

# **ETHNOCENTRISM AND GLOBAL IDENTITY AS PREDICTORS OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS HERDSMEN-FARMERS CONFLICT IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA**

## **ABSTRACT**

*The study examined if ethnocentrism and global identity were predictors of attitude (Positive or Negative) towards herdsmen among secondary school students of Nimbo community, Uzo-Uwani Local government Area Enugu state and Awka metropolis, Anambra state Nigeria. Two hundred and thirty-two (232) participants (male 111, 47.8 %) and (female 121, 52.2%) were randomly selected from four secondary schools. Their ages ranged from 14-18 ( $M = 15.99$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ). Three instruments were used for data collection (Ethnocentrism Scale by Neulip & McCroskey, 2013; Global Identity Scale by Turken & Rudmin 2013 and Attitude towards Herdsmen Scale, 2018 developed in the course of this study. The study was a cross-sectional survey and Pearson correlation design was adopted while regression statistics were used for analysis. The results showed that ethnocentrism and locality were positively and negatively related to attitude towards herdsmen respectively while global identity did not predict attitude towards herdsmen. Based on the findings, the study implicated attitudinal bias and ethnic sentiments which may be localized as a result of experiences and interactions of the group. It is therefore recommended that desensitization programs along ethnic and religious line be encouraged in areas with herdsmen attack experiences and vulnerable areas under perpetual fear of attack in order to reduce ethnic bigotry and hatred capable of inflaming reprisal attack from the community in order to promote peace and cohabitation.*

**Key Words:** Attitude, Ethnocentrism, Herdsmen, Global identity, Insecurity

## **Introduction**

In Nigeria, the struggle for resources may have contributed significantly to herdsmen and crop farmers conflict (Eniola, 2007). According to Marietu and Olanrewaju (2009), herdsmen and crop farmers conflict was predominantly resource/land use related. Pastoralists prefer open-grazing practice to ranching for its cost-effectiveness (Alhassan, 2013). The open grazing practice affords unmitigated access to farmland, which often times lead to the destruction of crops and another farm, while owners of such crops often fightbacks, thereby leading to a chain of conflict. It is pertinent to note that herdsmen

open-grazing practice may be beneficial to an extent. The herdsmen indisputably represent a significant component of the Nigerian economy. They contribute to readily available meat in circulation, the main source of meat, the most available and cheap source of animal proteins consumed by Nigerians (Alhassan, 2013). Given that open-grazing practice requires low financial cost, it may account for the availability of meat at very affordable prices.

In consideration of the level of colossal destruction often recorded during herdsmen and crop farmers conflict in various communities in Nigeria, leaves people with positive and negative feelings towards herdsmen (Alhassan, 2013). Akintude and Musa (2016) have averred that insecurity was a major threat to the survival of Nigerian people and thus, herdsmen and crop farmers' conflict might be a significant contributor to insecurity. With such high scale insecurity, socio-economic activities are disrupted. Some scholars agreed that herdsmen activities were associated with stressful studies, poor school attendance, closure of school, vandalization of school facilities, production of half-baked graduates, non-establishment of new schools, kidnapping and killing of school children, as witnessed in Chibok Community, Borno, Benue and Yobe states, Nigeria (Akintude & Musa, 2016; Alhassan 2013).

Studies by Adisa and Adekunle (2010), Gefu and Kolawale (2014) have shown that serious conflict erupted between herdsmen and crop farmers leading to loss of lives, valuable properties and destruction of vast expanse of arable agricultural farmlands thereby posing serious threat to food security; since farmers, for fear of attack could no longer go to farm and harvest their farm produce. Newspaper coverage of the conflict between farmers and herdsmen in central Tiv land, Benue State, Nigeria, with specific emphasis on text format, frequency, prominence, depth of coverage, the language of reports and audience assessment of this coverage has been endorsed by Gever & Essien (2019). Also, the inability to resolve the 'Settler/Indigene' identity crises and the inherent struggles over resources could be adduced to have brought dangerous dimensions of economic and political elements in herdsmen and crop farmers' conflict (Dimelu et al., 2017). O'Brien and Cretan (2017) reported with participating and non-participating

shepherds to examine the motivations behind the protest action and its relation to their position in contemporary society. According to Marietu and Olanrewaju (2009), food security may be possible when critical risk factors to food supply such as farmers' conflict, drought, shipping disruption, fuel shortages, economic instability, and wars are forestalled. With the current happenings in Nigeria, where farmers in various communities could no longer harvest their agricultural produce pose a real danger to food security in Nigeria.

Herdsmen and crop farmers' conflict in Nigeria, like other parts of West Africa have created serious rifts in human relations with its attendant negative effects (Adisa & Adekunle, 2010). In a multi-ethnic, cultural and religious community like Nigeria, where people live together; crises are inevitable. Such violence often left the people with various forms of retardation and underdevelopment resulting from the destruction of lives, farmland and valuable properties. The menaces of crises have been on the increase in some places in Nigeria, examples: Nimbo Agatu, Benue, Taraba, Kaduna, Zamfara, Yobe etc (Ilufeye, 2009). Most of these conflicts are generally perceived to have deep-rooted ethno-religious bigotry and antagonism though triggered with pastoralists and crop farmers' conflicts. The massive destruction resulting largely from such clashes is uncalled for (Ugbudu, 2017).

Worse-still, the clashes have pitched Christians and Muslims against each other. It has had devastating effects on inter-group relationships especially in those communities where those conflicts have taken place. It has a profound influence on residential relationships, leading to new trends in the polarization of communities. This is evident in a physical manifestation of mono-religious areas in Nasarawa and Benue states, with Christians and Muslims living in dominant religious clusters (Eyekpemi, 2016). Thus, has widened cultural and religious gap thereby increasing the level of suspicion among the people. Such gap has the tendency to perpetuate ethnocentric attitude among the people. Thus, serves as a fertile ground for ethnic crises and community disharmony, with a capacity to influence cognitive development and information processing among the inhabitants (Nwafor, 2014). This is a result of socio-cultural theory postulation that people are the product of their environment (Vygotsky, 1976).

Psychologically, it is instructive to note that persons displaced during the crises may tend to internalize the conflict approach to interpersonal interaction (Vesalon & Crețan, 2012). Hence may deteriorate the interpersonal suspicion. Currently, there are numerous displaced peoples' camps in Nigeria. People in such camps lost their economic activities, social lives, educational and career pursuit. With such quanta of loss, acrimony against the perceived 'cause' tends to increase over time and becomes internalized (Gefu & Kolawale, 2014). The implication is that most people may tend to relate with others especially people from other ethnic group and religious leaning in social spheres with suspicion. As noted by Nwafor (2014), the prevailing environment influences human behaviour. The prevailing circumstance may lead people to either become ethnocentric orientated or global citizen orientated. That is to say that other factor may be responsible for the attitude one may develop in the face of crop farmers and pastoralists' crises. Such a factor may be that the ways people interact with others and the culture they live in shape their mental abilities. Vygotsky (1976) believed that parents, relatives, peers and society all have an important role in forming higher levels of functioning. According to Cole, John-Steiner, Scribner and Souberman (1978), every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level. This means that the skills people learn first are related to interactions with others and they then take that information and use it within themselves.

Ethnocentrism is the act of judging another culture solely by the values and standards of one's own culture (Omohundro, 2008). The judgment is relative to their own ethnic group or culture, especially with concern for language, behaviour, customs, and religion. These ethnic distinctions and sub-divisions serve to define each ethnicity's unique cultural identity (Anderson & Taylor, 2006). According to Sumner (1906), ethnocentrism is the technical name for the view of thing in which one's own group is the centre of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it. He further characterized ethnocentrism as often leading to pride, vanity, beliefs of one's own group's superiority and contempt of outsiders. In addition, Reber and Reber (2001) depicted the term ethnic group as referring to any group of individuals with common cultural traditions and a sense of identity. They asserted that ethnic groups are bound together by characteristics

such as history, language, religion, geography, and tradition. Ethnocentrism can be assumed as an inevitable consequence of social identification manifested through in-group favouritism or out-group derogation. It is in part, this differentiation from out-groups through the formulation of stereotypes and attributions that leads to discrimination and prejudice, which, increases an in-group member's positive social identity (LeVine & Campbell, 1972). It is the view of this paper that one's belief about his culture and ethnic affiliation may positively or negatively predict people attitude towards herdsmen.

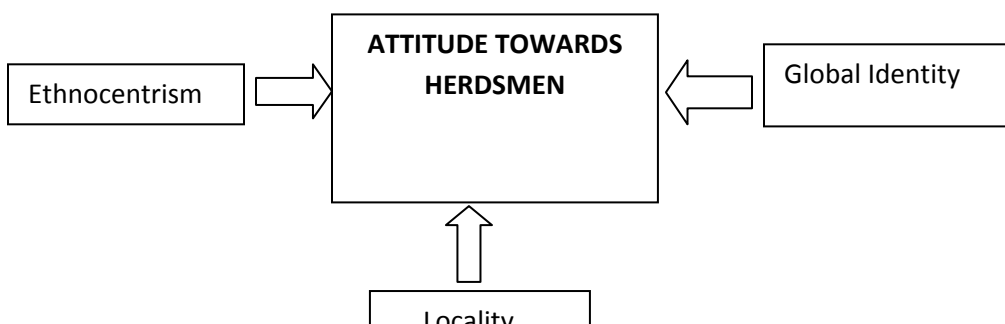
In the same vein, global identity was probed to ascertain its' predictive roles in attitude (positive or negative) towards herdsmen. Global identity entails the notion that one's identity transcends geography or political borders and that responsibilities or rights are derived from membership in a broader class. This does not mean that such a person denounces his/her nationality or other, more local identities, but such identities are given second place to their membership in the global community (Israel, 2012). In general usage, the term may have the same meaning as world citizen or cosmopolitan. Studies of the psychological roots of global citizenship have found that persons high in global citizenship are also high on the personality traits of openness to experience and agreeableness from Big Five Personality traits and high in empathy and caring (McFarland & Brown, 2012). They further found that those who are high in global human identification are less prejudiced towards many groups, care more about international human rights, worldwide inequality, global poverty and human suffering (McFarland & Brown, 2012). Although, other variables may be determinant of attitude (positive or negative) towards herdsmen practice in Nigeria, ethnocentrism and global identity may be important in its understanding.

In summation of factors enumerated, may have contributed to people's attitude regarding herdsmen. It is assumed that the types of attitude people have about the herdsmen may determine how they relate with them. This is in tandem with socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1976), which postulated that the ways people interact with others and the culture they live in shape their information processing abilities. It further maintained that parents, relatives, peers and society all have an important role in forming higher-order functioning. Vygotsky (1976) provided the foundation for the application of socio-

cultural learning theory. This important theory underscored the dynamic interdependence between the social and individual processes in learning. Vygotsky's work emphasized 3 major themes. First, he contended that cognitive development, including higher-order learning, is rooted in social interactions and mediated by abstract symbols, which he referred to as tools. Second, Vygotsky asserted that these tools are not created in isolation but rather are products of the socio-cultural evolution of an actively involved individual. Third, Vygotsky viewed learning as a developmental or genetic process. This general genetic law of cultural development emphasized the importance of concentrating on the process by which higher functioning is established. It is in this purview that the researchers want to probe the role of ethnocentrism and global identity on attitude towards herdsmen activities.

Furthermore, in support of the study, some work attempted to establish a relationship between ethnocentrism and global identity on attitude towards in-group and out-group relationship. This theoretical assumption was supported by the result of Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, (1999) in adult studies, have found that group identification moderates group-level responses. However, it should be noted that group identification had no independent effect on in-group favouritism. This could be a result of the pictorial measure used, which tends to capture the more cognitive dimension of in-group ties (Cameron, 2004). This dimension may be less important for intergroup differentiation (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin- Volpe, 2004). In addition, other studies on adults (for a review, see Hinkle & Brown, 1990), as well as on children, have found that preference for one's group may be unrelated to group identification and even may antecede self-identification as a group member (Lambert & Klineberg, 1967). Bennett, Sani, Lyons, and Barrett (1998), for example, asked children who failed to identify themselves as members of their national group to make evaluative judgments about nationalities, including their own. National identification was not found to be a necessary precondition for in-group favouritism.

### Conceptual model



## **PROBLEM STATEMENT OF THE STUDY**

Herdsman menace in Nigeria seems to be on the increase. Not only has it negatively affected the social economic lives of the locales but has also led to suspicion and degeneration of inter-ethnic, religious and group relationship in the country. The widespread numbers of internally displaced camps in various communities may likely be affecting the cognitive, economic, socio-emotional development and every other critical factor of human capital development of the victims and members of the affected communities.

Consequently, the crises **may also affect the attitude of** the people towards herdsmen. It is also pertinent to probe the predictive roles of ethnocentrism (the tendency to judge another culture solely by the values and standards of one's own culture) and global identity (entails the notion that one's identity transcends geography or political borders and that responsibilities or rights are derived from membership in a broader class) and locality (place of residence, where Fulani herdsmen attacks have been experienced or not) on herdsmen menace. This work will contribute to the enhancement in instilling accommodating skills and attitude among different nationalities in Nigeria. This work ultimately will help in preventing/reducing inter-ethnic hostilities in Nigeria.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- Will ethnocentrism be a significant predictor of negative attitude towards herdsmen among adolescents in Nimbo community Uzo-Uwani local government area, Enugu state and Awka metropolis Anambra state, Nigeria?
- Will global identity be a significant predictor of a positive attitude towards herdsmen among adolescents in Nimbo community Uzo-Uwani local government area, Enugu state and Awka metropolis Anambra state, Nigeria?
- Will locality be a significant predictor of attitude towards herdsmen among adolescents of Nimbo community Uzo-Uwani local government area, Enugu state and Awka metropolis Anambra state, Nigeria?



## **HYPOTHESES**

- (1) Ethnocentrism will significantly predict attitude (Negative) towards herdsmen among adolescents in Nimbo community Uzo-Uwani local government area, Enugu state and Awka metropolis **Anambra state, Nigeria.**
- (2) Global identity will significantly predict attitude (Positive) towards herdsmen among adolescents in Nimbo community Uzo-Uwani local government area, Enugu state and Awka metropolis **Anambra state, Nigeria**
- (3) Locality will significantly predict attitude towards herdsmen among adolescents of Nimbo community Uzo-Uwani local government area, Enugu state and Awka metropolis Anambra state, Nigeria

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

A total of two hundred **and thirty-two (232) adolescents or students were randomly** drawn from Nimbo community, Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area, Enugu State and Awka metropolis, Anambra State. They consist of one hundred and eleven male (111, 47.8%) and one hundred **and twenty-one female** (121, 52.2%). Their age ranges from 14 - 18 ( $M = 15.99$ ,  $SD = 1.1$ ). Participants were randomly selected from four secondary schools and only those in classes four, five and six who gave their consent participated in the study.

### **Instruments**

**Ethnocentrism Scale** - This was developed by Neuliep & McCroskey (2013). It has a total **of twenty-two items** (22). However, fifteen items (15) were used during the scoring and the other seven were discarded. Also, three items were reversed during scoring. It was completed in likert response pattern where 1- Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree and 5-Strongly Agree. The developers reported Cronbach Alpha .90, however, for the present study the Cronbach Alpha of .85 was obtained.



**Global Identity Scale** - This was developed by Turken & Rudmin (2013). It consists of ten (10) items with six-point likert response pattern. 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Slightly Disagree, 4-Slightly Agree, 5-Agree, 6-Strongly Agree. The developers reported Cronbach Alpha .85. But Nwafor, Obi-Nwosu, Atalor & Okoye (2016) found a Cronbach Alpha of .84 among Nigeria sample.

**Attitude Towards Herdsmen Scale** - This was developed in the course of the study. It contains ten items, which are scored in five-point likert pattern: 1- Strongly Agree, 2-Agree, 3-Neutral, 4-Disagree, 5- Strongly Disagree.

**Design/Statistics** - It is a cross-sectional and predictive study and regression analysis statistics was used.

## RESULTS

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics showing Frequency distribution of age and gender

S/NO	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	15.9	1.1
Gender	1.5	.50

Frequency distribution of the mean and standard deviation of age and gender of participants in the study

<i>S/NO</i>	<i>B</i>
Locality	-.23**
Global Identity	-.09
Ethnocentrism	.14**
R Square	.09

Table 2: Regression results showed that attitude towards herdsmen overall  $R^2 = .09$ , implying that predictor variables contributed to 9 % of criterion variable,  $F, (7,600)$ . The  $\beta$  coefficient.

Regression result of locality (Nimbo & Awka), global identity and ethnocentrism as predictors of attitude towards herdsmen menace in Nigeria were significant for locality,  $\beta = -0.23 P < 0.001$ ; Ethnocentrism  $\beta = 0.14 P < 0.001$ . However, Global identity was not significant  $\beta = 0.09 P > 0.05$ .

#### Summary of the result

1. Locality significantly and negatively predicted attitude towards herdsmen.
2. Global identity did not predict attitude towards herdsmen.
3. Ethnocentrism significantly positively predicted attitude towards herdsman

#### DISCUSSION

This study examined the predictive roles of locality, global identity and ethnocentrism on attitude towards herdsmen. Generally, locality and ethnocentrism predicted attitude towards herdsmen however, global identity did not predict attitude towards herdsmen. Between the two interval variables locality and ethnocentrism; locality has a stronger beta value attitude towards herdsmen. Specifically, the hypothesis one which stated that ethnocentrism will significantly predict attitude (Negative) towards herdsmen among adolescents in Nimbo community Uzo-Uwani local government area, Enugu state and Awka metropolis Anambra state, Nigeria accepted.

Hypothesis two which stated that Global identity will significantly predict attitude (Positive) towards herdsmen among adolescents in Nimbo community Uzo-Uwani local government area, Enugu state and Awka metropolis Anambra state, Nigeria, rejected. The third hypothesis which stated that Locality will significantly predict attitude towards

herdsmen among adolescents of Nimbo community Uzo-Uwani local government area, Enugu state and Awka metropolis Anambra state, Nigeria accepted.

### **The implication of the finding**

The findings of the study implied that adolescents' locality has a strong relationship with their attitude towards herdsmen in Nimbo community, Uzo-Uwani and Awka metropolis. It also showed that ethnocentrism has a significant relationship with also attitude towards herdsmen in Nigeria. However, the results showed that global identity did not have any predictive role in adolescents' towards herdsmen menace. Theoretically, the study despite the fact that some past studies (Adisa & Adekunle, 2010; Akintude & Musa, 2016; Alhassan, 2013; Dimelu, Salifu, Enwelu & Igbokwe 2017; Eniola, 2007; Eyekpemi, 2016; Gefu & Kolawale, 2014; Ilufoye, 2009 & Marietu & Olanrewaju, 2009) have explained the devastation of attitude towards herdsmen, this study has also added to the body of knowledge on that construct and to the best of researcher's knowledge the first empirical study in Nigeria. Also, this study is the first to be done in two localities Nimbo community, Uzo-Uwani and Awka samples to the best of researcher's knowledge.

### **Limitation of the study**

The limitation of this study was the use of predictive correlation design instead of an approach that will enable the researcher to know other variables that might have influenced the attitudinal changes in adolescents.

### **Conclusion and recommendation**

Based on findings of this study and theoretical underpinning of socio-culture, ethnocentrism and locality play significant roles in adolescents' attitude towards herdsmen. Therefore, evaluation of other cultures according to preconceptions and standards of one's own culture and place of abode be worked on to reduce farmers and herdsmen killing. This will increase cohabitation among Nigerians with greater tolerance across religious and ethnic lines.

Findings of this study should be considered as national policy plan for peaceful co-existence between crop farmers and herdsmen. Fulani herdsmen menaces have assumed

different dimensions such as political, religious, economic and socio-cultural undertone. That means that all the causative factors should be addressed head-on especially ethnocentrism and locality. With trust and peaceful co-existence, ethno-religious tension will be things of the past in Nigeria. Other researchers should employ participatory observation method in further study.

#### **Consent:**

Participants were randomly selected from four secondary schools and only those in classes four, five and six who gave their consent participated in the study.

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