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INTERROGATING THE EFFECTS OF HERDSMEN'S ACTIVITIES ON AGRICULTURAL OUTPUTS AS AN EFFORT TOWARDS ERADICATION OF INSECURITY IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper examines the effects of herdsmen's activities on agricultural outputs concerning eradicating insecurity in Niger State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to determine the effects of herdsmen activities on farmers' agricultural productivity; and ascertain how insecurity could be eradicated. The mixed research design was adopted. The quantitative and qualitative data were collected through questionnaires and in-depth interviews respectively. Multi-stage sampling technique and 24 interviews were used to select 376 respondents for the quantitative study and generate qualitative data respectively. The quantitative data were processed using SPSS version 20.0 and analysed descriptively and inferentially. The QDA-Miner was used to analyse the qualitative data. The findings showed that herdsmen have reduced productivity turn up of farm produce; limited farmers from going to farm; and contributed to the destruction of farm produce. The narrowing of income and wealth disparities; elimination of corruption and bad governance; and the creation of decent jobs and livelihoods can eradicate insecurity. *It was recommended that community policing should be established and equipped with security gadgets for proper security of various communities against banditry*

Keywords: Interrogating. Herdsmen Activities, Agricultural Output, Livelihoods, Insecurity-Eradication, Banditry

Introduction

The rate of insecurity in Nigeria especially in Niger State cannot be over-emphasized. It is on record that Nigeria has been experiencing an alarming incidence of insecurity since the 2009 insurgency of Boko Haram that has killed tens of thousands and displaced millions of victims in IDP camps with their methods of attack include bombings, armed assaults, assassinations and kidnapping (Human Right Watch, 2022). It is also on record that not less than 20 lives were lost to bandit attacks while between 50 and 70 villagers were kidnapped and valuable items made away with including money in Paikoro, Shiroro and Rafi local government attacks (Odewale, 2023). The high incidence of insecurity has no doubt reaped a lot of havoc in the nation, especially in Niger State. Apart from these, there are other consequences of bandits' activities on food production, healthcare facilities, transportation and disruption of economic activities which have affected foreign direct investment. All these have created hunger and hardship for the residents of Niger State.

However, there have been a series of interventions made by Niger State government towards curbing the insecurity in the state. The federal government allocated security agencies to tackle banditry, and other cross-border security challenges; to coordinate joint security operations by providing aerial surveillance and other combat mission plans to flush out bandits, destroy their camps, and allow farmers to return to their farmlands to ensure continuous food

production and sustain community peace and prosperity in the state (Yakubu, 2024; Oyebanji, 2024). Also, the state government has allocated huge sum of money towards security by equipping security, for the security agencies to live up to their responsibilities by combing the forests in order to free those detained there and apprehend the terrorists (Oyebanji, 2024).

Furthermore, the Niger state government intervened in the area of agriculture in order to boost the economy of the state, due to the vast nature of land in the state. The state government allocated 50 per cent of its appointments to women of the state as secretaries of the local government councils with the responsibilities of effective development of agriculture in the state (Okwuchi, 2023).

Despite these interventions, the problem of insecurity still persists in Niger state as the evil activities of herdsmen, ISWA, bandits and Boko Haram are still-going to the extent that people cannot sleep with their two eyes closed. For example, Amata (2022) reported that Niger State accounted for the highest figures in both the deaths (267) and kidnappings (396) of residents in Niger State in January 2022.

It is on account of the forgoing problems that this study intends to investigate security challenges and socio-economic development in Niger state. This will fill the gap in knowledge by providing specific information on the effects of Boko Haram, ISWA, herdsmen and bandits on Niger state infrastructural development, residents' livelihoods, and agricultural outputs.

Objectives of the Study

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To ascertain the effects of herdsmen activities on farmer's agricultural productivity in Niger state, Nigeria.
2. To determine how insecurity could be eradicated in Niger State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions are posed for this study:

1. What are the effects of herdsmen activities on farmers' agricultural productivity in Niger State, Nigeria?
2. How can insecurity in Niger State be eradicated?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant relationship between herdsmen/farmers clashes and low agricultural productivity in Niger state.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as thus:

Herdsmen:

Herdsmen are simply persons who breed, rear or care for cattle or other livestock in the herd. They are also referred to as nomadic herdsmen who by their nature are migrants who leave their traditional abode in search of greener pastures for their flocks. In most cases, the movement is orchestrated by the absence of good and

veritable land for their flock to feed on (Imo, 2017). Adeyemi (2022) described the herdsmen as armed herdsmen of Fulani extraction, a tribe accused of spearheading insecurity across Nigeria. This explains why they are also referred to as Fulani Herdsmen, that is, because they are of Fulani extraction

Banditry

Banditry is an act of robbery and violence in places where the rule of law has broken down. Collins (2000) argues that banditry consists of the organization of armed bands for the purpose of attacking state or social institutions, enterprises or individual persons

Terrorism:

There is no generally acceptable definition of terrorism. The problem in conceptualizing terrorism lies in identifying or agreeing on what is understood as the act of terrorism or who terrorists are (Allens, 2023). The United States Army Manuel (2001), however, sees terrorism as the calculated use of unlawful violence or threats of unlawful violence that inculcate fear. Again, the United Nations Security Council (2004) defines terrorism as criminal acts including those against civilians committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act.

Insecurity

Insecurity is just the opposite of security and could be used in different ways (Zubairu, 2020). It could mean lack of safety or the existence of hazard, danger, uncertainty; inadequately guided or protected; lack of stability; disturbed; doubtful; lack of protection and unsafe (Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro, 2013). Insecurity could also mean the state of being in all ramifications to terror, threat, risk, molestation, bullying and harassment (Zubairu, 2020). In fact, insecurity is one of the social ills that threatens humanity's existence, creates fear within its environment and limits its free movement (Ngwoke & Akabike, 2022). This is the reason; Obi (2015:12) sees insecurity as” a chronic threat to human's life, territories, states, religious beliefs, property and institutions among others”.

Agricultural output

Agricultural output simply means the value of the final products produced from farming activities. It could also mean the produce from agricultural activities for consumption, export and processing purposes. It is important to note here that agricultural output comprises both outputs from livestock and crops.

Insecurity eradication

This simply means stopping insecurity. Musa (2021) notes that the present government, since inception has preoccupied itself

with addressing the prevailing multifaceted forms of insecurity in all parts of the country, particularly in the North-East and North-West regions.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the Social Banditry Theory by Eric Hobsbawm (1969) as the framework for this study. This theory is known as social banditry/social crime theory; it was propounded in 1969 by Eric Hobsbawm. Hobsbawm's key thesis was on the outlaws individuals living on the edges of rural societies by robbing and plundering, who are often seen by ordinary people as heroes or beacons of popular resistance. He called it a form of “pre-historical social movement”, by contrast with the organized labor movement.

Hobsbawm, however, characterized social banditry as a primitive form of class struggle and class resistance in usually pre-industrial and frontier societies. He then drew a sharp distinction between criminal outlaws and social bandits and claimed that social banditry flourished in pre-capitalist agrarian societies. These societies were a primitive type of social protest by peasants against oppression and exploitation. The rural poor regard social bandits as class heroes and as avengers of social injustice who robbed the rich to give to the poor. In turn, the bandits expected protection and support (Adam, 2010).

Linking this to the issue of security challenges, one could say from Hobsbawm's perspective that banditry is a result of class struggle in society to avenge social justice. In conclusion, this theory

is very relevant to this work. This theory is then adopted as the framework of this study because it creates a general picture that poverty orchestrated by the rich might be the reason for the incessant prevalence of herdsmen activities, banditry, kidnapping, and terrorism in Nigeria.

Methodology

This study was based on a mixed research design. The design was considered appropriate and adopted because it enabled a large population to be studied at a relatively short time and it allowed the researcher to use both quantitative and qualitative methods to generate extensive data for the study.

This study is conducted in Niger State which is presently one of the six states in North-Central Nigeria, the others being Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nassarawa and Plateau states, as well as Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory Abuja. It is a Hausa-speaking state with 25 local government areas. Niger State has both Muslim and Christian populations and they engage in farming as a major occupation.

The total population of Niger state based on 2006 National Population and Housing Census was 3,950,249 people (2032, 725 for males and 1,917,524 for females). The population was projected to 2022 and shown by gender and state in the table.

Table 1: Projected Population Niger State by Gender

Niger state	Male	Female	Total
2006	2032,725	1,917,524	3,950,249
2022	3,364,758	3,174,066	6,538,824

Source: Estimated from National Population Commission (2006).

However, the target population for the study is 6,218, being the population of some (4) relevant population categories for this study which cut across the study area. The population categories are as follows: - Men, Women, Youths, and Opinion Molders (this includes: Health Workers, Teachers, Traditional Rulers, Religious leaders etc). The target population is shown in table 2.

Table 2: Target Population of the Study

L.G.A/ Community	Men	Women	Youths	Opinion molders	TOTAL
RAFI					
KAGARA	530	585	450	342	1907
MARIGA					
BANGI	476	532	505	367	1880
BIDA					
LEMU	652	700	637	442	2431
TOTAL	1658	1817	1592	1151	6218

Sources: Official records/registers of community unions/associations, official records/registers of schools, official records of Health Workers, Teachers, Traditional Rulers and Religious leaders.

The sample size for this study was 376 persons. This was statistically generated by using TaroYamane statistical method of determining sample size as follows:

$$N = N / 1 + N(e)^2$$

Where: n = Sample size

N = Target Population

e = error margin (it could be 0.10 down to 0.01, but in this work 0.05)

1 = unity or constant

Therefore;

$$n = \frac{6218}{1 + 6218(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{6218}{1 + 6218(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{6218}{1 + 15.545}$$

$$n = \frac{6218}{16.545}$$

$$n = 375.8$$

$$n = 376$$

The multi-stage sampling technique involving cluster sampling, simple random sampling, proportionate stratified sampling and availability sampling techniques was adopted to select respondents for this study. At first, the population of Niger State was

clustered into three (3) senatorial districts: The senatorial districts are Niger East, Niger North and Niger South. Secondly, the local government areas in each of the senatorial zones were numbered and one local government area each was selected, giving a total of three Local government areas across the three senatorial zones. The local government areas are Rafi, Mariga and Bida.

Thirdly, the communities in each of the LGAs were numbered and one community each was selected from the three selected LGAs, making a total of three communities. The selected communities are Kagara, Bangi and Lemu. In order to collect appropriate data for the study, four relevant population categories were created in each community. The members of each population category formed the respondents for the study. The stratified proportionate sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents from each population category because the population categories did not have equal size. The availability sampling technique was then used to select the actual respondents from each population category as shown in Table 3

Table 3: Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling Technique for the study

L.G.A/COMMUNITIES	POPULATION CATEGORY	TOTAL	PROPORTIONATE CALCULATIONS
RAFI			
KAGARA	MEN	530	$530/6218 \times 376/1 = 32$
	WOMEN	585	$585/6218 \times 376/1 = 35$
	YOUTHS	450	$450/6218 \times 376/1 = 27$
	OPINION MOLDERS	342	$342/6218 \times 376/1 = 21$
MARIGA			
BANGI	MEN	476	$476/6218 \times 376/1 = 29$
	WOMEN	532	$532/6218 \times 376/1 = 32$
	YOUTHS	505	$505/6218 \times 376/1 = 31$
	OPINION MOLDERS	367	$367/6218 \times 376/1 = 22$
BIDA			
LEMU	MEN	652	$652/6218 \times 376/1 = 39$
	WOMEN	700	$700/6218 \times 376/1 = 42$
	YOUTHS	637	$637/6218 \times 376/1 = 39$
	OPINION MOLDERS	442	$442/6218 \times 376/1 = 27$
TOTAL		6218	376

Source: Researcher's computation

For the qualitative data (in-depth interview data), 24 people were purposively selected for interview, 8 from each of the 3 communities based on their leadership positions in the relevant qualitative population categories as follows:

1. Men's union leaders (2) from each community
2. Women's union leaders (2) from each community
3. Youth leaders (2) from each community
4. Opinion molders (2) from each community

The instruments for data collection for this study were a questionnaire and in-depth interview because of the need for mixed-methods research (in this case, 50% quantitative and 50% qualitative) for an investigation of security challenges and socioeconomic development in Niger state Nigeria. The questionnaire, specifically, collects quantitative data, and it is highly structured with only a few unstructured questions. It also has two different sections. The first section contains the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents while the other section addresses the substantive issues on security challenges and socio-economic development in Niger state Nigeria, derived from the research questions, specific objectives and hypothesis.

The in-depth interview (IDI) on the other hand, was employed to gather qualitative data to complement the quantitative data for fuller understanding of Security Challenges and Socioeconomic Development in the area of study. The IDI was unstructured questions with necessary probes.

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher herself with the help of two Research Assistants. The research assistants

were recruited on the basis of their ability to read and write, speak and understand both English and local dialects of the communities. They were people (male and female) that came from either the communities or local government areas of the study. They were trained for three (3) days on the objectives of the study, the relevance of the study, administration and retrieval of a questionnaire.

The in-depth interview was conducted by the researchers with the help of two research assistants who were from the community or local government whose community and religious leaders will be interviewed at any appropriate time. This means that the two research assistants were involved in the in-depth interview at one point in time or the other depending on the community to be interviewed. The reasons for the two Research Assistants is to help close the gap of language differences between the researcher and the interviewees; to ensure easy distribution and retrieval of the questionnaire, and to ensure that every bit of information given by our interviewees was captured. The researcher moderated the interview while the two assistants did the note-taking and recording respectively.

The researchers issue questionnaire to the respondents in their communities with two research assistants to properly guide the respondents in filling out the questionnaire. In some cases, other administration was applied because of the educational statuses of some of the respondents. The researchers personally guided the filling of the questionnaire to make sure that it was properly completed. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, A and B. Section A contained the personal data or information of the

respondents. While Section B contained the closed-ended questions relating to the subject under study.

The researcher used face validity to ensure that the instrument for data collection could be used to collect the desired data. The lead researcher after showing her supervisor the instrument took it to experts in the faculty of education to look at it and validate it before the fieldwork. The researchers also conducted a pretest with some populations outside the area of study, specifically in the Southern Nigeria to ascertain the consistency of the questionnaire which served as a measure in this case. The data collected were analyzed descriptively with percentages and tables and inferentially using Chi-square. This determined whether the instrument was reliable or not.

The data collected were processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Both the socio-demographic data and the substantive issues were analyzed using frequency distribution tables, percentages and charts while the stated hypothesis was tested using chi-square.

The researchers obtained an ethical letter from the University through the HOD, Sociology to present to the traditional rulers of the three communities of study in order to be permitted to administer questionnaire and grant interviews to the respondents. The introduction letter of the instrument was read to the respondents to assure them that the data were for academic purposes only and that whatever information they divulged to the researchers would be given utmost confidentiality.

Results

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

This section of the analysis deals with the personal data of the respondents and these include gender, age, marital status, place of

residence, educational attainment, occupation, and religious affiliation.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents for Quantitative Data by their Socio-Demographic Characteristics (n=353)

	Variables	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	122	34.5
	Female	231	65.4
	Total	353	100
Age	18– 22	32	9.0
	23– 27	67	18.9
	28– 32	53	15.0
	33– 37	59	16.7
	38– 42	67	18.9
	43 andabove	75	21.2
	Total	353	100
Marital status	Single	88	24.9
	Married	164	46.5
	Separated	36	10.1
	Divorced	13	3.7
	Widowed	52	14.7
	Total	353	100
Place of residence	Lemu	124	35.1
	Bangi	98	27.7
	Kagara	131	37.1
	Total	353	100
Educational attainment	No formal Education	91	25.7
	FSLC	138	39.0
	WAEC/SSCE/GCE	67	18.9
	NCE/OND	24	6.7
	B.Sc. /HND	21	5.9
	MSc. /PhD	12	3.3
	Total	353	100

Occupation	Unemployed	85	24.0
	Student	44	12.4
	Self-employed	43	12.1
	Publicservant/Farmer	89	25.2
	Business/trading	81	22.9
	Apprentice	11	3.1
	Total	353	100
Agricultural Productivity	High productivity	136	38.5
	Low productivity	217	61.5
	Total	353	100
Religion affiliation	Christianity	148	41.9
	Muslim	172	48.7
	Judaism	2	0.5
	African traditional religion	31	8.7
	Total	353	100
Monthly income	No income	11	3.1
	Below #50,000	123	34.8
	Below #100,000	138	39.0
	#100,000	50	14.1
	#100,000 and above	31	8.7
	Total	353	100

Field survey: 2023

Table 4: Shows the socio-demographic data of the respondents and key variables. With respect to gender, it was found that 122(34.5%) were male, while 231(65.4%). As for age, the data show that more of

the respondents were 43(21.1%), while the lowest 18-22(9.0%) years. As for marital status, it was found that more of the respondents were married 164(46.5%) while 13(3.7%) were divorcees. In terms of residency, it was found that more of the respondents 124(35.1%) resided in Lemu area while 98(27.7%) were in Bangi. The educational status shows that more of the respondents 138(39.0%) had their first school leaving certificate while 12(3.3%) had an M.sc/Ph.D. In terms of occupation, more of the respondents 89(25.2%) were farmers and public servants while 11(3.1%) were apprentices. The study also found that there is low productivity in agriculture 217(61.5%). In terms of religious affiliation, more of the respondents 172(48.7%) were Muslim while 2(172) were into Judaism worship. And lastly, in terms of income, the study found that more of the respondents 138(39.0%) earn below 100,000 naira per month, while 11(3.1%) were of no income.

Substantive Issues

Research Question One: How have herdsmen activities affected farmer's agricultural outputs in Niger State. Research question three is answered and the responses are presented in Tables 5, 6, 7, 8 and figures 1 and 2.

Table 5: Reduction in farm produce due to herdsmen activities

<i>Options</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly Agree	233	66.0
Agree	81	22.9
Disagree	23	6.5
Strongly Disagree	16	4.5
Total	353	100

Field survey: 2023

Table 5 shows the distribution of respondents on whether the Fulani herdsman has reduced productivity turn up of farm produce. The data showed that a majority of the respondents 233(66.0%) strongly agreed that the Fulani herdsmen have reduced productivity turn up of farm produce, 81(22.9%) of the respondents agreed that the Fulani herdsmen have reduced productivity turn up of farm produce, then 23(6.5%) of the respondents disagreed that the Fulani herdsmen have not reduced productivity turn up of farm produce while 16(4.5%) strongly disagreed that the Fulani herdsmen have not reduced productivity turn up of farm produce. This implies that the Fulani herdsmen have reduced productivity turn up of farm produce. This corroborated the qualitative finding. One of the IDI respondents, for example, narrated as thus:

Well, I won't just say reduction in farm produce but everything has already been affected. Life has not remained the same with us here. From Herdsmen attacks, and abductions from bandits and criminals to Boko haram attacks. Everything has experienced drastic reductions and devastation (Male, retired Civil Servant, 79 years of age).

Another said: *"Yes! The herdsmen are the reason we don't produce much from our farms, people are farming with fear, it's only God that is helping us"* (Female, Farmer, 57 years old).

Table 6: Herdsmen and farmers conflict causes rural livelihoods vulnerability

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	253	71.6
Agree	45	12.7
Disagree	37	10.4
Strongly Disagree	18	5.0
Total	353	100

Field survey: 2023

Table 6 shows the distribution of respondents by whether the conflict between herdsmen and farmers led to rural livelihood vulnerability. The data showed that a majority of the respondents 253(71.6%) strongly agreed that conflict between herdsmen and farmers led to rural livelihoods vulnerability, 45(12.7%) of the respondent agreed that conflict between herdsmen and farmers led to rural livelihoods vulnerability, then 37(10.4%) of the respondents disagreed that conflict between herdsmen and farmers do not lead to rural livelihoods vulnerability while 18(5.0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that conflict between herdsmen and farmers do not lead to rural livelihoods vulnerability. This implies that conflict between herdsmen and farmers led to rural livelihoods vulnerability. This also corroborated the IDI data. One of the respondents, for example, said:

The clashes and attacks have devastated everything in our society. Rural livelihood is not just suffering but might never

recover, most of the young people have all run away so who will farm the lands again? The experience is better said than witnessed

(Female, Retired Civil Servant, 79 years of age).

Another respondent said: *“Farming is our major source of livelihood here in this state. As long as they keep attacking farmers, they have succeeded in deteriorating our livelihoods”* **(Male, civil servant/farmer, 49 years old).**

Table 7: Farmers are limited from going to farm due to kidnapping

<i>Options</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly Agree	197	55.8
Agree	102	28.8
Disagree	33	9.3
Strongly Disagree	21	5.9
Total	353	100

Field survey: 2023

Table 7 shows the distribution of respondents by whether farmers are limited from going to farms due to kidnapping. The data showed that a majority of the respondents 197(55.8%) strongly agreed that farmers are limited from going to farms due to kidnapping, 102(28.8%) of the respondents agreed that farmers are limited from going to farms due to kidnapping, then 33(9.3%) of the respondents disagreed that farmers are not limited from going to farm due to kidnapping while 21(5.9%) of the respondents strongly

disagreed that farmers are not limited from going to farm due to kidnapping. This implies that farmers are limited from going to farms due to kidnapping. This also corroborated the IDI data. One of the respondents, for example, gave an elaborate narrative as thus:

The issue of herdsmen, Boko haram and other factors causing insecurity in our country is such that we can't complete its discussion in one day. The effects are enormous, we have suffered all manner of losses and devastation. People are being killed every day, properties are lost, and we can't even visit our farms anymore, the sad part of all these is that there seems to be no end in sight

(Male, Community Chief, 68 years of age).

Another said: “If I begin to talk about what we see in the hands of these herdsmen, especially their atrocities to our farmers and farms, a month will not be enough for us to tell the whole story” **(Female, teacher, 45 years old)**

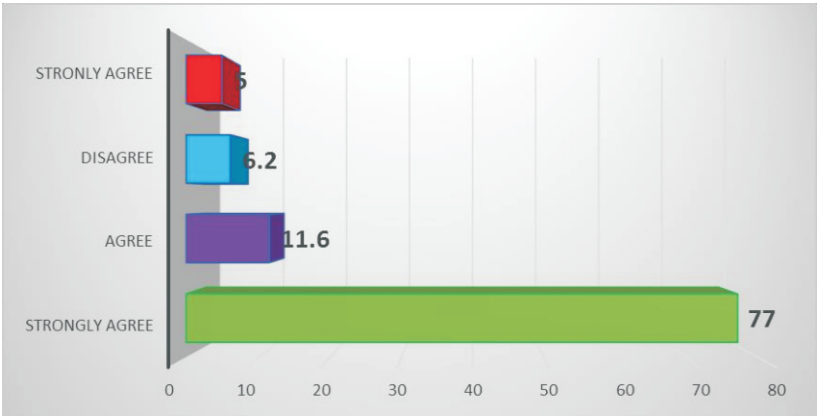


Fig 1: Opinion of Respondents whether Herdsmen abduct farmers from their farmland

Figure 1: Showed the distribution of respondents by whether Herdsmen abduct farmers from their farmland. The data showed that a majority of the respondents 272(77.0%) strongly agreed that Herdsmen abduct farmers from their farmland, 41(11.6%) of the respondents agreed that herdsmen abduct farmers from their farmland, then 22(6.2%) of the respondents disagreed that herdsmen do not abduct farmers from their farmland while 18(5%) strongly disagreed that Herdsmen do not abduct farmers from their farmland. This implies that Herdsmen abduct farmers from their farmland. This corroborated the IDI data as all the respondents' narratives supported the statement that herdsmen abduct farmers from the farmlands in Niger state. Some of the respondents said:

The report of abducting farmers from their farms or even on the way to their farms has become an everyday report in our state. This has even scared a lot of farmers and they don't go to their farms again, some of them have even changed their lines of business (female, trader, 52 years old)

My sister, I used to be Farmer but after I escaped kidnapping on my way to the farm, I stopped going to the farm. I could not even go to harvest my crops, what happened to the crops up till now, I don't know but I thank God I have my life. They say, when there is life, there is hope (Male, Business man, 47 years old)

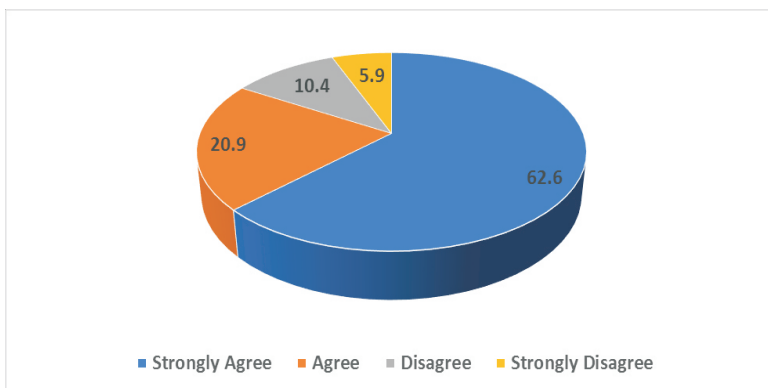


Fig 2: Opinion of Respondents on Herdsmen Contributions to the Destruction of Farm produces

Figure 2 shows the distribution of respondents by whether Herdsmen contribute to the destruction of farm produce. The data showed that a majority of the respondents 221(62.6%) strongly agreed that Herdsmen contribute to the destruction of farm produce, 74(20.9%) of the respondents agreed that herdsmen contribute to the destruction of farm produce, then 37(10.4%) of the respondents disagreed that herdsmen contribute to destruction of farm produces while 21(5.9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that Herdsmen contribute to destruction of farm produces. This implies that Herdsmen contribute to the destruction of farm produce. The findings corroborated the qualitative data. One of the respondents, for example, said: *“sometimes, they will allow us to finish farming and when it is time for harvest, they will start destroying our produce”* (**Female, farmer, 50 years old**).

Another also corroborated the above statement as thus: *“I don't even know whether they are after our lives, our crops or our lands, they destroy everything including our mature crops due for harvest” (Male, local government worker, 58 years old)*

Research Question Two: How could insecurity be eradicated in Niger State? Research question four is answered using questionnaire items 25 to 28. The responses are presented in Tables 9, 10, and Figures 3 and 4.

Table 9: Enhanced income and wealth reduce insecurity

<i>Options</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly Agree	106	30.0
Agree	191	54.1
Disagree	36	10.1
Strongly Disagree	20	5.6
Total	353	100

Field survey: 2023

Table 9 shows the distribution of respondents on whether the narrowing of income and wealth disparities can eradicate insecurity and enhance socioeconomic development. The data showed that a majority of the respondents 191(54.1%) agreed that narrowing

income and wealth disparities can eradicate insecurity and enhance socioeconomic development, 106(30.0%) of the respondents agreed that narrowing income and wealth disparities can eradicate insecurity and enhance socioeconomic development, then 36(10.1) of the respondents disagreed that narrowing of income and wealth disparities cannot eradicate insecurity and enhance socio-economic development while 20(5.6%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that narrowing of income and wealth disparities cannot eradicate insecurity and enhance socioeconomic development. This implies that the narrowing of income and wealth disparities can eradicate insecurity and enhance socioeconomic development. This corroborated the qualitative data as almost all the IDI respondents gave their narrative in this direction. One of them for example, narrated as thus:

The issue of income and means of livelihood is very valid. To say the least political negligence is one of the factors that precipitated insecurity in the first place and what can we do about it than to request for the political elites to try and maximize the potential of these youths by enabling them to learn new skills? It is a well-known fact that an idle man is the devil's workshop. So if the youths get employed or learn skills they will no doubt stay off from crime (Male, Community leader, 57 years of age).

Table 10: Elimination of corruption and bad governance can reduce insecurity

<i>Options</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Strongly Agree	287	81.3
Agree	39	11.0
Disagree	20	5.6
Strongly Disagree	7	1.9
Total	353	100

Field survey: 2023

Table 10 shows the distribution of respondents by whether the elimination of corruption and bad governance can eradicate insecurity. The data show that a majority of the respondents 287(81.3%) strongly agreed that elimination of corruption and bad governance can eradicate insecurity, 39(11.0%) of the respondents agreed that elimination of corruption and bad governance can eradicate insecurity, then 20(5.6%) of the respondents disagreed that elimination of corruption and bad governance can eradicate insecurity while 7(1.9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that elimination of corruption and bad governance can eradicate insecurity. This implies that the elimination of corruption and bad governance can eradicate insecurity. This also corroborated the qualitative data since all the respondent believe as shown by their narratives that bad governance and corruption contribute greatly to insecurity in Niger State, hence its elimination. One of the respondents, for example, narrated:

The country has become very terrible, it looks to me that some

people are benefitting from these acts of insecurity going on everywhere, if you call it corruption, it is not far from the truth, they don't even pay the security operatives or provide them with modern gadgets yet we hear on the media millions and billions have already been spent fighting insecurity yet there are no results to show. If the government shows commitment all these issues will be resolved, that's my take (Female, Retired Civil Servant, 78 years of age).

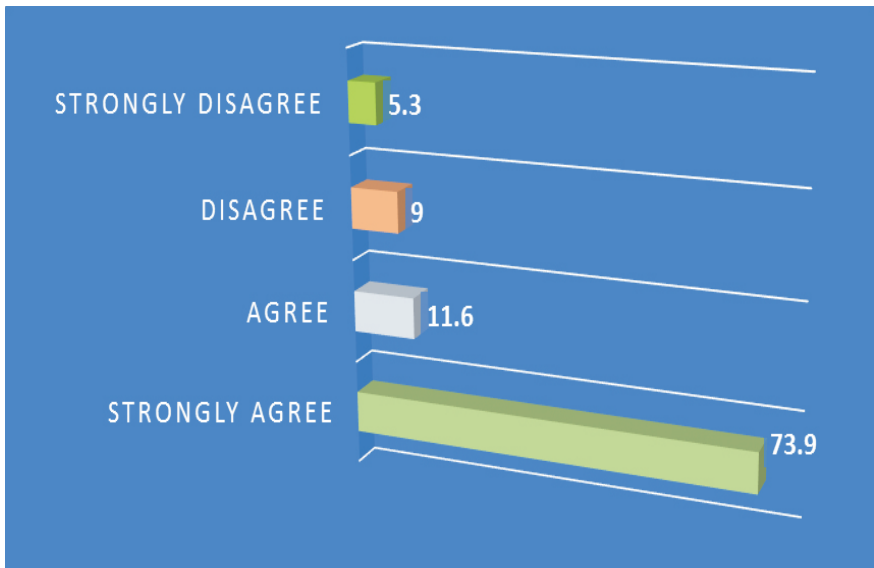


Fig 3: Opinion of Respondents on Availability of jobs and livelihood reduces insecurity

Figure 3: Showed the distribution of respondents on whether the creation of decent jobs and livelihood by the government will help eradicate insecurity. The data showed that a majority of the respondents 261(73.9%) strongly agreed that the creation of decent jobs and livelihood by government will

help eradicate insecurity, 41(11.6%) of the respondents agreed that the creation of decent jobs and livelihood by government will help eradicate insecurity, then 32(9%) of the respondents disagreed that the creation of decent jobs and livelihood by government will help eradicate insecurity while 19(5.3%) strongly disagreed that the creation of decent jobs and livelihood by government will help eradicate insecurity. This implies that the creation of decent jobs and livelihoods by government will help eradicate insecurity. This also corroborated the IDI data. One of the respondents, for example, said: *“Ah! Hunger and poverty are the reasons people engage in Banditry. I believe that if jobs are provided for the youths, banditry will reduce greatly”* (Female, trader, 53 years old)

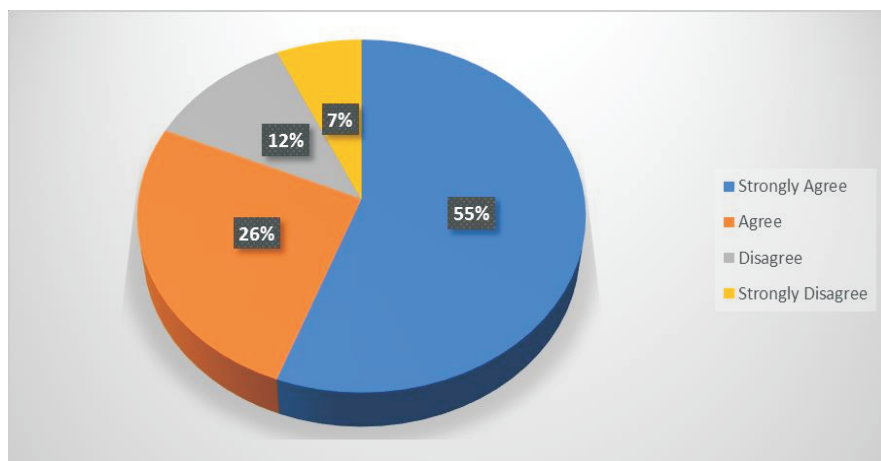


Fig 4: Opinion of Respondents on Social Safety Nets Can Enhance Socio-economic Development

Figure 4: Showed the distribution of respondents by whether

the provision of social safety nets by the government can enhance socioeconomic development. The data showed that a majority of the respondents 194(55%) strongly agreed that the provision of social safety nets by the government can enhance socioeconomic development, 92(26%) of the respondents agreed that the provision of social safety nets by the government can enhance socioeconomic development, then 42(12%) of the respondents disagreed that the provision of social safety nets by the government cannot enhance socioeconomic development while 25(7%) strongly disagreed that the provision of social safety nets by the government cannot enhance socioeconomic development. This implies that the provision of social safety nets by the government can enhance socioeconomic development. This also corroborated the IDI data. One of the respondents has a notable narrative as thus:

The government must intervene genuinely, there are many things they can do. Apart from equipping the military properly they must also implement poverty alleviation programmes. Not the one to compensate the political elites but programmes that will get to the true vulnerable youths who have no means of livelihood. They always claim they are providing but if you look at it closely what they're doing is settling their political friends and cronies. They should provide social safety nets for the youths it will redirect their minds obviously (Male, Retired public Servant, 79 years of

age).

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between herdsmen/farmers clashes and low agricultural productivity in Niger state.

<i>Agricultural</i>	<i>Herdsmen/farmers activities</i>				<i>Total</i>	χ^2
<i>productivity</i>	Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Strongly		$\chi^2=2.194$
	Agree			Disagree		(N = 353),
Low	94(17.0%)	64(45.5%)	23(12.5%)	29(25.0%)	220	df = 4,
High	36(25.0%)	49(47.2%)	27(8.3%)	31(19.4%)	143	P =.000
Total	130	113	50	60	353	

The hypothesis shows that there is a significant relationship between the activity of herdsmen /farmers and low agricultural productivity in Niger state at $p >.000$. This implies that bandits' clash with farmers has drastically reduced food production as most farmers due to fear of attacks cannot access their farms.

Discussion of Findings

Effects of Bandits Activities on Agricultural productivity

The study found that Fulani herdsmen have reduced

productivity turn up of farm produce in Niger State. This corroborates with the IDI data. The result of the related hypothesis, that is, hypothesis 1 showed that there is a statistical significant relationship between herdsmen/farmers clash and low agricultural productivity at $P>0.000$. This finding is in tandem with the study of Victor, Godwin, and Clement (2015) who found that the number of Fulani herdsmen attacks and deaths recorded have negative effects on Benue State farmer's output, resulting in a reduction in crop yield and income, displacement of farmers, loss of lives and properties, loss of produce storage and destruction of public and private facilities. Similarly, the finding agrees with the study of Obi, Odikpa and Jeremiah (2021) who found that crops are being damaged by cattle as a result of a lack of grazing land reserve by the government for cattle grazing. The finding is also in consonant with the view of Mba (2020) that the conflict between herdsmen and farmers significantly affects both the physical and financial livelihood assets of farmers.

The study found that the conflict between herdsmen and farmers led to rural livelihoods vulnerability. This also corroborated the qualitative data. This finding is in tandem with the view of Iweze (2020) which holds that the Bandits insurgency had disruptive effects and therefore road transport infrastructure and trans-border mobility constituted one of the major targets of terrorist attacks leading to growing insecurity in Nigeria's Northeast region and farmers significantly affect both physical and financial livelihood assets of farmers. The study further found that farmers are limited from going to farms due to kidnapping. This corroborated the qualitative finding.

This finding is in tandem with the study of Victor, Godwin and Clement (2015) who found that the number of Fulani herdsmen attacks and deaths recorded have a negative effect on Benue State farmer's output, resulting in a reduction in crop yield and income, displacement of farmers, loss of lives and properties, loss of produce storage and destruction of public and private facilities. It was also found that herdsmen abduct farmers from their farmland. This corroborated the IDI data and the result of the hypothesis. This finding is in tandem with the view of Chukwu and Nkama (2022) that farming in communities of Benue and border communities of Nasarawa and Taraba is no longer business as usual as many farmers have been displaced and dispossessed of their farms by armed men believed to be herdsmen to the destruction of farm produce. Both the IDI data and the related hypotheses corroborated the findings. This finding is in consonant with the study of Obi, Odikpa and Jeremiah (2021) who found that crops are being damaged by cattle, as a result of the lack of grazing land research by government for cattle grazing. This finding supports the assumption of the theory of organized crime by Bello (1953) that organized crime is carried out in societies where the government's capacity to detect and ensure punitive measures against criminals is weak and there is no equal access to basic means of livelihood, and chances of upward mobility among the masses are too slim.

Eradication of Insecurity to Enhance Economic Development.

The study invested in the eradication of insecurity to enhance

economic development. At first, the study investigated how enhanced income and health could reduce insecurity in Niger State. It was found that narrowing income and wealth disparities can eradicate insecurity and enhance socioeconomic development of Niger State. This finding corroborated the IDI data. The finding agrees with the study of Okolie, Onyema and Bassey (2019) who found that poverty exerts a positive and statistically significant impact on insecurity in Nigeria ($r^2=0.716$). This supports the basic assumptions of the theory of organized crime as articulated by Mallory (2007) that organized crime is an instrument of several climbing or socio-economic advancement and a means to accumulate wealth and build power. This suggests that creating job opportunities and other economic activities that could enhance people's income and put food on their table could reduce insecurity and enhance socioeconomic development in Niger State.

It was also found that the elimination of corruption and bad governance can reduce insecurity in Niger State as a majority of the respondents 287(81.3%) strongly agreed to this. This finding corroborated the qualitative data i.e. the IDI data. This finding is in tandem with the view of Kitabu (2022) who noted that the problem of banditry is traceable to the problem of unemployment among citizens, injustice by those in the position of authority, use and dumping of youths by politicians, porous nature of Nigerian borders and poor motivation of security agents. The study also found that the creation of decent jobs and livelihoods by the government will help eradicate insecurity as a majority of the respondents 261(73.9%)

attested to it. This also corroborated with the IDI data. This agrees with the study of Ijaiya, Marikan and Rambeli (2018) who found that the more the people of Niger State engage in social capital activities the more they find themselves out of poverty.

Finally, it was found that the provision of social safety nets by the government can enhance socio-economic development. This also corroborated the IDI data. This finding is in tandem with the same study of Ijaiye, Marikau, and Rambeli (2016) who stated that the more residents of Niger State engage in social capital activities, the more they find themselves out of poverty. It is also in agreement with the view of Olufemi (2023) that encouraging an entrepreneurial mindset through mentorship programmes, access to finance schemes and business investment support can empower youths to create their employment opportunities, thus, contributing to economic growth. It is therefore imperative to agree with Olufemi (2023) once more that empowerment helps to create a more just and equitable society for everyone, and youth empowerment improves the growth in productivity of its workforce and strengthens, the social fabrics of communities. This supports the assertion theory of organized crime by Bell (1953) that socioeconomic reason is a factor in organized crime.

Conclusion

This explores the effects of herdsmen's activities on agricultural outputs as an effort towards eradicating insecurity in Niger State, Nigeria. Fulani herdsmen have actually done a lot of harm to the

people of Niger State by reducing the productivity turn up of farm produce; limiting farmers from going to farm due to fear of being kidnapped; abducting farmers from their farmland; and contributing to the destruction of farm produce. Insecurity, however, is not a problem without a solution; it could be eradicated by the narrowing of income and wealth disparities; elimination of corruption and bad governance; and the creation of decent jobs and livelihoods by government. Consequently, *community* policing should be established and equipped with sophisticated security tools and gadgets to enable them to secure the various communities against banditry

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in line with the findings of this study as thus:

1. Community policing should be established and equipped with security tools to enable them to secure the various communities against banditry.
2. There is a need for the state government to designate grazing fields for the nomadic herdsman and make them pay taxes to the state.
3. Government should be proactive in handling security issues and threats using modern methods of intelligence gathering and sharing among security personnel, training, logistics, motivation and developing advanced technology in managing security challenges

4. The government should fast-track the rate of economic development by creating an economy with relevant social, economic and physical infrastructure to support businesses and industrial growth. This will go a long way to keep the youths busy and invariably reduce insecurity
5. The government should introduce a free education scheme to ensure that the youths are educated. This is because when the youths are educated, they will never take crime as an option and this is capable of making the state peaceful

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