

IMPACT OF HERDSMEN-FARMERS' CONFLICT ON SMALL OFF-FARM BUSINESSES IN BENUE STATE

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ABSTRACT

The advent of Herdsmen-farmers' conflict has resulted to severe violence which is a serious threat to human security and development of our society. This persistent conflict has affected the capacity of households, firms and government to accurately carry out economic activities necessary for human existence. In Benue State, households have continued to grapple with economic instability resulting from incessant clash between herdsmen and farmers. Consequently many households have lost many members and means of livelihood. This study assesses the implications of this persistent violence on households' small off-farm businesses in Benue State. The data for this study was primary, gotten from structured questionnaire which was administered to 384 households that were affected by herdsmen-farmers' conflict in Benue State. The sample covered farmers that engaged in small off-farm businesses and were affected by herdsmen-farmers' conflict. The data were analysed with the use of frequency tables, simple percentages, t-test and logit regression model. The study revealed that, herdsmen-farmers' conflict has a significant negative impact on small off farm businesses in Benue State. The study recommended that government should revisit the existing 1964 grazing reserves act and 1978 land tenure act so as to accommodate land ownership, usage and control by farmers and herders. The study also recommended that, government should provide access to finance for farm households, whose small off farm businesses were destroyed due to herdsmen-farmers' conflict to rebuild their businesses wherever they are.

Keywords: Herdsmen-farmers' conflict, small scale businesses, off-farm economic activities, Farm households.

JEL: A10, C21, C83, D01, D13, D21, D60, H56, I31

1. INTRODUCTION

Conflict in economic literature is inimical to economic fortunes of every society. According to Gurr (1980), conflict is defined as a coercive interactions in which two or more involved participants engage in mutually opposing actions, and use coercive behaviour to destroy, injure, thwart or otherwise control their opponents. Folger, Poole & Stutman (2009), defined conflict as the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving those goals. Gyong (2007) also defined conflict as the struggle for dominance or control of one person or group by the other in such a way as to subjugate or even eliminate the opponent. Conflict results to loss of lives and destruction of properties, loss of agricultural output and animals, destruction of cottage industries and other small and medium scale businesses, hinders man power growth, lessen labour strength, hinders socio-economic development, hinders social cohesion and promotes political instability. According to Eme, Ugwu and Richard (2017), conflict has grossly reduced activities of small-scale entrepreneurs in the affected areas. Farmers, artisans, as well as businessmen who are supposed to be in their farms to tend their crops or look after their businesses have been forced out of their residents by the insurgents, thereby pushing the affected areas to the precipice of famine, poverty and crime.

Nigeria today experiencing conflicts that are causing community unrest, panic, homelessness and joblessness of great proportions among several ethnic and religious communities across the Country. The country has been grappling with diverse security challenges, chief among them are insurgency, election

violence, kidnapping and most recently, the herder-farmer conflicts among others. Amao, Adeagbo, Olojede, Ogunleye and Ogundoyin (2018), observed that, the farmers-herdsmen conflicts has remained the most preponderant resource-use conflict in Nigeria. This conflict has turned into serious overt and covert manifestation of hostilities and social friction in many parts of Nigeria. The conflicts have demonstrated high potential to exacerbate the insecurity and food crisis particularly in rural communities where most of the conflicts are localized, with reverberating consequences nationwide. According to Egbuta (2018), the north central states of Benue, Plateau and Nasarawa are the most hit and this has caused thousands of deaths and displacements. Egbuta reported that, in January 2018 alone, 168 people were killed as a result of herdsmen-farmer clashes. Amnesty International (2018) reported that, about have 3,641 people have been killed between January 2016 and October 2018, 57 percent of them in 2018 alone.

In Benue State, Herdsmen-farmers' conflict has ravaged most rural communities by depriving them of their farmlands and ancestral homes leading to loss of their sources of livelihood. Most worrisome in the present development is the raping, killing and kidnapping of innocent people where women and children are the most vulnerable and worst hit (Mbah, Jiriko and Amah, 2020). According to Kazeem (2018), an attack on villages in Benue state on the first day of January, 2018 left 73 people dead, with communities razed and buildings destroyed and the state emergency agency says 40,000 were injured by the attack. These attacks have forced thousands of people to abandon their homes and farmlands for safety. Worthy of note are the social issues of the raping of women, robbery and kidnapping with ultimate intent for ransom. Besides the destroyed properties, socio-economic life in the affected areas are grounded to a halt as people cannot freely go about their farming and socio-economic activities for fear of being killed.

It is evident from past studies that, this conflict has had negative impact on agricultural productivity of farmers in Benue State. However, these farmers also engage in other income generating activities to augment their income from farming (Msoo and Aye 2014; Yusuf, Ballogun and Tiamiyu, 2016; and Odoh and Nwibo 2016). According to Ejimonye and Nwosa, (2018), about 77.66 % of rural farmers engage in small non-farm enterprises such as stores, hairdressing saloons, mechanics workshops, carpentry, electrical workshops, restaurants, etc in order to meet up their daily needs. Eme et al (2017) argued that, herdsmen-farmers conflict can actually reduce these off-farm income generating activities. Empirical studies on the impact of this conflict on these income generating activities are therefore, as importance as studies on its impact on agricultural productivity. However, there is paucity of empirical information on the impact of this conflict on small off farm businesses in the rural areas of Benue State. This study therefore, addressed the impact of this conflict on small off-farm businesses.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Conceptual Clarification

Conflict as defined by Gurr (1980), Folger, Poole & Stutman (2009), and .Gyong (2007) among others, is an interaction between two groups (whether tribal, ethnic, linguistic, religious, socio-economic, political or others) in which the involved participants engage in mutually opposing actions, and use coercive behaviour to destroy, injure, thwart or otherwise control their opponents. Herdsmen-Farmers conflict is therefore, the interaction between the Fulani Herders and farmers in which they engage in mutually opposing actions and use coercive behaviour to destroy, injure and even kill their opponents. According to Okoro (2018), herdsmen-farmer conflict is conflict occurring between peasant farmers or subsistence cultivators and nomadic or transhumant live-stock keepers. To Amao, Adeagbo, Olojede, Ogunleye and Ogundoyin (2018), Farmer-herdsmen conflict has remained the most preponderant resource-use conflict in Nigeria. This conflict had led to damage of crops, attacks on cattle, destruction of properties, killings of people and cattle rustling.

The definition of small business varies from one country to another and from one time to another in the same country depending upon the pattern and stage of development, Government Policy and administrative set up of the particular country. As a result, there are nearly 50 different definitions of small businesses found and used in 75 countries. All these definitions either relate to capital or employment or both or any other criteria. It is defined in terms of annual sales, asset valuation, net profit, balance sheet totals and the size of the business including the numbers of

employees available in the business. Different authors have different ideas as to the variation in capital outlay, number of employees, sales turnover, fixed capital investment, available plant and machinery, market share and the level of development, these features equally vary from one country to the other. In Nigeria, the Third National Development plan defined a small business as a manufacturing establishment which employs not more than ten people, or whose investment in machinery and equipment does not exceed six hundred thousand naira (Kehinde, Abiodun, Adebuyi, and Oladimeji, 2016).

The Central Bank of Nigeria (1983) in its credit guidelines, classified small business as the business with an annual income or asset of less half a million naira (N500, 000). The Federal Government Small Scale Industry Development Plan of 1980 defined a small scale business enterprise in Nigeria as any manufacturing process or service industry, with a capital not exceeding N150, 000 in manufacturing and equipment alone. The small scale industries association of Nigeria (1973) defined small scale business as those having investment of capital, land, building and equipment of up to N60, 000 pre-SAP Value and employing not more than fifty persons. The Federal Ministry of Industries (1973) defined it as those enterprises that cost no more than N500, 000 (pre-SAP Value) including working capital to set up. In 1990 budget, the Federal Government of Nigeria defined small scale enterprises for the purpose of commercial loan as those enterprises with annual turnover not exceeding N500, 000 for merchant loan and those for the purpose of commercial loan as enterprises with capital investment not exceeding N2 million (excluding cost of land or a maximum of N5 million). According to Ebitu, Basil and Ufot (2018), Small business is any business that employs between ten to forty – nine people and has asset worth (excluding land and building) between ₦ 5million and ₦ 50 million. Ebitu, Basil and Ufot (2018), however, defined a micro business as any business employing between one to nine people and having a capital base from one naira to ₦5 million excluding cost of land. This study defined a small off-farm business as an establishment own by farmers which employs not more than fifty people, or whose investment in machinery and equipment does not exceed fifty million naira.

2.2 Theoretical and Empirical Literature

This study adopted the Greed Thesis and the Theory of the Tragedy of Commons as its theoretical framework. According to the greed thesis, conflict in society results from human greed and the desire of some people, called conflict entrepreneurs, to benefit from conflict that propels them to go to war (Collier, 2006). Collier gives the example of a rebel group in a country, which uses grievance as a bait to go to war in order to gain economic benefits. The greed thesis attribute the existence of conflict in society to the contest for resources, unemployment, economic inequalities, poverty, human greed and underdevelopment. The theory of the tragedy of the commons on the other hand, states that, this continuous polarized contest for resources and the gains from economic activities as argued by the greed thesis will ultimately destroy the resources and the gains from economic activities. Empirical studies on the impact of conflict on economic activities have also shown that, conflict destroys economic benefits.

On conflict specific, Orji and Eme (2015), carried out a research on Human Cost of Communal Conflicts in Nigeria: a case of Ezillo and Ezza-Zillo Conflicts of Ebonyi State and found out a negative impact of conflict on development. Studies by Malik-Kusi (2012), Akpaeti and Umoh (2013), Wiyiel (2015), Kughur, Daudu & Iornenege (2017) Bolarinwa¹, Abdulsalam-Saghir and Oyekunle (2013), and Popoola, Muili and Muftai (2020) also carried out studies to find out the impact of conflict on socio-economic development. Their studies found out that, conflict has a significant and negative impact on agricultural output, livestock, sustainable capital building programmes, entrepreneurship development, and developmental support from both government and eternal bodies.

Yakubu, Musa, Bamidele, Ali, Bappah, and Manuwa, (2021), Solomon, (2010), Kwaghtser, (2019), Amao et al (2018), Adepoju, Oladeebo, and Sanusi, (2018), Bello (2013), Rukwe, Abdullahi, Faruk and Nwaeze (2019), Ijirshar, Ker and Terlumun (2015), and Olobatoke and Omowumi (2017) on the other hand, undertook various studies on the impact of herdsman-farmers conflict in the agricultural sector. Their studies found out that, the conflict has a significant negative impact on food security, agricultural productivity, income of farmers, poverty status, produce of farmers in storage, residents, farm households properties, farm labour, infrastructural facilities as well as public and private facilities. On the impact of

herdsmen-farmers' conflict on entrepreneurship and development, Mbah, Jiriko, and Amah, (2020), Popoola, Brimah and Olawale (2020), Eme, Ugwu, Richard and Onuigbo (2017), Okoro (2018), Duke and Agbaji, (2018), and Ajibefun, (2018) found out that, herdsmen-farmers' conflict has disintegrative consequence on the Nigerian state in spite of the region, impacts negatively on the socio-economic development, household economy, general wellbeing, and employment. This study will look at the impact of herdsmen-farmer conflict on the off-farm economic activities of farm household in rural areas of Benue State with particular focus on small scale businesses.

In a related study, Demilu et al (2017), assessed the causes and effects of herdsmen-farmers' conflicts on livelihood of agrarian communities in Kogi State. The study found out that, socio-economic life, production outcome and settlement of crop farmers are affected, cumulating to breakdown in livelihood assets of farmers. Another related study, Ahynetal (2018), assessed the effect of farmers-Herdsmen conflict on National Integration in Nigeria and found out that farmers Herdsmen crisis will have far-reaching consequences on National Integration in Nigeria if left unchecked. The study also found out that, each region affected by the crisis suffer food crisis.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a survey design (quasi-experimental design) technique via a cross-sectional approach that involves field and sample surveys. The study adopted purposive sampling techniques in order to select Benue farmers that are engage in other income earning activities besides farming. The study covered only those that are affected by herdsmen-farmers' conflict. A sample size of 384 Benue farmers was chosen from the population of Benue farmers based on the proportion of the local governments that were affected by Fulani herdsmen attack. It was difficult to know the population of the farmers that were affected by the conflict among the affected local government in Benue State. Therefore, the sample size was derived by computing the minimum sample size required for accuracy in estimating proportions, by considering the standard normal deviation set at 95% confidence level (1.96) percentage, making a choice of response (50% = 0.5) and the confidence interval (0.05 = ±5) using the formula developed by Kenya Projects Organization (KENPRO, 2013) to determine the sample size, the appropriate formulae this study is therefore stated as;

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \times P(1 - P)}{M^2}$$

Where,

n = Sample size for unknown population

Z = Z Value (for standard normal variant; for instance, 1.96 for 95% confidence level)

P = Population proportion or expected proportion in population based on previous studies or pilot survey (expressed as decimal, assumed to be 0.5 (50%); since this would provide the maximum sample size) and;

M = Margin of error at 5% (0.05) - Absolute error or precision; which has to be decided by the researcher

Accordingly, the study has computed the sample size relying on the previous preliminary studies using the Bourley's proportional allocation formula. Substituting using this formula, we have;

$$n = \frac{1.95^2 \times 0.5(1 - 0.5)}{0.05^2}$$
$$n = \frac{3.8416 \times 0.25}{0.0025}$$
$$n = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025}$$

Therefore, n = 384.2 or n ≈ 384

Data was collected through an open-ended and structured questionnaire, oral interview, personal observations and Focused group discussion (FGDs) because, the study was aimed at eliciting both qualitative and quantitative information pertaining the effect of the conflict on farmers' owned small businesses in Benue state. The qualitative methods include, tables, charts, graphs, ratios, frequency

description and simple percentages. Paired t-test was used to ascertain the differences in the status of the affected farmers' small off-farm business before and after the Fulani attack on the business. The formula for the computation of t-test of independent sample is given as;

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{S^2P \left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}\right)}}$$

Where;

\bar{x}_1 = the mean of the business capital base before the attack

\bar{x}_2 = the mean of the business capital base after the attack

n_1 or n_2 = the sample size

S^2p = the pooled estimate of the population variance defined as;

$$S^2p = \frac{(n_1 - 1)S_1^2 + (n_2 - 1)S_2^2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2}$$

The ordered logit regression model was employed to determine the impact of the conflict on the farmers' off-farm economic activities proxied by business capital status. The model is specifically expressed as;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + U$$

Where;

Y = Change in farmers off-farm business capital (Y = 2; No capital loss, Y=1; capital partially lost and Y = 0; capital fully lost)

X_1 = Number of attacks by the Fulani herdsmen (number of times that the respondents have been attacked)

X_2 = Sex of the respondents ($X_2 = 0$; respondents is a male otherwise 1). The inclusion of sex here is due to the fact that, a male has more capacity to respond to conflict and thus, protect his businesses.

U = Error term

4. RESULTS

4.1 Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Affected Households.

The socio-economic characteristics of respondents is presented in the table below;

Table 1: The Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	337	61.8
Female	147	38.2
Age (years)		
<20	19	4.9
21 – 50	309	81.4
51 – 60	56	13.7
Marital status		
Single	24	6.3
Married	303	78.9
Widows/widowers	57	14.8
Household size		

1-5	34	8.9
6-10	84	21.9
11-15	254	66.1
16-20	12	3.1
Farm size (ha)		
<1	84	22.1
1 – 2	174	45.3
3 – 4	93	24.2
5 and above	32	8.4
Educational level		
No formal education	99	25.8
Primary education	122	31.8
Secondary education	138	35.9
Tertiary education	25	6.5
Types of SOB		
Auto Repair Shop.	48	12.5
Fertilizer and insecticides	20	5.2
Pure Water Supply	42	10.9
Retail Shop	62	16.1
Woodworker	51	13.3
Tailor shop	54	14.1
Saloon shop	63	16.4
Electrical/Plumber shop	19	4.9
Food Restaurants	21	5.5
Others	4	1.1

Results on socioeconomic characteristics of farming households in the study area as shown in Table 1 indicates that 61.8% of the affected farmers were males, meaning that males are more in off-farm economic activities. This could probably be because men are more energetic and capable of involving in other production activities other than farming. This result corroborates with that of Rukwe *et al.* (2019) who found that, men formed the majority of farmers that were affected by Herdsmen-farmers' conflict. Majority (81.4%) of the affected farmers fell within 21-50 years with mean age of 41 years indicating that the farmers are still in their active and productive years. Consequently, they may respond violently to conflict or aggression from herdsmen due to youthful exuberance. Majority (78.9%) were married with average household size of 11 persons. Rural farmers have a large household size which may have resulted from the need for family labour with the consequence of more dependent family members. This is in line with the finding of Olobatoke and Omowumi (2017) who revealed that majority of the farmers are married and have large family size implying that they may be able to utilize family labour to reduce input costs and increase productivity.

Majority of the farmers are mostly small-scale farmers with average farm size of 2.82 ha. This may be because they acquire land for farming mainly by inheritance and may indicate the practice of individual system of land ownership. It is in confirmation with the study of Dimelu *et al.* (2017) who reported that the respondents are subsistence farmers with average farm size of 2.9 ha. With respect to education, about 74.2% of the rural farmers had formal education. Though, the farmers are literate but the educational level attained is relatively low. Only 6.5% had higher qualification. This could negatively affect the farmers' perception of conflict situation and subsequently their behavior and altitude to conflict. This might be one of the reasons why farmer-herders' conflict has remained unabated and a regular phenomenon in Benue State. The small scale businesses engaged in by the sampled household include auto repair shop, fertilizer

and insecticides, pure water supply, retail shop, woodworker, tailor shop, saloon shop, electrical/plumber shop and food restaurants.

4.2 T-test Analysis

The result of the t-test analysis is presented in the table below.

Table 2: T-test result

Indicator	Before	After	Difference	T-value	Prob.
Average small scale business capital	363,000.00	68,000.00	295,000.00	61.534	0.0000

The table above showed the t-test result of the difference between the average capital base of respondents before and after the Fulani herdsmen attacks. The result showed that there was a drastic drop in the capital base of small scale businesses owned by farmers in rural areas of Benue State. Finding from focus group discussion revealed that, the change in the capital base is as a results of damage of business facilities, use of the business capital to make repairs for properties destroyed by the attack, cost of repair of the business facility, use of the business capital for treatment of injuries incurred from the attacks and use of the business capital to rebuild farm business. The findings also revealed that, many of the respondents were attacked more than one time.

The results revealed a t-test value of 61.534 and it is statistically significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between capital base of small off-farm business of farm households in the study area before the attacks and after the attacks was rejected and the alternative accepted that, there exist a significant difference between capital base of small off-farm business of farm households in the study area before the attacks and after the attacks. This implies that, herdsmen-farmers conflict has a significant impact on the small off farm businesses of farm households in Benue State.

4.3 Logit Regression Results

The result of the logit analysis is presented in the table below;

Variables	Coefficient	Standard Error	z-statistic	Prob.
X ₁	1.575389	0.073044	21.56771	0.0000
X ₂	0.111464	0.718028	0.155227	0.0066
C	3.414014	0.283466	12.04384	0.0000

Mac Fadden R-Squared 0.540426, *Akaike Infor Criterion* 1.102718
Prob. (LR Statistics) 0.034192

From the functional form of the Logit regression result presented in table 3, the coefficient of of both the Fulani attack and gender is positively related to loss of capital of the farmers' off-farm businesses and are statistically significant at 5% level of significance. The coefficient of Fulani attack is 1.575389 which means that Fulani attack has 157% likelihood of reducing the capital of the farmers' small off-farm businesses. The coefficient of gender is 0.111464 and statistically significant at 5% level of significance. The result implies that having a female as the household head has a higher likelihood of losing capital by 11.15%.

The result also shows the Mac Fadden R² value of 0.540426, meaning that the explanatory variables included in the model explain the changes in market access by 54.04%. The Akaeke and Schwarz statistics are relatively low suggesting that the model performs well. The LR statistics is significant at 5% level of significance, suggesting elements of joint effect by the explanatory variables of the model. The results of all criteria perform well and imply that all the βs are significantly different from zero.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that, the herdsmen-farmers' conflict has a significant negative impact on small off-farm businesses of farm households in Benue State. Many farm households' businesses have been destroyed and many of the small off-farm business owners have lost their capital as a result of this herdsmen-farmers conflict. This result agreed with results by Eme, Ugwu and Richard (2017), and Popoola et al (2020) who find out that, conflict grossly reduced activities of small-scale entrepreneurs and even close down businesses in the affected areas and hindered the economic activities of the people and causes a lot of poverty. Farmers, artisans, as well as businessmen who are supposed to be in their farms to tend their crops or look after their businesses after close of farm have been forced out of their residents by the insurgents, thereby pushing the affected areas to the precipice of famine, poverty and crime. Base on the finding, the study recommended that government should revisit the existing 1964 grazing reserves act and 1978 land tenure act so as to accommodate land ownership, usage and control by farmers and herders. This could be done by enforcing ranching so that cattle will be restricted to a particular place and close out chances of future clashes. The study also recommended that, government should provide access to finance for farm households, whose small off-farm businesses were destroyed due to herdsmen-farmers' conflict to rebuild their businesses wherever they are.

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