

# **Influence of Information and Communication Technology Skills on the Alleviation of Herders and Farmers Clashes in Nigeria**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study examined the influence of information and technology skills on the alleviation of herders and farmers' clashes in Nigeria. Farmers/herders clash has been a thorn in the flesh of peaceful co-existence in community who has lived together for decades. The study attempted to answer two research questions and two corresponding hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. A quasi-experimental research design was adopted for the study. The population was made up of respondents from local communities consisting of 97 farmers and 74 cattle herders from Kaura Namoda, Shinkafi and Maru local government areas of Zamfara state. Test of Information and Communication Technology Alleviation of Herders Farmers Clashes (TICTAHFC) was administered as instrument for data collection. Respondent in the selected local government were exposed to an extensive training conducted for three weeks. Contents in the training manual included topics in usage of technological devices, processing and dissemination of information on Internet office technologies, whatsapp application, Facebook Application, and local networking skills. The instrument was validated by experts in the field of psychology and counselling and cronbach Alpha was used in obtaining a reliability coefficient of 0.79. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while simple regression t-test was used to analyse the hypotheses. The findings revealed that information dissemination using technological skills had influence in alleviating herders and farmers clashes in Nigeria. The study concluded that information dissemination and processing through the use of office technological skills if properly imparted

on the respondents can be utilized to a high extend in alleviating farmers/herders clashes in Nigeria. A major recommendation advanced was that the Office IT professional and Extension workers should expose farmers and herders to technological skills on processing and dissemination of videos, YouTube, and live streaming program to teach them proper land usage pattern and need for peaceful co-existence.

**Keywords:** office technology, technological skills, alleviation, farmers, herders

## INTRODUCTION

Information and communication center refers to a work center where all managerial functions, including clerical works, are performed. An office is also seen as any center or location where engagements, commitments, process, and flow of needed and relevant information are carried out. Office technology is the application of scientific knowledge, devices, and systems to facilitate and augment the information processes and delivery of same. It is also viewed as a concept that is associated with office automation, electronic technology, and office globalization. Office management is viewed as any location or place where the function of planning, organizing, controlling, and leading related administrative information. These activities, combine human, financial, physical resources, efficiently, and effectively to achieve the goals of the organization.

Internet office information processing and dissemination on social networks have become a universal application allowing people to process and disseminate text, pictures, audio, and video files. Moreover, information processing and dissemination could be easily done via social networking site. It is defined as an internet-based service that gives individuals three capabilities: first, the ability to construct a public or semi-public profile; second, the ability to identify a list of other users with whom a connection is shared; third, the ability to view and track individual connections as well as those made by others (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Popular networks include Facebook, Reddit, and LinkedIn, all of which maintain websites which serve as hubs facilitating people's information processing and disseminating. In contrast, the relatively new WhatsApp application is a smartphone application that enables people to disseminate information directly via their phones. Since its introduction in 2009, its growth has steadily increased, and as of April 2016, it numbers over a billion monthly active users.

## FRAMEWORK

Sociological challenges over the years in Nigeria have resulted in communal clashes which pose a serious challenge to our existence as a nation. There have been a lot of communal clashes in Nigeria in recent times (Kwaja, Ademola, & Bukola, 2018). However, the most threatening is the farmers/herdsmen clashes in many rural communities. Over the last few years, Nigeria's rural population has boomed, climate change has dried up traditional grazing areas, farmers and cattle herders have been gradually forced into closer quarters. Seemingly small disputes over a wandering cow, or a new crop patch appearing on a grazing path, can turn to violence and then, over months and years, into escalating reprisals that leave whole families dead, hundreds of thousands of people displaced, and villages in charred ruins (Aliyu, 2018). The northern region of Nigeria has experienced conflicts that led to thousands of deaths and displacements as a result of clashes between pastoralists (herders) and local farmers in several communities.

In January 2018 alone, Amnesty International reports indicate that 168 people were killed as a result of herdsmen-farmer clashes. It has been insinuated from many researchers that among the identified causes is a large number of unemployed youth and widespread illiteracy, escalating proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria. Given, this host communities (including farmers) also have access to sophisticated weapons, minor disagreement or provocation often degenerates into violent clashes, resulting in widespread destruction of property and human casualties (Kwaja et al., 2017). There are many theoretical explanations for the causes and nature of the herder-farmer conflict in Nigeria.

The conflict is best described with the use of social conflict theory. The theory sees social life as a competition and focuses on the distribution of resources and power, which are not evenly endowed by nature. Proponents of the theory view society as a gathering of people of diverse needs and interests with limited resources to meet their needs. Inequality is created which generates social conflict and social change. Karl Marx is considered the father of social conflict theory. Social conflict theory looks at struggles for power and control in society as a causal factor of conflict. Conflict occurs when two or more actors oppose each other in social interaction, reciprocally exerting social powers to attain scarce or incompatible goals and prevent the opponent from attaining them. The quest for dominance and power becomes the currency rather than consensus. Based on this premise, governments at local, state, and federal levels have not been able to address the contending issues between herdsmen and farmers or assist them in

reaching some consensus.

Information and Communication Technology Skills (ICT), put together, gives birth to automation in process and flow of activities related to planning, organizing, controlling and co-ordinating of all types of organizational set-up to achieve its set goals and objectives. ICT allow individuals to build careers in a despatch of information, processing of information, distribution of information, and human resource development. All these are specific aspects of office technology and management, which if properly harnessed, could go a long way in alleviating sociological, economic, and political challenges faced in Nigeria. Furthermore, there are several other factors that can be combined to escalate the conflict among the identified actors. Some of these include climate change and environmental degradation, depleting arable land for farming, and lack of political will to tackle the challenges.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study aimed to; (1) determine the influence of processing of information using technological skills in alleviating herders and farmers` clashes in Nigeria; and (2) determine the influence of dissemination of information using technological skills in alleviating herders and farmers clashes in Nigeria;

## **METHODS**

For this study, a quasi-experimental research design was adopted. The sample population for the study was ninety-seven farmers and seventy-four cattle herders in the local community in Zamfara state, north- western, Nigeria. A purposive sample was used to select Kaura Namoda, Shinkafi, and Maru local government areas because of its direct affliction by this menace and distribution among affected areas. A pre-test was administered on the respondents to ascertain their level of information dissemination technological skills and processing of information office administrative skill before the actual training took place. The adopted data collection instrument for this study was developed by the researcher, and it was named Test of Information and Communication Technology Alleviation of Herders Farmers Clashes (TICTAHFC). The instrument was administered to the respondent in the selected local government after a training conducted for three weeks. Contents in the training manual included topics in the usage of Information and Communication Technology devices, usage of

whatsApp application, usage and dissemination of information on Facebook, the local networking skills. The instrument is validated by research experts in the Department of Psychology and Counseling, Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Their comments, advice, and suggestions were put in effect before the final draft of the instrument. The reliability coefficient was determined using Cronbach alpha techniques, which showed the reliability value of 0.79. Given the result, the instrument was considered reliable because the reliability index falls between 0.5 and 1. A post-test was then administered to the respondent by the researcher with the help of two research assistantants from the local communities to ensure the safety of the researcher and test was answered correctly. Data collected was analyzed using mean, and standard deviation, and the two null hypotheses were analyzed using analysis of independent sample t-test at  $P \leq 0.05$  (5%) level of significance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Information and Communication Technology skills on the alleviation of herders and farmers clashes in Nigeria on the various objectives in this study are presented under this section.

**Objective 1:** To determine the influence of the processing of information using technological skills in alleviating herders and farmers clashes in Nigeria.

Table 1

*Influence of processing of information using technological skills in alleviating herders and farmers clashes in Nigeria*

Information dissemination technological Skills	N	X	SD
Farmers	97	57.41	15.07
Cattle Herders	74	29.38	13.72
<b>Total</b>	171		

Source; Fieldwork, 2019

The data analysis used to answer objective 1 is as presented in Table 1. From the table, scores of 97 representing 57.41 mean with a mean deviation of 15.07 for farmers-respondents who use technological devices in disseminating information. Those cattle herders-respondents had a score of 74 representing 29.38 mean with a mean deviation of 13.72. Based on the analysis, the mean score of 57.41 was better than the mean score of 29.38. The result, therefore, reveals that more farmers use technological devices in disseminating information compared to cattle herders.

**Objective 2:** To determine the influence of information dissemination using technological skills in alleviating herders and farmers clashes in Nigeria.

Table 2

*Influence of Information dissemination using technological skills in alleviating herders and farmers clashes in Nigeria*

<b>Information dissemination technological Skills</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>SD</b>
Farmers	97	15.03	5.7
Cattle Herders	74	9.08	3.2
<b>Total</b>	171		

*Source; Fieldwork, 2019*

The data analysis used to answer objectives is as presented in Table 2. From the table, scores of 97 representing 15.03 mean with a mean deviation of 5.7 for farmers-respondents who use technological devices in processing information. Those cattle herders-respondents had a score of 74 representing 9.08 mean with a mean deviation of 3.2. Based on the analysis, the mean score of 15.03 was better than the mean score of 9.08. The result, therefore, reveals that more farmers use technological devices in processing information compared to cattle herders.

**Research Hypotheses One:** Information Processing using technological skills has no influence alleviating herders and farmers clashes in Nigeria.

Table 3

*t-Test of Information Processing using technological skills on alleviating herders and farmers clashes in Nigeria.*

<b>Information using Tech. skills</b>	<b>Processing</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>r-cal</b>	<b>r-crit</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>Farmers</b>								
Pre-test		97	17.21	5.07	0.86	24.03	1.14	Had Influence
Post-test		97	57.41	15.07				
<b>Cattle Herders</b>								
Pre-test		74	16.09	7.2	0.78	23.16	1.65	Had Influence
Post-test		74	29.38	13.72				

P=0.000      Source; Fieldwork, 2019

The result of t-test in Table 3 shows the r-calculated for farmers was 24.03, which was better than 1.14 table value, while that for cattle herders-respondents shows r-calculated at 23.16 greater than 1.65 t-table value. Therefore, H01 is rejected. This implies that using information and communication technological skills processing information influenced alleviating the farmers/herders clashes in Nigeria.

**Research Hypotheses Two:** Information dissemination using technological skills has no influence alleviating herders and farmers clashes in Nigeria.

Table 4

*t-Test of Information dissemination using technological skills on alleviating herders and farmers clashes in Nigeria.*

<b>Information dissemination using Technological skills</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>r-cal</b>	<b>r-crit</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>Farmers</b>							
Pre-test	97	7.02	1.71	0.81	19.05	1.16	Had Influence
Post-test	97	15.03	5.27				
<b>Cattle Herders</b>							
Pre-test	74	6.09	2.11	0.78	18.99	1.61	Had Influence
Post-test	74	9.80	4.12				

P=0.000      Source; Fieldwork, 2019

The result of t-test analysis in Table 4 shows the rcalculated for farmers was 19.05, which was better than 1.16 table value, while that of cattle herders shows r-calculated at 18.99 greater than 1.61 t-table value. Therefore, H02 is rejected. This implies that using information, and communication technological skills to disseminate information influenced alleviating the farmers/herders clashes in Nigeria.

### CONCLUSIONS

This paper has carefully examined the utilization of Influence of office technology and management skills on the alleviation of herders and farmers clashes in Nigeria. Based on the findings arising from the study, it is therefore concluded that information dissemination and processing through the use of office technological skills if imparted on the respondents can be utilized to a high extent in alleviating farmers/herders clashes in Nigeria. It is also fascinating to note that emphasis still needs to be put into the training of herders and farmers in the proper utilization of technological skills in processing and dissemination of information to allow peaceful coexistence of these two groups in our society.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations are therefore advanced:

1. Office IT professional and Extension workers should expose farmers and herders to technological skills on processing and dissemination of videos, YouTube, and live streaming program to teach them proper land usage pattern;
2. States governments should organise training for farmers/herders in the affected community on how to properly utilize technological gadgets to gain skills that will assist in processing and dissemination of information on WhatsApp, Facebook and other social networks; and
3. Farmers and herders should be re-oriented on how to live and relate peacefully, by sending them peace-related topic by periodic SMS on WhatsApp, Facebook, and other social networks.

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