

Insecurity and Entrepreneurship In Nigeria - The South East Experience

Mboto, Helen Walter

Department of Banking and Finance
University Of Calabar, Calabar

&

Abeng, Christiana Oliver

Department of Vocational and Technical Education
University Of Cross River State, Calabar

&

Okoi, Innocent Obeten

Department of Banking and Finance
University Of Calabar, Calabar

Abstract

The study ascertained the influence of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria. A survey of 400 business owners from a population of 5,073,672 was the sample size. Hypotheses tested using population t-test and simple linear regression revealed that causes of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities is significantly high and negatively influence entrepreneurship activities. The study proffered relevant recommendations.

Keywords: Insecurity, Entrepreneurship Activities, South East, Nigeria

Introduction

The term entrepreneurship is a multi-faceted concept, which does not have a consistent definition and conceptual clarification. According to Nwekeaku (2013), Entrepreneurship embodies unique knowledge and capabilities that spur an entrepreneur into progressive and creative thoughts which are crystallized into short and volatile enterprise choices that result to sustainable profitability. Entrepreneurship is creativity, innovation employed in the process of production and creation of value, every nation with great development is built on the premise of entrepreneurship and it is the life blood of a nation which creates values and blocks of growth on which development is achieved. Hence, entrepreneurship activities are various ways of recognizing the needs in an economy and supplying the factors of production to meet such needs with a purpose to generate earnings. That is, various legitimate activities undertaken by business owners to meet customers' needs and make profit in the long run.

Mboto, Offiong and Udoka (2018) stated that the existence of entrepreneurship activities in any region of the country is critical since it encourages and contributes to economic growth. Entrepreneurship promotes social change and boost innovation. These have resulted to the establishment of Small and Medium Scale Businesses (SMEs) different part of the country, especially in South East Nigeria. The southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria is made up of five states, namely, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States with eighty-five Local Government Areas (LGAs) and a population of over

twenty million people dwelling in over ten commercial cities and large towns (Roberta, Priya & Dan, 2019). Apart from agriculture as the mainstay of economic activities for the majority in the rural communities, the zone is also known for its commerce and trading activities with a preponderance of micro, small and medium indigenous industries that are into manufacturing, fabrication and agro-allied produce. One of the challenges faced by States in the South East is insecurity.

Insecurity as a term is not new, as it is exhibited in many parts the country. Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor-Robaro (2013) defined insecurity in two parts; the authors stated that insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where the danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. On the other hand, insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) stated that security placed emphasis on the absence of threats to peace, stability, national cohesion, political and socio-economic objectives of a country.

Nigeria as a country was once regarded as the pride and giant of Africa but since the presence of democracy in Nigeria, about how many years ago, Nigeria has experienced security challenges that shake the country economic activities. The unprecedented security challenges in Nigeria and even at the South East is becoming alarming, as people are no longer safe to go about doing their business, foreigners no longer feel safe to have their investment in the country. Hence, economic activities in the South East are reducing on a daily basis, lives are being threatened, shops are being close, citizens changing locations for safety reasons (Onime, 2018). Adebakin and Raimi (2012) stated that past and present government has failed on their part to provide the constitutional duty of securing lives, property of her citizen. According to Mezieobi and Ejiogu (2018), since 2007, the South East region experienced insecurity challenge exhibited by various action groups that assume a different shape to interrupt economic activities in the region. Action such as militancy, kidnapping, banditry, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), End Sars, Armed Robbery, Killings among others became a big challenge to entrepreneurial activities (Udeh & Okoroafor, 2013).

Regular killings, beheading, shooting, kidnapping which exist in the South-East of Nigeria today are all examples of insecurities. In the past three years, the security picture in the Southeast has been very troubling. Hoodlums masquerading as 'unknown gunmen' have killed hundreds of people, including personnel of the army, police civil defence and civilians. Dozens of these innocent victims were summarily executed on the street (Adeleke, 2018). Facilities belonging to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), security agencies, in addition to private property, have also been attacked and destroyed. In the absence of any serious containment measures, criminals seized the zone by the jugular while others like the so-called Eastern Security Network (ESN) spread their campaign of terror under the pretext of working for the release of the leader of the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu. In the process, the entire five states in the zone were converted into a human abattoir (Opusunju, Akyuz & Ibrahim, 2019).

The causes of insecurity in Southeast have been researched upon by many authors and According to Okonkwo, Ndibuisi and Anagbogu (2013), the causes of security challenges in Nigeria are not limited to ethno- religious conflicts, weak security

system, unemployment and poverty, porous border, systemic and political corruption. Nigeria being a multi-cultural country is constantly faced with religion, economic, political, ethnic crisis and terrorism. Nwagbosa (2012) stated that failure of different government to look into the issue of unemployment, poverty and incidence of inequitable distribution of resources are major causes of insecurity in Nigeria. The rise in Crime wave in Nigeria since the mid-1990s was as a result of unemployment, economic decline, and social inequality, which are abetted by inefficient and corrupt police and customs forces (Ojo, Petrescu, Petrescu & Bilcon, 2017). The idle minds became devil's workshop. These people are mostly youth, they are easily recruited into militant groups and trained in to rob, kill, kidnap, smuggle, highjack to mention but a few. Accurate unemployment rates are difficult to obtain and generally mean little in a society where many who work are marginally employed and where begging is a socially accepted occupation. According to Amadi, Ojiabo and Kemi (2018), a tenth of the country's young citizens are officially unemployed. Young people are overwhelmed by the high unemployment rate in Nigeria. Every year, universities in South east turnout many graduates into the job market with no prospect of job opportunities and this has lead a lot into criminal acts. Unfortunately, due to bad government decisions, our factories are still not reactivating. Due to the unemployment among Nigerians, young people are now negatively attracted to violent crimes which endangers insecurity.

Poverty is another prominent cause of insecurity. The failure of Nigerian governments to fix the challenges of poverty and the unequal distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities is a major contributor to the country's insecurity. In the same vein, corruption is already a part of life in the country and, unfortunately, is now part of Nigeria's economic problems, and public appropriation. It has gained popularity in our system of government. This creates financial insecurity which has exacerbated poverty, thereby resulting to insecurity (Lister, 2018). Another cause of insecurity is the poor security system - this is due to inadequate government security equipment in both weapons and training, which contributes to the poor disposition of the security personnel (Inmates' Official, 2021). In many cases, security officers in the Southeast tasked with certain security situations, lack the experience and equipment to handle situations so that they will not arise.

In addition, Nigeria shares borders with Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali. According to Cable (2021), these borders are poorly secured by the Nigerian immigration and customs authorities. The porous nature of these borders has exacerbated the possible spread of terrorist activity in Nigeria. With terrorism in the country there will be no room for adequate entrepreneurial development in our country especially, the South-East of Nigeria. The free flow of migrants from other countries to Nigeria through our unguarded borders allows criminals to enter the South-East without check.

Today, socio-economic activities in the Southeast are systematically being laid to waste. An ill-conceived series of disruptions to social life, work, and business under the guise of 'sit at home' order is frequently imposed by IPOB and its brutal enforcers throughout the zone. According to Oriazowanlan and Erah (2019), fear of rough vigilante enforcement of these orders has led to ruinous impact on the domestic economy. At his inauguration earlier in the year, Anambra State Governor, Chukwuma Soludo put the

situation in proper context when he lamented that “a significant part of our state economy is powered by artisans, Keke drivers, vulcanisers, hairdressers, cart pushers, petty traders, bricklayers, women frying Akara, and all those who depend upon daily toil and sweat to feed their families” (Uzodinma, 2023). Yet, every day there is a sit-at-home, according to Soludo, “these poor masses lose an estimated N19.6 billion in Anambra alone” (Uzodinma, 2023). Besides, due to the protracted breakdown of law and order, businesses are relocating outside the region while the queue of unemployment is lengthening.

Insecurity in Nigeria has affected the activities of business in Nigeria especially Southeast where shops and offices are closed by 5.30PM due to theft, Army Robbery, Kidnapping, Assassination and Fraud as well as killings. These insecurities cause operation management to stop production or utilization of available resources such as material, men, machine among others which invariably affect the performance of entrepreneurial businesses in Southeast. The assurance of businesses survival in the zone is very low since shops and business centers closed early and some of the shops or small centers experienced arm robbery activities after they have closed or on their way back home.

Security challenges in Nigeria have created more impact that is negative. Adejumo (2011) posited that the effect of security challenges in Nigeria have damaging result and gives the shows foreign business investors that Nigeria is a risky and uncertain place for economic investment and activities. Insecurity is a threat to the growth and stability of any nation. Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor-Robaro(2013) argued that impact of insecurity can be conceptualized from two major perspectives. Insecurity discourages potential investment opportunities in a nation and this has a negative impact on the economic growth and development of a country. Security challenges may result to low investment to some persons as it could increases the cost of investment through direct loss of properties and increases cost of insuring against business risks and uncertainty (Achumba et al, 2013). According to the Central Bank of Nigeria (2011), Foreign Direct Investment has been on the decrease in Nigeria as a result of security challenges by about 15% since 2011. This shows that Nigeria is not a safe place for investment and business activities. The lack of investment have grievous effect on the economy as it retards the expansion and growth of local industries and also lead to the relocation of businesses to other countries from Nigeria to Sub Sahara Africa countries. A study on investment climate by World Bank in some African countries showed that 29% of business enterprises in Africa and about 36% of Nigerian entrepreneurs perceived that security challenges are major constraints on investment (Ujah & Eboh, 2006).

All aspects of business activities such as production, marketing, finance, human resources, transportation, banking, health and communication have been affected by the surge of insecurity. Nwagbosa (2012) opined that businesses such as manufacturing and human resources have relocated from the Northern part of Nigeria to the other geographical zones because of insecurity in Nigeria while Suleiman (2012) argued that non-indigenes especially the Igbos and Yoruba’s have relocated to their hometown because of incidence of Boko Haram in Nigeria. Resources that would have been used in improving on social and infrastructural amenities are diverted to curb insecurity, which is a major challenge in Nigeria thereby leaving other sectors requiring attention to suffer.

Entrepreneurship activities, as a key to economic growth, are being threatened because of this social menace of insecurity in the region. The level of insecurity in the South East is unbearable, featuring in various surface of our lives, resulting to daily loss of investment opportunities, creating unemployment, chasing foreign investors away and forcing Nigerians to be on the run (Onime, 2018). People are no longer interested in doing any business, productivity keep reducing, investors not willing to invest thereby making the region loss its economic activities, as no one wants to invest in a land that is not safe; hitherto, full of destruction of human lives. The consequence of this is that there will be a breakdown of commercial activities which is the key to every region's growth. Therefore, the researchers were prompt to ask, what are the causes of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria and how do they affect entrepreneurship activities in the region? Hence, the need for the study.

Purpose of the study

The study ascertained the causes of insecurity and its effect on entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the causes of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria.
2. Find out the influence of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria

Research hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and were statistically tested in the study:

1. The causes of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria is not significantly high
2. Insecurity does not significantly influence entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria

Methodology

The researcher adopted a survey research design. The design was used to obtain a picture of the present condition of a particular phenomenon. Survey design was appropriate for the study since it involves the collection of data to accurately and objectively describe existing phenomena, which are: causes of insecurity and how it affects entrepreneurship activities. The study was carried out in South East region of Nigeria. 5,073,672 Micro, Small and Medium Scale Business Owners (MSMSBO) in South East, Nigeria (Records from the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), 2022) was the study population. This was because they are the subjects to be investigated and they are presently engaged in entrepreneurship. The breakdown of the population distribution is presented in Table 1.

Taro Yamane's Formula ($n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$) was used to determine the sample size of 400

MSMSBO. The formula was used since the population is very large and a representative sample can be gotten using this formula to avoid being bias. Also, a multi stage sampling of proportionate and accidental techniques was used in the study. Proportionate sampling technique was used to apportion the sample size of 400 Micro, Small and Medium Scale Business Owners to the five (5) States that are in South East, Nigeria, after applying the Taro Yamane's formula while accidental sampling techniques was used in the administration of the copies of the questionnaire. That is, the researchers administered the

questionnaire to the respondents willing to volunteer information at the time of the distribution until the required number from that State was achieved.

A validated questionnaire titled “Insecurity and Entrepreneurship Activities Questionnaire” (IEAQ) was the instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by three experts; two in Management Sciences and one in Measurement and Evaluation. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was carried out using 30 Business Owners who were not part of the main study and data collected were subjected to Cronbach Alpha Statistical Analysis which yielded an overall reliability index of .82. Four hundred (400) copies of the IEAQ were administered and 371 copies were correctly filled and returned giving rise to 93% return rate. After the data was collected, research questions were answered using means and standard deviation because it describes the existing phenomenon (that is, the causes of insecurity and its effects on entrepreneurship). Hypotheses were tested at .05 significance level using population t-test for hypothesis one and simple linear regression statistics for hypothesis two. Population t-test was used to test hypothesis one to determine if these causes of insecurity is high or low while simple linear regression was used to test hypothesis two to ascertain if there is an influence of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities and the percentage of variation on entrepreneurship activities, attributed to insecurity. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance with relative degree of freedom.

TABLE 1
Population distribution by state and business size

S/No	Total	State	Micro	Small	Medium
1	906,530	Abia	904,721	1,769	40
2	1,225,132	Anambra	1,223,395	1,160	117
3	578,426	Ebonyi	577,216	1,206	4
4	1,065,804	Enugu	1,064,893	812	99
5	1,297,780	Imo	1,296,386	1,259	41
	5,073,672	Total	5,066,611	6,206	301

Source: Records from the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), 2022

Results

Research question one

What are the causes of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria?

To provide answers to research question one, mean and standard deviation were used. The result is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Mean and standard deviation of responses on the causes of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities
n=371

S/No	Causes of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities	X	SD	Remark
1.	Ethno- religious conflicts	2.83	.462	Agree
2.	Weak security system	2.34	.668	Agree
3.	Unemployment	3.20	.703	Agree
4.	Poverty	2.42	.789	Agree
5.	Porous border	3.28	.621	Agree
6.	Political corruption	2.25	.957	Agree
7.	Inequitable distribution of resources	2.83	.462	Agree
8.	Militancy	2.34	.668	Agree
9.	Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) activities	2.67	.585	Agree
10.	Incidence of Boko Haram	2.69	.952	Agree

The results of the study showed that all the items in the Table were accepted as the causes of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria. All items scored a mean point above 2.5. This indicates that all the ten items are the causes of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria.

Research question two

How does insecurity influence entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria?

To provide answers to research question two, mean and standard deviation were used. The result is presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
Mean and standard deviation of responses on the influence of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities n=371

S/No	Influence of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities	X	SD	Remark
1.	Business owners are no longer safe to go about doing their business	3.48	.585	Agree
2.	Economic activities in the South East is reducing on a daily basis due to insecurity	3.14	.443	Agree
3.	Citizens are moving from one place to another in search of safety	3.31	.553	Agree
4.	Shops are being closed on time	3.18	.681	Agree
5.	Foreigners no longer feel safe to have their investment in the country	3.34	.610	Agree
6.	Insecurity discourages potential investment opportunities	3.39	.561	Agree
7.	Insecurity increases the cost of investment through direct loss of properties	3.15	.488	Agree
8.	Insecurity increases cost of insuring against business risks and uncertainty	2.90	.539	Agree
9.	Insecurity has led to the relocation of businesses from South East to other states	3.01	.533	Agree

10. Resources that would have been used in improving on social andinfrastructural amenities are diverted to curb insecurity	3.05	.557	Agree
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The results of the study showed that all the items in the Table were accepted as the how insecurity influences entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria. All items scored a mean point above 2.5. This indicates that all the ten items are how insecurity influences entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria.

Hypothesis one

The causes of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria is not significantly high.

Population t-test was used to test this hypothesis and the result was presented on Table 4.

TABLE 4
Population t-test analysis of causes of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities

Variable	N	X	SD	t-cal	μ	df	Test val.	p val.
Causes of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities	371	25.85	2.490	6.359	2.5	370	25	.000

From Table 4, the mean of causes of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities of 25.85, was greater than the test value of 25. The calculated t-value of 6.359 and its associated p-value of .000 was found to be less than 0.05 level of significance with 370 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies alternately that causes of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria is significantly high

Hypothesis two

Insecurity does not significantly influence entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria

The independent variable is insecurity while the dependent variable is entrepreneurship activities. Simple linear regression was used as statistical tool to test this hypothesis and the result is presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5
Simple regression analysis on the influence of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities n=371

Variable	R	R ²	Adj R ²	Std. Error	
Insecurity on entrepreneurship activities	-.731 ^a	.617	.615	1.889	
Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Regression	23.124	1	23.124	6.478	.000 ^b
Residual	1317.269	369	3.570		
Total	1340.394	370			

*p<.05; df= 1, 369

From Table 5, the R, which is the correlation coefficient of the independent and the dependent variable, was -0.73 indicating significant negative relationship between the independent and the dependent variable. This showed that, as insecurity increases, there is likelihood decrease in entrepreneurship activities. The coefficient of determination (Adj. R²) which explains the power of the independent variable in predicting the dependent variable is 0.615. This showed that up to 61.5 percent of variance in entrepreneurship activities in South East is explained by insecurity. It suggested that insecurity to large extent genitivelyinfluence entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria. The Table also showed that the p-value of .000 associated with the computed F-ratio of 6.478 is less than 0.05 level of significance at 1 and 369 degrees of freedom.

With these results, the null hypothesis, which stated that insecurity does not significantly influence entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria, was rejected. It was accepted alternately that insecurity significantly influence entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria.

Discussion of findings

Causes of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities

The finding of the study in this regard showed that all the items listed as the causes of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeriawere accepted. The test of hypothesis showed thatcauses of insecurity on entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria is significantly high. The result is so because Nigeria has been faced with ample of security challenges ranging from increase in crime rates, militancy in Niger Delta and of recent the incidence of Boko Haram. The finding is supported by Okonkwo, Ndibuisi and Anagbogu(2011) who stated that the causes of security challenges in Nigeria are ethno- religious conflicts, weak security system, unemployment and poverty, porousborder, systemic and political corruption. Nigeria being a multi-cultural country is constantly faced with religion, economic, political, ethnic crisis and terrorism. Nwagbosa (2012) also agrees with the findings, as the author posited that failure of different government to look into the issue of unemployment, poverty and incidence of inequitable distribution of resources are major causes of insecurity in Nigeria. The finding is supported by Inmates'Official (2021) who stated that another cause of insecurity is the poor security system - this is due to inadequategovernment security equipment in both weapons and training, which contributes to the poor disposition of the security personnel. In line with the finding, Cable (2021) who opined that porous border also cause insecurity, asthese borders are poorly secured by the Nigerian immigration and customs authorities. The porous nature of these borders has exacerbated the possible spread of terrorist activity in Nigeria and have negatively affected entrepreneurship in Southeast.

Insecurity and entrepreneurship activities

The finding of the study in this regard showed that all the items listed on how insecurity influences entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria were accepted. The test of hypothesis showed that insecurity significantly influence entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria. The nature of the influence is negative, as increase insecurity would decrease entrepreneurship activities in South East, Nigeria.The result is so because security challenges in Nigeria have created more impact that is negative.

Today, socio-economic activities in the Southeast are systematically being laid to waste. An ill-conceived series of disruptions to social life, work, and business under the guise of 'sit at home' order is frequently imposed by IPOB and its brutal enforcers throughout the zone.

In consonance with the finding, Oriazowanlan and Erah(2019) asserted that the fear of rough vigilante enforcement of these orders has led to ruinous impact on the domestic economy. The finding is supported by Adejumo (2011) who posited that the effect of security challenges in Nigeria have damaging result and gives the signal to the international business community that Nigeria is a risky and uncertain place for economic investment and activities. Insecurity is a threat to the growth and stability of any nation. In line with the finding, Achumbaet. al. (2013) argued that impact of insecurity can be conceptualized from two major perspectives. Insecurity discourages potential investment opportunities in a nation. Security challenges may result to low investment to some persons as it could increase the cost of investment through direct loss of properties and increases cost of insuring against business risks and uncertainty.

Conclusion

The rate of insecurity in the country seems to threaten the harmony of our great country and this is at the expense of developmental strides especially in entrepreneurial activities. Hence, the various causes of insecurity as discussed in this study should be addressed to enhance entrepreneurial activities, not just in the South East but in our Country, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

1. South East Governors should come together to form a formidable force, ensuring that their security personnel are well paid and fully equipped to safeguard lives, properties and attend to security issues when being called upon at any point in time. This would go a long way to address some causes of insecurity such as weak security system, porous border, militancy and IPOB activities.
2. South East Governors should ensure that all hands are on deck to ensure the safety of business owners and potential investors by deploying security personnel to various business locations or employ local vigilantes for adequate security, as this would ensure that businesses are open/close as at when due and foreign investors feel safe to have their investment in the country.

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