

Impact of Crop-Farmers and Herders' Conflict on Public Primary School Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Apa Local Government Area, Benue State

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Abstract

The study investigated the influence of crop-farmers and herders' conflict on primary school teachers' job satisfaction in Apa LGA, Benue State. Three (3) specific purposes guided the study, three (3) research questions were answered and three (3) null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The research design was ex-post facto. The population of the study comprised 729 primary school teachers from which a sample of 105 was drawn through multi-staged sampling procedure. The instrument for data collection was adapted Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaires (MJSQ) which was face validated by three experts. The internal consistency of the questionnaire items were established using the Cronbach Alpha reliability test with coefficient value of .826 obtained. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The t-test was used to test the null hypotheses 1 and 2, while 2-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses 3. The findings revealed that there was a significant influence of crop farmers-herders' conflict on primary school teachers' job satisfaction. The implication of the findings is that primary school teachers' job satisfaction in Apa LGA is poor. The researcher, therefore recommends that adequate security is to be provided to safe-guard life and property and to ensure smooth running of school activities. The researcher suggests that a replica of this study should consider other locations outside Apa LGA where this conflict has lasted for many years.

Keywords: Crop-farmers, Herders, Conflict, Job-satisfaction, School

Introduction

The persistent conflicts between crop farmers and herders have become a significant socio-economic challenge in Nigeria, particularly in Benue State. This conflict, often stemming from competition for land and resources, has far-reaching implications not only for agricultural productivity but also for the educational sector. The escalation of this conflict has a negative influence, particularly, on primary school activities, infrastructure and teachers. Several teachers have lost their lives on school premises, while others lost their lives on their way to or from school, in addition to the loss of properties. The surviving teachers seem to have lost interest in their jobs and dedication to carrying out their duties because of the risks involved. This ugly trend triggered this current study on the: influence of crop-farmers and herders' conflict on primary school teachers' job satisfaction and performance in Apa Local Government Area (LGA), Benue State. Crop farmers and herders are both farmers that specialised in different products.

Crop farmers are specifically, persons who tend to field and manage the production of crops. According to Bisht, Mehta, Negi, Verma, Tyagi, and Garkoti, (2017), people who practice agriculture or agronomy, that cultivate plants for food, fiber and medicine used to sustain and enhance human life are crop farmers. They are those who manage the growth and harvesting of various types of plants, including grains, fruits, tubers and vegetables (Monteiro, Cannon, Moubarac, Levy, Louzada, & Jaime, 2017). In this study crop farmers are considered as individuals who cultivate and produce crops such as fruits, vegetables, grains, tubers and other agricultural products for human consumption, animal feed, or industrial use. Thus, they can either own the land they farm or work on land owned by others, and their activities may involve a range of practices from planting and nurturing crops to harvesting and marketing the produce. Many Nigerians, therefore, are crop farmers. According to Sasu (2023), 70% of Nigerian households are crop farmers and the major crops cultivated by these households are maize, cassava, beans, millet, rice, guinea corn, maize and yam. According to Adeite (2021), Nigeria has a total of 47 million crop farmers, 38 million small holder farmers, and 9 million medium and large-scale farmers. Similarly, the people of Apa LGA of Benue State, the "food basket of the nation," are predominantly farmers. The farmers in Apa LGA are, majorly, producers of crops such as rice, beans, guinea corn, maize, cassava and yam. Currently, crop farmers' output in Apa LGA has sharply declined as a result of the crop-farmers and herders' conflict

which emanated from competition for farming and grazing land between farmers and herders respectively.

Herders are persons who own or manage a flock of animals. Chanamoto and Hall (2015), define herders as pastoral workers who are responsible for the care and management of a herd or flock of domestic animals, usually on an open pasture which typically includes livestock such as cattle, sheep, goats, or reindeer. In the view of Ofem and Inyang (2014), herders are persons who manage and oversee the animals' feeding, breeding, and protection from predators, often in outdoor environments. In this work, a herder is defined as a person whose work is to feed and manage grazing animals like sheep, goats, cattle, or horses nomadically from one open pasture to another in search of food and water. Herding involves various practices and techniques to raise and care for animals.

Herding in Nigeria is particularly associated with extensive, nomadic or trans-human management of animals, with common open land grazing. This practice involves herders moving about with their cattle in search of water and grazing grounds (National Geographic, 2023). According to Shailesh (2019), this nomadic animal herders keep changing the grazing land for their animals by travelling to various places. The author states that herders may travel from one place to another without the place actually being their own. This practice of open grazing often lead to herders encroaching into farmers' farm which often leads to conflict between them. In Benue State, efforts has been made to minimize this conflict, by stopping herds' encroachment into farmers' farm. One of these efforts, is the enactment of the open grazing prohibition and ranches establishment law by Benue State Government in 2017 (Aligba, Omanchi & Gbakighir, 2018). The enactment of the open grazing prohibition and ranches establishment law appears unacceptable to herders (Gusa & Tijah, 2023). According to the authors, the aftermath of that law is that herders would deliberately move their herds into farmers' farm, farm lands and water sources. The herders would have their firearms ready to engage the farmers while the animals are grazing on their crops. If the farmer reacts violently, there will be a conflict.

Conflict refers to a situation where there are serious disagreements or opposing views among individuals or groups. Evgueni, Kovalenko and Viktor (2018) define conflict as a struggle and a clash of interest, opinion, or even principles. In the view of Din, Bibi, Karim and Khan (2014), conflict is when two people or groups disagree, and the disagreement causes friction. According to the authors,

conflict results in heated arguments, physical abuses and definitely loss of peace and harmony. Conflict in this study refers to a violent hostility in which the parties involved resort to the use of small arms and light weapons. The violent herder–crop farmer conflicts in Nigeria, West and Central Africa has been surging in recent years. Since 2010, there have been over 15,000 deaths linked to farmer-herder violence (Brottem, 2021). According to Hassan, Hassan and Hussain (2018), Nigeria has experienced the highest number of farmer-herder fatalities in West or Central Africa over the past decade. According to the authors, this trend has been largely upward, with 2,000 deaths recorded in 2018. Violent conflicts between pastoralist and farming communities in Nigeria have been concentrated in the North Western, North Central, and recently Southern states (Erondu & Nwakanma, 2018). In Apa Local Government Area of Benue State, there are two types of crop-farmers and herders' conflict which are: guerrilla warfare and kidnapping. These categories of the conflict have affected every sector of the society, especially primary school.

Primary school is the foundation of formal education in Nigeria. Primary school refers to the institution of learning where education is provided to children between the ages of 6 and 12 years as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (NPE) by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014). Primary school is a formal level of education designed to be free and compulsory for children, officially, between the ages 6 to 12. It is also designed to provide basic literacy, numeracy, and life skills to pupils. Primary education which is of six (6) years duration is to be compulsory, free, qualitative and universal (FRN, 2014).

In Apa LGA, primary schools are found in most rural areas, where crop-farmers and herders conflicts take place, for that reason, primary school programmes were terribly affected. The impact of conflict on primary school in Apa LGA, like in other places affected by armed conflict, include kidnapping of school age children and teachers, prolong school closure, destruction of school infrastructure, killing and maiming of teachers and pupils, overcrowding in the available schools and teachers' turnover (Hassan, Dauda, Ibrahim & Sale, 2018). The impact of this conflict on primary school teachers is worthy of note because of the key roles teachers play. A teacher is a professional that facilitates and manages instructional and administrative activities in the classroom. According to Musodiq (2019), a teacher has been viewed as an expert who is capable of imparting knowledge that will help learners to build, identify and acquire skills that will be used to face the challenges in life. A

teacher is an individual who plays a vital role in shaping the minds of pupils, helping them to acquire knowledge, skills, and values for success in life and as foundation for further studies. Apart from their fundamental role of teaching, teacher, builds a warm environment, mentors and nurtures pupils, become role model, and listens, mediates, look for signs of trouble and averts it (Musodiq, 2019).

Job satisfaction refers to the degree of pleasure or happiness that an individual feels in their job. According to Mansour (2014), this feeling can be influenced by a variety of factors, such as the nature of the work itself, the work environment, the organization's culture, and the employee's relationships with their co-workers. Put simply, job satisfaction refers to whether an employee is happy with his/her job (Rumage, 2023). According to Herrity (2022), job satisfaction is a measure of an employee's contentedness with their job, the feeling of enjoyment or fulfillment that a person derives from the job. Job satisfaction is when an employee is happy or feel fulfilled in the job he/she is doing because his/her expectations from the job are met. In literature, it has been found that male and female workers respond differently to factors that affect job satisfaction (Rumage, 2023). Despite the records of differences in male and female job satisfaction variables, the influence of crop-farmer and herder conflict on male and female teachers' job satisfaction has not been verified.

It is however, believed that teachers' job satisfaction is key to the achievement of the goals of the school, this underscores the importance of this current study. While existing studies have explored the broader socio-economic impacts of crop-farmers and herders' conflicts, there is a notable lack of focused research on how these conflicts specifically affect teachers' job satisfaction in Apa LGA, Benue State. Understanding this relationship is crucial for developing targeted interventions that can help mitigate the adverse effects of such conflicts on the primary school programmes in Apa LGA, Benue State Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions.

- 1 What is the influence of crop-farmers and herders' conflict on primary school teachers' job satisfaction?
- 2 What is the influence of gender on primary school teachers' job satisfaction?

- 3 What is the interaction influence of crop-farmers and herders' conflict and gender on primary school teachers' job satisfaction?

Hypotheses

The study was guided by the following null hypotheses and was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant influence of crop-farmers and herders' conflict on primary school teachers' job satisfaction.

H₀₂: There is no significant influence of gender on primary school teachers' job satisfaction.

H₀₃: There is no significant interaction influence of crop-farmers and herders conflict and gender on primary school teachers' job satisfaction.

Methodology

The research design is ex-post facto or causal comparative. According to Nworgu (2015), an ex-post facto or causal comparative research design is utilized when a study seeks cause-effect relationship in which the researcher cannot control or manipulate the variables of interest, but rather links some already existing effects or observation to some variables as causative agent(s). The sample for the study was 105 teachers, made up of 60 males and 45 females. The sample size of 105 is more than 10% of the population (729) which, according to Martinez-Mesa, Gonzalez-Chica, Bastos, Bonamigo and Duquia (2014), is a good representation of the population. This sample was drawn using multi-stage sampling procedure. Stage one: out of eleven (11) wards in the LGA, seven (7) wards where crop farmers-herders' conflict takes place was purposively sampled. Stage two: three (3) schools each were randomly drawn from the schools in the seven wards using balloting. Stage three: three (3) male and two (2) female teachers were drawn using stratified sampling technique to get 105 participants.

The instrument for data collection was Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (MJSQ). The instrument was face validated by three experts. One each from the departments of Early Childhood and Primary Education, Educational Foundations (Educational Psychology unit) and Measurement and Evaluation, Department of Science Education; all from the Faculty of Education, University of

Nigeria, Nsukka. The trial-testing of the instrument to determine its internal consistency and reliability, using the Cronbach Alpha reliability test, yielded reliability co-efficient of .826. This indicated that the instrument was highly reliable and adequate for the study. The researcher administered the instruments to the respondents, using direct delivery and retrieval methods, with the help of three research assistants who were thoroughly briefed on the modalities of administration and collection of the instrument. All the 105 copies of the questionnaire administered were retrieved because of the direct delivery and retrieval method used. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Then t-test was used to test hypotheses 1 and 2 while two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test hypothesis 3 at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

This section presents the results of the data analysis in line with the study's research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question One: What is the influence of crop-farmers and herders conflict on primary school teachers' job satisfaction?

Table 1: Mean analysis of the influence of crop-farmers and herders conflict on primary school teachers' job satisfaction

| Farmers-Herders Conflict | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------------|----|-------|----------------|
| Guerrilla Attack | 65 | 30.83 | 8.28 |
| Kidnapping | 40 | 24.95 | 5.91 |

Table 1 indicates that primary school teachers who experience guerrilla attack due to crop famers-herders conflict had mean job satisfaction of ($M = 30.83$, $SD = 8.28$) while primary school teachers who experience kidnapping due to crop famers-herders conflict had mean job satisfaction of ($M = 24.95$, $SD = 5.91$). This means that primary school teachers who experience guerrilla attack due to crop famers-herders conflict had higher mean job satisfaction than those who experience kidnapping.

H01: There is no significant influence of crop-farmers and herders conflict on primary school teachers' job satisfaction.

Table 2: t-test analysis of the influence of crop-farmers and herders conflict on primary school teachers' job satisfaction

| Farmers-Herders | | Std. | | p | |
|------------------|----|-------|-----------|-----|-----------|
| Conflict | N | Mean | Deviation | Dt | T |
| Guerrilla Attack | 65 | 30.83 | 8.28 | 104 | 3.74 .026 |
| Kidnapping | 40 | 24.95 | 5.91 | | 5 |

Table 2 reveals that there is a significant influence of crop farmers-herders conflict on primary school teachers' job satisfaction in favour of those who experience guerrilla attack, $t(104) = 3.745, p = .026$. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected since the associated probability of .026 is less than the .05 level of significance. This implies that kidnapping influences primary school teachers' job satisfaction more than the guerrilla attack.

Research Question Two: What is the influence of gender on primary school teachers' job satisfaction?

Table 3: Mean analysis of the influence of gender on primary school teachers' job satisfaction

| Gender | | Std. | |
|--------|----|-------|-----------|
| | N | Mean | Deviation |
| Male | 60 | 30.59 | 7.63 |
| Female | 45 | 28.71 | 7.22 |

Table 3 indicates that male primary school teachers had mean job satisfaction of ($M = 30.59, SD = 7.63$) while female primary school teachers had mean job satisfaction of ($M = 28.71, SD = 7.22$). This means that male primary school teachers had higher mean job satisfaction than the female teachers.

H02: There is no significant influence of gender on primary school teachers' job satisfaction.

Table 4: t-test analysis of the influence of gender on primary school teachers’ job satisfaction

| Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Df | t | P |
|--------|----|-------|----------------|-----|------|------|
| Male | 60 | 30.59 | 7.63 | 104 | 1.06 | .288 |
| Female | 45 | 28.71 | 7.22 | | 8 | |

Table 4 reveals that there is no significant influence of gender on primary school teachers’ job satisfaction, $t(104) = 1.068$, $p = .288$. Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected since the associated probability of .288 is greater than the .05 level of significance. This implies that gender does not influence primary school teachers’ job satisfaction.

Research Question Three: What is the interaction influence of crop-farmers and herders conflict and gender on primary school teachers’ job satisfaction?

Table 5: Mean analysis for interaction influence of crop farmers-herders conflict and gender on primary school teachers’ job satisfaction

| Farmers-Herders Conflict | Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------------|--------|----|-------|----------------|
| Guerrilla Attack | Male | 45 | 29.84 | 7.88 |
| | Female | 20 | 32.95 | 8.90 |
| Kidnapping | Male | 16 | 24.69 | 6.64 |
| | Female | 24 | 24.46 | 5.46 |

Table 5 indicates that male primary school teachers who experience guerrilla attack due to crop famers-herders conflict had mean job satisfaction of ($M = 29.84$, $SD = 7.88$) while male primary school teachers who experience kidnapping due to crop famers-herders conflict had mean job satisfaction of ($M = 24.69$, $SD = 6.64$). Similarly, female primary school teachers who experience guerrilla attack due to crop famers-herders conflict had mean job satisfaction of ($M = 32.95$, $SD = 8.90$) while female primary school teachers who experience kidnapping due to crop famers-herders

conflict had mean job satisfaction of ($M = 24.46, SD = 5.46$). This means that while female primary school teachers who experience guerrilla attack due to crop famers-herders conflict had higher mean job satisfaction than the male teachers who experience, the male primary school teachers who experience kidnapping due to crop famers-herders conflict had higher mean job satisfaction than the female teachers.

H03: There is no significant interaction influence of crop farmers-herders conflict and gender on primary school teachers' job satisfaction.

Table 6: 2-way analysis of variance for interaction influence of crop-farmers and herders conflict and gender on primary school teachers' job satisfaction

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|
| Corrected Model | 183.863 ^a | 3 | 61.288 | 1.104 | .351 |
| Intercept | 92607.492 | 1 | 92607.492 | 1667.64 | .000 |
| Farmers-Herders Conflict | 1210.458 | 1 | 1210.458 | 21.797 | .000 |
| Gender | 20.285 | 1 | 20.285 | .365 | .547 |
| Farmers-Herders Conflict * Gender | 108.101 | 1 | 108.101 | 1.947 | .166 |
| Error | 5664.259 | 102 | 55.532 | | |
| Total | 109395.000 | 105 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 5848.123 | 104 | | | |

Table 6 reveals that there is no significant interaction influence of crop-farmers and herders conflict and gender on primary school teachers' job satisfaction, $F(1, 102) = 1.947, p = .166$. Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected ($p > .05$). This means that the influence of crop farmers-herders conflict on primary school teachers' job satisfaction is not dependent on gender.

Discussion of the Findings

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the influence of crop farmers and herders' conflict on primary school teachers' job satisfaction. Several key findings emerged from the current

study. The finding of the study shows that primary school teachers who experienced crop farmers-herders conflict had lower mean job satisfaction than those who did not experience. Thus, there is a significant influence of crop-farmers and herders conflict on primary school teachers' job satisfaction. This finding is in support of the findings of Hassan, Dauda, Ibrahim and Sale (2018), who found that armed conflict by Boko Haram resulted in the high rate of primary school teachers' turnover in the North-East, Nigeria. The reason may not be unconnected with the fact that conflict comes with negative feelings of disaffection, disharmony and disenchantment which makes people feel bad and negate satisfaction. On the influence of gender on primary school teachers' job satisfaction, it was found that there is no significant influence of gender on primary school teachers' job satisfaction. The result is expected because, crop-farmers and herders' conflict affects everyone, including male and female teachers, in the affected communities. The result aligns with the finding of Mansour (2014) who found that there is no significant difference in male and female workers' job satisfaction. Similarly, Bonte and Krabel, (2014) also found that, there was no significant difference between male and female workers' job satisfaction. However, some findings indicated that, gender has significant influence on workers' job satisfaction, especially when factors such as pay package, work-life balance and social interaction variables are considered (Yu & Choe, 2021); which are not the focus of the present study.

The finding of the study indicates that there is no significant interaction influence of crop-farmers and herders' conflict and gender on primary school teachers' job satisfaction. The result is not a surprise because gender had been found to have no significant influence on teachers' job satisfaction in this study, for that reason, when it interacts with crop farmers – herders' conflict which had been found to have significant influence on job satisfaction, the result was altered. The finding aligns with the study conducted by Mazhar, Ullah and Majeed (2021) who found that gender has no significant difference in teachers' job satisfaction on social variables.

Conclusion

In conclusion, crop-farmers and herders' conflict significantly influence primary school teachers' job satisfaction in Apa LGA. It can therefore be stated that, as long as crop farmers-herders' conflict continues, primary school teachers' job satisfaction will not improve. Furthermore, primary school

teachers' job satisfaction due to crop-farmers and herders' conflict, in Apa LGA is not based on gender. This implies that both male and female teachers are affected.

Recommendations

This research was undertaken to investigate the influence of crop-farmers and herders conflict on primary school teacher' job satisfaction and performance in Apa LGA of Benue State. Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations were made.

1. The government should live up to expectations in providing security for citizens both in the school host communities and in the school premises.
2. Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), should use all lawful means to draw the attention of government to their plight for needed intervention.

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