

## Using Public Relations Strategies in the Management of Herdsmen/Farmers Conflicts Arising from Open Grazing in Enugu State

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**Abstract:** The paper examined how to use public relations strategies in managing Herdsmen/farmers conflicts arising from open grazing in Enugu State. Open grazing is a situation where the cattle of herdsmen feed on grasses and crops of farmers freely from one location to another without control by the farmers. During this open grazing by cattle of herdsmen much damages are usually done to the farmers and their crops. There were reported cases of conflicts between Herdsmen and farmers arising from open grazing in different parts of Enugu State. Some of the affected areas include Nimbo Community in Uzo-Uwani LGA, Udi Community in Udi LGA, Atakwu in Nkanu West LGA, Oduma in Aninri LGA and other areas not mentioned here. These conflicts caused death tolls of farmers from the herdsmen who were fully armed with different weapons. The attacks launched by these herdsmen against the farmers led to bloodshed of innocent souls. The one that occurred at Nimbo Community was very ugly, devastating and painful. Uncountable families lost their lives. It is this constant and frequent conflict between the farmers and the herdsmen that necessitated this research. The researcher therefore wants to know how these conflicts could be managed with the application of Public relations strategies. The researcher carried out a survey on the affected local government areas in Enugu State. The results of the study showed that Public relations strategies could be used in the management of the conflicts. Recommendations were made on how to stop further conflicts arising from open grazing henceforth.

**Key words:** Strategies • Open Grazing • Herdsmen/Farmers • Conflicts • Management • Enugu State

### INTRODUCTION

The recent increasing threat posed by Fulani herdsmen in most parts of Nigeria today, is rocking the fabrics of the fundamental human rights to live, work and the freedom to own property. This is as a result of incidents of killing, robbery, rape, maiming and kidnapping by the Fulani herdsmen. Their activities have caused pains and losses to their victims based on the recent happenings and facts on ground in most parts of the country. "The activities of these Fulani herdsmen have also caused agony to their host communities. The anger and condemnation expressed across the country as a result of the killing occasioned by farmers/herdsmen conflicts would not bring permanent solution but would rather stir up hatred and disunity in the country", Abdulsalami [1]. "Fulani herdsmen are worse than Boko Haram Islamic sect because of their crime against humanity". Awogbade Moses [2].

Today, the activities of Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria have caused more harm than good because wherever Fulani herdsmen are seen, is expected to be a place where they can easily unleash their mayhem. The killings, maiming, rape and wanton destruction of properties of their victims are living testimonies that cohabitation and peaceful existence among Fulani herdsmen and their host communities cannot easily be achieved, unless government/national, its agencies and other appropriate authorities intervene very seriously on this burning issue. Fulani herdsmen have caused agony to most farmers and rural dwellers who are victims of such menace meted out by the Fulani herdsmen.

The recent attacks and treats to cause harm to some communities in Igbo land by the Fulani herdsmen cannot be discussed in a hurry. Their attacks in Igbo communities like; Attakwu Akaegbe, in Nkanu East Local Government Area of Enugu State is still fresh in the minds of the people living in the community and the entire state

in general. Also that of Nimbo Community in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State is still memorable as well as other places like; Ohaji in Egbema Local Government Area of Imo State, Uzuakoli Local Government Area of Abia State, etc. These Fulani herdsmen have stamped their authority to destroy people who are mostly the members of their host communities at least provocation. No wonder, Sunday Sun Newspaper publication of August 28, 2016, (page 51), covered by Chukwudere Eze, titled "Attakwu Akaegbe monarch accuses Fulani herdsmen of wickedness" reported that;

The traditional ruler of Attakwu Akaegbe Community in Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State, HRH Igwe Greg Ugwu, has described the attack on his community by Fulani herdsmen last Thursday as a wicked act, saying that the herders are living in his domain illegally. Igwe Ugwu said that it came as a shock and surprise to him, insisting that the Community did not do anything wrong to the herdsmen or their cows.

Although, there have been negative attributes to the activities of Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria but proper knowledge of what really causes these activities of the herdsmen will help to understand how best to handle the situation. As a result of this social malady confronting the country today, there is need for both federal, state and local governments in the country to unite in fighting against the rate in which innocent Nigerians are being killed brutally.

This cannot be easily achieved without the authorities making frantic effort to bring all the parties involved in the extra-judicial killing of Nigerians to order. This is the best way to achieve civil society were Fulani herdsmen and other Nigerians can live peaceful. Grassland Stewardship Guide [3] citing Thomas Hobbes and John Locke described a civil society as "a system in which peaceful coexisting among human beings could be ensured through social pacts or contracts". If government becomes insensitive to the menace of the Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria, it could be said that it has failed in its social contract with the people. As a result of this proper emphasis should be made by all the parties involve to guarantee mutual understanding amongst these conflicting groups of people.

In the past, the movement of Fulani herdsmen was seen as a means of increasing the economy of the country because the income made from the sale of their cattle and other animals had increased the internally generated revenue in the country in general. Today, these Fulani herdsmen have been seen as a problem which cannot be easily solved wherever they are found in the country.

The need to establish social cohabitation among the Fulani herdsmen and their host communities has been threatened as a result of continuous killing, maiming and total destruction of lives and properties.

At this juncture, it has become very imperative to use Public Relations in the management of the conflicts between the Fulani Herdsmen and the farmers in Enugu State. Public relations will make the Herdsmen to know that they are causing havoc to human existence. It will make them to understand that it is morally and constitutionally wrong to attack their host communities rather they should compensate them for accommodating them in their land. Public Relations will make the parties to understand the need for co-operation and co-existence.

It will make them know that it is not good to be barbaric and wickedness in their interaction with their host communities. They will also understand that it is against the law of nature to engage in bloodshed of innocent citizens. Public Relations will help to bring everlasting peace between Herdsmen and the farmers in Enugu State and Nigeria.

**Statement of the Problem:** There has been reported case of Conflicts between Herdsmen and farmers arising from open grazing by cattle of Herdsmen.

Since then much damages have been done to human life, agriculture and different forms of human endeavors in Enugu State and Nigeria at large. This wanton destruction of lives and property by the herdsmen under the guise of open grazing has resulted to death tolls of innocent souls of men and women in Enugu State. Other negative effects of this menace include rape, intimidation, destruction of native vegetations, damage of soils and stream banks, damage of farm lands and agricultural products, contamination of waterways with fecal wastes and a lot more. These constant attacks of Herdsmen have generated serious tensions and conflicts between the herdsmen and the farmers in Enugu State. This situation has created social insecurity and disunity. The reported cases of this Fulani Herdsmen is nationwide that some States of the federation such as Benue State, Ekiti, Taraba etc have enacted laws against open grazing.

The activities of Herdsmen in Nigeria have attracted both national and international attention and therefore should be seriously checked before it becomes much uncontrollable.

The researcher therefore wants to know whether Public relations strategies could be used to manage this conflict so as to ensure peaceful atmosphere and healthy living for all and sundry in the country.

**Objectives of the Study:** The broad objective of this study is to examine the use of Public Relations strategies in the management of Herdsmen/Farmers conflicts arising from open grazing in Enugu State.

**Other Objectives Include**

- To find out whether open grazing is the real cause of conflicts between the herdsmen and farmers in Enugu State.
- To identify how the conflicts can be managed with the application of Public Relations strategies.
- To ascertain the consequences of the conflicts between the Herdsmen and the farmers in Enugu State.
- To determine whether the application of Public relations strategies can bring everlasting peace between the Herdsmen and the Farmers in Enugu State.
- To know whether government made adequate effort to stop the conflicts.

**Research Questions:** The researcher asked the following research questions to guide the study.

- Is open grazing the real cause of conflicts between the Herdsmen and farmers in Enugu State?
- Can Public Relations strategies be used in the management of the conflicts between Herdsmen and farmers in Enugu State?
- What are the consequences of the conflicts between the Herdsmen and the farmers in Enugu State?
- Can the application of Public Relations strategies bring everlasting peace between the Herdsmen and farmers in Enugu?
- Do governments make adequate efforts to stop the conflicts?

**Significance of the Study:** The outcome of this study would be used to prevent the incessant attacks by Fulani herdsmen on their host communities in Enugu State. It will also be a source of arranging for peaceful cohabitation, prevention of loss of lives and property caused by the Fulani herdsmen in Enugu State. Since it is believed that what we view on television has tremendous influence on us, the researcher believes that the outcome of this study will be of great advantage to a number of people. Amongst the benefits and beneficiaries of this study are rural dwellers, governments and other agencies in the country:

The study will also act as a deterrent to both Fulani herdsmen and the indigenes who may wish to cause social misunderstanding or disorder in Igbo land because, it will help them to understand how to cohabit peacefully, irrespective of their socio-political and religious backgrounds.

The study will also be used to educate the masses in Enugu State on activities of the Fulani herdsmen in Igbo land.

**Literature Review**

**The Concept of Public Relations:** Although, Public Relations is described, explained and defined in so many ways. However, the researcher shall make effort to examine some of them.

The Institute of Public Relations in Great Britain, defines it as the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. In other words, public relations is sound human relations geared towards the elimination of misunderstanding and chaos between individuals and bodies whose lives touch one another, in one way or the other.

Also, the International Public Relations Association (IPRA), defines Public Relations as the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organization leaders and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve the public interest. In her analysis of the above definition [4], opines that:

Research and evaluation are paramount in public relations. As such, the public relations executive should engage in trends survey and analysis and from the results, advises the organization's leaders and plan programmes that will serve public interest.

Furthermore, <http://www.conflictdynamics.org>[5], define Public Relations as the management function that identifies, establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics on whom its success or failure depends. The researcher believes that the above definitions are synonymous with maintaining a sustainable two way communication between an organization and its publics. It also shows that, in today's management style, public relations have transcended the lower level of the official hierarchy to the top, thus, becoming the responsibility of the management.

Supporting the above view, Chukwudera [6], opines that "Public Relations can be used to effectively ensure peaceful co-existence between and among neighbouring

communities”. This, he concludes, is based on its role of creation of mutual understanding, in addition to, serving as the basic tool for achieving peace and concord in various communities.

#### **The Role of Public Relations in Conflict Management:**

Darling and Fogliasso [7], asserts that public relations is about people, about communication, planned communication. It is about identifying and fulfilling the needs of the publics so as to have mutually beneficial relationship with elements in these publics.

In other words, Public relations entails effective utilization of planned communication to get the consent, support, cooperation of the publics and thus, influence their behavior and attitude to a desired point.

However, Ejembi [8], notes that, “in the process of communication, conflict may be generated.” Hence, human conflicts are situations of discord and disharmony, discontent and disillusionment and of dissatisfaction and of dissatisfaction and brought about by communication interaction [9].

This is why Goldberg and Sander [10], opines that:

Communication has a causal relationship with conflict. Conflict is dependent on or has dependent relationship with communication. Thus, conflict manifests as a function of interaction or interactive escalated or mismanaged.

It could be based on the above view, that Ikpe [11], asserts that “planned communication (a major component of Public relations strategies) plays preventive and curative roles in conflict situation.” Communication can prevent conflict be it in an organization, or in a community or between the organization and environment, or between the government and community or between employees and management, NLPD [12], IPRA [13].

Mmuo [14], Moguluwa [15], have asserted that perhaps the most useful approach to preventing the occurrences of conflict is the fostering of a supportive and participatory communication climate. What Nwosu [16], calls “consent engineering” in Public relations strategies. Furthermore, Nwosu [17], opines that:

Seriously destructive conflict would rarely occur if in fact the organizational climate is one of (a) trust and confidence (b) everyone wins approach and (c) openness and candor in the airing of differences.

Also, the above scholars agreed that communication plays curative roles in conflict management. This is achieved when the parties, through participatory communication or dialogue on the most generally,

accepted solutions to conflicting issue(s). In his contribution to the role of Public Relations in conflict management, Nzamane [18], opines that:

Specifically, the role of Public Relations in conflict management requires the adoption of a sharp focused and concerted effort comprising: planning a strategy, an action plan. The key lies in first defining the problem clearly, with all seriousness and then, fix clear cut objectives that need to be met and be achieved by communication with the target publics.

As earlier mentioned, Public relations activities are always planned. There is no fire brigade approach in dealings with Public relations public. Public relations activities have to be effectively, planned in order to ensure productive result and to enable the impact of the activity, adequately felt their target publics. To this end, the Public relations input in conflict management is for the practitioner or whoever that is concerned to adopt the Public relations process model.

#### **Public Relations Strategies and Community Conflicts:**

Ogbuoshi [19], identified the following as Public relations strategies used in resolving community conflicts. They include: Negotiation, Mediation, Inquiry, Conciliation, Arbitration, Mass media, Public opinion and Propaganda devices.

#### **In His Analysis, the above Scholar Noted That:**

Negotiation is the simplest and the most effective Public relations strategy used in resolving community conflicts. It consists basically of discussions between both parties in dispute and their allies with a view to reconciling divergent opinions or views or at least, understanding the differing positions of the stakeholders. The parties involved decide amongst themselves how best to resolve their difference... although, involves discussions, arguments and counter arguments, targeted towards resolving the conflict, Onyejiuwa [20].

One striking difference between this and other Public relations strategies is that the parties will continuously discuss the issues at stake, to enable members of the community who have no proper knowledge of the fundamental causes of the conflict, be in a better position to understand more of the conflicts and thus, cooperate adequately towards resolutions.

In addition, in the case of mediation, Santhirasegaram [21], notes that if involves the use of a third party in settling of the conflict. The Public relations helps to encourage the contending parties to come for a settlement

and influence, persuade the opposing sides to enter into negotiation. He recommended that use of influential community or religious leaders from both communities as members of the mediation team. According to Suleiman [22], mediation worked successfully in the conflict between Umuode and Oruku in Enugu State, when the leaders of Catholic Church waded into the settlement of the conflict in 1995.

Also, Inquiry is one of the Public relations strategies used in resolving community conflicts. It is most appropriately used, when difference of opinions on factual matters underlie a conflict between parties. Usually, the logical solution is to institute a commission of inquiry to be conducted by reputable observers such as Public relations experts and others. The essence is to ascertain precisely, the facts in contention and therefore, make recommendations.

Furthermore, in Conciliation, the above scholar pointed out that it is a public relations strategy which involves a Third party investigation of the causes of the conflict and submission of report embodying suggestions on how to resolve the conflict. Conciliation involves elements of both inquiry and mediation and its report may stimulate negotiation between the parties concerned. The Public relations inputs also include carrying out thorough research, to ascertain the causes of the conflict as well as, making productive recommendations. Thomas [23].

More so, in Arbitration, as Public relations strategy in resolving conflicts, a neutral body, panel or tribunal intervenes, to resolve the conflicts between the parties. Public relations is used to appeal and persuade the opposing parties to cooperate by attending the proceedings. Through this process, a decision is reached which is binding on both parties concerned [24].

According to Ugwueze [25], mass media is another public relations strategy used in resolving conflicts. The media can resolve conflict situation through reports that are devoid of inflammatory remarks, sensational captions or playing to the gallery and maintain neutrality and objectivity in their reportage. He opines that the media can be used to create a conducive atmosphere for effective persuasion of the conflicting communities, to see reasons why they should resolve their differences. He cited the He-Modakeke conflict as a good case in point, in which the media, through interpretative investigative reports, motivated concerned Nigerians to wade into the matter that brought lasting peace in the area.

Public opinion is one of the strategies used in Public relations to resolve community conflicts. Public opinion is the expression of views held in common by members of the community on controversial or salient issues. Public relations are used to monitor Public opinion, in a community so as to know their feelings and views on the matter under dispute for easy resolution. It is said that problem known/shared, is problem solved. Waters-Bayer and Taylor-Powell [26].

Finally, Santhirasegarm [21], also identified Propaganda devices as Public relations strategies in resolving community conflicts. It is useful in this regard since, it is a conscious effort by persons; pressure groups or government to influence the formation of attitudes. The Public relations experts use such Propaganda techniques as glittering generalities, bandwagon effects and name calling to achieve their motive. The above scholar notes that propaganda was used by the Yorubas, after the annulment of the June 12, Presidential election and interpreted the crisis as “Yoruba’s affair”. Through this, popular sentiments and support from “Yorubas” was achieved, which generated their cooperation and subsequent wide condemnation of the annulment.

**The Concept of Grazing:** Grazing is a way of eating or feeding in which herbivorous animals feed in plants such as grasses or other multicellular organisms such as algae.

Graminivore is a method of grazing involving feeding primarily on grasses. Horses, cattle, grasshoppers, geese, hippopotamuses, Capybara and giant pandas are examples of graminivores.

Rabbits are herbivores that feed by grazing on grass, forbs and leafy weeds. They graze heavily and rapidly for about the first half of a grazing period, mainly late afternoon, followed by half an hour of more selective feeding.

Grazing is typically associated with mammals feeding on grasslands or more specifically live stock in a pasture.

Following one of the largest international reports on animal agriculture, the United Nations said this of livestock grazing:

Grazing occupies 26 percent of the Earth’s terrestrial surface, while feed crop production requires about a third of all arable land. Expansion of grazing land for livestock is a key factor in deforestation, especially in Latin America: some 70 percent of previously forested land in the Amazon is used as pasture and feed crops cover a large part of the remainder. About 70 percent of all

grazing land in dry area is considered degraded, mostly because of overgrazing, compaction and erosion attributable to livestock activity.

The explicit opinion of the Center for Biological Diversity is that grazing has significant negative impacts on local biodiversity.

Cattle destroy native vegetation, damage soils and stream banks and contaminate waterways with fecal waste. After decades of livestock grazing, once-lush streams and riparian forests have been reduced to flat, dry wastelands; once-rich topsoil has been turned to dust, causing soil erosion, stream sedimentation and wholesale elimination of some aquatic habitats.

When grass is grazed, the dead litter grass is reduced and allows for the birds to utilize it, while at the same time the livestock benefit. Just as importantly, it increases species richness. When grazing is not used, many of the same grasses grow, for example, brome and bluegrass, consequently creating a monoculture.

There are different types of grazing such Rotational, creeping, open grazing etc. But the focus of this paper is open grazing which allow animals to move freely from one location to another without much restriction. The animals move with their owners from one area to another.

**Origin of Grazing in Nigeria:** Grazing Reserves in Nigeria are areas set aside for the use of pastoralists and are intended to be the foci of livestock development. Grazing reserves resemble group ranches in that both consist of clearly defined areas of rangeland which provides grazing for determined herds of livestock [13]. On group ranches in Kenya pastoralists have a right to land under national law. In Nigeria, they have not in the past had such rights and grazing reserves more closely resemble what Nwosu [16] termed 'grazing blocks'. There are now plans for issuing 30 year leases for parcels of land within the grazing reserves in order to encourage them to invest in land improvement.

The stated purpose of Grazing Reserves is the settlement of 'nomadic' pastoralists; they offer security of tenure as an inducement to standardization through the provision of land for grazing and permanent water. Grassland Stewardship Guide [3]. Large pieces of land have been demarcated, some legally sanctioned by order in the Official Gazette and infrastructure, such as dams and boreholes, constructed. Potential settlers are recruited through the livestock extension service.

In Nigeria the practice of preserving land for exclusive use by livestock existed prior to colonial times. Allocation of grazing grounds to pastoralists around

towns and villages for use particularly during the cultivation season were socially sanctioned [6]. However, since there was no legal instrument to prevent encroachment by crop farmers, such reserved areas subsequently disappeared with increasing population and cropping intensity.

This phenomenon was most visible in the sub humid zone of Nigeria where pastoralists from the semiarid zone further north traditionally moved to exploit dry-season pastures. Additionally, improved veterinary services and tsetse control and eradication campaigns have resulted in an expanding ruminant livestock population in the sub humid zone itself and in restricting pastoralists' access to the grazing lands [12]. Combined with this, the greater preference afforded to local (i.e. sub humid zone) farmers' livestock both for grazing and water has contributed to the further reduction of the resources available [9]. Kjenstad, 1988. Conflicts between farmers and pastoralists frequently occurred as a consequence.

The Nigerian Government's Grazing Reserve Act of 1964 was a response to the problem of alienation of grazing lands increasingly being faced by the pastoral population at the time. In a broader framework, the law is also taken as one of the policy measures to address some of the constraints confronting livestock development in Nigeria. Thus, grazing reserves were established not only to protect grazing lands from crop farming and provide easier access to them by pastoralists but also to encourage the standardization of nomadic/transhumant pastoralists through legally secure titles to grazing water and, in general, as one means of promoting livestock development.

Negative effects of grazing including increased soil erosion, adverse water quality impacts from increased runoff and loss of biodiversity.

In the present day open grazing has caused a lot of social problems in Nigeria. It has resulted to the wanton destruction of lives and properties in Nigeria. It has caused death tolls of many innocent souls in Nigeria.

This ugly situation has brought negative reactions from both government and individuals. Some State governments have enacted anti-open grazing laws. The anti-open grazing law is currently operational in Benue, Ekiti and Taraba States.

By January 2018, the Minister of Defence, Dan Ali stated that states should suspend implementation of anti-grazing law as an affront to federalism that is practiced in Nigeria.

Fayose later issued a statement where he argued that the federal government lacked the power to suspend or abrogate the anti-grazing laws enacted by the State governments to prohibit open grazing of cattle in this states.

Fayose hinged his submission on the fact that “the country is a federation and that Ekiti is one of the federating units and the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria spelt out what each unit can legislate on.

Federal government also proposed cattle ranches in the different zones in the country. So establishing the issue of cattle grazing in Nigeria is yet to be resolved.

**Grazing Management:** Grazing management is the planning, implementation and monitoring of animal grazing to achieve sustain animal, plant, land, environmental and economic results under a range of environmental conditions.

Grazing management practices seek to optimize livestock production and maintain productive grasslands by minimizing overgrazing, improve forage production and increasing plant and animal diversity. Grazing, when well managed, allows health grasslands to be sustained, livestock operations to meet economic requirements and other plants and animals to flourish. Well managed grazing techniques can reverse damage and help to restore grassland health.

Managing rangelands is both art and science. Scientific knowledge is combined with practical local experience to find solutions to specific management problems.

Grazing management entails managing how grazing animals, forage plants and soils interact to meet specific ecological and economic objectives. A successful grazing manager needs to know how plants grow and reproduce if he wants to understand how grazing animals affect plants by the amount of plant material removed, hoof action and other aspects of grazing. In addition, managers must understand the grazing animal, specifically its nutritional needs at critical points of the production cycle and its behavior including diet selection.

**Concept of Conflict:** Although it emerges in various environments and levels, conflict in its general meaning could be defined as a difficulty encountered by an individual or a group in the process of choosing an option and disruption in decision making mechanisms as a consequence [18]. In addition to this, although it arises from individual differences in general, conflict may also

originate from the issues such as codependency of jobs, differences in definitions of jobs, duties and organizational structures. As regards, conflict may also be defined as a dispute between two or more organization members or groups as a consequence of the need to work in positions that require functional codependency and that differ in status, purpose, value or perception [23]. When considered as a process, the sub stages that may be drawn from the definitions concerning the concept of conflict are listed as in the following sequence [11]:

- The presence of incompatible or opposite interests between individuals or groups,
- Diagnosis of these oppositions by the parties involved,
- The belief by both parties that the other is obstructing and disrupting their interests,
- Action taken by both parties with the aim of obstructing or disrupting the other’s work.

Wherever there is human factor as a social input, arguments and conflicts among individuals are inevitable as a consequence of individual differences especially in today’s environment of intense globalization and competition [9]. Everybody may adopt and defend different feelings, thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, preferences, etc. depending on individual differences. These differences are one of the important factors constituting the source of conflicts [17]. Conflict is a phenomenon that could emerge in every part of organizational life and it may bring heavy loads and costs both for organization and individuals if it is not managed well. Tyotom [24].

**Conflict Management:** The term conflict management is more extensive than the term conflict resolution. In other words, conflict resolution expresses reconciliation of conflict while conflict management includes both reconciliation of conflict and directing destructive conflicts towards constructive results. Conflict management may be expressed as a process that involves stages of diagnosing the conflict, determining its intensity, defining appropriate intervention methods through an evaluation of this intensity with regard to its effects and monitoring its result [22]. The success of organization in conflict management is indicative of an organizational structure that enables constructive interaction between individuals and groups. In such organizations, majority of employees consist of individuals who are adequately knowledgeable, experienced and ready to accept different

standards of judgment. Individuals show a genuine, honest and determined attitude in an attempt to find a solution for the conflict by virtue of trust between the members of organization, by loyalty to the work group and organization and motivation for cooperation. There is a prominent inclination to find a constructive solution rather than carrying on the conflict. The solutions found are often quite creative and are better than the resolution proposed by the conflicting parties [8].

**Approaches to Conflict Management:** Many managerial approaches with regard to organizational conflicts are observed to be in use when related studies are examined. These approaches, although deferring in their understanding of conflict, are analyzed here below.

**Traditional Approach:** Traditional approach deals with destructive and disruptive aspects of conflict, which have to be avoided in terms of organization and does not take into account the creative, productive, changing and improving aspects of it. In this approach, conflict is seen as something that is undesirable and that must be avoided. The duty of manager is to clear the undesirable conflict right away. According to the traditional approach, conflict corrupts the functioning of organizational processes and causes a decrease or drop in the organizational performance.

**Behavioral Approach:** Behavioral approach, which considers individuals in the organization as social human beings and which deals with human behaviors and relations, accepts conflict as a part of organizational life. According to this, conflict is natural and inevitable in organizations and it is sometimes even useful to the performance of organization. This view has been influential from the 1940s and to the middle of the 1970s.

**Interactional Approach:** Interactional approach, which belongs to the modern understanding of management and organization, accepts that conflict is inevitable in organizations. Differing from behavioral approach, not only does it accept conflict but also it suggests that an extremely compatible, peaceful and cooperative group would be indifferent to changes and innovations and argues that conflict should be encouraged deliberately. Organizations which do not experience conflicts are condemned to immobility, lifelessness and destruction [12].

**The Activities of Fulani Herdsmen in Igbo Land:** The Fulani herdsmen are people from the Northern part of

Nigeria who move from one corner of the country to the other to practice “nomadic-farming” (the act of moving with their animals from one place to the other). These cattle rearers go about looking for pasture or feed for their animals which they move along with. In the olden days, the heinous activities of the cattle rearers which are perpetrated to their host communities now were not practical. They could only be accused of allowing their cow, sheep, goats and other animals they moved about with, to destroy the crops of their host communities. This was usually settled amicably between the cattle rearers and those who owned such crops. But today, the sight of cattle rearers and their animals in any-community within and outside the Igbo land spells doom. Any slight provocation from the cattle rearers or their host communities usually results to mayhem in which blood of innocent people is usually spilled. Based on this deadly and ungodly attitude of the Fulani herdsmen, wherever they set their feet on, a lot of human lives are usually lost and property worth millions of naira lost in the process. According to Nwosu [17];

The existence of Fulani herdsmen ... within and outside the Igbo land seems to worry the locals who think that they could be attacked by these Fulani herdsmen at least provocation.

The roll call of the activities of the Fulani herdsmen in Igbo land is inexhaustible, among the deadly attacks meted out by these herdsmen to their host communities include; the attack on Atakwu Akaegbe Community in Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State. In his newspaper coverage on the issue, Chukwudera Eze, a Daily Sun/Sunday Sun Newspaper reporter wrote in the medium's edition of August 28, 2016, page 51 in a headline titled, “Atakwu Akaegbe Monarch Accuses Fulani Herdsmen of wickedness”. The report of the newspaper on the story went thus:

The traditional ruler of Atakwu Akaegbe Community in Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State, HRH Igwe Gred Ugwu, has described the attack on his Community by the Fulani herdsmen last Thursday as a wicked act, saying that the herdsmen are living in his domain illegally. The traditional ruler who stated this in an interview with newsmen who visited the devastated Community yesterday said the attack on his people was planned and unprovoked... Igwe Ugwu said that it came as a shock and surprise to him, insisting that the Community did not do anything wrong to the herdsmen or their cows.

This outburst of anger by the traditional Ruler of Atakwu Akaegbe Community in Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State, was as a result of the



level of destruction of lives and property of his subjects by Fulani herdsmen. In an interview which the monarch granted to daily Sun, newspaper, HRH Igwe Greg Ugwu stated that what the Fulani herdsmen did was a wicked act. As he said it; “what happened here came to me s a surprise because before now we lived in peace with the herdsmen”

The above made statement reported by Sunday Sun Newspaper on the attack of the Community - Atakwu Akaegbe in Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State by the Fulani herdsmen, automatically proves that those herdsmen are deadly set of people whose main purpose is to kill, main and destroy property of people. It seems that the fear of the Fulani herdsmen is the beginning of wisdom because any opportunity they have to attack people, usually leads to drastic loss of lives and property worth of millions of Naira. Another example of the Fulani Herdsmen activities in Igbo land is the attack of Nimbo Community in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State. According to an Online data generated from Independent Online, November 18, 2016 which narrated the “Nimbo Massacre”, “Scores of people were massacred by armed Fulani herdsmen in the early hours of April 25, 2016. The story reported that;

“The Community (Uzo-Uwani) which has boundaries with the Southern part of Ebonyi State and Anambra and Central States of Benue and Kogi witnessed this attack that lead to the dissertation of the areas by the inhabitants”.

It was reported by the Online print out that, “the herdsmen who were bent on occupying a portion of the faming Community’s land for cattle grazing plotted the attack and executed it”. Also, a report from Radio Biafra on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2016 went further to state that;

...at about 5:15am on April 25, 2016, the armed herdsmen numbering about 500 struck, killing 40 people. The following day, April 26, 2016, six bodies were recovered and 14 victims were lying critically ill at Royal Cross Hospital Nsukka, Nsukka District General Hospital and Bishop Shanahan Hospital Nsukka. During the raid, a Roman Catholic Church, Christ Holy Catholic Church, Odozi-Obodo, at Onu-Eke and 11 houses were burnt by the marauders. As a result of insecurity, displaced natives fled to neighboring communities of Nkpologu and Uvuru, even as indigenes of these communities fled to Nsukka in fear of further attacks.

Another report from Vanguard Nigeria Online, April 27, 2016, stated that, “There was invasion of Abbi, another Uzo-Uwani Community by the Fulani herdsmen where a brother and sister Fidelis and Mary Okeja were reportedly killed by Fulani herdsmen in early February

2016. It is important to note that the cattle rearers have also carried out their deadly attack in Imo State which is another Igbo land. According to Santhirasegarm [21] “... 7 feared dead in clash between Hausa/Fulani and Imo Community... No fewer than seven people were feared dead in Akokwa Community in idea to North Council of Imo State following a blood clash between the Hausa/Fulani community and the indigenes. It was gathered that trouble started when a member of the Hausa/Fulani Community whose name could not be ascertained had allegedly attacked and killed two of the indigenes and thereafter killed himself... angered by the dastardly act, the indigenes in a reappraisal attacked the Hausa/Fulani Community where four persons were killed as well as the destruction of several properties and houses”.

The above indicates that the Fulani herdsmen have been a terror to those who live close to them as well as their host communities. The attacks carried out by the Fulani herdsmen to such communities outside the Igbo land can also testify to this. Remember the invasion of Agatu Community in Benue State by the Fulani herdsmen in March, 2016. The killing of about 27 Innocent people at Ogume, in Ndokwa West Local Government Area of Delta State in April, 2014 after the herdsmen were confronted by Ogume youths etc. There are other areas within and outside the Igbo land where the Fulani herdsmen had carried out their deadly attacks which this researcher cannot discuss because of the limitations of this study.

Also, Mmuo [14] asserts that, Fulani herdsmen have again killed six persons near Ikpayongo, Gwer Local Government Area of Benue State. Those killed were teachers from Makurdi Local Government Education Authority Area (LGEA)... the teachers went to the area last Wednesday to inspect some farmland for rice cultivation under the umbrella of a Cooperative Society but were ambushed by the armed herdsmen who immediately opened fire on them”. Again, Nzamane [18], wrote that “some persons suspected to be herdsmen in the early hours of yesterday killed no fewer than five people suspected to be herdsmen, killed six other persons in Ganda village of Dafu District in Bokkos Council”. It was reported that the attack came as President Mohammadu Buhari was concluding his first official visit to the State.

**Empirical Review:** The researcher used survey research method for the study and used random sampling technique to select 50 residents of Owerri Urban for focus group interviews. By selecting 400 respondents derived

from a statistical method (Taro Yamane formula) she retrieved data, analysed and interpreted same from these respondents. Some of the results of the study showed that; television has powerful influence in curbing Fulani herdsmen killings in Nigeria. Also, the result of the study showed that the residents of Owerri Urban Area believed that television programmes can be used to sensitize the masses on the activities of Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria in general and Owerri Urban in particular.

In a related study, by Darling and Fogliasso [7], on the “Effectiveness of Public Relations Techniques in the Promotion of Pastoral Communication at the Grassroots. A study of Catholic Diocese of Nsukka, Enugu State.” The above researchers, who used survey design, with a population of 96 respondents, discovered that Public Relations Strategies cannot only be effectively employed in grassroots evangelization, but also, in grassroots peaceful co-existence campaign. They concluded that public relations can be used to foster goodwill, enhance consent, support and co-operation of the grassroots, towards a desired agenda. The study indicated that a good number of the respondents claimed they were influenced to give their support and consent, owing to “people friendly techniques employed by the researcher,” which of course, is an attribute to public relations.

In addition, Ogbuoshi [19], in the study conducted in Calabar, using survey research, with a population of 280 First Bank staff and customers, on the topic, “Public Relations and the Challenges of Image Management in the Nigerian Banking Sector”. He discovered that the application of Public relations Strategies in banking management, contributed immensely to the image of the Bank and thus, has helped to increase customers’ patronage and good relationship between them. The researcher concluded that, Public Relations inputs in First Bank is among the best in the country.

Furthermore, Onyejiuwa [20] who conducted a survey to examine the “Role of Public Relations in the Management of Inter Communal Conflict in Osun State,” using a Population of 150 respondents, discovered that, Ife and Modakeke crisis continued unabated.

**Theoretical Framework:** This study was anchored on Public relations transfer process theory. The Public Relations transfer process model was propounded by Frank Jefkins in 1988. According to Chukwudera [6], the model is an antidote against some negative developments in our society especially in organizations. Also, Grassland Stewardship Guide [3], asserts that when Negative Situations is converted into Positive Achievements,

through knowledge, the result predictably, is the primary objective of public relations practice, which is understanding.

The theory explains how Practitioners and others in leadership can use and apply Public relations tools and strategies towards changing hostility among organization’s target publics or community members, to sympathy. This enables them to be in a better position to convert prejudice into acceptance, develop interest, where there is apathy and then, be able to communicate effectively to achieve knowledge, where there is ignorance.

Deductions or inferences from the above discussion, show that organizations, including the government, community leaders can use the Jefkin’s Public relations transfer process model to win the ‘goodwill of the publics, so as to reduce or prevent conflicts in our local communities and other organized groups. This can be achieved through effective communication that is so much needed to convert the four negative attitudes of the publics, into four positive attitudes, as ‘earlier mentioned.

The central idea in the above discussion is that community leaders or government representatives or local government Public relations officers, should act as the clarifying link in these transformation process.

Finally, this model clearly illuminates the nexus between the government, the governed and public relations. With the level of disenchantments of the rural dwellers, no amount of tricks and propaganda and or lobbying can succeed, without the effective application of public relations principles, practices and strategies [9].

**Methodology:** This study adopts survey research method because it is more appropriate to the study. This study elicited information from people from the affected local governments in the State which include Aninri, Nkanu West, Udi and Uzo-Uwani. One hundred respondents were randomly selected from the four Local Government Areas making a total population of 400. The researcher administered four hundred copies of questionnaires to 400 respondents.

**Data Analysis:** The data collected for the study are hereunder presented. Out of 400 questionnaires distributed 382 were returned and used in the data presentation

Data presented above indicate that 380 respondents representing 99.5% were of the opinion that open grazing is the cause of the conflicts between the Herdsmen and the farmers in Enugu State. However 2 respondents representing 0.5% had contrary view.

Table 1: Is open grazing the cause of conflicts between the Herdsmen and famers

Respondents	Frequency	Percentages
Yes	380	99.5%
No	2	0.52%
Total	382	100%

Source: Field Data 2018

Table 2: Can Public Relations Strategies be used in the management of the conflicts?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentages
Yes	375	98.17
No	2	0.52%
Neutral	5	1.31
Total	382	100%

Source: Field Data 2018

Table 3: What are the consequences of the Conflicts between the Herdsmen and the Farmers?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentages
Wanton destruction of lives and farm crops	382	100%
Protection of lives and farm crops	0	0%
Total	382	100%

Source: Field Data 2018

Table 4: Can the application of PR strategies bring everlasting peace between the Herdsmen and the farmers in Enugu State?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentages
Possible	342	89.53%
Not possible	40	10.47%
Total	382	100%

Source: Field Data 2018

Table 5: Do Governments make adequate efforts to stop the recurring of the conflicts?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentages
Government made adequate efforts	182	47.64%
Government did not make adequate efforts	185	48.43%
No idea	15	3.93%
Total	382	100%

Source: Field Data 2018

Judging from the magnitude of the respondents, it is clear that the majority of the respondents were unanimous in their opinion that open grazing is the main cause of the conflicts between the Herdsmen and the farmers in Enugu State.

Data presented above indicates that 375 respondents representing 98.17% were of the view that Public relation strategies can be used in the management of conflicts between the herdsmen and the Farmers in Enugu State. Also 2 representing 0.52% had contrary view while 5 representing 1.31% have no idea. This means that public Relations strategies is a powerful tool in conflict management.

Data presented above indicates that 382 respondents representing 100% were unanimous that the consequences of the conflicts are wanton destruction of lives and farm crops.

Data presented above indicated that 342 respondents representing 89.53% said that it is possible that application of Public Relations Strategies can bring everlasting peace between the Herdsmen and the farmers while 40 respondents representing 10.47% were of the view that it cannot bring everlasting peace.

Data presented on the table above indicated that 182 respondents representing 47.64% were of the view that government made adequate efforts to stop the reoccurrence of the conflicts, 185 respondents representing 48.43% were of the view that government did not make adequate efforts to stop the reoccurrence of the conflict while 15 respondents representing 3.93% said they have no idea on government efforts.

**Findings:** The major findings of this study have been summarized below.

- Evident from research data shows that open grazing of cattle is the major cause of the conflicts between the Herdsmen and the farmers in Enugu State. Open grazing makes it too difficult to control the movement and grazing of cattle.
- Research data indicates that Public Relations Strategies could be used in the management of conflicts arising from open grazing between the Herdsmen and farmers in Enugu State. It was empirically proved that Public Relations Strategies are powerful tools in conflict management.
- Also evidence from research data shows that the consequences of the conflicts between the Herdsmen and farmers are wanton destruction of lives and properties of people in Enugu State. That is the conflicts have resulted to death tolls of innocent citizens and losses of valuables in the State.
- It was also gathered from research data that application of public relations technically can bring everlasting peace between the Herdsmen and farmers.
- Available research data revealed that governments did not make enough efforts to stop the recurring of the conflicts between the herdsman and the farmers.

**Discussion of Findings:** The data presented in Table 1 made it crystal clear that open grazing is the main cause of conflicts between the Herdsmen and the farmers in Enugu State. Open grazing encourages free movement of cattle from one zone to another resulting to uncountable damages to people, crops and other valuables.

It will be recalled that grazing laws have existed. Open grazing should be banned and animals or cattle should be confined to ranches where they will be properly controlled and managed.

Public Relations strategies should be adequately used in the management of conflicts arising from open grazing. Government should help train enough Public Relations practitioners to handle conflicts management in the country.

The consequences of the conflicts arising from open grazing is not encouraging. It resulted to death tolls of innocent citizens. The Nimbo case is very embarrassing, painful, devastating and dehumanizing. It is a total violation of human rights.

The implication of this ugly trend is that the activities of the Herdsmen must be properly and adequately checked. Law should be applied so that they will be punished adequately. Otherwise, if they are left unpunished it then means that they are above the law by violating human rights through killing of human beings

like rats. They also insult, intimidate and rape women with impunity. They are always armed with dangerous weapons including guns, swords, daggers etc.

Public Relations strategies should be used to bring everlasting peace between Herdsmen and farmers. Appeal and persuasion should be used to make those who psychologically suffering from fear and insecurity to relax their nerves in that regard.

Government should intervene quickly to save citizens and the society from destruction and decay. Compensations should be made to the families that sustained or lost relations. Government through law enforcement agents should help to restore peace and order in Enugu State and the country in general.

## **CONCLUSION**

The conflict arising from open grazing between the Herdsmen and the farmers has become a recurring decimal in the contemporary day. This ugly situation has generated tensions and insecurity all over the country. The death tolls and destruction of farm crops have attracted international attention. It is also a threat to national unity.

## **Recommendations:**

- The Federal Government of Nigeria must wake-up from deep slumber and take urgent action by enacting law to stop open grazing of cattle in Nigeria. Tribal sentiments should be avoided in this regard.
- Government should adopt Public Relations strategies in the management of conflicts between the Herdsmen and the farmers.
- Government should mobilize law enforcement agents. Military and paramilitary officers should be deployed to conflict zones to stop it from further eruption and escalation.
- Public Relations Strategies should be adequately applied to stop the conflicts and bring the everlasting peace between the Herdsmen and the farmers in Enugu State and Nigeria in general.
- The Federal Government should make dogged and frantic efforts to stop the recurring of this ugly conflict. The culprits and their cohorts fueling the conflicts should be brought to book without fear or favor; otherwise it will degenerate into uncontrollable situation which may tear the country apart. When this happens the centre can no longer hold and the end result will be total disintegration of Nigerian federations. Government should act

urgently without delay to forestall potential and impending violent conflict that may degenerate in war. We should recall bitter experiences of Nigeria/Biafra Civil War of 1966.

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