

The Effects of Insecurity on Rural Livelihoods in Kabba-Bunu LGA, Kogi State- Nigeria

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Abstract

Insecurity has become one of the most pressing challenges undermining rural development in Nigeria, threatening not only the safety of lives and property but also the sustainability of livelihoods that depend largely on agriculture and petty trading. This study examined The Effects of Insecurity on Rural Livelihoods in Kabba-Bunu Local Government Area, Kogi State with the aim of analysing its impact on agricultural productivity and food security, assessing the socio-economic consequences on rural households, and identifying coping strategies and community-based interventions adopted by residents. The study was anchored on Frustration–Aggression Theory and Relative Deprivation Theory, which explain how socio-economic frustrations and perceived inequalities fuel violence and deepen rural insecurity. Employing a descriptive survey design within a mixed-methods framework, the study covered a population of 108,049 residents, with a sample size of 200 respondents determined using Yamane’s formula. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to ensure fair representation across communities, and data were collected through structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative responses were content analysed. The findings revealed that insecurity has significantly reduced access to farmland, discouraged cultivation, increased the prices of farm inputs, and disrupted agricultural trade, thereby aggravating food insecurity. It also displaced families, led to the loss of income, restricted access to education and healthcare, and heightened fear that weakened socio-economic participation.

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***Related declarations are provided in the final section of this article.*

Although residents have adopted coping strategies such as community policing, income diversification, and collaboration with NGOs, these remain insufficient without sustained external support. The study concluded that insecurity poses a direct threat to rural survival and undermines human development in Kabba-Bunu. It recommended strengthening the security of farmlands and rural roads, investing in social services and infrastructure, and supporting community-based initiatives as critical steps towards restoring stability, rebuilding livelihoods, and enhancing resilience in the area.

Background to the Study

Insecurity is categorized by indecision, defenselessness, and exposure to intimidations such as theft, assault, or social unpredictability. According to Adejumo (2020), a lack of security and stability creates an atmosphere of dread and discontent. These events have a significant impact on the lives of people living in rural areas, where agriculture and small-scale trade are primary sources of income. Despite countless efforts to combat hunger, the global prevalence of hunger has not decreased significantly in recent years. Many countries and geographical areas have been dealing with acute hunger in recent years, and the situation is likely to deteriorate by early 2024.

Insecurity has disastrous consequences worldwide, particularly in areas that are prone to conflict. Inadequate security infrastructure and restricted access to resources disproportionately impact rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Asia, according to the World Bank (2021). As demonstrated by Afghanistan and Syria, insecurity causes long-term socioeconomic problems by upsetting livelihoods, threatening crops, and uprooting millions of people. Food insecurity and extreme hunger have been problems in many nations recently, especially in Africa. These issues are often made worse by things like rising global costs, ongoing insecurity, and the COVID-19 pandemic's effects.

Banditry, herdsman-farmer conflicts, and the Boko Haram insurgency are some of Nigeria's complicated security issues. Food shortages and economic stagnation have been made worse by these significant disruptions to agriculture, which have forced farmers and traders to relocate. Nwankwo (2021) observes that, especially in the North-East and North-Central regions, instability has weakened rural economies, resulting in forced migration and declining agricultural yields.

The vulnerability of rural populations to insecurity is best exemplified by Kabba-Bunu LGA in Kogi State. People who live in primarily rural areas, such as Iluke, Aiyetoto Kiri, Odo-Ape, Obele, Ogiri, and Egbeda, depend on farming and small-scale commerce. But because of insecurity—which includes community conflicts, herders, and kidnapping—many people have been forced to leave their livelihoods due to disruptions in agricultural activity and market access. According to Abubakar (2022), these dangers have a significant socioeconomic impact, with increased poverty and social disintegration being two prominent results.

There are widespread socioeconomic repercussions of insecurity. Food insecurity, forced migration, and decreased agricultural output are common outcomes, according to Ogunleye (2021). Children and women are two of the most vulnerable groups that suffer disproportionately

from issues like exploitation and delayed education. In afflicted areas, insecurity hinders the long-term development of human capital and exacerbates gender inequality, according to UNDP (2020). To overcome these challenges, cooperation is required at the local, regional, and international levels. Globally implemented inclusive development plans must place a high premium on rural security. The African Union (AU) has placed a high priority on regional cooperation, while Nigeria's National Livelihood Support Program aims to provide affected communities with assistance as quickly as possible. Incorporating community leaders and civil society organizations into participatory security measures at the local level offers promising opportunities.

Kabba-Bunu LGA's ongoing insecurity highlights the urgent need for focused actions. According to Falola and Oyeade (2020), these problems are caused by poor governance, unemployment, and poverty. In addition to displacing farmers, these issues erode rural economies and increase instability. Without strong security measures, the region's food insecurity, disruptions to education, and economic stagnation worsen.

This study is to investigate the distinct experiences of rural communities in Kabba-Bunu LGA and offer context-specific remedies in order to mitigate the effects of insecurity. Effective community policing and socioeconomic activities are crucial strategies, claims Onuoha (2019). By addressing unemployment and enhancing education and vocational training, this study seeks to empower rural residents and lessen their vulnerability to instability.

Aim and objectives of the study

This study aimed to explore the Effects of Insecurity on Rural Livelihoods in Kabba-Bunu Local Government Area, Kogi State. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the impact of insecurity on agricultural productivity and food security in Kabba-Bunu LGA, Kogi State.
- ii. Analyze the socio-economic consequences of insecurity on rural livelihoods in Kabba-Bunu LGA.
- iii. Identify coping strategies and community-based interventions for mitigating the effects of insecurity on rural livelihoods in Kabba-Bunu LGA.

Research Questions

This study attempted to address the following questions:

- i. What are the major socio-economic impacts of insecurity on households in Kabba-Bunu LGA?
- ii. How have insecurity affected agricultural productivity in Kabba-Bunu LGA?
- iii. What coping strategies have rural residents adopted to deal with insecurity in Kabba-Bunu LGA?

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was defined across several dimensions to ensure clarity and focus. Contextually, the study concentrated on the effects of insecurity on rural livelihoods, with particular attention to agricultural productivity, food security, socio-economic conditions, and coping strategies of affected households in Kabba-Bunu Local Government Area of Kogi State. The population scope covered farmers, traders, artisans, and community leaders within the LGA who are directly impacted by insecurity, estimated at 108,049 residents according to the population census. Geographically, the study was confined to Kabba-Bunu LGA, a predominantly agrarian area in Kogi State, encompassing selected communities such as Iluke, Aiyetoro-Kiri, Odo-Ape, Obelle, Ogiri, and Egbeda.

Methodologically, the research employed a descriptive survey design within a mixed-methods framework, integrating quantitative data collected through structured questionnaires with qualitative insights obtained from in-depth interviews, and the data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics alongside thematic analysis. Temporally, the study was conducted in the year 2024, providing a contemporary perspective on how prevailing insecurity has influenced rural livelihoods in the area during this period.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to practical, policy, and theoretical dimensions of knowledge. Practically, the study is important because it highlighted the real-life experiences of rural households in Kabba-Bunu LGA whose livelihoods have been disrupted by insecurity, thereby providing evidence that can guide communities, farmers, and development agencies in devising sustainable coping mechanisms and livelihood strategies. At the policy level, the study offers insights that can inform government interventions, particularly in designing security measures, rural development programmes, and social support systems that address the immediate and long-term effects of insecurity on agriculture, income, and human welfare. Theoretically, the study adds to existing literature by applying the Frustration–Aggression and Relative Deprivation theories to explain the relationship between insecurity, socio-economic frustrations, and rural vulnerability, thereby extending their relevance to contemporary rural Nigerian contexts. This multi-dimensional significance ensures that the findings not only deepen academic understanding but also provide actionable knowledge for stakeholders working to mitigate the effects of insecurity on rural livelihoods

Literature Review

The review of relevant and related literature was done under the following:

Conceptual Review

Insecurity

Insecurity is a condition of unpredictability, anxiety, or susceptibility brought on by dangers or real harm to people or groups. It covers a wide range of violent crimes, including as terrorism,

banditry, abductions, and inter-communal strife. According to Adetayo et al. (2021), these occurrences have grown to be major problems in Nigeria, especially in rural areas like Kabba-Bunu LGA where there is a lack of government presence and inadequate law enforcement infrastructure.

In the context of Kabba-Bunu LGA, insecurity manifests in frequent farmer-herder clashes, communal disputes, and the activities of armed groups. Insecurity often target rural communities due to their vulnerability, lack of adequate security, and strategic significance in disrupting agricultural and economic activities (Akinwale, 2021).

Livelihoods in Rural Communities

The concept of livelihoods involves the means, assets, and strategies people employ to acquire necessities such as clothing, food, and shelter. Agriculture, fishing, trading, and artisanal endeavors are frequently the main sources of income in rural areas. In places like Kabba-Bunu LGA, where agriculture is the main source of economic activity, sustainable livelihoods are essential to the socioeconomic well-being of both individuals and communities. Nevertheless, all these activities are disrupted by insecurity, making many rural inhabitants socially and economically displaced.

Effects of Insecurity

The effects of insecurity on livelihoods are profound and complex. Key areas of impact include:

Economic Disruption: Rural economies in Kabba-Bunu are predominantly agrarian, known for farming crops like yam, cassava, groundnut, maize, guinea corn, millet, etc. Insecurity prevents farmers from accessing their fields, leading to reduced agricultural productivity and income losses (Adetayo et al., 2021).

Food Security Challenges: With diminished agricultural output, food availability declines, driving up prices and aggravating hunger and malnutrition among rural populations (Akinwale, 2021). This creates a vicious cycle where communities become more impoverished and vulnerable to exploitation.

Social Displacement: Insecurity often forces people to flee their homes, leading to displacement and the breakdown of social networks. Displaced persons in Kabba-Bunu frequently lose access to land and resources, further compounding their economic struggles (Falola & Oyebade, 2020).

Psychological and Social Impact: Living under constant threat leads to heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and trauma among residents. The erosion of trust within and between communities also weakens collective resilience (Ibrahim & Jaja, 2022).

Empirical reviews

Ahmad and Musa (2020) examined the insecurity situation in Northern Nigeria, focusing particularly on the spread of banditry and insurgency. They observed that a combination of

deteriorating social conditions, persistent conflicts, political assassinations, and rising unemployment created fertile ground for the emergence and expansion of armed non-state actors, who now pose a significant threat to internal security. Their study, which was theoretical and based on secondary sources, explored the underlying causes, patterns, and possible solutions to insecurity in the region. According to their findings, both immediate and remote drivers of insecurity include weak institutional capacity resulting in governance failure, widespread inequality, lack of fairness and justice, ethno-religious tensions, and a widening disconnect between citizens and the state. Additional factors such as porous borders, rural–urban migration, poverty, and joblessness have intensified the situation. Although insurgency remains the most formidable challenge, other threats including farmer–herder clashes, armed robbery, and communal violence have also undermined the long-standing peace of the region. The study further highlighted that dissatisfaction with government performance, coupled with corruption, poor transparency, and weak accountability, has created opportunities for insurgent groups to mobilise vulnerable populations living in poverty. It therefore establishes a clear link between governance and security, concluding that sustainable peace requires comprehensive and inclusive measures, as well as a genuine commitment by authorities to safeguard the lives, property, and assets of all communities. While their study highlighted broad causes such as unemployment, corruption, porous borders, and government failure, it was largely theoretical and generalised to the entire northern region. The current study addressed this gap by focusing specifically on Kabba-Bunu LGA, providing empirical evidence on how insecurity directly affects rural livelihoods, particularly in agriculture and food security.

Usman (2019) investigated the link between poverty, unemployment, and insecurity in Nigeria, with a particular focus on the resurgence of the Boko Haram insurgency. The study emphasised that widespread unemployment and extreme poverty, especially in the northern region, remain central to the persistence of insecurity. Contrary to the expectations that Nigeria's wealth and democratic transition in 1999 would improve citizens' welfare through better employment opportunities and higher living standards, the reality has been disappointing, as official corruption and mismanagement have widened the gap between the rich and the poor. While the study acknowledged that unemployment and poverty alone cannot fully account for the escalation of insecurity, it highlighted a strong correlation between these socio-economic conditions and the rise of violent groups in the region. The analysis drew parallels with the case of Mohammed Bouazizi's self-immolation in Tunisia in 2010, which triggered the Arab Spring uprisings, arguing that similar frustrations arising from poverty and joblessness fuel unrest in Nigeria. To strengthen its analysis, the paper adopted a combination of Marxist theory, Relative Deprivation theory, and the Frustration–Aggression framework, demonstrating how structural inequality, unmet expectations, and prolonged deprivation contribute to violent insurgency and social instability.

However, his study centred on the North-East and did not capture other forms of insecurity such as farmer–herder conflicts or kidnapping, which are prevalent in North-Central Nigeria. This study filled that gap by examining how such insecurities manifest in Kabba-Bunu LGA and their socio-economic consequences on households and communities.

Godwin (2020) explored the relationship between insecurity, conflict, and socio-economic development in Nigeria, noting that despite government assurances, particularly under the Buhari administration, the menace of Boko Haram and other violent crimes has persisted and continues to destabilise the nation. The study argued that insecurity and conflict are not only critical problems in Nigeria but also major challenges across West Africa that demand urgent scholarly and policy attention. According to the author, the sophistication of crime and the inability of state institutions to adequately respond have created dire living conditions for citizens, turning insecurity into one of the country's most pressing developmental threats. The research, which employed a survey method, collected data from key informants using structured questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions, and the responses were analysed through Likert scales, percentages, and statistical tables. Findings revealed that terrorism, kidnapping, ritual killings, cultism, corruption, injustice, poverty, inflation, and bad governance are driving insecurity, which in turn has produced severe socio-economic consequences across Nigeria. The study concluded that insecurity perpetuates more crime and instability, recommending inclusive growth and participatory development, particularly for rural and disadvantaged groups. It further stressed the need for broad-based civic engagement, urging communities and associations—ranging from professional and youth groups to religious bodies and trade unions—to unite in resisting insecurity, since safeguarding society is a shared responsibility that affects everyone.

Although the study highlighted the widespread consequences of insecurity on development, it focused on the national context and did not disaggregate its findings to specific rural localities. The present study therefore closed gap by generating community-level data from Kabba-Bunu, which provides localised insights into the disruptions faced by farmers and traders.

Nneka (2024) examined the impact of rural banditry on food security and poverty reduction in Nigeria, with a particular focus on how armed violence in rural areas undermines sustainable agricultural development. The study drew on secondary data from institutions such as the Food and Agricultural Organisation, International Monetary Fund, National Bureau of Statistics, and the United Nations Development Programme, alongside evidence from scholarly journals and field surveys. In addition, primary data were collected through 300 questionnaires administered to farmers across six states—Plateau, Nassarawa, Kaduna, Benue, Oyo, and Niger—supplemented by focus group discussions with selected farmers. The data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Findings revealed that widespread unemployment, poverty, poor governance, infrastructural decay, weak security systems, and lack of institutional coordination have contributed to the spread of banditry, as vulnerable individuals are either drawn into or victimised by such networks. Farmers reported severe disruptions to agricultural activities, psychological trauma, and loss of livestock. The socio-economic consequences were extensive, including income loss, displacement, declining productivity, and the destruction of infrastructure, all of which led to food shortages, rising food prices, malnutrition, and worsening poverty. The study stressed the urgent need for federal and state governments to address unemployment and poverty, invest in rural infrastructure, strengthen security systems, and implement targeted development programmes. According to the research, such measures are essential to curbing rural banditry, ensuring food security, and alleviating poverty in Nigeria.

While comprehensive, the study generalised outcomes across regions and did not capture coping strategies adopted at the community level. The current study narrowed the focus to Kabba-Bunu LGA and investigates both the effects of insecurity and the coping mechanisms that rural residents employ, thereby bridging this contextual gap.

Balogun and Adeoye (2021) assessed government policies on rural security in Nigeria and their implications for rural livelihoods. Their study focused on policy interventions aimed at tackling the high incidence of farmer–herder clashes, banditry, and kidnapping, which have resulted in widespread loss of lives, mass displacement, and the destruction of livelihoods. They observed that rural insecurity poses a major obstacle to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those linked to food security, poverty reduction, and the promotion of peace and strong institutions. Despite the existence of various policy measures, the persistence and escalation of insecurity suggest that government responses have been largely ineffective in curbing rural violence and its socio-economic consequences. Using documentary analysis with data drawn from published works, journals, internet sources, and personal observation, the study examined the drivers of insecurity, its impacts on livelihoods, and the shortcomings of existing interventions. Findings indicated that porous borders and vast ungoverned spaces, particularly forests, have served as safe havens for criminals and greatly contributed to the persistence of rural insecurity. The study concluded that existing policy frameworks have not adapted effectively to the changing nature of rural crime and therefore recommended the adoption of community policing as a more viable approach for safeguarding rural populations and sustaining livelihoods.

However, their study relied heavily on documentary analysis and policy critique rather than primary data. The present study extended this line of inquiry by combining survey and interview methods to provide field-based evidence on how insecurity is experienced in Kabba-Bunu and how policies and interventions are perceived at the grassroots level.

Ernest and George (2021) explored the effects of violent extremism on rural livelihoods within the Lake Chad Basin, analysing the link between resource struggles, insurgency, and livelihood disruptions. The study sought to answer whether competition for resources fuels extremism, the extent to which violent extremism undermines rural livelihoods, and the strategies communities adopt to cope with persistent violence. Since 2009, Boko Haram’s insurgency has devastated communities in the region, leading to widespread loss of lives, displacement, and the collapse of livelihoods. Nonetheless, the study noted that many affected households devised both short-term and long-term survival strategies, demonstrating resilience amidst adversity. Using conflict resolution theories and the livelihood framework, the research assessed how livelihoods both influence and are shaped by violent conflict, drawing evidence from five communities in Nigeria, Cameroon, and Niger. By highlighting community responses to violence, the study contributed to the growing literature on rural livelihood resilience and countering violent extremism in Africa. However, its scope was geographically restricted to the Lake Chad Basin, whereas the present study addresses this gap by situating its analysis in Kabba-Bunu LGA of Kogi State, where insecurity is expressed more through farmer–herder clashes and kidnapping rather than extremism.

David and Tseer (2019) investigated the roots and consequences of the farmer–herder conflict in Benue State, focusing on how these clashes manifest in the livelihoods of rural farmers and pastoralists. Using a mixed-method approach that combined qualitative and quantitative data, the study sampled ninety community leaders across nine conflict-affected local governments through simple random sampling. Their findings identified climate change, cattle rustling, ethnic and religious divisions, and competition over cultivable and grazing land as the major triggers of the conflict. The consequences were devastating, with over four thousand deaths, displacement of more than half a million people, and widespread sexual violence, including rape and abductions. The study recommended revitalising traditional systems of conflict resolution that previously allowed farmers and herders to co-exist peacefully, alongside government efforts to strengthen human security through education, job creation, and greater law enforcement presence.

While the study provided valuable insights into farmer–herder conflicts in Benue, its focus was limited to that state. The current research addresses this limitation by examining how similar dynamics of insecurity affect livelihoods in Kabba-Bunu, thereby extending the discourse to another part of North-Central Nigeria.

While their findings are relevant, they are limited to Benue and do not address Kogi State, which faces similar but distinct challenges. This study therefore bridged the gap by contextualising the issue within Kabba-Bunu LGA, generating empirical data on both agricultural disruptions and socio-economic consequences in the area.

Theoretical Framework

Every study requires relevant theories to provide a guide for its course. Theories by nature are sets of facts and explanations about the study. This study was therefore anchored on frustration-aggression theory and relative deprivation theory.

Frustration-Aggression Theory

Frustration-Aggression Theory was propounded by John Dollard et al. in 1939 and it assumes that aggression arises when individuals are blocked from achieving their goals, leading to frustration and insurgencies can result from prolonged socio-economic frustration. The strength of this theory in this study lies in the fact that it provides a psychological explanation for the link between insecurity and aggression and highlights the role of socio-economic deprivation in fueling violence.

By application to this study, the theory explains how insecurity and socio-economic frustration in Kabba-Bunu trigger insurgencies and Links rural deprivation to increased violence and instability. The theory also explains how insecurity exacerbates frustrations, leading to cycles of violence and declining rural livelihoods.

However, the theory has its own weakness in the sense that it does not fully account for organized or politically motivated violence and overlooks structural and systemic factors that may cause violence in the study area.

Relative Deprivation Theory

Relative Deprivation Theory was propounded by Ted Gurr in 1970. And it assumes that dissatisfaction arises when individuals or groups perceive a gap between their expectations and their actual conditions and Relative deprivation is a key driver of political violence and insurgency. The strength of this theory lies in the fact that it highlights the psychological and perceptual aspects of conflict and explains how unmet expectations can destabilize societies.

By application to this study, the theory analyzes how perceived inequalities and unmet expectations fuel insurgencies in Kabba-Bunu and Explains how insecurity exacerbates the sense of deprivation among rural residents. The theory underscores the role of perceived deprivation in perpetuating insecurity and undermining livelihoods. Albeit, the theory has been criticised for focusing on perceptions, which can be subjective and difficult to measure and May overlook external or systemic causes of deprivation.

Research Methods

This study on the effects of insecurity on rural livelihoods in Kabba-Bunu LGA, Kogi State, adopted a mixed-methods research approach. This methodology integrated both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue. The mixed-methods approach ensured that statistical trends were complemented with in-depth insights, allowing for a holistic analysis of the impacts of insecurity on the socio-economic conditions of rural residents.

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey design to capture the extent and nature of the effects of insecurity on rural livelihoods. This design was suitable for understanding phenomena in their natural settings and enabled the collection of primary data directly from affected populations. It also allowed for the identification of patterns, trends, and relationships between variables, such as the level of insecurity and its impact on agriculture, education, and market access.

Study Area

This study was carried out in Kabba-Bunu Local Government Area in Kogi State which is predominantly rural, with its headquarters in Kabba. Covering over 2,700 km² and with a population largely made up of Okun-speaking people, the area depends heavily on agriculture, timber-related activities, and small-scale trading as the main sources of livelihood. Farming remains central to household survival, making the people particularly vulnerable to disruptions that affect access to land, markets, and production. In recent years, Kabba-Bunu has witnessed increasing cases of insecurity, including kidnappings, violent attacks, and farmer–herder conflicts. These incidents not only cause immediate harm through loss of lives and property but also create long-term challenges such as fear, reduced farm investment, displacement, and food

shortages. The rural economy of Kabba-Bunu is therefore under considerable strain, as insecurity has made it difficult for farmers to cultivate freely, transport produce, and sustain their families.

Studying the effects of insecurity on rural livelihoods in Kabba-Bunu was crucial because it provided context-specific evidence of how violence and instability impact agricultural productivity, income, and food security in the area. Although similar challenges exist in other parts of Kogi State, Kabba-Bunu presents a unique case where insecurity has directly threatened the survival of farming households and disrupted the socio-economic fabric of the communities. Findings from such a study will be vital for policymakers, government agencies, and development partners who seek to design effective interventions to safeguard livelihoods, strengthen rural resilience, and promote sustainable peace and development in the region.

Population of the Study

The population of this study included residents of Kabba-Bunu LGA, particularly farmers, traders, artisans, and community leaders, who are directly affected by insecurity which were estimated to be 108,049 in numbers according to the population census results.

Sample Size Determination and Sampling Techniques

A sample size of approximately 200 respondents is determined based on Yamane's formula for sample size calculation, ensuring adequate representation and statistical reliability.

The sample size for this research is 200 as determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula.

The formula is as follows:

n= required sample size

N = the population size

P = the population proportion (assumed to be 0.50) since this would provide the maximum sample size

E = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{108,049}{1 + (108,049)(0.50)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{108049}{1 + 108,049 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{108,049}{108050 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{108,049}{540.25}$$

$$n = 199.7$$

$$n = 200$$

$$n = 200$$

$$n = 200$$

A multi-stage sampling technique was used to ensure representation across different demographic and occupational groups. In the first stage, Kabba-Bunu LGA was divided into clusters based on geographic and economic activity zones. In the second stage, purposive sampling was employed to select participants with firsthand experience of insecurity. Finally, simple random sampling was applied to ensure that every resident within the selected clusters has an equal chance of participating in the study.

Table 1: Showing selected Areas in Kabba-Bunu LGA Kogi State

S/N	Name of Areas	Number of Questionnaire
1.	Iluke	33
2.	Aiyetoro Kiri	34
3.	Odo-Ape	33
4.	Obelle	33
5.	Ogiri	33
6.	Egbeda	34
	Total	200

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Methods Data Collection

Data was collected using a combination of structured questionnaires and In-depth Interview. The questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative data on the frequency, intensity, and impact of

insecurity on livelihoods. It included both closed-ended and open-ended questions to capture detailed responses. In-depth interviews with community leaders, local government officials, and security personnel provided qualitative insights into the causes and broader implications of insecurity in the region.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

The validity of the research instruments was carefully ensured to guarantee accuracy and consistency in the data collected. To establish validity, the questionnaire and interview guide were reviewed by experts in rural development and security studies who examined them for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives. Their feedback helped refine the instruments, thereby ensuring content validity and confirming that the items measured the intended constructs.

Reliability was determined through a pilot test carried out with respondents outside the study area, and the internal consistency of the questionnaire items was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. The analysis produced a reliability coefficient of 0.9, which is considered a high and acceptable standard, indicating that the items were consistent and dependable. Triangulation through the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches further strengthened the robustness of the instruments, ensuring they were both valid and reliable for the purpose of the study.

Methods of Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Tools such as frequency distributions, percentages, and triangulation were used to summarize the data.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of the 200 copies of questionnaire administered to the respondents, the whole were filled and retrieved making 100 % response rate. Hence, the analysis was based on the number of instruments returned as follows.

Table 2: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (Note: N = 200)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	110	55.0
	Female	90	45.0
Age	18-30	60	30.0
	31-45	80	40.0
	46-60	40	20.0

	61 and above	20	10.0
Marital Status	Single	70	35.0
	Married	110	55.0
	Widowed/Divorced	20	10.0
Educational Level	No formal education	30	15.0
	Primary	50	25.0
	Secondary	70	35.0
	Tertiary	50	25.0
Occupation	Farming	100	50.0
	Trading	50	25.0
	Civil Service	30	15.0
	Others	20	10.0

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The demographic data of the 200 respondents in table 2 reveal important patterns that reflect the realities of rural livelihoods in Kabba-Bunu.

The gender distribution in table 2 indicates a slight male dominance, with 55 percent being men compared to 45 percent women. This is not unexpected given the nature of rural economic activities in the area, especially farming and timber work, which are often associated with men, although women also play an active role in subsistence farming and petty trading. The implication of this pattern is that men are more exposed to the risks of insecurity when engaging in outdoor livelihood activities, while women may face indirect challenges when household food security and income sources are disrupted.

The age structure shows that the majority of respondents fall within the 31–45 age group (40 percent), followed by those aged 18–30 (30 percent). Older respondents are fewer, with 20 percent between 46–60 years and only 10 percent above 61. This concentration of respondents in the youthful and middle-aged categories reflects Nigeria’s general demographic trend and demonstrates that the most economically active population is driving agricultural production. It suggests that insecurity directly undermines the productivity of those who are most capable of sustaining rural livelihoods, leading to potential migration, reduced output, and long-term rural decline.

Marital status reveals that more than half of the respondents (55 percent) are married, while 35 percent are single and 10 percent widowed or divorced. This reflects the early family formation that is common in rural communities, where households are typically organised around family labour. The finding implies that insecurity affects not only individual farmers but also entire households, creating wider social and economic burdens when families lose breadwinners or face displacement.

In terms of education, the respondents show a relatively balanced spread, with 15 percent having no formal education, 25 percent attaining primary education, 35 percent with secondary education, and 25 percent having tertiary qualifications. This indicates progress in educational access, but the presence of a significant proportion without higher levels of education suggests limited opportunities for diversifying away from farming into more secure non-agricultural livelihoods. The implication here is that low educational attainment restricts resilience, as less-educated farmers may find it more difficult to adapt to the disruptions brought about by insecurity.

Occupationally, farming dominates with half of the respondents engaged in it, while trading accounts for 25 percent, civil service for 15 percent, and other occupations for 10 percent. This heavy reliance on agriculture underscores the vulnerability of the local economy to insecurity, since any disruption to farming activities directly threatens food production, household incomes, and community stability. The implication is that unless measures are taken to secure farmlands and rural communities, insecurity will continue to erode the foundation of livelihoods in Kabba-Bunu, with knock-on effects on food supply and socio-economic development in the wider region.

Objective : To examine the impact of insecurity on agricultural productivity and food security in Kabba-Bunu LGA, Kogi State.

Table 3: The Impact of Insecurity on Agricultural Productivity and Food Security in Kabba-Bunu LGA Kogi State (Note: N = 200)

ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN
Insecurity has significantly reduced the availability of farmlands for agricultural use.	61	79	43	17	3.9
Frequent attacks have discouraged farmers from cultivating crops, impacting food supply.	70	60	50	20	4.0
Insecurity have led to increased prices of agricultural inputs and reduced access.	49	92	39	20	4.0
Insecurity has disrupted agricultural trade and the transportation of farm produce.	80	61	40	19	4.1
Cluster Mean					4.0

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The results from Table 3 show that insecurity has significantly affected agriculture and food systems in Kabba-Bunu. A majority of respondents agreed that insecurity has reduced the availability of farmland for cultivation, with a mean score of 3.9, and even more strongly that frequent attacks discourage farmers from cultivating, thereby impacting food supply, with a mean score of 4.0. Respondents also strongly affirmed that insecurity has led to increased prices of agricultural inputs and reduced access to them (mean 4.0), while the highest rating was given to the claim that insecurity has disrupted agricultural trade and transportation of farm produce (mean 4.1). The cluster mean of 4.0 confirms that insecurity is consistently perceived as a serious barrier to agricultural productivity and food security.

These findings reflect the reality that when farmers are afraid of attacks, they abandon farmlands or reduce farming intensity, leading to food shortages and higher costs. In addition, market linkages are weakened as transporters fear moving goods, which explains why agricultural trade is disrupted. The implication is that unless insecurity is addressed, local agricultural production will continue to decline, food inflation will worsen, and rural livelihoods will be pushed further into vulnerability, threatening both household welfare and regional food stability.

Objective 2: To analyze the socio-economic consequences of insecurity on rural livelihoods in Kabba-Bunu LGA.

Table 4: Socio-Economic Consequences of Insecurity on Rural Livelihoods in Kabba-Bunu LGA Kogi State

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
Insecurity has led to the displacement of families, disrupting their economic activities.	60	80	40	20	3.9
Rural residents have lost significant income sources due to insurgencies.	80	60	40	20	4.0
Limited access to healthcare and education is a major consequence of insecurity.	70	70	40	20	4.0
Fear of attacks has limited the participation of residents in social and economic ventures.	90	60	30	20	4.1
Cluster Mean					4.0

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 4 highlights how insecurity extends beyond agriculture to affect broader socio-economic life. Respondents agreed that insecurity has displaced families and disrupted their economic activities, with a mean of 3.9. A significant proportion confirmed that rural residents have lost income sources as a result of insurgencies (mean 4.0), while limited access to healthcare and

education was also noted as a major consequence (mean 4.0). The highest response mean of 4.1 was recorded for the fear of attacks limiting participation in social and economic ventures. With a cluster mean of 4.0, the table underscores that insecurity is deeply entrenched in everyday life in Kabba-Bunu.

However, the following responses were elicited from an interviewee in support of the above findings:

Schools and clinics are often abandoned in unsafe areas, while social gatherings and business ventures shrink due to fear of violence. The implication is that insecurity not only reduces household income and productivity but also erodes human capital development and weakens community bonds. This further compounds poverty and underdevelopment, reinforcing a cycle that makes recovery even more difficult without effective interventions. We are into mess, food likes yam, maize, cassava, is becoming a scares commodity in Aiyetotro-Kiri just because my people cannot go to their various farms, just for the fear of either been killed or kidnapped. (IDI/ Male/ Farmer/ 50 years old/ Married/ Aiyetoro-Kiri/ December, 2024).

Objective 3: To identify coping strategies and community-based interventions for mitigating the effects of insecurity on rural livelihoods in Kabba-Bunu LGA.

Table 5: Coping Strategies and Community-Based Interventions for Mitigating the Effects of Insecurity in Kabba-Bunu LGA Kogi State

ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
Community policing initiatives have helped mitigate the effects of insecurity.	51	80	52	17	3.9
Local leaders have played a significant role in addressing insecurity and its effects.	62	79	39	20	4.0
Diversifying income sources is a common coping strategy among affected residents.	91	63	28	18	4.1
Collaborative efforts between communities and NGOs have reduced the impacts of insurgencies.	67	82	31	20	4.0
Cluster Mean					4.0

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 5 presents respondents' perspectives on strategies adopted to mitigate insecurity. The findings indicate that community policing initiatives are perceived as helpful in mitigating insecurity, although the mean score of 3.9 suggests their impact is moderate. Respondents gave higher recognition to the role of local leaders in addressing insecurity (mean 4.0), as well as to collaborative efforts between communities and NGOs (mean 4.0). The highest mean score of 4.1 was recorded for diversifying income sources as a common coping strategy among residents. The

cluster mean of 4.0 suggests that these interventions are widely acknowledged but still face limitations.

The prominence of income diversification as a coping strategy reflects the fact that when farming becomes unsafe, households turn to petty trading, crafts, or casual labour as alternatives. The recognition of local leaders and NGOs indicates the reliance on community-based and non-state actors where government responses are weak or slow. However, the moderate impact of community policing suggests that such efforts are often under-resourced and lack formal backing. The implication is that while communities are not passive in the face of insecurity, their coping mechanisms are short-term and insufficient to fully address the crisis. For long-term resilience, stronger institutional support, better security frameworks, and coordinated interventions will be necessary to complement local strategies.

The findings from the in-depth interview collaborate the findings of the questionnaire as an interview stated thus:

The prominence of income diversification as a coping strategy reflects the fact that when farming becomes unsafe, households turn to petty trading, crafts, or casual labour as alternatives. The recognition of local leaders and NGOs indicates the reliance on community-based and non-state actors where government responses are weak or slow. However, the moderate impact of community policing suggests that such efforts are often under-resourced and lack formal backing. The implication is that while communities are not passive in the face of insecurity, their coping mechanisms are short-term and insufficient to fully address the crisis. For long-term resilience, stronger institutional support, better security frameworks, and coordinated interventions will be necessary to complement local strategies. We have come to realize that our faith is in our hand, so we have make a decision to face our adversaries by ourselves, organizing a JTF with the Military to tackle the insecurity ravaging our community. (IDI/ Male/Hunter/ 37 years old/ Married/ Obelle/ January, 2024).

Discussion of Findings

The findings from this study indicate that insecurity in Kabba-Bunu LGA has profoundly affected rural households socio-economically. Many respondents reported displacement, loss of income, and reduced access to essential services such as healthcare and education. Agricultural activities, the primary source of income in rural areas, have been significantly disrupted due to fear of attacks and violence, leading to reduced productivity and exacerbating poverty (Ogunleye, 2021). Additionally, healthcare facilities have been targets of attacks, leading to their closure and leaving communities without adequate medical care. Similarly, insecurity has disrupted educational institutions, decreasing enrollment and attendance and adversely affecting the region's educational attainment (Nwankwo, 2021; Abubakar, 2022). These findings are consistent with broader patterns observed in conflict-affected regions where insecurity erodes local economies and impedes access to essential services (Adamu & Mustapha, 2020).

Insecurity has also caused social fragmentation, weakening community cohesion and disrupting the social networks vital for economic activities and communal support. The displacement of

households and persistent violence have undermined trust among community members, further isolating the most vulnerable populations (Ogunleye, 2021). These socio-economic impacts align with global observations, where conflict often exacerbates poverty, weakens infrastructure, and disrupts livelihoods (UNHCR, 2020). Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive interventions, including restoring security, rebuilding infrastructure, and supporting displaced households.

The findings from this study revealed that insecurity has significantly disrupted agricultural productivity in Kabba-Bunu LGA. Respondents reported reduced access to farmlands, discouraged farming activities, and disruptions in agricultural trade. These challenges have forced many farmers to abandon their land or halt agricultural activities, reducing productivity and escalating food prices. This aligns with local and global studies highlighting the adverse effects of insecurity on rural agricultural output, including decreased food availability and heightened food insecurity (Akinwale, 2021; Ogunleye, 2021). Similar patterns have been observed in conflict-affected rural regions across sub-Saharan Africa, where insecurity undermines the agricultural sector and exacerbates poverty (World Bank, 2021).

Agriculture is the mainstay of livelihoods in Kabba-Bunu LGA; its disruption has far-reaching socio-economic consequences. Beyond immediate food shortages, the agricultural sector's instability has weakened farming households' economic stability and disrupted regional food supply chains. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to improve security, promote farmland access, and support displaced farmers to restore agricultural productivity. Policies aimed at rebuilding rural infrastructure, offering financial support to farmers, and ensuring safe access to farmlands are essential to mitigating the long-term effects of insecurity on agricultural systems (Olayemi, 2019; Akinwale, 2021).

The study revealed that rural residents in Kabba-Bunu LGA have adopted various coping strategies to mitigate the adverse effects of insecurity. Key strategies identified include diversifying income sources, engaging in community policing initiatives, and relying on local leadership. Many respondents highlighted these approaches as providing some relief in managing the impacts of insecurity. These findings align with research from other regions where communities leverage social structures and grassroots initiatives to navigate insurgency challenges (Godwin, 2020; Nneka, 2024). The active role of local leaders and collaborations with NGOs further demonstrates the resilience of these communities, showcasing their capacity to mobilize resources and address security concerns without robust government intervention (Falola & Oyebade, 2020).

However, the effectiveness of these strategies was limited without sustained external support. While community policing and local initiatives have shown promise, they cannot fully restore stability without adequate security and infrastructure from governmental and non-governmental actors. This underscores the need for integrated approaches that combine community-driven efforts with broader policy and institutional support. Such interventions should include financial aid, security reinforcements, and capacity-building programs to empower residents and sustain their resilience against the challenges of insecurity (Godwin, 2020; Falola & Oyebade, 2020).

Furthermore, the findings of this study are well supported by the Frustration–Aggression and Relative Deprivation theories adopted as its framework. The Frustration–Aggression theory explains how the inability of rural residents in Kabba-Bunu to access their farmlands, markets, and basic services due to insecurity generates frustration, which in turn fuels cycles of aggression, displacement, and declining productivity as observed in the study. Similarly, the Relative Deprivation theory aligns with the findings by showing that when households perceive a wide gap between their expectations of safety, stability, and livelihood opportunities and the harsh realities of insecurity, feelings of deprivation deepen, resulting in social unrest, reduced resilience, and weakened socio-economic participation. In essence, these theories provide a solid explanation for why insecurity has not only disrupted agriculture and livelihoods but also intensified fear, poverty, and social disintegration in the study area

Conclusion

The study concluded that insecurity in Kabba-Bunu LGA has severely disrupted agricultural productivity, socio-economic livelihoods, and community cohesion. The agricultural sector, a primary economic driver in the area, has been particularly hard-hit, resulting in reduced productivity and heightened food insecurity. Similarly, socio-economic challenges such as displacement, income loss, and restricted access to essential services have further destabilized rural livelihoods.

Despite these challenges, the resilience of local communities is evident through the adoption of coping strategies, including economic diversification, community policing, and collaboration with NGOs. However, these efforts require robust external support, including enhanced security measures, infrastructure development, and targeted programs for displaced households. Integrated approaches that combine grassroots initiatives with governmental and non-governmental support are essential to restore stability, rebuild livelihoods, and foster resilience in Kabba-Bunu LGA. This study underscores the urgent need for policies and interventions that address the root causes of insecurity while empowering communities to navigate its impacts effectively.

Recommendations

Arising from the above findings, the study suggested the following recommendations:

- i. Government at all levels and security agencies should strengthen the protection of rural farmlands and transportation routes. By improving security presence in farming areas and along rural roads, farmers would feel safer to return to their fields and traders would regain confidence in moving produce to markets, thereby reducing food shortages and stabilising prices.
- ii. Another important step is to invest in social services and rural infrastructure as a means of reducing the wider socio-economic impact of insecurity. When communities have access to functional schools, healthcare, and safe social spaces, the disruption of insecurity is less damaging to household welfare and long-term development. This would

not only rebuild confidence among residents but also discourage rural out-migration, thereby sustaining the population needed to support economic and social recovery.

- iii. Finally, strengthening community-based initiatives remains crucial. Local leaders, civil society groups, and NGOs should be supported with resources and training to sustain community policing, promote dialogue, and expand livelihood diversification programmes. These community-driven strategies have already shown effectiveness in helping residents cope, and with proper institutional backing, they can evolve into long-term mechanisms that build resilience and reduce dependence on emergency responses.

Problems Encountered on the Field and they were Surmounted

During the fieldwork for this study, some challenges were encountered that shaped the research process. One major problem was the reluctance of some respondents to provide information due to fear and suspicion, as insecurity made them wary of outsiders; this was addressed by engaging trusted community leaders to introduce the researcher and reassure participants of confidentiality. Another challenge was poor accessibility to some rural communities because of bad roads and security threats; this was managed by adjusting visitation times, using local guides, and focusing on safer routes. Limited literacy levels among some respondents also posed difficulties in understanding questionnaire items, which was overcome by translating questions into the local dialect and using oral explanations where necessary. These measures ensured that reliable data were collected despite the constraints.

Suggestion for further Studies

For further studies, researchers may explore the following areas:

1. The Role of Traditional Institutions in Mitigating Rural Insecurity in Kogi State.
2. Psychological Impacts of Insecurity on Rural Households in North-Central Nigeria.
3. The Effect of Insecurity on Youth Employment and Migration in Rural Communities.

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Declarations

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The study involved human beings and research ethical clearance was obtained and participants consented to participate in the study appropriately.

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