

Impact of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen Conflict on Socio-Economic Activities in Agatu LGA of Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Violence between Farmers and Fulani herdsmen is one of Benue state's most persistent security scourges which have displaced thousands of persons, destroyed many properties and left thousands of people dead in recent decades. This necessitated the study entitled "Impact of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen Conflict on Socio-Economic Activities in Agatu LGA of Benue State, Nigeria". The study was anchored on three objectives which were aimed at ascertaining the causes of Farmers and Fulani herdsmen clashes; the social and economic impacts of Farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict in Agatu LGA of Benue State. Malthusian Theory on Population by Thomas Malthus (1803) had been adopted as theoretical framework to underpin this study. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Sequel to this, the instruments used for the collection of primary data include structured questionnaire while relevant documents that contain secondary data such as journal publications, newspapers, textbooks & international crisis group publications were used to support it. The primary data were presented in tables of frequencies and percentages; mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data generated while T-Test analysis was used to test the hypotheses. A total of 101 questionnaires were purposively administered to respondents in the study area, out of which 89 questionnaires (68 Farmers and 21 Fulani Herdsmen) were returned with valid responses while 12 were not returned. Among other things, the study revealed that the destruction of crops was one of the causes of Farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict while the socio-economic impacts of the conflict was the destruction of lives/properties, reduction of outputs/income and the reduction of quality in social relationship between the Nomads and farmers. The study concluded that socio-economic activities would continue to be affected unless the root causes of the conflict is addressed. The study recommended that stakeholder should exercise good leadership and political will by bringing the feuding parties on a dialogue table while meting punishment and rewards where necessarily so as to restore peace, order and trust on the populace and community at large.

Keywords: Fulani herdsmen, Farmers, Socio-Economic, Malthusian Theory, Benue State, Nigeria

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Background to the Study

Nigeria's population grew from 33 million in 1950, 88.99 million in 1991, and 187 million in 2016 to about 192.3 million in current years (FMH, 2001; International Crises Group, 2017; Ningxin, 2018). Over the last decade also, reporting of Farmers-Herders violence has increased exponentially. Violence between Fulani herdsmen and Farmers is one of Nigeria's most persistent security problems and has left thousands of people dead in recent decades (Kwaghga, 2018).

The Global terrorism index ranked Herdsmen as the fourth deadliest militant group in the world with a record killing of 1229 people in 2014 (Eyekpimi, 2016). In 2016, it was estimated that the death toll of approximately 2,500 people were recorded. In tandem to this, the Nigeria Watch database has recorded 615 violent deaths related to cattle grazing, out of a total of 61, 314 violent fatalities in Nigeria (Olayoku 2014). According to a 2015 study, the federal government of Nigeria was losing \$13.7 billion in revenue annually because of herders-farmers conflicts in Benue, Kaduna, Nasarawa and Plateau states. These clashes are becoming as potentially dangerous as the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East. At present, response to the crisis at both the federal and state levels has been poor (International Crises Group, 2018). The Fulani-Farmer conflict was caused by different factors, such as ideological, historical, and cultural influences (Ningxin, 2018). For example, the usages of land and water resources caused enormous pressure. Also, in the far north, the impact of desertification has resulted in deforestation and migration of Fulani herders (Ndubuisi, 2018 as cited in Ningxin, 2018).

The conflicts between Fulani herdsmen and farmers have been on for years (Abdulbaqi and Ariemu, n.d). The menace of Fulani-Herdsman appears to have dire implications for socio-economic development in the states attacked and Nigeria in general. In the states where the Fulani herdsmen and farmers crisis is pervasive, the property destroyed and cases of rapes slog their economic and social opulence back by several steps. Besides the destroyed properties, socio-economic life in those states is usually grounded to a halt as people could not freely go about their farming and socio-economic activities for fear of being killed (Ajibefun, 2018).

In Benue State, the frequent clashes between herdsmen and farmers in the predominantly farming areas of the state have resulted in the destruction of lives and farmlands. According to Apenda (2016), nine out of the 23 local governments in Benue state, namely Guma, Gwer-West, Agatu, Logo, Kwande, Ukum, Tarka and the Northern part of Makurdi are mostly affected by the rampaging herdsmen have tale of woes to tell. Adetula (2016) as cited in International Crisis Group (2017) says that Benue State seems to be the hardest hit in recent times. Barely 5 days before the end of Governor Gabriel Suswam's administration in May 2015, over 100 farmers and their family members were reportedly massacred in villages and refugee camps located in the Ukura, Per, Gafa and Tse-Gusa areas of the state. In December 2015, 6 persons were killed at Idele village in the Oju Local Government Area of Benue State. A reprisal attack by youths in the community saw 3 Fulani herdsmen killed and beheaded. Recently, more than 92 Nigerians were massacred by suspected Fulani herdsmen in Benue

and Niger States (Duru, 2016). In tandem to the forgoing, Governor Samuel Ortom also reported that more than 1,878 people were killed between 2014 and 2016 and that attacks by herders coming from more northerly states, and possibly also from Cameroon and Niger, had cost his state N95 billion (about \$634 million at that time) between 2012 and 2014. Conversely, this implies that over 1,800 killed in herdsmen, farmer's clashes in Benue in three years (International Crises Group, 2017).

Agatu LGA of Benue State has gained notoriety with regards to herdsmen and farmers conflict with heavy casualties. Sequel to this, Duru (2016) reported a gruesome attack on Agatu LGA of Benue State in February 2016 in which about 7000 people were driven from six villages by the Fulani herdsmen. The villagers observed that despite heavy gunshots by the Herdsmen, no military or security presence was felt. Over 200 persons were killed and houses were razed. Another report has it that about 500 people were killed by rampaging herdsmen following a siege on Agatu LGA of Benue State. The communities affected include Aila, Akwu, Adagbo, Okokolo, Ugboju, Odugbeho, Obagaji and Egba (Premium Times, March 12, 2016). In April 2016, there was a renewed attack on Agatu by the armed herdsmen. Statistics from the Benue State Emergency Management Agency indicates that no fewer than 30 persons died in the renewed violence. With regards to properties destroyed by the conflict, the ethnic Nzor-Tiv Global Association estimated its Agatu communities in Benue state lost N65 billion in properties (\$204 million) during the early 2016 herder attacks. This figure was provided by the president general of Nzor-Tiv Global Associates, Edward Ujege, at a public hearing convened by the House of Representatives in Abuja, 25 May 2016 (International Crisis Group, 2017).

Against the forgoing, this study assesses the impact of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen conflict on socio economic activities in Agatu LGA of Benue State.

Hypotheses

- Ho₁:** There is no significant difference between Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen perception of the causes of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen clashes in Agatu LGA of Benue State.
- Ho₂:** There is no significant difference between Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen perception of the social impacts of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen clashes in Agatu LGA of Benue State.
- Ho₃:** There is no significant difference between Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen perception of the economic impacts of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen clashes in Agatu LGA of Benue State.

Literature Review

In recent times, several empirical studies on the scourge of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen abound. For instance, Gamgum (2018) carried out an empirical study titled "Herdsmen and Farmers conflict in Nigeria: another dimension of insecurity". The objective of the paper was to understanding the rationale and how specific perennial conflicts between herdsmen and famers in Nigeria are being resolved before 2019 election in Nigeria to enable the people to resume normal life. In doing this, the study critically examined the perspectives of the disputants and the policy adopted by Federal and some State Governments to resolve it. The

study collected data from both primary and secondary sources. And the technique of “content analysis” was used in analyzing the data. The study found that the conflicts created tension not only in areas where there was direct confrontation between the disputants but the conflicts terrorized every community and put them on alert to ensure that both short term and long solution was provided to return the State to a violent free community. Some State Governments made specific policies which include intergroup committees and or after due process of law making in a democratic society, presented open grazing prohibition and establishment of ranches laws to guide behaviors and the resolution of future conflicts that may arise between farmers and herdsmen in their respective States. Yet pocket of threats to life and property continued in some parts of the country to ensure the laws are not enforced and “cattle colonies” were established instead. The paper recommends that both parties to the dispute should continue to exercise restraints, and obey Government policy/law by using institutional approaches to resolve grievances. And a stop should be put to the destruction of life and properties.

Oli, Ibekwe and Nwankwo (2018) in their study investigated the prevalence of herdsmen and farmers conflict in Nigeria. The study is anchored on the frustration-aggression and conflict theories. Data were extracted and used from secondary sources like journals, textbooks, newspapers and online organizational publications. Evidences indicated that herdsmen-farmers conflict is prevalent in the country. It also showed that some of the factors that usually led to clashes were limited or unavailability of sufficient resources like grazing fields, farm lands, destruction or grazing on crops, long-standing disagreements, lack of access to farm or grazing fields and scarcity of fresh water. Consequently, loss of human and animal lives, destruction of crops and properties, displacement of persons and animals, distrust between herdsmen and farmers, rising anti-Fulani sentiment and breakdown of peaceful relationship with many communities in some parts of the country were amongst the gross effects of the conflict. The study concluded that until this issue is amicably resolved and absolute cooperation among the conflicting parties enhanced; food and national security would continue to be threatened. Therefore, the study recommended amongst others that government should establish cattle grazing fields in the six geo-political zones of the country and out-law open grazing of cattle. This must be done through due consultation, dialogue or appeal to some aggrieved regions of the country which may oppose or resist the move. Poor water management practice in the country should be improved by the Federal Ministry of Water Resources. This is in view of the fact that climate change cum water shortage and drought are the major reasons herdsmen are migrating southward in search of fresh water and grass for their cattle.

Adelakun, Adurogbangba and Akinbile (2015) examined Socioeconomic Effects of Farmer-Pastoralist Conflict on Agricultural Extension Service Delivery in Oyo State, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 60 farmers and 60 pastoralists for the research and was interviewed with structured questionnaire. Results showed that a little above half (52.6%) were between the ages of 30-50 years. The majority (63.3%) had household size of 5-9 members. Crop damage (63.3%) and indiscriminate bush burning (46.7%) were considered the most common causes of conflict between farmers and pastoralists. The majority (71%) of

farmers suffer economic losses from farmer-pastoralist conflicts. About seventy five percent of farmers used more of problem-oriented (e.g. early harvesting/stock disposal) coping strategies while the majority of herdsmen (73%) used more of emotion-oriented strategies (e.g. use of charms/Vengeance. There was a significant difference ($p=0.000$) in socio-economic losses among farmers and pastoralists. Farmers are the worst hit of Farmer-pastoralist conflicts as it affects their family farming. Setting up of a three-tier farmer-herdsmen conflict management committee is recommended.

Musa, Shabu and Igbawua (2014) in their study assessed resource use conflict between Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. A total of 160 heads of farming households and 40 herdsmen from areas that have experienced Farmer-Herders conflict were purposively selected. Data for the study was collected using questionnaire, field observation and reports from Benue State Agricultural and rural development authority. The data collected comprised socio-economic characteristics of Farmers and Herdsmen, causes and effects of the conflict. The study revealed that, both farmers ($AI=1.93$) and herdsmen ($AI=1.55$) agreed that herdsmen were not accepted by their host communities. The role of traditional rulers ($CCI=3.68$), destruction of crops/farmland ($CCI=3.21$), contamination of water ($CCI=3.45$) and harassment of herdsmen by host communities ($CCI=3.25$) were the major causes of conflict between farmers and herdsmen. Displacement of both farmers and herdsmen ($CEI=3.67$), loss of lives and properties ($CEI=3.49$) and decrease in output ($CEI=3.48$) were the major effects of conflicts between farmers and herdsmen in the area. Yogbo town is the most affected in the area with estimated cost of property destroyed of ₦43.8 million, 30 people killed and 32 people injured. The paper concluded that, the conflict is a setback to the development of agricultural sector and therefore recommends the creation of grazing reserves so that herders can shift from traditional method of animal husbandry to modern methods.

Lastly in a unique study, Ofuoku and Isife (2010) analyses the causes, effects and resolution of Farmers-Nomadic cattle herders conflict in Delta State, Nigeria. The study was conducted in Delta state to investigate the farmers-nomadic herders' conflict that is very common in many parts of Nigeria. The study unveils the secrets behind such conflicts and gives ideas on the way to prevent and solve such in the future. Using simple random and purposive sampling techniques, 80 farmers and 20 nomadic cattle herders were selected respectively from 8 randomly selected communities. Data were collected using structured interview schedule. The causes of such conflict were destruction of crops, contamination of streams by cattle, zero grazing of land, disregard for local traditional authorities, female harassment, harassment of nomads by host communities youths, indiscriminate bush burning, and defecation of cattle on roads, cattle theft, and straying of cattle. The socio-economic effects of the conflicts result to reduction in crop yield and income of farmers/nomads displacement of farmers, loss of lives and properties and loss of products in the storage. T-test result showed differences in the responses of farmers and nomads in the respect to the causes of the conflicts ($P < 0.05$). It was then suggested that mechanism of local development plans should be established to reduce such conflicts. Also the extent of damage and compensation should be agreed upon by both parties at the community level with the extension agents as facilitators.

Gap in Literature

Despite the fact that some studies have been conducted on Farmers and Herdsmen squabbles in Nigeria; from the literature reviewed, none has precisely focus on assessing the impact of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen conflict on socio economic activities in Agatu LGA of Benue State. The studies conducted by Gamgum (2018) & Oli et al, (2018) focuses on the entire country. Oli et al, (2018) derived their data via secondary sources alone which is another limitation of their paper. Ofuoku and Osife (2010) & Adalakun et al, (2015) in their studies became more specific by focusing on Delta and Oyo state. However, the study by Adalakun et al, (2015) is limited because it focused on Farmer-Pastoralist Conflict on Agricultural Extension Service Delivery in Oyo State only while neglecting other sectors. The scope of the two separate studies is also vague as it focused on the entire states. The study by Musa et al, (2014) tends to be related to this very study as it was carried out in Guma LGA of Benue State; however, the study wasn't conducted in Agatu LGA of Benue State. This study had bridge the gaps left by the aforementioned reviewed empirical studies as it focused on Agatu LGA of Benue State; questionnaire was also used as instrument for data collection. The study had also traced the causes of the conflict, the social and economic impacts of the conflict on the community.

Theoretical Framework

The Malthusian Theory on Population by Thomas Malthus (1803) was leveraged upon to underpin the study. Malthusian theory predicts that world population would soon exceed the resource base and lead to serious environmental destruction, widespread hunger and violent conflicts. The essential argument presented in his work titled an essay on the principle of population. Thomas Malthus (1803) maintained that population growth can and will outstrip the food supply. To him, human populations grow exponentially (i.e., doubling with each circle) while food production grows at an arithmetic rate (i.e., by the repeated addition of a uniform increment in each uniform interval of time). Thus, while food output was likely to increase in a series of twenty-five years intervals in the arithmetic progression and so on, population was capable of increasing in the geometric progression and so forth. This scenario of arithmetic food growth with simultaneous geometric human population growth predicted a future when humans would have no resources to survive on. He maintained that problems arising from marriage were likely to be less serious than those caused by a continuation of rapid population increase. The positive checks to population growth are any causes that contributed to the shortening of human lifespan. He included in this category poor living and working conditions which might give rise to low resistance to disease itself, war, and famine. This invariably may result to all unwholesome occupations, severe labour, and exposure to the seasons, extreme poverty, bad nursing of children, great towns, excesses of all kinds, the whole train of common diseases, wars (violent clashes), plagues, and famines.

Like Thomas Malthus, the neo-Malthusian position argued that resource scarcities can cause violent intra-state conflict under unfavorable conditions (Homer-Dixon, 1999 & Kaplan, 1994). He used three hypotheses to link environmental changes with violent conflict. First, he suggested that decreasing supplies of physically controllable

environmental resources, such as clean water and good agricultural land, would provoke conflicts. The second hypothesis stated that large population movements caused by environmental stress would induce "group-identity" conflicts, especially ethnic clashes. The third hypothesis suggested that severe environmental scarcity would simultaneously increase economic deprivation and disrupt key social institutions, which in turn would cause "deprivation" conflicts such as civil strife and insurgency (Homer-Dickson, 1994).

The theory serves as a good explanation for the study of Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers' clashes in Agatu LGA of Benue State. Malthusian theory emphasizes poor living and working conditions of a teeming population which might give rise to low resistance to disease itself, war, and famine. This invariably may result to all unwholesome occupations, severe labour, and exposure to the seasons, extreme poverty, excesses of all kinds of common diseases, wars (violent clashes), plagues, and famines.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for the study. Both primary (questionnaire) and secondary (journal publications, newspapers, textbooks & international crisis group publication) sources of data were used. A total of 101 questionnaires were purposively administered to respondents in the study area, out of which 89 questionnaires (68 Farmers and 21 Fulani Herdsmen) were returned with valid responses while 12 were not returned. 5 point likert scale rating was used to rate response options which are Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentage, mean, standard deviation were used to analyze the data generated while inferential statistics such as T-Test analysis via SPSS were used to test the hypothesis. Both the three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: The Causes of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen Conflict in Agatu LGA of Benue State

S/N	Research Questions	Farmers		Fulani-Herdsmen	
		Mean	Remark	Mean	Remark
1	The destruction of crops by cattle is one of the major causes of Farmers and Fulani herdsmen crisis in Agatu LGA of Benue State	3.4	Accepted	2.8	Accepted
2	The harassment of Nomads by host youths is a factor facilitating Farmers and Fulani herdsmen crisis in Agatu LGA of Benue State	3.1	Accepted	3.9	Accepted
3	The sexual harassment of women by Nomads is a driving force behind Farmers and Fulani herdsmen crisis in Agatu LGA of Benue State	2.4	Rejected	2.7	Accepted
4	Indiscriminate bush burning by Farmers is also a cause of Farmers and Fulani herdsmen crisis in Agatu LGA of Benue State	2.6	Accepted	3.0	Accepted

Bench Mark 2.5

The table 1 explained perspective of Farmers and Fulani-herdsmen on the major causes of crises between the two groups in the selected local government area of Benue state. The finding shows that destruction of crop by cattle's is one of the major causes of the crises given the mean value of 3.4 and 2.8 for Farmers and Fulani-herdsmen respectively. However, Fulani-herdsmen have lower opinion as compare to the farmers. The finding further reveal that harassment of Nomads by host youths is a factor facilitating Farmers and Fulani herdsmen crisis in Agatu LGA of Benue State. This is evidence from the mean value of 3.1 and 3.9 for Farmer and Fulani-herdsmen respectively. However, the result reveals that Farmers have lower perception on the sexual harassment as one of the major causes of clashed between the two group. The finding shows that Farmer has mean value of 2.4 which is below the bench mark of 2.5, while Fulani-herdsmen have mean value of 2.7. Finally, the two selected group agreed that indiscriminate bush burning by Farmers is also a cause of conflict between the groups

Table 2. The Social Impact of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen Conflict in Agatu LGA of Benue State

S/N	Research Questions	Farmers		Fulani-Herdsmen	
		Mean	Remark	Mean	Remark
1	Farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict has resulted to a reduction in quality of social relationship in Agatu LGA of Benue State	3.5	Accepted	2.9	Accepted
2	One of the outcomes of Farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict is the loss of human life in Agatu LGA of Benue State	4.1	Accepted	3.9	Accepted
3	Farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict has encouraged the proliferation and the acquiring of Weapons/Arms in Agatu LGA of Benue State	2.7	Accepted	3.6	Accepted

Mean Cut-off 2.5

The result in table 2 revealed that as a result of conflict between the two selected groups, quality in social life has reduced. This is evidenced from the mean value of 3.5 and 2.9 for Farmers and Fulani-herdsmen respectively. This findings shows that conflict between these groups have hindered their social relationship in an adverse way. Furthermore, the result shows that Farmers/Herdsmen have cause the loss of life and property in the affected area of the selected LGA of Benue State. This finding, indicate that both actors and community members have lost some of their property as a result of the crises.

Finally, the finding shows that conflict between these two groups have encouraged the proliferation and acquiring of Weapons in the selected LGA of the state. This is evidence from mean value of 2.7 and 3.6 above bench mark of 2.5 for both Farmers and Fulani-herdsmen respectively.

Table 3: The Economic Impact of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen Conflict in Agatu LGA of Benue State

S/N	Research Questions	Farmers		Fulani-Herdsmen	
		Mean	Remark	Mean	Remark
1	Farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict has led to the scarcity of agricultural products thereby reducing output and income of Farmers/ Nomads in Agatu LGA of Benue State?	3.0	Accepted	3.3	Accepted
2	Loss of houses and properties is one of the impacts of Farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict in Agatu LGA of Benue State?	4	Accepted	3.9	Accepted
3	Farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict has led to the displacement of Farmers in Agatu LGA of Benue State?	3.6	Accepted	2.7	Accepted

Mean Cut-off 2.5

The result in the table 3 was centralized on the impact of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen conflict in Agatu LGA of Benue State. The finding shows that conflict has led to scarcity of some farm produce and reduction in income of the farmers in the state. This is evidenced from mean value of 3.0 and 3.3 greater than 2.5 bench mark for the two selected groups respectively. Furthermore, the result also revealed that loss of houses and properties is one of the major impacts of the conflict in Agatu LGA of the state. Finally, the result shows that the crises have led to displacement of Farmers in the LGA of the state. This finding, indicate that Farmers are worst-off in the conflict compare to Fulani-herdsmen.

Table 4: Summary of T-test Result

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cap	p-value	Test of Ho
Farmers	68	2.20	0.718	86	-7.273	0.000**	Significant
Fulani-herdsmen	21	2.28	0.797				
Farmers	68	1.80	0.856	86	-3.967	0.000**	Significant
Fulani-herdsmen	21	2.16	0.871				
Farmers	68	1.56	0.794	86	7.587	0.000**	Significant
Fulani-herdsmen	21	2.11	0.652				

Note: ** significant at 5% or 1% significance level

Source: SPSS, 2019

Test of Hypotheses

Ho: There is no significant difference between Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen perception of the causes of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen clashes in Agatu LGA of Benue State.

In order to test the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between farmers and Fulani Herdsmen perception of the cause of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen clashes in Agatu LGA of Benue State.

The t-value of 7.273 with a p-value of 0.000 is less than 5% significance level. This finding shows that there is a negative and significant difference between the perception of the Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen on the causes of crises in the Agatu LGA of Benue State.

Hence, based on this result, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected. It is therefore concluded that there is significant difference between perception of the Farmer and Fulani Herdsmen on the causes of crises in the Benue state. This finding is in line with the works of Oli, Ibekwe and Nwankwo (2018), Musa, Shabu and Igbawua (2014), and Ofuoku and Isife (2010).

Ho₂ There is no significant difference between Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen perception of the social impacts of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen clashes in Agatu LGA of Benue State.

This was proved by a t- value of -3.976 which has a p- value of 0.000, significant at 5% significance level. This finding shows that there is a significant difference between social impact between Farmers and Fulani herdsmen clashes in the Agatu LGA of Benue state. This finding signifies that the differences in the social economic perception of the two groups and has negative influence on the clashes in the selected local government area of Benue State. This result forms the basis for rejecting the second null hypothesis of the study which states that, there is no significant difference between Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen perception of the social impacts of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen clashes in Agatu LGA of Benue State. This discovery is in consonance with the works of Oli, Ibekwe and Nwankwo (2018), Adedokun, Adurogbangba and Akinbile (2015), Musa, Shabu and Igbawua (2014) and Ofuoku and Isife (2010).

Ho₃: There is no significant difference between Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen perception of the economic impacts of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen clashes in Agatu LGA of Benue State.

The t-statistics value of 7.587 and a p-value of 0.000 significant at 5% significance level. This implies that, there is significant difference between Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen perception on economic impact of the clashes in the Agatu LGA of Benue State. This finding shows that the two groups' perception has positive impact on the economic development of the selected area. Thus, the third hypothesis of the study which states that, there is no significant difference between Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen perception of the economic impacts of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen clashes in Agatu LGA of Benue State is rejected. The finding of this study is in conformity with outcomes of Adedokun, Adurogbangba and Akinbile (2015), Musa, Shabu and Igbawua (2014) and Ofuoku and Isife (2010).

Major Findings

From the data collected from both primary and secondary sources, analyzed and tested, the following findings were made;

- i. The destruction of crops by cattle is one of the major causes of Farmers and Fulani herdsmen crisis in Agatu LGA of Benue State.
- ii. The harassment of Nomads by host community youths is another factor which breeds animosity thereby facilitating Farmers and Fulani herdsmen crisis in Agatu LGA of Benue State.
- iii. Farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict has reduce quality in social relationship between both the farmers and herdsmen, resulted to the loss of human life, houses and properties worth billions of naira in Agatu LGA of Benue State.
- iv. Farmers and Fulani herdsmen conflict has led to the scarcity of agricultural products thereby reducing output and income of Farmers/ Nomads in Agatu LGA of Benue State.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study analyses the impact of Farmers and Fulani Herdsmen conflict on socio-economic activities in Agatu LGA of Benue State, Nigeria. The study concludes that socio-economic activities would continue to be affected unless the root causes of the conflict which ranges from the destruction of crops by cattle and harassment of Nomads by host community youths amongst others are addressed. The following policy based recommendations are suggested for proper conflict resolutions between the Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Agatu LGA of Benue state;

- i. The government and stakeholders should ensure strict adherence to the anti open grazing policy enacted by Benue state government.
- ii. The stakeholders and government at all levels should exercise good leadership and political will by assembling the feuding parties on a dialogue table while meting punishment and rewards where necessarily so as to restore peace, order and trust on the populace and community at large.
- iii. The extent of the damages incurred by the feuding parties should be asses; and both NGOs and financial institutions, such as rural development/microfinance banks and agricultural insurance companies, should work towards financial assistance for victims of farmer-herdsmen conflicts.
- iv. The need for improving security in Agatu LGA and its environs through the use of security forces and mobilizing the civil population, and some policy decisions are required. This will build confidence in the local populace to go back to their agricultural practices thereby boasting their yearly farm outputs.

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