
ASSESSMENT STUDY OF THE CHALLENGES OF INSECURITY ON ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF RURAL COMMUNITIES IN OKEHI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KOGI STATE

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Abstract

The study assessed the challenges of insecurity on economic activities in rural communities of Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State. Survey research design was adopted for the study and a well structured questionnaire was used to gather relevant information from a sample population of 400 people in Okehi Local Government Area across 11 wards. Simple percentages were used to analyse the data obtained. The findings of the study indicated that insecurity affected economic activities, food supply chain and investments in rural communities of Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State. It was however recommended among others that the government should accelerate the pace of development by establishing an economy with relevant social, economic and physical infrastructure for business operations and industrial growth, to meet the basic needs and provide gainful employment for its citizens. This will discourage their willingness to engage in crimes that lead to insecurity. New government administration should ensure the sustenance of the effort of the current government at curbing insecurity and develop more strategies and take advantage of modern technological security and surveillance tools for better results.

Keywords: Insecurity, Challenges, Economic Activities, Investment, Food Supply Chain

Introduction

Peace and security are necessary components that cannot be divorced from economic growth and development of a society. The social and electronic media release reports of crime and violence across nations of the world on daily basis, indicating the alarming rate at which insecurity and crime has continuously increased. The hash economy most recently factored by the COVID-19 pandemic has brought untold hardship and poverty which has consequently increased the rate of criminality and insecurity (Agogbua, Mgbatogu & Nzewi, 2022).

Insecurity situations have been witnessed within Nigeria over the years in various forms. In the South-South there have been incidences of Niger-Delta militants attacking and vandalizing oil pipelines in the region as well as cases of incessant kidnappings recorded over the years; in the North, common insecurity issues result from religious crises, banditry, kidnappings/abductions and bomb explosions; in the West are common cases of armed robbery and assassination; in the middle-belt region are cases of communal clashes, religious violence and farmers-herders clashes (Onime, 2018; Udoh, Prince, Udo & Kelvin-Iioafu, 2019). It is the responsibility of government to ensure security of lives and property, which is a fundamental human right of Nigerians for economic growth to be fostered.

In May 2022, the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act No. 15 was enacted by the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to capture and make provision for certain areas that were not included in the Terrorism (Prevention) Act No. 10 of 2011. Therein lies an indication of the government's reinforced readiness to stem crime and insecurity in Nigeria.

Onime (2018) observed that areas prone to insecurity in Nigeria experience economic setback. Insecurity constitutes threat on the level and continuity of business activities in Nigeria as with other nations of the world threatened with insecurity. Insecurity has many times hindered investors from investing in countries so affected. The distressing level of insecurity in Nigeria has made the economy unattractive to foreign investors because investors do not only look for high returns on their investments but also safe environment for their investments; this invariably slows down the level of business activities and negatively affect economic growth and development (Okonkwo, Ndubuisi-Okolo & Anagbogu, 2015). Other after effects of insecurity situations in the nation are experienced in the increased cost of doing business, companies folding up, capital infrastructures destroyed, fall in oil exports and earnings and increase in unemployment (Onime, 2018; Oyebode, 2022).

Rural communities, particularly areas surrounded by forests have become a common ground for insecurity in Nigeria which could be linked to unavailability of strong security structure when compared with many urban communities/settlements (Albert, 2017; Omoroghomwan, 2021). Various insecurity situations have been experienced within rural communities in Nigeria in the form of communal clashes, kidnapping/abduction, farmers-herders' clashes, religious violence, banditry and attacks by 'unknown gunmen' among others (Gadzama, Saddiq, Oduhie & Dariya 2018; Naswem, Unongo & Nyityo 2019; Obidiegwu & Elekwa 2019; Yahaya & Bello, 2020). These have brought negative effects on the lives of residents of affected communities. The negative effects include; loss of lives and properties, displacement of lives, disruption of the supply chain, children becoming orphans, women becoming widows, men becoming widowers and couples becoming childless (Ahmad & Ukasha, 2021). Inflation rate is also increased, thereby reducing the purchasing power of the people in those areas; famine/hunger inevitably characterizes such occurrences as a result of increase in food inflation rate; educational activities are affected; people become afraid to go

about regular businesses and economic activities, automatically disrupting business activities and retarding the economic growth of such communities and the nation by extension (Iheriohanma & Emenyonu, 2018).

Problem Statement/Justification

Insecurity issues remain a growing concern following increase in violence and crime; ranging from terrorist attacks to kidnapping, banditry, communal clashes and farmers-herders clashes. Insecurity has been commonly linked to factors such as poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, poor security structure, corruption and bad governance (Epron, 2019; Okonkwo et al., 2015; Shavah, 2021; Zubairu, 2020).

The case of Nigeria is a paradoxical situation of living in plenty yet suffering; despite the abundance of rich economic and natural resources, Nigeria still remains a developing nation (Zubairu, 2020). The number of poor people in Nigeria is estimated to rise from 89.0 million people in 2020 to 95.1 million in 2022 (World Bank, 2022). Ajodo-Adebanjoko and Walter (2014) pointed insecurity to have contributed to the level of poverty reported in the North West and North East Nigeria at 77.7% and 77.6% respectively because of the prevalence of conflicts in these regions. They also attributed the reason for the high poverty level in the South-South region of Nigeria to insecurity, following the conflicts between the militant groups and the multinational oil companies. However, there is no record of the percentage of poverty attributed to insecurity in Nigeria. According to Ndubisi-Okolo and Anigbuogu (2019) the economic, social and political stability of Nigeria is put under serious threat as a result of insecurity. Insecurity creates fear and destroys confidence in the heart of numerous business owners from establishing businesses in parts of Nigeria threatened by insecurity (Ndubisi-Okolo & Anigbuogu, 2019; Shavah, 2021).

Okehi local government area of Kogi State is known for commercial activities, such as; small-scale trading activities, lumbering, farming, carpentry, bricklaying, auto-mechanics and other menial jobs. Over the past 15 years, the area has become a shadow of itself following political fights, kidnappings and incidences of Fulani herders' attacks within the state. Areas that were easily accessible have become totally abandoned even after relative peace has been restored. Many businesses within Okehi local government area have been moved out of the locality and even out of the state to locations that are considered to be relatively safe and secure for doing business. Local markets are no longer what it used to be. Regular reports on kidnapping along Okene-Lokoja road have created fear in the heart of travelers who travel to the North to buy goods. Farming activities which is a common activity for the rural dwellers have been affected by recent occurrences of cattle rustlings and herders attack; the fear of been attacked by armed herders who move their cattle into cultivated farmlands have made farmers stay away from their farmlands or having to only farm on small pieces of land that are not far away from residential areas. Other value-chain activities associated with agriculture have been disrupted as well. School/educational activities have also been disrupted as school closure time is made early and sometimes students/pupils may not have to go to school for weeks.

At the state and local government levels within the state, reports suggested that efforts are being made to bring an end to these incidences. Local hunters and vigilante groups parade the forest areas, guarding the areas from kidnapers and bandits. Recently, the state government carried out security mop-up in areas within Kogi Central senatorial districts reported to be hideouts for kidnapers and bandits.

Rural areas have the potential for development as therein lay many untapped natural resources. Insecurity however hinders primary production activities such as (farming, exploration and mining) as well as secondary production activities (manufacturing and construction) within the host community which would have been of economic developmental advantage of such areas.

Objectives of the study

The major objective of this study is to assess the challenges of insecurity on economic activities in rural communities in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State. Specifically, the study is established to:

- i. Examine insecurity on the disruption of economic activities in rural communities in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State.
- ii. Determine the challenges of insecurity on food supply chain in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State.
- iii. Assess the challenges of insecurity on investment in rural communities in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State.
- iv. Assess role of government at curbing insecurity in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State.

Review of Related Literature

Insecurity, simply put is the absence of security, safety and protection. Ishaya (2021) conceptualized insecurity as a state of being exposed to risk or anxiety (in anticipation of some misfortune). According to Udoh (2015) it is a state of being in danger, vulnerable and insecure.

Onime (2018) examined the effect of insecurity on economic growth in Nigeria and observed that economic activities have been slowed down in areas where insecurity is prevalent. He observed that as a result of the Boko Haram terrorist insurgency in the North East of Nigeria and the militants attack and vandalisation of oil pipeline installations in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria, many communities have been deserted, economic activities in both the formal and informal sectors have been disrupted, multinational companies have closed and relocated their offices, thus increasing the level of unemployment.

Yusuf and Moh'd, (2022) in their study on the growth and fiscal effects of insecurity on Nigerian economy found out that Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) are often directed to low risk countries which ultimately reduces returns on investments in countries associated with insecurity. In the study of Okonkwo et al. (2015) on the implications of security challenges for business activities in Nigeria, the study revealed that insecurity in any environment accelerates the cost of doing business either through direct loss of goods and properties or the cost of taking precautions against business risks and uncertainties, which in turn hinder business activities and discourage both local and foreign investors. In line with this, Brodeur (2018) stated that activities of terrorists also affect economic growth by increasing the cost of doing business through higher wages, higher insurance premiums and increased security expenditures; which consequently result in lower profits and, as a result, a lower return on investment. He further asserted that terrorist attacks can lead to the devastation of infrastructure, causing business disruptions.

Arisukwu (2017) examined the implication of insecurity on the socio-economic development in Ilorin metropolis and found out that, insecurity factored by ethno-religious crisis, terrorism, absence of viable security outfit has negative effects on the socio-economic

development of Ilorin metropolis. Oriazowanlan and Erah (2019) analysed the effect of insecurity on MSMEs development in Benin-City, Edo State. Their findings revealed that the productive hours of businesses have been reduced as a result of many business operators closing early for fear of being attack by thugs. Their findings substantiated the opinion of other researchers that the consequence of insecurity will discourage both business operators who want to expand their businesses and potential businesses and investors.

Insecurity situations in Nigeria have led to the closure of many businesses especially in areas where threats of insecurity are prevalent. Many business owners and investors relocate their businesses to states and countries considered to be relatively secure for doing business (Agogbua, et al., 2022).

Abubakar (2021) studied the activities of Boko-Haram in North East Nigeria to have forced famers to abandon farms and markets due to risks to their lives, thereby posing a huge threat to food security and eventually affecting socio-economic development in the region. In corroboration, Onime (2018) in his study alluded that farmers-herders' clashes within some parts in the middle belt states (Benue, Kogi, Taraba) of Nigeria and Enugu state have resulted in destruction of farmlands and reduced farm yield in those areas, which eventually lead to increase in the prices of food items and discourages further agricultural activities. Agricultural activities which contribute largely to the supplies of inputs to agro- allied companies and companies that depend largely on agricultural products as inputs have been disrupted to a great extent as a result of communal clashes as well as farmers-herders' clashes (Adekoya, 2021). The study of Lesmore (2022) on the effect of insecurity on the socio-economic development of Mayo-Belwa Local Government Area of Adamawa State revealed that insecurity has restricted many farmers' access to their farmlands for either planting or harvesting crops, for fear of been attacked. This consequently discourages agricultural activities, reduces agricultural output, induces food scarcity and higher prices of food.

Theoretical Framework

The research study adopts the aggression-frustration theory as the theoretical framework to explain and analyse the cause and effect of insecurity.

The frustration-aggression theory was developed by John Dollard Neal Miller, Leonard Doob, Orval Mowrer and Robert Sears in 1939. The frustration aggression theory is based on the general premise that all humans have basic needs and goals which they seek to fulfill, when there is any obstruction to the fulfillment of their needs and goals by individuals or groups it creates frustration which eventually leads to an aggressive response. Such aggressive response could be directed to a person or object and to both as the case may be. Simply put, when frustration cannot be eased off, it turns into aggression.

This theory is relevant to the study with respect to various cases of violence in form of kidnapping, armed robbery, pipe-line vandalization by militants, bombings, farmers-herders' clashes, communal clashes, religious crisis which can be attributed to some forms of frustration. The cases of oil pipeline vandalization and militants' attacks in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria is as a result of the militants agitating for their share of the oil revenue and infrastructural and environmental development of their region by the oil companies in the region and the government. On another hand, The Boko Haram insurgency prevalent in the Northern part of Nigeria is as well ascribed to the frustration prompted by corruption and the attendant poverty and unemployment situation. As a result, these frustrated persons willingly make themselves available for criminal and destructive acts as well as agents for suicide bombings. Most people involved in the act of kidnapping are frustrated as a result of poverty

and unemployment thereby embracing kidnapping as a fast medium of making money. Farmers-herders' clash is factored by a 'two-way' frustration; on one part is the movement of the frustrated herders from the Northern region with increased frequency of drought to accessing green pastures on farmlands for their cattle. On the other part is the frustrated farmers whose aggression stem from the attack on their farmlands by the herders and their cattle. These eventually results to a clash between the two parties.

The nation at large and not only the communities affected by insecurity have suffered grave negative impact such as destruction of lives and property, hunger and disruption of economic activities.

Methodology

Research Design

The survey research design was adopted in the process of data collection.

Population of the Study

The population of the study is Okehi local government with an estimated population of 199,999 in 2006 (National Population Census, 2006). With an annual population growth rate of 4%, the population of Okehi local government area in 2022 was estimated at 327,998.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Using the Slovin's formula of sample size determination ($N/(1+Ne^2)$) at 95% confidence level, the sample population for the study will be a total of 400 people; 37 respondents each from the 11 wards were randomly drawn.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

A total of 401 questionnaire copies out of 407 distributed questionnaires were accounted to be completely returned on which the data presentation, analysis and discussion was based.

Table1: Demographic characteristics of Respondents

DemographicCharacteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	227	57%
	Female	174	43%
	Total	401	100%
Age Bracket	18-24	163	41%
	25- 44	208	52%
	45-60	30	7%
	Total	401	100%
Employment Status	Employed	166	41%
	Unemployed	235	59%
	Total	401	100%
Economic Activity	Trading	30	18%
	Teaching	75	45%
	Lumbering activities	7	4%
	Farming	5	3%
	Carpentry	5	3%
	Bricklaying	4	2%
	Auto-mechanic	2	1%
Total	166	100%	

Source: Field Work, 2022

From table 1 above, under gender, 227 respondents representing 57% of the respondents were male, while 174 respondents representing 43% of the respondents were reported female. Under age bracket 163 (41%) of the total respondents fell within the age bracket of 18-24, 208 (52%) fell within the age bracket of 25-44, and 30 (7%) of the total respondents fell within the age bracket of 45-60. This indicates therefore that; majority of the respondents were within the age bracket of 25-44. Under employment status, 166 respondents which represented 41% of the total respondents were reported employed, while 235 which represented 59% of the total respondents were unemployed. The unemployed respondents are more represented in number than the employed, which is indicative of a high unemployment rate. Under economic activity engaged in by the respondents; out of the total number of employed respondents, 30 (18%) are engaged in trading, 75 (45%) are engaged in teaching, 7 (4%) are engaged in lumbering, 5 (3%) are engaged in farming, 5 (3%) are engaged in carpentry, 4 (2%) are engaged in bricklaying, 2 (1%) are engaged as auto-mechanics, 38 (24%) are engaged in other economic activities not listed.

Table 2: Responses on examining insecurity on the disruption of economic activities in rural communities in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State

Many businesses in the area no longer exist as a result of insecurity.	Frequency	Percentage
SA	202	50.4%
A	141	35.2%
D	51	12.7%
SD	7	1.7%
Total	401	100%
Insecurity has made many people lose their jobs since the organizations where they work have relocated	Frequency	Percentage
SA	120	30%
A	217	54%
D	60	15%
SD	3	0.8%
Total	400	100%
Many farmers no longer go to farm for fear of being attacked	Frequency	Percentage
SA	191	48%
A	139	35%
D	61	15.4%
SD	5	1.3%
Total	396	100%
Schooling and educational activities are usually disrupted at the height of insecurity challenges in the area	Frequency	Percentage
SA	111	28%
A	167	42%
D	92	23%
SD	30	7%
Total	400	100%
Insecurity has reduced the operating hours of businesses in the area	Frequency	Percentage
SA	184	47%
A	137	35%
D	65	17%
SD	4	1%
Total	390	100%

Source: Field Work, 2022

From table 5 above, the responses of respondents to if many businesses in the area no longer exist as a result of insecurity indicated that; 50.4% of the total respondents strongly agreed, while 32.5% agreed, 12.7% disagreed and 1.7% strongly disagreed.

Responses to if insecurity has made many people lose their jobs since the organizations where they work have relocated revealed that; 30% of the total respondents strongly, 54% agreed, while 15% disagreed and 0.8% strongly disagreed.

From the responses to if many farmers no longer go to farm for fear of being attacked; 48% of the total respondents strongly agreed that many farmers no longer go to farm for fear of being attacked, 35% also agreed. However, 15.4% of the total respondents disagreed and 1.3% strongly disagreed.

Responses to if schooling and educational activities are usually disrupted at the height of insecurity challenges in the area showed that; 28% of the total respondents strongly agreed that schooling and educational activities are usually disrupted at the height of insecurity challenges in the area, 42% also agreed, while 23% disagreed and 7% strongly disagreed.

47% of the total respondents strongly agreed and 35% agreed to the statement that operating hours of businesses in the area has been reduced as a result of insecurity. On the other hand, 17% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed.

Table 3: Responses on the determination of the challenges of insecurity on food supply chain in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State.

Agricultural labour force has reduced as a result of relocation of farmers to safe farm settlement	Frequency	Percentage
SA	203	51%
A	146	37%
D	44	11%
SD	5	1%
Total	398	100%
Common farm produce are in short supply as a result of low cultivation and productivity	Frequency	Percentage
SA	157	40%
A	179	45%
D	56	14%
SD	5	1%
Total	397	100%
Food inflation rate increases due to high demand over short supply of farm produce	Frequency	Percentage
SA	171	43%
A	169	42%
D	50	13%
SD	8	2%
Total	398	100%
Relocation of farmers to safe farm settlements has led to fall in food supply.	Frequency	Percentage
SA	150	37.5%
A	184	46%
D	54	13.5%
SD	11	2.7%
Total	399	100%
Arable lands available within residential areas are not enough for large cultivation	Frequency	Percentage
SA	214	54%
A	136	34.5%
D	26	6.5%
SD	18	4.5%
Total	394	100%

Source: Field Work, 2022

From table 3 above, responses to the statement of agricultural labour force being reduced as a result of relocation of farmers to safe farm settlement was strongly agreed by 51% and agreed by 37% of the total respondents; while 11% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed.

Responses to if common farm produce are in short supply as a result of low cultivation and productivity revealed that; 40% of the total respondents strongly agreed and 45% agreed that common farm produce are in short supply as a result of low cultivation and productivity, 14% disagreed and 1% agreed.

43% of the respondents strongly agreed and 42% agreed that food inflation rate increases due to high demand over short supply of farm produce. On the other hand, 13% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed.

Responses to if relocation of farmers to safe farm settlements has led to fall in food supply indicated that; 37.5% of the total respondents strongly agreed and 46% agreed that relocation of farmers to safe farm settlements has led to fall in food supply, while 13.5% of the respondents disagreed and 2.7% strongly disagreed.

The responses of respondents to if arable lands available within residential areas are not enough for large cultivation showed that 54% of the total respondents strongly agreed and 34.5% agreed that arable lands available within residential areas are not enough for large cultivation. However, 6.5% disagreed and 4.5% strongly disagreed.

Table 4: Responses on the assessment of the challenges of insecurity on investment in rural communities in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State

Profitability of business activities has fallen as a result of insecurity challenges	Frequency	Percentage
SA	172	44%
A	158	40%
D	52	13%
SD	10	3%
Total	392	100%
The security cost incurred by investors has increased the cost of carrying out economic activities	Frequency	Percentage
SA	149	37.6%
A	189	47.7%
D	52	13%
SD	6	1.5%
Total	396	100%
New businesses and investors are discouraged from starting up or citing businesses in the area for fear of insecurity	Frequency	Percentage
SA	204	51%
A	135	34%
D	59	15%
SD	1	0.2%
Total	399	100%
Relocation of consumers of goods and services as a result of insecurity reduces patronage and discourages business investment in the area	Frequency	Percentage
SA	142	35.6%
A	186	46.7%
D	63	15.8%
SD	7	1.7%
Total	398	100%
Fall in demand for goods and services as a result of fall in income of households discourages investment in the area	Frequency	Percentage
SA	150	37.9%
A	184	46.5%
D	55	13.9%
SD	6	1.5%
Total	395	100%

Source: Field Work, 2022

From table 4, the statement that profitability of business activities has fallen as a result of insecurity challenges was strongly agreed by 44% of the total respondents, and agreed by 40%; while 13% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed.

Responses to if the security cost incurred by investors has increased the cost of carrying out economic activities revealed that; 37.6% of the total respondents strongly agreed and 47.7% agreed that security cost incurred by investors has increased the cost of carrying out economic activities; while 13% disagreed and 1.5% strongly disagreed.

Responses to if new businesses and investors are discouraged from starting up or citing businesses in the area for fear of insecurity, showed 51% of the total respondents to have strongly agreed and 34% agreed that new businesses and investors are discouraged from starting up or citing businesses in the area for fear of insecurity. On the other hand, 15% disagreed and 0.2% strongly disagreed.

35.6% of the total respondents strongly agreed and 46.7% agreed that the relocation of consumers of goods and services as a result of insecurity reduces patronage and discourages business investment in the area; while 15.8% disagreed and 1.7% strongly disagreed.

The responses of respondents to if fall in demand for goods and services as a result of fall in income of households discourages investment in the area indicated that; 37.9% of the total respondents strongly agreed and 46.5% agreed that fall in demand for goods and services as a result of fall in income of households discourages investment in the area. On the other hand, 13.9% disagreed and 1.5% strongly disagreed.

Table 5: Responses on the assessment of the role of government at curbing insecurity in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State.

There has been no effort made by the government to ensure security within the area	Frequency	Percentage
SA	65	16.2%
A	45	11.2%
D	185	46.3%
SD	104	26%
Total	399	100%
The effort of the State government at addressing insecurity has brought a sense of security to the residents of the area	Frequency	Percentage
SA	126	31.6%
A	199	50%
D	52	13%
SD	21	5.2%
Total	398	100%
A good number of crime perpetrators have being apprehended by the law enforcement agents	Frequency	Percentage
SA	165	41.7%
A	135	34%
D	72	18.2%
SD	23	5.8%
Total	395	100%
The state security agents, local hunters and vigilante often respond immediately alarm is raised at the sight of intruders	Frequency	Percentage
SA	126	31.7%
A	164	41.3%
D	75	18.8%
SD	32	8%
Total	397	100%
The state security agents, local hunters and vigilante are well equipped with ammunitions to ensure security in the area	Frequency	Percentage
SA	121	30.4%
A	159	39.9%
D	76	19%
SD	42	10.5%
Total	398	100%

Source: Field Work, 2022

From table 5, 46.3% of the total respondents disagreed, and 26% strongly disagreed to the statement that there has been no effort made by the government to ensure security within the area. However, 16.2% strongly agreed and 11.2% agreed.

The responses to if the effort of the state government at addressing insecurity has brought a sense of security to the residents of the area revealed that 31.6% of the total respondents strongly agreed while 50% agreed that the effort of the state government at addressing insecurity has brought a sense of security to the residents of the area. On the other hand, 13% disagreed and 5.2% strongly disagreed.

41.7% of the total respondents strongly agreed, while 34% agreed that a good number of crime perpetrators have been apprehended by the law enforcement agents. However, 18.2% disagreed and 5.8% strongly disagreed.

The responses of respondents to if the state security agents, local hunters and vigilantes often respond immediately when an alarm is raised at the sight of intruders revealed that 31.7% strongly agreed, 41.3% agreed, 18.8% disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed.

Responses to if the state security agents, local hunters and vigilantes are well equipped with ammunition to ensure security in the area revealed that; 30.4% of the total respondents strongly agreed, while 39.9% agreed that the state and local government security forces are well equipped with ammunition to ensure security in the area. On the other hand, 19% disagreed and 10.5% strongly disagreed.

Discussion of Findings

From the result, it is revealed that economic activities in the rural communities of Okehi Local Government Area have been disrupted as a result of insecurity. Many businesses in the area no longer exist as a result of insecurity. Insecurity has made many people lose their jobs since the organizations where they work have relocated; Many farmers no longer go to farm for fear of being attacked; Schooling and educational activities are usually disrupted at the height of insecurity challenges in the area and insecurity has reduced the operating hours of businesses in the area. This is in line with the findings of Okonkwo et al. (2015), Oriazowanlan and Erah (2019), and Ndubuisi-Okolo & Anigbuogu, (2019).

In agreement with Onime (2018), Tanyi, Nwatu, Ugwu, Amadi, and Idongesit (2021), and Lesmore (2022) on the impact of insecurity challenges on food supply chain in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State, it was revealed that agricultural labour force has reduced as a result of relocation of farmers to safe farm settlement; common farm produce are in short supply as a result of low cultivation and productivity; food inflation rate increase due to high demand over short supply of farm produce; relocation of farmers to safe farm settlements has led to fall in food supply and arable lands available within residential areas are not enough for large cultivation. All these sum up to pose a challenge on food supply chain in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State.

Insecurity has hampered investments in the rural communities in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State have been evidently seen as profitability of business activities has fallen as a result of insecurity challenges. The security cost incurred by investors has increased the cost of carrying out economic activities hence discouraging investments, this is substantiated by the findings of Brodeur (2018). In line with Ewetan and Urhie (2014), and Agogbua, et al. (2022) the study revealed that new businesses and investors are discouraged from starting up or citing businesses in the area for fear of insecurity; relocation of consumers of goods and services as a result of insecurity reduces patronage and discourages business investment in the area; there is also the fall in demand for goods and services as a result of fall in income of households which discourages investment in the area.

With regards to the role of government at curbing insecurity in Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State, the study revealed that efforts have been made by the government to ensure security within the area; the efforts of the state government at addressing insecurity has brought a sense of security to the residents of the area. Furthermore, a good number of crime perpetrators have been apprehended by the law enforcement agents. Also the effort of

the state security agents, local hunters and vigilanteis quite impressive as the study revealed that both the state and local government vigilante often respond immediately a distress call is made at the sight of intruders. The study also revealed that the state security agents, local hunters and vigilante are well equipped with ammunitions to ensure security in the area. This is in corroboration with the findings of Obidiegwu and Elekwa (2019), and Oladesu (2022).

Conclusion

Previous researches have alluded to the impact of security challenges on economic activities. Much of such impacts have negatively affected economic activities, growth and development of the areas of study. This study however had similar result indicating the negative impact of insecurity on economic activities, food supply chain and investments in rural communities of Okehi Local Government Area of Kogi State. Government's effort at addressing the issue of insecurity in the recent time is commendable.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are put forward;

1. It has been established that the basic causes of insecurity in Nigeria are poverty, unemployment, uneven distribution and inadequacy of infrastructural facilities, environmental degradation, uneven development and bad governance. The government should accelerate the pace of development by establishing an economy with relevant social, economic and physical infrastructure for business operations and industrial growth, to meet the basic needs and provide gainful employment for its citizens. This will discourage their willingness to engage in crimes that lead to insecurity.
2. The recent effort of the state security agents, local hunters and vigilante in Okehi local government area is commendable, however there should be more strengthened collaboration by these agents to address areas of loopholes where necessary.
3. New government administration should ensure the sustenance of the effort of the current government at curbing insecurity and develop more strategies as well as taking advantage of modern technological security and surveillance tools for better results. This should be done to prevent greater damages in an event of a fire back attack by crime elements.
4. Grazing grounds or ranches should be built in designated part of the state by the government for herdsmen who rear cattle, through a proper land survey and consultancy from the traditional custodians of the lands. This will go some length at restricting open grazing and roaming of cattle into farmlands.

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