

Ethno-communal crisis and its implication on food security and business activities in Nigeria

Felix E. Ojong*, A. M. Ogaboh Agba, Chinenye J. Njirinze, & Pius U. Angioha

University of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria

Abstract

This assessed available information on the effect of ethno-communal crisis on food security and business activities in Nigeria. Literature was reviewed according to the variables raised in the study. The study adopted Eco-violence theory for the study. The survey design was used in the study. Four hundred (400) participants from Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State were selected using purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Data was gathered from respondents using a structured questionnaire. Results revealed that ethno-communal crisis has a significant impact on food security and business activities. It was recommended that the government, in collaboration with traditional rulers, should set up well-defined boundaries between communities.

Keywords: Ethno-communal crisis, food security, business activities.

1. Introduction

There is no nation of the world that has not gone through one conflict or another in its history. However, the nature of these conflicts has changed drastically since the end of the cold war. The new pattern of conflict is within nation-states as a result of scarce resources and struggle for power. According to Chikaire, Orusha, Amanze & Asony (2006), approximately 386 communal crises occurred between 1989 and 2004 in African, accounting for 131 563 deaths in Nigeria, Somalia, Uganda and DR Congo. For instance, since early 1980, Nigeria has recorded devastating ethno-religious crisis, especially among the 19 states that make up the northern part of the country. The spate of ethno-communal crisis has been increasing even after the return to democratic rule in 1999. No part of the country has been spared of the shattering scourge of communal conflicts, although their prevalence and intensity varies.

In Cross River State, ethno-communal or boundary crisis are common occurrences either within the state or between communities sharing boundaries with other states. In most recent times, the incident has been on the increase resulting in wanton loss of property. For example, the crisis between Ebom and Ebyiakara communities in Abi has led to the loss of life and destruction of properties worth millions of Naira. Others communal crisis with devastating consequences are the Bojce and Nsadop conflict, Onyadama and Nko crisis, Inyma and Odenegha ethno-communal conflict (Bisong & Eremi, 2018; Ukwayi, Angioha & Ojong-Ejoh, 2018; Ingwe, Agba, & Ndum, 2014). The list is endless and has become intermittent, often very destructive and occurring frequently. It has become a treat to life and security and has become a draining pipe to the state's finance, as money is spent to set up IDP camps, panel of inquiring and rehabilitation centres across the state (Agba, Agba, Ushie & Akwara, 2009; Agba, Ushie, Abam, Agba & Okoro, 2010; Ndem, Angioha & Dike, 2020; Ojong, Iji & Angioha, 2019)

This study investigates the effect of these crisis on food security and business activities with special focus on the crisis in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study is designed to: (i) To assess the extent to which ethno-communal crisis relates to food security in Nigeria. (ii) To examine the extent to which ethno-communal crisis significantly influence business activities in Nigeria.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: ejaojong3@unical.edu.ng (Felix E. Ojong)

2. Content and geographical scope of the study

The content scope of the study is aimed at examining ethno-communal crisis and its implication on food security and business activities in Nigeria. The study is limited to studying the impact of ethno-communal crisis on food security and business activities. The geographical scope of the study is limited to Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State. The study is limited to communities within Yakurr Local Government Area that have in recent time experienced ethno-communal conflict.

Yakurr Local Government Area was calved out of Obubra in 1987 with Ugep as its headquarters. It lies between latitude $5^{\circ} 40'$ and $6^{\circ} 10'$ N and longitude $8^{\circ} 2'$ and $6^{\circ} 10'$ E and 120km North of Calabar. It shares boundaries in the south and east with Biase Local Government Area, in the North with Abi Local Government Area. It is made up of thirteen (13) political wards. The local government area has a projected population of 262,300 (NPC & Bureau of Statistics, 2017). It has a landmass of approximately 670 4385 square kilometres. The people are predominantly farmers, as agriculture and trading are major economic activities of the people. Over the years, there have been continuous communal conflicts between Ugep and its neighbours, including Mkpani, Idimi, Ekori and Adam. There are also clashes between Mkpani and Nko, all in Yakurr Local Government Area over farmlands.

3. Literature review and theoretical framework

3.1. Ethno-communal conflict and food security

Crops and livestock production is the main economic activity of rural communities. Ethno communal conflict has a negative consequence on agricultural production. During ethno communal crisis, warring communities tend to resort to manipulating access to agricultural production. Thus, communal conflict tend to affect food security (Messer, Cohen & Marchione, 2004). The food and Agriculture organization (2004) maintain that ethno communal conflicts in the last 40 years have cost Africa more than 120 billion Dollars in Agriculture produce. Ethno communal conflicts have the propensity to limit food production and deny people access to food supply. The food Research Policy Institution (2004) posits that conflict and most post-conflict zones in Africa are home to communities suffering from food insecurity. The Food and Agricultural Organization estimates that almost 52 billion dollars have been lost from Agricultural production in sub-Saharan Africa due to conflict between 1970 and 1997, equivalent to 75% of all development assistance received by nations affected by conflict. It is estimated that developing countries lost an average of 4.3 billion dollars every year. This amount is enough to raise the food intake of over 330 million undernourished people to a minimum required level.

Since 2000, the continuous rise in food cost has contributed to the increase in the number of people suffering from food insecurity, from 857 million to 102 billion in 2009 (National Program For Food Security, 2009). The rise in food cost may not be connected to the crisis in developing nations, especially Africa. O'Grada (2007) argued that the famine in most sub-Saharan Africa Nations is connected to ethno and communal crisis, especially in Nigeria, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Somalia. The United Nation (1993) reported that in sub-Saharan Africa, and the ability to produce, trade and have access to food supply is indirectly or directly affected by conflict. Messer, Cohen and Marchione (2002), World Food Program (2004) confirmed that the ethno communal crisis hinders normal economic activities, destroys infrastructural facilities and cut off access to food supply, thereby subjecting people to food insecurity. Chikare, Orusha, Irebusi, Amanze and Asonye (2006) on the impact of conflict on achieving food security in the South-east Nigeria, 150 respondents were selected using the multi-stage sampling technique. Findings revealed that land dispute, traditional ruler tussle, counterclaim to land, unemployment were the cause of communal conflicts. Results showed that communal crisis causes food loss, loss of lives, farmland abandonment, labour migration, poor farm yields, malnutrition, increased transport cost. In a study in Nigeria's Guinea Savannah by Fiki and Lee (2004) in which 150 household members were interviewed, 22 reported loss of standing crops. 41 reported loss of their livestock, while eight households from both sides report loss of human lives to communal conflict.

3.2. Ethno-communal conflict and business activities

The continuous reoccurrence of communal crisis in communities have had devastating consequences on business activities. Communal crisis can severely constrain business activities by interrupting production, destroying business infrastructures and diverting resources meant for production to use for other crisis issues. Adeyemi (2006) argued that one significant implication of continuous ethnoreligious conflict is the insecurity and loss of lives and properties, which hinders people from conducting their business activities. Saheed and Egwaikhide (2012) investigated the effect of conflict on the efficient use of natural and human resources to develop the economy. The descriptive analysis revealed that ethno-communal conflict hinders and clogs business activities and economic growth in Nigeria. Collier and Hoeffler (1998) asserts that one of the most obvious implication of conflict is the disruption in the smooth running of business activities. This is because disputes reduce the economy's taxability since businesses tend to be disrupted when conflicts happen.

Collier (1998) rightly pointed out that conflict leads to the diversion of public expenditure away from output enhancing activities. It damages the economy through the destruction of vital resources. Alabi and Famakinwa (2017) study the effects of communal conflicts on rural economic activities in Osun State, Nigeria. The results showed the impact of disputes to include loss of properties (mean=2.23), reduction in income (mean=2.23), disruption of economic activities (mean=2.22) and loss of employment (mean=2.10), among others. Onwumah (2014) asserts that in financial terms, ethno communal conflicts destroy business facilities and resources which business owners took time to acquire. Also, communal conflict result in a lack of business investment from foreign investors in nations effect by conflict. Nwaomah (2011) maintained that ethno-communal and religious conflicts in Nigeria have affected investors' investment options in the affected state.

4. Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the Eco-Violence Theory of Homer-Dixon (1999). The theory examines the inter-linkage between environmental changes and possible conflict situation. The eco-violence theory derives its epistemological foundation from the political ecology perspective (Okoli & Handeior, 2018). According to Homer-Dixon (1999), the theory's basic assumption is that reduction in the quantity and quality of resources, increase in population and access to resources singularly or in combination with other variable act to increase scarcity both for the community suffering from scarcity and the larger society. This may cause migration of the affected population to new communities and areas, while a decrease in wealth might cause communal deprivation.

The theory's fundamental assumptions are that scarcity of resources is a product of an inadequate supply, a lot of demand and unequal distribution of resources resulting from environmental hazards that causes some parts of society into deprivation conditions. The four sources of scarcity are also caused by economic development, climate change, pollution, and population size. This scarcity in renewable resources hinders economic and agricultural production while also disrupting business activities, migration and poverty. Disrupted economic activities and migration will more likely strengthen the already segmented religious, ethnic and linguistic divide of the society (Gleditsch & Urdal, 2002), thus precipitate conflicts. The theory to this study overemphasized scarce resources, including land, cause that communal disputes. It also reveals that population growth could lead to limited resources and deprivation. More so, economic development could lead to scares resources that may result in conflict among parties in production.

5. Methodology

The researcher adopted the survey design. It was adopted because it allows for empirical enquiry of either a large or a small population. The study obtained cross-sectional data from the respondents by means of a questionnaire. The study population comprises all adult male and female whose community has witnessed one ethno-communal crisis or the other. The sample size used for this study is four hundred (400). Taro Yamane sampling determination Technique was used to determine the sample size. The study purposively selected four communities from Yakurr Local Government Area. The communities are Ugep, Mpkani, Ekori and Nko. These communities were chosen because reoccurrence of communal conflicts in their domains. The researcher adopted the simple random sampling technique in selecting one hundred (100) respondents from each of the four purposively chosen communities.

The questionnaire was the main instrument of data collection. The instrument was designed in a way to elicit needed information from respondents. Elucidated data from the field was edited and checked for accuracy. The instrument was then coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Statistical means such as percentages, bar charts, and pie charts were used to analyze the data for demographic features. The testing of the hypotheses raised was done using One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 confidence level.

6. Results

There are 400 copies of questionnaires were administered, of which 355 were retrieved for analysis, accounting for an 88.75 per cent response rate. Forty-five (45) copies of the questionnaire were either wrongly filled or not returned. As presented in Table 1, out of the 355 respondents, 225 (63.4%) were male, while 130 (36.6%) were female.

Table 1. Bio-data of respondents

Demographic Information		Frequency	Percentages (%)
Gender	Male	225	63.4
	Female	130	36.6
	Total	355	100.0
Age	18-25 years	63	17.7
	26-32 years	71	20.0
	33-39 years	93	26.2
	40-47 years	77	21.7
	48 years and above	51	14.4
	Total	355	100.0
Occupation	Civil servant	80	22.5
	Farmer	122	34.4
	Trader	46	13.0
	Students	54	15.2
	Others	53	14.9
Educational qualification	No formal education	91	25.6
	Completed primary school	55	15.5
	Completed secondary school	140	39.4
	Completed tertiary education	69	19.4
	Total	355	100.0

Table 1 shows the age of respondents. From the table, out of 355 respondents, 63 (17.7%) respondents are between 18 and 25 years, 71 (20.0%) respondents are between 26 and 32 years, 93 (26.2%) are between 33 and 39 years, 77 (21.7%) respondents are between 40 and 47 years; 51 (14.4%) are aged 48 years and more. In the Table, the occupation status of respondents are shown, it reveals that out of 355 respondents, 80 (22.5%) respondents are civil servants, 122 (34.4%) respondents are farmers, 46 (13.0%) are traders, 54 (15.2%) respondents are students and 53 (14.9%) are involved in other occupations. More so, the educational qualification of respondents shows that out of 355 respondents, 91 (25.6%) participants have no formal education, 55 (15.5%) respondents have completed primary school, 140 (39.4%) have secondary school certificate, and 69 (19.4%) have completed tertiary education.

6.1. Data analysis (test of hypotheses)

6.1.1. Hypothesis one

Ethno-communal crisis does not significantly relate to food security in Nigeria. The independent variable in this hypothesis is ethno-communal crisis. This was categorized into three categories, high intensity, moderate intensity and low intensity, while the dependent variable is food security. This was measured continuously. One-way analysis of variance was used to test this hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance, and the result is presented in Table 2.

Respondents were categorized into the different levels of ethno-communal conflict base on their mean score. Those whose scores were below the mean score of the variable were categorized as low intensity, within the mean as moderate intensity and above the mean as high intensity.

As presented in Table 2, there is a statistical significant influence of ethno-communal crisis on food production in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria, given by the F-value $(2, 351) = 15.411$; $p < 0.05$. By this result, the null hypothesis, which states that ethno-communal crisis does not significantly relate to food security in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria, is rejected, while the alternate hypothesis was retained. Since there is statistical significant influence of ethno-communal crisis on food production, Scheffe Post Hoc test was performed to establish the intensity (high intensity, moderate intensity and low intensity) of ethno-communal conflict witnessed in the communities affected most in food production and the result is presented in Table 3, homogeneous subsets in Table 4 to show the categories and graphical illustration in Figure 1.

Table 3 shows that communities with high intensity of ethno-communal conflict suffer more in terms of food production than communities with moderate ethno-communal conflict (Mean difference = 0.602; $p < 0.05$). Also, communities that witness high intensity of ethno-communal conflict suffer more in terms of food production than communities with low intensity of ethno-communal conflict (Mean difference = 0.843; $p < 0.05$). While on the contrary, communities with moderate intensity of ethno-communal conflict suffer a similar level of difficulty in food production as communities with low intensity of ethno-communal conflict (Mean difference = 0.241; $p > 0.05$). This result implies that the high degree/intensity of ethno-communal conflict is directly proportional to low food production in Nigeria.

As displayed in Table 4, further results imply that communities that witness moderate and low intensity of ethno-communal conflict were in the same sub-set. This means that there was no statistically significant difference between communities that saw moderate and low ethno-communal crisis in terms of food production. While communities that experience high intensity of ethno-communal conflict were in a different sub-set, signifying a statistically significant difference between communities that witness high ethno-communal crisis with communities that suffer moderate or low intensity of ethno-communal conflict in terms of food production. This could be because most ethno-communal conflict is caused by land disputes, especially during planting season. Therefore, if the planting season is interrupted by ethno-communal conflict, food production is already compromised.

As shown in Figure 1, the graphical illustration implies that the higher the intensity of ethno-communal crisis, the higher the difficulty in food production, the lower the intensity of ethno-communal crisis, and the easier food production. We can conclude that ethno-communal crisis have significant influence on food security in Nigeria

Table 2. ANOVA of influence of ethno-communal crisis on food security

Category	N	Mean	SD
Low intensity	61	22.54	1.444
Moderate intensity	142	22.78	1.204
High intensity	151	23.38	0.992
Total	354	23.00	1.213

Source of variance	Sums of Square	Df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
Between Groups	41.895	2	20.948	15.411	0.000
Within Groups	477.102	351	1.359		
Total	518.997	353			

*Significant at 0.05; $df = 2, 351$; critical F-value = 3.00

Table 3. Scheffe Post Hoc test of Ethno-communal conflict and food security

(I) Ethno-communal crisis	(J) Ethno-communal crisis	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Low intensity	Moderate intensity	-0.241	0.178	0.404
	High intensity	-0.843*	0.177	0.000
Moderate intensity	Low intensity	0.241	0.178	0.404
	High intensity	-0.602*	0.136	0.000
High intensity	Low intensity	0.843*	0.177	0.000
	Moderate intensity	0.602*	0.136	0.000

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 4. Homogeneous subsets of ethno-communal crisis and food security

	Parental support	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
			1	2
Scheffe ^{1,b}	Low intensity	61	22.54	
	Moderate intensity	142	22.78	
	High intensity	151		23.38
	Sig.		.346	1.000

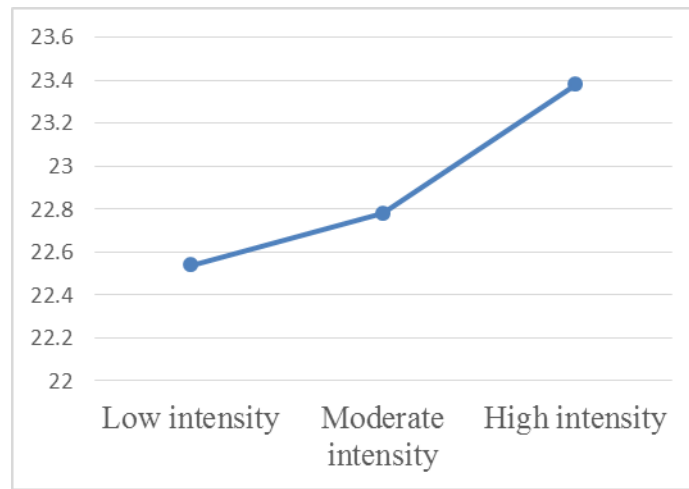


Fig. 1. Ethno-communal crisis and food security

6.1.2 Hypothesis two

In the null form, the second hypothesis states that ethno-communal crisis does not significantly influence Nigeria's business activities. The independent variable in this hypothesis is ethno-communal crisis and is categorized into three: high intensity, moderate intensity and low intensity, while the dependent variable is business activities, this was measured continuously. One-way analysis of variance was used to test this hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance, and the result is presented in Table 5. Respondents were categorized into the different levels of ethno-communal crisis based on their mean score. Those whose scores were below the mean score of the variable were grouped as low intensity, within the mean as moderate intensity and above the mean as high intensity.

The result presented in Table 5 shows that there is a statistically significant influence of ethno-communal crisis on business activities in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria, given that $F\text{-value}(2, 351) = 6.774$; $p < 0.05$. By this result, the null hypothesis, which states that ethno-communal crisis does not significantly influence business activities in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria, is rejected, while the alternate hypothesis was retained. Since there is a statistical significant influence of ethno-communal crisis on business activities, Scheffe Post Hoc test was performed to establish the intensity (high intensity, moderate intensity and low intensity) of ethno-communal conflict.

Table 6 shows, communities that witness high intensity of ethno-communal crisis suffer more in terms of business activities than those with low intensity of ethno-communal conflicts (Mean difference = 1.375; $p < 0.05$). While on the contrary, communities that witness moderate intensity of ethno-communal conflict suffer similar strain in business activities with communities that witness low-intensity ethno-communal conflict (Mean difference = 0.812; $p > 0.05$). This result implies that high intensity of ethno-communal crisis is directly proportional to low business activities in Nigeria.

As displayed in Table 7, further results imply that communities that witness moderate and low intensity of ethno-communal conflict were in the same sub-set. This means that there was no statistically significant difference between communities that witnessed moderate and low ethno-communal crisis in terms of business activities. While communities that experience high intensity of ethno-communal conflict were in a different sub-set, signifying that there was a statistically significant difference between communities that witnessed high ethno-communal crisis with those that suffered moderate or low intensity of ethno-communal conflict in terms of business activities. As shown in Figure 2, the graphical illustration implies that the higher the intensity of ethno-communal crisis, the more strain exerted on business activities. The lower the intensity of ethno-communal crisis, the ease of doing business. We can conclude that the ethno-communal crisis has a significant influence on business activities in Nigeria.

Table 5. ANOVA of influence of ethno-communal crisis on business activities

Category	N	Mean	SD
Low intensity	61	22.08	1.773
Moderate intensity	142	22.89	1.134
High intensity	151	23.46	3.483
Total	354	22.99	2.538

Source of variance	Sums of Square	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
Between groups	84.513	2	42.256	6.774	.001
Within groups	2189.476	351	6.238		
Total	2273.989	353			

Table 6. Scheffe Post Hoc test of ethno-communal crisis and business activities

(I) ethno-communal crisis	(J) Ethno-communal crisis	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Low intensity	Moderate intensity	-.812	.382	.106
	High intensity	-1.375*	.379	.002
Moderate intensity	Low intensity	.812	.382	.106
	High intensity	-.563	.292	.158
High intensity	Low intensity	1.375*	.379	.002
	Moderate intensity	.563	.292	.158

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 7. Homogeneous subsets of ethno-communal crisis and business activities

	Parental support	N	Subset for alpha =0.05	
			1	2
Scheffe ^{1,b}	Low intensity	61	22.08	
	Moderate intensity	142	22.89	
	High intensity	151		23.46
	Sig.		.073	.283

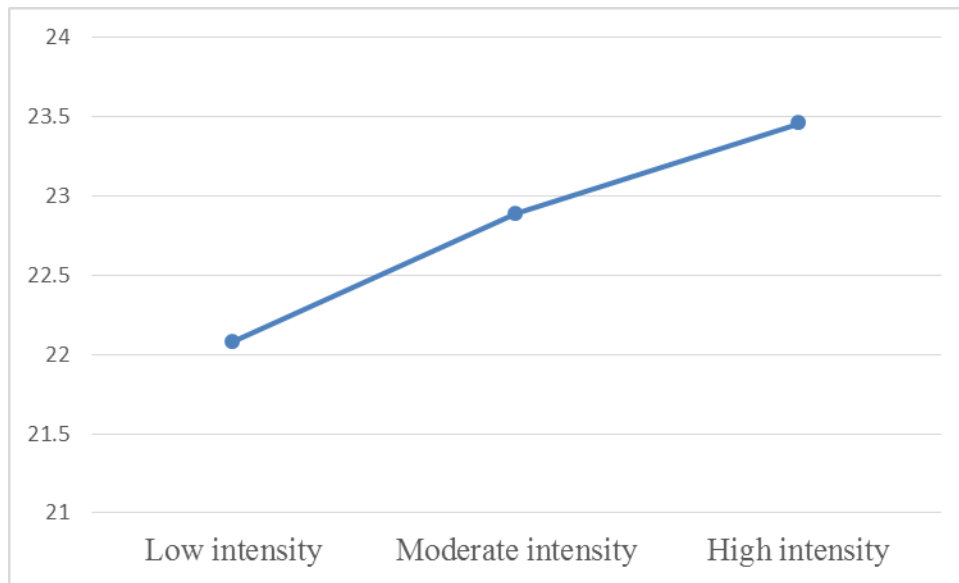


Fig. 2. Ethno-communal crisis and business activities

6.2 Discussion of findings

Results from the first hypothesis revealed that ethno-communal crisis has a significant influence on food security in Nigeria. This result implies that the ongoing ethnic-communal crisis between communities in Yakurr Local Government Area negatively affects food security. As neighbouring communities continue to clash, the people, who are mostly farmers, do not go to their farms for fear of being attacked. The findings of this study is supported by the works of FAO (2002), whose study reveals an estimates that almost 52 billion dollars have been lost from Agricultural production in Sub-Saharan Africa as a result of conflict between 1970 and 1997, figures that is equivalent to 75% all development assistance received by nations affected by conflict. It is estimated that developing countries lost an average of 4.3 billion dollars every year. This amount is enough to raise the level of food intake of over 330 million undernourished people to a minimum required level.

Food and Organization-National Programme for Food security (2009) assert that since the year 2000, rising food prices have contributed to an increasing number of food-insecure people. The organization argued that the rise in food cost might not be disconnected from the crisis in developing nations, especially Africa. O’Grada (2007) confirm that famine in most Sub-Saharan Africa nations is connected to ethno and communal crisis, especially in Nigeria, Somalia, Ethiopia and Mozambique. Also, Chikaire, Orusha, Irebuisi, Amanze and Asonye (2006) argue that that land dispute, traditional ruler tussle, counterclaim to land, unemployment were the cause of communal conflicts. This crisis negatively impacts food security and is also responsible for loss of lives, home abandonment, labour migration, inadequate savings, and increased transportation costs.

The second hypothesis revealed that the ethno-communal crisis has a significant influence on business activities in Nigeria. This result implies that communal clashes have impacted business activities in the affected communities, as people are afraid to go about their businesses because of attacks. The findings of this study are similar to that of Adeyemi (2006), who argue that one significant implication of continuous ethnoreligious conflict is the insecurity and loss of lives and properties, which hinders people from conducting their business activities. Saheed and Egwaikhide (2012) posit that Nigeria's social crises, especially corruption and ethnoreligious conflicts have been a clog on the wheels of business, economic growth and development in Nigeria. Collier and Hoeffler (1998) explained that one of the most obvious implication of conflict is the disruption in the smooth running of business activities. Onwumah (2014) posit that ethno communal conflicts destroy business facilities and resources that business owners took time to acquire. Also, communal conflict result in a lack of business investment from foreign investors in nations effect by conflict. According to Nwaomah (2011), ethno-communal and religious conflicts in Nigeria have affected investors' investment options in the affected state.

7. Conclusion and recommendations

This study's objective was to assess the information on the effect of ethnic-communal crisis on food security and business activities in Nigeria. The analysis of data gathered revealed that ethno-communal crisis significantly influences food security in Yakurr Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. It also revealed that ethno-communal crisis significantly affects business activities. The study, therefore, recommended that: The federal, state, and local governments, in collaboration with traditional rulers, should demarcate boundaries between communities. Government should create jobs for teeming unemployed youths who are highly prone to violence. Dialogue models and Robust, vibrant social communication should be put in place to resolve boundary problems without resorting to communal war. The government and other relevant agencies should duly compensate families of those who lost their lives and properties in communal conflicts.

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