

## The Impact of Interpersonal Communication in Addressing Farmers'/Herders' Conflicts in Nigeria: A Study of Some Selected States (Enugu, Benue and Plateau)

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### ABSTRACT

Farmers and herders conflicts in Nigeria are one of the growing challenges facing the country today. Both the rulers and the ruled in Nigeria are worried about this ugly scenario to an extent that there is need to employ an acceptable means by the conflicting parties to stop incessant killings, maiming and destruction of properties of those who fall victims from both sides of the warring factions. This study was carried out to ascertain the impact of interpersonal communication in addressing farmers/herders conflicts in Nigeria, with special reference to Enugu, Benue and Plateau States. The researcher identified the problem of the study and sought for a way to solve it through the review of conceptual, empirical and theoretical frameworks relating to the study. Also, through the use of descriptive research design that made use of survey research method, both questionnaire and oral interviews were used to collect data from a population of 14, 182, 429 generated from the three states of the federation under study. Again, a sample size of 400 respondents was used in the study. Data collected from the respondents were presented and analysed through bar charts and pie charts. They were presented in simple percentages. At the end of the study, it was found out that, interpersonal communication is one of the best means of conflict resolution among farmers and herders in Enugu, Benue and Plateau States. It was also found out that sexual harassment by herders, destruction of farmers' crops and hatred were responsible for these conflicts, etc. The researcher recommended that, both farmers' and herders' associations in Nigeria should caution their members to desist from sexual harassment, destruction of one another's means of livelihood and rustling of animals which do not belong to them and that, strong cultural ties such as intermarriages, festivals, etc can be established among the farmers and herders as this will go a long way to reduce the incidence of hatred among the conflict factions and restore peace among them.

Key words: Impact, Interpersonal Communication, Farmers'/Herders' Conflicts

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### INTRODUCTION

There is growing concern among the federal, states, local governments and Nigerians in general over the state of insecurity in the country today [1]. There is no day that Nigerians will not hear about killings, maiming of people and destruction of properties of people as a result of what is perceived as "the state of insecurity" in the country [2,3,4]. Both the conventional media such as newspapers, magazines, radio, Tv, etc and the new media technologies such as; Facebook, The Internet, You Tube, etc have been used to give the

masses all sorts of information on different conflict situations which are taking place in Nigeria today [5,6]. It is as a result of the conflicts which have engulfed Nigeria in recent years that some prominent Nigerians have called for different stakeholders in the country to address the dual issues of insecurity and conflict situations in the country [7,8]. To buttress the above made statement [9,10] in a communiqué on how to address conflicts which were going on in Nigeria in 2018 wrote that:

The general state of insecurity and incessant killings in Nigeria have escalated in recent times with several communities at the mercy of marauding killers. This has

reached totally unacceptable proportion that gravely endangers the peace, unity and development of the country... In the eyes of many affected communities, there appear to be palpable government complicity in the killings going on around the country. These killings claimed more than 3,500 lives in 2017, a figure that could be much higher in 2018.

As a result of the above statement made by the statesmen cited above, nobody needs to be told that all sorts of conflicts have engulfed Nigeria in recent years. The conflicts between herders and farmers in Nigeria have created all sorts of popular attention to an extent that these conflicts have led to the killings, maiming and destruction of lives and properties of those affected. Although it has been argued by scholars like [11,12] that conflicts are ways of life and that, they can be both destructive and constructive. This simply indicates that, there is need to seek for a more acceptable way for the masses to address the issue of conflicts between farmers and herders in Enugu, Benue and Plateau States [13,14]. Among one of the best means to address

#### Statement of the Problem

Conflicts can be the destructive as well as constructive in nature. But the best option in handling conflicts is to use an appropriate means or approach which will not further escalate the issues that led to conflicts under resolution. In Nigeria today both farmers and herders seem to be at odds over accusations and counter-accusation on crop destruction by herders and their cattle of farmers' crops, overgrazing offallow land, sexual harassment by nomads, cattle theft by host communities, amongst others. This has resulted to a situation where both

#### Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to determine the impact of interpersonal communication in addressing farmers/herders conflicts in Nigeria. Specifically, the study has the following objectives which are to:

1. find out whether interpersonal communication is the best means of conflict resolution among farmers/herders in Enugu, Benue and Plateau States.

farmers' and herders' conflicts in Nigeria in general and Enugu, Benue and Plateau States in particular is through interpersonal communication [15,16]. One important thing about interpersonal communication is that, the parties involved in the communication process meet face-to-face, interact in a way they can understand themselves and feedback is usually immediate without delay. Since an issue can be reviewed from variety of perspectives and can be construed as having implication for multiple issues or considerations [17], argued that, the issue of the conflicts existing between herders and farmers can also be viewed through interpersonal communication. These are the reasons that promoted the researcher to embark on this study.

herders and farmers engage in all sorts of conflicts that occasionally result to deaths, maiming, and destruction of one another's lives and sources of livelihood. These conflict situations between farmers and herders have been addressed through different types of communication with little or no achievements made in their resolution. The need to see if the use of interpersonal communication to address these conflicts in Enugu, Benue and Plateau States promoted this researcher to embark on this study.

2. determine the factors which are responsible for the conflict among farmers/herders in Enugu, Benue and Plateau States.
3. ascertain the extent to which interpersonal communication has contributed to the resolution of conflicts among farmers/herders in Enugu, Benue and Plateau States.

Definition of Concepts/Keywords

The major terms that formed the topic of this study are hereby defined operationally. They include:

Impact

In this study, impact is defined as the effect of interpersonal communication in addressing farmers/herders conflicts in Enugu, Benue and Plateau States of Nigeria.

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication in this study is a form of one-on-one or face-to-face communication process which can be used as a means of addressing the conflicts among farmers and herders in Benue, Enugu and Plateau States.

Farmers/Herders

These are operationalized as those people who clash among themselves as a result of the destruction of their farmlands, crops and the stealing of their animals in Enugu, Benue and Plateau States of Nigeria.

Conflicts

In this study, conflicts mean the misunderstanding, killings, maiming and destruction of lives and properties of farmers/herders in Enugu, Benue and Plateau states which the researcher wants to use interpersonal form of communication to address.

Review of Related Literature

Sources of Literature

In this study, the researcher used both primary and secondary sources of literature in the review of relevant literatures associated with the study. The primary sources of literature here were derived from structured and unstructured questionnaire items that addressed the research problem. Also, extensive interviews and group discussions were used to compliment the questionnaire used to gather data in this study. In terms of the secondary sources of literature for this study, the researcher used manifest contents of such printed and published materials like; newspapers, magazines, books, journals, as well as internet printout. Also, unpublished lecture notes on the subject matter were used as part of the secondary sources of data for this study. They helped the researcher to review relevant sub-topics relating to this study conceptually, empirically as well as theoretically.

Meaning/Definition of Interpersonal Communication

When we engage in a social interaction involving one-to-one means of communication, it is referred to as interpersonal communication. This might involve the use of telephone, an e-mail or a touch. Although, more than two persons can carry out interpersonal communication but one important thing about this type of communication is that, the parties involved in the communication process know themselves, their social interaction must be intentional and feedback might be immediate. It is in line with the above that, Hanson (2005, p. 3) wrote that:

Interpersonal communication is how we communicate one-on-one; it is the intentional or accidental transmission of information through verbal and non verbal message systems to another human being. It can take the form of a hug that tells your mother you love her... Interpersonal communication is continual when others are around because we constantly send out messages even if they consist of nothing more than body language indicating that we want to be left alone.

In another definition of interpersonal communication by [11], interpersonal communication is seen as the communication that occurs when "we communicate on a one-to-one basis - usually in an informal, unstructured setting. This kind of communication occurs mostly between two people

though it may include more than two". To buttress the above points made by these researchers (cited above), Agbo

- To influence others.
- To express feelings and emotions.
- To provide, receive or exchange information
- To reinforce the formal structure of an organization such as using formal channels of communication

Based on the meaning and definitions given by these authors cited above on what interpersonal communication is all about, we can say that, this type of communication can be used to raise issues concerning farmers/ herders conflicts in Nigeria in general and Enugu, Benue and Plateau States in

#### The Concept of Conflict

Conflict is a situation in which people, groups or countries are involved in a serious disagreement or argument... it is a situation in which there are opposing

Conflict involves disagreement, clash, collision or a struggle or contest between two or more parties. These are many technical definitions of the term depending on the understanding and background of the individual proponents. In one instance, conflict was described as an escalated competition at any system or level between groups (or individuals, institutions, governments, countries) whose aim is to gain advantage in the area of power, resources, interest, and needs. At least one of the parties believes that this dimension of the relationship is mutually incompactable.

Having stated this, we need to understand the causes of conflict between or among farmers and herders in Nigeria and how, best to address them for us to say that conflict situations among these divergent interests can easily be managed by

#### Types of Conflict

According to [4], there are two main types of conflict which are in

#### Disruptive Conflict

In this type of conflict, misunderstanding, arguments, bickering and other negative connotations take place when people are communicating. It interferes with the effective or healthy communication climate of people or a group. [5], argued that "typically, disruptive conflict is marked by communication that is domineering, rigid, and competitive ... It is self-interested focus in which members talk only about their ideas, their solutions and their point of view". Realizing the

and [14,16] stated that "interpersonal communication in whatever manner serves four basic purposes:

particular on how best to address the causes of these conflicts as well as their prevention. Also, interpersonal communication can offer the conflicting parties the opportunity to come together and express their feelings since such is one of the basic purposes of interpersonal communication.

ideas, opinions, feelings or wishes [8]. In their discussion of the concept of conflict, [11] stated that:

those who want to resolve them. In line with the definitions made above, we can understand that when people disagree or make argument which can lead to fighting and maiming, conflict can be said to have occurred among them.

existence in our society today. They include:

fact that such conflict situations are not for the interest of all the parties involved in the conflict, We went further to state that "the competitive and self-centred communication in disruptive conflict, fosters a win-lose orientation. Members express the belief that only one or some members can win and others will lose". It could be said that disruptive conflict is not really the best to apply, when dealing with a conflict situation that permits the use of interpersonal communication.

### Constructive Conflict

In terms of constructive conflict, we mean that type of conflict which encourages mutual understanding between or among the conflicting

parties. Under constructive conflict, there is collective means of resolution of the conflict by the parties involved in the conflict. As Wood [4] would state:

Constructive conflict allows members of a group, persons or any other social organization to broaden their understanding, generate a range of possible solutions and subject all ideas to careful cooperative analysis - a situation where everybody's contribution to organizational or group goals counts.

Based on the numerous advantages one can derive from constructive conflict, it becomes necessary for parties involved in a conflict to adopt this type of conflict as a means of resolving their differences.

Causes of Conflict between Farmers and Herders in Nigeria and How to Use Interpersonal Communication to

#### Sexual Harassment by Nomads

Nomads are people who move with their animals such as cattle, cow, goat, sheep etc from one place to the other in search of feed for the animals. This type of agriculture is predominantly practiced by the Fulani's and in most cases, they have been accused of raping women they meet in the bush or farms. When such things happen, the host communities usually carry out a reprisal attacks against the herders or nomads which usually lead to all sorts of conflicts between or among them. The need to use interpersonal communication to address the issue of sexual harassment by those who are alleged to be involved in this type of anti-social act, is to call for a meeting of one or two prominent people from both sides who are involved in the conflict.

#### Crop Destruction by Cattle Owned by Herders

This is another factor which has continued to cause conflicts among farmers and herders in Nigeria. Most often, farmers usually confront herders on the rate in which their cattle destroy farmers' crops. If the situation is not properly taken care of, it usually leads to conflicts between or among the farmers and herders. To address this issue through interpersonal communication, phone numbers of the head of cattle rearers in the states under

address the conflicts. A lot of factors have been identified by social scientists, media practitioners and other stakeholders in various areas of human endeavour in Nigeria on what cause farmers and herders' conflicts. Among these causes of conflicts. Between farmers and herders in Nigeria are:

After their meeting, they will go back to their people and address them on how to stop such anti-social activity. This will go a long way to restore peace or order among the farmers and herders. To buttress this point made above, there is need for the herders and farmers to adhere to what [9] stated when she said that, "the basis of conflict depends on the finding which is laid down on equal recognition of interests and in the unequal perception and treatment of unequal entities and situations." The above simply means that the heads of the farmers' association and that of herders in Enugu, Benue and Plateau States can have a close-door meeting and both will reach an agreement on how to stop sexual harassment and raping of women by alleged herders.

study can be exchanged with those of the heads of the farmers. When such issues like destruction of farmers' crops occur, farmers can alert their leaders who also call other party's leaders as this will help to caution their members from fomenting trouble. Through mutual interaction of the two leaders in form of interpersonal communication, conflicts can be prevented from emanating or escalating between farmers and herders.

Cattle and other Animals Belonging to Herders Theft by Host Communities  
Sometimes herders claim that their animals are stolen or rustled. As a result of this, they usually attack suspected rustlers and this usually results to the killings, burning and destruction of lives and properties of the alleged rustlers by herders. To address this problem, community leaders can call for a round-table meeting of small group of different stakeholders in the community and seek a way to resolve the issue before it degenerated to more deadly conflicts. Accordingly to [4]:

Crisis (conflict) and communication are two sides of a coin. The communication plan formulated by... communication experts should be put into operation immediately at the onset of the crisis. Of course, communication is ongoing activity, and it must be ensured that communication process is in full and effective existence at all times without hindrance of any kind.

This statement made above will go a long way to ensure that issues relating to farmers and herders conflicts would

be resolved easily through interpersonal communication between those who control the conflicting parties.

#### Lack of Understanding of other People's Plights, Values and Culture

Why conflicts exist between or among farmers and herders in Nigeria is that, these set of people have not really and properly understood one another's plights, values and culture. For instance, it is wrong for herders to allow their animals to destroy farmers' crops as it is wrong for farmers or other people to rustle cattle and other animals belonging to herders. Since come cultures forbid stealing of any kind or damaging of a person's source of livelihood, it becomes very necessary for the farmers and herders to understand one another's plight, respect their values as well as culture. To address these conflict situations through interpersonal communication, communication experts, public relations

officers and peacemakers from both sides can engage in doorstep to doorstep sensitization of the farmers and herders in order to stop future conflicts from taking place amongst them. Some of the Conflicts Between Farmers and Herders Situations which had Taken Place in Enugu, Benue and Plateau States. One of the recorded conflict incidents of farmers and herders in Enugu State was that of Attakwu Akaegbe Ugwu Community in Nkanu Local Government Area of Enugu State on August 25, 2016. It was alleged that not less than seven people were killed by men suspected to be Fulani herders. According to [6] who stated that:

The activities of the Fulani herdsmen in Attakwu Akaegbe Ugwu Community is a wicked one... What happened here came to me as a surprise because before now, we have not had much problems with them... Fulani herdsmen have been taking their cows to the farms, and rift will always occur but when it happens, my people will come and report and we will invite them and they will come and we settle it. I calm my people down and they will go. We have not attacked them or done anything bad to them.

This statement above was the response of the traditional ruler of Akaegbe Ugwu, (H.R.H. Igwe Greg Ugwu) in Nkanu West L.G.A., after his community was

attacked by men suspected to be Fulani herders. The report which was part of the news-story carried by Daily Sun Newspaper of August 28, 2016 with the

headline “Attakwu Akaegbu Ugwu Monarch accuses Fulani herdsmen of wickedness,” was one of the conflicts between farmers and herders that resulted to the death of some people in the community. In another conflict that occurred between the farmers and

herders in Enugu State, it was reported by [8] that people suspected to be Fulani herders struck at a Community called Nimbo, Uzo Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State on April 15<sup>th</sup> 2016. These reporters stated that:

About 40 people have so far been killed by some Fulani herdsmen at Nimbo in Uzo Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State, source told Vanguard at Nsukka Police Area Command near the area yesterday.

Again, the killing of a Catholic priest - Rev. Fr. Paul Offu, in August 2019 in Awgu L.G.A. of the State (Enugu State) by some people suspected to be herders had lead to all sorts of conflicts between the herders and their host communities. When it comes to Benue State, one of the most gruesome and conflict issues between the farmers and herders was the killing of more than 500 people in Agatu between February and March 2016. It was also reported by Senator David Mark representing the area that, more than 7000 people were displaced as a result of the conflicts. Also, on

March 4, 2018, a village in Okpokwu L.G.A. of Benue State known as “Omusu village” was attacked by men suspected to be Fulani herders. The LGA is one of the places in the state where farmers predominately live and earn their living through agriculture. It was reported by social media platforms like Facebook, the Internet and Twitter that these attacks have led to conflict situations in Benue state as they did in Enugu State. In terms of conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Plateau State. It was reported online by goggle.com that:

In June 2018, over 200 people were killed and 50 houses were burnt in clashes between farmers and Fulani cattle herders in Plateau State... The coalition against Kajuru killings stated on March 2019 that 130 people have been killed in a series of revenge attacks since the massacre announced by El-Rufai.

This attack that took place although in Kaduna state later led to reprisal attack on the Fulani herders in Plateau State the same month and year. Also in 2016, conflict erupted between farmers and herders in Jos Plateau. According to [12] “on Saturday [11], more than 200 people were left dead after an attack on villages in Plateau, a state in the country’s

middle belt.” It was also reported that a source known as “Information Nigeria (IN)” stated in 2018 that 86 people killed and 50 houses burnt in fresh Fulani herdsmen attack in Plateau. There are other cases of such conflicts which were not listed here and these conflicts pointed to the need to use interpersonal communication to resolve them.

#### Empirical Review

Experts in mass communication and other related disciplines have conducted studies on the impact of interpersonal communication in addressing all sorts of conflicts within and outside Nigeria. For instance, in a study conducted by [8] entitled “Framing of the Farmers-Herders Crisis in Selected Nigerian Newspapers”, the researchers’ objectives of study was to determine, the extent of coverage of the farmers-herders conflict in the Daily Trust and

Vanguard newspapers to discover those aspects where the Daily Trust and Vanguard newspapers differ in framing the farmers - herders conflict among other objectives of the study. Three research questions were raised from the objectives of the study and content analysis research design used as the research method. Also, none-probability sampling technique was employed by the researchers whose population of study were 352 editions of the Daily

Trust and Vanguard newspapers. A sample size of 176 was used in the study as well. After data presentation and analysis using coding sheet, the researchers among other things found out that, the Vanguard newspaper was more volatile than the Daily Trust newspaper in the coverage of the crisis and that, the Vanguard newspaper was more sympathetic to the South and the Middle belt regions of Nigeria while Daily Trust newspaper was sympathetic to the Northern region. The researchers recommended that, stories on conflict should be framed with a national outlook than regional or ethnic or religious colourations. This study is relevant to our study because it can be used to understand the factors which are responsible for farmers/herders conflicts in Nigeria and how best to solve them through both interpersonal communication and other forms of conflict resolution approaches. This will help to bring peace to the troubled regions where conflicts exist between farmers and herders in Nigeria. In another study conducted by [7] on the topic "Framing of Cartoons on Fulani-Herders Crisis in Nigeria: A Content Analysis of Daily Trust, Leadership, Punch and Vanguard Newspapers", the researchers identified the relevance of cartoons as means of communication. They (the researchers) adopted qualitative visual and semiotic analysis

The media has a responsibility to stamp some elements of legitimacy by publicly justifying the actions and inactions that relate to sustainable peace by the government and everyone.

They recommend that, for peace to be realized in our society today, responsible reporting for public good and public peace should be encouraged by our media content producers, the government and other stakeholders in Nigeria. This study is also relevant to ours in the sense that, it encouraged

#### Theoretical Framework

The researcher anchored this study on the Agenda-Setting theory. This theory was propounded in 1922 by Walter Lippman and reinforced in 1976 by Marshal McCombs and Donald Shaw [5]. According to [9] "Agenda setting theory

in their determination of dominant cartoon frames in their study. Their study period was January 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018. By using framing and play theories of communication, the researchers found out that the dominant cartoon frames used by the four selected newspapers is power imbalance and government negligence. The researchers recommended that; "newspapers should be relevant in presenting revealing information concerning the nation through cartoon messages. This empirical study cited above is relevant to our work because it has shown that two or more people can use newspaper cartons to understand the crisis situation which exists between farmers and herders in Enugu, Benue and Plateau States and Nigeria in general. It can also act as a means of interpersonal communication where few people can discuss cartons on farmers-herders conflicts as a form of interpersonal communication which can help them in understanding such conflicts. In their study of "The Media Responsibility and Conflict Sensitive Reporting in Nigeria", [8] through agenda-setting principle of the media and social responsibility discussed the nature of conflict, the consequences and the responsibilities of the media in sustaining peace in Nigeria. These researchers admonished the media in Nigeria by stating that:

concerted effort through the media for the maintenance of peace and order in our country. Also, through the use of interpersonal communication, one-on-one discussions can be engaged in the media between Farmers and Herders leadership on how best to end the conflicts between them.

is a theory that holds that issues that are portrayed as important in the news media became important to the public, that the media set the agenda for public debate". Also, [11] wrote that agenda setting is "a process of media influence



... by which the relative importance of news events, issues or personages in the public mind are affected by the order of presentation (or relative salience) in news reports."To relate this theory to this topic of study, farmers and herders in Nigeria in general and Enugu, Benue and Plateau States in particular can use the media to engage in interpersonal communication on how best to address

the issue of farmers-herders conflicts in Nigeria. This can be done through telephone interviews, oral interviews (face-to-face), debates, media interactions and other means of using interpersonal communication to address social problems. It is also as a result of the above that this researcher anchored this study on agenda setting theory.

### METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design

In this study, the researcher adopted descriptive research design that was survey based. Also, through the use of survey research method, the researcher employed mixed qualitative research

method in form of both the use of questionnaire and extensive oral interview in data collection and analysis.

#### Population of the Study

The population of this study was derived from Enugu, Benue and Plateau States. Accordingly, to the website of National Population Commission (NPC)-Enugu, Benue and Plateau States had a population of 3,267,837, 4,253,641 and 3,206,532 respectively. Since 2006 till date is 14 years and the National Population Commission recommended a projected (annual population increase) of 2.28 percent or 0.23, the researcher used this formula (annual population increase index) to determine the population of these three states under study.

$$PP = GP \times Pi \times T$$

Where:

PP - Projected population (unknown)  
GP = Given population as at the last census = 3,267,837 + 4,253,641 + 3,206,532 = 10,728,010 (population of the three states as at 2006 census).

Pi = Population increase index (0.023)

T = Period between the given population and year of study = 14 years

$$PP = 10,728,010 \times 0.023 \times 14 = 3,453,419 \text{ (population increase of the three states from 2006-2020).}$$

$$\text{Projected population} = 3,434,419 + 10,728,010 = 14,182,429 \text{ (population of study).}$$

The formula is:

#### Sample Size Determination

Since the population of the study is 14,182,429, the researcher did not study the entire population, rather, she used a scientific method known as Taro

Yamane formula to determine the sample size of the study. The formula is

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = Desired sample size

N = Population size under study

e = Level of significance of error assumed to be 5% or 0.05.

I = Unity (Always constant in value)

Working formula

$$n = \frac{14,182,429}{1 + 14,182,429(0.005)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{14,182,429}{1 + 14,182,429 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{14,182,429}{1 + 35456.1}$$

$$n = \frac{35457}{35457}$$

$$n = 399.98954 \text{ App. } 400 \text{ (sample size)}$$

Sampling Technique

Since the sample size of the study is 400, the researcher adopted systematic sampling technique where elements in the population were selected on interval of 5. Also, the researcher used both questionnaire and extensive oral

interview in data gathering and analysis. Through these qualitative and quantitative approaches, the researcher was able to gather the necessary data needed for this study.

Method of Data Collection Analysis

Since the researcher studied three states of the federation (Enugu, Benue and Plateau States), she hired two research assistants who worked with her for three weeks in data gathering and analysis. Each of them (the researcher and her research assistants) was assigned each state and after data

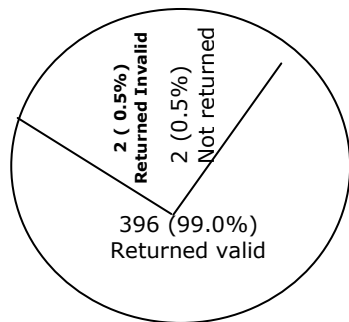
collection within the span of three weeks, the researcher and her assistants collected and analysed data generated from the respondents. It was found out that 396 out of the 400 copies of the research instruments were valid for the study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The researcher presented data generated from the respondents using bar and pie

charts statistical instruments. The statistics are presented below

Pie Chart showing rate of return of the copies of questionnaire



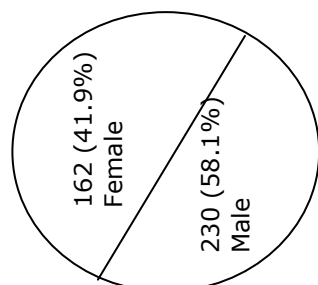
Source: Field Survey, 2021

Figure 1 shows the return rate of the 400 copies of the questionnaire distributed to the respondents which indicates that 396 copies, representing 99% were returned valid, 2 copies representing 0.5% were not returned and 2 copies again, representing 0.5% were

returned invalid. This simply means that 4 copies of the questionnaire were not used for the study. This formula indicates that the greater number of the copies of the questionnaire were returned valid.

Gender distribution of the respondents

Figure 2:

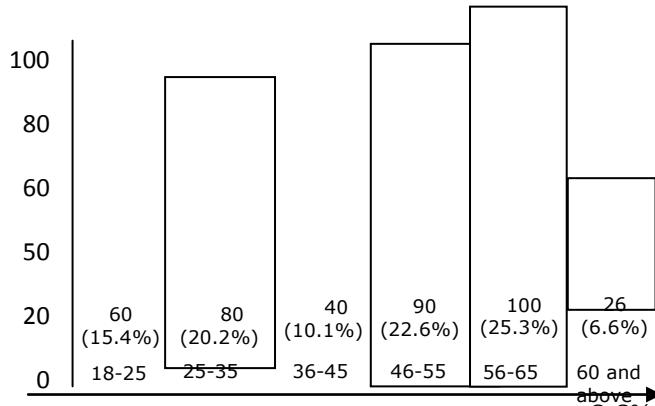


Source: Field Survey, 2021

Data generated from the pie chart above showed that 230 of the respondents, representing 58.1% of them were males and 162 of them, representing 41.9% Figures 3

were females. This further indicates that the greater number of the respondents were males.

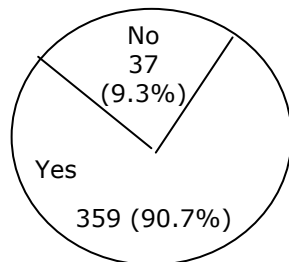
Bar Char Showing the Age Distribution of the Respondents



Source: Field Survey, 2021

Data generated from figure 1 above indicate that 60 of the respondents, representing 15.4% were between the ages of 18-25 years. 80 of them, representing 20.2% were between 26-35 years. Also, 40, representing 10.1% of them were between 36-45 years and 90 or 22.6% were between 46-55 whereas 100 of them representing 25.3% were between 56.65, 26 of them representing Figure 4.

6.6% were 60 and above years. This also further indicates that the greater number of the respondents were between 56-65 years. Analysis of the Research Questions using Pie Chart. Three research questions were posed in this study and the responses derived from the respondents are presented below: Is interpersonal communication the best means of conflict resolution among farmers and herders in Enugu, Benue and Plateau States?



Source:Field Survey, 2021

In line with data generated from figure 4 above, 359 representing 90.7% of them said No. This further indicates that the greater number of the respondents said

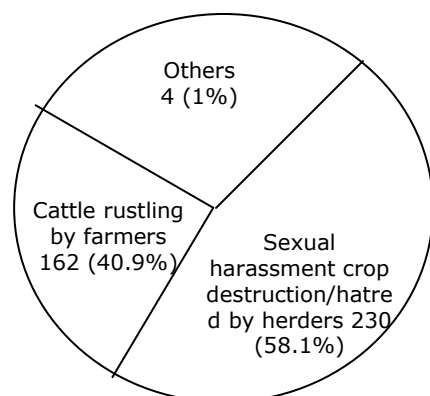
yes that, interpersonal communication is the best means of conflict resolution among farmers and herders in Enugu, Benue and Plateau states.

Analysis of Research Question 2

Determination of the factors which are responsible for the conflicts among

farmers and herders in Enugu, Benue and Plateau States.

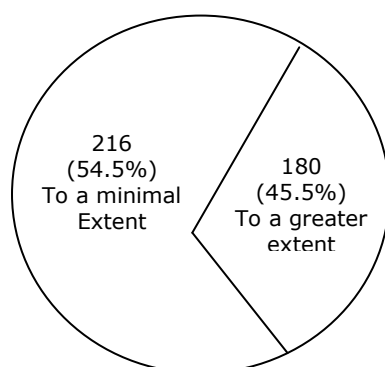
Figure 5



Source:Field Survey, 2021

In line with data generated from the respondents on the research question (2) posed above, 230 of them, representing 58.1% said that sexual harassment, destruction of crops and hatred by herders were responsible for the conflicts between farmers and herders in Enugu, Benue and Plateau States. 162 of them, representing 40.9% said it was as a result of cattle rustling by farmers and 4 or 1% of the respondents gave other reasons. This Figure 6

further indicates that the greater number of the respondents said sexual harassment and crop destruction by farmers as well as hatred were responsible for the conflicts among farmers and herders. Analysis of research question three on the extent to which interpersonal communication has contributed to the resolution of conflicts between farmers and herders in Enugu, Benue and Plateau States.



Source: Field Survey, 2021

Data generated from Figure 6 that analysed research question 3 stated that 216 of the respondents, representing 54.4% of them said that to a minimal extent, interpersonal communication has contributed to the resolution of the conflicts among or between farmers and herders in Enugu, Benue and Plateau

States whereas 180 of them representing 45.5% said that this has been achieved to a greater extent. This further indicates that, to a minimal extent, interpersonal communication has contributed to the resolution of the conflicts between farmers and herders in these states mentioned above.

Discussion of Findings

Data collected and analysed from this study has helped to understand the impact of interpersonal communication in addressing farmers and herders conflicts in Nigeria in general and Enugu, Benue and Plateau States in particular. As a result of the outcome of the responses obtained from the

respondents in figure that analysed the research question, it was found out that interpersonal communication is the best means of conflict resolution among farmers and herders in Enugu, Benue and Plateau States. Also, this means that the need to use interpersonal communication to resolve these

conflicts should not be neglected by the conflicting parties. In terms of the findings made from figures that presented and analysed research question 2, it becomes obvious that, sexual harassment by herders, destruction of farmers' crops and hatred were responsible for these conflicts. As a result, such conflict keeps persisting since these factors have not been

addressed by the conflicting parties. Another major finding made by the researcher is that made from figure 6 which addressed research question 3. The respondents stated that though, interpersonal communication is the best means of conflicts resolution among farmers and herders in these states under study to a minimal extent it has been used to address these conflicts.

#### CONCLUSION

The study has identified some of the causes of conflicts among farmers and herders in Nigeria in general and Enugu, Benue and Plateau States in particular. It is now obvious for us to state that interpersonal communication can be used in addressing these conflicts because, the more the conflicting parties come together on one-on-one or face-to-face basis, the more they understand how best to resolve their differences.

This is in line with the need for agenda-setting theory used in this study as such effort to communicate with one another, will help the conflicting parties to discuss how best to end the conflicts among them. It is in line with the above, that it is believed that the use of interpersonal communication will help farmers and herders in Nigeria to resolve their differences.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made for policy formulation and for further studies.

1. Both farmers' association and herders' association in Nigeria should caution their members to desist from sexual harassment, destruction of one another's means of livelihood and rustling of animals which do not belong to them.
2. Government officials and those of the farmers and herders association should organize interpersonal communication meetings on how to live in peace among themselves. The outcome of the meetings should immediately be communicated to

every stakeholder from these parties and implemented.

3. Strong cultural ties such as intermarriages, festivals, etc can be established among the farmers and herders as this will go a long way to reduce the incidence of hatred among them since it has been established in this study that hatred is one of the factors that cause conflicts amongst farmers and herders in Nigeria.
4. It is also recommended that further studies should be conducted on this topic of study to fill the gaps which were not filled as a result of an oversight (if any) from the researcher.

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APPENDIX I  
LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki,  
Faculty of Management Sciences,  
Department of Mass Communication  
20<sup>th</sup> April, 2021

Dear Respondent,

I am a doctoral student of the above named University. I am currently conducting a study on "The Impact of Interpersonal Communication in Addressing Farmers'/Herders' Conflicts in Nigeria: A Study of Enugu, Benue and Plateau States".

I would be very grateful if you can help me to fill out this questionnaire designed for the study. It is purely for academic exercise and the information given to me will be used for the execution of the study alone and would be treated with utmost confidence.

Thanks for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,  
Rose Anigbo

APPENDIX II  
QUESTIONNAIRE  
Please tick (✓) where applicable

Section A: Biographical Data

1. What is your sex?  
(a) Male [ ] (b) Female [ ] (c) No Comment [ ]
2. What is your age bracket?  
(a) 18-25 years [ ] (b) 26-35 years [ ] (c) 36-45 years [ ]  
(d) 46 years and above [ ]

- 3. What is your academic qualification?  
 (a) O' Level [ ] (b) OND/HND [ ] (c) M.Sc./MA [ ] (D) Others [ ]  
 Section B: Thematic Data
- 4. Is interpersonal communication the best means of conflict resolution among farmers /herders in Enugu, Benue and Plateau State?  
 (a) Yes [ ] No [ ] (c) No Comment
- 5. What are the factors which are responsible for conflicts amongst farmers/herders in Enugu, Benue and Plateau States?  
 (a) Sexual harassment, killings and rape by nomads [ ]  
 (b) Cattle rustling or theft by host communities [ ]  
 (c) others [ ]
- 6. To what extent has interpersonal communication contributed to the resolution of conflicts among farmers and herders in Enugu, Benue and Plateau States?  
 (a) To a greater extent [ ] (b) To a minimal extent [ ]  
 (c) No comment [ ]
- 7. Suggest the factors which can encourage peaceful resolution of farmers'/herders' conflicts in Nigeria.  
 1.....  
 ...  
 2.....  
 ....3.....  
 .....
- 8. Do you agree that Federal government has done enough in the resolution of farmers and herders conflicts in Nigeria?  
 (a) Strongly Agree [ ] (b) Agree [ ] (c) Strongly Disagree [ ] (d) Disagree [ ]  
 (e) No comment [ ]