

**THE EFFECT OF INSECURITY ON ECONOMIC GROWTH IN  
NORTHERN NIGERIA; AN ANALYSIS OF BOKO- HARAM ATTACKS**

**HADIZA BILYAMINU YAKUBU**

Department of Political Science  
Umaru Musa Yaradua University Katsina, Nigeria  
Ph.D. Student at Career Point University  
Kota Rajasthan India

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**ABSTRACT**

Security is literally defined by most of the mainstream writings as a state's capabilities to protect life and properties, as well as, defend its territorial integrity from either actual or imagined threats through the country's security apparatuses. Pervasive insecurity depresses the economy in many ways that this paper considers some of the salient consequences. This paper examines the causes, implications, and panaceas for insecurity on economic growth in northern Nigeria. Using a survey research design and a well-structured questionnaire, a sample size of 500 was drawn from a population of 800 elite, business persons, and farmers in northern Nigeria. The major findings show that economic growth and investment activities tend to be negatively affected during periods of insecurity. Also, the rate of employment opportunities reduced during periods of insecurity. This implies that insecurity not only threatens economic activities with a negative effect on the entire economy as conjectured by various economic theories. Thus, to continuously sustain northern Nigeria's economic growth, the government needs to protect domestic and foreign investments by stepping up its national security. All must be done to bring under control the insecurity that currently affect northern parts of the country. Government should protect and advance Nigerian economic interests against threats.

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The instance of difficulty was seen in Nigeria as far back as the year 2000 in some government's territories in the nation. However, the carelessness of this quick demonstration by the constituted expert at that point influenced it to spread to various parts of the country. Possibly the legislatures at that point were not able to understand its unfavorable impact over the long haul. As of late, their activities have constituted a great deal of danger to the whole populace and appear to have exacerbated high-security investors in the nation. (Jelilov et al, 2018) Thus, it has been observed that in areas where insecurity is prone in Nigeria, economic activities and variables have been lagging behind. For instance, in the North East of Nigeria where Boko Haram has held sway, the area has been deserted, businesses including the informal sector have been affected, unemployment has soared, Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and camps have suddenly emerged, and State internally generated revenue have plummeted, etc (Onime,2018) It has been widely argued by Yusuf et al (2022) that insecurity

and violent extremism can have a negative impact on economic growth in the short run through a variety of channels.

Terrorism reduces the capital stock of a country by destroying human and physical capital. To combat terrorism, increased government spending on security may crowd out more growth-enhancing public and private investments in social sectors such as health and education, affecting a country's long-term growth (cited in Yusuf et al 2022). The risk and uncertainty effect associated with the rising levels of insecurity causes Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to be redirected away from countries with higher security risks and toward countries with lower risks. Increased levels of insecurity reduce investment returns, reducing a developing country's capacity to attract foreign direct and portfolio investments. Furthermore, terrorist activities create economic risks and uncertainties that distort the equilibrium resource allocation within a country by influencing individuals' savings, investment and consumption behavior. Terrorist activity also stifles growth by increasing the cost of doing business through higher wages, higher insurance premiums, and increased security expenditures. These higher costs result in lower profits and, as a result, a lower return on investment. Terrorist attacks can also devastate infrastructure, causing business disruptions.

However, the intensity of the consequences of terrorist events on the economy may be varied across countries based on the economic structure.(Yusuf et al, 2022) Nigeria has been ravaged by terrorist activities which have made the country unsafe for Nigerians and foreign investors. The country was named the third most afflicted by terrorism in the 2020 Global Terrorism Index, trailing only Iraq and Afghanistan (Yusuf et al, 2022).

The current insecurity situation in Nigeria is deplorable as lives are lost on daily basis, businesses are in comatose settlements are displaced, investments are constrained, and people live in fear amid abject poverty due to low productivity and rising unemployment. This paper attempts to answer questions on what are the serious damages caused by insecurity in northern Nigeria and what are the workable solutions. The paper is divided into five sections followed by conclusions and recommendations.

## 2.0 THE CONCEPT OF INSECURITY

Aghaulor (2020) defined insecurity as a breach of peace and security, whether historical, religious, ethnic-regional, civil, social, economic, or political that contributes to recurring conflicts, and leads to wanton destruction of lives and property. (Aghaulor, 2020) Saleh (2021) says insecurity is characterized by the vulnerability of an individual or group to danger or harm against which they cannot take defensive action(Saleh, 2021). According to Beland (2005), insecurity entails a lack of protection from crime (Being unsafe) and lack of freedom from Psychological harm unprotected from emotional stress resulting from a paucity of assurance that an individualism accepted, has opportunity and choices to fulfil his or her own potentials including freedom from fear(cited in Ebipre et al 2020). Insecurity as an antithesis of security refers to a condition that exists due to the lack of effective measures put in place to protect individuals, information, and property against hostile persons, influences, and actions. Insecurity is simply a situation in which individuals in a given society cannot go

about their daily activities as a result of the threat to and harmful disruption of their lives and property (Umaru et al 2015)

### 3.0 THE CONSEQUENCES OF INSECURITY IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

Insecurity is one of the major reasons for Nigeria's unattractiveness for inward foreign investment in the last five years, amongst other factors such as policy dysfunctions, including multiple exchange rates of the Central Bank of Nigeria. Poor transport infrastructure, unreliable grid-electricity supply (which exacerbates high operating costs), inefficient judicial system, and unreliable alternative dispute resolution mechanisms are some of the other factors accounting for the decline in FDI flows into the country.

Boko Haram is considered the most dangerous Militant Islamic group in the northern part of Nigeria that seeks the imposition of Sharia Law in the Northern States. Ideologically, the group opposes western education, culture, and modern science. Historically, the Boko Haram group was founded in 2002 in Maiduguri by Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf. In 2004, it moved to Kanama in Yobe state, where it set up base called „Afghanistan“ used to attack nearby Police stations and killing police officers (Ebipre et al 2020) Further, insecurity have resulted to a rise in incidences of kidnapping and assassinations. No wonder the number of assassinations continued to be on the increase. This was put at 1255 persons in year 2000, increasing by 1295 to 2550 in year 2004, until it got to an all-time high of 38,955 persons in year 2009.(Onime, 2018). Recent evidences show that terrorism is becoming frequent in Nigeria, ranging from incessant Boko Haram and its offshoot, the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) insurgency in the North East; Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) activities in the South-East states, kidnapping and vandalization of oil pipes in the South-South, nomadic cattle herders and farmers clashes in the Middle Belt, banditry and a thriving mass abduction-for-ransom business in the North-West and North-central states among others. (Yusuf, 2022) In the same vein, the operations of various insecurity monsters affect the economic activities of both the crisis region and the noncrises region. Nigeria as a nation has had a long, checkered history of religious upheavals. The religious uprising gave birth to problems of insecurity especially the current Boko Haram insurrection and others before it started in the northern city of Kano in 2009 and later spread to other cities, mostly in the north. The emergence and growth of the Boko Haram sect have been attributed mainly to social malaise and the absence of effective engagement of the nation's youths

Olusegun, (2016). Many people in our official security agencies also corruptly enrich themselves through security-related procurements. Although all these powerful people are few in number, they are influential enough to perpetuate insecurity as that is more profitable for them than tranquility. The activities of the Boko Haram group constitute serious security challenges in the contemporary Nigerian state. The activities of members of this group have raised critical questions among investors on the safety of their investments in Nigeria. It has also threatened the existence and survival of many businesses in Nigeria, especially in the northern part of the country. This ranges from killing innocent Nigerians, raping women, and bombing major cities and police stations in the northern part of Nigeria, particularly, Borno, Kano, Bauchi, Niger, Yobe, Adamawa, and Abuja, among others.(Okoro, 2019) Weak security system is one of the major contributory factors to the level of insecurity in Nigeria. According to Olonisakin (2008), the police-population ratio in Nigeria is 1 per 450 people

which falls below the standard set by the United Nations. The implication of this is that Nigeria is grossly policed and this partly explains the inability of the Nigerian Police Force to effectively combat crimes and criminality in the country. (cited in Benedict et al, 2021)

## 4.0 METHODOLOGY

Using a survey research design and well-structured questionnaires, a sample size of 500 was drawn from a population of 800 elite, business persons and farmers in northern Nigeria. The purpose of the key informant interview is to collect information from a wide range of people including community leaders, professionals, private security experts or residents who have firsthand knowledge about conflict and insecurity in Nigeria. The research uses the Key Informant Interview which involved interviewing people (experts and professionals) who have particularly informed perspectives on all aspects of insecurity being evaluated. Also, a cross-section of youths in churches and mosques were engaged in focus group discussion to sample their opinion on the causes, impacts, and the way out of insecurity in Nigeria. This method has helped to secure a participant with unique knowledge of the topic. It takes less time than in-depth interview and also reduces the financial costs and the risk of being physically present with every stakeholder for information or data collection.

More so, information from just anyone may not be reliable but misleading for a study of this magnitude, hence the need for accurate information informed the choice of methods. It was complemented by a structured questionnaire. A structured questionnaire is a document that consists of a set of standardized questions with a fixed scheme, which specifies the exact intent and order of the questions, for gathering information from respondents. The sample of 382 questionnaires was sorted, classified, and interpreted using the link sent scale, simple percentages, statistical tables, and charts. The sample framework and procedure is the Yamane formula, the sample areas are Bauchi, Gombe, Borno, and Adamawa State in North-eastern Nigeria which is also seriously affected by insecurity.

## 5.0 FINDINGS

The major findings show that economic growth and investment activities tend to be negatively affected during periods of insecurity. Also, the rate of employment opportunities reduced because of insecurity. This implies that insecurity not only threatens economic activities with negative effects on the entire economy as conjectured by various economic theories. Economic development cannot be sustained without an enabling environment of peace and security. The business environment, small and medium-scale enterprises, and foreign direct investment in critical sectors are all negatively impacted by insecurity in Nigeria. Since its independence in 1960, Nigeria still ranks low in socioeconomic indicators such as life expectancy, the standard of living, health status, and literacy rate. Similarly, it ranks high in mortality rate, poverty rate, crime rate, and unemployment rate. Health, housing, transportation, education, and recreation infrastructures are grossly inadequate and adversely affected by conflict and insecurity.

The Nigerian economy continues to witness fluctuations and macroeconomic instability, largely as a result of overdependence on oil and lack of diversification. Huge chunks of government revenue that would have been channeled to various diversification initiatives are spent on insecurity, to fight insurgency. The latter deprives Nigeria of innovation, technology

transfer, and job creation which comes as a result of synergy with multinationals. Religious Institutions. One of the most fundamental causes of insecurity in contemporary society is terrorism which is traceable to religious fanaticism and intolerance. Globally, particularly in Islam regions, religious extremism has been rife and devastating. Far Northern states in Nigeria such as Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, and the central states of Plateau, FCT, and Kaduna have witnessed direct attacks on churches and mosques.(Eneji et al, 2020) Bombings and fire incidences have destroyed worship centers leading to the loss of lives. Premeditated attacks have scared and frustrated people from active participation in pastoral and spiritual activities. Boko Haram has been responsible for over 20,000 deaths (worse than coronavirus) of mostly innocent Nigerians including children, women, Muslims, and Christians.

Maiduguri, the ancient city of peace has become the city of fear, terror, and gloom, making Nigeria among the territories of global terrorism. Ansaru acting in the likes of al-Qaida. Ansaru is an offshoot, and a splinter group of Boko-Haram- the Islamic jihadist militant terrorist sect (Eneji et al, 2020).

## 6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is therefore recommended that government should declare war on terrorism and seek assistance/advice from the international community who have in the time past faced this kind of challenge and were able to tackle it. The Nigerian Military should be empowered more with arms to fight this insurgency. Government should beef up security in the eastern and southern parts of the country to curb the menace of insecurity. Grazing grounds or/and ranches should be built in all states of the country for Fulani herdsmen who rear cattle. (Obi, 2015) There should be proper political adaptation spotting insecurity as a threat to health security and fostering peacemaking collaboration with an international organization to address the challenges inherent in the northern region of Nigeria. Just as funding is made available for health issues, so should it be made available to tackle insecurity in northern Nigeria. There is a dire need to refocus from the present curative policing to community preventive policing in terms of security issues. Insecurity is a product of underdevelopment, when we address the issues of underdevelopment like unemployment we achieve security and sustainable development. (Adofu et al, 2018).

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

Insecurity portends serious danger to the nation's development. Insecurity has been found to be a product of the government's inability to allocate resources effectively and efficiently to bring development to the frontline sectors of the economy. Underdevelopment presents itself in the form of unemployment and lack of infrastructural facilities breed insecurity. Nigeria can overcome her insecurity situation by refocusing her policy to be more human-centered. Insecurity has reached frightening proportions in Nigeria, rearing its ugly head in numerous aspects of our national life. Day after day, lives are lost, the population is depleted, businesses are paralyzed, investments are plummeting, multinational corporations are shutting their operations and leaving the country, unemployment is skyrocketing, and the citizenry is terrified and acutely impoverished. Clearly, this represents a severe threat to Nigeria's government and economic growth.

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