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COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGIES IN THE NORTH EAST, NIGERIA: AN EVALUATION OF MUHAMMADU BUHARI'S ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract

Terrorism is one of the major global security threats that has become a frightening phenomenon and issue of concern to the Nigerian government and international community. The menace is pervasive and its devastating effects are felt all over the world with no nation being immune from the acts of terrorism. In the last decades, the activities of Boko Haram in the North East, Nigeria has led to the loss of thousands of lives and mass displacement of over people. Hence, this study examined government counter-terrorism strategies in the North East with a focus on the civilian administration of Muhammadu Buhari between 2015 and 2023. The objective of this study is to assess the impact of counter-terrorism strategies adopted by the Buhari's regime in the North East, Nigeria. This study adopted descriptive research design. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Self-structured questionnaires and interviews were used to gather primary data while secondary data were gathered from the journals, newspapers, and online articles. This study is anchored on Galula's counter-insurgency theory. A total of 450 copies of questionnaires were administered to the respondents whereas 400 copies were retrieved. The sample size of this study was determined using Taro Yamane formula. Data gathered from the respondents for the quantitative data was analysed using simple percentage and regression analysis utilising Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The study concluded that the implementation of counter-terrorism strategies cannot be successful in Nigeria without addressing the issues of poverty, illiteracy, poor governance and unemployment in the affected geo-political zone. The researchers recommended that the Nigerian government should embark on massive socio-economic empowerment programmes to address the alarming rate of poverty and unemployment which often provide fodder for the extremist groups. It also recommended that the corrupt public office holders should be prosecuted and government at all levels must eschew corruption in the fight against terrorism and insecurity in Nigeria.

Keywords: Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism, Muhammadu Buhari's Administration, North-East Nigeria, Insecurity.

Introduction

Over the years, terrorism has become pervasive and its devastating effects are felt all over the world with no nation being immune from the acts of terrorism. The problem posed by terrorism has become a major global security threat to the Nigerian government and the international community (Adedire, Ake & Olowojolu 2016). In Nigeria, several terrorist groups have emerged and turned the North Eastern region of Nigeria into a hotbed of terrorist activities. The Northeastern Nigeria has witnessed violent terrorist activities primarily attributed to the Boko Haram sect which has become one of the deadliest terrorist organization in Nigeria. In the last two decades, the deadly attacks carried out by Boko Haram terrorist group has led to the death of thousands of people and mass displacement of over 2.5 million people in the North Eastern Nigeria. The Boko Haram's alliance with ISIS which led to the formation of a new faction known as Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) that has given them access to deploy more jihadist ideologies and facts within the global terrorist network (Ordu, 2017). In a study conducted by the University of Maryland on global terrorism for the American Government, it was revealed that Boko Haram related deaths in Nigeria has exceeded the number of deaths inflicted by Al Qaeda in Iraq, Maoists in India and Al-Shabab in somalia (Aghedo & Eke 2017). In the 1990s, several terrorist attacks had occurred, some of which included the 1995 Sarin subway attack in Tokyo, the 1995 bombing of Oklahoma City's Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, the 1996 bombing of Saudi Arabia's Khobar Towers, and the 1998 bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. The September 11 World Trade Center attack in New York in 2001 arose the attention of the world leaders to address the menace threatening the global peace and security. Thus, terrorism is a major concern of both local and international policies with massive resources invested in it; yet, new laws and procedures aimed to combat it have significantly impacted the lives of almost everyone on the world (Jackson, et al., 2011),

In Nigeria, various security-threatening acts had occurred since 1960 when the country attained her political independence. Some of these crises include the 1964 general elections crisis and the civil war that lasted between 1967 and 1970. However, after returning finally to civilian rule in May 1999, violence in the country experienced a new dimension in 2009 with the emergence of terrorist activities in the North Eastern part of the country. However, the Nigerian Government and the international community have focused on reducing the threat of terrorism in response to this act of domestic terrorism, which is blamed on the Islamic cult known as "Boko Haram." The philosophy of Boko Haram, whose name means "western education is forbidden," is centred on extreme Sunni Islam. Their goal is to build an Islamic state in Nigeria and rid the nation of all Western influences (Uzochukwu, 2014). The Boko Haram sect have also has taken credits for numerous bombings, killings, shootings, kidnappings, and abductions across Nigeria in an effort to establish an Islamic state (Adedire, Ake & Olowojolu, 2016). Some of their activities include: the vehicle bomb explosion in Abuja in April 2014, which killed 19 persons and the abduction of about 250 Chibok school girls in Borno State on April 15, 2014 (Uzochukwu, 2014). From the foregoing, it has become a great necessity for any government to work towards protecting her territorial integrity as well as protecting lives and properties of citizens from any terrorists' threat. In this study, the researchers take a cursory look at the counter-terrorism strategies adopted by the Muhammadu Buhari's government in combating terrorism in Nigeria.

Statement of Problem

Terrorism in Nigeria had witnessed three significant waves of terrorism since 1980s, which includes Maitatsine revolt, the Niger Delta militancy, and the Boko Haram insurgency. However, 2009 saw the beginning of Boko Haram terrorism activities in Nigeria, which is now the highest wave of terrorism in the country. As stated earlier, Boko Haram was perceived during this time as terrorist group agitating for Islamic State in North Eastern Nigeria which led to formation of Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). In 2009, Boko Haram became a terrorist organization that formed alliance with other terrorist organisations such as the Al-Qaeda network to terrorise the North Eastern region. Over time, it has advanced through phases as a terrorist organization, starting with the period of covert or Islamic insurgency from 2009 to 2013. The period that followed was the time of full confrontation with the Nigerian state from 2013 to 2015 (which was characterized by the takeover of Nigeria's land). The third phase was distinguished by regional or transnational spread (regionalization and internationalization) from 2015 to 2023. However, terrorism activities in Nigeria has created a serious threat and major concern for the Nigerian Government and the International Community. Research has shown that thousands of people have been killed while over 2.5 million people has been displaced from their homes. In addition, hundreds of thousands had left Nigeria and fled into Cameroon, Chad and Niger. As at 2017, it was reported by government of Borno State that Boko Haram activities had led to destruction of N1.9 trillion (\$5.2 billion) worth of properties, including one million houses and 5, 000 classrooms. Nonetheless, it is an established fact that terrorist organizations and groups have been persistently carrying out massive onslaughts on both military and civilian targets in the country since 2009. It is against this backdrop that this study tried to examine the Counter-terrorism Strategies adopted by Muhammadu Buhari's administration between 2015 and 2023.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the Government Counter-terrorism Strategies adopted by Muhammadu Buhari's administration between 2015 and 2023. Other specific objectives are to:

- i. assess the consequences of terrorism on the national development under Buhari's administration.
- ii. Investigate the various counter-terrorism strategies adopted by Buhari's administration in combating terrorism in Nigeria.

Research Questions

- i. What are the consequences of terrorism on the national development under Buhari's administration?
- ii. What are the various counter-terrorism strategies adopted by Buhari's administration in combating terrorism in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023?

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the counter-terrorism strategies implemented by Buhari's administration and the high level of insecurity in north east, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the escalation of terrorism in the north east and counter-terrorism strategies adopted by Muhammadu Buhari's administration.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

- i. **Terrorism:** There is no generally acceptable definition of terrorism. This is due to the fact that terrorism is a contested concept in the literature that lacks universal acceptable definition and there is neither an academic nor an international legal consensus regarding the concept of terrorism as well. The difficulties arise from the fact that the term is politically and emotionally charged (William, 2009). The etymology of terrorism is derived from Latin words "terrere" which means "frighten". It basically implies a special crime associated with violent, victimization, threatening, frightening, and disruption of socio-political atmosphere in a particular society. It is an act of bombing, killing, kidnapping, maiming and destruction thereby creating socio-political tension, extremely fear, and destabilizing existing government or political opposition. It also entails deadly attacks on government agency and functionary, international organization, military and civilian in order to gain international recognition (Chibuike & Eme, 2019).
- ii. **Counter-Terrorism:** Definitions of counter-terrorism might not be as abundant as some other concepts in social sciences but the few definitions explained below will point out to the entirety of the concept. Therefore, the term "counter-terrorism" refers to the methods, strategies, and military tactics that are employed by the government, armed forces, law enforcement, private sector, and intelligence organizations to oppose or prevent terrorism. It also includes the methods used to stop the financing of terrorists (Stigall & Donnatucci, 2019). Furthermore, counter-terrorism strategies refer to the involvement of an increase in standard police and domestic intelligence in an effort at preventing terrorism (Sexton, Wellhausen & Findley, 2019). However, resolving conflicts, ending foreign occupations, overcoming oppression, eradicating poverty, supporting sustainable development, empowering the marginalized, defending human rights, and promoting good governance are all essential to the fight against terrorism, but addressing these challenges is made more difficult by repressive counter-terrorism policies (Ezirim & Okoye, 2018). Therefore, counter-terrorism requires not only improved security but also better effort to address the underlying conditions that give rise to terrorism.
- iii. **Counter-Terrorism Policy Framework in Nigeria:** The National Counter-Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST), which was initially announced as a strategy framework in the fight against terrorism in Nigeria by former President Goodluck Jonathan in 2014. It was then adopted by President Muhamadu Buhari in 2016, although with amendment. Prior to the passage of the NACTEST, attempts were made to create a strong legislative framework document that would include numerous specifics and legislation to address challenges of terrorism in Nigeria. The "Terrorism Prevention Act" of 2011, which was subsequently revised in 2013, codified this endeavor. The Terrorism Prevent Act of 2013 as amended inspired the creation coordination of "inter-agency" bodies, and defined the functions and responsibilities of their various agencies and stakeholders. The Act also empowers the law enforcement agencies with the power to arrest, detain and prosecute suspected individuals linked to terrorism. According to Section 1(A) of the Terrorism Prevention Act 2013 as amended, it created for the office of the National Security Adviser also known as "ONSA". The ONSA is empowered by law to act as a chief coordinating

body to all security and enforcement agencies under the provisions of the law. Furthermore, the ONSA must ensure that Nigeria's counterterrorism framework does not run ultra-vires the international counterterrorism policy framework and laws. Therefore, the National Counterterrorism Strategy was created to lessen the likelihood that terrorism would occur in the nation. It was also intended to address difficulties linked to geographical limitations, operational flaws, and structural challenges that terrorists would use to injure or attack the nation.

- iv. **Effects of Terrorism on the Economic Development of Nigeria:** Terrorism in Nigeria has significant impact on the country's economic development over the years. Nigeria, as a developing country with poor domestic capital formation and a scarcity of vital infrastructure, requires considerable inflows of foreign direct and portfolio investment to spur growth. However, the country has become increasingly unattractive to foreign investors caused by growing insecurity, shortage of critical infrastructures and the relocation of multinational companies to neighbouring countries (Chuku, Abang & Isip, 2019). No investor, whether domestic or foreign, will be inspired to invest in a risky and insecure environment. The government's apparent incapacity to provide a secure and safe environment for people, property, and the performance of business and economic operations and the country's dismal economic state is responsible for the gradual withdrawal of Portfolio as well as foreign direct investment from Nigeria to other West African countries which adversely affect government revenue generation, destroying part of the tax base and thereby increasing deficit financing (Edeme & Nkalu, 2019).
- v. **Effects of Terrorism on the National Security:** There is no doubt that terrorism has significant effects on the economic development and national security of Nigeria. This becomes obvious in light of the recent tragic effects of terrorism in Nigeria. Along with fostering a mood of desolation and dislocation, it worsens the region's recent wave of instability and endangers peaceful coexistence (Akinyetun, 2017). According to Okoli and Iortyer (2014), the country has seen public security volatility as a result, which has hampered commerce and investment, stable coexistence, and sustainable livelihood and growth. Moreover, the level of violence and devastation linked to the Boko Haram conflict in Nigeria has been horrifying. Simply put, the prevalence and increasing frequency of terrorist strikes in Nigeria has created a serious humanitarian crisis and territorial vulnerabilities in the country. The maintenance of Nigeria's national security in light of this circumstance is quite challenging (Dibia, 2021).
- vi. **Effects of Terrorism on the National Development:** Terrorism has devastating effects on the national development of the country and deterred foreign direct investments, leading to economic stagnation and reduced job opportunities for the teeming Nigerians youths (Akinyetun, 2017). Furthermore, the insecurity in situation has disrupted essential services such as education and healthcare, hindering human capital development. Moreover, the allocation of a substantial portion of the national budget to security measures diverts resources away from critical infrastructure projects and social programs (Adebayo, 2014). Terrorism in Nigeria has also posed a severe impediment to the country's progress, its detrimental effects on the socio-economic, and political development are enormous (Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro, 2013). Consequently, the effects of terrorism on national development in

Nigeria extend beyond immediate casualties and economic setbacks. It erodes social cohesion and exacerbates ethnic and religious tensions, potentially leading to further violence and instability (Dibia, 2021).

- vii. **Assessment of Counter-Terrorism Strategies adopted by Buhari's administration in the North East between 2015 -2022:** Counter-terrorism, as discussed above involves a broader or comprehensive military and civilian strategies or response towards combating, eradicating or eliminating terrorist activities in a state. Thus, bringing this to the Nigeria level, various government administrations has devise various strategies to eradicate terrorism. This section of this research focuses on the evaluation of President Muhammadu Buhari's administration counter terrorism strategies in Nigeria spanning between 2015 and 2023. In the view of Falode (2019), Nigeria must come up with countermeasures that will successfully deal with the various dimensions of terrorism confronting it in order to contain their activities. Simply put, Nigeria must implement strategic steps to address terrorism in the country. Thus, Nigeria, under the Muhammadu Buhari's administration adopted several measures to control and stifle terrorist activities in the country. To corroborate this fact, Nosiri and Ibekwe (2021) rightly noted that, since Buhari's administration took office in 2015, it has implemented a number of tactics or developed strategies to effectively battle the Boko Haram insurgency and other terrorist activities in the nation (Nosiri & Ibekwe, 2021). However, these counter-terrorism strategies according to Nosiri and Ibekwe (2021) included the reviving or bolstering the Multinational Joint Task Force (JTF) in 2015 in order to foster the elimination of terrorist activities; moving of the Nigerian Military Command Center from Abuja to Maiduguri with the intention of centralizing operations close to Boko Haram's movement and lowering the level of bureaucracy to hasten decision-making the termination of the STTEP contract and turning it to the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF); peace negotiations with Boko Haram through an undefined amnesty offer; review of National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) in 2016 for effective prevention of violent extremism; establishment of the de-radicalization programme run by the office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) and the establishment of the North East Presidential Initiative (NPE) to combat poverty, which is the main driver of terrorism. Furthermore, the Buhari administration also embarked on launching the Operation Safe Corridor Programme in 2016 to help reintegrate terrorists who have changed their ways. There was also the creation of the National Action Plan for the prevention of violent extremism (PVE). Also, the government of Buhari formed an alliance with the Islamic Military Alliance with Saudi Arabia. This was a military alliance against terrorism that includes 39 Islamic nations. In the same vein, the Buhari administration also adopted the usage of the civilian Joint Task Force (JTF), a group of vigilante citizens, to assist the Nigerian military's Joint Task Force (JTF) in battling the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East. Under his government too, there was the establishment of collaboration with the US and the UK. This prompted the Trump administration to approve the sale of high-tech attack jets to Nigeria for around 600 million dollars. The U.K. prime minister also promised to give Nigeria military training and supplies. Additionally, the United Kingdom pledged to develop a crisis response program and invest roughly 16 million dollars in educational facilities for children living in conflict zones (Nosiri & Ibekwe, 2021). Nigeria was only able to make headway against the Boko Haram group towards the end of 2015 and early 2016 when President Muhammadu Buhari decided to blend both

conventional and unconventional countermeasures against the terrorist groups in the country. Furthermore, in the early stages of the conflict between Nigeria and Boko Haram, Nigeria, under the Buhari's administration used its police force to monitor the organization's actions. The Group's actions were perceived as civic, social, and religious disobedience to Nigeria's established norms (Ordu, 2017). Additionally, roadblocks and mass arrests were also frequently used by the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) to stop and contain the Group's activities. As one the Counter-terrorism Strategies adopted by Buhari's administration,, Nigeria hired white South African mercenaries in the early months of 2015 under the name STTEP (Specialized Tasks, Training, Equipment and Protection) to aid the nation in its fight against Boko Haram insurgency (Colin, 2015). The mercenaries, who had experience with South African bush combat, trained elite anti-terrorism soldiers there and launched operations against Boko Haram. As a result, Nigeria was able to develop a successful counter-offensive against terrorism by employing a policy of "relentless pursuit," an unusual military mobile warfare tactic developed by STTEP to counter Boko Haram's attack pattern of hit-and-run. However, the STTEP was only successful in putting the Boko Haram on the back foot by the time the MNJTF (Multinational Joint Task Force) stepped in to help Nigeria in late 2015 (Ordu, 2017). Thus, Nigeria's Counter--offensive against the terrorism generally have not been effective, with the revitalisation of Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), comprised the armed forces from Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Benin, was added to the conflict. In 2016, showing a departure from its ineffective kinetic strategy against terrorism in the country, the Nigerian military introduced what can be called asymmetric mobile tactics. The Nigerian army established a 'combat motorbike battalion' consisting of a rider and another riding shotgun (Omonobi, 2016). This strategy worked effectively than the kinetic response in combating terrorism in the North Eastern region.

- viii. **Method of Warfare Adopted by Terrorist Organizations in Nigeria:** Terrorist organizations in Nigeria, such as Boko Haram and its offshoots, have deployed various methods of warfare to achieve their objectives. One prominent strategy is the use of asymmetric warfare tactics, which involve guerrilla-style attacks, ambushes, and hit-and-run operations (Azama, 2017). These groups often target security forces, government installations, and civilians, creating an atmosphere of fear and instability. Additionally, they frequently employ suicide bombings, which have been responsible for a significant number of casualties. Another method is the abduction of civilians, particularly schoolchildren, for ransom or to further their ideological goals, as witnessed in incidents like the Chibok and Dapchi kidnappings. These groups also engage in propaganda and information warfare, disseminating their extremist ideologies through videos and social media to recruit and radicalize new members. Overall, the tactics employed by terrorist organizations in Nigeria are characterized by their brutality, unpredictability, and willingness to exploit vulnerabilities in the security and social fabric of the country (Higazi, 2015). In the view of Ekwonna (2018) and Ndubuisi (2017), strategies of warfare adopted by the Boko Haram for instance, is alien to Nigeria military and thus making it difficult for them to win the battle against terrorism. The Boko Haram insurgency's unconventional or asymmetric warfare, such as terrorism and guerrilla war strategy (GWS), is a modern kind of warfare known as fourth generation warfare (4GW) that has rendered the Nigerian army or military utterly impotent in the fight against terrorism (Ndubuisi, 2017). Boko

Haram appears to be more powerful due to its development of close relationships with other worldwide terrorist groups including the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), and Al-Qaida. Thus, President Buhari believed that Boko Haram's support to ISIS had strengthened the terrorist organizations, signaling a global threat from terrorism (Nosiri & Anekwe, 2017). One of the most notable international ties of Boko Haram has been with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), an extremist organization active in North Africa. This collaboration has facilitated the exchange of resources, fighters, and knowledge between the two groups. AQIM has provided Boko Haram with training in tactics, explosives, and other militant skills, which has contributed to the group's ability to carry out more sophisticated attacks (Onuoha, 2014). The difficulty of containing terrorism in Nigeria can be said to be exacerbated by inadequate border security and management. The porous nature of the Nigerian border has aided or enhanced the operation of Boko Haram in terms of the trafficking of weapons and ammunition, easy movement or cross-border migration, trafficking of people and illegal goods for funding, establishment of training camps, and the establishment of links with international terrorist organizations (Chukwuma, 2022). Furthermore, these porous borders have been exploited by terrorist groups like Boko Haram and various criminal organizations to facilitate the movement of fighters, weapons, and contraband. The inability to effectively secure these borders has posed significant challenges to Nigeria's national security. One of the primary consequences of poor border management in Nigeria is the ease with which terrorist groups can cross into and out of the country. Boko Haram, in particular, has taken advantage of these weak points to launch attacks, kidnap civilians, and engage in other acts of violence. Also, the lack of border security has allowed the group to establish safe havens in neighboring countries, making it difficult for Nigerian security forces to eradicate the threat entirely (Ojo, 2020). Additionally, poor border management has contributed to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria. These weapons are often smuggled across porous borders, fueling conflicts and acts of terrorism within the country. The absence of effective border control measures has enabled illegal arms trafficking, exacerbating security challenges and making it easier for terrorist groups to acquire weapons (Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro, 2013).

- ix. **Assessment of Buhari Administration Responses in Combating Terrorism in Nigeria (2015 - 2023):** After the assumption of office of President Muhammadu Buhari as the president of Nigeria, he took some drastic measures to fight against terrorism in Nigeria. His electoral victory came after the Boko Haram terrorist organization kidnapped more than 200 schoolgirls from Chibok in the nation's northeastern Borno state. President Buhari moved the military headquarters from Abuja to Maiduguri, the birth place of Boko Haram, upon taking office again in 2015. In the same manner, he improved the military budget and approved the purchase of arms for the security forces and agencies. However, despite these efforts to end terrorism, the menace still thrives in the North East. Therefore, it is necessary and of great importance to measure and assess the performance of Buhari's government in combating Terrorism in Nigeria. In assessing the degree to which the Buhari's administration's responses have quelled terrorism, especially the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, we must consider two factors. The first one is the frequency of attacks and the number of casualties caused by terrorist activities, and secondly, the territories the terrorist group has occupied in Nigeria. Nosiri and Ibekwe

(2021) reported the incidence of attack and casualties caused by Boko Haram in Nigeria from 2015 - 2020, in order to determine the extent to which the Buhari's government has succeeded in combating terrorism. Thus, table 1 below reveals the incidence of attack and casualties caused by Boko Haram in Nigeria from 2015 - to 2020.

Table 1: The incidence of attack and casualties caused by Boko Haram in Nigeria (2015 – 2020)

Year	No. of Casualties	Incidence of Attacks
2015	2224 casualties (2016 people killed and 208 injured)	88
2016	871 casualties (477 killed and 394 injured)	33
2017	901 casualties (590 killed and 311 injured)	65
2018	985 casualties (460 killed and 525 injured)	49
2019	292 casualties (238 killed and 54 injured)	21
2020	724 casualties (564 killed and 160 wounded)	19

Source: Nosiri and Ibekwe (2021).

Data from the table 1 above revealed that there has been reduction in the rate of Boko Haram terrorist activities and number of casualties as compare to 2015 attacks. Therefore, it indicated that the Buhari's administration had contributed in curtailing the Boko Haram terrorism activities, although they still exist.

Theoretical Framework

Counter-Insurgency Theory: This study adopted Galula's counter-insurgency theory. The reason for adoption this theory is based on its explanation to achieving counter-terrorism. The theory posits that counter-terrorism requires a combination of military, political, and social operations that are tightly controlled by a single authority. Thus, this theory is relevant in this study because it explains the rationale behind counter terrorism strategies embarked upon by President Buhari. The theory is also relevant in this work because it explores the methods and techniques of counter terrorism. This framework was propounded by David Galula. According to the theory, the development and success of a counter-insurgency operation should depend on the "political machine's" core, which requires political initiatives aimed at appeasing the insurgents' support. As this is a crucial prerequisite, the counter-insurgents must also successfully coordinate their efforts at such programs. Through committees and integrated military-civilian bureaucracies, this cooperation can be realized (Itumo & Nwobashi, 2015).

Empirical Review

Onapajo (2017) carried out a study on the appraisal of the counter terrorism approach under the Buhari Administration in Nigeria. The research was focused on identifying whether Nigeria has defeated Boko Haram. The research relied mainly on secondary sources of data. The findings revealed that, although the military approach cannot be totally abandoned because of the form of insurgency that Boko Haram has adopted, nevertheless, for a long-term solution Nigeria and its partners must complement this approach by taking a developmental approach which would ultimately address the underlying social conditions that initially created the problem. Consequently, Nosiri & Ibekwe (2021) carried out a study on counter terrorism in Nigeria, with an assessment of President Buhari government's response to Boko Haram insurgency. The research critically assessed the Buhari's government response towards combating the Boko Haram terrorist activities in Nigeria.

The research also identified the problems encountered by Buhari administration in combating the insurgency in Nigeria and proffer lasting solutions for effective counter-terrorism in Nigeria. The research data was sourced through secondary sources and analysed with both qualitative and quantitative methods. The findings revealed that despite the fact that the Buhari's government has achieved some degree of success in combating Boko Haram insurgency (in terms of reduction of incidence of attacks and number of casualties; and recapture of territories), the success has not been significant or effective in the fight against the Boko Haram insurgent. This is because the Boko Haram is still carrying out successful operations or attacks. The research recommended for the need for effective training of security personnel on counter terrorism and insurgency and adequate use of ICT or modern technologies in fighting terrorism. Also, Chukwuma (2022) carried out a study on critical terrorism studies and post-colonialism, constructing ungoverned spaces in counter-terrorism discourse in Nigeria. The study employed both primary and secondary sources of data. The findings revealed that Nigeria's counter-terrorism strategy is essentially a political activity which contributes to the production of a specific Nigerian identity by designating north-eastern Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin as "ungoverned" spaces. The research recommended that both "hard" approaches, including military force and anti-terrorism legislation and the need for "softer" measures should be employed in tackling terrorism in Nigeria.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted in this study. This research design is considered valid for this study because it allows the researcher to gather data from the selected population using standardized collection procedures based on well-structured research instruments, study concepts and related variables as well as being able to describe the situation, events and phenomenon under the study effectively with an objective reality. The population of the study specifically covered the North Eastern States where the activities of Boko Haram terrorists had resulted to the deaths of thousands of people and mass displacement of people. The region consists of six states which include Bornu, Adamawa, Yobe, Bauchi, Gombe and Taraba states. Purposively, the target population was drawn from the inhabitants of Yobe State which is one of the turbulent states that is most affected by the Boko Haram insurgency which culminated to high level of insecurity in the region. The sample size of this study was determined using Taro Yamane formula. The Taro Yamane formula was adopted because it shows that sample size is inversely proportional to the square of margin error and accurate for calculating sample size based on the specific population of this study. The statistical formula devised by Taro Yamane is as follows:

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

Where;

n is the required sample size from the population under study

N is the whole population that is under study

e is the precision or sampling error which is 0.05

The calculation is as follows:

$$n = \frac{3,649,600}{[1 + N(e)^2]}$$

N

$$n = \frac{3,649,600}{[1 + 3,649,600 (0.05)^2]}$$

$$n = [1 + 3,649,600 (0.0025)]$$

$$n = 3649600/9125.0025$$

$$n = 399.9$$

The calculated sample size is 399.9 when will be approximated to 400 so as to make a perfect figure for easy analysis of data. Two research instruments include self-structured questionnaires and oral interviews were used for the study to enable the researchers gather data from the correspondence. The questionnaire was titled “Government Counter-Terrorism Strategies in the North East: An Evaluation of Muhammadu Buhari’s Administration”.

The content and construct validity as well as the internal consistency method to ascertain the reliability of the research instruments research instrument were carried out by educational evaluation experts for what it intends to measure and be consistent.

The quantitative data was gathered through the use of a self-structured questionnaire, 450 copies of the questionnaires were administered through the use of google form because it is very easy and convenient for the respondents to fill at their leisure time. The copies of questionnaires were administered in Yobe state and data collected was collated through the use of Google spread sheet. Only 400 copies were retrieved. The quantitative data gathered through the self-structured questionnaires was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version26 because it is easier and faster than manual calculations. The demographic data of the respondents was analysed using descriptive statistics such as simple percentage, mean deviation and frequency tables.

Results

Analysis of Quantitative Data: This section deals with providing answers to the research questions which formed the objectives of this study.

Research Question 1: What are the consequences of terrorism on the national development under Buhari’s Administration?

Table 2: Responses on the consequences of terrorism on the national development under Buhari’s Administration

S/N	Variables	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	% Agreed	% Disagreed
1	Terrorism has multifaceted negative impacts on the national development of the country	166 41.5%	194 48.5%	26 6.5%	14 3.5%	90.0	10.0
2	Terrorism has led to palpable fear among the people as security of lives and properties can no longer be guaranteed.	136 34.0%	158 39.5%	66 16.5%	40 20.0%	63.5	36.5
3	Terrorism has hindered the human capital development led to loss of job opportunities for the teeming	242 60.5%	120 30.0%	20 5.0%	18 4.5%	90.5	9.5

	youths in the country.						
4	Terrorism have negatively affected the economic growth and drastically reduced the possibilities of foreign direct investments.	156 39.0%	178 44.5%	36 9.0%	30 7.5%	83.5.0	16.5
5	Activities of the Boko Haram terrorists has threatened the peaceful progress as it poses a great threat to national development of Nigeria.	282 70.5%	84 21.0%	20 5.0%	14 3.5%	91.5	8.5

Source: Field survey, 2023

The result in table 2 showed that 90.0% of the respondents agreed that terrorism has multifaceted negative impacts on the development of Nigeria while 10.0% of the respondents rejected this opinion. It was also observed that 63.5% of the respondents agreed that the terrorism has led to the palpable fear In the North Eastern region as against the claimed by Buhari's Administration in 2016 that Boko Haram been technically defeated, while 36.5% of the respondents disagreed with this opinion. The study also observed that 90.5% agreed that activities of the terrorists has affected the human capital development and contribute to the loss of job opportunities for the teeming youths as a result of insecurity situation in the North East while 9.5% of the respondents disagreed with this opinion.

The study further observed that 83.5% of the respondents agreed that terrorism has adversely affected the economic growth of the country and drastically reduced the possibilities of foreign direct investment as the investors cannot establish their investments in area where their security are not guaranteed while 16.5% of the respondents disagreed with this opinion. Finally, the study observed that 91.5% of the respondents agreed that the activities of Boko Haram terrorists has hindered the peace, disrupting progress , increases public unrest and pose a great threat to the national development under Muhammadu Buhari's Administration between 2015 and 2022 while 8.5% of the respondents disagreed with this statement.

Research Question 2: What are the counter-terrorism strategies adopted by Muhammadu Buhari's administration in combating against terrorism and insecurity in the North East, Nigeria?

Table 3: Responses on the counter-terrorism strategies adopted by Muhammadu Buhari's administration in combating against terrorism and insecurity in the North East, Nigeria.

S/N	Variables	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	% Agreed	% Disagreed
1	The relocation of the Nigerian Military Headquarters from Abuja to Maiduguri with the intention of centralizing operations close to Boko Haram's movement as Counter-terrorism strategy reduced the terrorist activities in the North East.	176 44.0%	58 14.5%	140 35.0%	26 6.5%	59.5	41.5
2	Lowering the level of bureaucracy to hasten decision-making on terrorism is a great strategy by	20 5.0%	50 13.5%	246 61.5%	84 21.0%	18.5	81.5

	President Buhari.						
3	The termination of the STTEP contract vis-a-vis creation of Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) played significant role in the fight against terrorism in Nigeria under Buhari's administration	280 70.0%	58 14.5%	30 7.5%	32 8.0%	84.5	15.5
4	Peaceful negotiations with Boko Haram fighters through an undefined amnesty programme.	36 9.0%	24 6.0%	92 23.0%	48 62.0%	15.0	85.0
5	The review of the Creation of National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) in 2016 for effective prevention of violent extremism is a great strategy implemented by President Muhammadu Buhari's Administration.	50 12.5%	66 16.5%	160 65.0%	24 6.0%	29.0	71.0

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 3 presents the responses on “the counter-terrorism strategies adopted by Muhammadu Buhari’s administration in combating against terrorism and insecurity in the North East, Nigeria”. The result showed that 59.5% of the respondents agreed that the relocation of the Nigerian Military Headquarters from Abuja to Maiduguri with the intention of centralizing operations close to Boko Haram's movement is a great Counter-terrorism strategy that reduced the terrorist activities in the North East, while 41.5% of the respondents rejected this opinion. It was also observed that 18.5% of the respondents agreed that lowering the level of bureaucracy to hasten decision-making on terrorism is also a great strategy by President Buhari while 81.5% of the respondents disagreed with this opinion. The study also observed that 84.5% of the respondents agreed that the creation of Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) also played significant role in the fight against terrorism in Nigeria under Buhari’s administration, while 15.5% of the respondents disagreed with this opinion.

The study further revealed that 15% of the respondents agreed that another strategy adopted by Buhari’s administration was the peaceful negotiations with Boko Haram fighters through an undefined amnesty programme, while 85.0% of the respondents disagreed with this opinion. Finally, the study observed that 29.0% of the respondents agreed that the review of the Creation of National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) in 2016 for effective prevention of violent extremism is another great strategy implemented by President Muhammadu Buhari Administration, while 71.0% of the respondents disagreed with this statement.

Test of Hypothesis

H0₁: There is no significant impact on the counter-terrorism strategies implemented by Buhari Administration and the high level of insecurity in Nigeria.

Table 4: Regression Result Summary for Hypothesis One:

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	1.000 ^a	1.000	1.000	.51466	1.914

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategies

b. Dependent Variable: Insecurity

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3533.405	1	3533.405	13339.789	.000 ^b
	Residual	.795	3	.265		
	Total	3534.200	4			

a. Dependent Variable: Insecurity

b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategies

The result of table 4 1 indicates that, R^2 is 1.000, which shows that all the points are explained by the regression line. We therefore reject the Hypothesis that there is no significant impact on the counter-terrorism strategies implemented by Buhari Administration and the high level insecurity in Nigeria. **H₀₂:** There is no significant relationship between the escalation of terrorism in the north east, Nigeria and counter-terrorism strategies deployed by Muhammadu Buhari's Administration.

Table 5: Regression Result Summary for Hypothesis Two:

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	1.000 ^a	1.000	1.000	.00000	.040

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategies

b. Dependent Variable: Terrorism

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	24.800	1	24.800	.	. ^b
	Residual	.000	3	.000		
	Total	24.800	4			

a. Dependent Variable: Terrorism

b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategies

The result of table 5 indicates that, R^2 is 1.000, which shows that all the points are explained by the regression line. This means therefore that hypothesis two is rejected, implying that there is significant effect on the escalation of terrorism in the North East despite counter-terrorism strategies adopted by Muhammadu Buhari's Administration.

Discussion of Findings

The results from the responses on the consequences of terrorism on the national development under however revealed that terrorism has significant consequences on the national development under Buhari's Administration. This is in agreement with Adedire, Ake & Olowojolu (2016) who submitted that the problem posed by terrorism has become a major global security threat to the Nigerian government and the international community. The findings from this study align with submission of Edeme & Nkulu (2019) and Chuku, Abang & Isip (2019) which highlighted the severe consequences of terrorism on Nigeria emphasizing that the country has become increasingly unattractive to foreign investors caused by growing insecurity, shortage of critical infrastructures and the relocation of multinational companies to neighbouring countries as well as other negative effects on long-term growth.

The results however further showed that, while some strategies adopted by President Muhammadu Buhari's Administration were effective, others were ineffective. As shown in table 3, among the effective strategies are the relocation of the Nigerian Military Headquarters from Abuja to Maiduguri with the intention of centralizing operations close to Boko Haram's movement is one of the great Counter-terrorism strategies that reduce the terrorist activities in the North East and the termination of the STTEP contract and creation of Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) also played significant role in the fight against terrorism in Nigeria under Buhari's administration. While among the ineffective strategies are the peaceful negotiations with faceless Boko Haram fighters through an undefined amnesty programme and the review of the Creation of National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) in 2016 for effective prevention of violent extremism. This is supported by Nosiri and Ibekwe (2021) which revealed that there has been reduction in the rate of Boko Haram terrorist activities and number of casualties as a result of the strategies adopted. The findings also aligned with Colin (2015) and Ordu (2017) which emphasized that the Counter-terrorism Strategies adopted were successful to a reasonable extent but not all encompassing.

From the result in hypothesis one tested, it portrayed that counter-terrorism strategies have significant impact on the level of insecurity in Nigeria during the Buhari's Administration. The findings agreed with the view of Falode (2019), Omonobi (2016), Ordu (2017) and Nosiri & Ibekwe (2021) which found that Nigeria's countermeasures have successfully dealt with the various dimensions of terrorism to a reasonable extent. Simply put, Nigeria's government under the Muhammadu Buhari's administration adopted several measures to control and stifle terrorist activities in the country. The result of hypothesis two tested revealed that there is a significant effect on the escalation of terrorism in the North East despite counter-terrorism strategies adopted by Muhammadu Buhari's Administration. The findings aligned with Ezirim & Okoye (2018) who found that addressing terrorism challenges was made more difficult by repressive counter-terrorism policies and suggested that counter-terrorism requires not only improved security but also better effort to address the underlying conditions that give rise to terrorism.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that Boko-Haram as a sect cannot be discussed without reference to religion, and international supports of some other groups such as ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Taliban and others. However the study concluded that poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, insecurity, poor governance, poor

socialization, social inequality, marginalization, porous international borders are the major factors that influence the activities of Boko-Haram in Nigeria. Hence, Boko-Haram insurgency has adverse effects on the socio-economic and political development of North east region and Nigeria at large. It has therefore affected the educational system, business activities, social activities, employment status and political system to mention few. It was in view of the above that the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari tried its best but failed to achieve tremendous success in the implementation of important counter terrorism strategies in North East. There is no doubt that these strategies such as the bolstering of the Multinational Joint Task Force (JTF) in 2015, the launching the Operation Safe Corridor Programme in 2016, and the establishment of international collaboration with the United States and the United Kingdom has reduced the negative activities of Boko Haram in Northeast Nigeria. However, this was not enough to stem the tides of this sect completely.

Recommendations

Consequently, the activities of Boko Haram are threats to the national development in Nigeria. The solution to the challenge posed by Boko Haram lies in an integrated holistic approach to addressing the issues raised. The state must also live up to its role of providing employment and other basic amenities and guarantee the protection of lives and property of the citizens. The current approach of military force is unlikely to resolve the insurgency problem completely. The problem can only be solved through a negotiated settlement with moderate members of the group.

It is therefore important to suggest that the prospect for a peaceful and secured Nigeria cannot be achieved only by military suppression but require the service of the international bodies and the Nigerian leaders, who must be transparent and have a strong political will to implement result oriented programmes that will improve the lives of the citizens of the country.

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