

## Impact of Political Marginalization and Historical Conflicts on the Sustainability of SMEs in Anambra State, Nigeria

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62154/p78dqf57>

### Abstract

The untamed rise in Nigeria's insecurity is of great concern to residents and observers. Aside from heightened unemployment, Nigeria is a troubled nation in need of international interventions to prevent the growth and spread of terror to various parts of the world. This study assessed the impact of perceived political marginalization and historical conflict on the sustainability of SMEs in Anambra State, Nigeria. To achieve the study intent, the design followed a qualitative pattern. Participants were in two groups: owners of SMEs on one side and Herders and farmers on the other. An in-depth interview was paramount to obtaining needed information. Thematic and Content analysis were adopted. Findings revealed that the willingness to ignore governmental directives increases as perceived marginalization increases. Also, a negative relationship between herders-farmers conflict and the business climate in Anambra state was discovered. The governor of Anambra state needs to consciously set up or empower if any, an internal mechanism under the ministry of agriculture to devise workable plans and strategies on how to resolve the existing conflict in order to boost investors' confidence in the state.

**Keywords:** Sit-at-Home, Farmers-Herders Clash, Political Marginalization, Business Sustainability.

### Introduction

Amidst governmental drive for better economic conditions and overall national prosperity, Nigeria has been overwhelmed by growing insecurity. The rising rate of insecurity in Nigeria is fast becoming an unwanted national heritage as incidents of terror and social unrest are daily reported on new media (Zubairu, 2020). Reports on insecurity has overwhelmed news houses such that most have restrained news team from terror reporting. To this regard, Mahmoud and Madori (2013) reveal that regions in Nigeria are constantly battling various forms of insecurity. Emmanuel and Emily (2019) reports that Nigerian residents have lost taste of a blissful night rest owing to midnight communal attacks. Despite these challenges, the Federal Government of Nigeria claims to be spending enormous funds on the safety of lives and property. Ineffective governmental approach to curtail poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic groups has resulted to anger, agitation and violent crimes against the Nigerian state by disgruntled individuals and groups (Achumba, 2013). The coupling of Nigeria during the era of colonial administration failed to

recognize future unrest in regional diversities such as demographical dispersion, land proportion, endowed resources, educational and societal developmental plan. In this regard, observers of Nigeria's political development reveal that existing disparities have created and sustained by fear of ethnic domination not only amongst Nigeria's 250 ethnic groups but amongst the majority groups *inter se* and between them and the ethnic minorities (Adangor, 2017). Among these agitations is the separatist movement, and the northern herdsmen who are in search of a better placement for national and economic stability respectively. Alumona, Azom and Iloh (2017) infer that agitations are discontentment expression in demanding for adequate political accommodation.

### **Problem Statement**

Since 2021, businesses and institutions in Nigeria's Eastern region have been threatened to remain closed on Mondays' else untold man-inflicted pain befalls them. Non adherence to Sit-at-home are not without consequences. Consequences range from injuries, carnage and death. Observers are reported that "Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)" is at the forefront of these havocs. Still within the southern region of Nigeria is Farmers - Herders conflict which back to 1965 has remained a threat to regional and national security in Nigeria. Separatist agitation and farmers-herders clash are negatively impacting SMEs sustainability in Anambra State, Nigeria. Violent agitations are negatively impacting the economic sustainability of Anambra state as Prof. Soludo the Executive governor of Anambra state warns that the state loses N19.6 billion every time the sit-at-home directives are enforced by an illegal group (Omon, 2021).

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To examine how sit-at-home order affects product-service sustainability of SMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria
2. To assess how herders-farmers conflict on business climate of SMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

1. How has sit-at-home order affected product-service sustainability of SMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria?
2. How has the herders-farmers conflict impacted on the business climate of SMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria?

### **Review of Literature**

#### **Political Marginalization and the Nascent of Sit-at-Home Order**

Nigeria is a complex nation comprising various cultural, ethnic, and religious diversities exceeding 250 ethnic nationalities (Orji, 2008). Besides diversity, Nigeria's population is around 206 million which constitutes 2.64% of global population (World meter, 2020). As reported by CIA (2015), the major ethnic groups which exercise the most political influence,

are the Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, and the Igbo, and they respectively constitute 29, 21, and 18 per cent of the country's population. To unify national diversity, Nigeria operates a federal system of government where all three governmental levels share political power between the central government, thirty-six states and 774 local government areas and the Federal Capital Territory in Abuja (Olusola, 2021). Nigeria's political power is distributed through election or positional appointment through the federal character principles (Olusola, 2021). The Federal Character principle is a constitutional provision that sanctions equal representation across various geo – political zones in the country (Nwozor, 2014). When introduced, Federal Character principle led to an increase in the number of ethnic minority participation across political and economic segments (Justine, Chinelo & Ogomegbulam, 2015). Afterward, the principle failed to guarantee equal allocation of public offices during the Buhari led administration, where Northerners were dominant in all federal offices of the country (Eme & Okeke, 2017). Consequentially, the resurgence of the clamor for self-actualization by the Igbos became loud and impactful. These agitations are connected to unresolved questions regarding religion, ethnic balancing, marginalization, revenue allocation, and power-sharing, among others (Awofeso, 2017). The resurgence of the IPOB is connected to the exclusion and marginalization of the Igbos' in political positions; a situation that worsened under the Buhari's administration (Alumona, Azam & Iloh, 2017). Adejumobi (2002) characterized separatist agitation as youth based groups formed with the purpose of promoting and protecting the parochial interests of their ethnic groups and whose activities sometimes involve the use of violence. Adangor (2017) reported that in May 30, 2017 a "sit at home" order was issued to all Igbos' by the leadership of the IPOB in honour of Igbos that were murdered during the Nigeria/Biafra Civil war. The regular Monday sit-at-home and its enforcements across the southeast region has generated some controversies between the group and the Federal Government with regional consequences on socio-political and economic activities (Owoeye, Ezeanya & Obiegbunam, 2022). Since the arrest of the leader of the group (IPOB), the sit-at-home order has been the major strategy employed by IPOB members in reacting to the arrest of their leader Mazi Nnamdi Kanu which they perceive as unlawful detention by the Federal government of Nigeria (Omole, 2021). Economically, the Monday sit- at- home strategy order has presumably led to the closure of market places where also commercial activities in the region are frequently interrupted. Owoeye, Ezeanya and Obiegbunam (2022) report that during Mondays, unlawful groups of young men in enforcing the sit-at-home order resort to the destruction of commercial property to serve as a deterrent warning to those aiming to resume business activities. Okoye (2021) stipulates that the effects of IPOB Monday sit-at-home on national development cum political activities of the Southeast Region is inadvertently handing a fatal blow to investments, investors and investees in South-East zone of Nigeria.

### **Historical Conflict Degenerating to Herders-Farmers Clash**

The Fulani tribe is an ethnic group who are mostly Muslim cattle herders with over 30 million Fulani people living in the northern states of Nigeria (Gordon, 2000). The main Fulani sub-

groups in Nigeria are: Fulbe Adamawa, Fulbe Mbororo, Fulbe Sokoto, Fulbe Gombe, and the Fulbe Borgu (Eyekpimi, 2016). Traditionally, there are pastoralist and nomadic Fulanis who mainly live in the north Gürsoy (2019), although both groups speak Fulfude language and are predominantly Muslims; as earlier explained. Urbanized Fulanis which are sometimes called Hausa-Fulani live more in the south and are considered being more politically wise and preeminent than nomadic Fulanis (Maiangwa, 2017). They are often armed and visibly move about with weapons such as daggers, matchets, and arrows used in protecting their flocks (Okoro, 2019). In their occupation as herders, the Fulani people have a long history of migration, and have built relationships with various farming populations in Nigeria (Mathias, 2021). The major reason for conflict existing between herdsman and farmers is one economic survival heightened by global warming effect witnessed in the northern part of Nigeria. Jaiyeoba, (2002) warns that desertification is evident in 15 States of Nigeria, and about 20% of the Nigeria's land has been encroached by the desert despite the problem being first reported in the 1920s. Herdsmen are migrants who leave their ancestral abode in search of fertile land for their flocks owing to desertification and deforestation in the Sahara Desert (Okolie & Atelhe, 2013). Violent confrontations between farmers and herders are prevalent and pervasive in Central and West Africa evident in Mali, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria, where climate disparity, environmental degradation, and socio-political upheaval have shifted pastoralist migratory patterns and increased tensions between farmers and herders (Kwaja & Ademola-Adelehin, 2018). Mathias (2021) reveals that the mismanagement of grazing portions led to the problem of land loss for economic survival, thereby culminating into economic, political and environmental tensions in the country. Egbuta (2018) explains that land disputes among nomadic pastoralists and farmers though not new but has degenerated into destructive feud because of government's inability to exert control measures. Core to Fulani herdsman is ensuring good and safe environment in that they do not see themselves as colonizers but as servant to their cattle (Ogbeide, 2017). The conflict between farmers and herders is one of the social problems that bestow serious security challenge and obstruct with severe threat to business activities and the unity of Nigeria, particularly Southwestern states (Poopola, Brima & Olawale, 2020). BBC reports that over 50,000 persons have been killed in the crisis between 2001 and 2004 and over 62, 000 person displaced in the Middle belt states of Benue, Kaduna, Nassarawa and Plateau alone (Nwakanma & Boroh, 2020). Sadly, women and children accounted for almost 35,000 of these deaths (Kwaja & Ademola-Adelehin, 2018). On economic loss, Nwosu (2017) avers that in Benue, Kaduna, Nassarawa and Plateau states, about \$14 billion have been lost to destruction of property and agricultural products.

### **Business Sustainability**

Sustainability or sustainable development is a much-discussed significant topic in light of increased environmental degradation and violation of human rights (Gupta et al., 2015). The dimensions of sustainability are economic, social, and environmental (Tomislav, 2018).

For this study, we shall be focusing on constructs affecting economic sustainability. While economic viability is necessary for organisational survival, Gupta et al. (2015) argue that it is insufficient to sustain an organisation in the long run if irreversible damages such as failure to ensure safety, security, dignity, healthcare, minimum wage, indiscrimination and better working conditions for employees, and living environment of communities and societies are ignored. The dimensions of economic sustainability to be reviewed are product sustainability and business climate.

Product sustainability (PS) examines how products provide economic benefits to companies while enhancing overall environmental and social benefits to society (Thomas & Zoe, 2017). PS aims to sustain business competitiveness in changing consumer and public demands by ensuring sustainable performance (Nielsen, 2015). PS helps firms prevent or reduce product-related risks and differentiate products from others (Thomas & Zoe, 2017). Saeed and Kersten (2017) explain sustainability goals to mean rendering value to stakeholders and fulfilling customer requirements by achieving sustainable flows of products, services, information, and capital. The consumers' and other stakeholders' sustainability-related expectations require organisations to incorporate sustainability throughout their supply chain by shifting focus from traditional profit maximisation towards ecological and social sustainability-related issues (Saeed & Kersten, 2017). Therefore, to achieve improved environmental and social quality, organisations must introduce sustainability during the product development stage in which all the product's substantial features and properties are defined (Petersen, 2017).

Small and medium-scale enterprises play an essential role in propelling the economy towards economic prosperity in any economy. The modus operandi of SMEs towards goal attainment and achievement of national objectives is a function of business environments which aid or mar goal attainment. Obiwuru, Oluwalaiye and Okwu (2011) define the environment of business as the aggregation of the pattern of all the external and internal conditions and influences that affect businesses' existence, growth and development. However, while some of these conditions are favourable, some are not. The business environment comprises all environmental conditions and influences impacting business activities (Anekwe et al., 2019). Organisations aiming to succeed are encouraged to understand trends in the business environment and forces that shape intended activities (Abel, 2013). This implies that organisations must be aware of threats and opportunities outside their internal mechanisms to shield them from unwanted occurrences and embrace opportunities. Bello (2011) reveals the growing international evidence that a sustainable business climate should be encouraged within the ambience of sound governmental policies, which is essential for promoting rapid and sustainable development.

### **Sit-at-home Order and its Economic Implications in Nigeria**

Osita, Anoke, and Eze (2022) investigated the effect of the mandatory closure of markets on Mondays by IPOB and its economic implications in Southeast Nigeria. The study revealed that sit-at-home orders have a substantial hostile effect on the economic activities

in south-east Nigeria. Similarly, Mark, Obi, and Oham (2022) examined the effect of the IPOB sit-at-home order on the economy of Nigeria's South-East geo-political zone. It was revealed that IPOB had undermined the economy of its people, the easterners. Olusola (2021) explores the prospect of the power-sharing model in tackling under-representation, political exclusion, and marginalization in Nigeria. The study fostered a rotation of power among the six geo-political zones in the country. Chukwudi, Gberevbie, Abasilim and Imhonopi (2019) examined governmental strategies in response to the growing agitation among the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). The study reports that the government's strategy in addressing the ongoing Biafra separatist movement is through excessive use of force. Alumona, Azom and Iloh (2017) revealed that governmental inactions and lopsided policies are perceived as collective victimisation against the Igbo tribe, hence their need to agitate.

### **Impact of Herders-Farmers Conflict on National Development**

Aziagba and Ahom (2021) historicize the effect of the herders-farmers conflict in Nigeria since 1914 and its implications on nation-building. It was revealed that the conflict metamorphosed from a local community conflict to a large-scale conflict through the use of sophisticated weapons aimed at ancestral displacement. Also, Emmanuel, Yahaya and Mohammed (2019) explored the impact of Farmers-Herdsman Conflict on Socio-Economic Activities in Agatu LGA of Benue State, Nigeria. Among other things, the study revealed that the destruction of crops was one of the causes of Farmers-herdsmen conflict. In contrast, the socio-economic impacts of the conflict were the destruction of lives/properties, reduction of outputs/income and the reduction of quality in the social relationship between the Nomads and farmers. Similarly, Okoro (2018) examined the prevalence of herdsmen-farmer conflict and its effects on socioeconomic development in Nigeria. Results show that the conflict has degenerated into loss of lives, displacement, distrust, and destruction of property.

### **Methodology**

The study utilised a qualitative research design. The qualitative aspect was obtained through an in-depth interview with selected participants. For information acquisition and research goals, Fulani cow sellers-herders in Amansea, selected owners of SMEs in Anambra state, and Farmers in the Ebenebe community were interviewed. Selected owners/managers of SMEs were recruited from the four (4) main commercial hubs of Anambra state which are Onitsha, Awka, Nnewi, and Ekwulobia. Participants were picked because of the need to understand how SMEs sustain activities despite economic hardship. The subject matter experts are farmers and herders in Anambra state, who are at the front burner of the historical conflict. Participants were invited through mobile phone calls and face-to-face. Through referral, some participants were reached; while some consented to participate in the study, others did not. However, ten participants were recruited to

participate in the session. The option of a mobile phone interview was made available to allow for flexibility in the location of participants.

Thematic and Content methods of analysis were employed to analyse the in-depth interview. Thematic analysis was used to deduce the choice of participants' words, such that repeated words in the conversation are grouped accordingly. On the other hand, content analysis was utilised in establishing relationships among participants' choice of words, themes, and concepts.

### Qualitative Analysis and Data Presentation

The demographic information of participants is shown in tables 1-3 below. The tables are classified into SMEs/owners, Herders, and farmers' demographic information tables.

**Table 1:** SMEs owners'/Managers Demographic information

Name	Gender	Employees	Line of Business	Geographical Location
Respondent .O	M	12	Building Materials	Ogidi/Onitsha
Respondent .U	M	14	Mobile phones/Gadgets	Main Mkt, Onitsha
Respondent .U	M	12	Automobile	Nnewi
Respondent .A	F	15	Outdoor catering	Awka RD, Onitsha
Respondent .M	M	16	Oil & Gas	Ziks avenue & Onitsha Enugu Rd, Awka
Respondent .I	M	18	Quick Service Restaurant	Awka
Respondent .J	M	25	Transport & Logistics	Ekwulobia
Respondent. F	F	13	Quick Service Restaurant	Nnewi

*Researchers Compilation, 2023*

Table 1 reveals the demographic information of the participants involved in an in-depth interview. Eight participants were involved in the interview, with six (6) males and two (2) females, which denotes gender inclusiveness. The number of employees working in these SMEs ranged from 12 – 25, which meets our set criteria for including SMEs (10 – 49) and not MSMEs, which are usually below 10. The lines of businesses studied are the construction industry, Information Communication Technology (ICT), Oil and gas, Quick Service Sector, and the transportation sector.



**Table 2:** Herders Demographic Information

Name	Gender	Age	Years of Experience	State of Origin
Respondent .B	M	32	17	Sokoto
Respondent A.M	M	73	53	Gombe
Respondent. R	M	27	13	Bauchi
Respondent A.A	M	74	51	Kebbi

*Researcher's Compilation, 2023*

From Table 2, it can be deduced that two out of the four participants are classified as the baby boomer generation (1946 – 1965), while the other two are Generation Y or millennial generation (1981 – 200). The intention is to obtain historical information as well as present field information. As per the gender disposition of herders, they are all male adults. In terms of herding experience, the experienced herders have been involved for 53 and 51 years, respectively, while the younger ones have garnered 17 and 13 years under their belts. These herders all hail from the northern region of Nigeria, as is shown in table 2.

**Table 3:** Farmers Demographic Information

Name	Gender	Age	Years of Farming	Community/Sate
Respondent .N	M	81	43 (Inactive)	Ebenebe, Anambra
Respondent .E	M	39	14 (Active)	Amansea, Anambra
Respondent. A	F	74	30 (Inactive)	Ebenebe, Anambra
Respondent .N	M	38	18 (Active)	Amansea, Anambra

*Researcher's Compilation, 2023*

In table 3, we have three male and a single female farmer, denoting gender inclusiveness. Farmers N and A are eighty-one (81) and seventy-four (74), respectively. On the other hand, the younger farmers are thirty (38) and thirty-nine (39) respectively. The two eldest farmers are no longer active in farming activities, while the two younger ones are involved in daily farming activities in their community. All four farmers are from Anambra state, Nigeria. Ebenebe and Amansea communities share a common border, and both border Enugu state, Nigeria.

### Thematic Analysis of Management Interview

Substantively, the major themes discussed under the management interview are perceived political displacement, structure of operational authority, customer retention, and business relocation.



**Political Marginalization (Appendix C, Q. 5)**

Participants, in their opinion, all pointed to the political displacement of the Igbos as the critical reason for the incessant sit-at-home directive in Anambra state. According to participants' opinion, it was an intentional act by President Buhari to maltreat the Igbos by totally ignoring the principle of federal character. Participants affirm the need to disintegrate the country since a prominent tribe has been politically maltreated and consciously sidelined. However, participants from the quick service industry are opposed to the sit-at-home orders. Reason for acting against the illegal directive is the perishability of service items. By implication, agitations will persist if present and subsequent administrations fail to adopt the principle of federal character.

**Structure of Operational Authority (Appendix C, Qs 6, 7&8)**

Authority structure is a significant factor that spells the operational activities of SMEs in Anambra state. Participants stated that their willingness to remain at home and not open to customers on sit-at-home days is due to unwanted attacks as reported on media. Consequentially, these participants have taken to obeying the announcements by IPOB rather than the instruction given by the state government. This implies that these businesses' operational authority rests on IPOB's permission to re-open business rather than legitimate authority.

**Customer Retention (Appendix C, Q. 9 & 10)**

As much as participants crave political inclusiveness, thus venting their anger through sit-at-home orders, they are also aware of low patronage due to heightened insecurity. Interviewed participants lamented their inability to keep their business running given that some of them in the food industry would have to refrigerate their perishable commodities for Mondays and days Nnamdi Kanu will appear in court. Also, a sit-at-home order prevents customers from Delta, Edo, Kogi, and Benue states from entering the southeast region; thereby prompting them to seek alternative markets for business activities.

**Business Relocation (Appendix C, Q.11 & 12)**

Interviewed participants opine that business survival may hinge on establishing outlets in Asaba for uninterrupted economic activity. However, participants with heavy equipment said it would be difficult to embark on such a plan without a substantial financial outlay. This implies that inter-state capital flight may not be farfetched, hence will further reduce Anambra state's internally generated revenue (IGR).

**Thematic Analysis on Farmers-Herders'**

Under this section, interview questions were organized into: vocational choice, interpersonal information, geographical ownership, economic survival, business climate, and interventions.

#### **Vocational Choice (Appendix D, Q.5 & Q.14)**

When interviewed on the choice of being farmers and herders, responses were as follows: the older and inactive farmers, N (81 yrs.) and A (74 yrs.), said they never wanted to be farmers but due to low-income family background, they had to take up farming as a profession since their parents could not afford formal education. The other younger farmers, E (39 yrs.) and N (38 yrs.) said farming is a part-time occupation from whence they raise money for family expenses. Aside from farming, they are motorist and tailor, respectively. However, they are formally educated.

Herders A. M (73 yrs.) and A. A (74 yrs.) became actively involved in herding at a younger age, but are now retired to selling cows in Amansea Awka, Anambra state. They both said herding is an ancestral responsibility, passed down to them, and they are expected to teach succeeding generation this tradition. Finally, the much younger herders, B (32 yrs.) and R (27 yrs.) said they are carrying out the duty bequeathed to them by their fathers, citing humility as the virtue that keeps them going. This implies that both herders and farmers are involved in commercial agriculture.

#### **Cross-Occupational Information (Appendix D, Q.7; Q.9 & Q.18)**

Historically, Herders A. M and A. A said they have been in Anambra state since they were little boys because of the welcoming nature of the state's people. They said it dates back to the 80s. As they explained, Anambra state has an abundance of feeds for herd, noting that there are different regions within Anambra state where they get feed variety for herds. Herders B and R said they came to Anambra ten years ago to exploit herding opportunities in the region. While growing up, older farmers' N and A said that the herders had reasons to come around their community to feed their herds with unwanted plants. According to them, the herders they once knew in the past were friendly, such that, they occasionally offer cows to communities as gifts. More interestingly, the younger farmers, N and E, are of the opinion that herders can be dangerous when provoked. Sadly, when asked if they knew why these herders were in Anambra state, they both said they were here to monitor the state's terrain for planned Islamization of Anambra state. There seems to be a gap in interpersonal knowledge between herders and farmers.

#### **Territorial Ownership (Appendix D, Q.19)**

In terms of ownership of Anambra state, the herders agreed that in as much as Anambra state belongs to the people of the state by birth and ancestral ownership, they believe that since we claim to be Nigerians, they should be allowed to move freely in regions; however, noting that they are not dragging land ownership with Anambrarians. They also pointed out that Igbos in the Northern part of Nigeria are allowed to purchase land, build structures and grow businesses.

### **Economic Survival (Appendix D, Q.11; Q.10, Q21 & Q.20)**

When herders and farmers were told of the allegation levied on them, which is herders' destruction of farmland, and Farmers stealing the livestock of herders. They both denied the allegation, claiming no knowledge of such accusation. They both agreed that as much as herders depend on their herds to survive, farmers depend on their farm produce to survive. However, after much twisting, the farmers and herders agreed that they would not deny the activities of youth who are on hard drugs that go about causing carnage. Consequentially, farmers and herders understand that an individual can behave violently if his means of economic survival is threatened.

### **Operational – Business Environment**

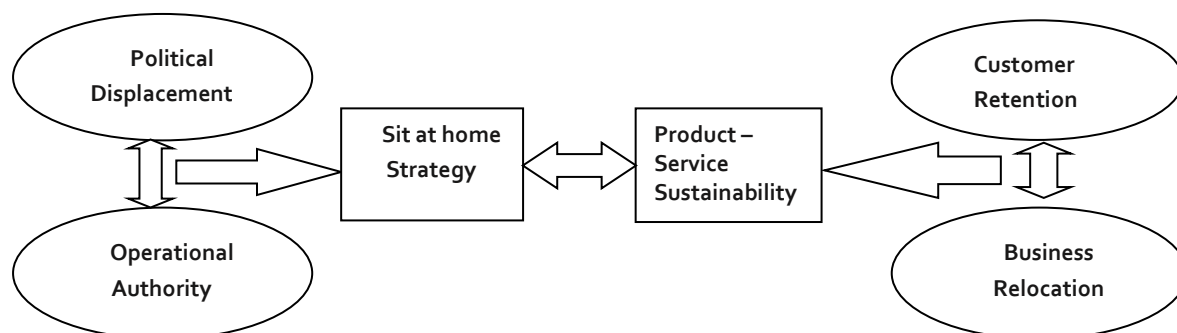
According to herders and farmers, the conflict has affected the patronage and conduct of business activity in Anambra state. Herders complained of periods when the Unknown gunmen attacked their herds, killing over 30 market-ready cows in Nanka, resulting in a loss in the region of twenty million naira in that particular incident. The herders and cow sellers cited the hostility in Anambra state as their livestock market was moved from Anambra state to Asaba Delta state. Equally, farmers were not without worry. They pointed out that the ongoing conflict between herders and farmers discourages them from going to their farmland, not knowing if an attack on them has been planned. This implies that Anambra's business climate is not conducive for the herders and farmers amidst the unresolved conflict.

### **Interventions (Appendix D, Q.13; Q.22 & Q. 23)**

Finally, a critical substantive issue rests on the role of conflict mediation by herders' associations and traditional rulers. Herders said they have a forum where they report gory incidents to the elders, who then inform the security operatives or the state governor through assigned channels. Herders commended the past two governors of Anambra State, Mr Peter Obi and Chief Willie Obiano, for creating avenues through which conflicts were swiftly resolved. However, they pointed out that they will not deny that some herders do not report incidents to them; instead, they take laws into their own hands. Farmers, on the other hand, claimed that they do report violent incidents to the communities' vigilante services before they bring the matter to their traditional ruler, who most times wastes much time before taking action. Additionally, the older farmers said that the younger generations are involved in a reprisal attack on the external force. This implies that some farmers and herders are involved in jungle justice, which tends to escalate the existing conflict.

### **Content Analysis of Management Interview**

The content analysis aims to establish the relationship between the concepts of thematic analysis. Rather than discussing themes in isolation, content analysis links themes together. It will be better to present diagrammatically



**Figure 1:** Diagrammatic representation of management interview content analysis, *Researcher's Conceptualization, 2023*

Figure 1 shows the critical thematic issues discussed in the management interview section. The thematic issues are political displacement and operational authority on one side, while customer retention and business relocation are on the other. Content analysis has a way of establishing links between themes developed in the thematic analysis. The figure above shows that the standard issue arising from political displacement and operational authority is the sit-at-home strategy. Conversely, product-service sustainability is a merger between customer retention and business relocation. Deduced from the discussion, it means that in as much as SMEs agree to the claim of political displacement of the Igbo tribe, they, however, opt that their business remains closed on declared sit-at-home days, which is a way to vent accumulated displeasure. They also claim that they rely more on the information from the enforcers of the order than the government of Anambra state. However, what baffles one is that they acknowledge that their business operations are declining; therefore, they plan relocation to nearby states. This implies that as the sense of perceived political displacement increases, the willingness to ignore the authority of Anambra state's government increases, SMEs' willingness to devise customer retention strategies, and the intention to relocate their business increases. About hypothesis one, the sit-at-home order affects the product-service sustainability of SMEs in Anambra state, Nigeria.

### Content Analysis of Subject Matter Expert

Under the thematic issues on the subject matter experts, the key themes are interpersonal information, territorial ownership, economic survival, and interventions, all sub-themes of herders-farmers conflict. The operational business environment is the sub-theme of the business climate in the thematic analysis. This means that for the business environment of Anambra state to be friendly towards investors, there should be a clear understanding between herders and farmers on critical issues relating to interpersonal information, territorial ownership, economic survival, and the need to utilize interventions. Therefore, there is a significant negative relationship between herders-farmers conflict and the business climate of Anambra state.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Based on the content analysis of the management interview, it was revealed that as a sense of perceived political displacement increases, the willingness further to ignore the authority of Anambra state's government increases, and SMEs' willingness to devise customer retention strategy and the intention to relocate their businesses increase as well. This assertion agrees with previous studies, such as the study of Owoeye, Ezeanya and Obiegbunam (2022) that revealed that established IPOB Monday sit-at-home has negatively affected the socio-political and economic activities of the Southeast region of Nigeria and the work of Chukwudi, Gberevbie, Abasilim and Imhonopi (2019) who revealed that government's use of force to resolve the agitation of IPOB will not yield needed result. Finally, on the second qualitative research question, it was revealed that a significant negative relationship exists between herders-farmers conflict and the business climate of Anambra state. This implies that as herder-farmers conflict increases, the less investment attractive Anambra state becomes. Regarding territorial ownership, Poopola, Brima and Olawale (2020) discovered that farmers-herdsmen conflicts would likely disintegrate the Nigerian state despite the region. In contrast, Okoro (2019) revealed that the conflicts have resulted in loss of lives, displacement, distrust, and destruction of properties, among others.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

This study focused on how the unaddressed political marginalization nurtured in Nigeria's eastern states has resulted to civil unrest, where illegal groups through threat force businesses to remain closed on days they want businesses to remain closed. This singular act has for a longtime plagued the region of peace, prosperity, and sustained progress. Also, the historical conflict between farmers and herders in the region has gathered concern as researchers through findings and prompt recommendations encouraged the government to intervene in an ongoing conflict that is claiming the lives of people, and rendering in futility the economic progress of farmers and herders alike. In line with the study findings, the under-listed recommendations are made;

- SME owners that wish to relocate their business should conduct a proper market analysis before making an entry. Firstly, a proper market analysis involves comparing the opportunities and threats that exists in the proposed environment with its opportunities and threats that exist in Anambra state. Secondly, there is need to ascertain if the current internal capabilities will match the demand of the external environment. The availability of this information will equip owners of SMEs in Anambra state to take informed decisions based on assessment rather than uncalculated risk.
- Unfriendly and an insecure business environment prevent investments and adversely affect employment creation and revenue generation of an economy. From the findings of the study, as long as conflicts still exist between herders and farmers in Anambra state, rural – minded investors will most likely not invest in

Anambra state's rural areas because of the heightened conflict. The governor of Anambra state needs to consciously set up or empower if any, an internal mechanism under the ministry of agriculture to devise workable plans and strategies on how to resolve the existing conflict in order to boost investors' confidence in the state.

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## APPENDIX C

### Interview Guide

#### Management Interview

##### Management Interview guide for SMEs:

1. Welcome reception for participants
2. Kindly tell me your name?
3. What is your line of Business?
4. How many workers do you currently have?
5. Kindly tell us why you think the Igbo tribe has been political displaced by tribes such as Hausas, Fulanis, and Yorubas?
6. Is the cry of IPOB for the disintegration of Nigeria is justified?
7. Does your business remain closed on sit at home days? If yes, why?
8. Does your willingness to re – open business on Mondays depends on IPOB announcement not the Anambra State Government? When are re-open your business?
9. Since the start of the sit at home order, will you say you have lost a great deal of customers? Why? And How?
10. As a result of the sit at home order, how infrequent have your customers become in their purchase?
11. Given the rate of business instability in Anambra state, how have you been meeting up with changed customers' expectation?
12. How difficult will it be to relocate your business to either Delta or Edo state?

## APPENDIX D

### Subject Matter Experts Interview

#### Subject Matter Experts guide for Herders and Farmers:

##### Preliminary Questions:

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?

3. How many years have you been herding/farming?
4. What is your state of origin?

**Farmers:**

5. Why did you choose to be a farmer?
6. How long have you been farming?
7. In your understanding, who are the herdsmen?
8. Do you know why they are here in Anambra state and not in their state?
9. Are they friendly or unfriendly people?
10. What do you have to say about herdsmen's claim that some villagers and/or farmers are in the habit of stealing their flocks?
11. Do you know herders feed their families from the sale of cows?
12. Does Anambra state belong to just Anambrarians or to every Nigerian?
13. In the current conflict with herdsmen, what are your kinsmen or traditional rulers doing to resolve the conflict?

**Herders:**

14. Why did you choose to be a herder?
15. How long have you been herding?
16. How long have you been herding in Southern Nigeria?
17. Why did you decide to herd in Anambra state?
18. Are the people of Anambra friendly or unfriendly?
19. Does Anambra state belong to Anambrarians or to Nigerians?
20. What do you have to say about farmers claim that herders and their cows are destroying their crops and farmlands?
21. If crops and farmlands are destroyed, do you think farmers will be able to feed their families?
22. Do you have herders' association in Anambra state?
23. What is your association doing to resolve the conflict between farmers and herders?