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School-Community Relations: The Federal Polytechnic Idah and Her Host Community: The Challenge of Peaceful Co-Existence

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Abstract

The relationship between tertiary institutions and their host communities plays a pivotal role in fostering mutual development, peaceful co-existence, and sustainable social integration. This study explores the dynamics of school–community relations between The Federal Polytechnic, Idah, and its host communities-Ojuwo-Afu, Ogbogbo, Owowo, Okpete, Otobo, and Oko-Ikeke focusing on the underlying factors that challenge peaceful co-existence. Drawing on qualitative data through interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary analysis, the research identifies key issues such as land disputes, youth restiveness, poor communication, lack of corporate social responsibility, and unmet community expectations as major sources of tension. The study also examines the roles of traditional institutions, community leaders, and the school management in managing these challenges. Findings reveal that the absence of structured dialogue platforms and mutual trust contributes significantly to recurring conflicts and strained relations. The paper concludes by recommending inclusive engagement mechanisms, community development partnerships, and regular dialogue forums to promote understanding and a harmonious relationship between the Polytechnic and its host communities. The study contributes to the discourse on institutional-community engagement in Nigeria and offers practical insights for policy reform and peace building at the local level.

Keywords: School-Community Relations, Federal Polytechnic Idah, Host Community, Challenge, Peaceful, Co-Existence

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

The relationship between educational institutions and their host communities plays a vital role in promoting sustainable development, peace, and mutual progress. Higher institutions are typically established with the aim of fostering education, research, innovation, and community service. However, their success often depends on the nature of their interactions with their immediate environment. When such relationships are cordial and inclusive, they foster stability, resource-sharing, and social development (Oni, 2016). Conversely, when strained, they lead to tensions, mistrust, and disruption of academic activities.

In Nigeria, several instances of conflict have been recorded between tertiary institutions and their host communities, stemming from issues such as land disputes, youth restiveness, exclusion from employment opportunities, and social misconduct by students (Ajayi & Afolabi, 2013). Such conflicts compromise not only institutional growth but also local socio-economic development.

The Federal Polytechnic, Idah, located in Idah Local Government Area of Kogi State, has contributed significantly to education, employment, and infrastructural development in the region. Yet, over the years, the institution has experienced intermittent challenges in its relationship with the host community. These challenges manifest in grievances over land acquisition, environmental concerns, community protests, and occasional hostility. Reports suggest that there is an absence of structured frameworks for sustained dialogue and conflict resolution between the institution and the community (Ejeh, 2022).

This study therefore seeks to interrogate the underlying factors affecting the relationship between The Federal Polytechnic, Idah, and her host community, and to propose strategies for fostering peaceful co-existence.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

While The Federal Polytechnic, Idah has undeniably contributed to the development of Idah town, several conflicts have persisted between the school and the host community. These include recurrent disputes over land ownership, allegations of neglect or marginalization by the institution, and security concerns resulting from student behavior. There also appears to be a significant gap in communication and mutual engagement between the management of the Polytechnic and community stakeholders, which has led to mistrust, unaddressed grievances, and reactive rather than proactive interventions (Aderinto, 2015).

Despite various efforts and dialogues, the relationship remains fragile, with peace often maintained on a temporary rather than sustainable basis. This situation not only threatens academic progress but also undermines the social and economic integration of both entities. Hence, this study investigates the core challenges and proposes mechanisms for fostering a mutually beneficial and peaceful relationship.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study aims to:
  i. Examine the nature and dynamics of the relationship between The Federal Polytechnic, Idah and its host community.
  ii. Identify the causes of conflict and tension between the institution and the community.
  iii. Assess the effectiveness of existing conflict resolution and communication strategies.
  iv. Propose sustainable models for improving school–community relations and peaceful co-existence.

1.4 Research Questions

  i. What is the nature of the relationship between The Federal Polytechnic, Idah and the host community?
  ii. What are the main causes of tension and conflict between the two entities?
  iii. How effective are the current mechanisms for managing disputes and fostering communication?
  iv. What strategies can be implemented to improve peaceful co-existence and collaboration?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study holds significance for several stakeholders. For the management of The Federal Polytechnic, Idah, it will provide insights into existing challenges in community engagement

and offer actionable recommendations for improvement. For the host community, particularly youth groups, traditional leaders, and local administrators, the study can foster understanding and promote constructive engagement with the institution.

At the policy level, the findings will be useful to government agencies and education planners in designing frameworks for institutional-community harmony. Academically, the study will contribute to existing literature on conflict resolution, education-community partnerships, and peace building in Nigeria.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This research is focused on The Federal Polytechnic, Idah and its immediate host community within Idah Local Government Area. It explores issues related to land, employment, cultural integration, communication, student behavior, and administrative policies. It does not extend to other Polytechnics or communities outside the specified locality.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

School–Community Relations: The formal and informal interactions between an educational institution and its surrounding community.

Host Community: The local population or town in which a higher institution is situated.

Peaceful Co-existence: The condition where diverse groups or institutions live and interact without conflict, based on mutual respect, equity, and dialogue.

Conflict Resolution: Strategies or mechanisms employed to resolve disagreements and disputes amicably.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This study is structured into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the background, problem, and objectives. Chapter Two reviews relevant literature. Chapter Three outlines the methodology used. Chapter Four presents and analyzes the data collected, while Chapter Five provides the summary, conclusion, and recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section reviews relevant literature on school–community relations, highlighting key concepts, theoretical frameworks, empirical studies, and the context of community engagement in higher education. The review aims to establish a solid foundation for analyzing the relationship between The Federal Polytechnic, Idah and its host community.

2.2 Conceptual Clarification

2.2.1 School–Community Relations

School–community relations refer to the network of interactions, collaborations, and mutual engagements between an educational institution and the people living within its immediate environment. According to Nwankwo (2013), effective school–community relations promote

the sharing of resources, foster mutual understanding, and create a conducive atmosphere for academic and social development. In higher institutions, such relations involve partnerships in areas such as employment, infrastructure development, cultural exchange, and problem-solving.

Joyce Epstein emphasized that schools, families, and communities must collaborate as overlapping spheres of influence in a child's development. She developed a six-type framework for effective partnership: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. This framework remains one of the most influential in school–community relations.

Okumbe argued that effective school–community relations depend on participatory school administration. He posited that community members must not only be consulted but actively involved in school decision-making processes, especially concerning resource mobilization, policy implementation, and conflict resolution.

Ndu and colleagues emphasized that in Nigeria, schools cannot operate in isolation from their communities. They observed that communities often provide land, financial support, and labor for school development. However, tensions sometimes arise when schools fail to reciprocate by meeting community expectations.

Adewale highlighted that schools have a dual responsibility: to educate learners and to contribute to the development of their host communities. He stressed that neglect of community needs often results in hostility, protests, and breakdown of peaceful co-existence.

Ogbodo explored both the cooperative and conflictual dimensions of school–community relations. He argued that while communities provide support for schools, issues such as land disputes, employment expectations, and cultural differences often create conflict. He recommends structured dialogue and mutual respect as key solutions.

Adeyemi and Adu stressed the role of democratic leadership in fostering strong ties between schools and communities. They argued that principals and school heads who adopt participatory decision-making are more successful in mobilizing community support than authoritarian leaders.

The concept of school–community relations revolve around the mutual interaction, cooperation, and partnership between schools and the communities in which they are located. It acknowledges that schools do not exist in isolation but are deeply embedded in their social and cultural environments. Scholars have approached this concept from different perspectives.

Epstein (2001) argues that school–community relations are best understood through her theory of overlapping spheres of influence, where the family, school, and community intersect to support the learning and development of children. According to her, effective collaboration ensures that students benefit from a holistic system of support, and schools gain from community resources, goodwill, and participation.

Okeke (2016) views school–community relations in Nigeria as a two-way communication system where both the school and the host community share responsibilities in educational development. He emphasizes that schools are societal institutions established not just to provide learning but also to serve as centers for community advancement, hence requiring reciprocal support and cooperation from their host environment.

Ogunyemi (2013) conceptualizes school–community relations as a social contract in which schools must contribute to community development through outreach programs, research, and human resource development, while communities, in turn, provide peace, security, and moral

support. He stresses that when this balance is broken, conflicts often emerge between institutions and host communities.

Adejumobi (2014) situates school–community relations within the broader framework of participatory governance. According to him, communities are stakeholders in the educational system, and their involvement in decision-making processes ensures transparency, accountability, and peaceful coexistence. He notes that many conflicts between schools and communities in Nigeria arise from exclusionary practices that alienate local stakeholders.

Amadi and Ordu (2016) focus on the economic dimension of school–community relations. They argue that communities often expect tangible benefits such as employment opportunities, infrastructural projects, and corporate social responsibility initiatives from educational institutions. When schools meet these expectations, cordiality is sustained; however, when promises are unfulfilled, hostilities and protests may ensue.

2.2.2 Host Community

A host community is the geographic and socio-political environment within which an institution or organization is located. It encompasses the local population, including traditional rulers, youths, elders, political actors, and civil society organizations. Aina (2014) observes that when host communities feel excluded or marginalized by institutions operating in their domain, tensions are likely to arise, leading to conflict and mistrust.

The concept of a host community has gained significant attention in the fields of education, sociology, and development studies. A host community refers to the immediate environment within which an institution or organization is located, and whose people bear both the direct impact of, and responsibility for, the institution's presence (Adeleye, 2015). In the context of higher institutions like the Federal Polytechnic Idah, host communities play a critical role in shaping the institution's growth, stability, and peaceful coexistence. A review of six authors provides a clearer understanding of this concept.

Adeleye defines the host community as "the geographical and socio-cultural environment that accommodates a given institution, serving as both a partner and stakeholder in its progress." He emphasizes that institutions cannot exist in isolation, and the mutual expectations between schools and host communities often determine the sustainability of peaceful relations. Adeleye further highlights that conflicts typically arise when expectations are unmet, particularly regarding employment opportunities, infrastructural development, and social responsibility.

According to Nwanegbo and Odigbo, host communities are critical stakeholders whose cooperation is essential for institutional survival. They argue that the legitimacy of institutions within a community depends on the extent to which the institutions align their operations with the socio-economic needs of the people. They also stress that poor school–community relations often result in hostility, strikes, or social unrest.

Omeje introduces the resource–community relationship perspective, noting that institutions often benefit from land, resources, and social services provided by host communities. In return, the expectation is that these institutions should contribute meaningfully to the community's welfare. He points out that when higher institutions neglect this responsibility, tensions and grievances escalate, leading to resistance and breakdown of cooperation.

Okoli views the host community through the lens of social capital theory, stressing that communities provide the social networks and cultural values that sustain institutions. He argues that the success of a polytechnic, university, or industry depends on its ability to integrate into

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the existing social fabric of the host community. He adds that institutions must respect traditions, leadership structures, and local norms if they are to maintain peaceful relations.

Uzochukwu extends the discussion by highlighting the role of host communities in peace-building. He asserts that host communities are not just passive recipients of institutional presence, but active agents that can either foster peace or fuel conflict. For him, host communities are partners in development, and institutions must deliberately engage them through dialogue, corporate social responsibility, and inclusive governance.

Akinwale frames host communities as "agents of accountability." He argues that institutions must recognize that their activities (such as land use, pollution, employment, and student behavior) directly affect the host community. Host communities, therefore, hold schools and organizations accountable for their actions. He calls for the establishment of formal communication channels between schools and host communities to prevent conflicts.

From the perspectives of these six authors, it is evident that host communities are more than just geographical spaces; they are living socio-political entities with legitimate claims and expectations. While Adeleye (2015) and Nwanegbo & Odigbo (2013) emphasize partnership and legitimacy, Omeje (2006) and Okoli (2010) highlight the exchange of resources and social capital. Uzochukwu (2018) and Akinwale (2012) focus on peace-building and accountability mechanisms. Together, these perspectives underscore that successful school–community relations depend on mutual respect, active engagement, and shared responsibility.

2.2.3 Peaceful Co-Existence

Peaceful co-existence implies the ability of diverse social groups or institutions to live together in harmony, devoid of violence, discrimination, or hostility. It entails mutual respect, dialogue, and cooperative relationships (Omeje, 2010). In the context of school–community interaction, peaceful co-existence ensures that both parties benefit and co-develop without friction or resentment.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two relevant theories:

2.3.1 Social Exchange Theory

Developed by Homans (1958), Social Exchange Theory posits that human relationships are formed by the use of subjective cost-benefit analyses and the comparison of alternatives. In institutional-community relations, both parties seek mutual benefits institutions expect community support, while communities expect social and economic returns. If one party perceives an imbalance, the relationship weakens.

2.3.2 Conflict Theory

Conflict Theory, associated with Karl Marx, emphasizes the role of power and inequality in generating tensions between groups. In school–community relations, conflicts may arise from unequal access to institutional benefits such as jobs, scholarships, land use, or contracts. Coser (1956) contends that conflict is inherent in human relations but can be managed constructively through inclusive decision-making and communication.

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2.4 Empirical Review

2.4.1 Nature of School–Community Relations in Nigeria

Empirical studies reveal that many Nigerian tertiary institutions experience strained relationships with their host communities. According to Ijaiya and Fasasi (2012), lack of transparency in institutional operations, neglect of corporate social responsibilities, and unfulfilled promises contribute to recurring tensions. In contrast, Adejumobi (2016) reports that where schools maintain open dialogue and involve community stakeholders in development planning, relationships are generally peaceful.

2.4.2 Causes of Institutional–Community Conflict

Several factors have been identified in literature as responsible for conflict between institutions and host communities. Edewor and Aluko (2007) outline these factors as: Land disputes and encroachment; Lack of employment opportunities for indigenes; Student misconduct (e.g., cultism, noise, drug use); Environmental degradation and pressure on local resources and Poor communication channels and exclusion from governance.

Specifically, in studies focused on Nigerian Polytechnics, Nwankwo and Ekemezie (2019) found that the failure of institutional leadership to engage regularly with traditional authorities and local leaders often results in misperception, rumors, and community protests.

2.4.3 Approaches to Conflict Resolution

Effective school–community conflict resolution involves adopting strategies such as community forums, memorandum of understanding (MOUs), stakeholder meetings, and grievance redress mechanisms. According to Alabi and Okemakinde (2015), institutional peacebuilding must be proactive and should incorporate cultural sensitivity, periodic dialogue, and fairness in the distribution of opportunities.

A case study by Ogunyemi (2020) at a Federal Polytechnic in Southwest Nigeria showed that introducing a Community Liaison Office significantly improved mutual trust, communication, and collaborative projects such as borehole construction and security patrols.

2.4.4 Challenges to Peaceful Co-existence

Despite numerous interventions, peaceful co-existence remains elusive in many institutional contexts. Factors inhibiting peace include: Bureaucratic barriers within school administration; Absence of community representation in decision-making; Insecurity and rising youth unemployment and Cultural and political differences (Ayoade & Okoli, 2018).

In the specific case of The Federal Polytechnic, Idah, previous observations and news reports have noted intermittent protests by youths alleging institutional marginalization (Ejeh, 2022).

2.5 Review of Related Studies

Several related studies support the necessity for improved school–community synergy: Udoh (2011) asserts that fostering mutual trust is crucial in sustaining peace in academic environments.

Otite and Albert (1999) argue that when community needs are not integrated into institutional development plans, conflict becomes inevitable.

In Kogi State, research by Olusola and Ibrahim (2021) emphasized that participatory governance involving traditional rulers helped resolve a long-standing dispute between a state-owned university and its host community.

2.6 School-Community tension in Federal Polytechnic Idah

The relationship between higher institutions and their host communities is often characterized by cooperation, partnership, and mutual dependence. However, this relationship is not without strains. In the case of the Federal Polytechnic Idah, the dynamics between the institution and its host communities Ojuwo Afu, Ogbogbo, Owowo, Okpete, Otobo, and Oko-Ikeke — reveal recurrent patterns of tension, contestation, and negotiation. A review of eight authors helps to situate these tensions within broader scholarly debates.

Clark observes that schools and communities frequently experience tension because of the competing expectations placed on institutions. Communities expect infrastructural development, employment opportunities, and respect for local traditions, while schools prioritize academic excellence and internal efficiency. In the case of Idah, the inability of the polytechnic to meet the rising social and economic demands of its host communities has periodically triggered conflicts.

Omeje, writing from the conflict–resource perspective, notes that tension between institutions and host communities often emerges where land acquisition and resource use are not handled equitably. This applies to the Federal Polytechnic Idah, where issues of compensation, land ownership, and perceived marginalization by the host communities have remained contentious, creating feelings of exclusion and distrust.

Okoli frames school–community tension in terms of social capital breakdown. He argues that when institutions fail to integrate themselves into the cultural networks and leadership systems of their host communities, alienation occurs. In Idah, the neglect of community leadership structures in decision-making has contributed to strained relations, as the people feel disregarded in matters that directly affect them.

Nwanegbo and Odigbo emphasize that tensions often arise when host communities perceive a lack of fairness in employment opportunities. Their argument resonates with the Federal Polytechnic Idah, where host communities frequently demand greater representation in staff recruitment and student admissions. The failure to satisfy these expectations often leads to accusations of bias and neglect.

Akinwale conceptualizes school–community tension as a form of accountability struggle, where communities hold institutions responsible for the consequences of their presence. He notes that issues such as student misconduct, environmental degradation, and infrastructural strain fuel tension. In Idah, recurring complaints about student behavior and pressure on community resources illustrate this accountability dimension.

Uzochukwu identifies conflict mismanagement as a major driver of tension. He argues that when disputes between schools and communities are poorly managed, they escalate into hostility. In Idah, the absence of effective mediation frameworks and regular dialogue platforms between the polytechnic and community leaders has deepened mistrust, making even minor grievances potential flashpoints.

Alabi examines tensions from the lens of educational social responsibility. He argues that communities see schools not only as centers of learning but also as partners in development. When institutions fail to invest in social projects such as water supply, road construction, or

scholarships tension emerges. This is visible in Idah, where community members expect the polytechnic to contribute more visibly to local development.

Kpolovie highlights competition for scarce resources as a cause of tension. He posits that host communities often believe institutions exploit local resources (land, water, electricity) without adequate compensation. In Idah, the perception that the polytechnic consumes much of the town's limited infrastructure without sufficient reciprocation has been a persistent grievance, fueling discontent.

The eight authors collectively show that school–community tension is multi-dimensional. For Clark (1998), it is about competing expectations; for Omeje (2006) and Kpolovie (2012), it is rooted in resource contestation; for Okoli (2010) and Nwanegbo & Odigbo (2013), it emerges from neglect of local social structures and inequitable employment. Akinwale (2012) and Uzochukwu (2018) point to accountability and conflict mismanagement, while Alabi (2015) stresses unmet social responsibility.

In the Federal Polytechnic Idah, these issues converge, making tension a recurring challenge that requires deliberate policies of engagement, negotiation, and inclusion to ensure peaceful coexistence.

2.7 School-community tensions in other tertiary institutions

School–community tension is not unique to the Federal Polytechnic Idah; it is a common phenomenon across tertiary institutions in Nigeria and beyond. These tensions often arise from conflicting expectations between institutions and their host communities regarding land ownership, employment, social responsibility, and cultural respect. A review of selected authors reveals how these issues manifest in other contexts.

Adeyemi highlights that in many Nigerian universities, land disputes have been a major source of conflict with host communities. He cites examples of recurring clashes between the University of Ibadan and its surrounding communities over expansion and compensation. According to him, host communities often feel dispossessed and marginalized when institutions acquire land without adequate dialogue or benefits.

Okafor argues that tensions in tertiary institutions are largely the result of unmet socio-economic expectations. He notes that host communities expect institutions to provide jobs, scholarships, and infrastructural development, but when these expectations are not met, mistrust and hostility emerge. For instance, he points out that communities surrounding the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, have repeatedly demanded greater inclusion in staff recruitment.

Aluko observes that tertiary institutions often face cultural and social integration problems with their host communities. Using the example of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, he explains that institutions sometimes disregard traditional leadership structures, leading to strained relations. He concludes that institutions must respect local customs and actively involve traditional leaders in decision-making to reduce conflict.

Eme and Okeke stress that student behavior is a recurring source of school–community tension. In towns hosting universities or polytechnics, issues such as cultism, noise pollution, sexual harassment, and disregard for community norms create hostility between students and local residents. They cite the case of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, where frequent clashes have occurred between students and local youth groups.

Jega examines tensions in northern Nigerian universities, particularly Bayero University Kano, where religious and political dynamics have sometimes created friction with host communities.

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He argues that higher institutions often become arenas where wider community conflicts such as ethno-religious rivalries are played out, thereby complicating the school–community relationship.

Ojo discusses the case of the University of Lagos and its host communities, emphasizing competition over resources and urban development pressures. He notes that host communities often accuse the university of contributing to environmental degradation, traffic congestion, and inflation of housing costs. This leads to resentment, even though the institution also provides economic opportunities.

2.8 Gaps in Literature

While several studies have explored the general dynamics of school–community relations in Nigeria, few have examined the specific context of Federal Polytechnics and their surrounding rural communities. Moreover, there is limited data-driven research focusing on The Federal Polytechnic, Idah. This study, therefore, aims to fill this gap by using empirical evidence to explore both the institutional and community perspectives on peaceful co-existence.

This chapter reviewed conceptual and theoretical frameworks relevant to school–community relations, with a focus on peaceful co-existence and conflict resolution. It highlighted empirical studies that inform our understanding of the factors driving harmony or conflict between institutions and host communities in Nigeria. The next section presents the methodology adopted in conducting the study.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology adopted for investigating the nature, dynamics, and challenges of school–community relations between The Federal Polytechnic, Idah, and her immediate host communities: Ojuwo-Afu, Ogbogbo, Owowo-Okpete, Otobo, and Oko-Ikeke. The chapter covers the research design, area of study, population, sample size and sampling techniques, research instruments, procedures for data collection and analysis, as well as ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

A descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. This design is appropriate for studies aimed at understanding the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of a population toward a given social phenomenon (Nworgu, 2015). The design also allows for the use of both quantitative and qualitative data to draw meaningful conclusions about the relationship between the Polytechnic and its host communities.

3.3 Area of Study

The study was conducted in Idah Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria, with particular focus on five host communities surrounding The Federal Polytechnic, Idah: Ojuwo-Afu, Ogbogbo, Owowo-Okpete, Otobo, and Oko-Ikeke. These communities are contiguous to the institution and have, over the years, engaged in varying degrees of socio-economic interaction with it. They are affected by issues such as land use, student behavior, infrastructural development, employment, and cultural practices.

3.4 Population of the Study

The population for this study comprises academic and non-academic staff of The Federal Polytechnic, students, and residents of the host communities mentioned. The estimated population includes over 1,200 Polytechnic staff, about 15,000 students, and over 10,000 residents from the five communities combined (Idah LGA Statistical Records, 2023).

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A total of 250 respondents were selected for this study using a multi-stage sampling technique. The distribution of respondents is as follows: 60 Polytechnic staff (academic and non-academic); 70 students (across various departments and faculties) and 120 community members drawn equally from the five host communities (24 from each: Ojuwo-Afu, Ogbogbo, Owowo-Okpete, Otobo, and Oko-Ikeke)

The sampling approach involved: Purposive sampling to select key informants (traditional rulers, youth leaders, elders) in each community. Stratified random sampling to ensure fair representation of various groups within the Polytechnic and host communities.

3.6 Research Instruments

Two main instruments were employed:

a) Structured Questionnaire: Titled "School–Community Interaction and Coexistence Questionnaire (SCICQ)," the tool was designed to elicit information on perceptions, experiences, and suggestions related to the Polytechnic–community relationship.

b) Interview Schedule: Semi-structured interview guides were used to gather deeper insights from key stakeholders such as community leaders, school administrators, and representatives of youth organizations in each of the five communities.

3.7 Validity of the Instruments

The instruments were validated through expert review by professionals in educational research, sociology, and peace studies. Feedback received helped refine and restructure some items to suit the local linguistic and socio-cultural context of Idah and its host communities.

3.8 Reliability of the Instruments

A pilot test was conducted using 20 respondents from Ejule (a neighboring community not involved in the main study). The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient yielded 0.84, confirming the internal consistency and dependability of the instrument (Creswell, 2014).

3.9 Method of Data Collection

Data were collected through the administration of questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. Trained research assistants who understand the local dialects assisted in administering the instruments in the host communities. The collection lasted for four weeks in June 2025. Community elders and youth leaders facilitated access to respondents in each of the five communities.

3.10 Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means with the aid of SPSS (Version 25). Thematic analysis was

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employed to analyze qualitative responses from interviews, using the method proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Themes related to causes of tension, collaboration, and solutions for peaceful coexistence were identified and discussed.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from The Federal Polytechnic, Idah Research and Ethics Committee. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Respondents were assured of confidentiality, anonymity, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Cultural sensitivity was observed during interactions with traditional and community leaders.

3.12 Limitations of the Study

The study encountered challenges such as: Skepticism from some community members due to past unfulfilled promises from institutional authorities; Logistical issues in reaching some remote parts of the communities and Communication barriers with elderly respondents unfamiliar with English.

These challenges were mitigated through local collaboration and language interpretation support.

3.13 Summary

This chapter has detailed the methodological framework employed in examining the school–community relations involving The Federal Polytechnic, Idah and its immediate host communities: Ojuwo-Afu, Ogbogbo, Owowo-Okpete, Otobo, and Oko-Ikeke. By integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods and ensuring local inclusion, the research provides a robust platform for understanding and resolving the challenges of peaceful coexistence.

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the data collected from the staff and students of The Federal Polytechnic, Idah and the residents of its five host communities: Ojuwo-Afu, Ogbogbo, Owowo-Okpete, Otobo, and Oko-Ikeke. The analysis is structured around the research questions and objectives set out in Chapters One and Three. The data were obtained through questionnaires and interviews and are presented using frequency tables, percentages, mean scores, and thematic analysis.

4.2 Questionnaire Return Rate

Out of 250 questionnaires administered, 240 were returned and deemed usable, representing a 96% response rate. The distribution is as follows:

Respondent Group	Administered	Returned	Percentage (%)
Polytechnic Staff	60	58	96.7%
Polytechnic Students	70	68	97.1%
Community Members (Total)	120	114	95.0%
– Ojuwo-Afu	24	23	95.8%
– Ogbogbo	24	23	95.8%
– Owowo-Okpete	24	22	91.7%
– Otobo	24	23	95.8%
– Oko-Ikeke	24	23	95.8%
Total	250	240	96.0%

4.3 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The respondents included males and females across age brackets 18–60+, with diverse educational and occupational backgrounds. Notably, most community respondents were farmers, artisans, and traders, while Polytechnic respondents included lecturers, administrators, and students from various faculties.

4.4 Analysis Based on Research Objectives

Objective 1: To examine the historical and socio-economic dynamics of the relationship between the Polytechnic and its host communities.

The majority of respondents (87% of staff and students; 91% of community members) agreed that the presence of the Polytechnic has influenced the local economy positively through increased commerce, rental housing demand, and job creation.

However, historical narratives collected through interviews revealed that community members, especially in Ogbogbo and Otobo, feel that promises made during land acquisition for the Polytechnic's expansion were not fully honored. An elder in Ogbogbo stated:

"The Polytechnic has brought development, yes, but there were agreements on community schools, roads, and youth employment that are still pending." — (Interviewee, Ogbogbo)

Objective 2: To identify the key sources of conflict and tension.

Table 1 below presents the major sources of conflict as ranked by respondents.
Table 1: Major Sources of Conflict (Ranked by Mean Score)

Source of Tension	Mean Score	Rank
Land ownership and compensation	4.42	1
Youth unemployment	4.27	2
Security issues involving students	3.85	3
Communication gaps	3.74	4
Marginalization in contracts	3.65	5

Community members in Ojuwo-Afu and Oko-Ikeke specifically cited "broken promises" relating to road grading and access to Polytechnic-related contracts. Youth representatives from Owowo-Okpete raised concerns about students' "arrogance" and disregard for community norms.

Objective 3: To assess the effectiveness of existing conflict resolution strategies.

Only 29% of Polytechnic staff and 18% of community respondents agreed that there is a formal, functioning mechanism for conflict resolution. Interviews confirmed that most disputes are handled reactively. In Otobo, for example, a youth leader noted:

"When there is a problem, they just call a quick meeting — but there is no permanent committee or regular town hall." — (Interviewee, Otobo)

Objective 4: To analyze the roles of institutional and community leadership.

Data from interviews revealed a disconnect between the Polytechnic's management and traditional leadership structures. While traditional rulers in Ogbogbo and Oko-Ikeke are open to dialogue, they expressed frustration over what they termed "top-down engagement" rather than collaborative involvement.

Objective 5: To explore perceptions and expectations on both sides.

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Most Polytechnic respondents (76%) believed the institution is doing enough to engage the communities. However, only 32% of community respondents agreed with this view. Community members expected greater access to employment, scholarships for indigent students, and social responsibility projects.

A traditional ruler in Owowo-Okpete stated:
"We want to feel that we are partners in development, not just neighbors to a large institution."
Objective 6: To propose sustainable strategies for improving relations.
Respondents suggested the following:
Establishment of a permanent School–Community Relations Committee.
Quarterly town hall meetings between Polytechnic officials and community leaders.
Allocation of 20–30% of minor contracts to youth cooperatives in each host community.
Joint cultural and sporting events to promote harmony.

4.5 Qualitative Summary of Community-Specific Issues

Ojuwo-Afu: Concerns over land demarcation and limited youth engagement.
Ogbogbo: Historical claims of unfulfilled MOU agreements.
Owowo-Okpete: Youth–student conflicts and cultural misunderstanding.
Otobo: Allegations of marginalization in employment and infrastructure.
Oko-Ikeke: Limited Polytechnic involvement in community development initiatives.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

The findings affirm that while the Polytechnic has contributed to local development, tensions persist due to perceived marginalization, unmet expectations, and lack of structured dialogue. These findings align with the conclusions of Aderinto (2015) and Omeje (2014), who emphasized that institutional goodwill alone is insufficient without community participation and reciprocal engagement.

4.7 Summary

This chapter presented and analyzed data from the field on the relationship between The Federal Polytechnic, Idah and her host communities. The findings highlight a complex interaction of progress, neglect, and potential, with clear recommendations emerging for improved and sustained collaboration.

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study investigated the dynamics of the relationship between The Federal Polytechnic, Idah and her five host communities — Ojuwo-Afu, Ogbogbo, Owowo-Okpete, Otobo, and Oko-Ikeke — with the aim of understanding the challenges of peaceful co-existence and proposing pathways for improved engagement.

Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews administered to Polytechnic staff and students, as well as residents and leaders from the host communities. The study explored historical, socio-economic, and cultural factors shaping school–community relations and analyzed the perceptions, expectations, and grievances of both institutional and community stakeholders.

Findings

The Polytechnic has positively impacted the local economy through employment, commerce, and infrastructure development, but expectations from host communities remain largely unmet.

Tensions stem from land ownership disputes, lack of transparent compensation, youth unemployment, limited access to contracts, and poor communication.

There is an absence of a structured conflict resolution mechanism, resulting in reactive rather than proactive engagements.

Community members feel excluded from decision-making processes that affect them, while the institution often operates on assumptions of compliance and goodwill.

Both sides acknowledge the need for improved collaboration but lack a coordinated platform for dialogue and partnership.

5.2 Conclusion

The relationship between The Federal Polytechnic, Idah and her host communities is a microcosm of the broader institutional–community dynamics in Nigeria. While the Polytechnic was established to catalyze development in the region, inadequate attention to inclusive engagement, cultural sensitivity, and participatory governance has led to friction and misunderstandings.

The host communities-Ojuwo-Afu, Ogbogbo, Owowo-Okpete, Otobo, and Oko-Ikeke have demonstrated a willingness to support institutional growth. However, this support must be reciprocated through meaningful inclusion in employment, infrastructural planning, and community benefit programs. Lasting peace and progress can only be achieved through mutual respect, open communication, and shared responsibility.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:
1. Establish a Permanent Polytechnic–Community Relations Committee: A committee comprising Polytechnic management, traditional leaders, youth representatives, and civil society actors from all five host communities should be set up to meet quarterly and address emerging issues constructively.
2. Institutionalize Regular Town Hall Meetings: Regular dialogue platforms should be created to ensure that grievances, suggestions, and proposals from community stakeholders are heard and acted upon.
3. Prioritize Community Inclusion in Employment and Contracting: The Polytechnic should develop a local content policy to ensure that host communities are considered in employment opportunities, minor contracts, and student admissions, particularly for indigent and qualified youths.
4. Resolve Land Disputes Transparently: A joint land review panel, involving community elders, legal experts, and institutional representatives, should revisit previous land agreements, compensation matters, and boundary clarifications to foster transparency and goodwill.
5. Implement Community Development Projects: Each host community should benefit from dedicated social responsibility programs — such as road grading, borehole installation, school support, and health outreach — coordinated by the Polytechnic.
6. Encourage Joint Cultural and Educational Programs: The Polytechnic and host communities should co-organize festivals, inter-community sporting events, and civic education forums to bridge social divides and promote cultural integration.

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7. Monitor and Evaluate Progress: A feedback mechanism should be developed to assess the effectiveness of interventions and measure improvements in school–community relations over time.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This research provides valuable insight into the complexities of institutional–community relations in Nigeria, particularly within a polytechnic context. It sheds light on the nuanced challenges faced by both educational institutions and their host environments and offers a framework for mutual engagement, peace building, and development.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Study

Future researchers may consider:

A comparative study of other Nigerian polytechnics and their host communities.
Longitudinal impact assessments of school–community conflict resolution interventions.
The role of traditional institutions in mediating higher education-community disputes.

5.6 Closing Remark

The Federal Polytechnic, Idah and her host communities must see themselves as partners in progress. Sustainable peace and development require not just coexistence but genuine collaboration built on trust, transparency, and shared aspirations.

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