

Research Article

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Evaluating the nature of Nigerian police and the challenges of insecurity in Wukari Area Command, Taraba State Nigeria, 2014-2020

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Abstract: The disagreement on whether the problem of the police in effectively addressing insecurity in Nigeria is internal or external to the police informed the present study. The study objective is to evaluate the nature of Nigerian police and the challenges of insecurity in Wukari area command, Taraba State, Nigeria, 2014-2020. The study employed a quantitative research method, using a questionnaire as a method of data collection. The finding of this study revealed that “the nature of Nigerian

police accounts for insecurity in Wukari area command. Based on the findings of this study, the study recommends that the internal security architectures of Nigeria should be well remunerated and rejobs to provide for federal, state, and community police to work cooperatively and independently as partners in progress to fight against insecurity. The suggested recommendation will provide sufficient motivation, more funds, and ammunition for the police to protect lives and properties, as all the tiers of government will have their own separate police to respond quickly to emergencies geared towards addressing insecurity in the country.

Keywords – Ammunition, Insecurity, Nigerian police, Nigeria, Police

1. INTRODUCTION

The efficient execution of the function of law enforcement agencies is germane in maintaining law and order in addition to protecting lives and properties; hence the traditional role of the police is maintenance of law and order. To ensure that the police effectively carry out their duties, the government, through the legislative and the executive arms, respectively, put up several legislations and regulations in place to assist the police in carrying out the duty of protecting the lives and property of the citizens and the provision of internal security of the nation to prevent relapsing into the insecurity of life and property. One such legislation is the Police Act; the police shall be employed for the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order, and the protection of life and property (Section 4, Nigeria Police Act, 2020).

Nigeria faces several security issues that reach the country's hidden corners (Adegoke, 2013). Terrorist attacks, which have affected large areas of the Northern region, are the most frequent security concern. Terrorist attacks, according to Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor-Robaro (2013), have been a big problem for the government and a threat to national security, prompting a significant portion of the national budget to be allocated to security. The

problems of insecurity in Nigeria seem to have increased geometrically, making people doubt the ability of the government to curtail the menace called insecurity. Given the high level of insecurity in the nation, everyone wonders if the police have fulfilled their duties to the standards that are expected of them.

Moving forward, the Nigerian Police Force (2008), in their annual report, noted that several issues have hindered the police in their efforts to tackle insecurity, including inadequate funding, inadequate government backing, subpar service, a lack of suitable training, and undertrained personnel. The inability of the government to do the needful that the police require is the bane of insecurity. Following from the above, we can say that the problem of the police in effectively managing insecurity in Nigeria is external to the Nigeria Police.

On the contrary, it has been argued that corruption and other vices common among the police system contributed to their lack of efficiency (Adegoke, 2013). The above is corroborated by Alozie (2019), who noted that the Nigeria Police Force has also constituted a cog in the wheel of progress of the Nigeria police, by not living up to their constitutional obligation of defending the course of justice; fighting crimes, and protecting citizens' lives and property. The above shows that the problem of the police in effectively managing insecurity in Nigeria is internal to the police rather than external to the police.

Following the above disagreement on whether the problem of the police in effectively managing insecurity in Nigeria is internal or external to the police informed the present study. The present research intends to provide answers to the following research questions: Does the nature of Nigerian police account for insecurity in the Wukari area command? The objective of this study is to evaluate the nature of the Nigerian Police and the challenges of insecurity in Wukari Police Command.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Conceptual clarifications: Police and insecurity

The concept of police has been variously defined by scholars in the humanities, management, and social sciences; however, the ones that appeal to us in this research are those of Lepore (Lepore, 2020). Police are a civil force charged with deterring crime. The primary role of the police is related to human security, which requires that people do not lose their lives and properties as a result of the inability of the government to deter crime (Ayeni, Andeshi & Uzoigwe, 2022). Related to the whole idea of the police is the one given by Bittner (1970), the police is a crime-fighting agency. For this research, the Nigerian Police is an agency of the Federal Government of Nigeria constituted to fight crime, maintaining law and order in addition to addressing insecurity.

Insecurity is a situation whereby individuals and groups of persons cannot carry out economic and social activities because of threats to their lives and properties in a particular environment (Ogunode, Ayeni, & Olorundare, 2024). Related to the above definition is the one given by Oluyomi and Grace (2016). Insecurity is concerned with feelings of uncertainty, dangers, and threats to life. From the above, insecurity makes people vulnerable to damage, injury, or loss from both internal and external causes. For this study, insecurity is a situation where there is a threat to lives and property of any kind.

2.2. Nigerian Police and insecurity

The role of the police is germane in checking insecurity in every country of the world. The above explanation of the roles of the Nigerian Police corroborates that view. All over the world, the police are known to have been instrumental in maintaining law and order, including preventing violent and crime-related situations. Following the above, Adegoke (2014) argues that in terms of stopping violent crimes like kidnapping, among others, people think that the Nigerian Police are not performing up to expectations. Conflict and violent crimes arise from police ineptitude in carrying out their responsibilities. Confirming what has already been said, Odekunle (2004) argues that crime prevention is a shared obligation between the police and the public because of Nigeria's high level of insecurity. The high level of insecurity was recorded by the National Bureau of Statistics (2008); the government

agency noted that the cases of armed robbery were more pronounced in Nigeria based on cases reported to the police in 2007.

A recent study carried out in River State, South-South Nigeria, affirmed the above fact by arguing that poverty, poor governance, corruption, and a shortage of crime prevention facilities are the causes of insecurity (Ihedioha & Terna, 2024). Another study that was carried out in the southern part of Nigeria where the ENDSARS protest started revealed that corruption and a lack of professionalism are among the causes of insecurity (Kweitsu, 2023).

Sources of insecurity in Nigeria

Poverty and unemployment: To say that poverty and unemployment are the twin sources of insecurity in Nigeria is not out of place. Thus, Cinjel, Joseph and Ayeni (2020) argued that the youth of Nigeria indulge in criminal activities courtesy of poverty and unemployment, among others. This high level of insecurity in Nigeria might not be unconnected to the fact that over 70% of Nigerians live in poverty (Muhammed & Ayeni, 2018). The high level of poverty and unemployment is no doubt a source of insecurity in Nigeria. The prevalence of poverty has been noted to be responsible for incessant conflict, a development that causes insecurity (Ulu, Okemini, Achimugu, Ayeni & Okogbuo, 2022).

Marginalisation and inequality: Related to the above is the issue of marginalisation and inequality that have sent many to the poverty line. The prevalence of poverty has forced many to embrace criminal means of sourcing for basic needs of life. There have been growing cases of insecurity that include Boko Haram insurgency, herdsmen and crop farmer clashes, kidnapping, armed robbery, and ethno-religious crises, among others (Alozie, 2019). The inability of a country to effectively manage its resources compounds the challenge of insecurity, a development that contradicts what Ayeni (2018) refers to as developmental integrity—the capacity of a nation to make use of its natural and human resources to enhance the standard of living of its citizens. A situation where the ruling elite fails to enhance the standard of living of citizens breeds poverty and causes insecurity. The root cause of inequality and insecurity has been further linked to the inability of the government to pursue economic development. For instance, it has been noted that the nonappearance of economic development in Nigeria is fighting “access to education, technological advancement, and opportunity for people to succeed” (Ayeni & Abdullahi, 2014: 91). The fight against education and opportunity to succeed, among others, breeds insecurity, as people will seek illegal means to provide for survival needs.

Ethno-religious conflicts: The role of religion in contributing to the level of insecurity in Nigeria is obvious because an average Nigerian is a religious person. Thus, Cinjel, Joseph and Ayeni (2020) posited that ethno-religious conflicts had opened the way to an organised and planned system of cattle rustling in Nasarawa and Plateau State. This planned system of cattle rustling creates a great deal of insecurity as lives are lost during such criminal operations. The belief by religious members of Boko Haram insurgents who believe that Western education is a sin has also constituted a great deal of insecurity as they continue to weigh war against the government and Nigerians. Boko Haram abducted about 276 girls from one of the schools in Chibok, Bornu State, North East of Nigeria in 2014 (Warner, O’Farrell, Nsaibia & Cummings, 2021; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime & National Institute for Security Studies, 2022).

Porous borders: Security challenges are intrinsically linked to the border of Nigeria that is porous. More important is the fact that organised crime trends in Nigeria are influenced by porous borders that facilitate the movement of illicit goods and people taking place in illicit markets (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime & National Institute for Security Studies, 2022). Consequent to the above, Edeko (2011) reported that Nigeria hosts over 70% of about 8 million illegal weapons in West Africa. The above development lends credence to the fact that the porous border of Nigeria has compounded the challenges of insecurity in the country.

2.3. Obstacles confronting the Nigeria Police Force in curbing insecurity

Corruption: Anyone who says that corruption is not an obstacle to curbing insecurity in Nigeria is likely to be a fool. It appears that corruption has crept into Nigeria's political structure's input and output mechanisms (Ayeni & Andeshi, 2023). This high level of corruption in the political system of Nigeria creates a corrupt environment for both private and public organisations. Therefore, Alemika (1999) asserts that the issue of corruption in the police force is an undeniable fact with several evidences of their involvement. Corruption has been so rampant in most structures that make up Nigerian society that it has almost become an institution on its own. Corruption is so rampant that it has badly affected the security system of the Nigerian police. For instance, it was noted that inadequate security measures lead to insufficient armaments and training (Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro, 2013). The presence of a weak security system is the bane of insecurity. This is even as Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor (2013) further posited that the security personnel that are supposed to protect people from criminal activities and defend national interests and values are now aiding and abetting criminals.

The corrupt nature of an average Nigerian is a reflection of the nature of an average police officer. It has been noted that the police have a bad image in the eye of the public as the most inefficient agent in curbing crimes, kidnapping, and arms robbery, which is not far from the truth (Odekunle, 2004; Adegoke, 2013). Innumerable harms that have stalled national growth despite efforts to combat it stem from the pervasiveness of corruption in the Nigerian police force and the country as a whole (Ayeni & Nwaorgu, 2018).

Inadequate equipment and training materials: Modern equipment for the fight against insecurity is germane for the effective performance of the police. Thus, Abdulkadir (2004) argues that the Nigerian police force lacks modern equipment. Not only that, communication gadgets, vehicles, computers, and patrol boats to fight insecurity (Odekunle, 2004). It has also been noted that adequate training materials are vital for effective performance, but regrettably, there is little or none presently, and where any exist, it is very poor as the men are not thoroughly exposed to modern policing (Adegoke, 2013). Training brings about effectiveness in the use of modern police equipment if police effectiveness must be enhanced. For instance, Ogunode and Ayeni (2023) noted that training improves the performance of individuals on their jobs by correcting any deficiency in human effort. Even though inadequate equipment and training materials are a challenge to the fight against insecurity, corruption from the police might even be the bane of inadequate equipment and training materials.

Poor remuneration: Good and efficient remuneration for employees all over the world is germane in enhancing and motivating staff for greater productivity. Odekunle (2004) maintains that poor police remuneration for officers of Nigerian police is another reason for their poor performance in crime prevention. High remuneration in the form of a living wage is what is needed for the financial security of the police to enhance performance. Thus, the provision of remuneration that can serve as financial security for people undergoing structural violence is an attempt at peacebuilding since they will be happy performing their job effectively (Ogunode & Ayeni, 2023). The role of financial security cannot be overemphasised, as it is tied to human survival and needs. Thus, this financial security is the ability of individuals to afford "their survival or basic needs through legitimate means" (Ayeni, 2024: 230).

2.4. Theoretical framework

The foundation of this work is structural-functional theory. Political scientists like Almond (1960), Coleman (1960), and others adopted this theory from sociology and anthropology. According to the structural-functional theory, all societies are composed of systems with structures that serve a variety of purposes for the system's existence. According to Almond (1960), the political system can be evaluated and contrasted based on how well its components carry out their respective roles. According to Almond (1960), a political system has two different kinds of functions: input functions and output functions. Certain structures inside the political system carry out the two types of functions necessary for the system to survive. Any structure that is unable to carry out its intended purpose will cause the system to malfunction. What the above implies is that any attempt by the Nigerian Police

not to perform its function of protecting lives and properties will make the society malfunction, hence insecurity becomes rampant.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative research method, where a questionnaire was used as a method of data collection. The reason for adopting quantitative is because it is suitable for studying individuals, groups, or organisations as a unit of analysis (Ayeni, Saman & Sani, 2019). Questionnaires are administered to sampled respondents in the area command. Available works of literature like books, journals, government publications, newspapers, and magazines were also used to strengthen the data obtained from primary sources. Likert scale formats of Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA) were used to show the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with the questions being asked. The respondents do respond to the questions by putting a tick () under the alternative columns provided.

Wukari Area Command as the study area covers 4 divisions, which include: Wukara Police Division, Ibi Police Division, Donga Police Division, and B/division Mararraba. It has a staff strength of 66. The breakdown shows that there are 5 superior officers, 22 inspectors, and 39 rank and file (Personal Interview, 2021). Following the above development, Wukari, Ibi, and Donga Local Government areas are considered as the study population.

According to the National Population Commission (2016), the population of Wukari, Ibi, and Donga local government areas is 238,283, 84,054, and 131,111, respectively. Therefore, sample size refers to a subject of a population chosen to stand in for the entire population of study. The sample size is a fraction of the population of the study that is considered to represent all existing elements within the targeted population. To determine the sample size for this study, the researchers used Yamani (1967) to determine the number that would be representative of the study population. The reason for using the above formula is that the population of the study is infinite.

The formula is represented by;

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

Where: n = Sample Size

N= population of Study =453,448

1 = Constant

e = error margin (0.05 or 0.08)

The researcher chose 0.05% as the error margin. The sample size is determined thus;

$$n = \frac{453,448}{1+453,448(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{453,448}{1+453,448(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{453,448}{1+ 1133.62}$$

$$n = \frac{238,283}{1134.62}$$

$$n = 399.64; \text{approximately to } 400$$

Thus the sample size was taken to be 400

The method of data analysis involves the use of descriptive statistics such as simple percentages to analyse the data collected. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyse the data.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data gathered were presented in two main subsections: demographic data and research questions. This presentation will form the basis for answering the research questions.

Demographic data

Table 1: Responses rate of administered questionnaire

No. of an administered questionnaire	399
No. of a returned questionnaire	340
Percentage response rate	85%

Source: Field survey, 2021

$$\text{Rate of Return} = \frac{\text{Total Number of questionnaires returned}}{\text{Total Number of questionnaires administered}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

$$= \frac{340 \times 100}{399} = 85.2$$

$$\text{Rate of Responses} = \frac{\text{Total Number of questionnaires completed}}{\text{Total Number of questionnaires administered}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

$$= \frac{340 \times 100}{399} = 85.2$$

Table 1 above shows the response rate of administered, questionnaires. A total of 399 questionnaires were administered but 340 were returned. This implies that the response rate is approximately 85%. According to Nworgu (1991), where all the questionnaires returned are less than 70%, the result could differ considerably. Therefore, a response rate of 85% can be considered adequate for valid statistical analysis. Respondents show the category of people who participated in answering the researcher questions, as indicated in the total of the data presented.

Table 2: Demographic bio-data of the respondents

S/N	Variable	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	191	56.2%
		Female	149	43.8%
		Total	340	100%
2	Marital Status	Married	154	45.3%
		Single	186	54.7%
		Total	340	100%
3	Qualification	FSLC	34	10%
		SSCE	186	54.7%
		OND/NCE	87	25.6%
		HND/BSC	33	9.7%
		Total	340	100%
4	Occupation	Farmer	100	29.4%
		Trader/Artisan	118	34.7%
		Public/Civil Servant	84	24.7%
		Unemployed	38	11.2%
		Total	340	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

Table 2 above shows the distribution of the respondents by gender. Out of the 340 questionnaires returned, 191 were from male respondents and 149 from female respondents. This means that 56.2% of the respondents are male, while the remaining 43.8% are female. Table 2 above displays the distribution of the respondents in terms of biodata. Data analysis of the marital status of the respondents shows that 154 (45.3%) of the respondents are married, while the remaining 186 (54.7%) of the respondents are single.

Table 2, serial number 3, revealed that educational qualifications of 33 (9.7%) of the respondents are either BSC/HND holders; 87 (25.6%) are Diploma/NCE holders; 186 (54.7%) of the respondents are SSCE holders, while

the remaining 34 (10%) are FLSC holders. Table 2, serial number 4, revealed that 100 (29.4%) of the respondents are farmers; 118 (34.7%) of the respondents are traders/artisans; 84 (24.7%) of the respondents are public/civil servants, while the remaining 38 (11.2%) of the respondents are unemployed.

Responses to research questions

Table 3: Nigeria police and the challenges of insecurity

S/N	Question	Categories	Frequency	Per cent
1	Welfare of Nigeria police is a constraint in the maintenance of security	Strongly agree	60	17.6%
		Agree	60	17.6%
		Undecided	19	5.6%
		Disagree	173	50.9%
		Strongly Disagree	28	8.2%
		Total	340	100%
2	Lack of ammunition affects police in combating insecurity	Strongly agree	100	29.4%
		Agree	100	29.4%
		Undecided	14	4.1%
		Disagree	105	30.9%
		Strongly disagree	21	6.2%
		Total	340	100%
3	Slow decision-making to tackle societal problems by the Police affects the lives and properties of the people	Strongly agree	92	27.1
		Agree	158	46.5
		Undecided	10	2.9
		Disagree	67	19.7
		Strongly disagree	13	3.8
		Total	340	100.0
4	Bureaucratic processes prevent police from revealing sensitive issues concerning terrorism	Strongly agree	100	29.4
		Agree	104	30.6
		Undecided	15	4.4
		Disagree	100	29.4
		Strongly disagree	21	6.2
		Total	340	100.0
5	A long chain of command in Nigeria's police force hinders prompt response in case of emergency attack	Strongly agree	92	27.1
		Agree	118	34.7
		Undecided	14	4.1
		Disagree	96	28.2
		Strongly disagree	20	5.9
		Total	340	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

Table 3 above shows that 60(17.6%) strongly agreed, 60 (17.6%) agreed, 19(5.6%) were undecided, 173 (50.9%) disagreed and 28(8.2%) strongly disagreed that the welfare of Nigeria police is a constraint in maintenance of security. What the above implies is that the majority of the respondents disagree with the observation that the “welfare of the Nigeria police is not a constraint in the maintenance of security”. Therefore, it means that the welfare of the Nigeria police is not constrained in the maintenance of security; hence the more concerned the government is about the welfare of the police, the more they are encouraged to fight insecurity.

The table above shows that 100(29.4%) strongly agreed, 100(29.4%) agreed, 14(4.1%) were undecided, 105(30.9%) disagreed, while the remaining 21(6.2%) respondents strongly disagreed with the observation that lack of ammunition affects police in combating the menace of armed robbery. The above responses imply that the majority of the respondents (200/58.8%) agreed that “lack of ammunition affects police in combating the menace of insecurity.

From the table above, it was revealed that 92 (27.1%) strongly agreed, 158 (46.5%) agreed, 10 (2.9%) were undecided, and 67 (19.7%) disagreed, while the remaining 13 (3.8%) strongly disagreed with the observation that “slow decision-making to tackle societal problems by the police affects lives and properties of the people.” What the above responses imply is that the majority (250/73.5%) of the respondents agreed that slow decision-making in tackling societal problems by the police affects lives and properties.

From the table above, it was revealed that 100 (29.4%) strongly agree, 104 (30.6%) agree, 15 (4.4%) were undecided, and 100 (29.4%) disagree, while the remaining 21 (6.2%) strongly disagree with the view that bureaucratic processes prevent police from revealing sensitive issues concerning terrorism. What the above implies is that the majority (204/60%) of the respondents agreed that “bureaucratic processes prevent police from revealing sensitive issues concerning terrorism.

From the above table, 92 (27.1%) strongly agree, 118 (34.7%) agree, 14 (4.1%) are undecided, and 92 (28.2%) disagree, while the remaining 20 (5.9%) strongly disagree with the view that “long chain of command in the Nigerian police force hinders prompt response in case of emergency attack.” What the above implies is that the majority of the respondents agreed that the “long chain of command in the Nigerian police force hinders prompt response in case of emergency attack”.

5. DISCUSSIONS OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The finding of this study revealed that “the nature of Nigerian police accounts for insecurity in Wukari area command.” Specifically, sub-findings of the study revealed as follows: lack of ammunition affects Nigerian police in combating the menace of armed robbery; slow decision-making to tackle societal problems by the police affects the lives and properties of the people; bureaucratic practice in the Nigerian police has undesirable effect on their performance on human rights protection; the poor welfare of Nigerian police is a constraint in the fight against insecurity; and lastly, a long chain of command in the Nigerian police delays quick response in case of an emergency attack. The finding of this study relates to the finding of a previous study that posited that the government is not willing to use available resources and powers for the advantage of the citizens (Umeifekwem, 2022). Using available resources by the government in the fight against insecurity could have provided adequate ammunition and enhanced the welfare package of the Nigerian police to effectively address insecurity in the country. This was not done by the central government.

6. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The research implication is that the research has vividly expressed the fact that the nature of Nigerian police accounts for insecurity in Wukari area command”, as a result of the following internal challenges that include; lack of ammunition affects Nigerian police in combating the menace of armed robbery; slow decision making to tackle societal problems by the Police affects the lives and properties of the people; bureaucratic practice in the Nigerian police has an undesirable effect on their performance on human right protection; the poor welfare of Nigerian

police is a constraint in the fight against insecurity; and lastly, long chain of command in Nigerian police delays quick response in case of emergency attack.

7. CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this study will assist stakeholders in the security sector and sensitize the ruling elite on the need to strengthen the law enforcement agencies by decentralising the police to deliver the needed effective security of lives and properties where there will be no threat to lives and properties. Researchers will find this study instrumental in carrying out further research that could lead to further investigation into the Nigerian police and internal security.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, the study recommends that the architecture of internal security in Nigeria should be well remunerated and rejijs to provide for federal, state, and community police to work cooperatively and independently as partners in progress to fight against insecurity. The suggested recommendation will provide sufficient motivation, more funds, and ammunition for the police to protect lives and properties, as all the tiers of government will have their own separate police to respond quickly to emergencies geared towards addressing insecurity in the country.

9. CONCLUSION

The study is on evaluating the nature of Nigerian police and the challenges of insecurity in Wukari Area Command, Taraba State, Nigeria. The study concludes by arguing that the nature of Nigerian police, which accounts for insecurity in Wukari Police Command and Nigeria in general, is caused by poor police remuneration that affects their morale in combating insecurity, a lack of ammunition that affects police in combating the menace of insecurity, slow decision-making in tackling societal problems by the police that affects lives and properties, long bureaucratic processes that prevent police from revealing sensitive issues concerning terrorism, and a long chain of command in Nigerian police that hinders prompt response in case of emergency attack.

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