

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT PASTORALISTS' ATTACKS ON SMALL SCALE FARMERS IN OKE-OGUN, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study interrogated the sources of information about pastoralists' attacks on small scale farmers in Oke-Ogun, Oyo State, and the implication on public understanding of the conflict. The small scale farmers are those whose crops were grazed on indiscriminately by herders. A survey design was employed, utilizing questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. Three hundred and twenty seven copies of the questionnaire were distributed on respondents in the selected towns such as: Iseyin, Saki and Igboora. Data collected were analysed using percentages and frequency counts. The agenda-setting theory provided the theoretical framework.

The findings from the study revealed that majority of the respondents received information about the attacks through new media. For instance, 44.3% got to know about the attacks through the social media platforms, including Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, Telegram, Instagram among others; followed by mainstream media -radio, television and newspapers 31.8%; interpersonal communication, 13.5%; religious group, 2.1% and international media, 7%. The findings highlighted a high level of professionalism in the presentation of the conflict, which contributed to the objectivity of the media. These diverse sources provided the public with timely and comprehensive information about the conflict. The study recommended that media operators should equip themselves with the latest technology for information gathering. The farmers and herders should find more amicable ways of addressing their conflicts, while host communities should create more peaceful platforms for addressing the disputes. Government and security agencies should enhance their response mechanisms to address and mitigate the deadly conflicts.

Keywords: Social Media, Information Sources, Pastoralists Attacks, Small Scale Farmers

INTRODUCTION

The origins of the conflict between pastoralists and small scale farmers can be traced back to the aftermath of the severe drought that struck Africa during the 1970s and 1980s (Nwankwo, Anyadiumo. Ali & Madu, 2020). According to these authors, the drought exacerbated the tensions between herders and farming communities, leading to an escalation of the conflict. Over time, this discord has evolved into a deadly and devastating crisis, resulting in significant loss of life and extensive property damage across various African nations (Amenaghawon & Owoyemi 2024; Nwankwo *et al.*, 2020; Olowojobi & Ajilore, 2018). Since the turn of the millennium, Moritz (2006) notes that the conflict has

become increasingly widespread, significantly affecting several West African countries, including Nigeria. In Nigeria, the crisis has intensified, particularly in the central regions such as Benue, Plateau, Adamawa, and Nasarawa States, and has now spread across the nation, has reached perilous proportions. The severity of the conflict has led to a marked increase in scholarly attention, especially since 2015, as it has posed serious threats to national security and peace. This is not different from the view Onwuka (2024); Amenaghawon and Owoyemi (2024) who caution on the need for those in leadership position to act fast. This escalating situation underscores the urgent need for comprehensive research and intervention to address the multifaceted issues surrounding the conflict.

The crisis between pastoralists and peasant farmers has far-reaching political and socioeconomic consequences. On the socioeconomic front, the conflict severely disrupts the livelihood systems of both herders and farmers (Moritz, 2006). The continued strife has been shown to have detrimental effects on agricultural growth rates, as several scholars have observed (Amenaghawon & Owoyemi, 2024; Nwankwo *et al.*, 2020; Higazi, 2016; Ofem & Inyang, 2014). This negative impact is increasingly apparent with the current food crises emerging in the country. The conflict poses a significant threat to the sustainability of both animal herding and crop farming systems (Nwankwo *et al.*, 2020; Amnesty International, 2018; Moritz, 2006). Beyond the immediate economic repercussions, the crisis is further exacerbated by a complex interplay of factors such as ethnicity, religion, and politics. These elements contribute to the deepening of the conflict and undermine the effectiveness of mediation efforts aimed at resolving the dispute and creating a secure environment for both pastoralists and peasant farmers. The intertwining of these factors illustrates the multifaceted nature of the crisis and underscores the challenges faced in achieving a lasting resolution.

The intensification of the conflict has brewed as a significant security challenge in Nigeria. The violent conflict has resulted in widespread destruction of property valued in the billions of dollars and has claimed numerous lives, leading to extensive collateral economic damages (Amenaghawon & Owoyemi, 2024; Egbuta, 2021; Nwankwo *et al.*, 2020; Genyi, 2017). Many agricultural settlements have been overtaken by herders, displacing farmers from their land and disrupting local economies. The International Crisis Group (2017) has raised concerns about the alarming pattern of attacks by groups identified as Fulani herders on farmers and agricultural communities across various regions of Nigeria. According to their report, these attacks have been more deadly than those perpetrated by the infamous terrorist group Boko Haram. Amnesty International (2018) corroborates this, revealing that the number of deaths resulting from these attacks exceeded those caused by Boko Haram. Specifically, 57% of the fatalities occurred in 2018, between January and October, while 21% of the deaths happened in 2017 and 22% in 2016 Amnesty International (2018). This significant loss of life underscores the urgency of addressing the conflict and mitigating its severe impacts on Nigerian society.

The conflict between pastoralists and peasant farmers has prompted a significant resurgence of scholarly interest in Nigeria, particularly as the situation has escalated significantly since 2015 (Gursory, 2020; Ali & Madu, 2020; Adeoye, 2017). This intensification of the crisis has become a profound threat to national security and peace, catalyzing a deeper examination of the issue by researchers. Concerned scholars and citizens have increasingly focused on understanding the conflict's scale, its consequences, and its broader implications. As a result, academic inquiry has concentrated on various aspects of the conflict, including its underlying causes, its trajectory, its economic impacts, security implications for the nation, effects on national integration, and media coverage. Researchers have examined how the conflict is framed in the media, the nature of news

sources, and related issues (Gursory, 2020; Ali & Madu, 2020; Odiegwe-Enwerem, Oso & Amodu, 2020; Olomjobi & Ajilore, 2018; Nwankwo *et al.*, 2017; Oboh & Abugu, 2016). Despite this extensive research, there remains a notable gap in the literature regarding the role of information sources in shaping public understanding of the conflict. Given that media have a substantial influence on public perception of various issues, it is crucial to explore how media narratives about the conflict affect public comprehension. In a society where media significantly influence other institutions and public discourse, stakeholders must critically assess how media portrayals of the conflict influence public awareness and understanding of the herders' attacks on peasant farmers.

Additionally, many existing studies on the herders-farmers conflict have employed content analysis to examine aspects such as media presentation and public perception. These include Onyebuchi *et al.* (2019): newspaper coverage of Fulani *herdsmen attacks on host communities: a study of three national dailies from January - April, 2018*, Shehu (2017): newspapers coverage of herders/farmers conflict in Nigeria, Nwankwo *et al.* (2020): farmer-herder conflict: the politics of media discourse in Nigeria and Odigwu-Enwerem *et al.* (2020): news sourcing, positioning and thematic focus: examining newspaper portrayal of herdsmen-farmers conflict in Nigeria. Yet, there remains a notable gap in the role of the sources of information on public understanding of the conflict. The reason is that most of the studies do not focus on the sources of information as a critical influencer of the public perception and understanding of the conflict. Also, with the use of survey, there is room to explain certain variables which content analysis may not effectively detail. To address this oversight, the present study aimed to investigate the sources of information regarding the attacks by pastoralists or herders on small scale crop farmers in the Oke-Ogun area of Oyo State. As a follow-up to these studies and to fill the identified gap, this study focused on the information sources about pastoralists' attacks on small scale farmers in Oke-Ogun, Oyo state, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The extensive literature on the farmers-herders conflict in Africa, reflects the complexity and scale of the issue. Contemporary scholarly works have primarily examined the impacts of herders' migratory patterns on the interactions between farmers and herders ((Genyi, 2017; Nwankwo, *et al.*, 2020; Egbuta, 2021). Majority of these studies delve into the underlying motivations driving each party involved in the conflict. Studies have also explored the causes, consequences, and potential resolutions of the conflict. In addition, there has been a focus on the role of institutions and policy measures in resolving the dispute, interventionist activities, individuals, communities and government attitudes; trust, betrayals and conspiracies among others. These included the works of Odiegwe-Enwerem *et al.* (2020), Adeoye (2017), Ofuoku and Isife (2009). These scholars have examined the various manifestations of the conflict, including violent attacks, social tension generated by the heat of the conflict, political actions and avoidance. Most of these studies investigated how and why these disputes can escalate from mere disagreements into violent confrontations and why they have actually escalated into violent attacks resulting into wanting destruction of lives and properties, and, now causing major economic crises: it has most recently led to food scarcity in different parts of the country. The conflict is also seen as evolving from struggles over power relations between indigenous populations and settler herdsmen, with ethnic identity playing an increasingly prominent role (Crises Group, 2022; Amnesty International, 2018; Olaniyi, 2015).

As a result, the ethnic dimension of the conflict between pastoralists and farmers is undeniably significant and cannot be ignored. This aspect of the crisis is intricately tied to

the fact that the majority of the nomadic pastoralists involved are of Fulani ethnic origin (Nwankwo, *et al.*, 2020; Amnesty International, 2018; Genyi, 2017; Olaniyi, 2015). Despite extensive scholarly exploration of this conflict, significant gaps remain in the research, particularly regarding the role of media discourse in shaping public perceptions and narratives about the conflict, and more significantly, sources of information about the conflict with the implication on the public understanding of the conflict. While some earlier studies have delved into the geopolitics of how the conflict is represented in the media; ethno-religious narratives; application of a critical geopolitical lens to the conflict in West Africa; migration and invasion; media presentation of herders-farmers' conflict and public perception of herders; impact of media presentation of herder' attacks on media and public perception of herders; the stereotype in the media narration of the conflict; viewing the discourse as both language and social practice among other focuses in literature (Genyi, 2017; Nwankwo, *et al.*, 2020; Egbuta, 2021; Amenaghawon & Owoyemi, 2024;). Yet, there remains a notable gap in the role of the sources of information on public understanding of the conflict.

In contrast to the body of research on media perspectives regarding other conflicts in Nigeria, such as ethno-religious disputes and various other forms of conflict, studies on the farmers-herders' strife have not adequately addressed how media the sources of information contribute to the way members of the public form their opinions regarding herders-farmers' conflicts. For instance, Amenaghawon and Owoyemi (2024) studied the impact of media presentation of the conflict on public perception of herders. Gever and Essien (2019) concentrated on three crucial aspects: the amount of attention newspapers gave to the conflict, the language employed in reporting, and how readers evaluated the coverage. Similarly, Odunlami (2017) analyzed the key themes and principal voices in newspaper narratives about the conflict, while Shehu (2017) examined how newspaper coverage portrayed the Fulani people as obstinate and conflict-prone.

Odunlami (2017) argues that the strong opinions of politicians, as frequently highlighted in newspaper coverage, contribute to the potential for propaganda and the politicization of the conflict. Egbuta (2021) considers general understanding of herders-farmers' conflict in Nigeria, Shehu (2017) considers the media's portrayal of the Fulani people, particularly the herdsmen, as instigators of conflict exacerbates Fulani-phobia, which in turn hinders efforts to resolve the conflict, while Genyi (2017) concentrated on ethnic and religious identities shaping contestation for land-based resources: the Tiv-farmers and pastoralists conflicts in central North/Central Nigeria until 2014. Similarly, in a seminar paper, Gusory (2019) presented herder-farmers' conflict in Nigeria and analysed the root causes of the conflict, Onyebuchi *et al.* (2019) also investigated the frequency, prominence, depth, and framing of coverage regarding Fulani herdsmen's attacks on host communities in Nigeria. Their findings indicated that the coverage was predominantly unfavorable and suggested that newspapers should aim to de-escalate tensions through the use of more neutral language and objective reporting, free from political and ethno-religious biases.

While these studies have contributed valuable insights into the analysis and understanding of the conflict through media presentation, framing and focus on the conflict, the actors and other stakeholders, they do not give considerable attention to the sources of information about herders-farmers' conflict and the consequences of the source on public understanding of the conflict. Although the works of Amenaghawon and Owoyemi (2024) considered essentially the media presentation of the conflict and the impact of the presentation on public perception of herders and farmers respectively, the

studies still neglected the role the sources of information about the conflict can have on the understanding of the conflict by the people.

Additionally, most of these studies often lack a conscious focus on public construct of the conflict being determined by where most information about the conflict emanated from, which limits their ability to reveal the underlying power dynamics within media discourse on the conflict. While these earlier works are crucial for understanding how the media constructs the conflict, this paper seeks to extend their findings by looking at source of information as major determinant in the construct of meaning on any issue of conflict, especially with regards to herders-farmers' crises. In certain instances, the conflict is portrayed through the lens of ethnic cleansing and terrorism. These characterizations gain added intensity from the perceived stance and responses of the government, which seem to suggest a bias in favour of the herders over the farmers (Amenaghawon & Owoyemi, 2024; Crises Group, 2022 & Genyi 2017). This perception is fueled by the dominant narrative, (Isola, 2015 & Idahosa, 2005) that consistently casts the farmers as the victims and the herders as the aggressors, war mongers, invaders, betrayals, terrorist among other derogatory nomenclatures (Amenaghawon & Owoyemi, 2024). The media framing often implies that the government is failing to adequately address the diverse security threats posed by the conflict. This portrayal contributes to a growing sense of injustice among the farmers and amplifies the perception that the government is neglecting its duty to protect all parties involved in the dispute. Consequently, the conflict is depicted as not merely a localized or ethnic issue but as a broader security crisis, exacerbated by government inaction or partiality, as noted by the authors.

Yet, different researches have shown that the media presentation of the conflict was influenced by certain political, economical, ideological or ethno-religious leanings. However, the connection between how mass media represent the conflict and public perception of the conflict appears to be tenuous. For instance, Nwankwo *et. al.* (2020) argues that while media portrayals can highlight various disputes and perspectives in the framing of the conflict in Nigeria, they may fall short in linking discourse, identity, and policy comprehensively. Also, Isola (2015) contends that certain stereotypes influence media narratives of conflicts, while Amenaghawon and Owoyemi (2024) assert that the conflict between herders and small scale crop farmers often influence the public perception of the parties involved in the conflict, positively or negatively. In furtherance to these studies and to fill the gap earlier identified, this study focused on the information sources about pastoralists' attacks on peasant farmers in Oke-Ogun, Oyo state, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed survey research design, utilising questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was distributed to 327 respondents, who were selected using purposive and simple random sampling techniques. The target population consisted of media audiences who were neither farmers nor herdsmen but were members of the public with sufficient knowledge about the herders' attacks on peasant farmers in the Oke-Ogun region of Oyo state. These respondents had formed their opinions based on information received through various media channels. The media platforms used by these respondents included mainstream media such as radio, television, and newspapers, as well as social media platforms including Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, Facebook, and WhatsApp. Additionally, they engaged with blogs, micro-blogs, social networking sites, and video-sharing platforms. The respondents for the study were identified using purposive sampling technique. The data collected were analysed using simple percentages and frequency counts to derive meaningful insights from the respondents' feedback.

THE STUDY AREA

The Oke-Ogun axis of Oyo state is one of the northern regions of Oyo state. It comprises five local government areas of the state: Saki West, Saki East, OnaAra, Irepo and Iseyin. The region's fertile lands make it a crucial agricultural hub, producing significant amounts of food and cash crops. Agriculture drives the local economy, with many farmers engaging in subsistence and commercial farming. Additionally, Oke-Ogun is home to numerous cattle farms operated by Fulani herders. However, frequent attacks on small-scale crop farmers by these herders have hindered the region's economic progress and impacted Oyo State's development.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on agenda-setting theory of the media. The essential principle of agenda-setting theory is that the mass media have long held the power to shape public perception by influencing the visibility of events and issues (Spring, 2006). According to this theory, the media guide public focus by highlighting the prominence, frequency, and perspective of news stories. Scholars such as Semiu (2015), Ishola (2010), McQuail (2010), Wanta and Ghanem (2006); Lang and Lang (1966) recognise the mass media as potent institutions that direct public attention to specific issues. By crafting particular images of events or objects, the media effectively shape what people should think about, understand, and feel regarding these issues.

The theory was empirically validated by McCombs and Shaw (1972) in their study of the 1968 American presidential election, which provided strong support for the agenda-setting hypothesis. The core assertion of the theory is that when a story is covered frequently and prominently by the media, it is perceived by the audience as more significant. This idea is further supported by Griffin's analysis of the Washington Post's coverage of the Watergate scandal. Despite the story's initial perception as minor, the newspaper's emphasis and ongoing coverage brought it to the forefront of public attention. Griffin (2000) notes that with television's persistent coverage of the Senate hearings on the matter, nearly all adults in the U.S. became aware of the Watergate scandal. Consequently, the President was compelled to resign, as a majority of U.S. citizens and their representatives deemed his actions scandalous. This process demonstrates how even seemingly insignificant issues can be elevated to prominent national concerns through sustained media attention (Suraj, 2014).

The salience of issues presented in news content plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions about what is considered most important. This process involves examining how the media emphasis on certain topics influences public opinion and understanding of those issues. The way in which members of the public frame and interpret various issues, events, and personalities is central to the news agenda and its daily focus. In this context, the media not only highlights specific stories but also guides the public attention and interpretation of these stories. As such, the media's portrayal of issues, such as the conflict between herders and farmers, can significantly affect how the public perceives and understands these conflicts. The manner in which the media presents these conflicts through selection, emphasis, and framing can thereby have a profound implication on the public understanding, views and reactions to the situation.

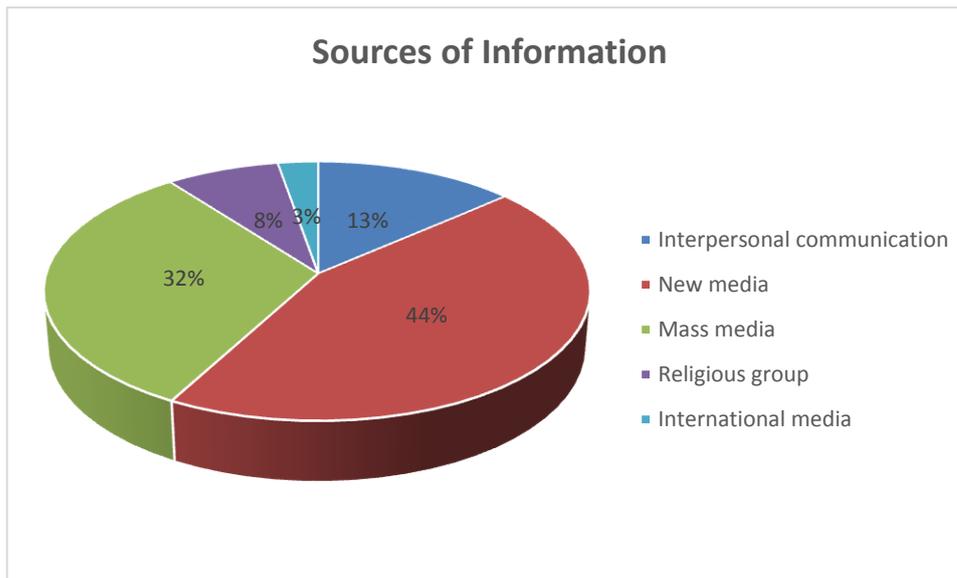
1. What were the sources of information about herders' attacks on small scale farmers in Oke Ogun, Oyo state?
2. How objective are the media about the herders' attacks on the small scale farmers in Oke Ogun, Oyo state?

3. To what extent have the information sources helped the people to get adequate information about the herders’ attacks on the small scale farmers in Oke Ogun,?

FINDINGS

Research question one: What were the sources of information about herders’ attacks on peasant farmers in Oke Ogun, Oyo State?

Figure 1: Main Sources Of Information On The Herders Attacks On Peasant Farmers In Oke-Ogun, Oyo state

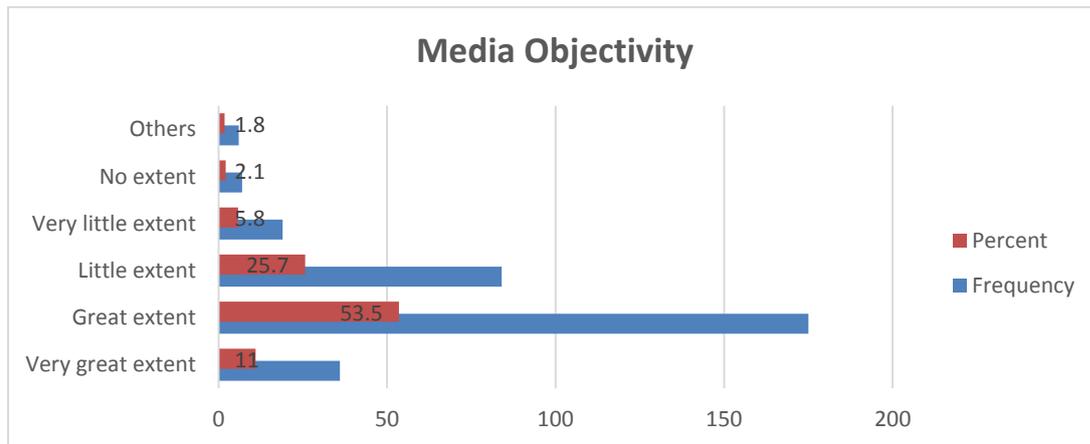


The findings in the figure one revealed that majority of the respondents received information about herder-farmers’ attacks through new media. For instance, 44.3% got to know about the attacks through the social media, followed by mass media 31.8%, interpersonal communication, 13.5%; religious group, 2.1% and international media, 7%. Therefore the way these platforms present the various occurrences of attacks can go a long to determine the understanding of the people about either the herders or the farmers.

Getting such information from diverse sources can enhance the understanding of the people. This finds correlation in the position of Owoyemi (2024) that sources of stories no doubt influences the perception and understanding of the media audience and determines the kind of attention directed to stories. This finding is capped up in the words of Ace (2024) that new media are effective on the matter of immediacy by providing breaking news, especially on security issues, but added that their limitations have necessitated the intervention of the mainstream/conventional media (Ace, 2024).

Research question two: How objective are the media about the herders’ attacks on peasant farmers in Oke Ogun, Oyo State?

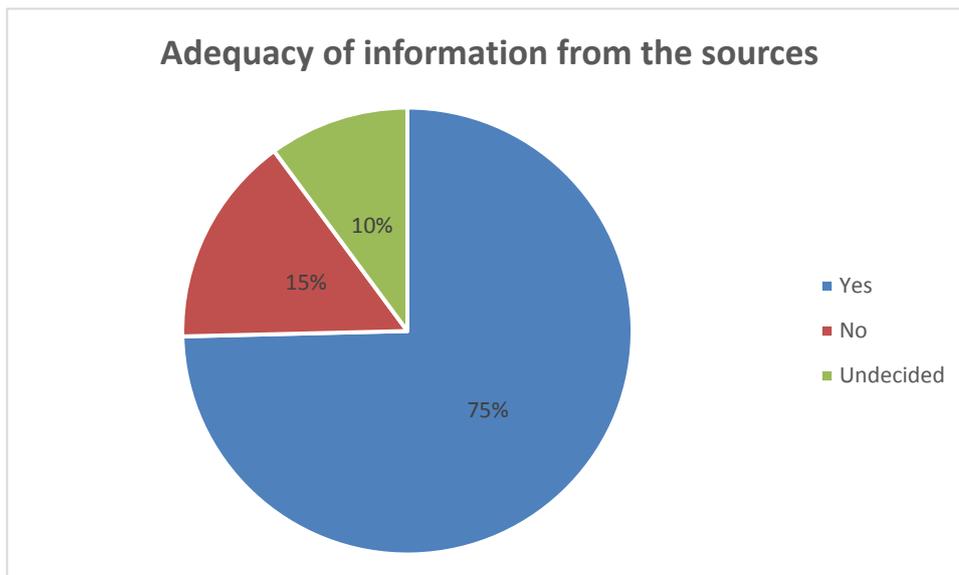
Figure 2: Perception of objectivity in the reportage of the herders’ attacks on peasant farmers in Oke-Ogun, Oyo State



report of the findings as indicated in the figure shows that the media reportage of the herders’ attacks on peasant farmer was perceived to be objective enough by the respondents. Where the level objectivity is achieved in media reportage of issues of conflict, the media can help to contribute to the management of the conflict. This is to stress the fact the professionalism should be the main influencer of the media professionals in their reportage of national issues (Adegbola & Gearhart, 2019; Odiegwe, *et al.*, 2020, woako, 2024 & Owoyemi 2024),

Research question three: To what extent have the information sources helped the people to get adequate information about the herders’ attacks on the peasant farmers in OkeOgun, Oyo state?

Figure 3: Whether the sources of information about the herders’ attacks on peasant farmers in Oke-Ogun have helped the people to get adequate information about the attack



As indicated in the figure three above, the presentation of the herders-farmers conflict has greatly affected the perception of members of public. Getting adequate information about any matter has often helped the members of the public to arm themselves with the

information necessary for decision making in any case (Suraj, 2013; Tobeckukwu, 2021; Owoyemi, 2024 & Abdulahi, 2024).

DISCUSSION

Findings from this study indicated that the majority of respondents received information about herder-farmer attacks primarily through new media. The interactive nature and immediacy of social media platforms make the information sharing through them particularly significant. The new media encompasses a wide array of tools, including the Internet, mobile phones, and social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, Telegram, and Instagram. It also includes social networks such as blogs, microblogs, and video-sharing sites. The term “new media” broadly refers to various digital platforms used for diverse purposes. In this context, the new media emerged as the primary channel through which information about herder attacks on peasant farmers in Oke-Ogun, Oyo state, was disseminated to the people in Oyo state, including security agencies and other relevant stakeholders. Traditional mass media such as radio, television, newspaper and magazine and interpersonal communication also played a role, especially in verifying the information circulated via new media. The interactive nature of new media enhances prompt responses from those concerned, supporting the academic consensus that digital media has significantly shaped youth identities, both individually and socially. It should be noted however that, while new/social media are effective for breaking news on security issues, their limitations has necessitated the intervention of the mainstream/conventional media (Ace, 2024). As the mainstream media closely follow up on the new media as the primary information sources, supplemented by other channels, the available information sources about the attacks can be considered sufficient, particularly for timely security interventions.

This underscores the growing consensus in media studies that digital media profoundly shape the individual and social identities of people, most especially the youth. With the widespread ownership of smartphones, young people increasingly engage with online spaces for entertainment, self-expression, socialisation, information, learning, community building and many other activities. These activities can be seen as performative aspects of identity, where the self is constructed through mediated interactions. Over the past decade, the relationship between media use and identity has become increasingly influenced by the market-driven logic of massive platforms like Google, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Telegram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok. These corporations do not create or own most of the content they distribute but instead rely on ordinary users to produce content that feeds a data-driven, privacy-invasive, and commercialized environment. The rise of the digital influencer model and its associated business practices has significantly impacted youth culture online, including how young people present themselves on social media.

The study also found that the media were perceived to have performed well in maintaining professionalism, accuracy, and impartiality in reporting the conflict between herders and peasant farmers in Oke-Ogun, Oyo state, Nigeria. Respondents generally perceived that the media coverage and presentation of the conflict was sufficiently objective. When objectivity, professionalism, accuracy, fairness and impartiality are upheld in reporting conflicts, the media can effectively shape public opinion and contribute to conflict management. Thus, by providing timely, factual, analytical, and objective information, the news media adhered to universal professional standards and played a crucial role in supporting a healthy, functioning society (Hawkins, 2024). Citing Hawkins, Owoyemi (2024) argues that a free press is crucial to maintaining a healthy society at all

times, emphasizing that the news media must stay focused daily. The potential of the media as a powerful force for change lies in its ability to serve as a watchdog, gatekeeper, and agenda-setter. By raising public awareness of social issues, enabling citizens to hold governments accountable, curbing corruption, and creating a civic forum for debate, the media can significantly improve governance.

The study further revealed that the way the herders-farmers conflict was presented in the media had significantly influenced the public perception about the conflict. According to Amenaghawon and Owoyemi (2024), having sufficient information on any issue will help equip members of the public with the information necessary to make informed decisions especially in conflict situation. It can thus be said that the media have begun to play a crucial role in strengthening democratic processes, particularly in conflict situations. The authors also note that the use of quick and instance messages has helped to avert violent conflicts in some instances.

The role of mainstream media in conflict situations is significantly augmented by the use of new media, which serve both as a source of information and as a conduit for public expression. By tracking social media conversations, monitoring citizen journalism, and developing their own new media platforms such as blogs and micro-blogs on official sites, traditional media have enhanced their investigative capabilities, making them faster, more diverse, and more interactive. Additionally, social media have been extensively employed to track hate speech and monitor online activity that could lead to or indicate violence. They have also been instrumental in mapping ongoing conflicts, including election-related disputes, ethno-religious tensions, and, more recently, conflicts between pastoralists and peasant farmers.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that new media platforms played a pivotal role in providing immediate, first-hand information regarding the herder-farmer conflicts in the Oke-Ogun region of Oyo State. Platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, Telegram, and Instagram were actively utilized by both the public and media members to access and disseminate information swiftly. These new media sources were further complemented by traditional mainstream media such as radio, television, newspapers, and magazines, which served to reinforce and verify the information, thereby enhancing the overall dissemination process. By adhering to the professional ethics of journalism with emphasis on objectivity, fairness, and timeliness, these media sources collectively ensured that the audience received comprehensive and reliable information. This multifaceted approach not only kept the public well-informed but also significantly enhanced their understanding of the ongoing conflict.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- (i) that new media platforms, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, and TikTok, be officially recognized and integrated as vital components of modern communication channels. Given the significant role these platforms play in information dissemination, it is crucial that users of social media adopt a professional approach when presenting information.
- (ii) Furthermore, to mitigate the risks associated with the spread of misinformation and fake news, it is strongly advised that users employ fact-checking tools and practices. This will ensure the credibility of the information shared and help

maintain the integrity of these platforms as reliable sources of news and communication.

- (iii) The crop farmers and the pastoralists should find more amicable ways of addressing the issues that often lead to violent attacks, while host communities should create more inclusive, accommodating and peaceful platforms for addressing the disputes. Additionally, government and security agencies should enhance their response mechanisms to address and mitigate the deadly conflicts. Strengthening law enforcement and supporting local conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms are also recommended.

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