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The Menace of Fulani Herdsmen in South East Nigeria: A Threat to National Security (2020-2025)

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Abstract
This study focused on the menace of Fulani herdsmen in South East Nigeria: a threat to National security (2020-2025). The work was carried out to determine the extent Fulani herdsmen have hindered economic development. Three research objectives, three research questions and three research hypotheses guided the study. The population of this study is 1,335,500 and the sample size is 400. Survey research design was used and questionnaire was employed to collect data. This study adopted social conflict theory and frustration-aggression theory to analyze the study. But this work was anchored on social conflict theory. The data collected in this study were analyzed using simple percentage, mean statistics, and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. The result indicated that There is significant effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east Nigeria within the period of Study; Fulani-herdsmen has significant impact on kidnapping in south east Nigeria within the period of Study and there is significant relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east Nigeria within the period of Study. The study concludes that finding a lasting solution for this conflict will help develop destroying agricultural projects/farmers which breed scarcity and high cost of living in Nigerian. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the government should effectively prosecute people who engage in kidnapping so that others will learn and avoid such negative venture.

Keywords: Fulani herdsmen, National security, farm crops, kidnapping, rural farmers

Introduction

Background to the Study

Since the return to civil rule in 1999, violence related to herders-men conflicts (mainly against farmers) has assumed alarming and disturbing proportions with thousands of people either killed or displaced and property

worth millions of naira destroyed. This made it possible that the Fulani herdsmen is one of Nigeria's most persistent security problems and has left thousands of people dead in recent decades. According to Nwosu (2024), the major areas of national security concern is the insecurity between Fulani herdsmen and farmers.

The menace of Fulani-herdsmen appears to have dire implications for socio-economic development and national security in Nigeria in general. In the states where the Fulani herdsmen and farmers crisis is pervasive, there is always destruction of properties and cases of rapes which negatively affects the economic and social lives of the people. Besides the destruction of 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**)**.

Basically, the activities of the Fulani-herdsmen cut across different geopolitical zones, and states in Nigeria. The south east zone is one of the zones where the Fulani-herdsmen destruction has led to lost of lives and properties. Some of the communities in imo state affected by the Fulani-herdsmen are in Amulu- Ihitte Mbieri in Mbaitoli LGA; Umunobo, Nkwu-Emeke, Akalovu in Emekuku in the Owerri North LGA; Amakohia-Ubi community in Owerri West; Ihitte/Okpola highway, and Aba/Owerri Express Road in Ngor Okpala LGA; Obosa Assa community in the Ohaji/Egbema LGA. In the above communities in Imo State, the activities of Fulani herdsmen has led to killing of farmer/vigilante group members, destruction of farm crops and rape. In all these, the government and the security agencies have continued to make peace between the community and the headers, but the situation has not changed. In Enugu State, some of the LGAs and community affected are Nsukka in enugu state, Isi-Uzu local government area of Enugu state and Nimbo in Uzo-uwani LGA of Enugu state; Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu state. In abia state, some of the communities and LGAs affected are some communities in Arochukwu LGA and Ndi Okereke Abam community in Ovukwu area of Abia state. In anambra state, there are some communities affected. Some of such communities are Iyiowa Odekpe Okoti in Ogbaru Local Government Area of Anambra State, and Umuchu in the Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State. In Ebonyi state, Suspected Fulani Islamists attacked Amagu, Amaokwe and Umunesha in Nkaleha community, Ishielu Local Government Area; and some communities in Afikpo LGA. Based on the above, this study focused on the menace of Fulani herdsmen in South East Nigeria: a threat to National security (2020-2025).

Statement of Problem

The global terrorism index ranked herdsmen as the fourth deadliest militant group in the world with a record killing of 9229 people between 2014-2023. According to the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (2019), the federal government of Nigeria was losing $35.7 billion in revenue annually because of farmers-herders conflicts. For that, the problem of farmers-herders conflict is one of the basic challenges affecting socio-economic and national development in Nigeria in general, and South East Nigeria in particular. People have lost their lives and economic investments have been hampered because of the activities of Fulani herders. No

doubt, that the Fulani herds-men have led to poor crop production, kidnapping, and fear among some residents in south East Nigeria.

This means that socio-economic development has been negatively affected. More so, many people no longer go to farms, because of regular killings and kidnapping of people in their farmlands. Not only that, other economic activities like trade and investment has been negatively affected. People have reduced night travels within in the South East Nigeria and beyond because of Fulani-herdsmen's kidnapping and so on. The above problems necessitated this study which focused on the menace of Fulani herdsmen in South East Nigeria: a threat to National security (2020-2025).

Research Questions

In line with the statement of problems, the following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east Nigeria within the period of Study?
2. Does Fulani-herdsmen impact on kidnapping in south east Nigeria within the period of Study?
3. What is the relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east Nigeria within the period of Study?

Objectives of the Study

The central objective of this study is focused on the menace of Fulani herdsmen in South East Nigeria: a threat to National security (2020-2025). The specific objectives include to:

1. examine the effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.
2. identify the impact of Fulani-herdsmen on kidnapping in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.
3. determine the relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.

Research Hypotheses

In view of our research question and objectives, the following hypotheses guided the study:

Hypothesis I

H_0: There is no significant effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.

H_1: There is significant effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.

Hypothesis II

H_0: Fulani-herdsmen has no significant impact on kidnapping in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.

H_2: Fulani-herdsmen has significant impact on kidnapping in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.

Hypothesis III

H_0: There is no significant relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.

H_3: There is significant relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.

Significance of the Study

This study has both practical and theoretical significance:

Practical significance: Practically, the findings of this study will expose the benefits of peace to Fulani herds-men and therefore serve as enlightenment to stop their fight. This study will enable them to know the consequences of their action and understand the benefit of a peaceful society. More so, the result of this study will enable the governments to effectively use intelligent gathering strategies and utilize indigenous people/ citizens within the area for the fight against terrorism. The government will understand the need to make and implement good policies which will reduce poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Theoretical significance: Theoretically, further researchers will understand what has been covered and what remains to be covered on all issues of farmers and herders in South east Nigeria. The work will serve as reference material to further researchers, and provide more materials for research work.

Operationalization of Concepts

1. **Fulani Herdsmen:** Fulani herdsmen are a nomadic or semi-nomadic ethnic group primarily located in West and Central Africa, traditionally herding cattle, sheep, and goats for a livelihood.
2. **National Security:** Is the protection and defense of a sovereign state, its citizens, economy, and institutions from a wide range of external and internal threats
3. **Farm Crops:** Farm crops are cultivated plants grown and harvested for food, animal feed, fiber, fuel, or other products for profit or subsistence.
4. **Kidnapping:** Is the unlawful taking and carrying away of a person against their will, often through force or fraud, with motives such as demanding ransom, furthering another crime, or political extortion
5. **Fare:** Is the **fee paid by a passenger for use of a public transport system.**

Scope of the Study

The subject scope of this study focused on the menace of Fulani herdsmen in South East Nigeria: a threat to National security (2020-2025). Geographically, the study is delimited to South East Nigeria. The content scope covers the effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east Nigeria within the period of Study; the impact of Fulani-herdsmen on kidnapping in south east Nigeria within the period of Study and the relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east Nigeria within the period of Study. The time scope is between 2020-2025. The reason for the period is to determine the extent of

Fulani headmen activities in south east Nigeria using the government in power within the periods.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the Social conflict theory and also used frustration-aggression theory to analyze the study. But social conflict theory was used as the anchor theory.

Social conflict theory

Karl Marx is considered the father of social conflict theory. it was most famously introduced in *The Communist Manifesto*, published in **1848** by Marx and Friedrich Engels. This work established his ideas on class conflict, a central theme of social conflict theory. Social conflict theory views society as a competition between groups for scarce resources like power and wealth. It posits that social order is maintained by domination and power, rather than by consensus, and that inequality is a fundamental aspect of society that drives social change. According to this theory, dominant groups use their power to exploit less powerful groups, which creates perpetual conflict. Karl Marx is considered the foundational figure of this theory. Society is seen as an arena where different groups constantly compete for limited resources, such as wealth, power, and status. The theory highlights power dynamics, arguing that those with more power and wealth work to maintain their dominance, often at the expense of the less powerful. Social order is not achieved through mutual agreement but through the control and domination exerted by the powerful over the less powerful. Social inequalities based on factors like class, race, gender, and age are not accidental but are inherent to society's structure and are used to maintain the advantage of certain groups. Conflict and struggle between groups are the primary drivers of social change, leading to shifts in power and the potential for revolution.

Justification for using the theory

Social conflict theory explains the Fulani-herdsmen attacks in the Southeast of Nigeria as a struggle for scarce resources, primarily land and water, driven by an unequal distribution of power and a clash of interests between the nomadic herders and sedentary farming communities. The central tenet of the theory is that groups in society compete for limited resources. Social conflict theory provides a robust framework for understanding the Fulani herdsmen attacks in Southeast Nigeria, interpreting the violence as **a struggle for power and control over scarce resources, particularly land and water**. In this context, climate change and desertification have pushed herders southwards into the Southeast in search of greener pastures and water sources, bringing them into direct competition with local farmers over a finite amount of arable land. The conflict arises from the opposing needs and survival strategies of the two groups. Herdsmen require open grazing routes and land for their cattle, which are essential for their economic and cultural survival. Farmers need to protect their cultivated land and crops, which are their primary source of livelihood. The incursion of cattle onto farmlands, leading to crop destruction, is a primary trigger for conflict. The theory

highlights the role of power and control. There is a perception by the local communities that the herders are armed and act with impunity, sometimes with the tacit support or inaction of the government, which exacerbates tensions and a sense of injustice. This perceived power imbalance can lead to a breakdown of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. Related to social conflict theory is the frustration-aggression theory, which is often used in analysis of this issue. It posits that frustration stemming from thwarted goals (e.g., herders being denied access to grazing land or farmers seeing their crops destroyed) leads to aggression. The inability to address the root causes and the lack of effective government intervention further intensifies this frustration, leading to violence and reprisal attacks. The conflict is also intensified by existing social, ethnic, and religious differences, which can be easily mobilized when resource competition is high. These differences can prevent groups from finding common ground and fostering mutual suspicion and distrust.

In essence, social conflict theory views the attacks not just as random acts of violence, but as an inevitable outcome of a system where two groups are struggling for survival over an increasingly limited and unequally distributed vital resource (land/pasture), with underlying tensions fueled by power dynamics and ethnic/social divides. The theory highlights the unequal distribution of power and resources. Historical, economic, and sociopolitical dimensions have created power dynamics where the actions and inactions of the state are often perceived as biased. For instance, the perceived lack of prosecution of herders and lack of feasible grazing policies are seen by some as a sign of government support or a lack of political will to address the issue, fuelling distrust and a sense of marginalization among farming communities. The conflict is exacerbated by ethnic and religious undertones, leading to "in-group" versus "out-group" dynamics. Herders are sometimes labelled as "intruders" or "aliens" by host communities, while herders may regard farmers as those who "militate against their survival". These mutual antagonisms and stereotypes contribute to a breakdown of traditional negotiation mechanisms and an escalation of violence when conflict occurs. Analyses within this framework often point to the conflict being politically motivated, where desperate political leaders or groups manipulate the situation for their own interests. The politicization of the crisis, coupled with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, has turned minor disagreements into violent confrontations. The theory also considers the structural issues that perpetuate the conflict, such as the collapse of traditional social contracts and the failure of the state to provide effective governance and security. The lack of a clear, accepted national policy on grazing (e.g., the controversy surrounding RUGA and National Livestock Transformation Plan) leaves the situation open to continued conflict and suspicion, not only in south east, but Nigeria at large.

The frustration-aggression theory

The theory was propounded by Dollard and Doob, et al. (1939), and further developed by Miller (1948) and Berkowitz (1969) as cited in Mohammed, Ibrahim & Suleiman (2017). Frustration-Anger-Aggression hypothesis of conflict posits that it is natural for man to react to unpleasant situations particularly when his effort to attain a goal is frustrated. This theory

posits that frustration, defined as the interference with the attainment of a goal, is a primary cause of aggression. While the original theory suggested that frustration always leads to aggression, later expansions and modifications, particularly by Leonard Berkowitz, acknowledged that frustration can lead to other responses besides aggression, and that environmental cues can also play a role. Frustration-Aggression Theory posits that when an individual's goal-directed behavior is blocked or thwarted, they experience frustration, which then increases the likelihood of aggressive behavior as a response. Proposed by Dollard and his colleagues in 1939 and later refined, the theory suggests that frustration creates an aggressive urge that can be discharged through direct aggression or displaced onto a less threatening target. While initially stating frustration always leads to aggression, later versions acknowledged other responses to frustration and that not all aggression stems from frustration.

Justification for the theory

The Frustration-Aggression Theory can explain the menace of Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria by positing that frustration, stemming from competition over scarce resources like land and water and environmental pressures like desertification, leads to aggression. This frustration is experienced by both herdsmen, who are forced to find new grazing lands, and farmers, who feel their livelihoods threatened by the encroaching herders. The theory suggests that when this goal-frustrating condition becomes prolonged, it can result in anger and aggressive actions, such as the violence and terror associated with the herdsmen's activities in Nigeria. The goal or aim of every farmer during planting season is to have bountiful harvest, then sell the farm produce and make profits. On the other hand, the herdsmen would always want to have well fed and healthy cattle and be able to make profits as well. When any of these expectations fails to meet attainment, the tendency is for people to confront others they can hold responsible for frustrating their ambitions or someone on whom they can take out their aggression. one's access to means of livelihood (farming or grasing as the case may be) is being thwarted by another or possibly by particular circumstances and that one's reaction to this thwarting phenomenon is that of annoyance which oftentimes result to conflict. In south east Nigeria and other nearby zones, herders have clashed with farmers and their host communities over cattle destruction of crops; farmers' encroachment on grasing reserves or use water reserved for cattle to irrigate their farms and indiscriminate bush burning by nomads resulting to loss of lives and crops, destruction of properties, displacement of persons, decline in income/savings; as well as threat to food and internal security causing the farmers frustration. Because they are frustrated, they become aggressive and channel their aggression to the herdsmen and their cows. Just like Marx (1818-1883 cited in Mohammed & Abdulkadir, 2024) had argued, once the economic base of a society is being threatened, it affects the entire well-being of that society.

Fulani Herdsmen

Fulani herdsmen or Fulani pastoralists are nomadic or semi nomadic herders whose primary occupation is raising living organisms/herds (Idowu, 2017). They usually move their herds

from one place to another in search of pasture and fresh water. It is predominantly the occupation of the Fulani ethnic group in Nigeria (GTI, 2015). They are often armed and visibly move about with weapons (like daggers, matchets, arrows etc) to protect their livestocks. The more disturbing issue about the Herdsmen is that they also block the highways with their cattle, rob and kidnap people, keep them captives in the bush and demand for ransom (Aghedo, 2019). The Herdsmen have also been involved in the rape of old and young women and burning of communities (The Vanguard, 2015). Due to their violent nature and associated killings, the group was recently described as the world's fourth deadliest militant group (Mikailu, 2016). The Fulani originated from the Senegambia before spreading out into about 20 states which cut across West Africa and the Sahel as well as western Sudan and Central African Republic.

The people are found in large number in Nigeria but while some have moved into the cities, many are still living as semi-nomadic herders. However, these group who own and rear herds of animals like cattle for commercial purposes are called Herdsmen. The Fulani or Fulbe according to Anter (2011) is an ethnic group with significant presence in many West African countries such as Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea, The Gambia, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Niger, Togo, the Central African Republic, Ghana, Liberia, and as far as Sudan in the east. Demographic studies (like Asogwa & Okafor, 2016) suggest that wherever the Fulanis are found, they rarely constitute the majority on account of their nomadic life style. They are essentially itinerant cattle rearers and are constantly on the move with their herds of cattle to find grazing fields.

In terms of religion, over 99% of Fulani are Muslims (Awortu, 2015). It will be recalled that in 1804 Usman Dan Fodio, prosecuted a jihad against the Hausa kings whom he felt were not following the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed. A great upheaval followed in the wake of this jihad in which the Fulani took control of most of the Hausa states of northern Nigeria (Asogwa & Okafor, 2016). A new kingdom, based in the city of Sokoto, was born. The Fulani expansion was not just driven by religious zeal but by political ambitions, as the attack on the well-established Muslim kingdom of Bornu showed. The result of this upheaval was the creation of a powerful Sokoto Caliphate under a caliph, whose authority was established over cities such as Kano and Zaria and whose rulers became emirs of provinces within the Sokoto caliphate (Morell, 1968). According to Anter (2011), “The Fulani are traditionally a nomadic, pastoralist, trading people, herding cattle, goats and sheep across the vast dry hinterlands of their domain, keeping somewhat separate from the local agricultural populations”.

Their origin is a matter of contestation, with some scholars claiming Judaeo-Syrian ancestry and others suggesting a North African descent. However, most scholars agree that the group may have migrated from the Middle East through North Africa and settled in the Central and West Africa from the Tekruur Empire in today’s Senegal region. They are believed to be the largest semi-nomadic group in the world. In Nigeria, most of them still function as semi-nomadic herders, while others have embraced modernity and moved to the cities. Unlike the more integrated city dwellers, the nomadic groups spend most of their lives in the bush and are the ones largely involved in these herders-farmers conflicts (Asogwa & Okafor, 2016).

These herders usually herd their animals across vast areas, frequently clashing with farming communities. These Fulani herdsmen are often linked with the Hausas, both having lived together for a very long time. Some refer to them as the Hausa-Fulani, but the truth is that they are different and distinct ethnic groups.

Farmers-Herdsmen Conflicts

Conflict refers to some form of friction, disagreement, or discord arising between groups when the beliefs or actions of one or more members of the group are either resisted by or unacceptable to one or more members of another group *(*Afzalur, 2010). Conflict can also arise between members of the same group, known as intra-group conflict, or it can occur between members of two or more groups, and involve violence, interpersonal discord, and psychological tension, known as intergroup conflict. Conflict in groups often follows a specific course. Routine group interaction is first disrupted by an initial conflict often caused by differences of opinion, disagreements between members, or scarcity of resources. At this point, the group is no longer united, and may split into coalitions. This period of conflict escalation in some cases gives way to a conflict resolution stage, after which the group can eventually return to routine group interaction once again (Curhan et al, 2004).

Herdsmen-Farmers conflict is as old as the existence of man. It started from the children (Cain and Abel) of the first man (Adam). Abel was a shepherd and Cain was a farmer according to Bible's account, however, Cain killed Abel in the field out of jealousy. Okoro (2018) averred that herdsmen-farmer or harder-farmer conflicts are conflicts occurring between peasant farmers or subsistence cultivators and nomadic or transhumant live-stock keepers. According to Hagmann (2003), there exist differences between 'herder-herder' conflicts and 'farmer-herder' conflicts. He maintained that herder-herder conflicts are usually conflicts between nomadic or transhumant livestock keepers that arise between receiving groups over their territory's resources and incoming groups searching for water and pastures, and cattle raiding. Herder-herder conflict is a conflict that results from theft of cattle or other animals among the Fulani herdsmen. It is herdsmen rustling cattle of other herdsmen, or when un-experienced herders entrust their animals in the care of experienced herders under agreements, and when such agreements are breached conflict occasions within. The violent cattle raids among pastoralists in East Africa are examples of herder-herder conflicts. Hussein, Sumberg and Seddon (1999) see farmer-herder conflicts as comprising different types of conflicts, including ethnic conflicts, interest conflicts, resource disputes, political action, evictions, killings, cattle raiding and cattle rustling.

National Security and National Development

National security is the extent to which a country enjoys security of lives and properties. It include issues of protection of citizens, protection of properties (public or private), and protection of national asset by both the citizens and security agencies. On the other way round, national development is the relationship between economic activity and social life of the people (Adebisi, Azeez and Oyedeji, 2017). It is the continuous improvement in the well-being

and in the standard of living of the people. It therefore, centers on poverty reduction or reduction of suffering of the poor and increase their access to social services. It also requires action to increase the poor's ability to generate an income in order to meet their basic needs. The impacts of national development are seen in changes in laws, changes in the physical environment, ecological changes and changes in security situations of every society (Aghedo, 2019). National development means the level of improvement in human capital, infrastructure, political, socio-cultural and health/educational development in the system. This means that when there is reduction in poverty, increase employment opportunities, improvement in infrastructural facilities (road, electrification, pipe borne water), high level of political stability, improved maternal health and reduction in infant mortality, improved income and per capita of the citizen, we say that there is national development.

Effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east Nigeria

Fulani herdsmen's activities cause crop destruction in Southeast Nigeria by overgrazing, leading to reduced crop yields, threatening food security, increasing farmers' income loss, and forcing farmers to abandon their lands due to fear and lack of security (Emmanuel, Yahaya & Mohammed, 2024). This directly impacts farmers' livelihoods, exacerbates hunger, reduces the region's agricultural output, and contributes to broader socio-economic instability by causing displacement and hindering foreign economic relations. The major effects are:

1. **Crop Yield Reduction:** Herdsmen's cattle often graze on cultivated lands, destroying crops and severely reducing yields.
2. **Farming Abandonment:** The pervasive fear of attacks and lack of security compels farmers to abandon their fields, resulting in complete loss of crops and agricultural activity.
3. **Disrupted Harvests:** Farmers are unable to harvest their produce due to the constant threat of violence from the herdsmen, further increasing their losses.
4. **Threat to Food Security:** The destruction of crops leads to a drastic reduction in food availability, making it difficult for communities to meet their basic needs and contributing to a heightened fear of hunger (Mohammed & Abdulkadir, 2024).
5. **Loss of Income for Farmers:** The destruction of crops and inability to cultivate them leads to significant losses in income for farmers, severely impacting their economic well-being.
6. **Economic Instability:** The overall decline in agricultural output and farmers' income can lead to reduced economic activity, affecting the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the affected regions and Nigeria as a whole.
7. **Farmer Displacement:** Many farmers are forced to abandon their homes and livelihoods, leading to mass displacement and migration, further destabilizing communities.

Impact of Fulani-herdsmen on kidnapping in south east Nigeria

Fulani herdsmen contribute to kidnapping in South-East Nigeria, evolving from localized disputes into a widespread criminal enterprise for ransom (Sari, Solomon & Kaka, 2021). This shift is driven by conflicts over resources, exacerbated by climate change and desertification forcing herdsmen southwards, leading to competition with farmers. Kidnappings, initially

reprisal attacks, now function as an organized business, often targeting individuals for financial gain.

Climate change and desertification in northern Nigeria push nomadic herdsmen to migrate south for grazing lands, creating friction with sedentary farming communities over land and water resources (Mohammed, Ibrahim & Suleiman, 2017). The persistent herder-farmer clashes evolved from localized disputes into systematic, organized kidnapping-for-ransom operations. Kidnapping has become a lucrative business for criminal gangs operating in the region. While often framed as "herder-farmer conflicts," the actions of some Fulani pastoralists are increasingly attributed to banditry and jihadist ideologies, with attacks targeting private citizens. The major consequences are:

- **Fear and Instability:** Kidnapping instills widespread fear and contributes to insecurity and instability within the affected communities (Sari, Solomon & Kaka, 2021).
- **Loss of Life:** Many kidnapping incidents result in deaths, with victims often killed during attempts to abduct them or in reprisal attacks.
- **Community Protection:** The rise in such incidents led to the creation of community-based security outfits like the Eastern Security Network (ESN) to counter threats from suspected herders and other criminal groups.

The relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east Nigeria

The relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and rural farmers in Southeast Nigeria is characterized by increasing conflict over land and resources, where herdsmen's cattle destroy farmlands, leading to violence, loss of life, displacement of people, and insecurity that threatens food security and livelihoods (Ofuoku & Isife, 2020). While traditionally the groups have had complementary roles, a history of poor land management by the government, increasing demand for beef, and the nomadic nature of herdsmen have escalated disagreements into deadly clashes. Both Fulani herdsmen and farmers rely on land for their livelihoods—herdsmen for grazing their cattle and farmers for cultivating crops (Adelakun, Adurogbangba & Akinbile, 2022).

Nomadic herdsmen's cattle often stray onto and destroy farmers' crops and fields, leading to grievances and retaliation (Mohammed & Abudulkadir, 2024). Government failure to adequately provide and manage grazing reserves for herdsmen forces them to seek land, often leading to conflicts. The effects of climate change on pastureland can also contribute to the migration of herders into new areas. The clashes have resulted in many deaths, particularly among rural communities, and significant destruction of property, including homes and farmlands. Many farmers have been forced to abandon their lands and homes, becoming internally displaced persons due to the ongoing violence and insecurity. Destruction of crops and farmland negatively impacts agricultural yields, threatening the food security of the region and Nigeria as a whole. Beyond agriculture, the

insecurity hampers economic activities, leading to increased poverty and hindering development in affected areas.

The conflict, initially more prevalent in other parts of Nigeria, has extended into the Southeast, with specific incidents of mass killings reported, such as the 2016 attacks in Ukpabi Nimbo, Enugu State. The escalating violence and insecurity pose a significant threat to social stability and peace in the region (Gamgu, 2023). Women and children are often the most vulnerable, suffering sexual violence, harassment, and other abuses during the attacks.

Areas Fulani Herdsmen Conflict has Affected National Development

1. **Impact of Fulani herds-men on education:** Education, as it's generally known, is the process through which an individual develops attitude, ability and other forms of behavior which are important and contributes positively to the society at large (Isokpan & Durojaye, 2016). Education enables a child to get appropriate knowledge, value and skills for personal development in particular and national development in general. Peaceful and conducive environment is a determinant for successful teaching and learning as well as student performance. It has been taken into consideration that, the phenomena of farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria have affected the education of the country.

   According to the Nigerian Education Data Survey (2019), constant attacks made it even difficult for teachers and stakeholders to persuade parents to allow their children stay on at schools. In this case, education which is a major investment and one of the determinants for economic growth and development has been confronted with the challenges of farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria. The challenges include, killing of teachers, school's destructions, and kidnapping of students especially female students, leading to low level of student's attendance and enrolment (Akereke, 2013). However, in spite of the low level of student's attendance and enrolment in the affected states or local government areas, there are high level of students' attendance and enrolment in the neighboring states or local government areas of the affected ones. Another issue is that the physical and psychological behavior of students can be affected.
2. **Impact of Fulani herds-men on agriculture:** Agriculture in Nigeria is the most important sector of the economy from the standpoint of rural employment, sufficiency in food and fibre, and export earning prior to the discovery of oil (Towobola, Luqman, Kolade, Ogunwale & Olakojo, 2014). The incidence of insurgency has destabilized agricultural and socioeconomic activities of the nation especially, the northern part of the country (Ezema, 2013). The instability generated by the farmers-herders conflict and other insurgency has caused an exact and substantial increase in prices for key agricultural crops produced. This increase in prices is mainly due to a decrease in agricultural output, unavailability of labour, scarcity of farm input, uncertainties at markets and an increase in transportation costs. There is large fall in the production of cowpeas, maize, millet, rice and sorghum by 40% in the areas affected by the insurgency, which has affected overall food supply to other parts of the country (Kegna, Djire, Adibe & AndJirgi, 2022). This reduction in the output of crops is due to reduction in the availability of labour due to the

threat of attacks on farmers on their ways to the farm land. Both farmers and farm labourers are scared of attacks on the farms or bombs planted on the roads to farms. The lack of labour has caused insufficient and inappropriately timing of weeding and harvesting.

This insurgency has made many farmers relocate to other places where there is peace in other to save their lives, causing them to leave their farmlands behind. Some of the crops they produced are also perishable and get spoiled leading to wastages. Agricultural production in Nigeria according to Oladele, Oladipo and Ogunlade (2008) is largely in the hand of peasants' farmers and the characteristics of these peasant farmers predispose them to low productivity. The crucial issue in the Nigerian agriculture is that of low productivity. The problem of declining crop productivity in Nigeria is compounded again with insurgency in the Northern part of the country. It has led to mass rural-urban migration and most of those migrating are at their productive age which serves as the primary source of labour to the Agricultural sector. Therefore, the insurgency has led to scarcity of labour to Agricultural sector which have affected the productivity of the farmers in the affected area (Papka, 2017). The major crops cultivated in the North Eastern Part of Nigeria are millet, sorghum, maize, groundnut, wheat, cowpea, soybeans and vegetables such as onions, pepper, tomatoes, garden eggs and leafy vegetables.

3. **Impact of Fulani herds-men on business:** Nigeria is a country that is grappling with issues of development. This is because of the neglect of commercial ventures like trade and investment (Sakaran, 2013). If Nigeria, including the Benue must develop very well, investors (local and foreign) have to play many positive roles. But the activities of farmers-herders conflict have affected all level of business in the north east. The activities of farmers-herders conflict and other insurgency have been a major catalyst of underdevelopment in Nigeria. Trade and business are the panacea for national development across the world. There is no society that does not give adequate attention to her commercial ventures growth and development. However, insurgency has been an obstacle to business in north east Nigeria. Economically, the Boko Haram insurgency has in no measure contributed to the economic backwardness of a country that is attempting to reposition her economy to meet the 21st century economic challenges and overcome poverty. Poverty rate is very alarming in Nigeria. But in recent years especially in Benue State, the Fulani herders' insurgency has doubled the poverty rate. According to Aro (2013) the economic effects of insurgency in Nigeria can be generally viewed from two perspectives: they are the effects on the state (Nigeria) and individual members of the state (Nigerians).

Causes of Fulani Herdsmen Conflict which Affects National Development in Nigeria

They are:

a. **Effects of climatic changes:** Nigeria over the year has witnessed changes in climatic condition which has resulted in the long dry season and low rainfall. In 2015, the National Meteorological Agency reported that over the preceding 30 years annual

rainfall has dropped from an average of 150 to 120 days of rain fall season and that in the last six decades over 350,000 sq km of the already arid region turned to desert and semi-desert conditions, an occurrence of this, progresses south world at the rate of 0.6 km per years (Federal Ministry of Environment National Policy on Desertification and Drought, 2018). According to the National Policy, states such a Bauchi, Bormo, Gombe, Jigama, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara had been estimated to have about 50 – 70 percent of the their land areas are being threatened by desertification thus pushing millions of the herders to seek grazing land in other communities. Migration of herders initially was seasonal spanning from December each year to May in the middle belt and some parts of the southern state. As a result, the herders have changed this practice of staying between December to May to staying permanently and this has resulted to increasing conflict in the country among crop farmers and herdsmen over the use of land and water (Adisa, 2010 and Nte, 2019).

b. **Population growth:** This has mounted pressure on the land resource for crop farmer and grazing by herdsmen. For example the growth in the size of population from 33 million in 1950 to 200 million in 2020 has intensified this crisis. About 47.7 percent of the former rural areas turned to urban area with serious consequence for grazing and crop farming (World Statistics, 2021). Population size couple with reduced grazing land has exacerbated this crisis. Most of the 415 grazing reserves established by the northern government in 1960 have since been lost. Only 114 is said to be documented (ADP Report, 2021). Resulting from this limited grazing space most herders have moved south in order to increase their access to grazing land. This has serious consequence because their action conflicts with that of the crop farmers. With growing population per land and with increasing farming activities beyond the traditional allocated land especially in the Agricultural Development Project (ADP) for crop farmers, the dwindling land resource has led to clashes between herders and crop farmers. Since herders lost access to abundant wetland, the cattle find their way into farms (Mike Sland/International Crisis Group, 2021)

c. **Breakdown of traditional conflict resolution mechanism:** This has been adjudged as one of the major causes of these clashes among herders and crop farmers. Over the last three decades, young men or boys, aged between ten to twenty-five years have been in charge of the cattle. They are not civil and mature to resolve dispute amicably. The federal and state governments on their part have not done much to ensure the protection of both herders and crop farmers (International Conflict Group, 2010). The outright legislation to ban cattle grazing in most state has spark up crisis and intensified the killings in most state (Sun Newspaper, 2020).

d. **Global terrorism:** According to the Vice Chairman of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association [MACBAN] (2017) claimed that their members had lost over one million cattle to Boko Haram insurgency in Borno, Yobe, Adamawa and other states in the north. The insurgence of Boko Haram had led to the mass migration of cattle from their original home to most parts of southern Nigeria. It was equally reported by

MACBAN (2017) that as a result of the attack on their members, they have been equipped with weapons to protect the survival of the cattle and their business. It has been reported that the increasable prevalence of weapons has amplified the human cost of killing in most parts of the country (Adejumobi, 2019).

e. **Crime (rural banditry and cattle rustling):** It has been reported by some researchers that rural banditry and cattle rustling are some of the causes of herders migrating to the southern part of Nigeria (Eyekpini, 2016). By the 1980s bandit groups locally known as "kwarta" attacked traders and other travelers along major highways and recently this group have proliferated in major rural area in the north raiding villages, market and engage in cattle rustling in these communities. Over the last decade, cattle rustling have grown in large scale operations and organizations in several northern states where large group of bandits operate with absolute freedom without law enforcement agencies putting a stop to their operations. Cattle rustling operate in Kawuka forest in Kaduna, Dansadua forest in Zamfara, Falgore forest in Kano and Davin Rugu forest in Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara States. It equally operates in some parts of Kogi, Benue, Plateau and Nasarawa (Adejumobi, 2019). It is reported that cattle theft has been a major source of funding for Boko Haram activities. This led to the government ban of cattle import to Borno State to check Boko Haram funding. The scale of banditry operations has been intense with an estimate of more than 64,750 cattle stolen in 2019 with the number rising in subsequent years.

f. **Technology and economic changes:** Another major factor cursing the conflict between herder and crop farmers is lack of technological innovation in farming practices by both herders and crop farmers (Uche, 2016). In a study carried by Addisa and Adekunle (2010), they identified poverty and lack of production techniques as factors responsible for crop farmers/herders conflict. Latest cattle farming techniques like Ranches and Agroponetnic techniques for crop farming are not feasible to both farmers because of the heavy initial cost. Therefore, farmers still use obsolete method of production (pastorialism) which is characterized by low production and low return on output per man.

g. **Dysfunctional legal system:** Ineffective prosecution of perpetrators of violence and weak legal system has been a major factor of the increasing cause of this conflict (Stieglitz, 2016). Federal security and law enforcement agencies have not established any rapid response mechanism to curb the occurrence of killings in most parts of the country, couple with the fact that state legislation on this issue appear to be one side (Crisis Group Report, 2016). Most state in the south and middle belt of the country have legislated outright ban of cattle rearing in their states. This decision has been opposed by the MACBAN as a threat to their business.

h. **Lack of planning model to accommodate farmers/herdsmen production:** From preoccupation on accelerated growth of the economy or Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the objective of every country development effort has been broadened to include improvement in welfare, access to basic need such as shelter, food, clothing,

education and health. These goals can only be achieved when there is appropriate planning of production by policy makers or government (Abugre, 2011; Sawin, 2013). Classical economist oppose to planning because they rely on the invisible hands to regulate market activities. With the successes in the growth and long term investment plan in China attention has now shifted from less government regulation of economic activities to state intervention in production.

Empirical Review

Some related past studies were summarized thus:

Emmanuel, Yahaya & Mohammed (2024) studied impact of farmers and fulani herdsmen conflict on development of 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.

Mohammed and Abdulkadir (2024) examined the causes and socioeconomic implication of herders-farmers crisis in Sabon Daga, Niger State. The study adopts the descriptive research design approach. Primary and secondary data were gathered concurrently to provide answers to the research questions in a quantitative manner. A total of 400 questionnaire was administered on herders and farmers; 200 for herders and 200 for farmers respectively; however, only 345 questionnaires were returned completed. The study revealed that destruction of crops (4.06), stealing of farm produce (3.84), and killing of herders (3.79) are among the most predominant causes of herders-farmers crisis. The study also established reduction in farm output (4.15), displacement of farmers/herders (3.78), and reduction in farmers' income are the major socioeconomic impact of herders-farmers crisis in Sabon Daga.

The study concluded that the causes of herders-farmers crisis mostly as a result of economic issues. Therefore, adequate conflict prevention and resolution mechanism should be put in place to forestall further crisis between the farmers and herders

Gamgum (2023) 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.

Oli, Ibekwe and Nwankwo (2022) 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.

Adelakun, Adurogbangba and Akinbile (2022) examined socioeconomic effects of farmer-pastoralist conflict on agricultural extension service delivery in Oyo State, Nigeria. Multistage 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 socioeconomic 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.

Ofuoku and Isife (2020) 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.

Sarki, Solomon & Kaka (2021) examined the impact of Boko Haram insurgency on the socio-economic development of Borno State, Nigeria. Three research objectives, three research questions and three research hypotheses were formulated to guide this study. The study was based on the Karl Marx Theory of Violence Conflict. The study was a descriptive survey and

was carried out in Borno State. A sample size of 400 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamani formula. The respondents were made up of Military personnel and civilians which were selected based on a multi-stage sampling technique. Questionnaire and interview were the instruments used for data collection. The instrument gave high reliability of 0.84 when subjected to a reliability test using the Cronbach Alpha method. Collated data from the study were analyzed using frequency, mean, standard deviation and regression analysis. Results from this study showed that there existed a weak relationship between Boko Haram insurgency and economic activities, food, security, and educational development in Borno State. The study concluded that the Boko Haram situation demands the articulation of a comprehensive strategy and the political will to address its root causes and dangerous dynamics, focusing on inhibiting opportunities for recruitment and radicalization, and choke its financial windpipe, amongst others. The study noted that the Nigerian military has too often taken civilian casualties too easy into account. By killing citizens in the North, the population's frustration against the military increases, thereby increasing Boko Haram's appeal as an alternative.

Mohammed, Ibrahim & Suleiman (2017), carried out a study on the impact of the Fulani herders on Education in Adamawa State, Nigeria. The general purpose of the study was to determine the impact of the insurgency on education with a focus on school enrolment, school attendance and school infrastructure. The study adopted a structural equation model and was guided by three research questions. The result of the analysis indicated that human capital investment is affected by school enrolment, school attendance and school infrastructure by 71%, 84% and 72% as a result of any 1% increase in Boko Haram violence activity. The study further revealed that extreme religious beliefs, unemployment and illiteracy contributed to the occurrence of the insurgency in Adamawa State. Although this study was carried out in Adamawa State, it is nevertheless, related to the present study in the sense that both were descriptive survey studies that used the same instrument for data collection and also adopted the same descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation in answering their research questions. More importantly, both studies were concerned, among others, with the impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on the educational aspect of human security.

Gap in Literature

Many studies have been executed on related areas of this work. However, the various past studies did not actually cover the exact theme of this work. Most of the past work did not cover national security. Some covered other aspects of insecurity, not actually Fulani herdsmen. The major variables in our research objectives/questions have not been covered by past researches. Such include the effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east Nigeria within the period of Study; the impact of Fulani-herdsmen on kidnapping in south east Nigeria within the period of Study and the relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.

Research Design

This work used survey research design. Survey research design involves the use of questionnaire and interview as the instrument of data collection.

Population of the Study

The population of this study is 1,335,500. It consists of one LGAs (which have been affected by Fulani-headmen) from each states of the South East, making a total of 5 LGAs used. The LGAs from the states used are Mbaitoli LGA of Imo State (330,100); Isi-Uzu LGA of Enugu state (213,300); Arochukwu LGA of Abia State (246,600); Ogbaru LGA of Anambra State (318,200); and Ishielu LGA of Ebonyi State (227,300). The LGAs and their population is presented in the table below:

Table 1: Population study.

S/N	LGA/states	2022 PROJECTED POPULATION
1	Mbaitoli LGA of Imo State	330,100
2	Isi-Uzu LGA of Enugu state	213,300
3	Arochukwu LGA of Abia State	246,600
4	Ogbaru LGA of Anambra State	318,200
5	Ishielu LGA of Ebonyi State	227,300
	Total	**1,335,500**

Source: 2022 Population Census Projection

Sample Size

The researcher used the Taro Yamane method to practically determine the sample size. It is applied thus:

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

Where

n = sample size

N = population

1 = constant

e^2 = error of significance

$$n = \frac{1,335,500}{1+1,335,500(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1,335,500}{1+1,335,500(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{1,335,500}{1+3,338.75}$$

$$n = \frac{1,335,500}{3,339.75}$$

n = 399.9

Approximately = 400

Sampling Technique

The sample size is 400. The purposive sampling technique was applied in selecting the sample for the study. The reason for using purposive sampling is to select people who can give appropriate information on the activities of Fulani herdsmen in Imo State.

Method of Data Collection

The major instrument that was used for data collection is structured questionnaire. Anyanwu, (2016), points out that questionnaire is a printed list of questions to be answered by a number of people especially as part of a survey research. Questionnaire is the list of questions framed from the research questions, objectives and hypotheses and focused on addressing the problem of the research.

Validity of the Instrument

The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation. In doing that, the initial draft of the instruments besides the supervisor, was given to some experts who after scrutiny, suggested corrections that were included on the final copy that were administered on the respondents.

Reliability of the Instrument

In order to determine the consistency of the instrument, test/retest exercise was carried out by the researcher. This is to ascertain the reliability of the research instrument. To do this, the researcher carried out a pilot test using 20 selected respondents from other LGAs in Abia State. When the first test was carried out, the result was recorded. The instrument was re-administered on the same respondents within an interval of two weeks. The results of the first and second pilot study were collected and tested statistically for reliability, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). Since the yielded Alpha coefficient is 0.84, it was concluded that the instrument is reliable.

Method of Data Analysis

In this study, Simple Percentage, Bar Chart, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) were used for data analysis. Simple Percentage was used to analyze the demographic variables (personal information of the respondents), and the subject matter of this work. The aimed is to determine the percentage responses of the respondents in each question. More so, Bar Chart was used to add meaning for easy understanding of the percentage results.

The hypotheses stated in chapter one were re-stated for testing, hence statistical test becomes quite necessary. Based on the result of the simple percentage, the researcher employed Pearson product moment correlation coefficient to test the hypotheses. Pearson product moment coefficient correlation is represented by the equation: r= n summation of xy - summation of x multiplied by summation of y divided by the square root of number of observed items multiply

by the summation of x^2 less the summation of x^2 multiplied by the number of items observed multiply by summation of y^2 less summation of y^2.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

In this fourth chapter of the work, the researcher presented in tables, the data gathered by way of questionnaire administration, analyzed same using the statistical tools stated in the method of data analysis in the previous chapter. Out of the 400 copies of the questionnaire distributed by the researcher, only 385 copies were properly filled and returned.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Section A: Bio Data of the Respondents

Item 1: Gender distribution

Table 1: Gender distribution of the respondents.

Options	No of Responses	% of Responses
Male	221	57.4
Female	164	42.6
Total	**385**	**100**

Source: Field Survey (2025).



Source: Field Survey (2025).

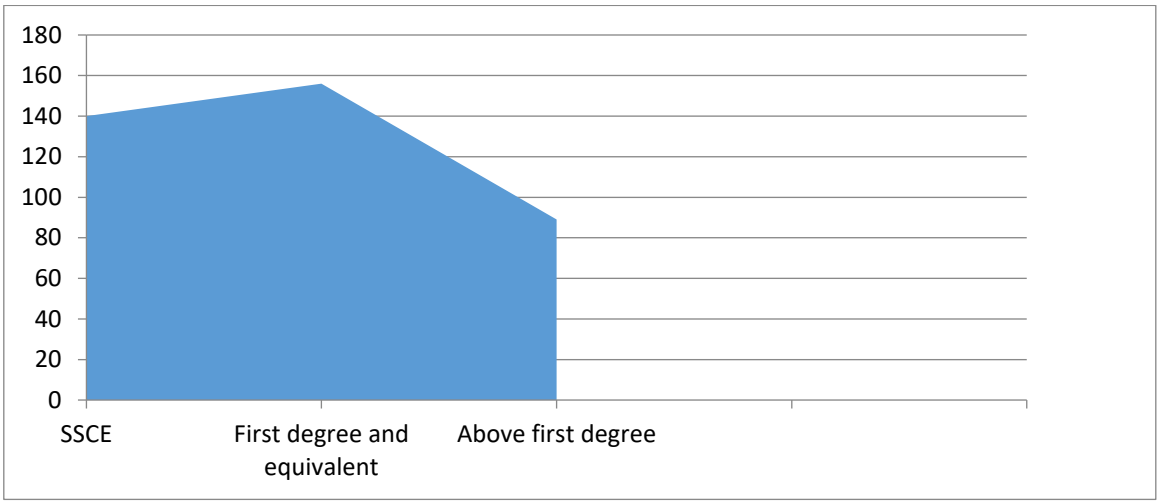
Table 1 shows that 57.4% of the respondents were males whereas 42.6% of the respondents were females.

Item 2: Level of educational distribution

Table 2: Level of educational distribution of the respondents.

Options	No of Responses	% of Responses
SSCE	140	36.4
First degree and equivalents	156	40.5
Above first degree	89	23.1
Total	**385**	**100**

Source: Field Survey (2025).



Source: Field Survey (2025).

Table 2 indicates that 36.4% of the respondents held SSCE as their qualifications, 40.5% of the respondents held first degree and equivalents as their qualifications whereas 23.1% of the respondents held above first degree as their qualifications.

Section B: The Subject Matter

Research question one: What is the effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east Nigeria within the period of Study?

Table 3: Responses on the effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east Nigeria within the period of Study

S/N	The effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east states	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	N	∑X	X	Dec.
1	Fulani-herdsmen has engaged in crop destruction	234	101	23	27	385	1312	3.4	Positive
2	Many farmers has loss their farm produce because of the activities Fulani heads men	213	158	8	6	385	1348	3.5	Positive
3	Fulani heads men has made many farmers not to go to the farm again	179	200	4	2	385	1326	3.4	Positive
4	Fulani headmen are the major challenge of agricultural development	309	50	16	10	385	1428	3.7	Positive
5	There is need for improved peace between farmers and Fulani herdsmen	212	151	15	7	385	1338	3.5	Positive
	Grand mean							**3.5**	

Source: Field Survey (2025).

It was discovered in table 3 that item 1 to 5 were all positive. This is because item 1 has a mean of 3.4, item 2 has a mean of 3.5, item 3 has a mean of 3.4, item 4 has a mean of 3.7 and item 5 has a mean of 3.5; hence all the items have mean scores more than 2.5 and above. It is therefore concluded that there is significant effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.

Research question two: Does Fulani-herdsmen impact on kidnapping in south east Nigeria within the period of Study?

Table 4: Responses on if Fulani-herdsmen impact on kidnapping in south east Nigeria within the period of Study?

S/N	The impact of Fulani-herdsmen on kidnapping in south east states	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	N	∑X	X	Dec.
1	Fulani-herdsmen sometimes engage in kidnapping in south east states	180	189	9	7	385	1312	3.4	Positive
2	There are some incidence of kidnapping liking Fulani-herdsmen	145	189	26	25	385	1224	3.2	Positive
3	Some people do not travel again in the night in some places in south east states because of kidnapping	160	199	15	11	385	1278	3.3	Positive
4	Kidnapping is on the increase in south east states because of the activities of Fulani herdsmen	189	188	5	3	385	1333	3.5	Positive
5	There is need for effectiveness of security agencies to reduce the issue of kidnapping	177	208	-	-	385	1332	3.5	Positive
	Grand mean							**3.4**	

Source: Field Survey (2025).

It was discovered in table 4 that item 1 to 5 were all positive. This is because item 1 has a mean of 3.4, item 2 has a mean of 3.2, item 3 has a mean of 3.3, item 4 has a mean of 3.5 and item 5 has a mean of 3.5; hence all the items have mean scores more than 2.5 and above. It is therefore concluded that Fulani-herdsmen has significant impact on kidnapping in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.

Research question three: What is the relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east Nigeria within the period of Study?

Table 5: Responses on the relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east Nigeria within the period of Study

S/N	The relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east states	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	N	∑X	X	Dec.
1	There is few among most rural farmers because of the activities of Fulani herdsmen	159	225	1	-	385	1313	3.4	Positive
2	Some farmers do not go to some of their farmland again because of fare of Fulani herdsmen	221	148	9	7	385	1353	3.5	Positive
3	There is poor agricultural produce because of herdsmen activities	200	141	30	14	385	1297	3.4	Positive
4	There is need for the security for farmers to reduce fare	179	200	5	1	385	1327	3.4	Positive
5	Improved security will encourage the growth of agricultural output	195	190	-	-	385	1350	3.5	Positive
	Grand mean							**3.4**	

Source: Field Survey (2025).

It was discovered in table 5 that item 1 to 5 were all positive. This is because item 1 has a mean of 3.4, item 2 has a mean of 3.5, item 3 has a mean of 3.4, item 4 has a mean of 3.4 and item 5 has a mean of 3.5; hence all the items have mean scores more than 2.5 and above. It is therefore concluded that there is significant relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.

Testing of Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis I

$H0_1$: There is no significant effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.

Hi_1: There is significant effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.

Fig. 1: Pearson Correlation for hypotheses one

To test the hypothesis one, data in table 3 was used.

H_i1	**There is significant effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.**	**Pearson Correlation = 0.89** **Sig = 0.05** **N = 385** **Grand mean = 3.5**	**Positive**

The table above shows that the Pearson product moment correlation is 0.89 which indicates that there is significant effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east Nigeria within the period of Study. Hence, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis II

$H0_2$: Fulani-herdsmen has no significant impact on kidnapping in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.

Hi_2: Fulani-herdsmen has significant impact on kidnapping in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.

Fig. 2: Pearson Correlation for hypotheses two

To test the hypothesis two, data in table 4 was used.

H_i2	**Fulani-herdsmen has significant impact on kidnapping in south east Nigeria within the period of Study**	**Pearson Correlation = 0.89** **Sig = 0.05** **N = 385** **Grand mean = 3.4**	**Positive**

The above table indicates that the Pearson product moment correlation is also 0.89 which reveals that Fulani-herdsmen has significant impact on kidnapping in south east Nigeria within the period of Study. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis III

$H0_3$: There is no significant relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.

Hi_3: There is significant relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.

Fig. 3: Pearson Correlation for hypotheses three

To test the hypothesis three, data in table 5 was used.

H_i3	**There is significant relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east Nigeria within the period of Study**	**Pearson Correlation = 0.87 Sig = 0.05 N = 385 Grand mean = 3.4**	**Positive**

The table above showcases that the Pearson product moment correlation is 0.87 indicating that there is significant relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east Nigeria within the period of Study. Thus, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected.

Fig. 4: Concise table for hypotheses testing.

S/N	Hypotheses		Result
H_i1	There is significant effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east Nigeria within the period of Study.	Pearson Correlation = 0.89 Sig = 0.05 N = 385 Grand mean = 3.5	**Positive**
H_i2	Fulani-herdsmen has significant impact on kidnapping in south east Nigeria within the period of Study	Pearson Correlation = 0.89 Sig = 0.05 N = 385 Grand mean = 3.4	**Positive**
H_i3	There is significant relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east Nigeria within the period of Study	Pearson Correlation = 0.87 Sig = 0.05 N = 385 Grand mean = 3.4	**Positive**

Discussion of Findings

Test of hypothesis one revealed that there is significant effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east Nigeria within the period of Study. By implication, Fulani herdsmen has contributed in the destruction of crops and such has always led to farmer-headers conflict (Iro, 2014).

For hypothesis two, it discovered that Fulani-herdsmen has significant impact on kidnapping in south east Nigeria within the period of Study. In view of Aghedo (2019), there is high level of insecurity in Nigeria because of high level of kidnapping involving Fulani herdsmen.

For hypothesis three, it was discovered that there is significant relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east Nigeria within the period of Study. For Aro (2013) most of the farmers do not go to farm because of fare of Fulani herdsmen. The farmers-herders conflict has greatly affected the production of non-factory items generally and trade in particular

Summary of Findings

The result indicated that:

1. There is significant effect of Fulani-herdsmen on destruction of farm crops in south east Nigeria within the period of Study
2. Fulani-herdsmen has significant impact on kidnapping in south east Nigeria within the period of Study
3. There is significant relationship between Fulani-herdsmen and fare among rural farmers in south east Nigeria within the period of Study

Conclusion

This study has focused on the menace of Fulani herdsmen in South East Nigeria: a threat to National security (2020-2025). The researcher used south east states and the LGAs covered are Mbaitoli LGA of Imo State; Isi-Uzu LGA of Enugu state; Arochukwu LGA of Abia State; Ogbaru LGA of Anambra State; and Ishielu LGA of Ebonyi State. The issue of Fulani-herdsmen attack on farmers and farmland has negatively affected agricultural development and overall economic good in Nigeria. Experts have predicted that the impact of climate change on the environment will become acute in the coming years. The implication of this is that the herders-farmers conflict can only escalate as the herders violate territorial boundaries in search of pastures and grazing fields for their animals. Finding a lasting cure for this, in the light of increasing pressure due to climate change, suggests that the Nigerian government must wake up from slumber. Farmers are not willing to trade off their means of livelihood for the Fulani herdsmen to graze their animals nor are the Fulanis willing to pass-by grazing fields and suffer their cattle to starve to death. This is indeed a very delicate matter requiring urgent and thoughtful intervention. This study concludes that providing a permanent place of ranch in the states where the Fulani people leave is the solution to the Fulani attack of farmers and farmlands.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made.

1. The government should carry out a national reorientation of Fulani-herdsmen on the need to totally stop destruction of crops. Government should explore the option of mapping potential grazing areas especially in farming communities.
2. The government should effectively prosecute people who engage in kidnapping so that others will learn and avoid such negative venture.
3. Community members should raise a strong vigilante group who will assist the security agencies in securing lives and properties as such will make farmers to have courage to go to their farmlands. In addition, the herders who engage in crop destruction must be identified and reported to the community head of their host communities.

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