective, with 52 (45.23%) strongly agreeing and 37 (32.17%) agreeing, compared to 13 (11.30%) who disagreed and 13 (11.30%) who strongly disagreed.

Similarly, respondents largely supported government interventions, such as commissions of inquiry, with 47 (40.87%) strongly agreeing and 41 (35.65%) agreeing, while 16 (13.91%) disagreed and 11 (9.57%) strongly disagreed. The results also indicate that a majority agreed on the need for more collaborative approaches involving both traditional and modern institutions, as 44 (38.26%) strongly agreed and 33 (28.70%) agreed, compared to 26 (22.61%) who disagreed and 12 (10.43%) who strongly disagreed.

Furthermore, most respondents agreed that current conflict resolution mechanisms are perceived as fair and unbiased, with 49 (42.61%) strongly agreeing and 18 (15.65%) agreeing, while 29 (25.22%) disagreed and 19 (16.52%) strongly disagreed.

Thus, the findings shows that although traditional methods are largely viewed as ineffective, there is strong confidence in legal processes and government interventions. At the same time, respondents emphasize the need for a more integrated approach combining traditional and modern systems. Notably, despite concerns about effectiveness, most respondents still perceive

existing mechanisms as fair and unbiased, indicating a gap between perceived fairness and actual effectiveness in resolving kingship disputes.

Discussion of Findings

This study provides important insights into the dynamics of kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko and their implications for sustainable peace. The findings reveal that these disputes are multidimensional, shaped by the interaction of historical, socio-cultural, political, and legal factors. This supports earlier studies which argue that chieftaincy conflicts in Africa are rarely caused by a single factor but are embedded within broader institutional and socio-political contexts (Oladipo, 2022; Dankwa, Asare-Kumi, & Eshun, 2022).

Drivers of Kingship Disputes

The study identified ambiguous succession rules, rival lineage claims, and intra-family power struggles as major drivers of kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko. This finding is consistent with Oduro-Awisi (2013), who observed that disagreements over succession arrangements remain central to chieftaincy conflicts in many African communities. Similarly, Joseph (2021) notes that rivalry among royal lineages and contested claims to legitimacy often intensify succession disputes.

Political interference was also identified as a major factor contributing to the persistence of conflicts. Respondents largely agreed that political actors influence succession processes, thereby transforming traditional disputes into politicized struggles for power and recognition. This corroborates Smith's (2001) argument that political interests frequently intersect with traditional institutions in Nigeria, leading to manipulation and prolonged disputes. Ogunode (2021) further explains that colonial restructuring of traditional institutions created enduring tensions that continue to shape contemporary kingship conflicts in Akokoland.

The findings additionally revealed that weak and inconsistent legal frameworks contribute significantly to the persistence of disputes. The coexistence of customary practices and statutory legal systems often creates ambiguity regarding legitimacy and succession procedures. This reflects Ekeh's (1975) position that overlapping systems of authority in Nigeria frequently generate contestation and institutional conflict.

Implications for Social Cohesion and Sustainable Peace

The study demonstrates that kingship disputes have serious implications for social relationships, trust, and community stability in Ikare Akoko. Respondents indicated that the disputes generate

mistrust, deepen divisions among lineages, and weaken communal harmony. This aligns with Ebiede and Nyiayaana (2022), who argue that disputes over traditional leadership often fracture community unity and destabilize local governance structures.

The findings further show that kingship disputes contribute to insecurity and hinder economic development within the community. Persistent tensions and instability discourage peaceful coexistence and negatively affect developmental activities. This supports Ogundiya's (2010) assertion that instability undermines governance and development outcomes. Similarly, Okoro and Bariledum (2019) emphasize that sustainable peace remains essential for social progress and economic growth.

Another important finding is the long-term erosion of social cohesion caused by recurring conflicts. The disputes reinforce divisions among competing groups and weaken collective identity within the community. This strongly reflects the assumptions of Social Identity Theory, which explains how group affiliations and in-group loyalties can intensify conflict and sustain hostility between rival factions.

Effectiveness of Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

A significant finding of this study is the perceived ineffectiveness of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, particularly mediation by elders. This contrasts with earlier studies such as Nwabueze (2010) and Anene and Duru (2019), which emphasize the historical effectiveness of traditional institutions in conflict management. The difference may indicate that the legitimacy and influence of traditional institutions have weakened over time due to politicization and external interference.

In contrast, respondents expressed stronger confidence in formal legal systems and government interventions, including court processes and commissions of inquiry. This suggests an increasing reliance on state institutions to manage disputes previously handled within customary frameworks. However, Vaughan (2006) argues that the integration of traditional authority into modern political systems often creates tensions that limit the effectiveness of both traditional and formal mechanisms.

Interestingly, although respondents viewed existing mechanisms as relatively fair, many still considered them ineffective in producing lasting solutions. This suggests a gap between procedural legitimacy and practical effectiveness. In other words, institutions may be perceived as fair in principle but unable to deliver timely and sustainable conflict resolution outcomes. This

observation supports Olurode's (1999) argument that institutional legitimacy does not necessarily guarantee functional efficiency.

Thus, the findings demonstrate that kingship disputes in Ikare Akoko are not merely traditional succession disagreements but broader socio-political conflicts with significant implications for sustainable peace, community stability, and development. The study therefore underscores the need for inclusive and integrated conflict resolution approaches capable of addressing both institutional and identity-based dimensions of the disputes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Clarification of Succession Rules:

The Ondo State Government, traditional councils, and kingmakers should collaborate to codify and clarify succession procedures in order to reduce ambiguity, rivalry, and political interference in kingship selection processes.

2. Promotion of Peace and Social Cohesion:

Traditional rulers, community leaders, and civil society organizations should promote inclusive dialogue, youth engagement, and peace sensitization programmes to strengthen trust and prevent the escalation of conflicts in Ikare Akoko.

3. Strengthening Conflict Resolution Mechanisms:

The judiciary, government agencies, and traditional institutions should adopt a hybrid conflict resolution approach that combines customary mediation with formal legal procedures to ensure fairness, legitimacy, and lasting peace.

4. Support for Sustainable Community Development:

Local authorities and community stakeholders should encourage development initiatives that promote social inclusion, economic empowerment, and peaceful coexistence within the community.

References

- Adewumi, J. (2008). Traditional institutions and the challenge of governance in contemporary Nigeria. In O. Vaughan (Ed.), *Tradition and politics: Indigenous political structures in Africa*. Africa World Press.
- Adeyemi, A. (2017). The Ooni of Ife: A monarch with a difference. *Leadership Newspaper*. <https://leadership.ng/the-ooni-of-ife-a-monarch-with-a-difference/>

- Ado-Kurawa, A. (2014). Kano's Emir Sanusi: A reformist on the throne. *Al Jazeera*.
<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/06/kano-emir-sanusi-reformist-throne-201467171616880841.html>
- Afe, A. E., & Adubuola, I. O. (2009). The travails of kingship institution in Yorubaland: A case study of Isinkan in Akureland. *Nebula*, 6(4).
- Ahorsu, K. (2014). A poststructuralist approach to the Dagbon chieftaincy crisis in northern Ghana. *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review*, 4(1), 95–119.
- Ajayi, J. F. A. (2004). *Tradition and change in Africa: The essays of J. F. Ade Ajayi*. Spectrum Books.
- Anene, C. P., & Duru, S. S. (2019). Conflict resolution in traditional African societies: The Nigerian and South African examples. *Ulysses International Journal of Humanities and Contemporary Studies*, 1(1), 94–107.
- Awogbenle, A. C., & Iwuamadi, K. C. (2010). Youth unemployment: Entrepreneurship development programme as an intervention mechanism. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(6), 831–835.
- Dankwa, S., Asare-Kumi, L., & Eshun, I. (2019). Background, cultural values and functions of traditional festivals in Ghana: The case of “Kloyosikplemi” of the Yilo Krobos. *International Journal of Art and Literature*, 3(2), 25–40.
- Dankwa, S., Kumi, E., & Eshun, I. (2022). A descriptive phenomenology of nature and characteristics of chieftaincy succession conflict: A case of Akuapem Traditional Area, Ghana. *Universal Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 291–309.
- Ebiede, T. M., & Nyiayaana, K. (2022). How violence shapes contentious traditional leadership in Nigeria's Niger Delta. *Violence: An International Journal*, 3(1), 65–84.
- Ekeh, P. P. (1975). Colonialism and the two publics in Africa: A theoretical statement. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 17(1), 91–112.
- Famoye, A. D. (2021). *Security challenges and the socio-political transformation of Akokoland in the 19th century* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Inyabri, I. T., Offong, I. J., & Mensah, E. O. (2022). Satire, agency and the contestation of patriarchy in Ibibio women's songs. *African Studies*, 81(1), 23–44.
- Joseph, O. K. (2021). Kingship rivalry and contested heritage in colonial Ekiti, 1900–1958. *Nigeria Police Academy Historical Review (NPHR)*, 54.

- Nnoli, O. (1978). Traditional institutions in African political culture: An introductory evaluation. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 16(2), 203–224.
- Nwabueze, R. N. (2010). Traditional institutions, modern politics, and the state in Africa. *African Studies Quarterly*, 11(2), 33–46.
- Odunsi, B. A. (1996). The impact of leadership instability on democratic process in Nigeria. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 31(1–2), 66–81.
- Oganwu, P. I., & Eshenake, S. J. (2017). Reforming the traditional institutions for good governance in Nigeria. *Journal of Inter-Disciplinary Studies on Contemporary Issues*, 3, 145.
- Ogunode, S. A. (2019). Kingship institution in post-colonial Akokoland, 1960–1999. *West Bohemian Historical Review*, 9(2), 215–237.
- Ogunode, S. A. (2021). Kingship institution and power politics in Akokoland northeastern Yorubaland in the twentieth century. *COOU Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 5(3).
- Okon, O. (2017). Boko Haram insurgency and the prospects for peaceful resolution in Nigeria. *The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies*, 42(3–4), 351–384.
- Okon, O. (2017). Boko Haram insurgency and the prospects for peaceful resolution in Nigeria. *The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies*, 42(3-4), 351-384.
- Oladipo, I. E. (2022). Traditional institutions and conflict resolution in contemporary Africa. *African Journal of Stability & Development*, 14(1&2), 224-244.
- Olurode, L. (1999). State and society in Nigeria. Lagos: Rebonik Publications Ltd.
- Onipede, K. J. (2022). Emergent Issues in Customs and Traditions of Yoruba Kingship and Chieftaincy: The Case of Orile-Igbon and Ibadan. *Asian & African Studies* (13351257), 31(2).
- Onumonu, U. P. (2016). The development of kingship institution in Oru-Igbo up to 1991. *Ogirisi: A New Journal of African Studies*, 12, 68-96.
- Oyemakinde, W. (1978). The Impact of Nineteenth Century Warfare on Yoruba Traditional Chieftaincy. *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 9(2), 21-34.
- Smith, D. J. (2001). Kinship and corruption in contemporary Nigeria. *Ethnos*, 66(3), 344-364.
- Vaughan, O. (2006). *Nigerian chiefs: traditional power in modern politics, 1890s-1990s* (Vol. 7). University Rochester Press.

Xiao, A. H., & Ogunode, S. A. (2021). Oka Day as an institution of power: kingship, chieftaincy and the community day in contemporary Yorubaland. *Africa*, 91(5), 790-809.