



RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE NEXUS BETWEEN ARMED CONFLICT AND FOOD SECURITY IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Insecurity in Nigeria is becoming a recurrent event. The activities of perpetrators of insecurity have implications on food security. Imo State, in South East Nigeria, has experienced several cases of insecurity. This study therefore, examines the effects of insecurity on food security in Imo State. The specific objectives include: to find out the causes of insecurity in Imo State, assess the effect of insecurity on agricultural activities in Imo State, determine how insecurity affect food availability and nutrition in Imo State, find out how insecurity affect food prices in Imo State, explore the strategies for enhancing food security in Imo State. The study was guided by the Frustration Aggression Theory. The study used the quantitative survey research design. Taro Yamane formula was adopted for sample size determination. Systematic random sampling technique was used to select sample size of 369 who were given copies of questionnaire to fill and submit. However, only 363 were retrieved for analysis. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Data was analyzed using both inferential and non-inferential statistical tools. Findings also revealed the effect of insecurity on agricultural activities in Imo State to include; inability to access farms, insecurity influences decision to invest in agricultural inputs, insecurity has negative effect on agricultural activities. Findings also revealed how insecurity affects food prices by causing rapid increase in food price, the instability in food prices, due to constant surge in food prices during periods of insecurity, insecurity influences availability of affordable food options. The study recommended that government should address the root causes of insecurity in order to avert insecurity which usually has effect on food security. It was further recommended that government should establish food security agency to coordinate food security issue. This study contributes to knowledge by establishing the factors that causes insecurity in Imo State and also proffered workable solutions.

Keyword: Insecurity; aggression; food security; food prices; quantitative; and affordable

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's over reliance on oil since the 1970s has caused serious problems for the once-reasonably self-sufficient food production country. The nation was a significant exporter of a variety of cash crops before this time. But as oil took precedence, agriculture was neglected by succeeding administrations. As a result, farms were abandoned, severely peasantizing the agricultural industry. Nigeria consequently became food dependent and relied on large-scale food imports to fill the gaps, moving from food self-sufficiency to food dependency.

The main goals of Nigeria's agricultural renaissance are to end hunger and diversify the country's economy by establishing agriculture as the center of economic growth. A nation that has food security is one that does not experience hunger. Given that the great majority of the nation's 198.1 million people experience food insecurity, food security has emerged as a top priority (Fadare, Akerele, Mavrotas, and Ogunniyi, 2019), 2016). Despite its advantageous agro-ecological resources, Nigeria has a high rate of food and nutrition insecurity. Only over 32 million hectares, or 34.63 percent, of its 92.4 million hectares of total land area are used for cultivation. Therefore, Nigeria lacks the competence and capacity to meet the dietary and nutritional needs of its hordes of people. Accordingly, Nigeria has some of the worst rates of food insecurity and under-nutrition in the world (Fadare et al, 2019).

Nigeria's food and nutrition crisis situation has been getting worse. According to FAO *et al* (2019), between 2004 and 2006, the total number of undernourished Nigerians was 9.1 million. In the years between 2016 and 2018, this figure rose to 25.6 million, or 281.32%. Nigeria's food and nutrition needs will rise along with its population, which is growing at a rate of 3.1% annually. This could lead to food and nutrition insecurity taking on concerning proportions.

Nigeria has been pursuing major agricultural policies since 2010, even though it has not yet allocated 10 percent of its annual national budget to agriculture, which would put it on track to achieve the 6 percent productivity growth predicted in the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) and the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) documents (FMARD, 2016).

There are still huge disparities between domestic production and demand for several staple crops, notwithstanding some minor advancements in the production of rice and cassava. Nigeria thus spends a significant portion of its limited resources on food imports. Nigeria's monthly import bill in 2015 was US\$665.4 million, according to sources from the Central Bank. By October 2018, however, the amount had sharply decreased to US\$160.4 million per month, according to fresh data from the same source (Popoola, 2018). Despite these brief moments of success, the overall picture shows that Nigeria remains severely food and nutrition insecure, with the potential to suddenly become acutely food insecure due to the depletion of agricultural productivity brought on by national insecurity.

Without a doubt, Nigeria's agricultural sector has enormous potential that, with the right management, could lead to job possibilities, food and nutritional security, and income development for farmers. It might also propel Nigeria to the forefront of the world's food markets (FMARD, 2011). Reorienting Nigeria's agricultural economy is hampered by a



number of factors, though. These include, among other things, a lack of financing availability, corruption, an uncompetitive agribusiness environment, inadequate policy execution, limited market access, and national instability (Downie, 2017).

The main danger facing the agriculture industry is insecurity brought on by Fulani herdsmen and Boko Haram. Agriculture in the northeastern part of Nigeria has suffered as a result of Boko Haram's ongoing terrorist attacks. Farming communities are uprooted, access to regional markets is restricted, domestic agricultural production is suppressed, and farming activities are not possible in an unstable environment (Eigege & Cooke, 2016). Due to their frequent attacks and resulting deaths, Fulani herdsmen have emerged as a significant danger to farming communities, alongside Boko Haram.

Food security is adversely impacted by insecurity. It typically results in the loss of agricultural products and human life, which directly affects the area's ability to feed itself. In regions where insecurity is a threat, there are never any significant agricultural operations, which has an impact on food security. According to Dahida (2015), the majority of insecurity in the nation is supported by militia members, whose lifestyles he characterizes as gangsterism, unemployment, hooliganism, and social instability. He claims that these impede efficient agricultural and commercial operations, which reduces the amount of food available. According to Onime (2018), Nigeria's insecurity has put businesses and agricultural operations in a state of near-slumber. He clarifies that socioeconomic and agricultural endeavors are typically negatively impacted by insecurity. He goes on to say that the level of insecurity in the nation has risen to a concerning level, with investments plummeting, multinational corporations closing their doors and leaving the country, unemployment skyrocketing, the public in a state of terror, and agricultural operations devastated, leading to food insecurity. Since insecurity leads to skyrocketing unemployment, it follows that agricultural operations are also impacted, according to Onime (2018). According to Stewart (2004), insecurity has a significant financial cost. He contends that the destruction of roads, schools, power plants, and agricultural products during times of crisis lowers the economy's potential for production, which in turn impacts food security.

In several Nigerian states, armed Fulani herdsmen, bandits, and gunmen have recently abducted farmers. The nation has seen a sharp increase in kidnappings. Because of the unusually high rate of kidnapping in various states, including Imo State, farmers are now reluctant to visit their farmlands, which has reduced the amount of labor available for farming activities. Because of the high number of kidnapping instances, several towns have also seen a rise in the cost of transportation. Olagunju, Oke, Babatunde, and Ajiboye's (2020) paper claims that Nigeria's national insecurity problems have caused food prices to rise, which has increased agricultural food loss.

Beans and tomatoes, for example, have seen price increases of almost 254% and 124%, respectively. The Boko Haram-initiated insurgency had raised the hunger index. Because current production levels are insufficient to fulfill the nation's constantly rising food demand, Nigeria's food import cost has also increased by 140%. Due to all of these insecurity-related factors, a large number of pastoralists and crop farmers were compelled to leave their farms and move to the cities, which significantly reduced food production and caused food prices to soar. Investors and entrepreneurs have a positive effect on a nation's agricultural system by



increasing its economic stability; yet, in Nigeria, the majority of these individuals are deterred from entering the agricultural sector by the country's insecurity problems.

For the past twenty years, issues relating to food security have constituted a major focus of the policy thrust of the international community. In actuality, it was one of the main objectives that the world leaders first decided to invest in achieving by 2015, but now they want to do so by 2030. Therefore, the global focus has shifted from the desire to end extreme poverty and hunger to the determination to ensure "no poverty" and "zero hunger" by 2030, as a result of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were introduced by world leaders in 2000, and their successor, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, in conflict-ridden regions, it might be challenging to attain these two admirable goals out of the 17 that make up the SDGs.

National security as a notion has changed over time. Therefore, national security has grown and become multilayered as it incorporates deeper and broader insights from other disciplines and schools of thought. This goes against the realist school's state-centric view, which is focused on the twin concerns of regime survival and maintaining the territorial integrity of the state system. Therefore, the narrow, restrictive, militaristic, and strategic perspective that emphasizes the lack of threats to governmental authority and the existence of domestic capacity to contain activities from centrifugal forces—whether in terms of internal subversive activities or as external attempts to sabotage and attack the state—no longer applies to understanding national security (Nwozor, 2018).

Nigeria must overcome the obstacles presented by national insecurity in its pursuit of food security. For the sake of the country's future stability and the welfare of its citizens, both problems must be addressed simultaneously. Despite the government's continuous efforts to reposition the agricultural sector and make it the driving force behind Nigeria's economic growth, the endeavor would only be successful if the government takes the necessary action to address national insecurity. When individuals feel physically, mentally, and symbolically unsafe, the nation cannot increase production or become competitive. According to ILO et al. (2019), national insecurity has a direct impact on food production since it reduces farming capacity and increases the risk of food prices skyrocketing, which worsens poverty and hunger and foreshadows a potential national food crisis.

Nigeria's agricultural operations have been severely disrupted by national insecurity. Millions of farmers have been uprooted and relocated from their ancestral farming areas, while others are unable to fully participate in farming activities because they live in constant fear for their lives. Declining productivity and the resulting shortages are the immediate results, which exacerbate the tensions surrounding Nigerian agricultural production and the future of food security. The insecurity that permeates farming communities must be addressed immediately by the Nigerian government in order to reposition the agricultural industry.

Reversing and resolving food insecurity will have a significant impact on Nigeria's security architecture. Depending on the situation, food insecurity may either cause or result from national insecurity. Stated differently, food insecurity can be exacerbated by national insecurity, as we are seeing with the disruptive actions of unknown herdsmen and gunmen in the South East and Imo State, among other places. Food insecurity, on the other hand, can



lead to unrest, which may result in a security crisis that jeopardizes national security. The state may eventually be weakened and undermined by the complicated security scenarios that result from this never-ending vicious cycle.

The situation of Imo situation's food security is significantly impacted by the insecurity there. Numerous innocent people have been abducted and assaulted on the fields, and agricultural products have also been damaged. Imo State's food security may suffer if the anxiety that the state's insecurity has instilled in its residents is not reduced. So, this study looks at how food security in Imo State is affected by insecurity.

1.1. Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is evaluate the nexus between armed conflict and food insecurity in Imo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

1. Determine how insecurity affects food availability and nutrition in Imo State
2. Investigate how insecurity affects food prices in Imo State.

1.2. Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to guide this study.

- i. How does insecurity affect food availability and nutrition in Imo State?
- ii. How does insecurity affect food prices Imo State?

1.3. Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis (H_{01}): Insecurity has no significant effect on food availability and nutrition in Imo State.

Null Hypothesis (H_{02}): Insecurity does not significantly affect food prices in Imo State.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Insecurity and Food Security

The term "insecurity" has several different meanings. It represents risk, danger, uncertainty, lack of safety, and lack of protection. "The state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection" is how Beland (2005) defines insecurity. It alludes to little or nonexistent safety. This suggests that the lack of peace, order, and security is what constitutes insecurity. Achumba, Ighomeroho, and Akpor (2013) provide two definitions of insecurity.

First of all, danger is the state of being vulnerable to harm or injury, whereas insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or the threat of danger. Second, being exposed to risk or experiencing anxiety—which is a vaguely unpleasant emotion felt in anticipation of some misfortune—is the state of insecurity. These definitions of insecurity highlight a key point:



people who experience insecurity are not only unsure of what might happen, but they are also at risk of hazards and threats when they materialize. People are involved in business, either directly or indirectly, to meet the limitless needs of people. As a result, business has assimilated into both the global environment and human existence in particular. According to the United Nations Development Programme (1994), security is the ability to prevent unintentional and harmful disruptions to regular operations in places like homes, workplaces, and communities. This implies that security borders on ensuring safety of lives and properties. According to Williams (2008), who views security from a sociopolitical standpoint, security is having the ability to pursue one's desired political and social goals. In other words, security is socio-political in nature since social activities will be in disarray and political stability is impossible without it.

The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations coined the phrase and idea of "food security" at the World Food Conference in 1974, which took place about four and a half decades ago. For the first time, the concept of food insecurity emerged as a way to differentiate the relationship between hunger, poverty, and unemployment. The world community attempted to find ways and means to provide food security to the hungry people during this conference by producing enough food, promising a supply, and providing safety from fluctuations in food prices (Anderson and Cook, 1999). Due to a variety of causes that differ in significance among socioeconomic groups, between regions and nations, and throughout time, food insecurity is a very complicated phenomenon. The socioeconomic and political environment, the food economy's performance, care practices, health, and sanitation are the four clusters of these components that correspond to the four potential areas of vulnerability (FAO, 2000). The worldwide food crisis of 2008 sparked protests in numerous nations, drawing public attention to the issue of food security. According to Barrett (2010), the G8 leaders decided in July 2009 "to act with the scale and urgency needed to achieve sustainable global food security."

2.2 Causes of insecurity

Numerous explanations are offered as likely causes of Nigerian insecurity. According to Inyang (2009), one of the factors contributing to the insecurity of abduction in Nigeria is the issue of unemployment. Youth unemployment is typically linked to insecurity. He presented the state of unemployment in Nigeria using the well-known proverb that states, "An idle man is the devil's workshop." He pointed out that there are countless physically fit men and women in Nigeria who wander the streets looking for unfulfilled jobs. Many idle youths have turned to criminal activity, of which insecurity is not an exception, out of frustration and growing duties to address.

Inyang went on to admit that a graduate without a job is psychologically without alternative ways to survive. In such a circumstance, the young person can grow pessimistic about society and blame it for his failure.

Additionally, according to Inyang (2009), the spread of weapons due to political sponsorship of criminals who were expelled following elections may unintentionally promote and worsen instability. Inyang compared the current state of insecurity to the early 1980s arm robbery epidemic, in which numerous young, physically fit men who served in the Nigerian civil war



were released and sent home empty-handed. Since the schools they left behind had been demolished, they had no jobs to keep them occupied in the interim.

Since they were former soldiers who had gained the necessary skills and firearms during the conflict, many of them subsequently turned to armed robbery. Today, politicians use the majority of idle kids as political thugs and then dump them after elections, so the story is essentially the same. As a result, after winning elections, the young goons who were deserted by their bosses are now occupied with abducting innocent people and the family members of individuals they boosted to prominence.

. 2.3 Impact of Insecurity on Agricultural Activities

Threats and degrees of insecurity vary from country to country. Walker (2018) claims that during the years of their rebellion in Kaduna, Zamfara, and other states in North-West Nigeria, the Bandits have carried out their threat-to-life attacks by kidnapping local miners and farmers, raping and killing female farmers, destroying government property, and carrying out armed assaults, among other things. According to Lopez (1981), Kukumah (2008), and the NOUN Document (2006), the organization typically targets residential buildings, farmlands, agro-industrial plants, and other similar locations. This has tremendous effects on agricultural activities of citizens particularly of food production. Walker, Kukumah and NOUN have been able to substantiate in their findings that insecurity affect farmers to the extent of depriving the government in achieving its policy on food security.

2.4 How Insecurity affect Food Availability and Access

Although Nigeria is not technically at war, the killings brought on by many types of insecurity make it eligible to be considered a war-torn country. Traditionally, 1,000 battle deaths must occur for an armed conflict to be classified as a civil war (Dupuy & Rustad, 2018). For decades, Nigeria has continuously reported more than 1,000 fatalities from hostilities that have been started by different factions all around the nation. The Armed Conflict Location and Event as well as the Nigeria Security Tracker

According to the Data Project (ACLED), between June 2011 and June 2018, between 34,260 and 37,535 persons died as a direct result of the Boko Haram terrorist organization alone (Campbell & Harwood, 2018). Conflicts between communities, disputes between herdsmen and farmers, confrontations between security forces and socio-cultural or religious groups, and other criminal activities—particularly kidnappings for ransom—are some of the other causes of violent deaths besides the Boko Haram insurgency. In Nigeria, there were over 10,665 incidents of violence-related injuries or fatalities. In 2018 alone, criminal activity was the leading cause of violent deaths, accounting for roughly 3,430 deaths in 1,190 cases (Ukoji, Ayodokun & Eze, 2019).

In addition to the violent actions of the Boko Haram sect in the country's northeastern geopolitical zone, Fulani herders pose a substantial threat to national security and have a direct impact on food security. Due to their cruel custom of destroying local farmers' farms, Fulani herders have frequently been pitted against them. In the past, mostly prior to 1999,



these disputes between farmers and herdsmen were handled so effectively that no deaths were ever reported.

3.0. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The research design used in the study was a descriptive and quantitative survey. The researcher can choose respondents from the public by using the survey design. The design of a survey makes it possible to gather information for a sample, or subset of the population, whose results or conclusions can be applied to the full population or universe. This involves employing several sampling procedures to choose a sample from the population (Denzin, 2006). Although it relies on a carefully chosen sample from the population for in-depth analysis of the population's characteristics, it is interested in certain aspects of the population.

Data for the study will be produced using quantitative techniques. Because of its ability to effectively gather data on individual perceptions, beliefs, feelings, motives, anticipations, future plans, and previous behavior that has actually occurred, the survey design is deemed appropriate (Ndiyo, 2006). A great way to gauge a huge population's attitude, orientation, and perception is through survey design.

3.2. Area of the Study

Imo State is a state in South East Nigeria that has borders with Abia State to the east, Anambra State to the north, and Rivers State to the west and south. Owerri serves as the state capital, and the Eastern Heartland is the official motto.

3.3. Population of the Study

The projected population of Imo State is 4,927,563. For the purpose of this study, the population was targeted with emphasis on the adults.

3.4. Sample Size Determination

The Taro Yamane (1967) sample size technique was adopted to determine the sample for the study. Therefore, from the formula

$$= \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} \quad 3.1$$

Where $n \rightarrow$ the required sample size; $N =$ is the Target Population (150 employees);

$e =$ accuracy level required. Standard error = 5%; Sample calculation

$$n = \frac{4,927,563}{1 + 4,927,563 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{4,927,563}{1 + 4,927,563 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{4,927,563}{1 + 4,927,563 (0.0025)}$$

$$= \frac{479982}{1 + 12,318.907}$$



$$= \frac{4927.563}{13.318907}$$

$$= 3.99.6669317n = 369$$

A total of three hundred and sixty-nine (369) respondents was sampled and used for this study.

3.5. Sampling Technique

The sample for this study was chosen utilizing the Primary Health Care (PHC) housing registration approach. The method of simple random sampling was used. The first fifth household was selected from the register using the basic random sample approach. Each subsequent fifth household (i.e., 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, etc.) was selected until the list was depleted and the final number was obtained.

3.6. Methods of Data Collection

Triangulation of qualitative and quantitative instruments was used to properly gather data on the topic being studied. A questionnaire served as the quantitative tool. The questionnaires were selected due to their capacity to obscure the identity of the respondents and to cover a wide geographic area. The Key Informant Interview (KII) was the qualitative tool.

3.7. Validation of Instrument

The two levels involved the construction of the instrument by the researcher. The second was the submission to the supervisor who ensured that the instrument satisfied face validity hence considered appropriate to collect data for the study. Validity means the ability of an instrument to measure what it is designed to measure and nothing else (Denga, 2006).

3.8. Methods of Data Analysis

Data analysis involves the breaking down of data for the purpose of establishing relationships. It also involves finding trends and patterns of happenings. After collecting the data, the pre-coded questionnaire will be properly arranged and inputted into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data was analyzed using inferential and non-inferential statistical tools. The qualitative data was analyzed through manual content analysis based on thematic area. The combination of the two (quantitative and qualitative) techniques was to ensure that data is properly analyzed and the study has a more valid outcome.

3.9. Decision Rule for Hypotheses Testing

The decision rule states that the null hypothesis is if the calculated value is less than the critical value. However, accept the null hypothesis if the calculated value is more significant than the critical value (tabulated value).



4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results generate through statistical analyses are presented as Figures and Tables and thematically discussed in the subsections that follows.

4.1 Assessment of Demographic Characteristics

The demographic data of respondents is presented Table 1. The results indicate that some of the demographic data that was collected. From the table it shows that 112 respondents constituting 30.9 percent of the study population are within the age group of 41 – 50 and about 108 respondents constituting 29.8 percent of the study population are within the age group of 31 – 40 years, about 79 of the study respondents constituting 21.8 percent falls within the age group of 21 – 30 meanwhile, 64 of the respondents constituting 17.6 percent are within the age group of 51 and above. The implication of this data indicates that majority of the respondents falls within a youthful, working and knowledgeable group on the subject matter. Consequently 192 respondents making 52.9 percent are male, while 171 respondents making 47.1 percent are female.

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Range	Frequency	Percentage
Age	21 – 30	79	21.8
	31 – 40	108	29.8
	41 – 50	112	30.9
	50 above	64	17.6
Gender	Male	192	52.9
	Female	171	47.1
Marital Status	Single	111	30.6
	Married	184	50.7
	Divorced	32	8.8
	Widow / widower	36	9.9
Religion	Christianity	337	92.8
	ATR	19	5.2
	Free Thinker	7	1.9
Age	21 – 30	79	21.8
	31 – 40	108	29.8
	41 – 50	112	30.9
	50 above	64	17.6
Gender	Male	192	52.9
	Female	171	47.1

Source: Field Survey (2024).



4.1.1 Analysis of Educational Background of Respondents

Table 2 and Figure 1 show the distribution of respondents according to their educational levels, from the figure, one can quickly identify or fathom the variation of respondents based on their educational levels, those with tertiary education constitute majority of the study with about 179 respondents making 49.3 percent of the study population, followed by those with secondary educational background 100 respondents constituting 27.5 percent, meanwhile those at the primary has 60 number of the respondents making 16.5 percent, while those with no formal education constitute only 6.6 percent of the study population.

Table 2: Educational Background of Respondents

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	60	16.5
Secondary	100	27.5
Tertiary	179	49.3
No formal Education	24	6.6

Source: Field Survey (2024).

4.1.2 Family Background of Respondents

The family background of respondents is presented in Table 3 and Figure 2. Table 3 and Figure 2 show the distribution of respondents based on their family background. Those from a monogamous family settlement are said to have the highest representation with about 65.3 percent followed by those from the polygamous family with about 20.9 percent of the respondents, those from a single parental home or family constitute only about 8.3 percent, while those that are said to be orphaned constituted only 5.5 percent of the study population.

Table 3: Family Background of Respondents

Type of family	Frequency	Percentage
Polygamous	76	20.9
Monogamous	237	65.3
Single parent	30	8.3
Orphan	20	5.5

Source: Field Survey (2024).

Figure 1: Educational Background of Respondents

Source: Field Survey (2024).

4.1.3. Occupational Distribution of respondents

The distribution of respondents' occupation is presented in Figure.3 and Table 4.

From Figure 3, the results varied according their livelihoods, with traders exhibiting a highest frequency in the series, followed by farmers. Furthermore, table 4 indicates that respondent's distribution based on their occupation, about 31.1 percent said they are traders, 27.3 percent admitted to be famers, 21.2 percent are civil servants while 9.9 percent are yet to be employed, 8 percent are students and 2.5 percent are public servants.

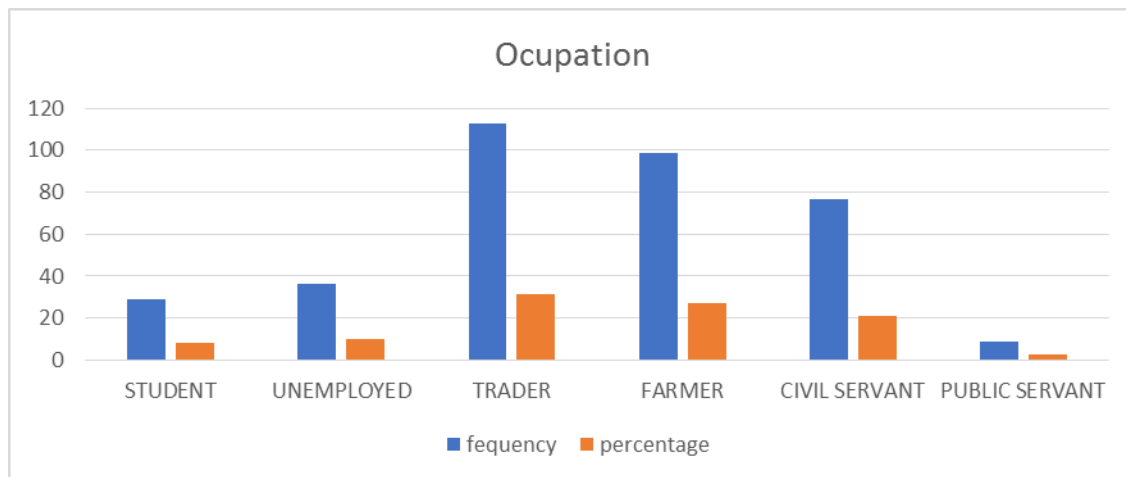


Figure 4: Occupational Distribution of Respondents

Source: Authors' Fieldwork (2024).

Table: 4: Occupational Distribution of respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Student	29	8
Unemployed	36	9.9
Trader	113	31.1
Farmer	99	27.3
Civil servant	77	21.2
Public servant	9	2.5

Source: Field Survey (2024).

4.2. Evaluation of how Insecurity Affects Food Availability and Nutrition in Imo State

Null Hypothesis (H_{01}): Insecurity has no significant effect on food availability and nutrition in Imo State.

The result of multiple regression analysis on the Influence of insecurity activities on food availability was carried out and its results are presented in Tables 5a, b, and c respectively.

The result shows that factors like; impact on food production (0.393), theft and damage to crops (-0.182), inability to hire laborers (0.435), expand or diversify agricultural activities (0.111), disruptions to agricultural related issues (0.184) and Overall productivity (0.105) were all statistically significant at $P < 0.05$ critical level.

Table 5a: Regression Model of Multiple Effects of Variations among Variables

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R	Std. Error
1	.983	.967	.966	.166

Source: Authors' analysis (2024).



Table 5b: ANOVA Model of Multiple Combined Effects of Variations among Variables

Model	Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig
2	Regression	342.675	6	57.113	705.778	0.000 ^b
	Residual	19.259	238	0.81		
	Total	361.935	244			

Source: Authors' analysis (2024).

Table 5c: Partial Regression Model of Effect of Variations between Variables

Independent Variables		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.120	.067		-1.797	.073		
2	Ability to access farm	.035	.048	.043	.716	.475	.026	38.018
3	Decision to invest in agricultural	.019	.016	.026	1.180	.239	.193	5.178
4	Impact on food production	.393	.042	.405	9.257	.000	.048	20.647
6	Theft and damage to crops	-.182	.030	-.146	-6.026	.000	.158	6.322
7	Inability to hire laborers	.435	.037	.390	11.822	.000	.085	11.707
8	Expand or diversify agric. activities	.111	.026	.092	4.329	.000	.206	4.863
9	Disruptions to agricultural related issues	.184	.050	.175	3.690	.000	.041	24.175
10	Overall productivity	.105	.052	.126	2.013	.045	.024	42.284

Source: Authors' analysis (2024).

Table 5a presented the $R^2 = 0.967$ which indicate the independent variables tested can explain about 97 percent variances on the dependent variable which is the availability of food. This was indeed significant when the between difference and the within differences were tested as shown in Table 5b and the ANOVA model of sources of difference offered $[F(6,238) = 705.778, P < 0.05]$. The partial regression model of variations between independent and each dependent variable is presented in Table 5c. The result further shows from the independent variables considered that five of the variables were significant predictors of food prices, the significant variables include —security impact on food production (t = 9.257, $P < 0.05$), Theft and damages on crops (t = -6.026, $P < .05$), —ability to hire laborers (t = 11.822, $P < 0.05$), the ability to expand or diversify agricultural activities (t = 4.329, $p < 0.05$), disruption of agricultural related issues (t = 3.690, $p < 0.05$).

Furthermore, four amongst the nine variables did not show a significance relationship at 95% confidence level, the variables include —ability to access farm land due to insecurity (t = 0.716, $P > 0.05$). The decision to invest in agriculture due to insecurity (t = 1.180, $P > 0.05$).



In another perspective, insecurity reveal negative effect on agricultural activities β ($t = -1.309$, $P > 0.05$), while the effect of insecurity on the overall agricultural productivity depicts a positive result ($t = 2.013$, $P < 0.05$).

Consequently, the standardized coefficient shows the contribution of each variable on the availability of food. Ability to access farm ($\beta = 0.043$), —decision to invest in agricultural activities β ($\beta = 0.026$) —impact on food production ($\beta = 0.405$), ability to hire labourers ($\beta = 0.390$) —expand or diversify agricultural activities β ($\beta = 0.092$), disruptions to agricultural related issues ($\beta = 0.175$) and overall agricultural activities ($\beta = 0.1.26$). However, —negative effect on agricultural activities β ($\beta = -0.094$), and —theft and damage of crops ($\beta = -0.146$).

The unstandardized coefficient reveals the following regression slope: Food availability = $-0.120 + 0.035$ (ability to access land) $+ .019$ (decision to invest in agriculture) $+0.393$ (impact on food production) -0.074 (negative effect on agricultural activities) -0.182 (theft and damage to crops) $+0.435$ (ability to hire laborers) $+0.111$ (expand or diversify agricultural) $+0.184$ (disruptions to agricultural related issues) $+ 0.105$ (Overall productivity).

Also, it was found that insecurity affects ability to hire labourers to farm (mean=4.40 std 0.809). This undoubtedly have effect on food security in the study area. Also, it was discovered that insecurity influences the decision to diversify agricultural activities (mean 4.36 std=0.746). In a situation where agricultural activities are not diversified, there will be problem of food security.

One of the key findings of this research is the influence of financial gain, desire of revenge or retaliation, political motives, ideological motives, criminal enterprise, poverty, unemployment and arms proliferation on the emergence of insecurity. The social factors include poverty. This finding is in line with the findings of Collier (1998), who argued that poverty, is a good predictor of emergence and enlistment in insecurity. Poverty impact on individuals negatively. If an individual is poor, he/she will be predisposed to criminal behaviours which will have effect on the security of the society. Francis, Khurana, and Pereira (2005) contend that some individuals form or join insecurity groups to get psychological satisfaction possibly after being frustrated by poverty.

It is worthy of note and a fact to note that financial gains account for the growing insecurity in the country in recent times. When people fail to meet up with responsibilities they turn to insecurity for financial gains. Political motives constitute a great danger to security, social and economic stability of the country. Youths who are ignorant of the danger of joining and forming insecurity do so because they are not knowledgeable about the implication and the effect and because of certain political reasons. This finding is in line with the finding of Collier (1998) that revealed and argued that poor political education especially on political violence account for insecurity.

Ideological motive is now a cankerworm in emergence of insecurity. This was found to be a factor that causes insecurity in Imo state ideological motives poses great security threat in the study area. The menace has created deep suspicion among groups. This finding is in line with the findings of Sanin (2004) in his study of Fuezzas Armadas Revolutionaries de Colombia (FARC) that insecurity is caused by a mélange of motivations which include vengeance, hate, fear etc which are based on ideology. Criminal enterprise was also found to be a cause of



insecurity in the study area. According to Sambanis (2001) and Gates (2002), enlistment and emergence of insecurity rest on two possible violent configurations. This includes affinity between low economic opportunities arising from rebellion on one side and high economic opportunities arising from insecurity on the other side. A confirmation by an in-depth interview respondent posited that: Criminal enterprise, poverty, financial gains etccauses insecurity. Honestly, some insecurities are caused by poverty, desire for revenge and because some criminals see insecurity as a criminal enterprise where they take the advantage to make money.

From the economic perspective, unemployment is found to cause insecurity. Unemployment is making life difficult for youths in the state. The youths are faced with intense hardship and hopelessness as a result of high unemployment. Therefore, youths who have waited for too long waiting for job opportunities in order to advance their economic interest resort to forming and enlisting in militant groups with the aim of advancing their economic interest through other means. This finding is in line with the findings of Downie, (2017) and Popoola, (2018) in their separate studies discovered and contend that a mechanism that motivates cooperation in any form of human endeavor, formation emergence of insecurity includes enhancement of material/economic interests among others.

A factor found to cause insecurity in the study area is arms proliferation. A multitude of unauthorized sources of firearms including smugglers, illegal arms dealers and armed robbers have formed powerful cartels that have flooded Nigeria with dangerous weapons, using porous borders (Ikoh, 2021). The proliferation of arms is the driving courage for insecurity. This is because there is wide spread of arms into the hands of people who are not licensed. This in recent times has triggered different forms of insecurity in the country and the study area. This finding is in line with the finding of Ginifer and Ismail (2005), which revealed that the spread of Small Arms and Light Weapon (SALW) has increased the proliferation of militant groups and the scale of lethality, degree of intensity, casualties and the extent of livelihood destruction. The opinion of a respondent that participated in the study through in-depth interview (IDI) revealed that: Various factors causes insecurity, but i feel arms proliferation is also a key cause of insecurity. This was further affirmed by another IDI respondent who confirmed that: The conclusion is that, arms proliferation is the main cause of insecurity because it is the arms that give the perpetrators the guts for insecurity.

4.3 Investigate how Insecurity Affects Food Prices in Imo State.

Testing of Null Hypothesis two (H_2): Insecurity does not significantly affect food prices in Imo State.

The multiple linear regression models of the influence of insecurity activities on food prices were carried out and the results summarized in Tables 6a, b, and c respectively differ

Table 6a: Regression Model of Multiple Influences of Insecurity on Food Prices

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R	Std. Error
1	.981	.962	961	.177

Source: Authors' analysis (2024).



Table 6b: ANOVA Model of Multiple Combined Influences of Variations among Variables

Model	Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig
2	Regression	278.807	9	30.979	988.711	.000 ^b
	Residual	11.060	353	.031		
	Total	289.868	362			

Source: Authors' analysis (2024).

Table 6c: Partial Regression Analysis of the Influence of Insecurity Activities on Food Prices

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error				Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	-.151	.071		-2.117	.035		
2 Ability to access farm	.068	.052	.084	1.318	.188	.026	38.018
3 Decision to invest in agricultural	.027	.017	.037	1.552	.122	.193	5.178
4 Effect on food production	.196	.045	.204	4.324	.000	.048	20.647
5 Negative effect	-.164	.060	-.211	-2.718	.007	.018	55.910
6 Theft and damage to crops	-.105	.032	-.085	-3.248	.001	.158	6.322
7 Ability to hire labourers	.252	.039	.228	6.398	.000	.085	11.707
8 Expand or diversify agricultural activities	.181	.028	.151	6.587	.000	.206	4.863
9 Disruptions to agricultural related issues	.346	.053	.332	6.498	.000	.041	24.175
10 Overall productivity	.233	.056	.281	4.163	.000	.024	42.284

Source: Authors' analysis (2024).

Table 6a presented the $R^2 = .962$, which indicates that the independent variables tested, can explain about 96 percent variances on the dependent variable which is the price of food. This was indeed significant when the between difference and the within differences were tested as shown in the ANOVA sources of difference presented in Table 6b with the model results of $F(9,353) = 988,711$ $P < .05$). The results in Table 6c shows that from the nine independent variables considered. Seven of the variables were significant predictors of food prices in imo state, the significant variables include —security impact on food production|| ($t = 4.324$, $P < .05$), —insecurity negative effect on agricultural activities|| ($t = -2.718$, $P < .05$), — theft and damage to crops|| ($t = -3.248$, $P < .05$), —ability to hire laborers as a result of insecurity|| ($t = 6.398$, $p < .05$), the ability to expand or diversify agricultural activities|| ($t = 6.587$, $p < .05$),



disruption of agricultural related issues ($t = 6.498$, $p < .05$) and effect of insecurity on the overall agricultural productivity ($t = 4.163$, $P < .05$). However, two among the six variables did not show a significance relationship at 95% confidence level, the variables include —ability to access farm land due to insecurity ($t = 1.318$, $P > .05$), and —the decision to invest in agriculture due to insecurity ($t = 1.552$, $P > .05$).

Consequently, the standardized coefficient shows the contribution of each variable on the price of food in circulation in Imo. Ability to access farm ($\beta = .084$), —decision to invest in agricultural activities ($\beta = .037$) —impact on food production ($\beta = .204$), ability to hire labourers ($\beta = .228$) —expand or diversify agricultural activities ($\beta = .151$), disruptions to agricultural related issues ($\beta = .332$) and overall agricultural activities ($\beta = .281$) however, —negative effect on agricultural activities ($\beta = -.211$), and —theft and damage of crops ($\beta = -.085$), are the only variable that indicated a negative relationship on the standardised coefficient, which also means that the more insecurity affect agricultural activities negatively the higher the prices of food in circulation also as theft and damages of crops increases the higher the prices of food in circulation. The unstandardized coefficient reveals the following regression slope: Food Prices = $-.151 + .068$ (ability to access land) + $.027$ (decision to invest in agriculture) + $.196$ (impact on food production) $-.164$ (negative effect on agricultural activities) $-.105$ (theft and damage to crops) + $.252$ (ability to hire laborers) + $.181$ (expand or diversify agricultural) + $.246$ (disruptions to agricultural related issues) + $.233$ (Overall productivity).

Insecurity has made it difficult for me to access my farm. I cannot even remember the number of times I have been attacked and threatened. This has made me to reduce the number of times I go to the farm. It was also discovered that another way insecurity affect agricultural activities is that insecurity influences decision to invest in agricultural inputs in the study area (mean=3.73 std=1.223). It is a known fact that the quantity and quality of agricultural produce is determined largely by the kind of inputs used. The effects on decision to invest on agricultural inputs pose a great danger on food security. This is because the amount of food that will be available will be small or minimal owing to the priority not given to the type of input used which is influenced by insecurity. This was corroborated by an IDI respondent who affirmed that: Recently, he does not even think of how he will invest on agricultural inputs, because it will amount to a waste since after investing, insecurity would not let one make adequate use of the inputs. In fact, sometimes they are even robbed of the farm inputs, so investing in it is a loss. Regrettably, the effect of this unfortunate situation, is that food security emerges in such kind of unfortunate situation.

It was also discovered that a way that in which insecurity affects agricultural activities is that insecurity has negative impact on food production (mean=4.39 std=.932). Food production refers to the amount or quantity of harvest or quantity of food made available. Once there is insecurity, the effect on agricultural activities is largely in the area of food production. This is because in the presence of insecurity, food production will be minimal and thereby having effect on food security. This was affirmed by an IDI respondent who said that: We can't plant crops in some areas because of the fear of attacks. Some have to reduce the size of their farms because of fear of destruction. It is no longer safe to farm far away from home. Indeed, this definitely have effect on food production and by extension food security.



Insecurity in Nigeria has had significant effects on the food availability and access in the country. For instance, in the study area it was discovered that insecurity reduces the availability of food in the community. This finding is in line with the findings of the British Department for International Development (BDID) funded humanitarian organization, Mercy Corps in 2013 and 2016 which indicated that the perennial farmers-herders clashes in Nigeria have affected foodstuffs supply and demand, causing approximately USD14 billion loss in three years. These clashes primarily involve settled farmers and nomadic herders over access to land, water resources, and grazing areas. The insecurity often results in violence, displacement, and destruction of property, which in turn impact agricultural activities and food availability.

The responses of respondents in the study have highlighted the concerns of residents on the effects of insecurity on food availability and access. Majority of the respondents agreed with the assertion that Insecurity affects access to food markets. Similarly, majority of the respondents agree that they often experience food shortages due to insecurity related issues. These indicate that the different forms of insecurity have resulted in reduction in availability of food and access. This was corroborated by an IDI respondent who said

Truly, insecurity has a great effect on food availability and access. The reality is that anytime there is insecurity you will notice that food is not adequate out there in terms of supply. There are times you will want to buy a particular thing and you will not see. The situation is really a sad one. Since the insecurity result sometimes in displacement of farmers and destruction of farmlands, agricultural activities are disrupted leading to reduced variety of food available in the community, household's food security which have effect on the health and wellbeing of the people.

The study responses indicate that insecurity has affected trading in food items. This finding is in line with the findings of Fadare, Akerele, Mavrotas and Ogunniyi (2019) which indicated, that the insecurity induces market disruption leading to higher transactions costs. This was confirmed by a respondent who asserted that Insecurity affects availability of food, not just that but trading. This is because it results in scarcity of food thereby, paralyzing trading in the markets, especially trading with food items.

The activities of herders and associated insecurity has not only affected agricultural production but have also become the most potent threat to national security in the last couple of years due to the frequency, the level of destruction and sheer brutality that results from the clashes (Obioma, 2016). Responses of the respondents in the study indicated that majority agreed that insecurity has influenced decision to relocate farming thereby causing challenge in food availability and access. This was corroborated by an IDI respondent who asserted that Insecurity indeed influence the decision of people to sometimes relocate their farms to places where there are no security challenge. This situation, results in the challenge of food availability and access.

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings highlight the strategies for enhancing food security in Imo State. In addition, the research yielded several major conclusions presented according to research objectives in what follow.



Eight factors were found to be causes of insecurity in Imo State. These factors include: financial gain, desire for revenge or retaliation, political motives, ideological motives, criminal enterprise, poverty, unemployment and arms proliferation.

The study found that the ways in which insecurity affects food availability and access include; insecurity reduces the availability of food in the community, insecurity affects access to food markets, there is often food shortages due to insecurity related issues, insecurity reduces the variety of food available in the community, insecurity affects household's food security, insecurity has affected trading in food items, insecurity has influenced decision to relocate farms in Imo State.

Seven ways were found to be how insecurity affects food prices. These include; insecurity leads to an increase in food prices, insecurity affects the stability of food prices, there is always surge in food prices during periods of insecurity, insecurity influences availability of affordable food options, insecurity affects ability to budget for food due to price fluctuation, insecurity result in difficulties in accessing food due to high prices caused by insecurity, insecurity largely affects overall affordability of food.

Conclusively, the concern of this study was to investigate the effects of insecurity on food security. The study focused on the causes of insecurity in Imo State. These causes were found to be ideological, social, political and economic related. The findings of the study revealed both effects of insecurity on food availability and access as well as how insecurity affects food prices. Strategies for enhancing food security in the study area were also underscored. This study, especially the results, will be of help to scholars, policy makers and the public generally. The results of this research will assist scholars in the field of crime and food security. The phenomenon of insecurity needs to be checked so as to prevent the effects it has on food security.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proffered:

- i. Government should address the root causes of insecurity in order to avert insecurity which usually has effect on food security.
- ii. Government should foster inclusive and sustainable agricultural development.
- iii. Government should establish food security agency to coordinate food security issue.
- iv. There should be budgetary allocation for food security emergency responses.
- v. Empowerment programmes, in the area of funding projects and peace building advocates are necessary for peaceful coexistence in the state.

This study contributes to knowledge by establishing the factors that causes insecurity in Imo State. In line with the tenets of the Broken Window theory, this work contributes to knowledge by establishing that insecurity is caused by factors which include financial gain, desire for revenge or retaliation, political motives, ideological motives, criminal enterprise, poverty, unemployment and arms proliferation.

This study further contributes to knowledge by establishing the impact of insecurity on agricultural activities in Imo State to include; insecurity affects ability to access farms, insecurity influences decision to invest in agricultural inputs, insecurity has negative impact



on food production, insecurity has negative effect on agricultural activities, insecurity result in theft and damage of crops, insecurity affects ability to hire labourers to the farm.

Competing Interest

The authors have declared that no conflicting interest exist in this manuscript.

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