

PERCEPTION OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PASTORALIST AND CROP FARMERS IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The competition for resources between pastoralist and crop-farmers has led to conflicts of various dimensions in recent times in Nigeria. This study thus examined the perception of interpersonal relationship between pastoralists and farmers in Ondo state. Respondents were selected through purposive sampling of communities located along grazing routes. Sixty farmers and 30 pastoralists were randomly selected for the study. Descriptive and inferential statistics (t-test) were used to analyse the data. Results reveal that majority (91.7%) of farmers were male and all (100.0%) pastoralists were male. They were mostly married (91.7% and 93.3% farmers and pastoralists, respectively). Mean age was 58.5 years for farmers and 40.5 years for pastoralists. Occupational experience was 32.5 years for farmers and 20 years for pastoralists. All pastoralists were Muslims while majority (96.7%) of farmers were Christians. Majority (66.7%) of pastoralists had Islamic/Arabic education while most (53.4%) farmers had primary education and above. Destruction of crops was the major cause of conflict as reported by 86.7% of farmers and 53.3% of pastoralists. Pooled mean perception of the relationship between the two groups revealed an unfavourable perception ($\bar{x}=32.6$). T-test revealed no significant difference in the perceptions of their relationships ($t=0.13$, $p>0.05$). This implies that both parties agree in their perception of an unfavourable relationship. Heads of the farmers and pastoralist were the major peace brokers in the communities. Regulations on pastoral activities should be put in place by the government.

Keywords: Pastoralist, Crop farmers, Conflict, Resolution, Relationship

INTRODUCTION

A conflict can be understood as an incompatible interaction between at least two actors, whereby one of the actors experienced damage, and the other actor caused this damage intentionally, or ignores it (Mason and Rychar, 200). Diez *et al* (2006) defined conflict as a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. According to the human needs theory, conflicts are caused by basic "universal" human needs that are not satisfied (Burton, 1990). Conflict according to Pia and Diez (2007) is however not always characterised by violence. Yet, conflict might escalate and lead to destructive results, in particular in the form of physical violence that is increasingly seen as legitimate as conflict intensifies. On a positive note, conflict can also lead to a new social or political organisation and therefore be productive if the parties involved are able to deal with their incompatibilities so that such a new organisational form is achieved. When defined in broadest terms, conflict denotes the incompatibility of subject positions.

In recent times in Nigeria, there has been an increase in the occurrence of clashes between crop farmers and pastoralist known as Fulani herds' men. The occurrence, which was once limited to the northern region of the nation, has become a threat to life and property in the south, south west and east of the country. The remote cause to some is a complex of the effect of climate change on the nation's vegetation and the Boko Haram crises in the Northeastern part of the country which has

made herds' men to abandon the foraging grounds for security reasons (Fabiya and Otunuga, 2016).

Though, conflict between these two groups has existed from time immemorial, it has been at a low frequency until recent times. Increase in herd sizes due to better veterinary services and affordable drugs, intensification of crop cultivation due to increasing population and growth of Fadama cultivation activities have further contributed to the competition for land, available vegetation and water during the dry season (Blench, 2010; Sulaiman and Ja'afar-Furo, 2010).

Data reveal that Nigerian cattle population has grown from 9 million heads of cattle in 1975 to about 25 million in 2016 and is estimated to reach about 60 million by 2050. Furthermore, the cows consume about 1 billion gallons per day of water and 500 million kilograms of grass and forage crops (Fabiya and Otunuga, 2016). These facts, coupled with the competition for scarce and limited natural resources by other livelihoods make the situation a dicey one for sustaining the cattle business. The Nigerian case is however more pathetic as the conflict has been coloured by religious, ethnic and political sentiments. Conflicts will definitely continue until there is a political will to produce the right policies and develop holistic programmes that attend to all the facets of the conflicts. In Nigeria, the spate of conflicts and fatal clashes between pastoralist and arable crop farmers is on the increase and going round the various states. Neighbouring states; Ekiti and Edo States has had their own share of this skirmishes and it has not yet subsided, though their State governments are already making legislation



towards it. It is against this background that the study was set, to investigate actors' perception of the conflict status and plausible solutions in Ondo State Nigeria such that lives and properties will be preserved and economic activities enhanced.

The general objective of the study was to assess the interpersonal relationship between crop farmers and pastoralist in Ondo State of Nigeria. Specifically it is to;

1. ascertained the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents;
2. determined respondents' perception of their relationship;
3. identified causes of conflicts; and
4. identified the institutions that are involved in conflict resolution between the respondents.

The hypothesis of the study, stated in null form was stated as; there is no significant difference between arable crop farmers and pastoralist perception of their interpersonal relationship.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Akure north of Ondo State, Nigeria. The state serves as a transit zone for pastoralists migrating from neighbouring states and the Niger Republic towards central and southwestern Nigeria in search of green pasture at the end of the wet season. Ondo State, like many other states in southwest Nigeria, has a history of clashes between pastoralists and arable farmers. Ondo State stretches from latitudes $5^{\circ} 45^1$ N and $7^{\circ} 52^1$ N and longitude $4^{\circ} 20^1$ E, covering a landmass of 15,500 square kilometres. Agriculture has a unique position in the economy of the state. It is estimated that agriculture, in its various forms, provides the means of livelihood for over 80 per cent of the population of the area.

A purposive sampling method was used in the study. Information on Fulani grazing route was obtained from the head of the cattle markets in Akure North Local Government Area. Three communities on the routes were purposively selected due to the incidence of conflicts. In each community, 20 farmers were randomly selected giving a sample size of 60 farmers. The Fulani pastoralists in the study area were interviewed on

contact. Thirty Fulani herdsmen were thus encountered and interviewed. Qualitative and quantitative data was used in the study. Quantitative data were collected with the aid of a well structured interview schedule while key informant interview with Fulani chiefs and leader of farmers association were used to generate qualitative data.

The data used in this study were essentially from primary sources. The English versions of the questionnaire were translated to Yoruba and Hausa language for proper understanding by the farmers and cattle rearers. Data collected were analyzed using statistical tools such as mean, percentage and frequency counts which was used to analyzed socio economic characteristics of the respondents. The t - test analysis was used to establish the difference in the perception of arable farmers and cattle rearers.

Perception of the interpersonal relationship between pastoralist and arable crop farmers, was measured by presenting respondents with eight statements on a 5 - point likert- type scale. Positive statements were scored '1' for strongly agreed, '2' for agreed, '3' for undecided, '4' for disagreed and '5' for strongly disagreed. These were reversed for the positive statements. This was done so that the higher the score, the more their unfavourable perception. The maximum score was 40 and the minimum 8. Dividing the range of 32 into equal halves, those with 16 and below were categorised as having favourable perception of their relationship while those equal to or above 16 were categorised as having unfavourable perception.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socioeconomic characteristics - Figure 1 shows that 91.7% of the crop farmers were male, while 8.3% were female. This implies that more male were involved in farming than the female. Only male (100%) made up the population of cattle rearers. The sole involvement of male in cattle rearing can be adduced to the rough terrain and various inconveniences they have to undergo *vis-à-vis* the stressful nature of the job, which makes such a job unsuitable for the female gender.

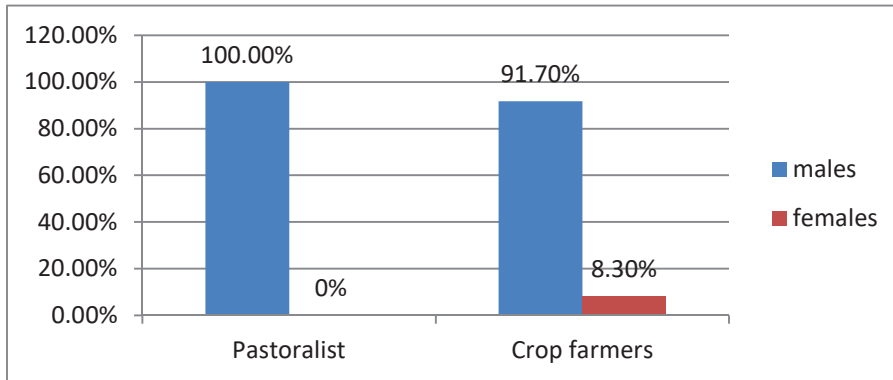


Figure 1: Sex distribution of respondents

The age distribution of pastoralists as presented in Figure 2 reveals that cattle rearers who fell below 30 years were 23.4%, those in the range of between 31 and 60 years were 66.7% , and 10% were above 60 years. This implies that majority of the cattle rearers were still young. The mean age was 40.5 years. The age distribution of the crop farmers shows that 50% of the respondent falls in the above 60years category and the other half were

under 60 years. Mean age was 58.5 years for crop farmers. The finding shows crop farmers were older than pastoralist in the study areas. This suggests that most of the pastoralists are still energetic with vigour to take up both economic and social activities that could enhance the living status of the households. However, in the case of violence they will have more ability to inflict harm and damage to crop farmer.

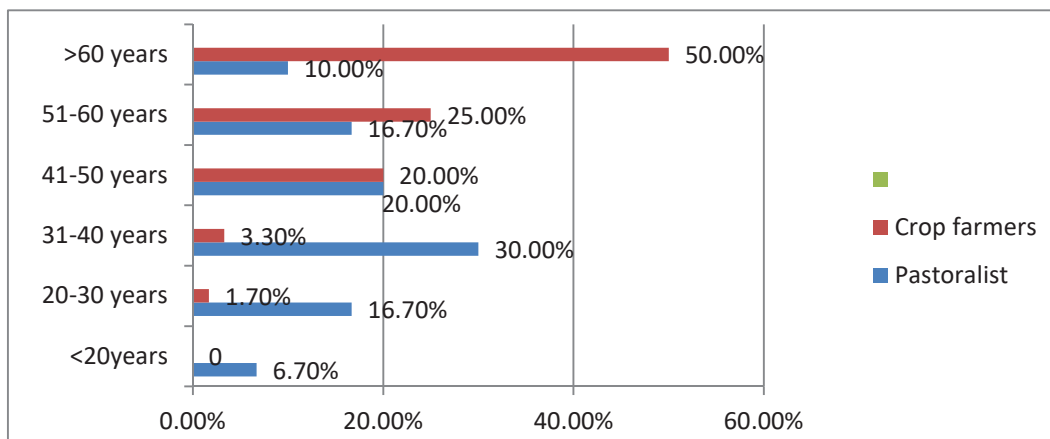


Figure 2: Age distribution of respondents

The pastoralist as shown in Figure 3 were all (100%) Muslims, while majority (96.7%) of the crop farmers were of the Christians. This area of difference could also serve as flash points for conflicts as their beliefs and manner of lifestyle

may be contrary. Thus, communication programmes should preach tolerance and patience and encourage dialogue to understand one another's view point in case of conflicts.

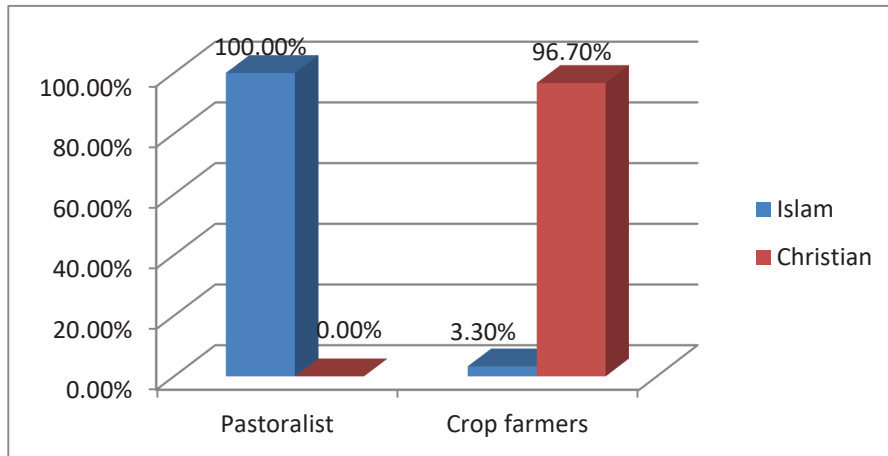


Figure 3: Distribution of respondents based on religious affiliations

The educational level of the respondents as shown in Figure 4 reveals that majority (66.7%) of the pastoralist had Qur’anic education. This is likely because they were itinerant and this lifestyle may not be suited to formal education. This calls to question the nomadic education programme of the

Federal government as only 20.0% had primary education and 10.0% had secondary education. The reverse was however the case with the crop farmers as 31.7% had primary education, 21.7% had secondary education and 10.0% had adult education.

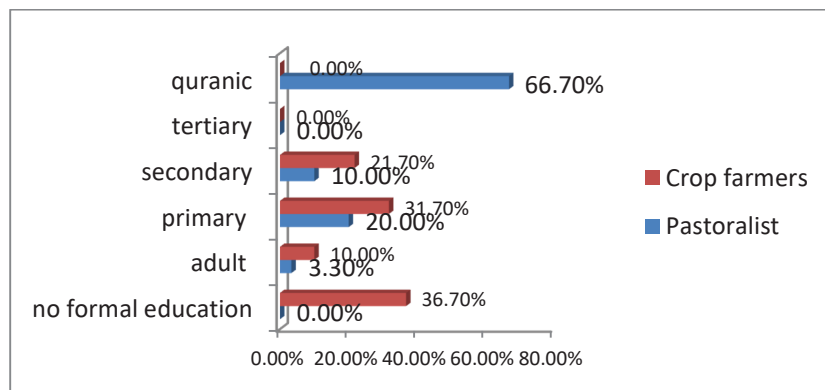


Figure 4: Educational distribution of respondents

Figure 5 indicates that 26.7% of the pastoralists had occupational experience of 1 to 10 years, those who had over 10 years of experience were more (73.3%). For crop farmers, few of them (16.7%) had a working experience of less than 20 years of age, signifying a relatively higher level of experience than the pastoralists. Mean years of

occupational experience was 32.5 years for farmers and 20 years for pastoralists. This finding tallies with the age groups of the farmers. The study therefore reveals crop farmers had more occupational experience than the pastoralists. Thus by their age and experience they will be able to settle conflicts amicably.

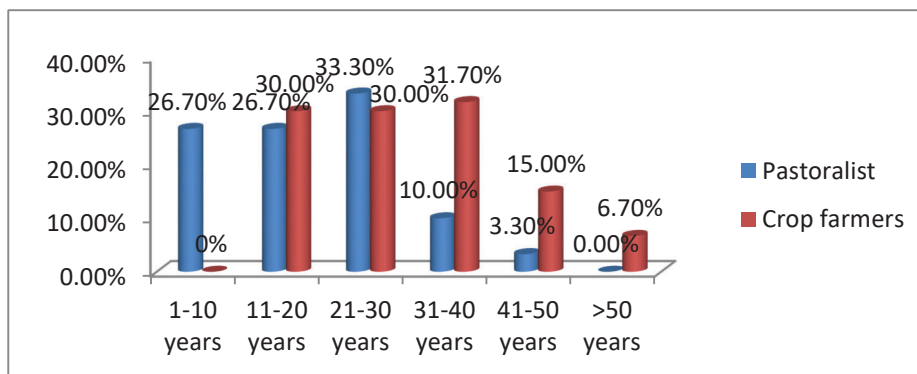


Figure 5: Distribution of respondents according to occupational experience

Figure 6 shows that 70.0% of the pastoralist speaks Yoruba language which may be due to their long stay in the southwest where Yoruba is the major language. All (100.0%) the pastoralist speaks Hausa language. Twenty percent of the pastoralists were able to speak English. Fifty five percent of crop farmers could speak English which is due to the fact that Yoruba's place more value on education. Those who spoke Yoruba were 96.7% while 3.3% of the farmers could not speak

Yoruba because they are non Yoruba indigenes. Those who spoke Hausa among them were 6.7%. The distribution of languages spoken reveals that language will not be a barrier as majority of both parties will be able to understand one another especially in the Yoruba language. Communication programmes on promotion of peace should thus be implemented in Yoruba and Hausa languages to ensure effectiveness

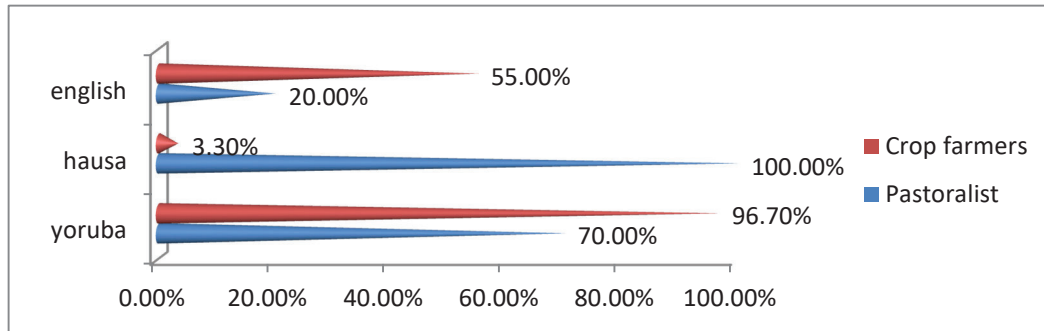


Figure 6: Distribution of respondents according to languages spoken

Causes of conflict - Causes of conflict as indicated by crop farmers (Figure 7) was mainly due to destruction of their crops by the cows of the pastoralists (86.7%), followed by stealing of their farm produce by the pastoralists (13.3%). On the part of pastoralists, 54.0% agreed destruction of

crops was the main cause of their conflict, while others responded by indicating lack of grazing reserves for their animals as a cause of conflict. It is thus clear that the competition for land to provide feeding material vis-à-vis for crop production is the main source of conflict.

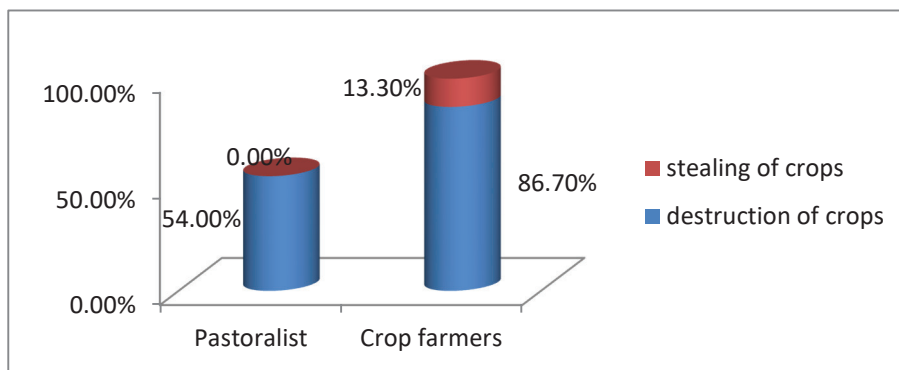


Figure 7: Distribution of respondents according to causes of conflicts

Perception of interpersonal relationships - Table 1 presents the responses of the respondents on their relationship with one another. Those who agreed that they can never be in agreement with one another were 98.9% while 1.1% were undecided. About 97.0% agreed that the only solution was for them to stay in separate locations, while the rest were undecided. Those who agreed that no solution has ever worked to resolve their disputes were 96.7%. All the respondents agreed that their relationship with one another was far from being cordial. Furthermore,

only 13.3% of the respondents believed that there can still be a good relationship between them; the majority (86.7%) did not. It is thus clear that both parties are not in good terms with each other. They are thus predisposed to violence any time.

The t-test as shown on Table 2 revealed there was no significant difference in the perception of the two parties (mean difference=0.67, $t = 0.13$, $p > 0.05$). Therefore, both parties agree to the existence of a highly volatile relationship



Table 1: Perception of interpersonal relationships among respondents (N=)

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Level of relationship between pastoralist and arable crop farmers is not cordial	80.0	20	0.0	0.0	0.0
The pastoralist and arable crop farmers can never agree together	80.0	18.9	0.0	1.1	0.0
No solution has worked to solved our dispute	53.4	43.3	1.1	0.0	2.2
There can be no other solution except pastoralist and arable crop farmers stay in separate areas	51.7	45.0	1.7	0.0	0.0

Table 2: Result of t-test analysis on the difference in respondents' perception

	Mean	Mean difference	Std. deviation	t-value	df	p-value
Farmers	32.60	0.67	2.84	0.13	29	0.89
Pastoralist	32.53					

Institutions for conflict resolutions

All respondents in the study indicated that the head of the farming community and the head of the pastoralist groups are often the point of call in the event of any conflict. However, 23.3% of the pastoralist indicated government agencies were also involved while 31.7% of the crop farmers

indicated same. It is thus evident that traditional avenues are being sought to settle disputes and this should be strengthened and incorporated into conflict settlement programmes as they are closest to the people and can quickly respond to crises before government institutions

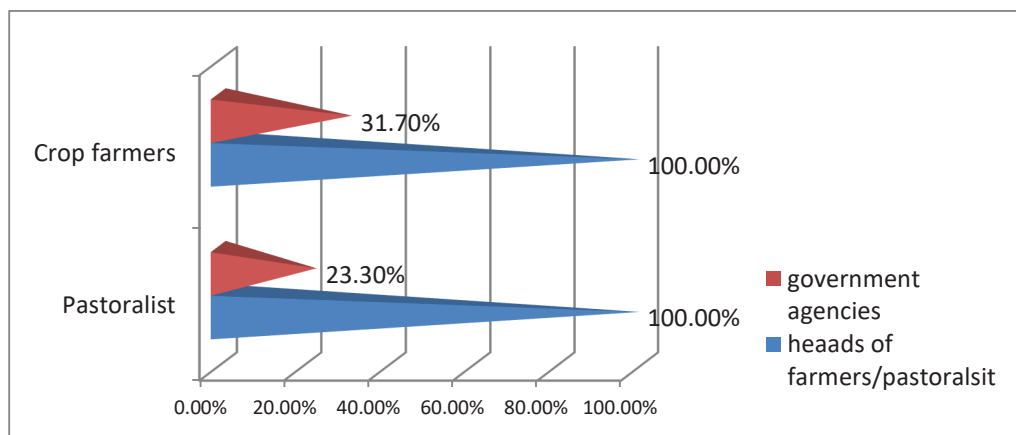


Figure 8: Distribution of respondents according to institutions involved in conflict resolutions

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concluded that majority of the respondents were males and married. Farmers were older than pastoralist. There was also an unfavourable perception of their interpersonal relationship in the study area. The destruction of crops was the major cause of conflict between pastoralists and crop farmers in the state. It is therefore recommended that

1. Pastoralists should seek permission from host communities before embarking on grazing activities
2. Sustainable cattle production, such as ranching as it is being done in developed countries where we have cow boys should be encouraged. Grazing lands/reserves

should be established by government or government –private partnership in the northern and middle belt of the country and pastoralist should be given access to such at an economic rate.

3. Government task force should be inaugurated as it is being done by some states to monitor the activities of pastoralists, attend to conflicts and also enforce the sustainable cattle production programme

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