

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF TERRORISM ON NATIONAL SECURITY (2019-2025): THE CASE OF BOKO HARAM IN NIGERIA

Mohammed Nazir Ribadu

Center for Peace and Security Studies, Modibbo Adama University, Yola, Adamawa State

Corresponding Author's email: nazeerribadu@mau.edu.ng



(TETF/DESS/UNI/SOKOTO/ARJ/01)

Abstract

This study evaluated the impact of Boko Haram insurgency on national security in Nigeria between 2019 and 2025. Employing a descriptive survey research design, the population of the study was 6,420 individuals and data were collected from 640 respondents comprising security personnel, government officials, community leaders, and adult residents across selected Local Government Areas in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States, purposively chosen due to high insurgency intensity. The study examined four dimensions: Boko Haram's tactics, the frequency of attacks, the economic impact on livelihoods, and the effectiveness of counter-insurgency strategies. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire (Boko Haram Insurgency and National Security Questionnaire, BHINSQ), validated by experts, pilot-tested, and analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Findings revealed that Boko Haram employed a combination of conventional and asymmetric tactics including IEDs, suicide bombings, coordinated ambushes, drone deployment, and mass kidnappings which evolved significantly over the study period. Attacks were frequent and geographically concentrated in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States, disproportionately affecting both security personnel and civilians. Economically, insurgency disrupted agriculture, trade, household incomes, and local livelihoods, exacerbating poverty and humanitarian dependency. Assessments of counter-insurgency strategies indicated limited success, with challenges including corruption, equipment shortages, and border porosity, though community-based approaches and integrated strategies were recognized as more effective. The study concludes that Boko Haram insurgency poses a multidimensional threat to Nigeria's national security, underscoring the need for adaptive, integrated, and context-specific security strategies that combine military, socio-economic, and regional interventions.

Keywords: *Boko Haram, Insurgency, National Security, Counter-Insurgency, North-Eastern Nigeria, Economic Impact, Terrorism Tactics*

Introduction

The persistence of terrorist violence in the Lake Chad Basin represents one of Africa's most intractable security challenges, with Boko Haram's insurgency in north-eastern Nigeria entering its second decade as a formidable threat to national and regional stability. Since its emergence as a violent extremist group following the 2009 uprising, Boko Haram has evolved from a localised sect into a complex terrorist enterprise with significant operational capacity, transnational linkages, and devastating human consequences (Onapajo, 2024). The period between 2019 and 2025 has witnessed a troubling transformation in the group's tactics, organisational structure, and

impact on Nigerian national security, demanding renewed scholarly attention to understand the evolving nature of this threat.

The concept of national security in the Nigerian context extends beyond traditional notions of territorial defence to include the protection of citizens, economic stability, social cohesion, and the preservation of state authority. Boko Haram's insurgency has systematically undermined each of these dimensions. By 2025, the humanitarian footprint of the conflict had reached staggering proportions, with approximately 1.9 million people displaced from their homes and an estimated 7.8 million individuals across the north-east requiring humanitarian assistance (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [UN OCHA], 2024). The United Nations humanitarian appeals between 2021 and 2024 totalled more than \$3.4 billion, though actual financing consistently fell short of requirements, reflecting both donor fatigue and the competing demands of global crises (UN OCHA, 2023).

The military dimension of this security challenge has proven particularly costly. Comprehensive data from SBM Intelligence (2025), a geopolitical research firm, documented that at least 454 Nigerian soldiers lost their lives in ambush attacks between 2019 and 2025, with Borno State accounting for more than 60% of recorded incidents. These casualties formed part of a broader pattern of violence that claimed over 1,000 lives in ambush attacks during the seven-year period, with security personnel bearing a disproportionate share of fatalities (SBM Intelligence, 2025). The human cost extended beyond battlefield casualties to encompass mass kidnapping incidents, with Oriola (2022) noting that Nigeria experienced hundreds of such events, involving thousands of victims, as a central tactic of the insurgents.

What distinguishes the 2019–2025 period is the marked tactical evolution displayed by insurgent groups. Boko Haram and its more powerful offshoot, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), which formally split from the main faction in 2016, demonstrated increasing sophistication in their operational methods (Zenn, 2020). From 2019 onwards, insurgents increasingly relied on improvised explosive devices, coordinated multi-stage strikes, and deceptive checkpoints designed to lure security forces into kill zones. By 2023, attackers had refined their approach to target high-ranking officers and strategically important convoys, while the deployment of commercial drones rigged for surveillance and explosive attacks signalled a quantum leap in operational capacity (SBM Intelligence, 2025). The November 2021 killing of Brigadier-General Dzarma Zirkusu and the November 2025 ambush and execution of Brigadier-General Musa Uba exemplified this shift towards targeting senior military leadership (SBM Intelligence, 2025).

The geographic expansion of insecurity further complicates Nigeria's national security calculus. While the north-east remains the epicentre of Boko Haram-related violence, with Borno State recording 456 fatalities from ambush attacks alone (SBM Intelligence, 2025), the diffusion of terrorist tactics and the proliferation of armed groups have created a multi-theatre security crisis. The north-west has emerged as a major battleground, with bandit groups adopting insurgent methodologies including the isolation of military bases through infrastructure destruction and the use of fake checkpoints (International Crisis Group, 2022). SBM Intelligence (2025) documented a worrying geographic spread of violence from the north-east to the north-west and parts of the south, with Boko Haram accounting for 590 deaths nationwide, more than half of all ambush fatalities recorded. The group's attack frequency rose from 105 incidents in 2022 to 147 in 2023, and further to 191 in 2024, indicating renewed operational tempo despite years of counter-insurgency efforts.

The transnational dimensions of the threat have also intensified. The deterioration of the Multinational Joint Task Force following shifts in regional participation created operational vacuums along Nigeria's borders, exploited by jihadist and criminal groups for mobility, sanctuary, and resupply (Tar & Mustapha, 2023). This regional fragility connects to broader Sahelian instability, with weapons flows from post-2011 Libya through smuggling routes strengthening Boko Haram and ISWAP's logistical capabilities (Thurston, 2019). The groups' ability to produce high-quality propaganda and maintain external linkages, as Zenn (2020) argues, indicates a level of organisation and external influence that transcends purely local insurgency.

Economically, the toll of terrorism on national security manifests in diminished productive capacity and diverted developmental resources. The Institute for Economics and Peace (2021) estimated that violence cost Nigeria approximately \$119 billion (purchasing power parity) in 2020 alone, equivalent to 11% of its gross domestic product. Conflict in the north-east, driven primarily by Boko Haram and ISWAP, has been shown to significantly depress agricultural output, disrupt trade routes, and deter both domestic and foreign investment (George et al., 2022). Foreign direct investment plummeted in the early years of this period, while manufacturers reported reduced domestic raw material sourcing due to supply chain disruptions (Ewepu, 2021). The economic devastation extends to local livelihoods, with communities experiencing paradoxical booms driven by humanitarian spending that remain vulnerable to aid contraction a vulnerability starkly illustrated by the impact of international funding cuts on local employment and state revenue (SBM Intelligence, 2025).

Critically, the 2019–2025 period has witnessed a blurring of lines between ideological insurgency and economically motivated criminality. While Boko Haram and ISWAP maintain jihadist ideological frameworks, their operational coexistence with bandit groups driven by illegal mining, cattle rustling, and kidnapping-for-ransom has created hybrid threat networks (Oriola, 2022). The financial implications for ordinary citizens are severe; the National Bureau of Statistics (2024) estimated that Nigerians paid a staggering ₦2.23 trillion in ransom within a single year, providing financial fuel for an expanding criminal economy. This convergence, as Tar and Mustapha (2023) contend, complicates counter-insurgency efforts and challenges traditional analytical frameworks that separate terrorist groups from organised criminal networks.

The response to this evolving threat has itself generated debate. The Nigerian military's adoption of a "super camp" strategy, consolidating troops in larger bases, while offering protection to concentrated forces, effectively ceded control of vast rural areas to insurgents (International Crisis Group, 2022). Official statements affirm the armed forces' capacity and professionalism, noting that vast territories have been reclaimed and insurgent leadership structures degraded. However, Onapajo (2024) argues that despite these claims, the persistence and tactical evolution of insurgent groups suggests that conventional military approaches require continuous adaptation to address asymmetric threats effectively.

This study therefore seeks to evaluate systematically the impact of Boko Haram's terrorism on Nigerian national security between 2019 and 2025, a period marked by significant tactical evolution, geographic diffusion, and deepening socio-economic consequences.

Statement of the Problem

Despite over a decade of counter-insurgency operations and scholarly attention, the Boko Haram insurgency persists as a critical threat to Nigerian national security, with the period between 2019 and 2025 witnessing a significant and under-examined tactical evolution of the group and its offshoot, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). While existing literature has extensively

documented the origins, ideology, and humanitarian consequences of the conflict, there is a notable gap in systematic analyses focusing on this recent period, characterized by the insurgents' increasing use of improvised explosive devices, drone technology, and strategic targeting of senior military personnel, which has resulted in over 454 soldier fatalities in ambush attacks alone (SBM Intelligence, 2025). Furthermore, the geographic diffusion of terrorist tactics from the north-east to the north-west, the blurring of lines between ideological insurgency and criminal banditry, and the deepening economic devastation estimated to cost Nigeria billions of dollars annually present a complex, multi-dimensional security challenge that conventional military responses, such as the "super camp" strategy, have failed to adequately address (International Crisis Group, 2022; Institute for Economics & Peace, 2021). This study was therefore motivated by the urgent need to evaluate the specific and evolving impact of Boko Haram's terrorism on the human, military, economic, and regional dimensions of Nigerian national security from 2019 to 2025, in order to provide evidence-based insights that can inform more effective and adaptive policy responses.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the impact of Boko Haram insurgency on national security in Nigeria between 2019 and 2025. The specific objectives are to:

- 1. Examine the tactics employed by Boko Haram in Nigeria.**
- 2. Assess the frequency of Boko Haram attacks in North-Eastern Nigeria.**
- 3. Analyze the economic impact of Boko Haram insurgency on livelihoods in North-Eastern Nigeria.**
- 4. Evaluate the effectiveness of counter-insurgency strategies against Boko Haram in Nigeria.**

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What tactics have been employed by Boko Haram in Nigeria between 2019 and 2025?
2. What is the frequency of Boko Haram attacks in North-Eastern Nigeria during the period under study?
3. What is the economic impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on livelihoods in North-Eastern Nigeria?
4. How effective have counter-insurgency strategies been against Boko Haram in Nigeria?

Literature Review

The Boko Haram insurgency represents one of Africa's most persistent and destructive terrorist campaigns, having evolved significantly since its emergence in 2009.

Tactical Evolution of Boko Haram

The period under review has witnessed a marked transformation in Boko Haram's operational methods, with insurgents demonstrating increasing sophistication in their approach to asymmetric warfare. Minko (2025) conducted a comprehensive examination of emerging technologies in Boko Haram's operations, documenting how the group has integrated social media for recruitment, encrypted messaging for secure communication, and advanced weaponry including drones and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). These technological adaptations have

significantly expanded Boko Haram's reach and operational efficiency, presenting formidable challenges to security forces operating in Central Africa.

A comparative study of African jihadist organizations by Bang (2025) revealed that Boko Haram has uniquely maximized shock effects by employing extreme violent means such as suicide bombings and mass kidnappings, distinguishing its tactical approach from groups like Al-Shabaab and AQIM. The analysis found that Boko Haram's organizational flexibility and strategies of community control have enabled it to adapt to changing security environments, while its use of ideological justification has sustained operational momentum despite sustained military pressure.

Empirical data from SBM Intelligence (2025) documented the tactical refinement process in detail. From 2019, insurgents increasingly relied on IEDs, coordinated multi-stage strikes, and deceptive checkpoints designed to lure security forces into kill zones. By 2023, attackers had developed the capacity to target high-ranking officers and strategically important convoys, while the deployment of commercial drones rigged for surveillance and explosive attacks signalled a significant enhancement in operational capacity. The report notes that insurgent operations expanded to include isolating Nigerian military "supercamps" by destroying key infrastructure such as bridges and roads to cut off reinforcements.

Frequency and Geographic Distribution of Attacks

Comprehensive analysis of attack patterns reveals the sustained operational capacity of insurgent groups throughout the 2019-2025 period. SBM Intelligence (2025) documented that at least 454 Nigerian soldiers were killed in ambush attacks across the country, with Borno State accounting for more than 60 per cent of all recorded incidents as ISWAP tightened its grip on parts of the state and the Lake Chad area. The report identified a worrying geographic spread of violence from the Northeast to the Northwest and parts of the South, with bandit groups in the northwest adopting increasingly sophisticated ambush tactics including coordinated multi-stage operations designed to lure reinforcements into kill zones.

Uduo and Obaji-Akpet (2025) examined insurgency and terrorism within Nigeria's national security framework, analysing quantitative data on attack frequency and casualty rates from 2010 to 2023. Their findings revealed systemic gaps between military strategies and their effectiveness, highlighting Boko Haram's resilience and adaptability despite sustained counter-insurgency operations. The study identified corruption, poor governance, and socioeconomic deprivation in northeastern Nigeria as persistent factors enabling the group's continued operational capacity.

Economic Impact on Livelihoods

The economic consequences of the Boko Haram insurgency have been devastating at both macroeconomic and household levels. A longitudinal study by Eneji, Eneji, and Offiong (2025) interrogated the association between sustained violent armed conflict and economic health in Nigeria from 2004 to 2020, covering both pre-Boko Haram years and the insurgency period. The study regressed battle-related deaths against percentage value added to gross domestic product by agriculture and against prevalence of undernourishment, finding that increases in battle-related deaths led to statistically significant decreases in agricultural productivity and significant increases in undernourishment. The research concluded that violent armed conflicts have had significant negative impacts on environmental security and economic health in Nigeria.

Research from the International Food Policy Research Institute (Amare et al., 2025) provided granular analysis of how violent conflicts reshape input use and productivity in smallholder farming in northeastern Nigeria. The study merged nationally representative household panel

data with georeferenced conflict data from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data project, finding that conflict within 15 kilometres of farms significantly reduces both fertilizer use and the yield response to fertilizer, thereby undercutting profitability. Women-managed plots were found to be disproportionately affected, with conflict reducing fertilizer returns more sharply when the plot-head was female, pointing to intersecting vulnerabilities of gender and insecurity. The study revealed that only about 57 per cent of maize plots achieve common profitability thresholds in conflict-prone environments, challenging conventional assumptions that increased fertilizer application automatically translates to higher productivity.

Osazuwa and Ugwukwu (2025) examined the socio-economic drivers of the insurgency, finding that poverty, insufficient education, and unemployment heighten susceptibility to Boko Haram's recruitment and ideological influence. Their analysis of Human Intelligence (HUMINT) applications revealed that understanding insurgent networks and their grievances requires addressing these underlying socio-economic disparities, though efforts face challenges including insufficient funding and bureaucratic inefficiencies. The study documented the efficacy of community-based intelligence through examples such as the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in countering insurgent operations.

Effectiveness of Counter-Insurgency Strategies

Scholarly evaluation of Nigeria's counter-insurgency response reveals mixed outcomes and ongoing challenges. Akinbile, et al. (2025) interrogated the effectiveness of Nigerian security forces' counter-insurgency strategies against Boko Haram in Northeast Nigeria, employing chi-square analysis to test hypotheses at the 0.05 significance level. Their results revealed a statistically significant relationship between the degradation of Boko Haram activities and the type of counter-insurgency strategy employed, demonstrating that effectiveness is significantly influenced by the specific strategies used. The study recommended that the Federal Government and military adopt an integrated approach combining kinetic (military force) and non-kinetic (non-combat) strategies in counter-insurgency operations.

Owojori, et al. (2021) examined the effectiveness of Nigeria's counterterrorism efforts from the perspective of variation in Boko Haram's trajectory and organisational capability. Arguing that the goal of counterterrorism is degradation of terrorists' operational capabilities and circumvention of armed hostilities, the study concluded that Nigeria's counterterrorism techniques have not been fully effective given the group's demonstrated resilience. By examining operational capacity, organisational basing, political ties, and myriad armed hostilities, the research determined that counterterrorism approaches need to be more holistic and strategic to achieve desirable outcomes.

Uduo and Obaji-Akpet (2025) similarly concluded that Nigeria's security response has achieved limited success due to an overemphasis on military tactics and insufficient socio-political reform. Their multi-dimensional model for counterterrorism policy in fragile states emphasizes investment in long-term development projects, improved intelligence operations, and enhanced regional cooperation as essential complements to military action.

The SBM Intelligence (2025) report identified several deep-rooted challenges undermining counter-insurgency operations, including shortages of mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles, gaps in reconnaissance, harsh deployment conditions, weaknesses in welfare and rotation schedules, and corruption affecting arms and equipment procurement. The deterioration of the Multinational Joint Task Force following Niger's withdrawal and reduced participation from Chad

has created operational vacuums along Nigeria's borders exploited by both jihadist and criminal groups for mobility, sanctuary, and resupply.

Research Gaps

This literature review reveals substantial scholarly attention to Boko Haram's tactical evolution, economic impact, and the challenges of counter-insurgency. However, several research gaps warrant attention. First, while technological adaptations have been documented (Minko, 2025), the specific mechanisms through which insurgents acquire advanced capabilities require further investigation. Second, the relationship between ideological insurgency and criminal banditry remains undertheorised, with limited empirical research on network intersections. Third, longitudinal studies of deradicalisation programme effectiveness remain scarce (Osazuwa & Ugwukwu, 2025). Fourth, the gender-differentiated impacts of conflict on agricultural productivity identified by Amare et al. (2025) suggest need for more nuanced analysis of vulnerability patterns. This study therefore sought to fill the fourth gap by evaluating the impact of Boko Haram insurgency on national security in Nigeria between 2019 and 2025. Addressing this gap was essential for developing evidence-based policy responses capable of addressing Nigeria's persistent terrorist threat.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The research was conducted in North-Eastern Nigeria, specifically in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States, which have been the most affected by insurgent activities. The population of the study comprised security personnel (military, police, and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps), government officials, community leaders, and adult residents in selected affected communities across Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States. Based on records obtained from relevant state and local authorities as well as community registers, the accessible population for the study was estimated at 6,420 individuals. This included 1,050 security personnel, 270 government officials, 300 community leaders, and 4,800 adult residents across the selected Local Government Areas.

A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed to select respondents for the study. First, the three states (Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe) were purposively selected due to the high intensity of Boko Haram activities. Second, six Local Government Areas (two from each state) with high records of insurgent attacks were purposively selected. Thereafter, a sample size of 640 respondents was drawn from the accessible population using simple random sampling technique to ensure equal representation. The sample comprised 100 security personnel, 40 government officials, 50 community leaders, and 450 adult residents proportionately distributed across the selected states and Local Government Areas. This sample size was considered adequate for the study because it provided sufficient representation of the key stakeholder groups directly affected by the insurgency. Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire titled *Boko Haram Insurgency and National Security Questionnaire (BHINSQ)*, which contained two sections: Section A elicited demographic information, while Section B contained items structured in line with the objectives of the study, covering insurgent tactics, frequency of attacks, economic effects, and counter-insurgency efforts, measured on a five-point Likert scale.

The instrument was subjected to face validation by experts in Security Studies to ensure clarity, relevance, and adequacy of the items. A pilot test was conducted outside the selected study areas, and the data obtained were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha to determine the internal consistency of the instrument, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.80 which was above the acceptable benchmark of 0.70. Prior to data collection, permission was secured from relevant

authorities, security formations, and community leaders. With the assistance of trained research assistants, copies of the questionnaire were administered and retrieved after completion to ensure a high response rate. The data collected were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions.

Results

Research Question One: *What tactics have been employed by Boko Haram in Nigeria between 2019 and 2025?*

Table 1: Tactical Dimensions of Boko Haram Operations

S/N	Questionnaire Statement	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
Cluster A: Conventional Attack Tactics				
1	Boko Haram has increasingly deployed improvised explosive devices (IEDs) against military convoys and civilian targets in North-Eastern Nigeria	3.52	0.87	Agreed
2	The group has employed coordinated multi-stage ambushes designed to lure security forces into kill zones	3.41	0.92	Agreed
3	Insurgents have used deceptive checkpoints posing as security personnel to attack unsuspecting travellers and military patrols	3.38	0.95	Agreed
4	Boko Haram has intensified its use of suicide bombings, including female bombers, against soft targets such as markets and mosques	3.45	0.89	Agreed
Cluster B: Asymmetric Warfare Methods				
5	The group has deployed commercial drones rigged for surveillance and explosive attacks against military positions	3.29	1.02	Agreed
6	Insurgents have strategically targeted high-ranking military officers and critical convoys to degrade command structures	3.47	0.88	Agreed
7	Boko Haram has isolated military "supercamps" by destroying bridges, roads, and communication infrastructure	3.35	0.96	Agreed
8	The group has employed hit-and-run tactics against vulnerable communities before security forces can respond	3.51	0.84	Agreed
Cluster C: Socio-Economic Warfare				
9	Boko Haram has systematically engaged in mass kidnapping for ransom as a primary revenue generation strategy	3.62	0.79	Agreed
10	The group has imposed taxation regimes on farmers, traders, and herders in areas under its control	3.44	0.91	Agreed
11	Insurgents have destroyed farmlands, killed livestock, and disrupted agricultural cycles to create food insecurity	3.48	0.86	Agreed
12	Boko Haram has used propaganda and social media to recruit followers and spread fear among civilian populations	3.31	0.98	Agreed
Cluster Mean		3.44	0.91	Agreed

Table 1 presents respondents' perceptions of the tactics employed by Boko Haram between 2019 and 2025. All twelve questionnaire items recorded mean scores above the 2.50 acceptance benchmark, with cluster means ranging from 3.41 to 3.48. The overall cluster mean of 3.44 indicates strong agreement among respondents regarding the tactical dimensions examined. The

highest mean score (3.62, SD=0.79) was recorded for item 9, confirming that mass kidnapping for ransom has become a primary tactic of the group, consistent with Bukarti's (2025) documentation of Boko Haram accumulating up to ₦1 billion through ransom operations since 2024. The use of IEDs and suicide bombings (items 1 and 4) also recorded high mean scores, validating Minko's (2025) findings on technological integration in insurgent operations. The relatively lower mean score for drone deployment (3.29, SD=1.02) despite acknowledgment by military commanders suggests this capability may be less widespread or visible to civilian respondents. The low standard deviations across most items (0.79-1.02) indicate reasonable consensus among respondents on the tactical evolution described.

Research Question Two: *What is the frequency of Boko Haram attacks in North-Eastern Nigeria during the period under study?*

Table 2: Frequency and Geographic Distribution of Attacks

S/N	Questionnaire Statement	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
Cluster A: Attack Frequency Patterns				
13	Boko Haram attacks have occurred with alarming frequency in North-Eastern Nigeria between 2019 and 2025	3.58	0.81	Agreed
14	The frequency of attacks increased significantly during 2020-2021 before declining in 2022-2023	3.33	0.97	Agreed
15	There has been a notable resurgence of attacks since the first quarter of 2025	3.46	0.89	Agreed
16	Security forces have been ambushed on a near-weekly basis in parts of Borno State	3.51	0.85	Agreed
Cluster B: Geographic Concentration				
17	Borno State has experienced the highest concentration of Boko Haram attacks in the North-East region	3.67	0.72	Agreed
18	Yobe and Adamawa states have also experienced significant but comparatively lower attack frequencies	3.42	0.88	Agreed
19	Rural and remote communities are more frequently attacked than urban centres	3.55	0.83	Agreed
20	Lake Chad islands and surrounding areas have become safe havens for insurgent staging operations	3.49	0.86	Agreed
Cluster C: Attack Outcomes and Casualties				
21	Military personnel have borne a disproportionate share of fatalities in insurgent attacks	3.53	0.84	Agreed
22	Civilian casualties remain high, particularly in markets, IDP camps, and farming communities	3.61	0.78	Agreed
23	Kidnapping incidents have occurred alongside violent attacks, increasing the human toll	3.57	0.82	Agreed
24	Attack intensity has varied seasonally, with increases during farming seasons and dry periods	3.29	1.01	Agreed
Cluster Mean		3.50	0.86	Agreed

Table 2 reveals respondents' perceptions of attack frequency and distribution, with an overall cluster mean of 3.50 indicating strong agreement that attacks have been frequent and geographically concentrated. Item 17 recorded the highest mean (3.67, SD=0.72), confirming

Borno State as the epicentre of violence, consistent with SBM Intelligence (2025) documentation that Borno accounted for 456 fatalities over the seven-year period. The high mean for item 22 (3.61, SD=0.78) reflects the devastating civilian toll, corroborating Okewunmi's (2025) findings that food security, education, health, and general living standards have been severely affected. Item 16 (3.51) supports the finding that 454 soldiers were killed in ambush attacks, validating Uduo and Obaji-Akpet's (2025) analysis of systemic gaps in security response. The relatively lower mean and higher standard deviation for item 24 (3.29, SD=1.01) suggests less consensus on seasonal variations in attack patterns. The recognition of a 2025 resurgence (item 15: 3.46) aligns with Governor Zulum's warning that authorities were "losing ground" to renewed attacks.

Research Question Three: *What is the economic impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on livelihoods in North-Eastern Nigeria?*

Table 3: Economic Impact on Livelihoods

S/N	Questionnaire Statement	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
Cluster A: Agricultural and Food Security Impact				
25	The insurgency has significantly reduced agricultural productivity in North-Eastern Nigeria	3.64	0.75	Agreed
26	Farmers have been forced to abandon their farmlands due to insecurity, leading to food shortages	3.68	0.71	Agreed
27	Livestock production has declined substantially due to rustling, killing of animals, and displacement of pastoralists	3.59	0.80	Agreed
28	Fertilizer use and crop yields have decreased in conflict-prone areas, undermining farm profitability	3.41	0.94	Agreed
Cluster B: Household and Community Livelihood Disruption				
29	Displacement of individuals and communities has destroyed traditional livelihoods and income sources	3.66	0.73	Agreed
30	Local markets and small businesses have collapsed or significantly contracted due to reduced economic activity	3.61	0.79	Agreed
31	Household incomes have plummeted, increasing poverty and dependency on humanitarian assistance	3.63	0.76	Agreed
32	The ransom economy has drained household savings, with families selling assets to secure release of kidnapped relatives	3.57	0.83	Agreed
Cluster C: Macroeconomic and Regional Economic Effects				
33	Foreign and domestic investment has been deterred by persistent insecurity in the region	3.52	0.86	Agreed
34	Trade routes have been disrupted, increasing transportation costs and reducing commercial activity	3.56	0.84	Agreed
35	The humanitarian aid economy in Maiduguri has created a fragile boom vulnerable to funding cuts	3.38	0.96	Agreed
36	Economic displacement has created ripple effects affecting overall productivity across the North-East	3.54	0.85	Agreed
Cluster Mean		3.57	0.82	Agreed

Table 3 presents respondents' perceptions of economic impacts, with the highest overall cluster mean of 3.57 among all research questions, indicating overwhelming consensus that the insurgency has devastated livelihoods. Item 26 recorded the highest mean (3.68, SD=0.71),

confirming widespread farmland abandonment, consistent with Eneji, Eneji, and Offiong's (2025) longitudinal findings that battle-related deaths significantly decreased agricultural productivity. Item 29 (3.66, SD=0.73) validates Okewunmi's (2025) conclusion that economic displacement has affected local markets, small businesses, and overall productivity. The strong agreement on household income collapse (item 31: 3.63) aligns with the National Bureau of Statistics (2024) estimate that Nigerians paid approximately ₦2.23 trillion in ransoms. Item 27 (3.59) corroborates Kabara et al.'s (2025) findings on devastating effects on pastoralist livelihoods, including loss of livestock. The relatively lower mean for item 35 (3.38, SD=0.96) suggests some respondents may be less familiar with the fragility of the humanitarian aid economy, though The New Humanitarian (2025) documented this vulnerability extensively. The consistently low standard deviations (0.71-0.96) indicate strong respondent consensus on the economic devastation described.

Research Question Four: *How effective have counter-insurgency strategies been against Boko Haram in Nigeria?*

Table 4: Effectiveness of Counter-Insurgency Strategies

S/N	Questionnaire Statement	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
Cluster A: Military and Kinetic Strategy Effectiveness				
37	The "super camp" strategy has protected concentrated forces but ceded rural areas to insurgent control	3.47	0.88	Agreed
38	Military operations have successfully degraded Boko Haram leadership structures and operational capacity	2.88	1.21	Agreed
39	The number of insurgents surrendering and entering deradicalisation programmes indicates progress	2.76	1.28	Agreed
40	Corruption and equipment shortages have undermined the effectiveness of military operations	3.53	0.85	Agreed
Cluster B: Non-Kinetic and Community-Based Strategy Effectiveness				
41	The Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) has been effective in providing local intelligence and community security	3.42	0.90	Agreed
42	Deradicalisation and reintegration programmes have successfully rehabilitated former insurgents	2.54	1.32	Agreed
43	Community involvement in counter-insurgency has improved based on communal consciousness and anti-insurgent sentiments	3.31	0.99	Agreed
44	Public enlightenment campaigns have reduced support for insurgent ideology among vulnerable populations	2.61	1.29	Agreed
Cluster C: Regional Cooperation and Overall Assessment				
45	The Multinational Joint Task Force has been weakened by reduced participation from neighbouring countries	3.29	1.03	Agreed
46	Border porosity continues to facilitate insurgent movement, arms trafficking, and resupply	3.55	0.84	Agreed
47	Overall, counter-insurgency strategies have achieved limited success given Boko Haram's demonstrated resilience	3.48	0.87	Agreed
48	An integrated approach combining kinetic and non-kinetic strategies is necessary for long-term success	3.58	0.81	Agreed
Cluster Mean		3.20	1.02	Agreed

Table 4 reveals more varied perceptions of counter-insurgency effectiveness, with an overall cluster mean of 3.20, the lowest among the four research questions, indicating more cautious assessment. The wide range of mean scores (2.54 to 3.58) and higher standard deviations (up to 1.32) reflect significant variation in respondents' experiences and perspectives. Item 48 recorded the highest mean (3.58, SD=0.81), confirming strong consensus that integrated approaches are necessary, consistent with Akinbile, Momodu, and Owonikoko's (2025) recommendation that the Federal Government adopt combined kinetic and non-kinetic strategies. Item 40 (3.53, SD=0.85) validates concerns about corruption and equipment shortages documented by SBM Intelligence (2025). Item 46 (3.55) supports Okewunmi's (2025) finding that border porosity and cross-border activities of armed groups promote insurgency. However, items assessing the success of specific strategies recorded notably lower means and higher standard deviations. Item 42 (2.54, SD=1.32) barely meets the acceptance threshold, suggesting considerable skepticism about deradicalisation programme effectiveness, highlighting the need for longitudinal studies called for by Sambo and Sule (2025). Item 38 (2.88, SD=1.21) and item 39 (2.76, SD=1.28) indicate divided opinions on whether military operations have successfully degraded insurgent capacity, reflecting Owojori et al.'s (2021) conclusion that counterterrorism techniques have not been fully effective given the group's demonstrated resilience.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding revealed that Boko Haram employed diverse and evolving tactics between 2019 and 2025, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs), coordinated multi-stage ambushes, suicide bombings, drone deployment, mass kidnapping for ransom, and the imposition of taxation regimes in areas under insurgent control, with mass kidnapping. This finding aligns with Bukarti's (2025) documentation of the group's calculated turn towards kidnap-for-ransom as a primary revenue source, accumulating up to ₦1 billion since 2024. The deployment of IEDs and coordinated ambushes validates Minko's (2025) examination of emerging technologies in Boko Haram's operations, including drone warfare that military commanders acknowledged as difficult to detect by conventional radar. Bang's (2025) comparative study of African jihadist organizations provides theoretical context, noting that Boko Haram uniquely maximizes shock effects through extreme violence including suicide bombings and mass kidnappings, distinguishing its approach from groups like Al-Shabaab. The imposition of taxation regimes on farmers, traders, and herders supports Bukarti's (2025) characterization of Boko Haram as "a de facto criminal state," representing a fundamental transformation from purely ideological insurgency to hybrid criminal enterprise. SBM Intelligence (2025) confirmed that by 2023, attackers had refined drone deployment for surveillance and explosive attacks, representing a quantum leap in operational capacity that continues to challenge security forces.

The second finding revealed that Boko Haram attacks occurred with alarming frequency in North-Eastern Nigeria, with Borno State experiencing the highest concentration of violence and civilians bearing disproportionate casualties, while respondents acknowledged a notable resurgence of attacks since the first quarter of 2025. This finding aligns closely with SBM Intelligence's (2025) documentation that at least 454 Nigerian soldiers were killed in ambush attacks between 2019 and 2025, with Borno State accounting for more than 60 per cent of recorded incidents. Governor Babagana Zulum's April 2025 warning that renewed attacks were occurring "almost on a daily basis" and that authorities were "losing ground" provides official corroboration of respondent perceptions. Bukarti (2025) documented that Boko Haram carried out over 397 attacks in Borno State alone during the first quarter of 2025, leaving 514 people dead and 357 others abducted, empirically validating the perceived resurgence. Uduo and Obaji-Akpet's (2025) quantitative

analysis of attack frequency from 2010 to 2023 revealed systemic gaps between military strategies and effectiveness, explaining the persistence of violence despite sustained counter-insurgency efforts. The concentration of violence in rural and remote communities aligns with the International Crisis Group's (2022) observation that the military's "super camp" strategy, while protecting concentrated forces, effectively ceded control of vast rural areas to insurgents, creating governance vacuums that insurgents readily exploit.

The third finding revealed devastating economic consequences of the insurgency on livelihoods, which include farmland abandonment, displacement destroying traditional livelihoods, household income collapse, and market contraction have fundamentally altered the economic landscape of North-Eastern Nigeria. This finding aligns robustly with Eneji, Eneji, and Offiong's (2025) longitudinal study, which found that increases in battle-related deaths led to statistically significant decreases in agricultural productivity and significant increases in undernourishment. Amare et al.'s (2025) research from the International Food Policy Research Institute provides granular confirmation, documenting that conflict within 15 kilometres of farms significantly reduces both fertilizer use and yield response, explaining why only 57 per cent of maize plots achieve profitability in conflict-prone environments. The devastating effects on pastoralist livelihoods find support in Kabara et al.'s (2025) examination of how Boko Haram has disrupted livestock production through rustling and displacement. Okewunmi's (2025) analysis confirms that economic displacement has affected local markets, small businesses, and overall productivity, while the National Bureau of Statistics (2024) estimate that Nigerians paid approximately ₦2.23 trillion in ransoms validates the finding that the ransom economy has drained household savings. George, Okon, and Akanji's (2022) sectoral analysis estimated that conflict subtracted \$12.6–15.4 billion from annual GDP in 2021, providing macroeconomic validation of micro-level livelihood impacts.

The fourth finding revealed varied and contested assessments of counter-insurgency effectiveness, with significant divergence in respondent experiences, though strong consensus emerged on the need for integrated approaches combining kinetic and non-kinetic strategies and concerns about corruption and equipment shortages undermining military operations. This finding aligns with Akinbile, Momodu, and Owonikoko's (2025) chi-square analysis revealing a statistically significant relationship between degradation of Boko Haram activities and the type of counter-insurgency strategy employed, validating respondent consensus on integrated approaches. Owojori, Fasuan, Ilori, and Matanmi's (2021) conclusion that Nigeria's counterterrorism techniques have not been fully effective given the group's demonstrated resilience explains the divided opinions on whether military operations have successfully degraded insurgent capacity. The skepticism regarding deradicalisation programme effectiveness highlights what Sambo and Sule (2025) identified as the need for more longitudinal studies of reintegration outcomes. The finding that corruption and equipment shortages have undermined operations validates SBM Intelligence's (2025) identification of challenges including shortages of mine-resistant vehicles and gaps in reconnaissance. Osazuwa and Ugwukwu's (2025) documentation of the Civilian Joint Task Force's efficacy provides context for positive assessments of community-based strategies, while Tar and Mustapha's (2023) analysis of the Multinational Joint Task Force's challenges explains concerns about border porosity facilitating insurgent movement and arms trafficking.

Conclusion

This study evaluated the impact of Boko Haram's terrorism on Nigerian national security between 2019 and 2025, drawing on data from 640 respondents and contemporary scholarly literature to

examine the group's tactical evolution, attack frequency, economic consequences, and counter-insurgency effectiveness. The findings revealed that Boko Haram has undergone significant tactical transformation during the study period, evolving from a conventional insurgent group into a hybrid entity combining ideological violence with sophisticated criminal enterprise, including mass kidnapping for ransom, drone deployment, coordinated ambushes targeting senior military personnel, and systematic taxation of civilian populations in areas under its control. Attack frequency, while fluctuating, has remained persistently high with Borno State accounting for the majority of incidents and a troubling resurgence documented in the first quarter of 2025, confirming the group's continued operational capacity despite years of counter-insurgency efforts. The most devastating impact, reflected in the strongest respondent consensus, has been economic, with farmland abandonment, livestock loss, market contraction, and household income collapse fundamentally altering livelihoods across North-Eastern Nigeria, creating intergenerational poverty and food insecurity that scholarly estimates suggest has cost the nation billions in lost GDP. Assessments of counter-insurgency effectiveness proved varied and contested, with strong consensus on the need for integrated approaches combining military and non-military strategies, but significant skepticism regarding deradicalisation programmes and purely kinetic operations, while persistent challenges including corruption, equipment shortages, border porosity, and weakened regional cooperation have undermined operational effectiveness. This convergence of tactical evolution, persistent violence, economic devastation, and contested counter-insurgency outcomes demonstrates that Boko Haram's threat to national security extends far beyond battlefield casualties to encompass human security, economic viability, and social cohesion, demanding equally adaptive responses that address underlying structural conditions including poverty, unemployment, and weak governance. Ultimately, the study concludes that effective counter-insurgency must be measured not only by insurgents neutralized but by livelihoods restored, communities rebuilt, and the human security of ordinary Nigerians secured, requiring sustained commitment to integrated approaches that recognize the limitations of purely military solutions.

Recommendations

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

1. The government should prioritize comprehensive livelihood recovery programmes in North-Eastern Nigeria, given that economic devastation recorded the highest respondent consensus and represents the most enduring consequence of the insurgency.
2. The Nigerian military and security agencies should formally adopt an integrated counter-insurgency framework that combines kinetic operations with sustained non-kinetic interventions.
3. Given the finding that border porosity continues to facilitate insurgent movement and arms trafficking, the Federal Government should urgently revitalize regional cooperation mechanisms, particularly the Multinational Joint Task Force. This should include diplomatic engagement to restore Niger's participation and strengthen Chad's commitment; establishment of joint border patrols and intelligence-sharing protocols; implementation of advanced border surveillance technologies.
4. The government should establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework for all counter-insurgency programmes, particularly deradicalization and reintegration initiatives.

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