

## The Perceived Economic and Wellbeing Effects of Herdsmen Attacks among Internally Displaced Persons in Benue State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*This study sought to assess the economic and wellbeing effects of Herdsmen attacks among Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Benue State, Nigeria. Six hundred and twenty-nine (male=305; female 324) internally displaced persons were used as sample. Their age range was between 18 and 65 years respectively with a mean age of 37.5. Instruments used for data collection were a 16-item questionnaire to assess the economic effects of herdsmen attacks on IDPs developed by the author and the Impact of Event Scale – Revised adopted to measure the effects of the herdsmen attacks on the wellbeing of IDPs in Benue State, Nigeria. The IES-R is a short set of 15 questions that can measure the amount of distress that you associate with a specific event with an internal consistency of alpha = .96. Data analysis involved the use of multiple regressions and Chi-square. The study revealed that victims of herdsmen attacks had lost livelihood sources, suffered economic hardship and become poorer due to the effect of these attacks on trading activities, farmlands and farm produce; they also suffered from anger, irritability, insomnia and constant reminders of the event. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the Government should provide seedlings and financial support to victims to restart livelihood activities as well as counseling services.*

**Keywords:** Economic Effects, Wellbeing, Herdsmen, Nigeria.

### Introduction

Insurgency has become a threat to global peace and security in the 21st century due to the fact that it constitutes the highest contributor to humanitarian crises in the form of rise in human casualties, internally displaced persons, refugee debacles, food insecurity and the spread of various diseases (van Creveld, 1996). Stewart (2004) states that people who are killed or flee, can no longer work productively; schools, power stations and/or roads that are destroyed reduce the productive capacity of the economy.

### Herdsmen

Herdsmen or Fulani Herdsmen as popularly called or Fulani pastoralists are nomadic or semi-nomadic whose primary occupation is raising livestock. The herdsmen are found in countries such as Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, Guinea, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Cameroon (Iro, 1994).

The incursion by Fulani herdsmen is the second greatest security challenge confronting Nigeria as noted by Edieya (2019) stating that the worst affected states include Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Taraba, Kaduna, Adamawa, Zamfara, Oyo, Imo, CrossRiver and Enugu. The attacks by the herdsmen on the sedentary communities have been increasing with each passing day (Akevi, 2014).

Much of the very violent and heavy casualty communal conflicts triggered by Fulani Herdsmen occur in the Middle-Belt of Nigeria in general and Benue State in particular (Nte, 2016). In the case of Benue State there have been highly devastating conflicts that have claimed so much lives and properties engendered by Fulani Herdsmen in communities of local government areas such as Agatu, Guma, Gwer West, Makurdi, Kwande, Katsina-Ala and Logo (Nte, 2016).

In the same study, Nte (2016) also noted that the communal conflicts orchestrated by Fulani herdsmen in Benue State had claimed the lives of

more than 5000 victims in the first half of year 2014; the victims include women and children and they sacked more than 100 communities and have thrown thousands of refugees into Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps located Makurdi.

In view of the frequency and magnitude of herdsmen attacks in different states in Nigeria including Benue state and the impact it has had on the communities within Benue and the state as a whole, the researcher is set to assess the economic and wellbeing effects of these attacks on the persons living in IDP camps in Benue State, Nigeria.

### **Economic effects**

The economic impact of terrorist activities can be varied. There are many direct losses, such as loss of lives and properties. Terrorist attacks can also destroy infrastructures and businesses (Gaibullov & Sandler, 2009). Further, there is the long-term impact of investing in projects designed to counter terror activities (Hussain & Sarma, 2016). Ajibefun (2018) noted that the number of Fulani Herdsmen attack and deaths recorded have negative effect on Benue farmers output and the economic effects of the conflict resulting to reduction in crop yield and income of the Benue farmers; displacement of farmers, loss of lives and properties, loss of products in storage, scarcity of agricultural products, and destruction of public and private facilities including houses.

### **Wellbeing**

Well-being, wellbeing, or wellness is the condition of an individual or group. A high level of well-being means that in some sense the individual's or group's condition is positive. According to Naci and Ioannidis (2015) "Wellness refers to diverse and interconnected dimensions of physical, mental, and social well-being that extend beyond the traditional definition of health. It includes choices and activities aimed at achieving physical vitality, mental alacrity, social satisfaction, a sense of accomplishment, and personal fulfillment.

A group of studies based on improved methodologies examined the symptoms of stress that appeared after a bomb attack. In these studies, a sample population was asked to reply to five questions: (1) Feeling very upset when something reminds you of what happened? (2)

repeated, disturbing memories, thoughts, or dreams about what happened? (3) Having difficulty concentrating? (4) Trouble falling or staying asleep? (5) Feeling irritable or having angry outbursts? Each participant evaluated their experience by choosing from a scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely). If the participant chose 4 (quite a bit) or 5 for any question, he/she was deemed to be suffering from substantial stress. On this basis, Schuster et al. (2001) found that 44% of a nation-wide sample of the population of the USA were affected by substantial stress during the five days following the 11 September 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks. Vázquez et al. (2006) recorded substantial stress in 59.2% of the population of Madrid during the three to four weeks following the 11 March 2004 (3/11) attacks, and Rubin, et al (2005) found that 31% of a London sample experienced substantial stress 11 to 13 days after the bombings on 7 July 2005 (7/7).

### **Hypotheses**

1. The Herdsmen attacks will have significant economic effects on victims in Benue State, Nigeria.
2. Herdsmen attacks will negatively affect the wellbeing of victims of these attacks in Benue State, Nigeria.

### **Method**

Descriptive research design was used for the study to enable the researcher adequately assess the effects of herdsmen attacks on the economic lives and wellbeing of persons living in IDP camps.

### **Sample**

The entire internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in IDP camp in Benue State constitute the population of the study. Stratified random sampling method was utilized to select 629 (male= 305; female= 324) from Daudu IDP camp 1, 2 and 3 in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. This LGA is the boundary between the Benue State Capital City and Nasarawa State of Nigeria. The age range of respondents was between 18 and 65 years.

### **Instruments**

Two standardized instruments were used to collect data:

1. The researcher designed a questionnaire to measure the economic effects of herdsmen attacks on victims. The questionnaire consists of 16 items rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). High scores on this scale indicate high level of impact while low scores indicate low impact.

## 2. Impact of Event Scale - Revised (IES - R)

The IES is a short set of 22 questions that can measure the amount of distress that you associate with a specific event associated with the wellbeing of the victim. Initially developed in 1979 by Horowitz, Wilner, and Alvarez (with 15 questions) the test is often useful in measuring the impact that you experience following a traumatic event. In 1997, Weiss and Marmar chose to revise the scale by adding seven additional questions to measure another dimension of people's reaction to intense stress events. Both versions have been found to be valid and reliable. Creamer, et al

(2003) found the internal consistency to be high ( $\alpha = .96$ ).

## Procedure

Data was collected from participants at three different Internally Displaced Persons Camps in Benue State Nigeria using both questionnaire (The economic effects of herdsmen attacks and the IES)

## Results and discussion

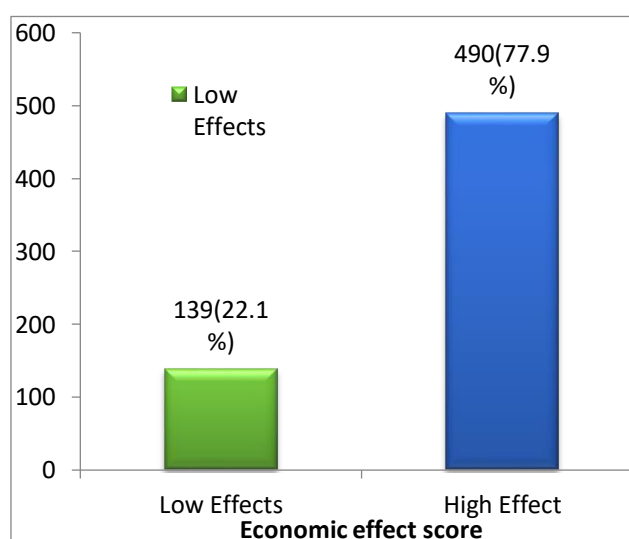
Data for this study was analyzed using simple percentages for demographic characteristics of participants, multiple regressions and chi square to analyze the objectives outcomes.

**Hypothesis 1:** The Herdsmen attacks will have significant economic effects on victims in Benue State, Nigeria. This was tested using the Economic effects of herdsmen attacks questionnaire and results are shown in the table below:

**Table 1.** Analysis of the economic effects of herdsmen attacks on the lives of victims in benue state, nigeria

Variables	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Unsure (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
My family and I were affected by this attack	1 (0.2)	0 (0.0)	13 (2.1)	416 (66.1)	199 (31.6)
Attacks affected trading activities	0 (0.0)	1 (0.2)	3 (0.5)	231 (36.7)	394 (62.6)
Attacks have increased the rate of unemployment	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	401 (63.8)	228 (36.2)
Attacks have affected farmlands and with reduced farm produce	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	14 (2.20)	268 (42.6)	347 (55.2)
Attacks have affected my savings negatively.	0 (0.0)	8 (1.3)	17 (2.7)	420 (66.8)	184 (29.3)
Attacks have prevented me from returning back to the source of my livelihood.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	31 (4.9)	464 (73.8)	134 (21.3)
It is pretty difficult getting my business back to normal	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	14 (2.2)	491 (78.1)	124 (19.7)
It is pretty difficult getting my farm back to normal	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	21 (3.3)	335 (53.3)	273 (43.4)

These attacks do not affect me in anyway	370 (58.8)	123 (19.6)	11 (1.7)	29 (4.6)	96 (15.3)
These attacks have no effect on my livelihood and not affected my savings negatively.	273 (43.4)	255 (40.5)	17 (2.7)	70 (11.1)	14 (2.2)
I go on with my daily business normally irrespective of the heard men attacks.	179 (28.5)	340 (54.1)	28 (4.5)	26 (4.1)	56 (8.9)
I do not record much losses due to this attack	249 (39.6)	275 (43.7)	63 (10.0)	28 (4.5)	14 (2.2)
It is pretty difficult returning to my source of livelihood.	17 (2.7)	196 (31.2)	38 (6.0)	305 (48.5)	73 (11.6)
I rather describe my economic state after this attack as relatively poor	80 (12.7)	19 (3.0)	25 (4.0)	362 (57.6)	143 (22.7)
I have enough savings to establish another business (this includes seedlings for farming)	13 (2.1)	85 (13.5)	17 (2.7)	275 (43.7)	239 (38.0)



**Figure 1.** Overall grading of economic effects of herdsmen attacks on victims

The results indicated in table 1 show how the herdsmen attacks have negatively affected the lives of victims economically. About 97.7% of victims agreed that the attacks have affected their families and 99.3% alluded to the fact that the attacks affected trading activities. While 97.8%

agreed that the attacks affected their farmlands and farm produce, 97.8% mentioned that it was difficult to get their businesses back to normal after the attacks. It was significant to also note that about 80.3% of participants described their economic status as “poor” with 81.7% suggested

they had no savings (including seedlings) to establish another business. On the whole, 490 (77.9) of the participants described the high effects of these attacks on economic activities with 139 (22.1) describing it as low.

The results showed that the herdsmen attack significantly affected the economic lives of the victims. These attacks destroyed communities, properties, human lives, farmlands, livestock and by default, sources of livelihoods. The hypothesis therefore, proves to be accepted due to the overwhelming evidence from these results. Herdsmen attacks have affected families by throwing them out of their communities, trading activities and increased the rate of unemployment within the affected communities. Victims have lost savings (as most of them use the traditional

way of saving either at home or through community-based savings groups or through livestock and grains), farmlands, livestock and other enterprises. Most of the victims as indicated in this study, have become poorer at the instance of these attacks.

These findings have empirical backing from the study conducted by Ajibefun (2018) whose study found that, the number of Fulani Herdsmen attack and deaths recorded have negative effect on Benue farmers output in the study area and the socioeconomic effects of the conflict resulting to reduction in crop yield and income of the Benue farmers; displacement of farmers, loss of lives and properties, loss of products in storage and destruction of public and private facilities.

**Table 2.** Association between economic effects of attacks on respondents and their socio-demographic characteristics

Social variables	Economic effects of attack		Total	$\chi^2$	Df	$\rho$
	High (%)	Low (%)				
<b>Age groups (Years)</b>				3.199	5	0.669
< 20	3 (23.1)	10 (76.9)	13			
20 – 29	40 (26.8)	109 (73.2)	149			
30 – 39	46 (19.7)	188 (90.3)	234			
40 – 49	27 (23.1)	90 (76.9)	117			
50 – 59	21 (20.00)	84 (80.0)	105			
≥ 60	2 (18.2)	9 (81.8)	11			
<b>Gender</b>				4.806	1	<b>0.028</b>
Male	56 (18.4)	249 (81.6)	305			
Female	83 (25.6)	241 (74.4)	324			
<b>Marital status</b>				10.112	4	<b>0.039</b>
Single	31 (25.4)	91 (74.6)	122			
Married	74 (18.7)	322 (81.3)	396			
Divorced	3 (50.0)	3 (50.0)	6			
Separated	6 (24.00)	19 (76.0)	25			
Widowed	25 (31.3)	55 (68.8)	80			
<b>Level of education</b>				9.055	2	<b>0.011</b>
No formal education	35 (21.2)	130 (78.8)	165			
Primary/ Secondary	86 (20.5)	333 (79.5)	419			
Tertiary	18 (40.0)	27 (60.0)	45			

As seen in table 2, the study found out that although there was no significant relationship between the age of participants and the economic

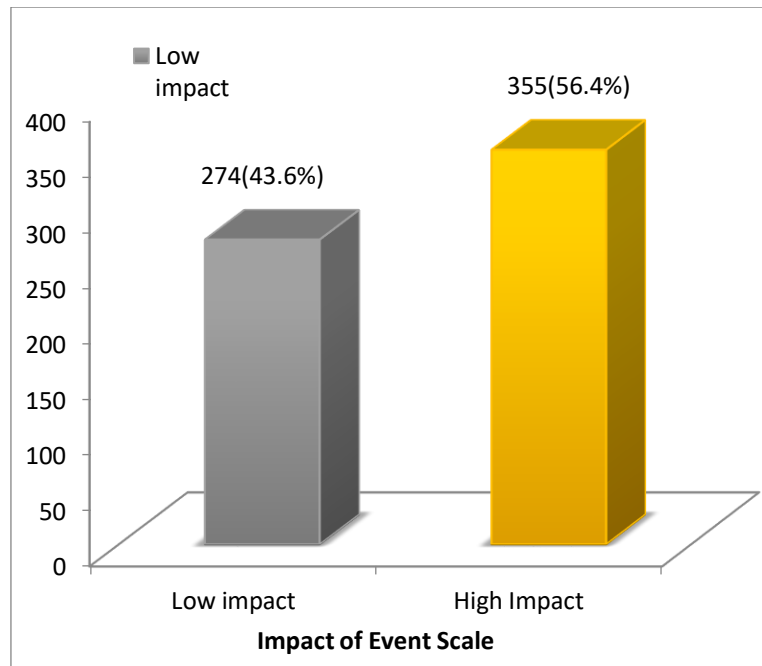
effects of the herdsmen attacks ( $p>0.05$ ), relationships could be found between gender of

participants and the economic effects of the attacks ( $p<0.05$ ), marital status and economic effects ( $p<0.05$ ) and the level of education of participants and economic effects of these attacks ( $p<0.05$ ).

**Hypothesis 2:** Herdsmen attacks will negatively affect the wellbeing of victims of these attacks in Benue State, Nigeria. This was tested using the IES and results are presented below.

**Table 3.** Impact of Event Scale –showing the impact the herdsmen attacks have had on the wellbeing of victims in Benue State, Nigeria

Item	Not at all (%)	Little bit (%)	Moderately (%)	Quite a bit (%)	Extremely (%)
Reminder brought back feelings about it	0 (0.0)	15 (2.4)	49 (7.8)	391 (62.2)	174 (27.7)
Trouble staying asleep	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	17 (2.7)	480 (76.3)	132 (21.0)
Things kept making me think about it	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	30 (4.8)	380 (60.4)	219 (34.8)
Felt irritable and angry	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	19 (3.0)	405 (64.4)	205 (32.6)
I avoided letting myself get upset when I thought about it or was reminded of it	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	26 (4.1)	328 (52.1)	275 (43.7)
Thought about it when I didn't mean to	0 (0.0)	2 (0.3)	38 (6.0)	298 (47.4)	291 (46.3)
Felt as if it hadn't happened or wasn't real	8 (1.3)	2 (0.3)	29 (4.60)	352 (56.0)	238 (37.8)
Stayed away from reminders about it	0 (0.0)	3 (0.5)	33 (5.2)	422 (67.1)	171 (27.2)
Pictures about it popped into my mind	0 (0.0)	2 (0.3)	25 (4.0)	247 (39.3)	255 (56.4)
I was jumpy and easily startled	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	17 (2.7)	380 (60.4)	323 (36.9)
Tried not to think about it	0 (0.0)	17 (2.7)	102 (16.2)	249 (39.6)	261 (41.5)
Still had a lot of feelings about it, but I didn't deal with them	15 (2.4)	6 (1.0)	130 920.70	395 (62.8)	83 (13.2)
My feelings about it were kind of numb	0 (0.0)	15 (2.4)	185 (29.4)	284 (45.2)	145 (23.1)
I found myself acting or feeling like I was back at that time	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	196 (31.2)	261 (41.5)	172 (27.3)



**Figure 2.** Overall analysis of the impact of events of herdsmen attacks on victims

The results indicated in table 3 suggests that over 80% of participants had reminders about the event and 97.3% of them had trouble staying asleep due to reminders of these attacks. The results also indicate that 95.2% always were thinking about it and 97% were angry and always felt irritable. As shown in the table above Reminder brought back feelings about it. About 81.1% of participants reported that they tried not to think about it; 76% had a lot of feelings about the event but could not find a way to deal with them and 68.8% alluded to acting or feeling as though they were back in the time of the attacks. Overall, 274 (43.6%) participants were experiencing low impacts of these attacks while 355 (56.4%) participants had an overwhelmingly high impact of these attacks. On the basis of these results, the hypothesis has been confirmed.

As indicated by the analysis of the impact of events, victims of such attacks experience different emotions and feelings as a result of the event that has occurred in their lives affecting their wellbeing. There are victims who reported they always felt irritable and angry while others had pictures of the attacks popping into their heads unconsciously. The results also showed that while some victims tried not to think about the attacks, others did constantly and had no way of dealing with those thoughts or feelings.

Herdsmen attacks have cause feelings of anger, irritability and sad reminders in the lives of victims. It is difficult to erase such memories from the mind of victims of these attacks and even more difficult to not think about it and the study showed that victims found themselves acting as though they were back in time of the attacks.

The study also proves that victims of these attacks are under a lot of stress as they experience insomnia, have difficulty concentrating on carrying out tasks, and feel angry, upset, irritable and paranoid. The study also shows that these attacks cause physical reactions such as sweating and breathing difficulties in victims.

This result is in agreement with the study by Schuster et al. (2001) who found that 44% of a nation-wide sample of the population of the USA were affected by substantial stress during the five days following the 11 September 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks and Vázquez et al. (2006) who recorded substantial stress in 59.2% of the population of Madrid during the three to four weeks following the 11 March 2004 (3/11) attacks, as well as Rubin, et al (2005) found that 31% of a London sample experienced substantial stress 11 to 13 days after the bombings on 7 July 2005 (7/7).

**Table 4.** Relationship between socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and the social impact of the events

Social variables	Impact of event scale		Total	$\chi^2$	df	$\rho$
	Low impact (%)	High impact (%)				
<b>Age groups (Years)</b>				<b>17.668</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.003</b>
< 20	7 (53.8)	6 (46.2)	13			
20 – 29	55 (36.9)	94 (63.1)	149			
30 – 39	123 (52.6)	111 (47.4)	234			
40 – 49	46 (39.3)	71 (60.7)	117			
50 – 59	42 (40.0)	63 (60.0)	105			
≥ 60	1 (9.1)	10 (90.9)	11			
<b>Gender</b>				0.118	1	0.731
Male	135 (44.3)	170 (55.7)	305			
Female	139 (42.9)	185 (57.1)	324			
<b>Marital status</b>				13.970	4	<b>0.007</b>
Single	60 (49.2)	62 (50.8)	122			
Married	179 (45.2)	217 (54.8)	396			
Divorced	3 (50.0)	3 (50.0)	6			
Separated	3 (12.00)	22 (88.0)	25			
Widowed	29 (36.3)	51 (63.7)	80			
<b>Level of education</b>				6.979	2	<b>0.031</b>
No formal education	86 (52.1)	79 (47.9)	165			
Primary/ Secondary	168 (40.1)	251 (59.9)	419			
Tertiary	20 (44.4)	25 (55.6)	45			

The analysis in table 4 indicates that there was no significant relationship between the gender of participants and the effects of the herdsmen attacks on their wellbeing as analyzed using the Impact of Event Scale ( $p>0.05$ ). However, the herdsmen attacks had a significant effect on the wellbeing of persons due to their age ( $p<0.05$ ), marital status ( $p<0.05$ ) and level of education ( $p<0.05$ ).

## Conclusion

The study has revealed that the menace posed by Fulani herdsmen in Benue State, Nigeria has had various effects on the lives of its victims. It was significant to note that about 80.3% of participants described their economic status as “poor” with 81.7% suggested they had no savings (including seedlings) to establish another business due to the attacks. With 490 (77.9) of the participants describing the high effects of these attacks on economic activities, the study confirms that the herdsmen attack significantly affected the economic lives of the victims.

The study also indicates the wellbeing of victims are also affected by the herdsmen attacks as 355 (56.4%) participants were experiencing anger, insomnia, recurrent thoughts of the

attacks, difficulty in concentrating, trouble with breathing and irritability. This indicates that the victims were under substantial stress as a result of these attacks.

## Recommendation

The study recommends that the State Government should work to provide seedlings and financial support to victims so they can restart livelihood activities and provide counseling sessions and other social activities within the camps to help victims relieve themselves of stress.

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