

## The Economic Implication of Boko Haram Insurgency in The North East Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

Boko Haram is loosely modelled on the Taliban movement in Afghanistan; one of the groups' primary bases in Kanama in Yobe state was named Afghanistan before its destruction. The group has also issued statements expressing solidarity with al-Qaeda and has threatened the United States. Although, a direct connection between 'Boko Haram' and the Taliban or al-Qaeda is not discernable, like its extremist counterparts, 'Boko Haram's ideology is based on hostility towards democracy and western anti-Islamic education. Nigeria's constitution guarantees freedom of religion and the country has a population that is split roughly in half between a Muslim and Christian South. Book Haram has repeatedly stated that it seeks the imposition of a strict Sharia law system throughout Nigeria; currently, nine northern states adhere to Sharia law, with an additional three only marginally implementing it. According to various statements, 'Boko Haram' also seeks the abolishment of western-style education, which it states is contrary to the teachings of Islam and its cause. Not much is known about the organizational structure of 'Boko Haram'. The groups' founder and former leader, Mohammed Yusuf, was thought to have been highly educated and wealthy. Although, Mohammed Yusuf was killed by security forces in 2009, his deputy, Abubakar Shehu who was initially thought to also have been killed, appeared on a video in 2010 and claimed leadership of the group. Shehu furthermore, threatened fresh attacks against the western influenced Nigerian government. cognitive dissonance theory was adopted. Secondary data were utilized.

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### INTRODUCTION

'Boko Haram' is an extremist Nigerian Islamist militant sect that was formed in Maiduguri in 2002 by Ustaz Mohammed Yusuf. The sect seeks the imposition of a strict Sharia Islamic Law throughout Nigeria and as its name, Boko Haram (literally translated as "Western education is a sacrilege/sin) denotes, the group believes that Nigeria should relinquish Western-style education. The sect became militarily active around 2003 and

*The Economic Implication of Boko Haram Insurgency in The North East Nigeria- Dominic Aondona Iornumbe, et al*

since then has carried out a series of attacks against the Nigerian government, Christian targets, including targeted killing of worshipers and bombings of churches, and moderate Islamist groups. Since 2008, the Nigerian government has tracked down on Boko Haram activity, this culminated in a five-day uprising in July 2009 which left hundreds of people, including Mohammed Yusuf, dead. However, despite heightened security efforts, the group has managed to continue with its attacks. Since its inception, Boko Haram's primary areas of focus have been in the northern states of Yobe, Kano, Bauchi, Borno and Kaduna, although, recent trends suggest the sects' activities are moving south wards, with attacks being recorded in the Plateau state and Abuja.

Boko Haram is loosely modeled on the Taliban movement in Afghanistan; one of the groups' primary base in Kanama in Yobe state was named Afghanistan before its destruction. The group has also issued statements expressing solidarity with al-Qaeda and has threatened the United States. Although, a direct connection between 'Boko Haram' and the Taliban or al-Qaeda is not discern-able, like its extremist counterparts, 'Boko Haram's ideology is based on hostility towards democracy and western anti-Islamic education. Nigeria's constitution guarantees freedom of religion and the country has a population that is split roughly in half between a Muslim and Christian South. Boko Haram has repeatedly stated that it seeks the imposition of a strict Sharia law system throughout Nigeria; currently, nine northern states adhere to Sharia law, with an additional three only marginally implementing it. According to various statements, 'Boko Haram' also seeks the abolishment of western-style education, which it states is contrary to the teachings of Islam and its cause.

Not much is known about the organizational structure of 'Boko Haram'. The groups' founder and former leader, Mohammed Yusuf, was thought to have been highly educated and wealthy. Although, Mohammed Yusuf was killed by security forces in 2009, his deputy, Abubakar Shehu who was initially thought to also have been killed, appeared on a video in 2010 and claimed leadership of the group. Shehu furthermore, threatened fresh attacks against the western influenced Nigerian government.

Boko Haram' members generally do not mix with other Islamist groups in Nigeria, even praying in separate mosques in the larger northern cities of Maiduguri, Kano and Sokoto. Its lack of education and a high unemployment rate in northern Nigeria has given the group a seemingly bottomless reservoir from which to draw disgruntled youth recruits and Nigeria's State Security Service and the defense intelligence agency estimates that Boko Haram has over 540,000 members. The sources are from Jos, Kaduna, Kano, parts of yobe state especially in Maiduguri (vanguard newspaper 23rd may 2011)

During the leadership of Mohammed Yusuf, 'Boko Haram' carried out a number of low-level attacks against security installations and Christian churches in northern Nigeria. However, the arrest of some of its members by security forces in July 2009 spurred 'Boko Haram' into a general uprising killing started in Bauchi, but soon spread to Maiduguri and smaller cities across Northern Nigeria. Maiduguri was mainly affected with over 700 deaths recorded. Following five days of violence, security forces stormed

*The Economic Implication of Boko Haram Insurgency in The North East Nigeria- Dominic Aondona Iornumbe, et al*

and destroyed 'Boko Haram's' primary mosque in Maiduguri and captured Mohammed Yusuf. He was subsequently shot and killed under suspicious circumstances by security forces. Following Mohammed Yusuf's death and a significant military deployment in Maiduguri and several other areas across northern Nigeria, 'Boko Haram' for while suspended its operations in northern Nigeria.

However, in mid-2010, 'Boko Haram' activity resumed in the region with the sect claiming responsibility for a spate of targeted killings in Maiduguri, several police officers, Christians and moderate Muslims were killed in drive-by motorcycle shootings. Furthermore, in September 200, 'Boko Haram' staged an attack on a federal prison in Buachi, freeing approximately 700 prisoners, of which an estimated 150 were sect's former members. The attacks came just mounts after the sect's former deputy, Shebu, claimed leadership of 'Boko Haram' and threatened renewed attacks

Boko haram insurgency has a devastating impact on food production, extending beyond immediate violence to disrupt agriculture and the food supply chain. Farmers face constant threats, leading to abandoned fields, reduced activities, and decreased yields. Livestock management is also affected, disrupting meat and milk supplies. Displacement of communities further exacerbates challenges, disrupting established practices and weakening farmer resilience. Banditry also disrupts food distribution, causing shortages and price hikes. Long-term consequences include erosion of agricultural infrastructure, perpetuating a cycle of diminished productivity. Addressing this requires both short-term security enhancements and long-term strategies to rebuild communities and promote sustainable agriculture.

## METHOD

### Conceptual Review

An insurgency is a systematic approach used by a group of people to kill, destroy, and violently intimidate innocent citizens for their selfish interest (Ifeoma, Purity & Anaggogu, 2015). The insurgency has been a global menace which affects the economic, political and social status of the country experiencing it. The recent insurgency that surfaced from the northern part of the country popularly known as "Boko Haram" has been a serious challenge to the country, since their inception in 2009, in the far north of Borno State; they have destroyed, killed and displaced millions of people which attracted international or global attention.

Boko Haram has intensified its operation in the North-East of Nigeria despite the state of emergency that was declared by the federal government in the three states in the northern region where Boko Haram activities are concentrated. The activities of the sect have been of concern to scholars who have written various academic papers on the modus operandi of Boko Haram. Eme and Ibietan (2012) analyze the origin and ideology of the sect, from their analysis they posit that Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad better known as Boko Haram is an Islamic terrorist group that has a strong operational based in the northeast of Nigeria. The ideology of the sect according them is to bring to an end the secular system of government and introduce sharia law in Nigeria. However,

*The Economic Implication of Boko Haram Insurgency in The North East Nigeria- Dominic Aondona Iornumbe, et al*

Lister (2012) did not subscribe to the notion that the Boko Haram aim is to Islamize Nigeria through the introduction of sharia law. According to him, the foot soldiers of the sect are disgruntled youths who have been paid by unscrupulous Northern politicians to cause mayhem in the country because of their selfish ambitions. This is this assumption from the southern part of Nigeria, where the incumbent president comes from that the activities of the sect was more intensified because of the emergence of the current president who is a southerner. The high rate of poverty, unemployment and political corruption have been blamed on the elongation of the conflict. Most of the foot soldiers of Boko Haram are youths that are frustrated because the lack employment, income and they have been disdained by politicians after being used by these politicians for their elections victory. Cook (2013); Awojobi (2014); Onuoha (2014) all assert that the youths enlisted into Boko Haram because of the prevalence of poverty in the North. The poverty profile of Nigeria that was released in 2011 by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) indicated that the northern region has more poor people than people in the south. Aside the killings, kidnapping and bombing of the sect, their activities constitute a hindrance to the socioeconomic development of the northeast where their operation is focused and Nigeria as a whole. Eme and Ibietan (2012); Ogochukwu (2013); Odita and Akan (2014); Ovaga (n.d.) agree with their study on the Boko Haram insurgency that the sect heinous crimes hinder socioeconomic development in Nigeria.

Boko haram has become a threat to the national security. Their activities have crippled the socioeconomic life of the entire citizenry. Owolabi (2013) stated that the activities of Boko Haram sect have rubbished the image of Nigeria and have hampered the quest for achieving millennium Development Goals (MDG'S) as well as vision 2020. Since the advent of a new dimension to terrorism in Nigeria, it is clear that the fabric of Nigeria economic foundation has really been shaken. The impact of the activities of the dreaded Boko Haram has brought physical, psychological and economic damage to the Nigeria's fragile economy. There is a sharp drop in the commercial activities in the North as foreign investors are gradually diverting from Nigeria due to the increasing security crisis. Amadu (2013) noted that with the increased intensity of bombing in the North, there is a strategic mass movement of individuals from the most attacked northern states especially in early 2012. The men mostly businessmen stay behind to defend their livelihood. This sudden movement directly affects school attendance among children. Some were forced to change location and school. With the massive killing of youth coppers serving in the Northern Nigeria in 2010, most Corpers especially southerners reject postings to the north thereby affecting the manpower needs of the people. According to Agomuo (2011), it all started in 2006 in the far Maiduguri, the state capital of Borno State, Nigeria as a child's play has become a national disgrace and now a global concern.

### **Emergence And Philosophy of Boko Haram**

From available information, the origin of Boko Haram can be traced to Abubakar Lawan. The sect was known by the name Ahiulsunna Wa! Jama ah Hijra. Another account traced the origin of the sect to 1995 under the name Shabaab, Muslim youth Organization

in Maiduguri, Borno state, also with Mallam Lawan as its leader ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/boko\\_Haram](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/boko_Haram)).

The record also revealed that Abubakar Lawan proceeded abroad for studies and Mohammed Yusuf succeeded him as the leader of the sect. It was under the leadership of Mohammed Yusuf that the sect gained influence and notoriety (Onuoha, Odoh and Chilaka, 2012:3). Mohammed Yusuf who was extra-judicially killed in 2009, hailed from Yobe State. He had formal Islamic education and strong radical ideology. Based on his radical convictions, he was constantly in conflict with other moderate Islamic adherents.

Boko Haram official name is, Jama, atu Ah!is Sunna Lidda, await Wa!- Jihad. The sect has changed its nomenclature over the periods such as Muhajirun, Yusuffiyyah, Nigerian Taliban, Boko Haram and so on. The sect is disenchanted with the existing secular Nigerian State and the ruling classes. They are against social injustice, corruption and widening gap between the rich and the poor. They perceived the police as enemies. The group's aspiration is to implement strict shariah law and enthrone Islamic republic in Nigeria. To that extent, Boko Haram aims to destroy the system of secular government and all its symbols.

As a Salafist Jihadist group, Boko Haram claims to be committed to the propagation of Islamic faith in Nigeria. To that extent, Mohammed Yusuf established a religious complex, including mosque and school in Borno State. Student from the north and neighbouring Chad and Niger Republic were his students. The centre also served as a recruiting ground for the purpose of insurgency.

In terms of organization, Boko Haram has a well-organized and coordinated pattern of authority designed for attack and violence. The sect is headed by a leader with two deputies. In the states where the sect exists, there is a commander or Amir. In the local governments where they operate, there are also Amirs, Below the Local Government Area Commanders are the lots of the followers. The sect operates clandestinely and this makes them elusive to security operatives. Their funding derives from three main sources, namely, levy by members, donations from individuals and organization and external sources especially Al Qaeda (Onuoha, 2011:92).

### **Boko Haram Attacks and Fatalities**

Since the first attack of Boko Haram in 2009 in one of the police barracks in Bauchi state that killed scores of people, including police officers and members of their family, and the subsequent killing of the leader of the sect, Yusuf Mohammed, the coordinated attacks by Boko Haram have intensified. The extrajudicial killing of the sect leader made the group intensified its attacks on government departments, the church, markets, homes, police and military formations (Ajah, 2011). It is erroneous to believe that the sect attacks churches without doing same to the Muslim worshiping centers. Boko Haram has attacked mosques in the northeast and even killed some Islamic clerics that are opposed to their ideology. It is estimated that over 10, 000 Nigerians have been killed and maimed by the sect since 2009. Abubakar Shekau who was the deputy of Mohammed Yusuf took over the mantle of leadership of the sect after Yusuf's death. The year 2014 has been the worst period of the group attacks, according to Human Right Watch. Over 700 people have been killed in attacks on 40 villages in the northeast states of Borno, Yobe and

Adamawa. Most of the attacks are concentrated in these three states. However, the nation's capital Abuja, Jos, Kano and some part of the north have experienced attacks from Boko Haram.

The sect attacks churches, mosque, schools, markets, motor parks and houses. The attacks of Boko Haram have led to the displacement of thousands of people in the northeast. In order to curtail the heinous crime of the sect against humanity the federal government in 2013 declared a state of emergency in the three states that the sect activities are predominate. The state of emergency did not stop the sect from the continuation of bombings, killings, kidnappings and the destruction of property. In a nutshell, the attacks of the sect in the period of state of emergency surpassed when there was no state of emergency.

### **Operations/activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria**

It will be pretty difficult to catalogue the atrocities of Boko Haram since they're too numerous, moreso, when the orgy of violence still continues unabated. However, some major ones are presented in this chapter. Boko Haram's operation started in 2009 when the sect struck on July 26, 2009 in Dutsan – Tanshi, Bauchi State. Prior to 2009, the sect was veiled until the killing of its leaders Mohammed Vusuf. Thereafter, the group vowed to carry out reprisal attacks. Since then, the violence escalated both in intensity and frequency. In short, the sect leader, Mallam Abubakar Shekau, in a press release said unequivocally, that he would kill and eliminate irresponsible political leaders of all leanings, hunt and gun down those who oppose the rule of Sharia in Nigeria.

To match words with action, Boko Haram has been inflicting incalculable havoc on the country, particularly, in the north where the sect is based. Statistics have shown that between July 2009, and January 2012, Boko Haram conducted about 160 attacks, leading to the death of over 1000 persons and displacing hundreds. The main targets of the zealots include government buildings and infrastructures, Police stations, Churches, Schools, Banks, and UN office and so on. Their attacks have occurred mainly in Borno, Bauchi, Gombe, Yobe, Kano, Kaduna, Jigawa, Niger, Plateau including Abuja (Onuoha, 2012).

Boko Haram has carried out attacks on symbolic targets. Their symbolic targets include buildings and important anniversaries. Examples of their symbolic targets where attacks have occurred were Christmas and Easter celebrations. In addition, the sect has carried out or threatened to carry out attack on important Ceremonial days such as Independence Day. Particularly disturbing in the Boko Haram terrorism, is its targeting of those who it regards as infidels or non-Muslim worshippers (Nees, 2013:505).

In December 2010, the zealots killed a gubernatorial candidate of the All Nigeria People Party. In the same year, over 29 churches were burnt and pastors killed to display its sophistication, in August 2011, the sect effectively used suicide bombing on the United Nations headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria, killing 23 persons. In addition, a horrendous Boko Haram killing spree occurred between January 20 and January 22, 2012 when the group massacred 300 people in Kario through suicide bombings and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (IED).

In March 2012, Boko Haram attacked a Catholic church in Jos and killed 6 people who were worshipping. On Easter Sunday, the sect killed 38 Christians while worshipping, using a vehicle bomb (Al Jazeera, 2012). The orgy of violence against Christians in the north continued in 2013 in Kogi State when Boko Haram raided a church and killed worshipers. The situation alarmed the Christian Elders Forum of Northern States (NOSCEF), compelling them to raise their voices against the atrocities of the sect. The Forum revealed that between January 2014 and February 9, 2014, 367 persons had been killed in Adamawa, Benue, Borno, Kaduna, Katsina and Plateau States (NOSCEF, 2014).

To prove Boko Haram really mean “western education is evil”, since March 2012, the insurgents had set on fire over 12 primary and secondary schools in the three most affected States in the North. In September, 2013, the sect attacked students’ dormitories in Momudo village, Yobe State, killing about 39 students. In February 2014, 59 children of the Federal Government College, Buni Yadi, Yobe State were killed (Udumebraye, 2014:45).

In April 14, 2014, Boko Haram Islamic sect carried out the worst dastardly act of terrorism when they abducted 276 female students at Government Girls’ Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/chibok-schoolgirl-kidnapping](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/chibok-schoolgirl-kidnapping)). As the search for the Chibok girls continues, attacks have occurred severally in Abuja and elsewhere in the North. The offensive embarked upon by the combined troops from Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria has resulted in the killings of many of the insurgents. In addition, some villages taken over by Boko Haram have been reclaimed.

Boko Haram uses sophisticated weapon such as AK 47 rifles, Fusil Automatique Léger, (FAL), Belgian made, self-loading rifle rocket launchers, R.P.G., improvised explosives device (IEDs) and bombs. Some members of the sect received training from outside. Intelligence report has also shown that the sect recruits fighters from outside, mainly from the neighbouring Countries, such as Chad, Cameroon and Niger Republic. The porous borders is not also helping matters as they facilitate the escape of insurgents after carrying out attacks (Uwerunonye, 2014:38-39).

### **The Socio-Economic Implications Of Boko Haram Insurgency In Nigeria**

Aside the human cost in the Boko Haram insurgency, the atrocities of the sect have socioeconomic implications, especially in the northeast where Boko Haram has dominance. The economic, social and psychological costs of the insurgency cannot be quantified. Commercial activities in the northeast have been reduced because of the unprecedented attacks by the sect. Banks, markets and shops do not open regularly due to the fear of the coordinated attacks from Boko Haram. According to Okereocha (2012) human capital and investors drain is hampering economic development in the northeast this is due to the attacks on banks, markets, parks and government departments. The attacks on these commercial areas have led to the migration of people to other parts of the country. Shiklam (2012) posits that: “The Maiduguri Monday Market said to be the biggest market in the city is reported to have been seriously affected as hundreds of shop owners, especially Southerners are said to have closed their businesses and left the troubled city. About half of the 10,000 shops and stalls in the market were said to have been abandoned by traders who have fled the city.”

*The Economic Implication of Boko Haram Insurgency in The North East Nigeria- Dominic Aondona Iornumbe, et al*

Aside the migration of people who have business in the northeast to other parts of Nigeria, foreign nationals of Chad, Cameroun and Niger are being repatriated to their home countries for what the government of Nigeria said they constitute the members of Boko Haram. Evidence has shown that not all the repatriated nationals of the above countries are members of Boko Haram. Definitely, those who have business in cities like Maiduguri, Damaturu and Yola will form part of those that are sent homes which will actually affect the economic activities in these cities. Ovaga (n.d) asserts that under this situation, the economy of the northeast will seriously be affected if foreign citizens who contribute large quota to the development of the northeast vis a vis their economic activities are sent back to their countries of origin. The never-ending attacks by Boko Haram in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states have a severe impact on the economic lives of people living in these areas. A case in point is that the working duration of most commercial banks in the affected areas hit by Boko Haram bombings has been reduced from eight hours to three hours (Mohammed, 2012). "In Maiduguri, Borno state, where the sect originated, the frequent bombings and clashes between Boko Haram and the security agents have weighed down seriously on the commercial and businesses activities in the city as many businesses have reportedly crumbled while many people have fled the state" (Shiklam, 2012).

There is already a dichotomy in the north and south development in Nigeria. The poverty profile released by the National Bureau of Statistics illustrates that there is the prevalence of poverty in the north as compared to the south. It is in this data that the *Businessday* newspaper predicted if the insecurity situation continues development in the northern part will remain static and the gap between the north and south will broaden further (BDN, 2012). "The region needs peace and stability more than any region in the country, particularly because the region clearly lagging behind in term of infrastructure, education and other development indices" (Minster of Information, Labara Maku cited in Ogochukwu, 2013).

Prominent Nigerians who have bemoaned the economic impact of Boko Haram insurgency in northeast Nigeria including the President Goodluck Jonathan and Northern Governors forum According to Obaremi (2014) "Economic affairs in the north is already depleting due to a massive departure of people and financial institutions from the northern region. But if the government delays in the implementing comprehensive plans to tackle insecurity from its roots, then not only will the northern region be economic desolation, the country as a whole risk losing billion of dollars in foreign direct investment" The business activities of telecom operators have not been left out from the attacks of Boko Haram. For instance, some telecom masts belong to some major mobile telephone operators were destroyed by Boko Haram and the banning of telephone services by the military affected the income generation of some of the mobile phone operators.

Just as the economic implications of Boko Haram atrocities cannot be quantified, the social costs are enormous. The church, school, market, clinic and mosque are potential targets of Boko Haram. For example, in April 2014, a federal government girls' college was attacked which subsequently led to the abduction of over 250 female students. Attacks on these social places have prevented people from going to these places. Some

students have stopped going to school, others have been transferred to the southern part of the country to continue their education. Christians are afraid to go and worship in the church on Sundays due to the fear of being attacked by the sect. Same for the muslim faithfuls who abandon their worshipping centers because of Boko Haram attacks. The markets have become deserted.

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) that was created by the government after the end of Nigerian civil war to foster unity among Nigeria is under threat due to Boko Haram attacks. The NYSC directorate posted 4171 corps members to Adamawa state, 1041 of the corps members have to abandon their national duty due to the precarious security situation (Ovaga (n.d.). Some parents from the south of the country have protested vehemently against the posting of their children to the northeast. Aside the socioeconomic implications, the human cost is more worrisome, more than 10.000 have been killed, a lot of people have been maimed and women have been kidnapped and raped These have left the family of the dead, the injured, the raped and the kidnapped in agony. In a nutshell, most of the family members of Boko Haram victims are going through a traumatized period. Many have left their homes and over 650 thousand Nigerians have been displaced according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCH).

### **Security implications of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria**

The Boko Haram menace has had damaging security implications for Nigeria such as giving signal to the international community that Nigeria is unsafe for even ordinary visit Statistics released by Global Peace Index, (GPI, 2012) have shown that between 2011 and 2012, there is a significant decline in peace as Nigeria dropped four places to 146th out of 158 countries in global peace ranking. As a matter of fact, Nigeria has been identified as the least peaceful country in West Africa (Igbuzor, 2011:7). The widespread insecurity in the North has caused decline in the development of the country with implication for human, economic, political, security and psychological dimensions. There is symbiotic relationship between development and security. Expenditures on security are essential components of the development process. The use of resources to improve a country's security system could be more beneficial in others areas. Therefore, insecurity is a drain on national resources at the expense of people's wellbeing. The adverse effects of insecurity on the economic growth and development of a nation is quite enormous.

Most often when terrorists destroy human lives and property, the government responds by providing relief materials for the victims of terrorism. The huge amount of money that is released in such circumstances is a drain on the public treasury and the nation's economy. For instance, in the 2012 budget, the federal government allocated 21.91 (US\$5.58) billion to security agencies (Opukri and Etekpe: 2013:377). Therefore, terrorist acts such as the Boko Haram hinders the development of the nation and increases the level of poverty. Another damaging consequence of the phenomenon of Boko Haram terrorism is that it is tarnishing the image of Nigeria abroad. With the designation of Boko Haram as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) with the potential to kill foreigners; Nigeria is on the list of countries that are unsafe for foreign nationals. This situation is diminishing the integrity or rather the prestige of Nigeria in the comity of

*The Economic Implication of Boko Haram Insurgency in The North East Nigeria- Dominic Aondona Iornumbe, et al*

nations. Within Africa, the consequences of insecurity for Nigeria's leadership role are disturbing. John Kufuor, former Ghanaian President, remarked that insecurity is the bane of Nigeria's development and is also making Nigeria unable to claim its rightful leadership position in Africa (Kufour, 2012:8). The implication of the above assertion is that Nigeria cannot give what it does not have. In essence, Nigeria's leadership position in Africa regional conflicts is questioned as she cannot guarantee her own security that is threatened by Boko Haram.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Theoretical Framework

#### Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Cognitive dissonance theory was developed by Festinger (1951). It is one of the most important psychological theories that shed light on terrorist behaviour. The major assumption of this theory according to Cunningham (2003) is that men prefer a situation of stability in respect of values, behaviour and their environmental conditions. When people experience a difference between what they perceive and what they desire (Cognitive dissonance), they seek to reduce this dissonance by reducing this gap through actions, filtering information or altering perceptions.

The baseline argument here is that cognitive dissonance is experienced whenever there is a discrepancy between preferred value and actual value states. Alao, Atere and Alao (2015) maintained that such a situation has the tendency to produce hatred, anxiety, fear and the desire to hurt or eliminate the source. The discrepancy could manifest within economic, social, cultural, political and religious spheres as these issues form the micro level of analysis that could be regarded as the structural background conditions operating at individual level.

Apparently, Boko Haram insurgency could therefore be linked to perceived discrepancy between the preferred way of life (to maintain the sanctity of orthodox Islam) and the actual state of their existence (secular state) that influence the dissonance (Alao, Atere and Alao, 2015). Importantly, it should be noted that the voice of few elements that initially reacted to the perceived dissonance is what the issue at stake requires in order to gain popular support and to a large extent, the personal dissonance grows to become group level grievances and discontentment. In all ramifications, it transcends from a micro to macro level phenomenon. This agrees with what Gurr (1970) referred to as relative deprivation. Essentially, the primary aim of Boko Haram is to destabilize Nigeria and make it ungovernable as this could lead to a situation of break-up of the country or imposition of Islamic ways of life.

The relevance of cognitive dissonance theory to the present study is that it reflects significantly, the philosophy behind the existentiality of Boko Haram sect and to a large extent explains government inability to tame the challenges posed by the Haramists.

### Poverty Breeds Conflict Hypothesis

Academic debates continue on the correlation between poverty and insecurity. Some scholars have argued that most of the conflicts in developing countries are caused by the prevalence of poverty. There is causality from high poverty rate to conflict Kanbur (2007). Ted Gurr deprivation theory subscribed to this assumption. The theory explains why the youths are always taking to violence. According to the deprivation theory, “aggression is always a consequence of frustration” and “frustration always lead to aggression” (Leeds 1978). “The poor are led to violence owing to their relative deprivation and needs” (Odumosu 1999 cited in Awojobi 2014). Frustration, lack of income, unemployment have prompted the youths in the northern Nigeria to become foot soldiers of Boko Haram (Awojobi 2014). Insecurity, terrorism, conflicts and violence are caused by the high poverty rate in most societies (Gurr 1970 and Burton 1997). Sarmiento and Bacerra (1998) and Sarmiento (1999) are the leading scholars on the poverty breeds conflict hypothesis. However, the likes of Gaitan (1995); Rubio (2000); Sanchez and Nunez (2001) and Sanchez, Solimano and Formisano (2005) objected to this hypothesis. Empirical evidence from the works of Collier and Hoeffler (2002); Bellows and Miguel (2006); Ford (2007) indicated that poverty was the major cause of conflict in Africa. For instance, Collier and Hoeffler (2002) examine conflicts in Africa, from their findings, they notice the interface between income and conflict. Rice et al. (2006); Collier and Hoeffler (2002); Fearon (2004); Walter (2004) subscribed to the notion that poverty helps to extend conflicts once it started. Evidence has shown that when income drops there is a tendency for conflict to surface or reignited. A study by Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler from the Oxford University, James Fearson and David Laitin both from the Stanford University, and Professor Nicholas Sambanis from the Yale University gave credence to this hypothesis (Collier and Hoeffler 2004).

The Boko Haram insurgency has been blamed on the high rate of poverty in Nigeria. However, some security experts have debunked this assumption. But in the words of Kastina (n.d.) who posits that whatever argument surrounding the cause of Boko Haram insurgency the “salient facts which cannot be demised always easily. The most important of this is that we have to admit that even if the group has its antecedents in theology, its swelling rank is as a result of a huge reservoir of unemployed urban youths from many parts of the country. These youths who have completely become disenfranchised are readily to provide the group with foot soldiers who commit all manners of atrocities, including assassination and suicide bombings in the name of religion.” Onuoha (2013) empirical study on why do youth join Boko Haram, the findings of the study indicated that poverty played a major role in luring the youth in joining Boko Haram.

### Related Review

Chukurah, Eme, and Ogbeje (2015) conducted research on the “Implication of Boko Haram Terrorism on Northern Nigeria” (Audu & Adamu, 2021). The study reveals that Boko Haram terrorist insurgency invigorates as a result of the pronouncement of Goodluck Jonathan as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Garba et al., 2020). According to the study, the North-East has witnessed one hundred and fifteen (115) attacks by suspected Boko Haram insurgents, making the environment hazardous and

*The Economic Implication of Boko Haram Insurgency in The North East Nigeria- Dominic Aondona Iornumbe, et al*

forcing the people especially investors and entrepreneurs to relocate to terrorist-free zones (Dearsley & Enganya, 2024).

Nnamdi, Sebastine, Junior, and Anyanwu (2015) carried out an investigation on the “Boko Haram Crisis and Implications for the Development of Northern Nigeria” (Mohammed et al., 2021). The study opined that the deadly activities of the Islamic sect, Boko Haram, have severely impacted the economy of the North (Bala et al., 2023). Business enterprises, particularly Small and Medium Enterprises, are suffering first because they rely on direct interaction with people to sustain demand (Ameh, 2024).

Oladunjoye and Omemu (2014) examined the effect of Boko Haram on school attendance in Northern Nigeria (Idris & Abdulwasiiu, 2023). The data was analyzed using the Pearson correlation coefficient statistic (Ayinoko et al., 2024). The results show that there is no significant difference in school attendance between males and females (Julius & Odemero, 2024). However, there is a significant difference in school attendance among rural and urban schools, as well as among primary school students (Dennis et al., 2022). Oladunjoye and Omemu found that both secondary and tertiary institutions in areas affected by Boko Haram attacks experienced disruptions (Mashi & Husaini, 2024). Similar studies, tagged “Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack,” reported to the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) president that about 171 teachers had been killed since 2009 by insurgents (Eneyo et al., 2023). The combination of low pay and risk of attacks has weakened Nigeria's education system (Onwunali et al., 2023).

Ugwumba and Ikoku (2014) studied the Boko Haram insurgency as a peril to the achievement of education for all in Nigeria (Garba et al., 2020). Descriptive analysis, using mean and standard deviation, was used to analyze the collected data (Audu & Adamu, 2021). The study indicates that many teachers were forced to leave their jobs or flee the affected areas (Bala et al., 2023).

According to Mohammed (2014), Boko Haram has destroyed economic activities in any place they have spread their tentacles (Dearsley & Enganya, 2024). Their actions have led to the movement of people away from affected areas due to restiveness (Mohammed et al., 2021; Idris & Abdulwasiiu, 2023). The trademarks of Boko Haram are destruction of lives and property with reckless attitudes, through bombings, abduction, and slaughtering of human beings, especially in the North-Eastern part of the country and other regions (Ameh, 2024). This has created fear and a sense of insecurity in the polity, as opined by Anthony 2014

## CONCLUSION

Boko Haram is a dynamic phenomenon and a persistent societal problem ravaging the country, Nigeria. Boko Haram has become one of the worst holocausts in the recent history. It is one of the greatest calamities of cataclysmic proportions in human history. Across the North-east of Nigeria, there are mass graves being discovered, some holding hundreds of shallow buried corpses. From the study, over three (3) million Nigerians were displaced, thousands abducted, over 100,000 killed within the six years of Boko Haram's program in Nigeria. The study concludes that the nation ought to have learnt

from the negative effects of Boko Haram on socioeconomic development and be more proactive and stop acting as an arm chair combatant on grave issues of national concern that consistently threatens the corporate existence of Nigeria, and renders the country relatively and economically impotent. Institutional mechanism should be employed to address Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria since they are not insurmountable given an objective analysis of the causative factors. In the face of the current problems and difficulties posed by the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, the following recommendations were made; 1) If Nigeria as a county wishes to move forward along the right path, there is need for a serious sensitization of mind and re-orientation, especially from the political class. This is because it has so corroded the society to the level of impunity and non-chalence that everything seems to depend on the whims and caprices of the political leadership. If the political leadership can muster the political will to deal with Boko Haram sects, then, their activities will be drastically reduced if not completely ameliorated. 2) The effort of the Nigerian government to foster inter-religious dialogue should be intensified and Boko Haram sects should be persuaded to be active participants in the collaborative effort to ensure peace and unity in the country with a view to enthroning favourable environment for socio-economic activities. 3) The state should detach itself from interference with religious matters, especially from the point of view of making any religion a state religion, overtly or covertly. Neither the Federal nor the state government should have anything to do with religion as is the case in other democratic societies. Such neutrality would discourage other fanatical religious groups like Boko Haram from disturbing the peace and unity of the country in the name of imposing any particular religion. 4) There is need for Nigerian government and stakeholders to strive very hard to make Nigeria a better place for children by providing adequate education and security with a view to enthroning socioeconomic development. Taking good care of children would reduce their susceptibility to child labour and deception into dangerous sects like Boko Haram where they are turned into suicide bombers and die-hard militants. The abduction of Chibok girls in 2014 by Boko Haram members still challenges the responsibility of government, parents, and guardians in the promotion of the welfare and security of children and youth since they are the leaders of tomorrow. No Nigerian child irrespective of nationality should be out-of-school in this knowledge-based and technologically-driven global economy. 5) Government should adopt an effective measure to ensure homeland security. This arrangement must evolve from the grass root believing that if every village or town is secured, the nation will in turn be secured. Traditional rulers and local notables in all the nooks and crannies of the nation must be effectively engaged in local policing provided they were not imposed by the government on helpless communities. 6) There should be a very one on one vigilant citizenry that is ever inquisitive, probing, evaluating and assertive. Good leadership closely monitored by vigilant citizenry will definitely bring about the best in government. 7) Sponsors and sources of founding of Boko Haram should be trace with a view to bringing the culprit to book . 8) Security agencies should be well equipped. This is because a situation where the Boko Haram set have more sophisticated

*The Economic Implication of Boko Haram Insurgency in The North East Nigeria- Dominic Aondona*

*Iornumbe, et al*

equipment and better training fighting them without adequate equipment is just for the asking. 9) Poverty should be adequately addressed and there should be a synergy between national and international agencies with government of Nigeria in fighting Boko Haram.

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